

# **THE ROLE OF SUFISM IN CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Award of the Degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**HAMID RASOOL**



**Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies  
School of International Studies  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
New Delhi-110067  
2016**



# JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies

School of International Studies

New Delhi-110067

Tel.: (O) +91-11-2670 4365  
Fax: (+91) - 11-2674 1586, 2586  
Email: crcasjnu@gmail.com

Date: 21 July 2016

## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “**THE ROLE OF SUFISM IN CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hamid Rasool', is written over a diagonal line.

**HAMID RASOOL**

## CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'skp', is written above the name of the chairperson.

**Prof Sanjay Kumar Pandey**

(CHAIRPERSON, CRCAS)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Phool Badan', is written above the name of the supervisor.

**Prof Phool Badan**

(SUPERVISOR)

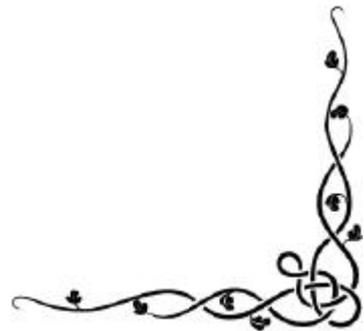


# ***Dedication***

*Dedicated*

to

*Mom and Dad*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It has really been an interesting experience to have worked on this insightful topic. I sincerely hope that this research will be helpful for future studies in related areas. I take the opportunity to thank all those people without whom this research would not have been the same.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Phool Badan under whose guidance and supervision I could complete my research. It is because of his continuous support, patience, motivation, and immense knowledge that I was able to complete my research on time. His inspiring guidance and encouragement helped me to make a better analysis of the major issues taken up in the present study. I have learned many things under his supervision which would help me a lot in my future academic pursuits (career). His affectionate and affordable guidance, constructive encouragements have gone the long way in writing and shaping my dissertation. He allowed me to do the research with full freedom, in developing my ideas and helping me to correct my mistakes. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this dissertation. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my M. Phil study.

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**Hamid Rasool**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AEEMS	Association des Eleves et Etudiants Musulmans du Senegal
AEMUD	Associations des Etudiants Musulmans del Universite de Dakar
AMEA	Association Musulmane des Etudiants Africains
CIRCOF	Comite Islamique pour la Reforme du Code de la Famille
DEM	Dahira des Etudiants Mourides DMM Dahira al Mustarchidin Al Mustarchidat
FAIS	Federation des Associations Islamiques du Senegal
FAL	Front pourl Alternance
HT	Hizb al Tarqiyya
JIR	Jama'at Ibadu Rahman
MFDC	Mouvement des Forces Democratiques de Casamance
MMUD	Mouvement Mondial pourl Unicite de Dieu
PDS	Parti Democratique Senegalais
PS	Parti Socialiste
PUR	Parti de l'Unite et du Rassemblement
PVD	Parti de la Verite pour le Developpement
CIS	Commonwealth Independent States
IRP	Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan
UCM	Union Culturelle Musulmane
SADUM	Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
MBCAK	Muslim Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan
HCE	High State Council
IRP	Islamic Revival Party

FLN	National Liberation Front
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
ASSR	Auditory Steady-State Response
SADUM	Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan

## CHAPTER-I

### INTRODUCTION

Sufism, or *Tasawwuf* as it is known in the Muslim world, is Islamic mysticism. Sufism is a part of the history of Central Asia. Sufi leaders helped in defining the relations between the ruler and the ruled during the time of Timurid rule. Sufis were a source of legitimization for the rulers of the eighteenth century in the region as well as a source of mobilizing protest during the Russian colonial and Soviet rules. Veneration of Sufi graves took on new importance during the years of Soviet religious persecution, making inevitable the revival of Sufism when the rebirth of Islam received state sanction during the late Soviet years and the first years of independence. Sufism is mysticism and spiritualism. The basic philosophy of Sufism is going to all ends to become God loving (Lings, 1999).

A practitioner of Sufism forgets everything and just tries to emulate God beats and follow it so that he could reach enlightenment. The word Sufism, popularly known as mysticism is most likely derived from the Arabic word “suf” meaning wool. The person wearing ascetic woolen garments is called sufi. Sufism is deeply rooted to the Islam and its development began in the late 7th and 8th centuries. Sufism was a natural development within Islam, owing little to non-Muslim sources, though receiving radiations from the ascetical-mystical life and thought of Eastern Christianity. Sufi saints had left a large intellectual heritage most Sufis were writers, poets and even singers (Khanam, 2009).

Sufism was initially launched by God fearing people of the Perso-Arab world. They renounced the world and devoted themselves to His service. As the seekers of Tawhid (Unity of God) they helped in the spread of Islam through mystic movement with intellectualization of Sunnah (The orthodox customs of the Islamic world) as one of its basic principles. The Sufis either in their lifetime or their tombs after death became a symbol of supernatural power with metaphysical features ascribed to them under the guidelines of Quran and Sunnah. "Seekers of Tawhid should strive to dedicate themselves to the Prophet Mohammad, so much so that their entire selves, including their hearts and their spirits, were free of thoughts other than of God" They

preach and practice religious tolerance and finding God through individual efforts. The Sufis love their creator, cherish the desire of his closeness and follow his path (Khalek, 2106).

According to Islam, there are two types of service. Throughout the night, they remain in prayer, meditation, and contemplation of Allah and throughout the day, they serve His creatures especially human beings. Sufis help the people irrespective of caste, creed, religion, faith, belief and sex. They are broad-minded persons having the universal vision. They follow the path of Islam, founded on divine love, universal charity and human compassion which also enshrine righteousness, piousness, truthfulness and kindness.

So far as Central Asia is considered it is considered as a centre of Sufism. Sufism has played a significant role in fighting against Russian colonization. Sufis and their different orders are the main religious sources. It is the common belief that in Sufism mundane activities such as politics, involvement in state business and fighting are avoided but the history of Sufism in Central Asia tells the other story. Different Sufi orders came forward to safeguard Islam and interests of the Muslims. They not only fought for the Muslim cause but also took an active part in the indigenous politics. The importance of Sufism to the lives of the people of Central Asia and the governments of the region has waned over the centuries.

The native society has preserved its clan structure, such as in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia and southern part of Uzbekistan. Sufi orders had been quite active in the Tatar intellectual and cultural revival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Volga region. After the war, they were almost disappeared. Now following the breakdown of the USSR, the Sufi network is gradually re-emerging particularly in Bukhara and Namangan the Sufi orders especially Naqshbandis assumed the leading role in the intellectual renaissance of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many Naqshbandis were in the forefront of the modernist liberal Jadid reform movement. Many leaders of Basmachi movement in Central Asia were Naqshbandi Murshids or Murids. Naqshbandiya is the most popular of all the Sufi orders as it follows the religious matters strictly but doesn't go for the excesses of other orders. This order is well organized and the

perfect whose aim is to support and dominate the religion (“Sufism” ReligionFacts.com, 2015) <sup>1</sup>.

Historically, four Sufi orders had a significant presence in the region. The Kubrawiyya, Yasawiyya, Qadiriyya, Naqshbandiyya. The Naqshbandiyya movement which originated in Central Asia. The Qadiriyya movement originated in Baghdad also had followers in Central Asia. Its founder Abdal-Qadir Jilani (1076–1166) was originally from the Iranian city of Jilan. Another order, the Qalandariyya, which in Central Asia is known as the brotherhood of wandering dervishes, is of more obscure origins, but its followers too have been found in the region. In addition to organized Sufi orders, Central Asia has also had its share of self-taught Sufis ascetics who preached their own personal messages of spiritual purification and who gathered followers around them. (Alvi, 2006)

Naqshbandiyya is the most dominant order in Central Asia. The Naqshbandiyya has a unique ability to adapt to changing social and political conditions. An adept is not ascetic; he remains in the world. Thus as an individual, the Naqshbandi adept is required to adjust his social behavior to meet the requirements of everyday life, he must be socially flexible. The role of practicing Muslims and these brotherhoods is not limited to preserve the religious beliefs and their cult observance. In Islam, religious, national and political spheres are interwoven, so these brotherhoods have become the centre of traditional opposition to the Russian presence.

Central Asian Muslims often made much of the religious element in the Basmachi resistance to the introduction of Bolshevik rule, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) celebrates the Basmachi movement as a major part of the history of jihad in Central Asia. Religion might have been a key element in stimulating the resistance, but only a few of the military leaders came from Sufi *ishans*. Most leaders of large numbers of Basmachi troops came from ordinary families. More often, leaders of resistance groups added *Amir al-muminin* to their names, emphasizing that they were marching under the banner of jihad. It was certainly true, though, that the Basmachi fighters enjoyed a great deal of support both moral and financial from Central Asia’s religious establishment. But the victory of the Bolsheviks ensured the

further deterioration of the Sufi movement in Central Asia, as it was now fully stripped of its economic means of survival.

Between 1922 and 1928 the institution of *vaqf* lands was first outlawed and then was subjected to formal nationalization procedures. This dealt a serious blow to fading Sufi *khanaqas* as centers of organizational structure. Sufi *khanaqas* (also *zawiyah*) were the first to lose their *vaqf* status and were closed down. Many Sufi sheikhs fled to remote regions or, more often, to Afghanistan, Kashgar (in western China), and other Muslim countries. Those Sufi sheikhs who remained were persecuted, arrested, deported, and sometimes executed during the subsequent anti-religion campaigns. Some of them, although very few, managed to survive and secretly teach individual disciples during Khrushchev's thaw. To survive, they fled to provincial regions of the former Bukhara khanate. They returned to their hometowns only after Stalin's death, and not all of them managed to educate disciples. Yet their biographies are worth considering, as these men did keep the tradition of learning alive through their writings as well as through their teachings. These men did not simply advocate the veneration of shrines, as did most self-proclaimed Soviet-era Sufis. Three Naqshbandiya sheikhs can be noted: Ravnaqi, his nephew Faqiri, and Ahmadjon Makhdum. Good biographical material is available for two of these three men in a four-volume work on Islam, and material on Haji Ahmadjon Makhdum can be found in his newly published autobiography (Olcott, 2007).

Veneration of Sufi graves took on new importance during the years of Soviet religious persecution, making inevitable the revival of Sufism when the rebirth of Islam received state sanction during the late Soviet years and the first years of independence. Even now the entrance into the political arena of a few Sufi figures with wide popular support including Ibrahim Hazrat in Uzbekistan and Ismatullah Sheikh in Kazakhstan would have considerable resonance. In the 'Islamic Threat to Soviet State', Bennigson (1984) says that the activities of the Tariqa were generally centered on the 'holy places' like tombs of Muslim saints. The people of Central Asia visited these holy places. Prayers by believers and Zikr by the adepts at these places had replaced the closed mosques. These places also acted as a forum which the Sufis used for Prayers by believers and Zikr by the adepts at these places had replaced the

closed mosques. These places also acted as a forum which the Sufis used for spreading messages to the masses.

There are two phases in the history of Central Asia when Sufism became politically active: once, when the followers of Sufis stood against colonial powers to liberate their country and, no doubt, it was quite a positive role on their part, secondly, when they participated in national politics and it was not on party level but on individual level. Atif Abdul Hamid (2006) quotes the co-operation between IRP Tajikistan and Qazi Tor Jan Zada (Mufti Azam) as its prime example. This co-operation lasted till 1997. According to Gregory T. Massel, Sufi orders had been the only effective Muslim response to the 'infidels' of Qara-Khitay and Mongols particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Again, the only serious and organized resistance against Russian conquerors in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Soviet regime in the 1920s was led by the same Sufi orders. These Sufi orders (tariqa) were called Parallel, non-Official or Sectarian Islam by Soviet sources (Olcott, 2007).

Sufism has been integral in defining the culture, political behavior and economic interaction of Central Asians since its arrival in the seventh century. Hence, its resurgence is neither surprising nor unintelligible. Despite bans on unofficial religious activity, Sufism received widespread commitment at the grassroots level during the Soviet period. Sufism remains an important strand as a calming influence even in the context of violence and terrorism in the name of Islam. Their impact on many parts of the world is so deeply rooted that it forms a significant part of popular religious beliefs and practices.

In fact, due to nondiscriminatory message, a large number of Hindu and Sikh also venerate Sufi saints. Most of the people are attached to Sufism by the way of tradition, condition, and belief or what other may call superstition, intellectual influence of Sufism and its over impact on the psyche of people cannot be denied. Development began in the late 7th and 8th centuries. The Sufis love their creator, cherish the desire of His closeness and follow His path. Sufism is a mystic and ascetic movement which originated in the Golden age of Islam, from about the 9th to 10th centuries. Some experts claim that Sufism is much older than Islam. The emergence

of Sufism is a consequence of the wide geographical spread of Islam after the Rashidun conquests resulted in absorption of a wide range of mystic traditions from outside Arabia, especially Greater Persia. Sufism became a more formalized movement by the 12th century and was a very successful movement throughout the Muslim world during the 13th to 16th centuries. There also were numerous Sufi orders active in the modern period, especially in nonArab parts of the Muslim world.

## **Review of Literature**

A literature review is evaluative information of information establish in the literature connected to chosen part of the study. The literature of assessment exercises to analyze the area of research which has been resolved in the study. Literature assessment is the secondary source, as well as such, do not information any latest otherwise innovative experimental work. Also, a literature review preserve is taken to mean as a review of a summary achievement. The review of literature begins with the analysis of the various readings on the history of Sufism Various published literature in the area has been reviewed here to develop a thematic view of this study and to find out the existing gap that is to be a filled.

This study deals with “The Role of Sufism in Central Asian Society” in theoretical and experimental terms. It starts by identifying some key theoretical perspectives of the Role of Sufism in Central Asian Society and history of Sufism in central Asia. The studies try to scrutinize and explore the role and importance of Sufism in the region with particular reference to its intended goals and real achievements in fighting against the Soviet colonizing forces. This review of literature is based on the written literature historical events biographies autobiographies philosophy and different religious books. These approaches make a great contribution to the study of Role of Sufism in Central Asian Society. This part of a review of the literature deals with the History of Sufism in Central Asia.

The comprehensive knowledge of different Sufi sects their teachings their ideology and role in the historical formulation and their political are very important, development of Different Sufi schools of thoughts is their basic teaching are Heath, Tom Everett (2003) focuses on the years of Soviet rule and concentrates on the post-

independence period. The study deals with the issues like the Soviet response to Basmachi movement, Soviet impact on the development of the region, colonial influence and the formation of vast collective farms. Social and economic development is also necessary for the development of the study of Role of Sufism in Central Asia, both empirically and theoretically. Each chapter contributes this central goal by closely analysing the historical accounts of different Sufi schools of thoughts through the prism of a core political, economic and social institutions of Central Asia. This helps us to reassess both our understanding of this region and the Role of Sufism in Central Asian Society.

The proper knowledge of the history is essential to study the importance of Sufism in Central Asia Not only books, but there are various research papers and articles that are extremely helpful for the study. Devendra Kaushik (2001) writes on the lines of religious extremism. He describes that how ruling parties banned the opposition parties for contest in elections and describes the challenges like religious extremism a major threat in the region. There is various existing literature to study the various dimensions of Sufism and religion in central Asia. Farida Khanam (2006): Sufism An Introduction is a historical study of Sufism (*Tasawwuf*) with specific reference to its spread of Sufi thoughts. It deals with the major Sufi orders, their distinguishing features and the ideology and method of Sufism.

### **Indigenisation of Islam in Central Asia**

Sufism, or *Tasawwuf* as it is known in the Muslim world, is Islamic mysticism (Lings, Martin, *What is Sufism?*, The Islamic Texts Society, 1999, pg 15). Islam, in the form that it was first brought to Central Asia by the Arabs, retained its orthodox, doctrinally regulated character in the learned institutions in the cities, but elsewhere it was gradually indigenised, assimilating local traditions and beliefs and adapting to local environmental conditions. Consequently, the nature of Islamic, beliefs and practices came to differ very considerably from one area to another, depending on the previous religious background as well as other local factors. In some areas, for example, Zoroastrian practices were absorbed into so-called Islamic rituals, while in others, traces of Buddhism, Manichaeism or Hellenistic cults became embedded in

local Islamic beliefs and observances; shamanism and pantheism provided an even broader substratum of pre-Islamic references.

Amongst the most tenacious of the ancient customs was the cult of 'saints' – the veneration of figures who were regarded as protectors and intercessors. They may or may not have had identifiable historical antecedents, but in any case they were the focus of cults that usually had ancient, non-Islamic origins. Such figures were often associated with a number of widely scattered sites, and specific biographical details varied accordingly. The best known included Burkut-baba, who was regarded by the Turkmen as having the power to ensure rain; Chopan-ata, widely regarded as a protector of sheep; and Kanbar-ata, regarded as a protector of horses. Individual saints (usually inherited from pre-Islamic traditions) were associated with particular crafts and occupations. Fertility cults, especially those connected with the annual farming cycle, were also preserved in one form or another; Dikan-baba (Bobo-Dekhon), for example, revered among the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Turkmen, was almost certainly an ancient agricultural divinity who was islamised during the early medieval period. Shrines to such individuals were to be found in many parts of the region; these were often associated with much older forms of faith, now reinterpreted within the framework of Islam. As in the more distant past these places were often located by springs, caves, trees or cliffs. It was common practice (and has remained so up to the present) to visit these holy places to pray for assistance and good fortune. Generally, this act of supplication was sealed with the ritual sacrifice of an animal (usually a sheep) and by lighting candles or leaving scraps of material tied to twigs.

Another common feature of Islam in Central Asia, especially in rural areas, was respect for the dead; reminiscent of the pre-Islamic ancestor cults, this was very deeply ingrained. The healing and soothsaying arts of the shamans also continued to be practiced beneath a veneer of Islamic justification. In various other aspects of popular culture too, such as folktales, sayings, and traditions, non-Muslim elements were preserved. Thus although in time virtually the whole of Central Asia was converted to Islam, it was an Islam that was permeated with a multitude of other influences.

## **The Sufi Shrines of the Sufi Saints as the Common Sites of Celebration and Veneration**

The shrines of the Sufi saints are common sites of celebration and prayer, and it is at these sites that local culture and venerative practices meld with Sufi doctrine. Local cultural traditions, especially musical ones, also permeate various Sufi saint day celebrations. In Asian sub-continent, these tombs attract Hindu-Muslim and people from other faiths as pilgrims. It has long been argued by scholars and advocates of Sufism alike that Sufism contributed to the spread of Islam in South Asia by forming cultural alliances between Muslims and other religious communities. And cultural adaptation was bidirectional among Hindu, Muslims and people from other religions. (Khalek, 2106)<sup>1</sup>

Part of what characterizes Sufism is its adaptability to various intellectual influences and its absorption of regional cultures. Sufi Islam is practiced in Iran, the Arab world, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Morocco, Turkey, Central Asia and many parts of Europe and the United States. Sufism is also practiced in Africa, South East Asia, and Australia.

According to Islam, there are two types of service. Throughout the night, they remain in prayer, meditation and contemplation of Allah and throughout the day, they serve His creatures especially human beings. Sufis help the people irrespective of caste, creed, religion, faith, belief and sex. They are broad-minded persons having the universal vision. They follow the path of Islam, founded on divine love, universal charity and human compassion which also enshrine righteousness, piusness, truthfulness and kindness.

### **Sufism: Beginning of the margins of the faith**

Basra, on the coast of Iraq, was one of the earliest cities in which Sufism first became active. There, a number of abstemious devotees sought a closer, more personal relationship with God through privation, moral behavior, and the general

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<sup>1</sup> Religion Library: **Sufism** (2015) web accessed on 17 june 2016  
<http://www.patheos.com/Library/Sufism/Historical-Development/Missions-Spread-Changes-Regional-adaptations>

rejection of worldly pleasures. This development was not a shift away from the Islamic community, or *Umma*, but rather a return to the piety and examples of the Rashidun Caliphs (632–661), especially Abu Bakr and Ali; a religiosity born as a bulwark against the political and more sophisticated imperial expansion of the eighth century (Umayyad Dynasty 661–749). While the early Sufis were ascetics, over time, they became known as mystics who sought to heighten their perception of God through rejection of comforts and control of bodily impulses. These early renunciants were known for their piety, sacrifices, and lives of denial, and their stories spread among an admiring people. One of the most well known eighth-century figures, and later most beloved, was the female martyr, Rabia al Adawiyya alQaysiyya. Rabia was the fourth daughter from a poor family, who lost her parents while young, was sold into slavery, and freed by her master when he saw her praying enveloped by light from a lantern hanging without a chain above her head. She led a life of ascetic piety, is credited with miracles, and revered as an early example of God's guardianship of the "friends of God" (*awliya Allah*).

### **Sufism and Central Asia**

Sufism is a part of the history of Central Asia. Sufi leaders helped in defining the relations between the ruler and the ruled during the time of Timurid rule. Sufis were a source of legitimization for the rulers of the eighteenth century in the region as well as a source of mobilizing protest during the Russian colonial and Soviet rules. Veneration of Sufi graves took on new importance during the years of Soviet religious persecution, making inevitable the revival of Sufism when the rebirth of Islam received state sanction during the late Soviet years and the first years of independence. Sufism is mysticism and spiritualism. The basic philosophy of Sufism is going to all ends to become God loving.

The aim of *Tasawwuf*, to put it briefly, is to attain the realization of God. The realization of God produces all kinds of spiritual qualities. Although the term *Tasawwuf* came into vogue as late as the 2nd century A.H., *Tasawwuf* was actually integral to the believer's life from the very beginning. *Tasawwuf* is, in fact, another name for the Islamic realization of God. (Farida Khanam (2006): Sufism An Introduction).

Sufism is a mystic and ascetic movement which originated in the Golden Age of Islam. Sufism was initially launched by God fearing people of the Perso-Arab world. They renounced the world and devoted themselves to His service. As the seekers of Tawhid (Unity of God), they helped in spread of the Islam through mystic movement with intellectualization of Sunnah (The orthodox customs of Islamic world) as one of its basic principles. The Sufis either in their lifetime or their tombs after death became a symbol of supernatural power with metaphysical features ascribed to them under the guidelines of Quran and Sunnah. "Seekers of Tawhid should strive to dedicate themselves to the Prophet Mohammad, so much so that their entire selves, including their hearts and their spirits, were free of thoughts other than of God" They preach and practice religious tolerance and finding God through individual efforts. The Sufis love their creator, cherish the desire of his closeness and follow his path

A practitioner of Sufism forgets every thing and just tries to emulate God beats and follow it so that he could reach enlightenment. The word **Sufism**, popularly known as mysticism is most likely derived from the Arabic word "suf" meaning wool. The person wearing ascetic woolen garments is called sufi. Sufism is deeply rooted with Islam and its development began in the late 7th and 8th centuries. Sufism was a natural development within Islam, owing little to non-Muslim sources, though receiving radiations from the ascetical-mystical life and thought of Eastern Christianity. Sufi saints had left a large intellectual heritage most Sufis were writers, poets, and even singers.

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## **The Main Sufi orders and Central Asia**

By the 12th century, Sufism had become a popular movement with broad grass roots support. The aspirants to the Sufi way became quite numerous and developed the tendency to attach themselves to a particular master, staying in his *khanqah* and interacting in the communal life there. The most popular orders were based in the Persian provinces of Khurasan and Transoxiana. Many important founders of the orders in Baghdad were Persians who had been influenced by the Baghdadi schools of mysticism, while at the same time developing new frameworks of their own. The two great orders that were founded in Baghdad in the period spanning the 12th and 13th centuries were the Qadriya and the Suhrawardiya. The Naqshbandiya order was set up in Transoxiana, while the Chishti order, which went on to become the most influential Sufi order in India, is associated with the area around Herat in today's Afghanistan. The Kubrawiya order came into existence in Khwarizm and metamorphosed into the Indian Firdausiya and Hamadaniya, with many more offshoots known under different names all over the Islamic world.

Historically, four Sufi orders had a significant presence in the region. The Kubrawiya, Yasawiya, Qadiriyya, Naqshbandiya. The Naqshbandiya movement which originated in Central Asia. The Qadiriyya movement originated in Baghdad also had followers in Central Asia. Its founder Abdal-Qadir Jilani (1076–1166) was originally from the Iranian city of Jilan. Another order, the Qalandariya, which in Central Asia is known as the brotherhood of wandering dervishes (wonderers), is of more obscure origins, but its followers too have been found in the region. In addition to organized Sufi orders, Central Asia has also had its share of self-taught Sufis ascetics who preached their own personal messages of spiritual purification and who gathered followers around them.

Naqshbandiya is the most dominant order in Central Asia. The Naqshbandiya has a unique ability to adapt to changing social and political conditions. An adept is not ascetic he remains in the world. Thus as an individual, the Naqshbandi adept is required to adjust his social behavior to meet the requirements of everyday life, he must be socially flexible. The role of practicing Muslims and these brotherhoods is not limited to preserve the religious beliefs and their cult observance. In Islam,

religious, national and political spheres are interwoven, so these brotherhoods have become the center of traditional opposition to the Russian presence.

Central Asian Muslims often made much of the religious element in the Basmachi resistance to the introduction of Bolshevik rule, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) celebrates the Basmachi movement as a major part of the history of jihad in Central Asia. Religion might have been a key element in stimulating the resistance, but only a few of the military leaders came from Sufi ishans. Most leaders of large numbers of Basmachi troops came from ordinary families. More often, leaders of resistance groups added Amir al-muminin to their names, emphasizing that they were marching under the banner of jihad. It was certainly true, though, that the Basmachi fighters enjoyed a great deal of support both moral and financial from Central Asia's religious establishment. But the victory of the Bolsheviks ensured the further deterioration of the Sufi movement in Central Asia, as it was now fully stripped of its economic means of survival.

### **Sufi practices**

The Sufis lay most emphasis on ihsan. Put most simply, ihsan can be described as that level of devotion at which the devotee is completely absorbed in the worship of God. The Sufis strongly believe that there are many levels of excellence in the actual practice of ihsan, and the objective of the Sufi practice is to raise this level of excellence. That is why they define true ihsan as the attainment of that level of devotion at which one begins to experience the presence of God.

The Sufis strive for and attest to having the experience of seeing God, Whom they call their Beloved One, face to face. There are instances of Sufis falling senseless when possessed by the ecstasy of extreme love. The Sufis say that the Prophet and some of his companions were totally absorbed in their prayers every time they prayed and that this complete absorption in prayer is the foundation of *tasawwuf* (Khanam, 2009) Sufism An Introduction.

What characterizes Sufism is its adaptability to various intellectual influences and its absorption of regional cultures. Sufi Islam is practiced in Iran, the Arab world, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Central Asia, Morocco, Turkey, and many parts

of Europe and the United States. Sufism is also practiced in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Australia.

Although, in its larger sense, the term Sufi Mysticism is difficult to define, yet it can be said that it deals with some special experiences and speculations and these experiences are based on such material that is supposed to be beyond the reach of sense and reason (Kumar, 2005).<sup>2</sup>

Since times immemorial, people have tried to solve the Mystery of life. Through the ages, this curiosity made people to experiment with things and know the hidden forces behind their actions. This has given rise to the system of science, which has made wonderful discoveries and advancements over the past century. But, for every moment life declares itself to be something fuller than a blind play of physical forces, however, complex and stimulated their interactions are. Scientists explain it in their own way but science only describes' life, it cannot feel it.<sup>3</sup>

There is a special form of craving the craving for the 'Infinite. It is a state when people cannot find rest except in communion with a Supreme Reality free from all imperfections and limitations; and ' such a Reality can be found in nothing less than the Unconditioned Absolute.

C.G. Jung, the famous psychoanalyst, once said: "Among my patients from many countries, all of them educated persons, there is a considerable number who came to see me, not because they were suffering from a neurosis, but because they could find no meaning of life... "This is the point where people start thinking beyond science. They wish to know the unknown forces that drive all. Here religion comes into action.

The word religion comes from the root 're' meaning 'back', and 'ligare,' meaning 'to bind' Thus religion is the way which binds people back with God. At first, people enjoyed the blessings of nature as children do, without deeply analyzing the causes and actions. It was sufficient for them that the earth gave them cereals to feed and herbs to heal. They have contented that the trees bore them fruit and the streams quenched their thirst. They were happy, and every moment though unconsciously they offered a prayer

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<sup>2</sup> Ravindra Kumar(2005) *Sufism in india*, jnu online catalogue

<sup>3</sup> ibid

of gratitude to the Supreme whom as yet they did not know. But later, in some religions, this turned quite complex when people started offering sacrifices and made rites and ceremonies an essential part of it to obtain special rewards from the Supreme. So today, when we look about, we find hundreds of philosophies and religions describing the path to God in their own special way. Still, the purpose of all religions, whether practiced since the beginning of human society or in the, current perspective, is the same to help followers know God. There may be a difference in rituals, prayers, and other religious practices, but they all have grown on the same pathway of desire to meet the Supreme Creator.

### **Sufi Mysticism as a means of attaining purity of soul**

In the history of religion, there is one practice, which has been known for its simplicity and also for its secret approach. This is Sufi Mysticism. The word Sufi is derived from the Arabic Word 'stir which means wool this refers to the coarse woolen robes that were worn by the followers the followers of Sufi Mysticism, Although, in its larger sense, the term Sufi Mysticism is difficult to define, yet it can be said that it deals with some special experiences and speculations and these experiences are based on such material that is supposed to be beyond the reach of sense and reason (Kumar, 2005).<sup>4</sup>A true follower of Sufi Mysticism is the one who gets devoted to the Supreme in such a way that he forgets himself and as such agrees with the will of Supreme.

The detailed account of Sufi Mysticism is found in the teachings of Saint Abdul Qadir jilani [1077-1166 AD]. He is also known by the name of Peeran-i-Peei; 'which literally means the Saint of Saints. His main teachings are compiled in his two popular books "N Fathal Rabbani" and "Futuh-al-ohaib". (Kumar, 2005)<sup>5</sup> In them, he has explained the different practices of worship. He laid emphasis on the purity of thought and action. He said that as such the true devotion in the Supreme develops. He also said that the war we fight against our egoistic hearts is the holiest. He propounded that a true devotee of God is the one who while leading a family life keeps himself free of all the vices of the world.

Sufi Mysticism became a popular means of attaining purity of soul. The worship that pleases Almighty the most is the granting of relief to the humble and oppressed" One

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<sup>4</sup> Ravindra Kumar(2005) *Sufism in india*, jnu online catalogue

<sup>5</sup> Ravindra Kumar(2005) *Sufism in india*, jnu online catalogue

should be polite and should consider others superior than him. One should consider and as such should believe that God is watching over him and One should be obedient to his Spiritual Master. Do not speak harshly to any one, as the Lord is in all, do not break anyone's heart as all are precious pearls." What is that knowledge, virtue and thing which is dear to the spouse? What dress should be put on to win over the Lord? Humility is the knowledge simplicity the virtue and sweet tongue the winning chant that is dear. If the dress of all these three is put on the Almighty is won over. During early period high rank people used to keep slaves. Sufi Mystics were totally against that. People knew that Sufi Mystics were made happy by freeing slaves so to gain their admiration "God holds dear those, who Love Him for the sake of Human beings and also those who love human beings for the sake of Almighty God.

The well known Sufi Saint of Punjab, Hazrat Miyan Meer [1550- 1635 AD) also emphasized: "The mind should be purified by abstaining from suspicion, plotting and thinking ill of others. The heart should be purified by keeping it free from lust jealousy, greed selfishness Hatred and pride.

Prince Dare Shikoh [1615-1659 AD}, who was the son of Mughal emperor Shahjahan, was also a follower of Sufi Mysticism. His early education was entrusted to tutors attached to the royal court. In his life, he came in contact with numerous Muslim and Hindu mystics. But the most noted among them was Hazrat Miyan Mir of Lahore who made the prince his disciple. In his book Ksala-I-Haqmona, he has written that Sufi Saints believed in some exclusive principles like

1. Awakening of hidden spiritual powers through unconditional surrender and submission before Supreme.
2. Attainment of enlightenment through the initiation by a True Spiritual Master: and
3. That the Supreme Himself incarnates as a Spiritual Master to guide people on the pathway of eternal liberation of a soul.

In his collection of poems, Iksir-i Azam, he said: Whatever you behold except Him is the object of your fancy Things other than He has an existence like a mirage. The existence of God is like a boundless ocean. People are like forms and wares in its water" He was a responsible.

Bulleh Shah [1680-1758 AD] the mystic poet the most popular Sufi of his times. His poems are full of love and longing for God and his Spiritual Master. In his poetry, he has also denounced ritualistic religion and stressed on the development of the feeling of oneness and brotherhood. He said: as Remove dualio and do away with all disputes; The Hindus and Muslims are not other than Him. Deem everyone virtuous there are no thieves. For, within every body, He Himself resides.

Sufi can be said that Sufi Mysticism in that commonly been viewed a secular attempt for eternal of the soul and for its direct experience of the ultimate Supreme. For centuries Hindus have also accepted Sufi shrines as a symbol of communal harmony. A large number of them have been offering prayers in Sufi shrines. Even today, their teachings are a source of light Mystics such in the dark and guidance for all.

## **DEFINATION, RATIONAL AND SCOPE OF STUDY**

The study of the role of Sufism in Central Asian society is related to the study of different Sufism orders and Sufi institution in Central Asian, and their involvement at different levels in Central Asian society political, cultural, and economics in preserving Islam in Central Asia. It will help us understanding the cultural role of Sufi philosophy and its relevance in present day Central Asia. It is very essential to identify the history of Sufism socio-political and cultural role in Central Asian states. This research could facilitate and could address the questions like the kind of culture was prevailing in Central Asia during pre soviet and post soviet times? It will help us in understanding the kind of role being played by the Soviet government in suppressing the religious movements and underground activities of Sufis in educating people and mobilizing them against the colonial power and its impact on present day society of Central Asia.

The rationale of the proposed study is to look out how and what kind of cultural, political and economic role has been played my Sufism and Sufi saints in the history of Central Asia and different kind of movement led by Sufi saints. Sufism has been a source of mobilizing protest during the Russian colonial and Soviet rules. Veneration of Sufi graves took on new importance during the years of Soviet religious

persecution, making inevitable the revival of Sufism when the rebirth of Islam received state sanction during the late Soviet years and the first years of independence.

The scope of the study is to evaluate the past and present Sufi institutions and kind of role being played by Sufism in making of present day Central Asian. The study will deal with historical findings different political and religious movements led by Sufi saints of Central Asia against the Soviet Union. It will help us to know about different uprisings under Sufi's leaderships and their role in different spheres of the society. The proposed study would make an attempt to investigate the kind of challenges which Sufism face during the propagation of Soviet Secularist policies.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the present study is to contribute to an understanding of the actual and potential roles played by Sufism and Sufi philosophy in the Central Asian region at political, cultural, economic and ideological fronts.

Specific objectives are:

1. To know the cultural significance of Central Asian Sufism
2. To understand the political importance of Sufism in Central Asia
3. To find out the conflicting situation of Islam and Us Policy towards Central Asia.
4. To analyze the political movements of Central Asia led by Sufi saints.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What kind of political role has been played by Sufism in Central Asia politics?
2. How much Sufism is significant for Central Asia?
3. What are the kinds of institutes which promote Sufism?
4. What kind of role is being played by Sufi philosophy in preserving the culture of the Central Asian society?
5. What is the Cultural significance of Sufism in Central Asia?

### **HYPOTHESIS**

1. The Soviet authorities tried to eradicate Islam and Islamic practices from the Central Asian region but underground activities of Sufis (Naqsbendis) kept the people informed about the basic teachings of Islam.

2. Leaders who were fighting against the Russian rule enjoyed a great deal of support both moral and financial from Central Asia's religious establishment and Sufi Shrines which acted as the epicenters of movements.

### **RESEACH METHODOLOGY:**

The proposed study is based on historical, analytical and descriptive methods of research of the concept. Historical approach has been deployed to understand the emergence of Sufism in central Asia extensively. Both the deductive and inductive methods are taken into consideration and the historical findings are examined deductively. The inductive method is used for generalizing some of the findings of the research.

The study has both independent and dependent variables. There are two hypotheses in the proposed research. In the first hypothesis, the Soviet efforts to eradicate Islam and Islamic institutions, customs and traditions from the region were superficial in nature. Because of the closure of mosque and madrassahs, the native did not have opportunity to learn about Islamic teachings. But underground activities of Sufis (Naqsbandis) have kept the people informed about the basic teachings of Islam. The soviet efforts to eradicate Islam and Islamic institutions, customs and traditions from the region are the independent variables and the underground activities of the Sufis which kept the people informed about the Islamic teachings is the dependent variable. In the second hypothesis the financial help by informal and religious organisation are the independent variable where the Sufi resistance to the Soviet policy of secularisation is a dependent variable.

The proposed study is based on both primary and secondary resources. The primary sources materials are the poetic work of Sufi saints, their autobiographies various government documents, reports and research undertaken government and resolutions, declarations and agreements, laws, speeches, constitution, survey, questionnaire, interview, empirical facts, etc. The secondary sources are books, journal, articles, magazine, newspaper and internet materials available at the different websites are consulted for the proposed study. The relevant lectures, seminars, workshops have also been used with in the research. The work has also utilized the interviews published in magazines and media.

## **Research Scheme**

This study comprises of five chapters including introduction and conclusion. The first chapter is an introduction and overview of the Sufism and Sufism of Central Asia.

The first chapter deals with the outlines of the subject. Besides, it throws light on the theoretical explanation of the themes, including research design. A brief survey of the relevant literature has been included in the chapter.

The Second chapter focuses on the historical background of Sufism. It discusses the expansion and genesis of Sufism in Central Asia. The chapter also highlights the development and expansion of Sufi Institutions in Central Asia before and after the coming of the Russian to the region.

The third chapter is about the political social and economic role of Sufism in Central Asia. It gives the detail idea about the role being played by Sufi saints and Sufi shrines as the epicenters of politics in the region. This chapter also describes the political powers or the political influence directly or indirectly being enjoyed by Sufis and Sufi shrines in the political and economic development of Central Asian society. It deals with the political influence of the Sufi saints and Sufi Shrines on government and political parties.

The fourth chapter discusses the Socio and cultural role of Sufism in Central Asian society. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to analyze the present situation of the institution of Sufism of Central

The fifth chapter sums up the finding of all chapters of the study and detailed conclusions of the present study undertaken have been presented. The gap in the present knowledge and innovative approach has been highlighted in this chapter. It also includes the observation and a conclusion derives from the study. This concluding chapter is an attempt to generalize some findings of the study.

## Chapter-2

### History of Sufism in Central Asia

Sufism is one of the most vibrant and exciting dimensions of Islamic religious and cultural expression. It is an umbrella term for a social, philosophical, and literary aspects occurring within the Islamic world. In its confined sense, the word "Sufism" applies to a number of schools of Islamic mystical philosophy and belief, to the phenomenon of religious rites and guilds (*tariqa*) that have exercised considerable influence over the advancement of Islamic politics and society, and to the varied expressions of popular devotion and service to shrines discovered throughout the Islamic world. In a wider sense, Sufism is often seen as the spiritual inspiration behind much of pre-modern verse in the Islamic world. Sufism has been a leading movement within Islam throughout of its history. It grew out of an early ascetic movement within Islam, which, like the Christian monastic equivalent, sought to counteract the worldliness that appeared with the rapid increase of the Muslim community ("Sufism." ReligionFacts.com. 2015, 2016)<sup>6</sup>. Sufism can be defined broadly as the intensification of Islamic belief and practice or the tendency amongst Muslims to strive for personal engagement with the Divine Reality. The Arabic term *Sufi* however, has been applied in a wide variety of meanings over the centuries, by both advocates and opponents of Sufism.

Western observers have sometimes obscured the issue by referring to Sufism as Islamic mysticism or Islamic esotericism. The original sense of *Şufi* seems to have been one who wears wool (*şuf*). The origin of the word Sufism is interpreted differently, from Arabian "suf" wool and Greek "sofna" a monk, Persian "sof" sincerity, open heartedness, naivete and Turkic "sufa" a sitting place. The most diffused opinion is that the term Sufism originated from "suf" wool, coarse clothes of fleece worn by Sufis in the initial period of this sect. Islamic mystics are described Sufis and their way of life is Sufism.

In the eighth century, the word was sometimes being applied to Muslims whose modest inclinations directed them to wear uncomfortable woolen garments. Gradually, it came to choose a group who separated themselves from others by

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<sup>6</sup>"Sufism". (10 Nov. 2015). Available at [www.religionfacts.com/sufism](http://www.religionfacts.com/sufism), Web Accessed 17 Jul. 2016

stressing certain teachings and practices of the Quran and the Sunnah<sup>7</sup>. By the ninth century the *tasawwuf*, means literally being a Sufi or Sufism, was embraced by some representatives from this group as a proper, though by no means the only, designation of their own beliefs and practices<sup>8</sup> (Sufism, 1997).

Sufism came into existence as an alternative in Islam, Many Muslims were only giving attention to material advantages and following the commands from the Shariah, not bothering much of their spiritual life. This prompted many scholars to appeal to come back to simple values and start struggling with the internal enemy, envy, arrogance, parsimony, laziness. This gave birth to the rise of a new trend "tasawwuf" which means "Sufism." Tasawwuf means mysticism in Arab as a mystic and modest belief and practice in Islam emerged first in the West of the Islamic world (Syria, Egypt, Iraq) under the influence of Eastern Christian monasticism near the shift of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries”(Advantour, 2001)<sup>9</sup>. By the 10<sup>th</sup> century having separated from asceticism, Sufism formed to an independent and progressive for its time religious philosophical, moral sect within Islam expanding widely over the entire Islamic world in the widespread Arab Caliphate from the Egypt to the Spain in the West to Eastern Turkestan in the East, including Iran and Central Asia. The mystic-ascetic sect in Islam is not an independent phenomenon in the religion; it can be traced in every religious system of the world in Christian monasticism from where this sect was directly obtained,<sup>10</sup> Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism (various forms of monasticism) and it runs to the depths of unrecorded time(Advantour, 2001).

The development of Sufism as the Islam religion itself was taking place in every individual region in interaction with more ancient religions. By the time of propagation and establishing of Islam in the countries conquered by the Arabs, the traditions of pre-Islamic ideology were still living and were very conservative and typically were obtained by the youngest faith of the world. Central Asian Sufism, in particular, was developed under the influence of the local forms of Zoroastrianism,

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<sup>7</sup> Activities perform by Prophet Muhammad PBUH

<sup>8</sup>Sufism Oxford Islamic Studies (1997), chapter 1, Online Western preference for “Sufism,”

<sup>9</sup> Advantour 2016. (2001, june 10). Retrieved jully 10-06-2016, from [www.advantour.com](http://www.advantour.com)

<sup>10</sup>ibid

Manichaeism, Nestorianism<sup>11</sup> and other eastern Iranian and religious sects of Mawarannahr<sup>12</sup> Existed in pre-Islamic Central Asia. Sufism is less a sect of Islam than a mystical method of approaching the Islamic belief. It has been described as "mystical Islamic belief and practice in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God (Advantour, 2001)."

The initial form of Sufism emerged under the Umayyad Dynasty<sup>13</sup> (661–749) less than a century following the founding of Islam. Mystics of this period meditated on the Doomsday passages in the Quran, thereby obtaining such nicknames as "those who always weep". Those early Sufis led a life of strict obedience to Islamic inscription and tradition and were known for their night prayers. Many of them centered their efforts upon tawakkul<sup>14</sup> which became a primary concept of Sufism.

Another century or so later, a new stress on love changed asceticism into mysticism. This development is attributed to Rabiah al-Adawiyah (d. 801), a woman from Basra who formed the Sufi ideal of a real love of God that was disinterested with the hope for Paradise or fear of Hell. Other important developments soon followed, including strict self-control, psychological insight, the annihilation of the self, interior knowledge, mystical insights about the nature of man and the Prophet, hymns and poetry. This phase, from about 800-1100 AD is regarded to as classical mysticism or classical Sufism.

The next major stage in Sufi history was the development of fraternal orders, in which disciples followed the teachings of a leader founder. The 13th century is regarded as the golden age of Sufism, in which some of the greatest mystical poetries were composed. Prominent figures from this period include Ibn al'Arabi of Spain, Ibn al-Farid of Egypt, Jalal ad-Din ArbiRumi of Persia, and Najmuddin Kubra<sup>15</sup> of

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<sup>11</sup> The Christian doctrine that there were two separate persons, one human and one divine, in the incarnate Christ. It is named after Nestorius, chief of Constantinople (428–31), and was maintained by some ancient Churches of the Middle East. A small Nestorian Church still exists in Iraq.

<sup>12</sup> Transoxiana (also spelled Transoxania), known in Arabic sources as Maawaraa an-nahr and to the Arabs as *Mawarannahr* (Land Exceeding the River) and to the Iranians as Turan a term used in the Persian national epic Shahnameh.

<sup>13</sup> The *Umayyad* regime was founded by Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, long-time governor of Syria, following the end of the First Muslim Civil War in 661 CE/41 AH.

<sup>14</sup> Absolute trust in God

<sup>15</sup> Najmuddin-e Kubra was a 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian Sufi from Khwarezm and the founder of the Kubrawiyah influential in the Ilkhanate and Timurid dynasty. [Born: 1145, Khiva, Uzbekistan](#) [Died: 1221, Konye-Urgench, Turkmenistan](#)

Central Asia. By this point, Sufism had permeated the whole of the Islamic world and played a large role in the shaping of Islamic society.

Unlike Christian mysticism, however, Sufism is a constant historical and also institutionalized phenomenon in the Muslim world that has had millions of followers down to the present day. Indeed, if we look at the Muslim world, there is hardly a region that does not have Sufi orders still performing there". Such is his evaluation of the importance, within Islam, of Sufism that he says: "Sufism has influenced the spiritual life of the religion to an extraordinary degree. There is no important domain in the civilization of Islam that has remained unaffected by it (Yachnes, 2000).

### **The Definition of the Term Sufi**

Sufism (tasawwuf) is the name given to mysticism in Islam. "The term Sufism contains the philosophy and practices which aim at direct communication between God and man, and those who follow Sufism are called Sufis" (KHANUM, 2006)<sup>16</sup>. Scholars differ as to the derivation of the term Sufi, for it is not mentioned in the Qur'an or the books of hadith, nor does it figure in the standard Arab dictionaries that were edited as late as the eighth century A.D. According to Qushayri author of al Risala(al-Qushayri, 2000), (al-Qushayri A.-Q. , 2007) "the word Sufi was used as a generic term to describe individuals adopting a particular religious attitude based on austerity and spirituality, and came into usage only at the beginning of the ninth century".

Sufism has been interpreted in different ways by scholars writing in English, during this century, but they all agree on its fundamental character as being the inner, secret, mystical, or purely spiritual dimension of the religion of Islam. Sufism, the religious philosophy of Islam, is described in the oldest extant definition as "the apprehension of divine realities<sup>17</sup> and although referring to it as "Islamic mysticism,". It still maintains the prevalent idea that Sufism was largely the product of various philosophical and spiritual influences, including Christian, Neoplatonic, and others.

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<sup>16</sup> Khanam, Farida (2006), *Sufiam AnIntroduction* ,New Delhi : Goodword Books

<sup>17</sup> Nicholson R. A. (1914) *little introduction to Sufism, The Mystics of Islam*,London, Cambridge universityPress

Yachnes further that it is a subject so immense and many sided that several large volumes would be essential to do it anything like justice" (Yachnes, 2000)<sup>18</sup>.

After the Prophet Muhammad, 'sahabi' (companion) was the single title given to the Muslims of that period. This was the premier title for them, and therefore they don't require another title for their piety and religiosity. The succeeding generation that received religious education directly from the Sahaba called 'tabiin' (followers of the companions), while the designation 'tabatabiin' (followers of the followers of the companions) was the title granted to those who had received religious education from the 'tabiin' (Rashid, 2002). Those who dedicated their lives to religious studies and religious devotion after the times of the tabii, were called zahid 'the pious' and abid 'the servant (of Allah) (Nizami, 2012). It is only in relation to the succeeding generations that one comes across the term Sufi. The first spiritualist to be given the title of Sufi was 'Shaykh Abu HashimKufi' (d. 776) (Rizvi, 1975).<sup>19</sup>

### **The Etymological meaning and origin of word Sufi**

It is formed up of three Arabic letters: 's- w- f', although there is much scholarly debate surrounding it. One view is that the word Sufi is borrowed from the Arabic word saf, which means line or row, referring here to those first Muslim generations of the Prophet, who stood in the first row at the time of prayer, having reached the mosque well in time. Others contend that the word is derived from the word 'suffa', the verandah or porch of the Prophet's mosque in Madinah. The traditions say that some the companions of the Prophet who had no shelter stayed in this verandah. They spent their time in prayer, in learning by heart the verses of the Qur'an and memorizing the words of the Prophet. They disengaged themselves from worldly activities. The Prophet and his companions looked after their needs. Since the porch of the mosque had virtually become their home, they came to be called Ashaab-i Suffaor 'People of the Porch' (KHANUM, 2006). However, the majority of the scholars are of the view that the word Sufi comes from the word suf or wool. This is because most of the early pious people were inclined to asceticism and wore undyed,

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Yachnes (December 9, 2000) Sufism: An Annotated Resource Guide, Sufism: Name and Origin Name and Origin by Paul Yachnes 5/26/2016. <http://islam.uga.edu/sufismdef.html> 1/2 Sufism.

<sup>19</sup>Rizvi, S.A.A. ( 1975), *A History of Sufism in India, Vol. I*, Delhi and Dar, B.A ( 1961) *Early Sufis, in Sharif, M.M., A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Delhi

coarse woolen garments. The rough cloth symbolized voluntary poverty and renunciation of the world with all its pleasures.

### **Origin and Evolution of Sufism**

The Sufis ascertain the source of Sufism or tasawwuf to the Prophet of Islam. They believe that there were two dimensions to the revelations received by the Prophet: "one took the form of the words of the Quran, the other that of the divine inspiration within his heart. The former was meant for all, while the latter was to be imparted to the chosen few and conveyed directly 'from heart to heart'(KHANUM, 2006). Understanding words of the Quran and hadith was known as ilm-e-safina, while the knowledge of the heart was known as ilm-e-sina. The religious scholars or ulama were experts in the knowledge of the Qur'an and hadith, but it was claimed that 'the knowledge of the heart remained with those called the Sufis. The claim of the Sufis that tasawwuf had its source in the life of the Prophet and his companions are based on some facts. The Prophet led a remarkably simple life.

He withdrew all luxuries. Any valuable presents received by him were immediately disposed of in charity. His personal possessions, even at the time when the whole of Arabia acknowledged his supremacy, comprised of no more than an ordinary mattress to sleep on and a pitcher to keep water in. He fasted for months on end and slept little preferring to spend the major portion of the night in prayers. His very life was the proof and the example of his knowledge and commitment to both the theoretical concepts of Islam as well as its everyday practice. Faith and practice of Islam are made up of three elements, which together form the basis of the Islamic religion. These are minor belief in the revealed word of God, itaah or compliance with the shahaadah (Islamic creed) and ihsan, or the practice of virtue and sincerity and surrender to God. The surrender is that you should say prayers five times, fast during Ramadan, pay zakat and, if you can, go on the pilgrimage to the Sacred house (the Kabah)<sup>20</sup>. And faith (iman) you should have faith in God, in angels and the books, the prophets and the Last Day, and you should rely on that no good or evil comes but by His providence. "And excellence (ihsan<sup>21</sup>-practice of virtue and sincerity) is that

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<sup>20</sup> By prophet Muhammed PBUH

<sup>21</sup> To do well or to do everything as beautifully as possible. In Sufism it refers to the level at which the devotee is completely absorbed in prayer to God. It is defined by the Sufis as the attainment of that

you should worship God as if you saw Him, or if you do not see Him, truly, He sees you” (KHANUM, 2006).

The Sufis lay most emphasis on ‘ihsan’. Put most simply, ‘ihsan’ can be defined as that level of devotion at which the devotee is absolutely absorbed in the worship of God. The Sufis strongly rely on that there are many stages of excellence in the actual practice of ‘ihsan’, and the objective of the Sufi practice is to raise this level of excellence. That is why they describe true ‘ihsan’ as the attainment of that level of devotion at which one begins to experience the presence of God. Early Sufis take out from society, gathering circles of admirers around them and retreating to the countryside where they developed religious orders and rituals called ‘zikr’. Which combined Quranic recitation with physical movement prescribed by the founder of the orders and elements of the song (sama) and dance (raqs), with the intended outcome being a state of ecstatic abandon. Sufism is disallowed by the more conservative elements of Islam, who are put off by the unorthodox Sufi ways of prayer.

Religious critics point out that the origin of each of the Sufi movements is rooted in an attack on the way Islam is practiced in the community and on the clerics responsible for these practices. The religious establishment often tries to turn the attack of the Sufis on its head. Much the way that Sufi leaders find fault with the religious establishment for being too rigid, the establishment finds fault with the way that Sufi leaders present religious teachings, complaining that it is too simplistic. The contest between the Sufis and the religious establishment is also explicitly political because the Islam that most Sufis were rejecting or distancing themselves from the Islam of their rulers. Most Sufi movements emerged as a protest against corrupt rulers (Advantour, 2001).

The path of any Sufism is divided into four stages: “shariah, obeying the Islamic law, tariqah, postulancy, marifah, meditation and perception of God, haqiqah, full attainment of truth”. The people who wish to enter upon the path of Sufism are called murids (which means thirsty), as well as saliks, ahl e dils, mutassavives. They have to work their path up under auspices of their counselors, teachers called as Sheikhs, Murshids, Pirs, Khojas, Ishons, Mavlons, Makhdums who in their turn

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degree of devotion at which one begins to experience the presence of God”.

received permission from their counselors. Thus Islam has a kind of system of succession with Sufis sheikhs as its main elements. The Sufi Sheikhs are counselors whose family line descends to the very source of Islam (Advantour, 2001).

Over the period of its existence, Sufism went through several stages of its development and change, determined by the changes in the socio-economic and political situations, ideological trends, dogmatics, Sufi philosophy and geography of its propagation. Figuratively, the development of Sufism can be divided into several stages.

The early forms of Sufism (pronounced mysticism, asceticism, celibate and reclusion caused a negative attitude of canonical Islam to it. Sufism at the first stage of its existence was declared heresy and it was repugnant for the Sunni clergy up to the 11 century. Gradually approximately from the 11 century, Sufism converted to a more appropriate and tolerant form for all stages of the population to so called "moderate Sufism", a gradual reconciliation of Sunni and Sufi theologies was taking place. From that time Sufism originated spreading broadly causing not only poor servants but also rich landlords to join its fraternity (monastery). Thus Sufi was considered honorable and good style. At the start of the 12 century there formed three large orders in Central Asia the Kubrawiya (in Khorezm), Qadyriya (in Fergana) and Turkic fraternity of Yassawiya founded on the basis of Yusuf al-Hamadani's teachings by Akhmad Yassawy in Turkestan (the south of Kazakhstan). Various Sufi unions tariqah were leading a fight for greater impact on believers, which sometimes took a desperate form.<sup>22</sup>

Sufism was spread initially in such Muslim regions like Kufa, Basra, Baghdad, and Syria. A part of the population dissatisfied with the moral and ethical behavior of the ruling elite and Muslim aristocracy of the Caliphate began to preach an ascetic way of life and to invoke for continuous and constant prayers recitation. In Khurasan (East Iran) and Maverannakhr<sup>23</sup> the first followers of Sufism were known as "wise men" (khukama), in the East provinces of the Caliphate, as well as in Iraq and Syria, they were named "ascetics". Sufism in its initial stage had a simple form, but in the

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<sup>22</sup> Advantour 2016. (2001, june 10). Retrieved jully 10-06-2016, from [www.advantour.com](http://www.advantour.com)

<sup>23</sup> is the ancient name used for the portion of Central Asia corresponding approximately with modern-day Uzbekistan

course of time since the 12<sup>th</sup> century it had been becoming more sophisticated elaborating specific rules and behavior standards. Various Sufi traditions (tariqa or "paths"), named in honor of the shaykhs-foxm & evs, began to take shape. In the Muslim world, the most widespread Sufi orders (tariqa) are the Shoziliyah, Yasaviyah, Naqshbandiyah, Halwatiyah, Kubraviyah, etc. Sufism (tasawwuf) and their growth is one of the key problems in studying Islam which frequently became the object of wide discussions (ASHIROV, 2002).

“Sufism is said to have been originated near a place called Basra located in Iraq. The Muslims located in this region started off this religion as a path to reach the divine. The divine form who is worshiped in Sufism is Prophet Mohammed and all schools of Sufism consider the Prophet as the manifestation of God. This is one reason why Sufi is considered to have branched from Islam. However, ancient Islamic scriptures have no mention of Sufism in them. Some scholars hold the view that Sufism is the evolution of Islam in a more spiritual and mystic direction. Sufism in its earlier stages was recited and meditated from the Quran”(www.iloveindia.com, 2015).<sup>24</sup>

Sufism is a mystical type of Islam that has flourished in the Muslim world for eras. Sufism has to be found a distinctive stamp on the path the religion has been followed in many Arab nations, in parts of Africa, in Turkey, and especially in Central Asia (Olcott, 2007). Like so much else in a spread out global faith such as Islam, the practice of Sufism has varied tremendously from region to region and even within a country or a region at a time. Although each Sufi order (*tariqat*) has its own character, shaped in large part by the teachings of its founder, much of how the Sufis in the order practice the founder’s teachings is shaped by the current generation of Sufi leaders. Proponents and defenders of Sufism concentrate on the spiritual purification that the followers of the Sufi way receive, which is how believers bring themselves to the fulfillment of their faith. Sufism offers a path to awakening and enlightenment a personal connection to God through mystic and ascetic discipline that attracts many Muslims. Non-Muslims, too, are sometimes attracted to the aesthetic

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<sup>24</sup>Sufism Sufism in India,(2015) Principle of Sufism, History of Sufism, Sufi Religion Teachings, Essence of Sufism ,I LOVEindia .com

strain of Sufism, which many see as intellectually distinct from more conventional forms of Islamic practice.

## **Sufi Philosophy**

God is inspecting our every action and knows the innermost recesses of our hearts. When one is conscious of God's ever watchful eye, one cannot but desist from evil actions. It is in this sense that prayer keeps us from indecency and evil. However, only a prayer stimulated by true meaning can yield the desired result. Thus, when one whose heart is filled with the love of God prostrates himself before Him and at that moment has the experience of seeing God face to face, this state of total absorption results in ecstasy. The Sufis strive for and attest to having the experience of seeing God, Whom they call their Beloved One, face to face. There are instances of Sufis falling senseless when possessed by the ecstasy (a trance or trance-like state) of extreme love. The Sufis say that the Prophet and some of his companions were totally absorbed in their prayers every time they prayed and that this complete absorption in prayer is the foundation of tasawwuf (Sufism).

According to the Sufis "this higher level of excellence in worship, which might lead to ecstasy may be achieved through dhikr"<sup>25</sup>. Remember God always so that you may prosper. Believers, be ever mindful of God praise Him morning and evening. The Sufis gave dhikr formal, well defined shape by attaching greater importance to its popular rather than the Quranic meaning. They developed a number of ways for calling out the name of God silently, loudly, and even accompanied by music or the beating of drums as a means of achieving their goal, but rather the spirit of prayer, the attachment to God, and the readiness to surrender one's will to His will by pursuing and reflecting upon the meaning of the divine words. And when spirit is fully observed. The desired spiritual benefit can be achieved from the words of the Qur'an.

## **Sufi Beliefs**

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<sup>25</sup> Dhikr : "remembrance, recollection" and in the Islamic context denotes the act of repeating God's names.

Sufi beliefs are based firmly in orthodox Islam and the text of the Quran, although a few Sufi teachers have strayed too close to monism or pantheism to remain within the orthodox fold. The core principles of Sufism are tawakkul (absolute trust in God) and tawhid (the truth that there is no deity but God). Tawhid is rich in meaning for mystics. "It has been interpreted by some as meaning that nothing truly exists but God or that nature and God are but two aspects of the same reality"(About ReligionFacts.com, 2004).<sup>26</sup>

Part of what characterizes Sufism is its adaptability to various intellectual influences and its absorption of regional cultures. Sufi Islam is practiced in Iran, the Arab world, Central Asia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Morocco, Turkey, and many parts of Europe and the United States. Sufism is also practiced in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Australia.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Sufi Way of Life**

This acceptance of Sufism by the established religious scholars occurred as central Abbasid Caliphate power was waning. Over the course of the 11 and 12 centuries, the decline of the Abbasid Empire weakened the political and religious authority of the scholars. The reach of their rulings lessened contrarily the prestige of Sufi walīs<sup>28</sup> grew. By this time, the designation as wali was recognition of God's grant of authority and spiritual guardianship to the pious, ascetic Sufis. The trouble lay in knowing, given the wide variety of Sufi practices, who was a friend of God. The difficulty was compounded by the concept that God only revealed the identity of the wali to other awliya. One compromise to this doctrine, defined by al Qushayri, lies in God's enabling them to perform miracles or karamat. Additionally, these miracles differ from those of the Prophets by the purpose they serve.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> About ReligionFacts.com. (10 Nov. 2015) Web. Accessed 17 Jul. 2016. [www.religionfacts.com/about](http://www.religionfacts.com/about)  
<sup>27</sup> Missions and Expansion(5/26/2016), Patheos, Religion Library: Sufism, <http://www.patheos.com/Library/Sufism/HistoricalDevelopment/MissionsSpreadChangesRegionaladaptations>

<sup>28</sup> Walī :means custodian, protector, helper, and friend. It can refer to someone who has "[Walayahat](#)" (authority or guardianship) over somebody else.

<sup>29</sup> Swansinger Jacqueline (11/28/2015) World History Connected | Vol. 12 No. 2 |: *Plow for Islam: Central Asia and Sufi Culture* FORUM: Religious Conversion Across Cultures Plow for Islam: Central Asia and Sufi Culture

The diffuse nature of wali authority is the foundation for the development of the function of Sufi sheikhs. Often, sheikhs were strong disciples of the Sufi master who used their understanding of his path (*tariqa*) to teach it. They taught the ways and exercises which the master (the original Sufi mystic) had used to reach God. Over a short course of time, these teaching disciples modified into sheikhs *altarbiya*, translated as a master who raised one or directing sheikh.<sup>30</sup> This alteration of emphasis from becoming a Sufi mystic to behaving in the tradition of the mystic relied on a social shift tied to a stronger degree of loyalty to the teacher and discipline, and obedience to the tenets of the Sufi order.<sup>31</sup> While the Sufi mystic himself may have passed his teachings were continued through his disciples who often founded schools or retreats to teach the precepts of their master, and teach his path to students. These teachers, or sheikhs, held authority through their struggles to attain spiritual mastery and by overcoming their worldly impulses as well as through their close ties to the Sufi master.<sup>32</sup> The sheikhs formed local communities pulled "together by the charisma of the master and the efficacy of his life example as perceived by the followers". Sheikhs, well versed and trained in the ascetic and mystical practices of Sufism, were spiritual guides and public figures connected to the *wali* through a spiritual lineage created by the *tariq* (Swansinger, 2015).

Sheikhs whose roles had been as guides to the *awliya's* path also became religious legal authorities (interpreters of Shari'a law when no *qadi* was available) in their communities. They were guardians, leaders, and heads of spiritual families, prominent figures in public life and wielding great influence. Frequently, the popularity of the sheikhs, the *tariqa* (path), and the number of disciples led to creation of *kanaqhs* or retreats where students and sheikhs lived, prayed, and set up communities to practice their tenets. Sometimes they were supported through charitable funding (*waqf*) from prominent local leaders, or from political rulers, and they were sought after through local and regional belief in their *karamat*. In Nishapur<sup>33</sup>, a primary center of Sufi scholarship, over the course of the tenth century,

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<sup>30</sup>Daphna Ephrat,(2008) *Spiritual Wayfarers, Leaders in Piety: Sufis and the Dissemination of Islam in Medieval Palestine* (Cambridge: Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies), 49.

<sup>31</sup> Abun Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, 59-60

<sup>32</sup>Abun Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, 63-64.

<sup>33</sup> Nishapur or Nishabur is a city in the Khorasan Province, capital of the Nishapur County and former capital of Province Khorasan, in northeastern Iran, situated in a fertile plain at the foot of the Binalud Mountains

the proliferation of Sufi mystics was noted. The growing numbers of Sufis reflect a strong ascetic and pietistic culture, but it also testifies to the growth of master student communities. The teaching of the path, or tariqa, of the mystics, to students in cities away from Baghdad is one of the characteristics of the period. These early communities were usually small and were often led by a disciple of the wali, a sheikh, representing his leadership position in teaching the tariqa of the master. Increasingly, these sheikhs were learned in both a specific school of Sharia law and the tariqa of the wali whose practices they taught. Scholars in this period wrote of the relationship of Sufis to law schools, to religious scholarship and of the states of Sufism so as to introduce and reinforce their legitimacy (Swansinger, 2015). This blending of Sufi practices with legal/scholarly forms acknowledged a role for Sufism in the teaching of Islam. It even encouraged, through the development and acceptance of training in the "Science of Islam" and the development of a literature known as the adab al muridin which set up the proper rules of conduct for those seeking that knowledge during the 11 century.<sup>34</sup>

### **Sufi Practices**

General characteristics of Sufi practices have their foundation in the purity of life, strict obedience to Islamic law and imitation of the Prophet through self-denial, careful introspection and mental struggle. Sufis hope to purify the self from all selfishness, thus attaining Ikhlas (sincerity), absolute purity of intention and act. "Little sleep, little talk, little food" are fundamental and fasting is considered one of the most important preparations for the spiritual life. The mystical experience of the divine is also central to Sufism. Sufis are distinguished from other Muslims by showing great warmth for seeking of Dhawq<sup>35</sup>. Dhawq is a "tasting" that leads to the illumination beyond standard forms of learning. However, the insight gained by such experience is not valid if it contradicts the teachings of the Quran.

The Path, the Sufi way of life is described a tariqah, "path." The path begins with sincere regret and submission to a pir (guide). If accepted by the guide, the seeker becomes a murid (disciple) and is given instructions for asceticism and

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<sup>34</sup> Ephrat, *Spiritual Wayfarers*, 71-73.

<sup>35</sup> Tasting refers to mystical intuition, that is, direct knowledge of invisible realities or of God. In general sense, a synonym for kashf (unveiling) and shuhud (witnessing, contemplation).

meditation. This usually includes sexual abstinence, fasting and poverty. The ultimate goal of the Sufi path is to find the true and fight Holy War against the lower self, which is often represented as a black dog (About ReligionFacts.com, 2004).<sup>36</sup>

Disciple on his way to illumination the mystic will undergo such changing spiritual states (hal) as qabd<sup>37</sup> and bast<sup>38</sup>, constraint and happy spiritual expansion, fear and hope, and longing and intimacy, which are granted by God and change in intensity according to the spiritual station in which the mystic is abiding at the moment. The culmination of the path is marifah (interior knowledge, gnosis) or mahabbah (love), which implies a union of lover and beloved (man and God). The final goal is annihilation (fana), primarily of one's own qualities but sometimes of one's entire personality. This is often accompanied by spiritual ecstasy or "intoxication." After the annihilation of the self and accompanying ecstatic experience, the mystic enters a "second sobriety" in which he reenters the world and continues the "journey of God."

### **Sama and Whirling**

Mystical sessions of music and poetry called 'sama' were introduced in Baghdad in the mid 9 century with the purpose of attaining an ecstatic experience. Narcotics have sometimes been introduced as part of the method, but this is considered a degeneration of the practice (The Ahlul Bayt World Assembly , 2009).<sup>39</sup>

The well known "Whirling Dervishes" are members of the Mevlevi order of Turkish Sufis, based on the teachings of the famous mystic Rumi (d.1273). The practice of spinning around is the group's distinctive form of sama. The whirlers, called semazens, are practicing a form of meditation in which they seek to abandon the self and contemplate God, sometimes achieving an ecstatic state. The Mevlevi sect

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<sup>36</sup>religionfacts.com (March,17, 2015 Short URL [www.religionfacts.com/sufism](http://www.religionfacts.com/sufism) (Sufism) [rlft.co/809](http://rlft.co/809) (<http://rlft.co/809>))

<sup>37</sup>Contraction or compression One of the stages of mystical or spiritual development in Sufism, characterized by feeling of constriction and sadness

<sup>38</sup>Openness, expansion, development, relief, and being freed from spiritual blockage, and as developing inwardly or spiritually to the point that the seeker becomes a means of mercy and embraces all things or beings in existence.

<sup>39</sup>The Ahlul Bayt World Assembly(2009) <http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/sects/sufi.html>

was banned in Turkey by Ataturk in 1925, but performances for tourists are still common throughout the country.<sup>40</sup>

The clothing worn for the ritual and the positions of the body during the spinning is highly symbolic. For instance, the tall camel hair that represents the tomb of the ego, the white cloak represents the ego's length, and the uplifted right hand indicates readiness to receive grace from God.

### **Sufism in Central Asia**

Sufism has remained very much part of the history of the Central Asia. Central Asia is considered to be a center of Sufism. Sufism has played a significant role in the history of Central Asian region. Sufi leaders helped in defining connections between the ruler and the ruled during the period of Timurid rule. Sufis were the source of legitimization for the rulers of the eighteenth century khanates in the region as well as a source of the mobilizing demonstration during the ending decades of Russian colonial rule and throughout the Russian Civil War and the establishing of Soviet rule. Veneration of Sufi graves took on extra importance during the years of Soviet religious oppression, making inevitable the return of Sufism when the revival of Islam received state sanction during the late Soviet years and the first years of independence. Even presently the entrance into the political sphere of a few Sufi figures with wide popular support including Ibrahim Hazrat in Uzbekistan and Ismatullah Sheikh in Kazakhstan would have considerable resonance (Louw, 2007). Finds Central Asia a place of several important brotherhoods where Sufism remained particularly active in the former nomadic areas (Zarcone)<sup>41</sup>. In central Asia, native society preserved its clan structure, such as in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzia and southern part of Uzbekistan (Saidbaev T. S., 1978).<sup>42</sup>

### **Main Lines of Sufi Thought in Sufism**

The two main principles of Sufi thought were:

- a. wahdat-al-shuhud
- b. wahdat-al-wujud

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<sup>40</sup> ibid

<sup>41</sup>Theiry Zarcone( ) *In Sufi Movements, Search for identity and Islamic resurgence*

<sup>42</sup>Saidbaev, T. S. (1978)*Islam I obshchestvo*, Moscow,

## **Wahdat al Shuhud**

This idea means the 'Oneness of Witness,' Al-Hallaj being its main advocate. Union with God is accomplished by God bearing witness to Himself and His secrecy of Unity, in the spiritual heart. "The divine transcendence and its complete Oneness about all creation is the central object of the act of faith. But the meeting with God is brought about by love. This love establishes a dialogue between the heart of a Sufi and God until both, that is the Sufi and God become one" (KHANUM, 2006).

It is well known that the official Islam of the 9 century refused this union of love, this unity of Witness (oneness of a Sufi and God) in the duality of characters. The most eloquent exponent of the concept of '*wahdat al shuhud*' was opposed to '*wahdat al wujud*', he was Ahmad Sirhindi (d.1623) a Naqshbandi Sufi of the Indian subcontinent.

In order to comprehend his notion, one has to maintain in mind the gulf formed between Islam and Sufism by Ibn-Arabi's theories of '*wahdat al wujud*'. Ibn-Arabi saw God's manifestation in every single thing. Thus advocating monism and pantheism. Sirhindi tried to understand Ibn 'Arabi's mysticism but finally came to the conclusion that 'the union with God is only spiritual and not existential (real). God is not and cannot be one with everything'. Thus, Ahmad Sirhindi rejected the pantheism and '*wahdat al wujud*' (unity of Being) of Ibn Arabi in favour of '*wahdat al shuhud*'(unity of Witness).

## **Wahdat al Wujud**

This impression of 'Oneness of Being' came to dominate Sufism after Ibn 'Arabi (13 century). IbnTaimiya (13 century) saw in it the influence of philosophers, especially that of Ibn-Sina (11 century) and denounced it. But one may state that these ideas were also present in the minor works of Al-Ghazali (12 century).

The idea of '*wahdat al wujud*' is, in a way, a feedback of the neo-platonic monism of the Islamic supporters of Greek philosophers to the 'Ash'arite*kalam*'. *Kalam*, or theology, stressed the idea of One God and deprived of the independent survival of created objects. In contradiction with God, said the Ash'arites and also the Sufi believers of the idea of '*wahdat al wujud*', the formed world is not everlasting.

The mystics then came to the final conclusion that the illusion of empirical presence must obliterate itself (*fana`*) in the alone Existence, which remains (*baqa`*), that is, the existence of God (KHANUM, 2006).

### **Sufi Orders in Central Asia**

Four Sufi sects had a significant presence in the region. These are Kubrawiya, Qadriya, Yasawiya, and Kubrawiya. Naqshbandiya movement started in Central Asia, and it is the major order of the Central Asia.

### **Naqshbandiya Silsila**

Khawaja Bahauddin Naqshband' (1317-1389), the originator of the Naqshbandi order, was born at 'Kushk-i-Hinduwan,' a village near Bhukhara. The title 'Naqshband' that he used literally means a painter or an embroiderer. Sufi sects exist in all the Muslim areas of the former Soviet Union, but their chief bastion remains the northern Caucasus especially the Chechen-Ingush Republic and Dagestan, where the Naqshbandiya for the last pair of centuries has been the regular bearer of the resistance to the Tsarists and their Soviet successors (Rashid, 2002)<sup>43</sup>. Muhammad Ibn-e-Bah-ud-Din Naqshband the forefather of the 'Naqshbandiya Tariqa' and is still considered to be the most revered mystical and saint in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Even today his tomb is the most visited place outside Bukhara in Central Asia. Though transformed into an anti-religious museum, it is still used as a place of pilgrimage by believers (Saidbaev T. S., 1978 )<sup>44</sup>.

Naqshbandiya is the most popular order of Central Asia. Reasons for the sweeping success of this Sufi brotherhood are that the Naqshbandiya has an unparalleled ability to adapt to changing social and political conditions (Bennigson A.

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<sup>43</sup>Rashid, A. Jihad (2002), *The rise of militant Islam*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press

<sup>44</sup>Haghyghi, M. (1995) *Islam and Politics in Central Asia*, p: 82, New York: St. Martin Press.

E., 1985). And its adept (practices) are not ascetic. Thus as an individual, the Naqshbandiya adept is required to adjust his social behavior to meet the requirements of everyday life .it is socially flexible (Saidbaev T. S., 1978, p. 82)<sup>45</sup>. This order signifies doctrinal liberalism, in that it excludes fanaticism or radicalism. For this reason, Naqshbandiya has managed to superimpose itself on other brotherhoods, absorbing them without insisting on their elimination.

Naqshbandiya is the most famous Sufi sect with a liberal orientation. Muslim political survival to the Naqshbandiya was largely because of that this sect had institutionalized Sufism and became an integral part of a social, political and cultural life of Central Asia since the fourteenth century (Bennigson A. E., 1985)<sup>46</sup>. This distinguishing feature of Naqshbandiya was that they, unlike other Brotherhood believe in active missionary work and political activism (Rashid, 2002). Many leaders of the revolutions against Tsar and 1898 revolt in Andijan communists were Naqshbandis (Rashid, 2002)<sup>47</sup>. In the twentieth century, Naqshbandi political activism played a major role in influencing Islamic movements in Afghanistan, Chechnya, and the Ferghana Valley.

The Naqshbandiya movement was established near Bukhara by Abd al-Khaliq Ghijduvani in Central Asia. Who lived in Ghijduvan. This movement was associated with Ghijduvan's disciple, Baha ad-Din Naqshband, who came from Kasr-i Hindu adjacent to Bukhara and who was buried just beyond Bukhara in 1389. The shrine over his grave remains an important point of pilgrimage within Central Asia and for Naqshbandiya Followers worldwide (Olcott, 2007).

Naqshbandiya has been the most influential and widespread of the Central Asian Sufi movements. By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, branches of Naqshbandiya had spread to most corners of the Muslim world from Xinjiang in China in the East to North Africa and the Balkans in the west and from Hind Peninsula in the South to the Volga River and Siberia in North. From the 15th through the 19th centuries, the Naqshbandiya Brotherhood had been the dominant Sufi brotherhood throughout the region.

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<sup>45</sup>Saidbaev, T. S. (1978) *Islam I obshchestvo*, p: 210: Moscow,

<sup>46</sup>Bennigson, Alexander and Enders, W. S. Mystics and Commissars(1985) *Sufism in the Soviet Union* :Hurst & Company: Pap Board Printers

<sup>47</sup>Rashid, A. Jihad (2002): *The rise of militant Islam*, p: 27-28, New Haven & London: Yale University Press,

The Naqshbandiya has also been the dominant Sufi brotherhood throughout Central Asian history. It alone managed to reappear in different forms again and again after years of stagnation. It is not unusual then that during the present Sufi revival, Naqshbandiya again has the widespread popular base. Although approximations are imprecise (and hence they vary considerably), a good conservative estimate is that there are nearly 30,000 to 40,000 Naqshbandiya followers in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Only about one-tenth of that number support the Yasawiya and Qadiriyya movements, which are concentrated mostly in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

### **Qadiriya Silsila**

The Qadri sect is named after Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (1077-1166), The Qadriya order emerged in central Asia when Naqshbandi resistance came to an end leaving Muslims disappointed and discouraged. Shaykh Abdul Qadir (1078-1166) was born in the village of Nif, in the district of Jilan in north Iran, south of the Caspian Sea. He was descended from Imam Hasan, the Prophet's grandson. In 1095, at the age of eighteen, he moved to Baghdad, at that time it was the hub of unparalleled intellectual activities and where the reputed Nizamiyyah College, a seminary founded was at its top. However, he did not choose to study in this institution and pursued the studies with some other teachers of Baghdad. Immediately from his early childhood, his honest character had a great impact upon anyone who chanced to meet him.

The Qadriya sect was founded in Baghdad and is probably by prestige and influence, the second most famous of the Sufi orders. As early as the 12 century, this brotherhood was introduced by Arab traders from Baghdad to the Kingdom of Bulghar and to the cities of Turkistan, especially those of the Ferghana Valley (Bennigson A. , 1985).

For the initial fifty years following the Shaykh's death, there was not any formal organization to speak of him. However, the Shaykh's teachings greatly influenced the thinking and manner. Later on, his disciples and followers perpetuated his teachings and attended to their dissemination. The Shaykh ultimately came to be

regarded as a great saint enriched with miraculous powers, and a manifestation of perfection. Shaykh had a highly effective way of encouraging people to distance themselves from an attraction with material things and turn rather to matters of the spirit. Having awoken the spiritual side of their life, he dedicated himself to introducing in them a profound reverence for moral and spiritual values. His religiosity and determination made a great impression on individuals who gathered to his side. He asked his followers to sustain the same strict rule of adherence to all the implications of Islamic Law *Shariah*, as he did himself, for he looked upon the *sharia* as the mainspring of all spiritual progress. Insistence upon this point not only formed a bond between the jurists and the mystics (Sufis) but also assured that there would be a just balance between the varying interpretations of the letter and the spirit of the Qur'an (KHANUM, 2006).

"Qadirya's mystic strivings were designed to meet the challenges of the era. The decline of Muslim political power disrupted the social structure, which subsequently led to the threatening of Muslim morals. Material attraction surpassed spiritual life. In this milieu, Shaykh Abdul Qadir's journey for spiritual upliftment proved so effective that the *Qadri Order's* 110 Sufis adopted Qadri mystic ideals and took it upon themselves to disseminate it into masses. This led to the formation of the *silsila* or the chain of a spiritual order, whose purpose was a large-scale regeneration of the spiritual foundation of society" (KHANUM, 2006).

At first the Qadri teachings were limited to Baghdad and its vicinity, but subsequently, their influence was also felt in Arabia, Morocco, Central Asia, Egypt, Turkestan, and Indian sub continent where people joined the fold in large numbers. But, the social environment and religious background of these regions being very distinct in nature, the order had to solve some problems relating to local conditions (KHANUM, 2006).

Similar to the most Islamic reformers of the Middle Ages, Shaykh Abdul Qadir believed that God sparked his mission and that it was His will that he led people on the path of spirituality. This conviction not only gave strength to his mission but also strengthened his endeavors with a sense of divine inspiration. He looked upon

himself as God's special envoy charged with the ethical and spiritual revitalization of society.

He regarded "showing people the way to God" not only as the early point of all mystic striving but as a legacy of the prophetic mission which it was the responsibility of all Muslims to perpetuate, regardless of situations. He addressed the problem of teaching spirituality.

### **Yasawiya Silsila**

The Yasawiya, an old Sufi order, was founded in southern Kazakhstan in the 12 century. Ahmed Yasawi was the founder of Yasawiya (Bennigson A. , 1984).<sup>48</sup>Yasawiya was a brotherhood of "common Turks," whose custom practices were generally borrowed from their cultural and religious traditions. The movement was founded by Khoja Ahmad Yasawi, who died in 1166 in the city of Turkestan (Kazakhstan).

Yasawi's supporters emphasized the use of mysticism and the need for abstention from worldly pleasures and amusements even higher than the other Sufi groups in the region. Hence, most prominent Sufi figures were historically more focused on their spiritual devotion to God, and they largely insulated themselves from participation in politics and the world of the powerful.

"It was the best known among the Central Asian brotherhoods. Faud-Koprulu termed it as a 'permeable to pre-Islamic beliefs'. Turkish speaking nomads from the people of Steppe were its supporters. Ravil Bukaraev says that Ahmed Yasawi was the first famous Sufi of Turkic origin, forming the Sufi movement of Yasawiya, the Tariqa of wanderers. Though this Tariqa did not achieve much fame in its own right, the much more famous Tariqa of Naqshbandiya is believed to have sourced from the teachings of Ahmed Yasawi" (Alvi, 2006).

As Yasawiya was a Tariqa of wandering dervishes, it had neither any branches nor any strong settlement except near Sheikh's tomb. The spread of Islam amongst the people of Turkistan and the nomads of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan owes to these wandering dervishes. These dervishes kept them restrained to practice the loud Zikr

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<sup>48</sup>Bennigson, A. (2002) *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*, P: 76. Rawalpindi: Pap Board Printers

and they were not interested in mundane affairs. But in the late 1920s, the repression after the defeat of Basmachis resulted in the evolution of two new radical divisions of Yasawiya 'the Laachi' and 'the Hairy Ishans'. Both groups were political in nature and survived today. The followers of the Laachi were farmers of villages while the Hairy Ishans belonged to the towns. The followers of these branches were large in number but for the underground nature of their brotherhood, they couldn't be founded easily (Polonskaya, 1994).<sup>49</sup>

Similar to other brotherhoods, Yasawiya had been under the strict criticism of Soviet sources. They accused the Tariqa of terrorism and political disturbance. Many adepts were tried in Kyrgyzstan for resisting Soviet laws, running private Qur'an schools and places of prayer. The main charge against them, common to all brotherhoods, was to sabotage the Soviet regime and to prepare the foundations of an Islamic theocratic state.

Yasawiya were much loosely or informally structured than any of Central Asia's other sects. Thus, Yasawiya branches relatively quickly faded and, though these branches sometimes revived, the effort at coordinated activity by Yasawiya leaders generally did not last long. One exception was the period of political activity by Yasawiya sheiks in Transoxiana (known as Mawara an-nahr, which is the region between the rivers Amu and Syr) during the 16th century, when the sheikhs' behavior was heavily influenced by the leaders of the traditionally more active Naqshbandiya movement. Even that did not last long, and by the 18th century the Yasawiya Brotherhood had largely disappeared from Central Asia as an organized organization.

### **Kubrawiya Silsila**

The Kubrawiyya sect is one of the Sufi order and ways that claims to trace its immediate spiritual lineage and chain (silsilah) to the Islamic prophet Muhammad, through Ali, Muhammad's cousin, son-in-law. In contrast, most other Sufi paths sketch their lineage through Ali. The Kubrawiya order is a Sufi order ("tariqa") named after its 13th century founder Najmuddin Kubra. The Kubrawiya Sufi order was founded in the 13th century by Sheikh Nadjmeed-Din Kubra in Bukhara in modern Uzbekistan. The Mongols had captured Bukhara in 1221.

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<sup>49</sup>Polonskaya. L, and Melashenko (1994) *A. Islam in Central Asia*, p: 14

An important feature of the Kubrawya order is that all its spiritual leaders were believed to admirers of Shiaism. He has also presented the description of a true Shia and the difference between a nominal Shia while regarding the Sufis to be the true followers of Ali. In Iran the Kubrawya order split into branches after Mir was succeeded by Khwaja-Ishaq-Khatlani. The difference had arisen between the two claimants to successorship of one group which called itself the Nurbakshia group comprising the supporters of Nurbaksh and other the supporters of Barzish Abad.

"After communist revolution, Sufism was left the only shelter for the Muslims of Central Asia. It was quite a natural choice on their part as any person when faces shackles outside; he tries to hide in his inner world. The same happened with the Muslims of Central Asia. They sought refuge in these orders of Sufism". (Bennigson A. a., 1985)<sup>50</sup> During the World War II when Soviet ruler's grip became weak, such orders emerged Kubrawiya was one of them. (Shahpuri, Muslim Ummah Soviet Roos Mein, (Muslim Community in Soviet Russia))<sup>51</sup> Kubrawiya, another mystical brotherhood was founded in the 12 century in Khwarzjam. It was named after Shiekh-Najamuddin-Kabral. This Tariqa practices loud zikr. The Kubrawiya played a significant role in the Islamisation of the nomadic tribes of the Golden Horde. Now, it is the least influential of Central Asian brotherhoods.

Lastly, there are various 'wandering' mystics in Central Asia. Some who are loosely connected to a brotherhood such as the Qalandria, whose spiritual centre is in Samarkand. Others have no affiliation with any brotherhood. Bennigson (1984) calls the later as 'part Muslim clerics (ruhani), part Turco-Mongol Shaman (witch-doctor).'

### **Sufism in Central Asia Today**

Sufism is becoming a spiritual alternative for some devotees, partly because the new ideology of independent nationhood being encouraged by state propaganda organizations is receiving a lukewarm reception. Sufism can now be spread legally which makes it more attractive to the older and middle aged Central Asian believers who are put off by the illegality of Hizbut-Tahrir and that it is at variance with traditional Islamic teachings.

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<sup>50</sup>Bennigson, A. and Enders, W. S. Mystics and Commissars (1985): *Sufism in the Soviet Union*. p: 12.

<sup>51</sup>Shahpuri, A. *Muslim Ummah Soviet Roos Mein, (muslim Community in Soviet Russia)*. p: 133

Sufi groups have spread quickly in numbers and in their geographic reach. Members are recruited to Naqshbandiya groups from all walks of life, regardless of ethnic or religious identity. Although Sufism is mostly a phenomenon among Muslims, Ibrahim Hazrat has some followers in Russia among Russians, Tatars, and Moldovans. Qadiriyya and Yasawiya do not accept non-Muslims. The Naqshbandiya will accept non-Muslims into the order if they first convert to Islam (Olcott, 2007). Usually, all sheiks tell their followers to bring to the brotherhood their wives, sisters, brothers, and other relatives. Many also bring their friends. In this way, recruitment takes place via a family tree.

Almost all taxi drivers on the route between Kokand and Tashkent are murids of Ibrahim Hazrat because they were brought in by one of the elderly drivers. They too, of course, are looking for support and *barakat* of the sheikh. Ibrahim Hazrat took them in, always talked about their problems, and offered advice with emotion and compassion. He sprinkled in talk of Sufism and the “invisible support” of elders (*pillar*) with discussions of everyday life, everyday problems. Ibrahim has said that if a person does well in everyday life, it is because he is supported by the spirits of the Naqshbandiya sheiks and that he (Ibrahim) requests these spirits to aid in the well-being of his *murids* (Olcott, 2007).

Barriers to entry are not formidable for those wishing to become ordinary members of the brotherhood. In more elitist groups, the sheikh selects members only after a rigorous exam (mostly on aspects of the Sharia) and character assessment. Groups led by Naqshbandiya sheiks Ahmad-jon-Makhdum in Shakhrikhan or Odil-khonqori in Andijan require formal guidance and are more thorough and are not based on individual choice, as in other groups. In such groups ordinary people like taxi drivers are not accepted. Such exclusivity reduces the number of such Sufi groups, makes membership more prestigious, and creates (at least in the minds of their leaders) a higher pedestal upon which to place the sheik. Estimates vary, however Ibrahim Hazrat is said to have between twenty thousand and thirty thousand *murids* in Uzbekistan (in the Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand and Ferghana Valley), in the south of Kazakhstan, and in Kyrgyzstan. In all, there are about fifty thousand Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya *murids* in the region (Olcott, 2007).

There has yet to appear among the post Soviet Sufi leaders a sheikh who knows well all the fine points of the path of spiritual perfection (*tariqat*) and the history of his brotherhood. The popular concept of Sufi heritage is limited to semi legendary stories about prominent Sufi figures of the past. The ritual practice consists of simplified practices of the late medieval brotherhoods, complete with the vulgarization of traditional rites. In some cases, we can even speak of the complete dilettantism of some sheiks (especially the Jahriya groups) who have many followers but who are capable of conveying only the simple technicalities of the ritual, namely *zikr*, the "remembrance of the name of God." This does not appear to be a case of trying to adapt to the low level of knowledge among neophytes<sup>52</sup> but of the sheiks' own limited knowledge.

The basis of the Naqshbandiya rituals is "quiet *zikr*," the names of God said silently, without uttering a sound and with deep spiritual concentration. In Jahriya itself a byproduct of Yasawiya and Qadiriya is carried out loudly, accompanied by body movements, and some times by mandatory, collective ritual dances (*raqs*). Although other aspects of the faith may have been forgotten, ancient ritual tradition has not been. The practices of the Kazakh *murids* of Ismatullah Sheikh, which are not hidden from the outside world, have shown the survival of these rituals. The sheik gradually, without pressure, but quite persistently demands fulfillment of the basic instructions of the Sharia (*farz*). This ritual draws on the historical parallel of Ahmad Yasawi and his followers participating in the broad public Islamisation among the people to the north of Mawaraannahr and the Islamisation of the Mongol leaders and tribes (Olcott, 2007).

The majority of the sheiks have their own meeting houses called *khanaqah*. Some are imams of mosques, and those mosques have become recognized as Sufi mosques that perform host to the rituals of the imam's brotherhood. Sufism's revival is currently more of a national phenomenon than a broad regional trend, although some groups, for example, Ibrahim Hazrat's have a regional following in both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. It seems likely, though, that Sufism in Central Asia will remain a national phenomenon because of the absence of ties between separate Sufi groups or even between separate branches of the same brotherhood. The natural competition

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<sup>52</sup> A person who is new to a subject or activity.

among brotherhoods and sub groups also play a role, as does the protection provided by the state in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to the government's favored Sufi groups. The incipient regional reach of a few of the current Sufi figures is a good reason to believe that if a single charismatic and authoritative leaders were to emerge, a large cross national Sufi movement could be developed. Several other Sufi leaders are also growing in influence in Central Asia. They include Ibrahim Hazrat and Ismatullah Sheikh as well as other Uzbek and Tajik sheiks (Olcott, 2007).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Olcott Martha Brill (2007) *Sufism in Central Asia :A Force for Moderation or a Cause of Politicization?* Washington DC : United State Institute of Peace.

## CHAPTER-3

### POLITICAL ROLE OF SUFISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

The importance of Sufism to the lives of the people of Central Asia and to the governments of the region has waxed and waned more than a thousand of years. Sufism, the mystical form of Islam flourished in the whole Muslim world. It has enjoyed a strong revival in Central Asia. Sufism has played a very prominent role in several political movements in Central Asia.

Sufism has been integral in defining the culture, political behavior and economic interaction of Central Asians since its arrival in the seventh century. Hence, its resurgence is neither surprising nor unintelligible. Despite bans on unofficial religious activity, Sufism received widespread commitment at the grassroots level during the Soviet period. Sufism remains an important strand as a calming influence even in the context of violence and terrorism in the name of Islam (Islamia, 2015). Their impact on many parts of the world is so deeply rooted that it forms a significant part of popular religious beliefs and practices.

Different Sufi orders came forward to safeguard Islam and interests of the Muslims. They not only fought for the Muslim cause but also took an active part in the indigenous politics. The history of some Sufi orders has been more characterized by open political confrontation than the history of other orders, but a potentially political agenda is implicit in all Sufi movements. From the eighteenth century onward, Sufi led to protest movements were often found in societies that were confronted with the encroachment of Western ideas or colonialism. Thus, rulers were either frightened by the political charisma posed by Sufis and were eager to go for negotiation with them, depending on the circumstance. Alliances between Sufis and their rulers both secular and religious have also been of varying success (Alvi, 2006)<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> Alvi Dr. Farhat (2006) *The Significant Role of Sufism in Central Asia*, Lahore: University of Sargodha

The Sufi brotherhoods had played a high profile role especially the Naqshbandiya in Central Asian society. It led to the sharp increase in conversion to Islam. It enhances the influence of its leaders. This in turn, contributed to its geographical expansion throughout the Islamic world. In many ways, though, the politicisation of Sufism and the new political role played by prominent Sufi sheikhs also led to the deterioration of the Islamic movement (Hassan, 2008)<sup>55</sup>.

Politicisation introduces a number of new elements which led to the spiritual decay. These politicised orders were created to root out of Islam. As politically influential Sufi dynasties including the lines that followed Khoja Ahrar, Makhdum-i Azamas and Juybari sheikhs an important authority to the Naqshbandi Order and spiritual leaders of the Shai banids in Bukhara. Those whose progenitor was Khoja Islam started to develop close personal ties with the families of ruling dynasties. They ceased being capable of politically independent. Thus, the politicisation of Sufism in Transoxiana led to its becoming a state like structure, like the Central Asian states of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (B.Olcott, 2007). This ensured that the Sufi movements would suffer the same kind of stagnation that characterized the khanates.

With time Naqshbandiya's active social engagement and drive for internal reform ceased to strengthen and expand the brotherhood. This instead became sources of crisis and stagnation of Naqshbandiya's. Even during the lifetime of Khoja Ahrar's his sons competed for the title of the head sheikh. In that struggle each was supported by a different civil ruler, which caused fights within the brotherhood to turn into political crises that led to armed conflicts within the Timurid dynasty. At the same time, the brotherhood was turning away from many of its original basic ethical and spiritual norms and teachings, which diminishes its popularity. Politicisation came at the expense of the emphasis on morality and spirituality that defined early Sufism, and this too served as a source of stagnation of the Naqshbandiya and the other brotherhoods in Central Asia.

In addition, the training of murids had been reduced, meaning that even more of the old traditions fell by the wayside. These changes further weakened the

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<sup>55</sup> Hussein D. Hassan (May 9, 2008) *Islam in Africa* Information Research Specialist Knowledge Services Group :[Congressional Research Services](#)

organizational structure of brotherhoods and promoted their merger with the state. As has been true of so many politicized Islamic religious figures, most pro establishment Sufi leaders, and especially those from Naqshbandiya brotherhood even they had become de facto officials by then, claimed to be the only true defenders of Sharia.

The future role which Sufism will play in Central Asia is dependent on both secular and religious circumstances. Political leaders will require a political vigor that has been lacking in recent decades in order to construct a reasonable balance between Sufis and fundamentalists. Sufism currently poses little threat to the secular ideology of Central Asian states, there is potential for a dangerous backlash if governments openly try to use Sufi ideology as a way to gain support (Olcott, 2007 )<sup>56</sup>.

### **POLITICIZATION OF SUFISM IN CENTRAL ASIA**

All modern Naqshbandiya sheikhs in Central Asia, Pakistan, India, Turkey, Iraq, and elsewhere begin the chain of their spiritual silsilah with Khoja Ahrar. Khoja Ahrar served as a model of a Sufi sheikh who served as a politically influential leader. He set an example for those who followed him. Khoja Ahrar's example is critical. Because he was the ever since powerful Naqshbandiya<sup>57</sup> sheikhs who have felt the imperative of direct political engagement if they wanted to be true to some of the central teachings of their order. For many Muslims in the region, Khoja Ahrar represents a just defender of the poor. A Sufi Robin Hood who was prepared to overthrow any ruler in the name of defending a just Sharia (Olcott, 2007 ).

His tomb located in a village Khwaja-yi Kafshira approximately four kilometers east of Samarkand has always been a popular pilgrimage destination. Even during Soviet imposed atheism, the mosque adjacent to his tomb was never closed because the authorities feared the public out cry that would have resulted from such an action. Today's political establishment in Uzbekistan plays considerable respect to Khoja Ahrar. But the more the Uzbek authorities have learned about Khoja Ahrar's ideas, the more uncomfortable they have become about elevating him as a national hero.

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<sup>56</sup> Olcott Martha Brill (2007) *Sufism in Central Asia :A Force for Moderation or a Cause of Politicization?* Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment

<sup>57</sup> Olcott Martha Brill (2007) *Sufism in Central Asia :A Force for Moderation or a Cause of Politicization?* Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment

Khoja Ahrar's jubilee was in 2004. According to a special resolution of the Uzbekistan Cabinet of Ministers, such Uzbek jubilee celebrations were to include an international conference and be recognized internationally. When a detailed memo on Khoja Ahrar's activities as a political leader, including a complete outline of his political credo, was submitted to the Presidential Council two months before the events were to take place, the jubilee events were postponed twice. Finally, the government decided to limit the jubilee celebrations to a small conference, without foreign experts, in Samarkand at the beginning of December 2004.

Khoja Ahrar's religious justification for politicization of the brotherhood's activity was very clear. "The times have worsened, and therefore, the best deed is to be with the court of the ruler, so that one can help the people and the repressed. One should go to the rulers having raised the religion of the prophet to its limits so that their throne and crown appeared insignificant compared to the eminence of the faith". In Sufi fashion, Khoja Ahrar offers his strong objection in a way that sets up the Sufi leadership to serve as mediators between the people and the authorities (B.Olcott, 2007).

He was a spokesman for a group of clerics who seemed to have enjoyed the wide support of merchants, craftsmen, and other strata of the population. His goal was the realization of the Islamic Sharia doctrine in politics as a much needed antidote to the so called religious model introduced by the Turko-Mongol rulers who were in power after the Chingisid conquest. It was a new and unusual function for a Sufi sheikh (Olcott, 2006).

Khoja Ahrar by putting himself forward as a political leader was in clear opposition to any non Islamic state or legal order. Another important innovation introduced in Naqshbandiya Silsila by Khoja Ahrar was the concept of a single regional leader of the brotherhood (pishva-ye-tariqat). By unifying all small brotherhoods under the control of a single leader Khoja Ahrar created this position. It strengthened the order institutionally and gave it the characteristics of a well organized order and a clearly defined hierarchy. Any attempts at independence on the part of petty sheikhs were severely punished (Bishara, 2006).

## **THE FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCES THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUFISM IN CENTRAL ASIA**

The world of Islam was challenged many times by non-Muslims. According to Gregory T. Massel, Sufi orders were the only effective Muslim response to the infidels of Qara-Khitay and Mongols, particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Again, the only serious and organized resistance against Russian conquerors in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Soviet regime in the 1920s was led by the same Sufi orders (Massel, 1974).

There are number of factors which influence the development of Sufism in Central Asia Firstly, the Soviet experience had a homogenising effect, reducing former nomads and settled peoples alike to the same level of secularisation, the same level of ignorance regarding Islam (Akiner, 1996).

While it is quite likely that the Central Asian states will follow different paths of religious development, the reasons for this are more likely to be rooted in local socio-economic conditions, including the ethnic balance, between immigrants and indigenous Central Asians in a given region, rather than in the supposed degree of orthodoxy that prevailed in the community over a century ago. Secondly, during the Soviet period, the institutional framework of Islam was all but destroyed. Crucially, opportunities for studying the doctrine and the law were so drastically reduced, and so tightly controlled, that the ulama were fatally weakened, in terms both of numbers and of influence. The Sufi orders suffered even more severely, the intended teachings and disciplines of the great masters reduced to a distorted, illiterate echo of the original. Thus not only was the power of Islam as a belief system undermined, but the infrastructure of what is essentially a law-based religion was almost completely demolished (AKINER, 1996).

Thirdly, Central Asia today is no longer the closed society that it once was. It has a very high rate of literacy (virtually 100 per cent) and, compared with the developing world (including most Muslim countries), there are good transport and communication networks and a large number of mass media outlets. This allows ideas to be disseminated quite rapidly, although, equally, it allows for a high degree of state censorship. Nevertheless, whatever level of control might exist, there are many other

sources of information that are functioning relatively freely in most areas (Advantour 2016, 2001)<sup>58</sup> .

Fourthly, the fact that there are now many different Islamic communities in the region, clustered around mission centers some local, some foreign, individual preachers and mosques, madrassahs and other such institutions, has led to a fragmentation of leadership and sources of authority. Thus whereas at the end of the Soviet period there was a high degree of unity amongst Central Asian Muslims, and a general acceptance of the authority of such establishment figures as Mufti Muhammad Sadyk (head of MBCAK) and Kazi Akbar Turajonzade (Tajikistan), there are now, no longer any Muslim leaders who command such respect (AKINER, 1996).

The emergence of Islamic political parties has not helped matters, since many Central Asians still feel that religion and politics should be kept apart. The leaders of such groups are generally regarded as adventurers rather than as sources of spiritual guidance. Few are known by name, let alone by teaching or by the reputation for knowledge and piety, outside their immediate location. Finally, throughout the region attitudes towards Islam are ambivalent.

There is a general acceptance that it is part of traditional culture and must, therefore, have a prominent place in the independent post-Soviet states. Some see it as an important ethical force and hence a means of halting the moral collapse of contemporary society. The recent reports (1994-96) seem to suggest that even in the Ferghana Valley, often considered to be a hot bed of fundamentalism there is a high level of secularisation, apathy over political issues, and nostalgia for the Soviet era (Akiner, 1996).

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<sup>58</sup>Advantour 2016. (2001, june 10). Retrieved jully 10-06-2016, from [www.advantour.com](http://www.advantour.com)  
<http://www.advantour.com>

## **POLITICAL ROLE OF SUFISM DURING TSARIST PERIOD**

Sufism has played a significant role in fighting against Tsars of Russia. Sufis and their different orders are the main sources of religion in Central Asia. It is the common belief that in Sufism mundane activities such as politics, involvement in state business and fighting are not encouraged and avoided. But in Central Asian history Sufism has taken part actively in politics of the region. Different Sufi orders came forward to safeguard Islam at the different period of time the interests of the Muslims. They not only fought for the Muslim cause but also an active part in the indigenous politics.

During the Soviet era when individual sheikhs fell from the favor of ruling dynasties their land and other possessions were confiscated. Thus from the mid eighteenth century onwards their sphere of influence was steadily eroded. By the time of the Russian conquest in the nineteenth century, they had already been largely marginalized heir activities. For the most part circumscribed to the socio and religious activities rather than, as previously, constituting a dominant force in the affairs of state.

Colonial rule led to an extreme simplification of Sufi doctrines and rituals that is from 1918 to 1991. Even in this context, small, unrelated groups of Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya continued to exert influence over local communities, as most rituals carried out by local Muslims were Sufi rituals. But the ability of the Naqshbandiya for asserting political influence over the ruling elite was seriously diminished, as was their ability to lead coordinated political activities.

There were a number of reasons for the Sufi Sheikhs to have a dominant position in the political life of Central Asia. During the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries Sufi Sheikhs were at very dominating position. Firstly, they had a very strong spiritual hold over the citizens and rulers, who were often their personal murids and thus bound by strict obligations of obedience and submission. Secondly, these sheikhs were able to bestow a mystical utterance of a blessing on their chosen candidate and divine protection. Thirdly, through their vertical chains of commitment and their extensive networks of devotees, they were able to mobilise popular support

and thus to reinforce the authority of the civil ruler. Fourthly, their status as holy men gave them immunity in times of war. Consequently, they were often used as envoys and sent to parley with the enemy. In gratitude for their services and good will, rulers would frequently reward the Sufi sheikhs.

Some sheikhs such as Hoja Ahrar became great person. They possessed huge tracts of cultivable land and urban settlements. With the attendant income arising from the dwellings, crafts and trade that were located on such land luxury goods such as costly textiles and robes and vast hoards of silver and gold coins. Many shrines, Madrassahs and other religious foundations attached to the Sufi orders were also given rich vaqf (charitable trusts granted in infinity). Thus both Sufi communities and individual heads of such communities had very great economic power. The position of a particular Sufi dynasty lines were further strengthened by intermarriage with the ruling families. This not only gave them added influence but also ensured that they had a vested interest in protecting the fortunes of the house with which they were associated.

The influence of the Sufi sheikhs on civil affairs waned in proportion to the increase in power and authority of the temporal rulers. This was facilitated by the rise of a new wave of nomad dominated elites in Bukhara, and later Khiva and Kokand, who were strong enough in their own right not to have to rely on the additional support provided by the religious establishment. This change in political status was matched, and hastened, by a decline in the economic power of the Sufis. The new rulers were not as liberal in their gifts and endowments as had been their predecessors.

Followers of Sufis stood against colonial powers to liberate their country. They participated in national politics and it was not on party level but it was on the individual level. The cooperation between IRP, Tajikistan and Qazi Tor Jan Zada (Mufti Azam) as its prime example (Abdul Hamid, 2006). This cooperation lasted till 1997. Sufi orders had been the only effective Muslim response to the infidels of Qara-Khitay and Mongols particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Massel, *The Surrogate Poletarial*, 1974). Again, the only serious and organized resistance against Russian conquerors in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Soviet regime in the

1920s was led by the same Sufi orders. These Sufi orders (tariqa) were called 'Parallel', 'non-Official' or 'Sectarian Islam' by Soviet sources.

Between 1922 and 1928 the institution of waqf lands was first outlawed and then was subjected to formal nationalization procedures. This dealt a serious blow to fading Sufi khanaqas as centers of organizational structure. Sufi khanaqas also called zawiyah were the first to lose their waqf status and were closed down.

## **POLITICAL ROLE OF SUFISM IN CENTRAL ASIA DURING SOVIET RULE**

After being conquered by Bolshevik forces, Soviet Central Asia experienced a flurry of administrative reorganization. In 1918 the Bolsheviks set up the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR), and Bukhara and Khiva also became the part of Soviet Union (Hann, 2008).

Islam in Central Asia during the Soviet period was suppressed by the Bolsheviks. As government considered religion as the opium for people. A major source of Islam in Central Asia was Sufism. In reality, Islam was one of the basic ideological enemies of the Bolsheviks which worked against the spreading of the ideas of Socialism and Communism among the Muslim population of Central Asia. Therefore, the Bolshevik party launched a large scale war against Islam. As a result of this war many religious leaders many Sufi Shaykhs theologians and ordinary believers were suppressed. Thousands of mosques were destroyed or converted into cinema halls, Jails, shopping malls and museums. Muslim religious schools (Madrasaas) were closed down. Thus, the Soviet authorities managed to oust Islam from the ideological field that promoted introducing and spreading the Communistic morals and socialist values in the Muslim society in Central Asia.

Central Asian Muslims often made much of the religious element in the Basmachi resistance to the introduction of Bolshevik rule, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) celebrates the Basmachi movement (1916-34) as a major part of the history of jihad in Central Asia. Religion might have been a key element in stimulating the resistance, but only a few of the military leaders came from Sufi ishans. Most leaders of large numbers of Basmachi troops came from ordinary families. More often, leaders of resistance groups added Amir-al-muminin to their

names, emphasizing that they were marching under the banner of jihad. It was certainly true, though, that the Basmachi fighters enjoyed a great deal of support both moral and financial from Central Asia's religious establishment. But the victory of the Bolsheviks ensured the further deterioration of the Sufi movement in Central Asia, as it was now fully stripped of its economic means of survival (Olcott, 2007 )

However, the Bolsheviks failed to completely eradicate Islam from the consciousness of people, and however paradoxical it may be, it continued to exist in parallel with the socialist values. For example, in Uzbekistan, despite the fierce persecution of Islam and Islamic believers by the Soviet authorities, Islam existed in traditional life of the population and people (except the political elite and local Communist Party members) continued to observe Islamic traditions which were displayed during the funeral ceremonies, wedding rituals, as well as in the persisting existence of Muslim relics and sacred places, etc. Besides, it is necessary to recognize a very important fact that during the epoch of aggressive (militant) atheism the Muslim population of Central Asia thought themselves as adherents of Islam and did not reject it nor forget it.

Soviet policies towards Islam passed through different phases; moreover, they were often not implemented uniformly, much depending on local conditions at any given time. This apparent lack of consistency may be ascribed to the fact that such policies were motivated not solely by the desire to eradicate the religion, but more broadly to secure the triumph of socialism and victory in the class war. Thus it was not simply Islamic beliefs that were under attack but Islam as an entire social system. As Lenin recognised very early on, this was a task that would require skill, patience and flexibility. This was most clearly reflected in the first years of Soviet rule (1917-1925), when pragmatism, more often than not, prevailed over ideology. The two main priorities during this period were to break the power of the religious leaders and to win the loyalty of the masses (AKINER, 1996)<sup>59</sup>. This required a rope walker's sense of balance, since no matter how exploitative and corrupt individual clerics might have

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<sup>59</sup> SHIRIN AKINER (1996) Religion, State & Society, Vo!. 24, Nos. 2/3, *Islam, the State and Ethnicity in Central Asia*

been they were nevertheless important members of the community and as such commanded respect and allegiance<sup>60</sup>.

Under the Soviets, the local languages and cultures were systematized and codified, and their differences clearly demarcated and encouraged. New Cyrillic writing systems were introduced, to break links with Turkey and Iran.

Sufi leaders were able to exert their political and social influence to mobilise popular dissatisfaction even during the period of Russian imperial rule. A small riot, known as the Aftobachi uprising, was organized under the Sufi banner in the Ferghana Valley in 1875-1876. Its leader, Makhtum Aftobachi, came from an impoverished Sufi clan (B.Olcott, 2007).

The khanaqa<sup>61</sup> became a magnet for many who were critical of the Russian colonial authorities and those who served in the local bodies of self administration including qazi. Initially Dukchi Ishan was against any call to immediate action or suggestions that local Russian settlers should be attacked. In fact he initially pressed hard for order, claiming that only universal ghazavat (a form of holy war that is always armed, and has specific preconditions) would change the political situation of sufis in Central Asia. With time, and in the absence of other political outlets, support for Dukchi Ishan grew in other cities and villages of the Ferghana Valley. Dukchi Ishan appointed formal deputies to manage the “affairs of brothers” (yaran). Gradually, in the face of deteriorating economic conditions, in particular, his position regarding ghazavat began to change.

A meeting of murids in Osh district was held in early 1898, in which Dukchi Ishan was announced a successor of (khalifa) Allah’s messenger, with a right to declare ghazavat and with the duty of “decreeing the right conduct and banning reprehensible conduct” (al-amr bi-l-maruf va-n-nahii an al-munkar). Dukchi Ishan changed this document to call himself “khalifa of master Umar ibn al-Khattab (Al-Faruk),” and, like the master, Dukchi Ishan also was intending to “wage justice.” On the basis of this document, Dukchi Ishan made an appeal for ghazavat against Russian

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<sup>60</sup> Z. Babakhanov, (1980) *Islam and the Muslims in the Land of the Soviets* ;Progress,), p. 49.

<sup>61</sup> A khanqah or khaniqah also known as a ribat is a building designed specifically for gatherings of a Sufi brotherhood or tariqa

rule that was sent to elders of Uzbek and Kyrgyz clans and even to several officials in the local government. Although many expressed sympathy with Dukchi Ishan's ideas, most who received the appeal either demanded more time for the preparation of ghazavat or rejected the appeal altogether.

Dukchi Ishan's appeal for ghazavat<sup>62</sup> against Russian rule was circulated about six weeks before the actual attack, but this did not provide enough time to attract broad based support. An attack nonetheless took place, making use of a local population that had been provided with strong religious incentives for the planned actions.

This action reflected their aspiration to reconstitute an Islamic state in place of the Kokand khanate that had been defeated by the Russians in 1876. On the other hand, it demonstrated that the notions (based on the laws of the steppe) of their right to a legally designated Khans were still strong for those who took inspiration from Dukchi Ishan.

Dukchi Ishan personally took part in attacks on the Russian army barracks in Andijan. This uprising in Andijan, because it was led by a Naqshbandiya sheikh, was the closest that Central Asia came to the Sufi inspired ferment in Kashgar and in the North Caucasus. Dukchi Ishan's uprising quickly failed, and its organizers, including Dukchi Ishan, tried to flee to Kashgar..

The authorities then gathered up the library of Dukchi Ishan's khanaqa. These manuscripts and lithographic editions, approximately 300 volumes in all, eventually made their way to the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, which has given contemporary scholars access to them. Thus, scholars have been able to learn about the level of religious knowledge in the Naqshbandiya of Central Asia in the late colonial period. Most of the books are literary works on fiqh, books of the madrassa, and Sufi hagiography<sup>63</sup>. This prompted Dukchi Ishan to explain to his followers, who were not aware of elementary requirements of the

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<sup>62</sup> holy war in which Murid is a follower of a Shaykh

<sup>63</sup> Biography of a saint or highly developed spiritual being in any of the world's spiritual traditions

Sharia, the basics of rituals (including ablution, prayers, and fasting) in order to reconcile non-Muslim.

But there is no question about the political nature of Dukchi Ishan's message. The community around him consisted mostly of peasants who had been victimized by the Tars migration policy as Russians arrived and took over much of the peasant's land. It made sense that the local peasantry would use the Sufi call to defend Sharia to seek religious recourse and protection against the Russians. The community established around Dukchi Ishan can be described as a Sufi community only in the sense that it reflected the major transformations that had occurred in Sufism, especially in the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya movement. This change drove society in only one direction that is turning Sharia into the cornerstone of Sufism and making Sharia the only law that pervaded.

Sufism provided anti colonial movements with a formal organizational structure, formed over Sufism's centuries-long existence and based on the absolute submission of a disciple to his teacher (murid to murshid). But, in Central Asia during the Russian colonial period, this relationship between religion and social protest led to an outcome that was antithetical to Dukchi Ishan's<sup>64</sup> aspirations for spreading Sufism among Muslims. Instead, the Naqshbandiya's reaction to Russian colonization led to Sharia being discounted, Muslims' rights limited, and the faith weakened.

After the suppression of the uprising led by Dukchi Ishan, the Russian Government treated Sufism with extreme suspicion. The Russians were afraid of new uprisings under Sufi banners and so tried to further weaken Sufi groups economically, which they were able to do largely through reviewing the status of waqf, tax-exempt real estate that belonged to religious institutions and individuals. Beginning in the late 1860s with the introduction of a formal colonial administration, the institution of waqf land began to be scrutinized and restricted, and the clerical establishment was stripped of the right to accumulate new land.

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<sup>64</sup> Muhammad Ali Madali was also known as *Dukchi Ishan* was an ishan of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, who led an 1898 revolt

Over time, the status of the existing vaqf lands began to be scrutinized as well. Russian officials undertook a review of vaqf and introduced changes that deprived almost all Sufi khanaqas of their real estate. Prominent Sufi leaders also lost the clerical status assigned to their own property. Between 1900 and 1902, even Khoja Ahrar's descendants in Samarkand were stripped of the vaqf status of their various properties. Vaqf land had included property deeded to religious orders by their followers, both as gifts and as in-kind-payment of zakat (taxes), as well as the real estate on which mosques, schools, and other religious buildings were situated. As a result, many religious orders held agricultural lands equal in size to those of large individual landowners, but, unlike the landowners, their property and the income it produced was tax exempted.

Thus by taxation the Russians tried to accelerate the further disintegration of Sufi groups and the economic weakening of its institutions and figures of authority. The imperial coffers, of course, benefited through the accumulation of lands that could be sold. On the eve of the Russian Revolution, Sufism was no longer a united and structurally solid movement in Central Asia. This was true even in the emirate of Bukhara and the khanate of Khiva, protectorates not directly administered by the Russians.

Despite Russian policies, a kind of religious aristocracy did remain in Central Asia. Most local Sufi figures of authority of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were descendants of Sufi family clans. In the Ferghana Valley, they were descendants of Makhdum-i Azam in Samarkand and Bukhara, of Khoja Ahrar or the Juybari sheikhs. Descendants of these families and clans were and still are called khoja, khoja-zadeh, or ishans. They were and still are considered heirs of their ancestors for their blessing. They were privately tutored usually in their relative's homes and were educated in Sharia studies (Quran, hadith, dogma, fiqh). Members of these clans, known as ak suyak (white bone), only marry members of other high-ranking families.

During Soviet times, they played a significant role in the preservation of Islam and Islamic traditions and rituals. But they did not reach out beyond their immediate narrow circles because of self preservation was viewed as more important than trying to spread the Sufi way.

## DIFFERENT SUFI ORDERS AND THEIR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENTS

The Qadriya order of Sufism in Central Asia emerged in the seventh decade of the 19th century when Naqshbandi resistance came to an end leaving Muslims disappointed and discouraged. Russian forces crossed all the limits to crush the Muslims after they occupied the area. That is why all the affected people joined Qadriya order to seek spiritual enlightenment.

As the continuous wars of almost half a century, affected the souls of the people badly. So this order proved a fresh air and became famous. But shortly, the government turned against Qadriya. The Russian wanted to crush every form of Muslims opposition which could create an impressive role in some type of organization, no matter how weak and harmless the form was. For this reason, when Qadriya started “Qwali” and “Urs”, the Russian forces, at one occasion, opened fire at the procession and hundreds of people were killed at the spot (Shahpuri, 1985, pp. 131-32).<sup>65</sup>

The Kubrawiya brotherhood which was founded by Najm ad-Din al-Kubra. He was killed defending his home town of Urgench, the capital of Khorezm, while it was under attack by the Mongols. A number of Kubrawiya leader left distinctive marks on the political and economic history of the region. One was Sheikh Sayfad Din Baharzi of Bukhara, who died in 1263 (Shahpuri, 1985)<sup>66</sup>.

He was a well known and much respected figure of the period just after the Mongol conquest. A disciple of Najm ad-Din al-Kubra, he remained in Bukhara after it was ravaged by the Mongols. Baharzi played a key role in the economic revival of the city and used his and others restored economic fortunes to fund the city’s spiritual revival, including finding funds for the building of new madrassa. Moreover, Baharzi reached out to the local Chingisid (Mongol) governors, and his surviving correspondence with them records his efforts to appease them and to avoid other attacks on the city and the vicinity. (Shahpuri, *Muslim Ummah Soviet Roos Mein*,

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<sup>65</sup> Shahpuri, A. (P: 131-32 ) *Muslim Ummah Soviet Roos Mein*, (Muslim Community in Soviet Russia).

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*

1985)<sup>67</sup>. He was a well known and much respected figure of the period just after the Mongol conquest.

The Kubrawiya silsila of the Central Asian region remained an important force in the region what is now called western Uzbekistan and eastern Turkmenistan until the seventeenth century by which time its structural cohesion (the linkage among religious doctrine, economic power, and political support) was almost fatally weakened. By the nineteenth century the Kubrawiya movement had almost completely disappeared, but by then most of its teachings and many of its rituals had been adopted by other Sufi groups in the region.

By contrast, the Yasawiya was a brotherhood of “common Turks,” whose ritual practices were often borrowed from their cultural and religious traditions. The movement was founded by Khoja Ahmad Yasawi, who died in 1166 in the city of Turkestan (Kazakhstan). Construction of a massive mausoleum over his grave was begun, and it achieved its state of near completion during the reign of Timur. The shrine was a site of strong spiritual and historic importance during the period of the Kazakh khanate, especially for the khans of the Middle Horde, because burial was viewed as interment in sacred ground.

As a result, the Yasawiya were much more loosely or informally structured than some of Central Asia’s other orders. Even that did not last long, and by the eighteenth century the Yasawiya brotherhood had largely disappeared from Central Asia as an organized force. Individual followers, including some who received recognition as sheikhs, were able to continue to make the Yasawiya religious tradition a continuous one up through the end of the Soviet period.

## **REVIVAL OF SUFISM AFTER INDEPENDENCE POST SOVIET PERIOD**

According to Bennigson and Enders (1985), Sufi brotherhoods played a major role in the history of the area by protecting the Muslims against the assault of the infidels and influencing some infidels by their preaching. As a result, Islam became deeply rooted among the northern sedentary Turks, Tatars, Bashkirs, Kazakh and Kirghiz nomads. It is therefore, rightly said that from twelve century, the history of

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<sup>67</sup> ibid

Central Asia is influenced by the activities of Sufi brotherhood (Bennigson A. a., 1985, p. 32).<sup>68</sup>

There were four Sufi brotherhoods active in the territories of Central Asia. These were Naqshbandia (the most wide spread order of Central Asia), Qadiriya, Yasawiya and Kubrawiya. The strongholds of Sufism are the Farghana valley, Daghestan, and northern Azerbaijan (Sheikh, 1992). The real revival of Sufism in Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan, was prompted by Gorbachev's reforms. The crisis of Communist ideology had become visible long before, however, at the end of the 1970s. Gorbachev's reforms were the beginning of the revival of people's religious consciousness as part of a search for an alternative ideology (Bishara, 2006).

This kind of folk Sufism had long been present in Central Asia, making it easy for the community to fall back on when the religious hierarchy was effectively decapitated by Soviet policies. Enough of a hierarchical infrastructure remained in Central Asia to create the grounds for a rebirth of a more traditional style of Sufism, in the open, with Sufi sheikhs attracting supporters and students and even seeking to build their own khanaqas. Moreover this revival provides a challenge for the government and religious hierarchy alike. The government is attracted to what many see as the lesser risk of politicization of Sufism, and the religious hierarchy is unhappy with the idea of religious competition.

Not only were most Central Asians free to travel to Islam's holy cities, but now foreign pilgrims could freely travel to Central Asia's religious sites and reach out to their coreligionists (B.Olcott, 2007).

### **WILL THE SUFI REVIVAL BECOME POLITICIZED?**

The current Sufi revival, which some have dubbed neo-Sufism, has become not only a way of life for its members but also an ideology based on faith, which creates a potential for politicization. This is especially true because supporters of a figure like Ibrahim Hazrat come to him for spiritual mediation of problems that originate in their social or material realms. Sufism has a strong potential in all the countries of the region. But, so far, the growth of the brotherhoods has been in

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<sup>68</sup> Bennigson, A. and Enders, W. S (1985) *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union*. p : 31. London: C. Hurst and Co.

quantity, not quality, at least as judged by the caliber of published works and from my conversations with informants who have interviewed these sheikhs. The faster the spiritual potential is restored, the greater the chances that the intelligentsia will join Sufism. This, in turn, will increase the intellectual potential of Sufism. (Olcott, 2007 )

The Sufi orders especially Naqshbandis assumed the leading role in the intellectual renaissance of the late nineteenth century. Many Naqshbandis were in forefront of the modernist liberal Jadid reform movement. Many leaders of Basmachi movement in Central Asia were all Naqshbandi Murshids or Murids. (Bennigson A. a., 1985)<sup>69</sup> Naqshbandiya is the most popular of all the Sufi orders as it follows the religious matters strictly but doesn't go for the excesses of other orders. This order is well organized and perfect whose aim is to support and dominate the religion. (P. Bearman, 1989)<sup>70</sup>

The re awakening of historical memory in Naqshbandiya can become a significant factor in politicization, at least in stimulating it. This, in turn, could lead to the unification of interests with the representatives of political Islam, for both the Sufis and the conservatives, who for a time being can forget their general hostility to Sufism that largely centers around the often low level of religious learning of Sufi sheikhs and their tolerance of rituals not based on Sharia. None of this is inevitable. Sufism possibly also could serve as a counterbalance to radical Islam. But efforts have been made to openly try to use Sufism are likely to cause a backlash, especially if the state tries to encourage a uniform viewpoint among clerics.

Indeed, in Central Asia, Islamic revival has been primarily an indigenous movement. The doctrines of political Islam developed on their own in Central Asia, within the very heart of the Soviet system. It was the Russian repression of reformist Islamic leaders that led to the rise of fundamentalist Islam in the region during the Soviet period (PEYROUSE, 2007).

The direction that Sufism will select for itself will depend on the behavior of the second and may be third generations of Sufi leaders and the choices made by its membership. Should secular intelligentsia become more attracted to Sufism and seek

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<sup>69</sup> Bennigson, A. and Enders, W. S. (1985), *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, p:21

<sup>70</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam* Second Edition (1955-2005) Edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs p: 436-37. Vol:22, 1989

membership in the Sufi brotherhoods in Uzbekistan, the whole shape of the movement would change quickly. They would likely rise quickly into the elite circles of the brotherhood, with the prospect of taking over leadership. This could lead to the politicization of such groups because the political ambitions of the intelligentsia remain unfulfilled in the absence of civil freedoms. Sufi movements played this role earlier in the Timurid and post-Timurid period. In almost every state in Central Asia, the Sufi spiritual heritage has become a component of the quickly created post-Soviet national ideologies. These new states, however, have not found a way to meaningfully integrate the legacy of Sufism into any sort of coherent national idea; instead, the states have inadvertently legitimized the position of Sufi groups.

Thus Sufism poses little threat of destabilizing the secular ideology of the state. Much depends on the policy of the state. Currently it is not Sufis but neo-Islamists who have penetrated in the secular state structures. Sufis are today's safeguard, but circumstances could turn the younger generation of Sufi leaders into tomorrow's enemies.

## Chapter-4

### Socio-cultural and Economic role of Sufism in Central Asia

Religion is considered as apart of the culture. So far as Sufism is concerned It is the part of the Islam which is the key element of the central Asia Society. Sufism permitted the incorporation of local customs to create individualized insights into Islam that were nevertheless acceptable to the orthodoxy by dint of their incorporation of the major threads of Islamic law. The varied paths of Islam, followed by pious individuals, led to the gradual supremacy of Muslim faith in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and other Central Asian lands, consequently facilitating the conversion of Mongol and Turkic conquerors. Their conversions cemented the establishment of Islam in the region, the greatest and most enduring popular accomplishment of the Sufis. Sufism's historical reputation is, as a converting force of Islam, especially in Central Asia (Swansinger, 2015).<sup>71</sup>

In contrast to European missionaries sent as emissaries of a king, or of a religious leader, Sufism arrives through a pietistic exemplary, who teaches, lives in and aids the community, and finally becomes the protector, negotiator, and a voice of the people prior to the formal application of institutional religion. That last step is often brought about by the conversion of the military conqueror, who then promotes the public rites and rituals of Islam in his new territory. The conversion becomes both a religious choice and a social political decision to secure the loyalty of the conquered people, but it is not violent, nor contested. Sufism offers a gradual adaptation to the Muslim life (Shah, 1971).

The 'shrine culture' that still thrives along with Sufism, continue to play an important spiritual and economic role. Shrine complexes throughout the Islamic world may serve as, especially in rural areas, localized, communally run entities to which other religious institutions such as mosques, etc. are often attached. Pilgrimage to the sites brings with it then an impetus for religious communication and many times

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<sup>71</sup> Jacqueline Swansinger (2011) *Forum: Religious Conversion Across Cultures Plow for Islam: Central Asia and Sufi Culture*, Upper Saddle River: NJ Pearson Publication

social and economic exchange (McChesney 1991). Furthermore, the specific local nature of the site acts to contribute to the creation or at least definition of communal identity and its concomitant boundaries; in Turkmenistan, the results of these often ongoing processes may be observed today.<sup>72</sup>

### **Socio-Cultural role of Sufism**

From time immemorial, the steppes and deserts that flanked the central oasis belt of Central Asia to the north (modern Kazakhstan) and the south (modern Turkmenistan), and the lower ranges of the mountains in the north-east (modern Kyrgyzstan), had been the domain of nomadic pastoralists. By the sixth century AD (or possibly earlier) these were predominantly Turkic-speaking tribes. Like the Mongols, they were shamanists, with strong animist beliefs. At the centre of their religious world was the cult of the sky god (Tengri); the sun, moon, stars, thunder and lightning were also revered as manifestations of this central divinity. Earth, water and fire were likewise venerated. Certain sites (e.g. groves, springs, rocks and cliff faces) were regarded as sacred places. The spirits of the dead were believed to have power over the living (A.K, 2015).

They were therefore treated with respect, and graves were marked and tended. Shamans mediated between this world and the supernatural world. They were credited with magical powers and were believed to have gifts of healing and prophecy. Islam took far longer to influence these peoples than it did the sedentary population of the oasis belt. This was partly owing to the nature of the nomadic way of life, which precluded the establishment of fixed, centrally located institutions; partly, too, to the enormous distances involved and the difficult terrain (Pathes, 2015).

The decisive role in the conversion of the nomads was played by Sufi missionaries who travelled from one community to another spreading the new faith. The islamisation of the nomadic regions closest to the oasis belt to the north and the south was probably completed by the mid-tenth century, albeit superficially. The leaders (khan) of the nomad tribes were the strongest supporters of the new religion.

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<sup>72</sup> Shrine pilgrimage in turkmenistan as a means to understand islam among the Turkmen By david tyson (no.1, 1997)

They generally had Muslim teachers and scribes in their retinue. Eventually, they began to send their sons to study in the madrassahs of Transoxiana. The outlying regions, however, were scarcely affected by Islam until some time later (Voll, 2008).

The faith probably did not penetrate the mountains of the north-east (modern Kyrgyzstan) much before the eighteenth century, when the region came under control of the khans of Kokand. The Pamiris had limited contact with the neighbouring regions, although they were frequently under the nominal suzerainty of Darwaz or Kunduz. Most of the mountain-dwellers were converted to the Ismaili sect of Shia Islam, which spread northwards from centres in Afghanistan and India from the late eleventh century onwards. A few groups, however, adopted Sunni Islam. Until the establishment of Soviet rule in the twentieth century the Pamiris were almost entirely isolated from the Muslim communities of the Central Asian lowlands, from the nomads as well as the sedentary population.

### **Sufism and Ishanism**

Sufism, the mystical aspect of Islam, began to penetrate Central Asia in the immediate aftermath of the Arab invasion. The first centre appeared in Balkh and Nishapur in the eighth to ninth centuries. Later, Merv, Bukhara, Khwarezm and other cities in Transoxiana became bastions of Sufism. The early adepts were disciples of the Baghdad school of mystics. Indigenous Central Asian orders began to appear towards the end of the twelfth century.

The term Ishanism is sometimes used to describe Central Asian Sufism in general, as distinct from other forms of Sufism, but sometimes, also, to distinguish between the major orders described above and the largely autonomous, local networks of mystics whose activities were mainly associated with popular i.e. folk and lay religion. To add to the confusion the term 'Ishan' (lit. 'they') has traditionally been used in Central Asia as an honorific for any revered religious teacher. By the early nineteenth century this resulted in the proliferation of local ishans, each of whom, in effect, established his own 'tariqa', with a personal, circle of devotees.<sup>73</sup> The

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<sup>73</sup> T. Saidbayev (1984) *Islam i obshchestvo* (Nauka, Moscow, p. 79).

phenomenon was most widespread in rural areas, where every village or nomad community sought to secure the presence of an Ishan of their own (Hatcher, Uzbekistan).

Allocations of free land and water were set aside for this purpose.<sup>74</sup> Often, ishans would have charge of a particular shrine or holy place, which gave them, added legitimacy and authority. The fact that, they generally had a medium of education which helped to enhance their understanding amongst their neighbours, most of whom were illiterate. The duties of an Ishan included a variety of social as well as quasi religious, quasi magical functions, they dispensed protective amulets and healing potions, gave counsel and comfort, and conducted prayers, rituals and ceremonial invocations for divine assistance and protection. There was a strong dynastic element in Ishanism. In several areas there existed whole clans of 'holy' families; strictly endogamous, they traced their lineage (not necessarily reliably) back to Arab forebears.<sup>75</sup>

#### **The Sufi Movement had twofold aims:**

1. To make their own spiritual progress and
2. To serve the mankind.

Sufism, which started as a reformist movement, laid emphasis on free thinking, liberal ideas and toleration. They believed in the equality of all human beings and brotherhood of man. Their concept of universal brotherhood and the humanitarian ideas of the Sufi saints attracted the other states and it also travelled to different nations in one form or another. The liberal minded Sufis were, therefore, welcomed everywhere. The Sufi movement proved very helpful in bridging the gap between the followers of the different religions and in bringing them together (Deweese, 1995).

The history of Central Asia has been determined primarily by the area's climate and geography. The aridity of the region makes agriculture difficult, and its

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The Hungarian orientalist and traveler (1868) A. Vambery, who visited the region in the second half of the nineteenth century, described ishans as 'secular priests' (Sketches of Central Asia (Allen and Co., London,)), p. 10.

<sup>74</sup> 15 S. Demidov, *Sufizm v Turkmenii* (1978), *Ylym, Ashkhabad*, pp. 110-20.

<sup>75</sup> S. Demidov, *Turkmenskiye ovlyady* (1976) *Ylym, Ashkhabad*.

distance from the sea cut it off from much trade. Thus, few major cities developed in the region. The Nomadic population of the steppe dominated the area for millennia. Relations between the steppe nomads and the settled people in and around Central Asia were marked by conflict. The nomadic lifestyle was well suited to warfare, and the steppe horse riders became some of the most militarily potent people in the world, due to the devastating techniques and ability of their horse archers.<sup>76</sup> Periodically, tribal leaders or changing conditions would organize several tribes into a single military force, which would then often launch campaigns of conquest, especially into more civilized areas. A few of these types of tribal coalitions included the Huns invasion of Europe, various Turkic migrations into Transoxiana, the Wu Hu attacks on China and most notably the Mongol conquest of much of Eurasia.

Scattered nomadic groups maintained herds of sheep, goats, horses, and camels, and conducted annual migrations to find new pastures (a practice known as transhumance). The people lived in yurts (or gers) tents made of hides and wood that could be disassembled and transported. Each group had several yurts, each accommodating about five people. Such kind of nomadic lifestyle and asceticism has been incorporated in the teachings of different Sufi sects. So adoption of Sufism and its amalgamation is very easy among Central Asian society (Trimingham, 1971).

After the first century BC, these cities became home to the traders of the Silk Road and grew wealthy from this trade. The steppe nomads were dependent on these settled people for a wide array of goods that were impossible for transient populations to produce. The nomads traded for these when they could, but because they generally did not produce goods of interest to sedentary people, the popular alternative was to carry out raids (Schimmel, 1975).

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<sup>76</sup> O'Connell, Robert L (2002) *Soul of the Sword*. page 51. New York :The Free Press

## **Sufi practices**

There are different Sufi practices which are performed to engage one with God that form a part of this religion these are (Khanam, 2001).

**Dhikr:** Dhikr is basically about remembering God for all Sufis. According to Islam, one who engages in Dhikr has the awareness of God. It basically includes chanting of God's name and reciting sections of the Quran. It has similarities with the Jewish Merkavah practice of meditation used to attain a higher level of consciousness. This can be done through singing, dance, meditative music, swirling, etc. that finally leads to a trance.

**Hadhra:** The Hadhra basically consists of various forms of Dhikr, songs and dances that are used to appeal God and Angels. The word Hadhra is Arabic and it means "Presence".

**Qawwali:** In Sufism, Qawwali is the devotional form of music, which is common in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran, etc. The Qawwali is known for its worldly appeal and transcends all bounds and limitations of countries and different regions. Some of the modern day masters of Qawwali are Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Sabri Brothers.

**Sama:** Sama is an Arabic word which means listening. In Sufis, the holy ritual of whirling dance is known as Sama. It is basically an act of devotion that takes a person to a higher level of consciousness. The right kind of music invokes the right kind of emotion which is elated when one does the whirl dance. This helps in the process of contemplating the divine force.

**Khalwa:** Khalwa basically refers to a kind of retreat that a person can experience under the guidance of a Sufi teacher. There is a belief in Sufism that all prophets must have retreated into seclusion at some point of time in order to derive inspiration and divine power. Thus, the Sufis practice retreat in order to concentrate on the divinity of the Almighty.

## **SOCIAL BASE OF CENTRAL ASIAN SUFISM**

The shrine complex has long been prominent on the Islamic landscape and its significance has been notable. With few exceptions, however, specialists have given little attention to shrine centered religious activity in the context of Central Asia as compared to other Sufi shrines in other countries. Islamic practice coupled with knowledge of religious behavior in the region from a historical perspective provides ample evidence that shrines have long been focal points of Islam among the Turkmen.

The Origins of Islam among the Turkmen and the "Holy Tribes" Recent research into the Islamization of parts of the former Soviet Union (DeWeese, 1994 and forthcoming) provides useful paradigms for understanding how conversion, communal identity, and saint status may be closely linked concepts. Which are critical to the origins and development of shrines among the Turkmen. One aspect of this paradigm suggests that Muslim "holy men" (Sufi shaykhs) emerged as key players in conversion due in part to their knowledge of Inner Asian pre-Islamic religious traditions and their ability to convey Islam's power and meaning in ways understandable, recognizable, and meaningful to local populations. The conversion of these communities to Islam, as stressed in subsequent oral conversion narratives, was often acknowledged as the genesis of the community itself -- its re-formation or re-definition in Islamic terms. The prominence of ancestor worship in Turkmen religious traditions apparently provided fertile soil for Islamic conversion and converter to take on indigenous "religious" meaning. One of the most visible indicators of this is the status of tribal or communal progenitor often ascribed to figures believed to be Islamicizers among the Turkmen. The burial sites of these Muslim founding fathers became then a focal point of veneration and were accompanied by a sort of "Muslim shamanism".

Ancestral spirits came to be identified with the companions of the saint progenitor and the burial sites (real or imagined) took on the qualities of shrines where vital concerns (both spiritual and otherwise) could be addressed. These shrines thus emerged not only as sites where sacred power was localized but as nexus points where Islam and the traditions of pre-Islamic times joined and developed. Here local communities dealt with Islam and accepted it as their own (Tyson, 1997).

The holy sites became part and parcel of daily life, accessible to all members of the community. Besides veneration sites of ancestral Islamicisers, communities in Central Asia adopted saints with other qualifications. A variety of personages considered to be having spiritual, intellectual, or physical power acquired saintly status. Thus the purported burial sites of, or places otherwise connected with, stock Islamic saints like Ali, Solomon, etc.

Grave of Local rulers, learned scholars, warriors, as well as pre Islamic figures have become shrines. As with the progenitor ancestor saint, the communities which appropriated these well known personages often considered them to be exclusively "theirs" even though they may have acknowledged their having a greater significance outside their community. This exclusively again was due the saint's purported activity in a certain locale or community and more often than not his role in the founding or sustaining of that community.

The Literature on the subject shows that shrine complexes throughout the Islamic world may serve as, especially in rural areas, localized, communally run entities to which other religious institutions such as mosques, etc. are often attached. Pilgrimage to the sites brings with it then an impetus for religious communication and many times social and economic exchange (McChesney 1991). Furthermore, the specific local nature of the site acts to contribute to the creation or at least definition of communal identity and its concomitant boundaries in Turkmenistan, the results of these often ongoing processes may be observed today. Numerous agents have molded and influenced the development of shrine based religious activity in the Central Asian states of the former USSR (Tyson, 1997).

Russian colonial and then Soviet rule have been the most foreign and overtly powerful forces to confront Central Asian society, there were and are several important characteristics inherent in the Central Asian, and more specifically, Turkmen tradition that have made shrine pilgrimage in Turkmenistan. An initial but enduring characteristic evident in Turkmen shrine activity has been the mark left by the pre-Islamic traditions. Including ancestor worship, while there are other rituals, customs, and traits connected with Turkmen shrines that can be traced back to a host of other pre Islamic traditions. It is the legacy of ancestor veneration which seems to underlie the most fundamental and critical aspects of the Turkmen tradition. It is also

this tradition which provides the most noticeable and perhaps most relevant links with the past.

The Turkmen possess one of the most well defined tribal structures in Central Asia. While they do claim a mythical ancestor, Oghuz Khan, who serves as the progenitor of the majority of existing Turkmen tribes, Turkmen (tribal) history is replete with intertribal enmity and instances of non Turkmen tribes becoming part of the larger tribal structure. Although the advent of Soviet power did much to mitigate the exclusivity of tribal identity, it continues to manifest itself and be relevant in Turkmenistan, especially in rural areas. Within the Turkmen tribal structure, there are a number of tribes and groups that do not trace their genealogy back to Oghuz Khan and were labeled by pre-Soviet era (mostly Russian).

These include tribes and lineages appearing to have their ethnic origins among either ancient local Iranian peoples or Turkic groups believed to pre date the coming of the Oghuz. The majority of these communities have long inhabited compact areas on the desert fringe either along the Amu-darya River or in and along the Kopetdag Mountains. Studies show that these groups have also come down through the centuries as sedentary agriculturists and did not engage in nomadic stock breeding like other more well-known and larger Turkmen tribes (Pathes, 2015). Another type of "non-Turkmen" lineage group, labeled by Soviet scholars as "holy groups" or "honor groups," are known by the Turkmen designation *owlat*. Turkmen tradition generally recognizes six *owlat* groups in the following order according to perceived holiness and power: Khoja, Seyit, Shikh, Magtim, Ata, and Müjewür<sup>77</sup>. All six groups trace their lineage to one of three of the first four caliphs of Islam (and by extension to Prophet Muhammad).

Genealogical history demonstrates invariably that individual Sufi figures, the majority of whom lived anywhere from the fourteenth to seventeenth century, are noted as links in the groups genealogical structures (Demidov 1976; Basilov 1975).

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<sup>77</sup> Turkamn on line Edu (2015) ,Assessed on 17june 2016 <http://islam.uga.edu/turkmen.html>

## **ISLAMIC PILGRIMAGE**

The Central Asia gained independence from the former Soviet Union in Dec. 1991. The citizens of the region have been exploring the public expression of religious practices. From the enduring influence of Soviet education's atheist ideology to the various world wide Islamic political and reformist ideologies many complexes often conflicting ideas confront Central Asian Muslims as they forge new religious identities. No religious practice remains untouched by this process (Subhan, 1938). Pilgrimage centers in southeastern Uzbekistan are changing the interpretations of pilgrimage practices. In Uzbekistan they demonstrate differing local responses to larger forces shaping contemporary Islam in Central Asia.

Pilgrimage to shrines has long been a prominent and distinctive feature of Central Asian Islam. Uzbekistan alone contains the tombs of thousands of religious scholars and saints from the mystical Sufi orders. Curtailed and often forbidden under the Soviets rule. Religious pilgrimage thrives under the current regime, which at times has even funded the restoration of prominent shrines as a bastion of an apolitical Islam against the perceived threat of political Islamic extremist groups. However, the Uzbek government still maintains a Soviet like control over Islamic institutions, requiring registration and doctrinal screening of mosques and imams (Hatcher, Uzbekistan).

A typical pilgrimage involves circumambulating, touching, or kissing the tomb for blessings, tying a wish cloth to a tree, lighting a candle, having a prayer and leaving monetary donations on or near the tomb. At most of the sites encourage to do some or all of these activities. In many respects, some of these local pilgrimage practices echo those of the obligatory Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, such as circumambulating the Ka'ba structure and possibly touching the black stone in its corner. In centuries past, many Muslim legal scholars even argued that since the Hajj was generally beyond the means of most Muslims, a cycle of certain local pilgrimages would fulfill a Muslim's obligation to go on the Hajj. These legal justifications are now only occasionally known or invoked. Instead, pilgrims and

imams typically appeal only to memories of pre Soviet tradition to defend these practices ('Alawi, 1971).

At a significant minority of these holy sites, posted signs, speeches by the shrine's imam or custodian, or the physical layout of the shrines themselves present a different and new interpretation of the proper practice of local pilgrimage. Whether prompted by criticism from certain purist Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia, which funds many Islamic restoration projects, by standardization attempts of the government-controlled Religious Directorship; or by Soviet, European, and Muslim orientalist disdain for village superstition, these initiatives encourage a more austere ritual. But it is not the existence of saints per se nor the general practice of shrine pilgrimage that is challenged. Rather, it is certain common practices that are the target of these would-be reform efforts.

One target is the practice of circumambulating the tomb, touching it, or leaving money on it. Posters at some shrines explicitly forbade these practices, while staff at a few other shrines had erected new fences around the tombs to make these activities physically impossible. At the tomb of the Sufi saint Baha' al-din Naqshband in 1998, circumambulation was generally practiced, but in 2002 there was a sign prohibiting such practices and equating such practices with idolatry and a fence to prevent the access of those who might disagree. Many pilgrims tie wish cloths to trees anyway (when the imams aren't looking.)

Uzbek Muslim leaders are very conscious of being watched by a government. They are worried about political Islamic movements yet eager to use Islam to bolster its legitimacy by Saudi and other foreign Muslim donors with their own doctrinal agendas. Ordinary Uzbek Muslims who may feel unsure of practices that they may only have heard about from parents and grandparents. For the near future, the course of post Soviet Central Asian Islam's development will be determined by the myriad small, quiet struggles in which local Muslim institutions and individual believers attempt to navigate these many currents influencing their religious practice (Hatcher, Uzbekistan).

## **Economic role**

The economic conditions of the people of Medieval Central Asia were largely influenced by the Sufis, Pirs, faqirs and the other pious men. Not only the living Sufi saints but yet after their death, the periodical Urs (fairs) celebrations gave chance to the people of far-flung areas, villagers to meet in such large gatherings on such occasions and hence they exchange their commercial commodities, which promote the rural and village economies.

Religious Tourism or Pilgrimage with about two to six hundred million national and international religious and spiritual travels worldwide is important, but rather ignored forms of tourism. Worldwide, numerous cities are created and developed only base on pilgrimage and travel of religious motivated visitors to these places (Lings, 1997).

For Muslims, pilgrimage plays a great role, especially in their social life. From North Africa, the Middle East to Central and South(-East) Asia, shrine pilgrimage is a common sight among the Muslims. Numerous Sufi lodgings (khanegahs), shrines, schools, mosques, tombs (mazars) and mausoleums of Muslim saints, martyrs, Sufi-masters and other holy men and women, attract millions of pilgrims, who travel substantial distances to these centers. In Central Asia, religious pilgrimage has a long tradition (Deweese, 1995).

Sufi saint shrine-culture displays great variation in factors such as the person enshrined the social categories of devotees, the architectural structure of the shrine, the rituals performed in and around it, its political and economic significance, and the form and activities of the Sufi order that provide its main support. The shrine and the other facilities are in many cases maintained financially through a waqf, an endowment provided by the Sufi order related to the saint enshrined. In the case of a small shrine a custodian, and in the case of a large shrine custodians or a committee, are responsible for the upkeep of the buildings and facilities.

## **Ritual Activities**

The Ṣūfī saint's shrine is one of the focal points of rituals carried out not only by the members of the Ṣūfī order that has a special spiritual relationship with the saint but also by common Muslims who simply admire the mystical power of the saint and venerate him. There are three important types of ritual: visiting the shrine, *dhikr* rituals conducted there, and the annual festival of the saint.

### **Visitation**

Many devotees of a Sufi saint make frequent visits to the shrine to perform such rituals as special prayers to the saint, circumambulation of his tomb, and kissing its cloth cover. Some of them remain there for a longer period. The main aim of their visit, as with ordinary supplication (*dua*), is to ask for divine blessing in general, as well as for more specific benefits such as success in business or study, or recovery from an illness. They may make a vow (*nadhr*) to give a suitable donation to the saint if their wishes are satisfactorily realized; many of the items belonging to the shrine are donations from supplicants. If they break the vow and give nothing to the saint as a reward, it is presumed that there will be divine retribution for their negligence.

Visits to some shrines can be regarded as a substitute for the pilgrimage to Mecca. Indeed, a visit to the shrine of Sayyid al-Badawi has been called “the pauper's hajj.” The shrine of al-Shadhili (d. 1465), the founder of the widespread Shadhiliyah Sufi order, is in a town on the Red Sea coast in southern Egypt. It is said that five visits to his shrine have an effect similar to that of one hajj. It is noteworthy, however, that the visit is not called hajj but ziyarah. Visitors apparently make an essential distinction between the two, even though they may think that repeated visits to a shrine may give them almost the same benefits as the pilgrimage to Mecca (Ernst, 1993).

### **Dhikr**

On the basis of the Quran (surah33:41–42), the *dhikr* ritual, in which participants devoutly repeat the names of God or some formula such as “Allah ḥayy” (God is the Eternal One) with prescribed gestures, has become one of the fundamental rituals for most Sufis. A gathering to perform the ritual, usually called ḥaḍrah, usually takes

place in the afternoon or at night in the court of a private house, in a public square in a neighborhood, at a lodge, or in an open space near a saint' shrine.

In some cases, a dhikr is conducted after the communal prayers on Friday. For instance, the Hamad al-Nil Sufi order, a Sudanese branch of the Qadariyah, regularly holds a dhikr gathering on Friday afternoon in an open space in front of the shrine of its founding Sufi in a cemetery in a suburb of Omdurman. After the 'aṣr prayer, members of the order march to the place from their nearby mosque and start to perform the dhikr rituals. Repeating the formulas to the rhythm of drums and religious songs, they line up in several rows and move around a pole set up in the center of the space. The ritual lasts until the sunset (maghrib) prayer.

Dhikr rituals, like visits to the shrine, can be carried out at any time. They are, however, enthusiastically conducted on a grand scale on the occasion of the annual festival of the saint.

### **Economic functions of Sufi Shrines**

Because people continually come and go, and the area around the shrine is relatively peaceful, the place may develop as a market center for the area; or, conversely, an existing market may also become a center for religious training, so that a saint's shrine is eventually built there. While the regular weekly market held in these towns has prospered. The annual saint's festivals have become an occasion on which the town bustles with massive crowds and a large-scale fair is held so that the festival has a considerable economic effect (Arberry, 1950).

The new openness with which Sufi-shrines may be visited and patronized has made them once again important economic centers, through offerings of pilgrims and through patronage by both local communities and, in some cases, the state. Offerings are often substantial, and one measure of the new profitability of shrines is the number of custodians we met who had quite different careers four or five years ago. Shrine after shrine had a new custodian, often appointed by a local communal board to rebuild the shrine, prepare food, maintain facilities for pilgrims, and in general improve the condition and the renown of the site. In most cases, the motivation seems

genuinely religious (i.e., to restore a cherished practice formerly off-limits) or cultural to preserve an aspect of traditional life, or familial. Many shrines are being restored by groups claiming descent from the saints buried there, but there are more tangible benefits to be had from shouldering the responsibilities that accompany custody of a shrine (DEWEESE, 1995).

## **Chapter-5**

### **Conclusion**

Through the lens of history, we can conclude that Sufism is a very unpredictable force in Central Asia, for all its seeming harmlessness. And it is also very difficult for the state to harness its own purposes. Sufism is primarily concerned with the heart that reflects the truth which exists within it, beyond time and in time. The Sufi is the whole human being. The Sufi is the one who realizes the courtesy due to the prison of his body which has been given to him on loan for a few years. He is aware of the fact that he is returning to the abode of infinite bliss from which he originally emerged. Sufism is an art of beingness through the attainment of divine knowledge. It is not an intellectual exercise for scholarly investigations and higher studies.

He wishes to remove the false self and discover God within, and he teaches to seek happiness, illumination. Beholds, harmony gave love to all created things and gets a greater power of love by pursuing this path. He finds the God and loses the self. As in Sufism heart is called as Qalab which is a divine heart not the ordinary heart, which pumps blood. In Sufism, it is also considered as the gateway of Ishq or Divine love. They also consider it as the battle ground of two warring armies. One is 'Nafs' and other is Rub or spirit. Cleansing of the Qalb or heart is a necessary spiritual discipline for travelers on the Sufi path. The whole Sufi way of life is about giving up attachments.

Islam has been incorporated in the domestic and foreign policies of governments for quite some time. Since September 11, 2001, terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon the teachings of Islam have become a major point of examination. Significant media and policy attention has been directed toward not only understanding of Islam but also discussing how individuals use religion in their political objectives. Within this discussion governments and other actors aimed to address how to stop the dissemination of specific Islamic interpretations, in the name of preventing future terror attacks. Because of the worry of particular interpretations of Islam and the effect that they may have on individual actions, many have been quick to try to find other interpretations of Islam (or specific groups of

Muslims) to promote. But while such interpretations of Islam have been supported by governments in hopes of preventing future terrorism

But these actions that are emphasised by policy makers have not been on distinguishing terrorists. This has turned the religious experience into a political category. In order to understand the individuals act, one should not just examine one's religion, nor should religion be viewed in a vacuum. A range of factors will play a role in an individual's actions indeed

Sufi belief has been considered apolitical, and thus not concerned with either political power or with those who govern politically. But while some may advocate such beliefs toward Sufism and Sufis, the idea of Sufis showing little concern for politics and only being focused on spiritual matters is very much accurate. Sufi orders have had a long history of involvement in politics and community affairs that include specific political campaigns against colonialism and authoritarian regimes.

Sufis have also participated in calling for equality and democracy and have had a history of political influence in places such as the Sudan, Senegal, in Ellis and in Morocco, Lebanon, Libya and Syria. We also find historical accounts where political leaders themselves have had connections to Sufi orders. Political leaders have often aimed to establish ties with Sufi leaders having good contacts with well-known Sufi leaders may enhance a politician's credibility and give religious legitimacy to his agenda.

Sufis stood against colonial powers to liberate their country and it was quite a positive role on the part of Sufis. They also participated in national politics where was not on party level but on the individual level. Sufi brotherhoods were closed but well structured and hierarchical organizations bound by an absolute dedication to a religious ideal. They opposed the foreign rulers to safeguard Islam. The survival of Islam in USSR owes to the constant struggle of these Sufi orders. Parallel and non-Official Islam could not be controlled by Soviet higher authorities the so-called Muslim spiritual directorates.

As official Islam could not gain ground in the Muslims of Central Asia and it rather gave way to Parallel Islam at some places so the later proved more effective with its adepts running their concealed religious schools and mosques. These mosques

and schools were many times more in number than their official working mosques and schools.

The activities of the Tariqa were generally centered on the holy places like tombs of Muslim saints or shrines. The people of Central Asia took these holy places as substitutes for the pilgrimage to Mecca. Prayers by believers and Zikr by the followers at these places had replaced the closed mosques. These places also acted as a forum which the Sufis used for teaching and for an active counter propaganda against official atheism. Sufi brotherhood was not a small group of people. Their number rather increased with the passage of time. They were badly targeted since the World War II, and an up rise was noticed in the branches of Sufism. The followers of Sufi orders does not include only the peasants and poor craftsmen of Central Asian cities but also a growing proportion of industrial workers and intellectuals.

More than half the believers in North Caucasus belonged to a Sufi brotherhood. This means that in North Caucasus alone the number of Sufi adepts could be around quarter of a million, an incredible figure for an underground society and a huge number to destabilise any government.

The Sufi brotherhood as not being passive force detached from the world were quite dynamic. The followers and adept were not only interested in advancing spiritually towards God but also in building God's rule on earth that is Sharia law. This latter interest was alarming for the Soviet forces and perhaps, for this reason the Soviet forces described them as a fanatical anti Soviet, anti social reactionary force. But, they couldn't help admitting that the emotional and aesthetic aspects of Sufi ritual appeared much more attractive than the dull and vulgar official ceremonies.

Sufi brotherhoods played a major role in the history of the area by protecting the Muslims against the assault of the infidels and influencing some infidels by their preaching. As a result, Islam became deeply rooted among the northern sedentary Turks, Tatars, Bashkirs, Kazakh and Kirghiz nomads. It is, therefore, rightly said that from twelve century, the history of Central Asia is influenced by the activities of Sufi brotherhood. Four Sufi brotherhoods were mainly active in the territories of Central Asia. They were Naqshbandia, Qadiriya, Yasawiya and Kubrawiya. The strongholds of Sufism are the Fergana valley, Dagestan, and northern Azerbaijan.

Central Asia is a home of several important brotherhoods, where Sufism remained active, particularly in the former nomadic areas. Here 'native society preserved its clan structure, such as in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and southern part of Uzbekistan. Sufi orders had been quite active in the Tatar intellectual and cultural revival of the nineteenth century in the Volga region. After the war, they were almost disappeared. After the breakdown of the erstwhile USSR, the Sufi network is gradually re emerging in the particularly, in Bukhara and Namangan.

The Sufi orders especially 'Naqshbandis' assumed the leading role in the intellectual renaissance of the late 19 century. Many Naqshbandis were in forefront of the modernist liberal Jadid reform movement. Many leaders of Basmachi movement in Central Asia were all Naqshbandi Murshids or Murids. Naqshbandiya is the most popular of all the Sufi orders as it follows the religious matters strictly but doesn't go for the excesses of other orders. This order is well organized and perfect whose aim is to support and dominate the religion.

Whereas Yasawiyais is an old Sufi order which was founded by Ahmed Yasawi. It was founded in southern Kazakhstan in the twelve century. It was the best known among the Central Asian brotherhoods. It is being termed as permeable to pre-Islamic beliefs by Faud Koprulu. Turkish speaking nomads from the people of Steppe were its supporters. Yasawiya was a Tariqa of wandering dervishes. It had neither any branch nor any permanent settlement except near Sheikh's tomb. The spread of Islam among the people of Turkistan and the nomads of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan owes to these wandering dervishes. These dervishes kept them restricted to practice the loud zikr and they were not interested in ordinary affairs.

After October Revolution, Sufism has left the only shelter for the Muslims of Central Asia. It was very obvious and a natural choice on their part as any person when faces restraints from outside, they try to hide in his inner world. The same happened with the Muslims of Central Asia. They sought refuge in these orders of Sufism. During the period of World War II when Soviet ruler's grip became weak such orders emerged. Kubrawiya was one of them. Kubrawiya, the brotherhood was founded in the 12th century in Khwarzham named after Shiekh Najamuddin Kabral. The role of practicing Muslims and these brotherhoods are not limited to preserve the

religious beliefs and their cult observance. In Islam, religious, national and political spheres are interwoven, so these brotherhoods have become the center of traditional opposition to the Russian presence.

The USA does not like the concept of the Islamic revolution and labels it as extremism. The USA favours the Sufism and its related activities against the Islamic revolutionary movements. The USA is trying to use this opportunity of getting benefits from Sufism. The US is getting involved in the region by helping them in their progress in Central Asia. So that they are bound to the customs and traditions of this specific region and no space is left for the introduction of outer ideologies. It is not possible for the USA to help in the training of Imam in Islamic countries. But it can help in secular education in this region and the experience of Turkish secularism can be repeated being closely connected to USA and NATO countries. The teaching of Atta Turk can be consulted to chalk out the future course of action in Central Asia. Consequently, the markets are invaded with the books about Sufism and the books of Sufis were used to combat Islamic revolutionary teachings. In mosques, Sufis were appointed as Imams and preachers. They are given heavy financial support and were supplied with weapons which give forth to riots between the groups having Sufi ideology and other people resulting in many deaths. So, if the Islamic powers want to perform an active role in future, they will have to create a harmony between Islamic movements and Sufi orders.

Sufism has been started as a reform movement. It laid emphasis on free thinking, liberal ideas and toleration. They believed in the equality of all human beings and brotherhood of man. Their concept of universal brotherhood and the humanitarian ideas of the Sufi saints attracted the Indian mind. The liberal minded Sufis are, therefore, welcomed everywhere. The Sufi movement proved very helpful in bridging the gap between the followers of the different religions.

The Islam was challenged many times by non Muslims. Sufi orders had given an effective response to them particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Again, the only serious and organized resistance against Russian conquerors in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Soviet regime in the 1920s was led by the same Sufi orders.

The Sufi brotherhoods who survived the changing political environment joined the specific factions who had aligned with the new power centers to face the future. After gaining independence, in the post-Soviet republics of Central Asia the revival of Sufism has developed along with the renewal of the people national, cultural and religious identity. Sufism had managed to survive and revitalize its traditions despite the ruthless persecution by the Soviet regime.

Since the 1980s-90s intensive studies of Sufism in Central Asia have began. Above all, such interest has been caused by the invasion of the Soviet armies in Afghanistan and the resistance movement emerged there, which originated from a religious following the crash of Communistic ideology (1991) in the post Soviet states and including Eastern Europe, as well as the reinforcement of the Islamic factor in the independent republics of Central Asia and in Russia. The most widespread Sufi tariqas in the region were then Naqshbandiyah and Yasaviyah orders. They have a strong diffusion in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Under Lenin and Trotsky the Bolshevik leadership was true to its Marxist understanding that the revolutionary party must be atheist primarily in a word, not deed, while the state must be non religious but not antireligious. Religious communities were given remarkable freedoms under the revolution, although the religion of the Tsarist empire was the most likely to be circumscribed because of its strong links to the former ruling class. Religious believers, including Muslims, who considered themselves revolutionaries, were welcomed into the Bolshevik ranks. Non Communist believers who backed the revolution occupied leading positions in the state apparatus. Some major Muslim organizations joined the Communist parties in their entirety or joined with the Bolsheviks to defend the revolution. The demands of Muslims for religious freedom were intimately connected with demands for national rights.

The Bolsheviks fought along side with Muslims to win those rights from the Tsarists and Russian colonialists, but also from the Communist. These rights were fought for and won as part of the revolution, not granted as concessions by an anti religious regime waiting for the moment to pronounce on believers. The attacks on these rights originated among the Russian chauvinists of the former regime, many of

whom were military men who flooded into the state machine after the civil war and gradually came to see Stalin as the leader of the counter revolution.

However, these elements were assisted by the strong ultra left elements among the Bolsheviks party who rejected Lenin's approach and despised talk of national or religious rights. These comrades overwhelmingly perished under Stalin. The Islamic veil was not an issue for the Bolsheviks under Lenin. The mass assault on the veil was launched in 1927 by Russian chauvinists and Stalinists, a frightening harbinger of the calamity of forced collectivization a few years later. Forced unveiling was a Stalinist policy that turned Leninism on its head. So in standing up for the right of Muslim women to wear the hijab in Europe today, marching alongside Muslims against the occupations of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan, defending the right of Muslims to oppose those occupations by force, and joining with left wing Muslims in united front coalitions such as Respect, socialists are upholding a tradition that goes back to Lenin and Trotsky.

Today, Central Asia is passing through the transition period. The situation is still in such a state of flux. Only just nearly 25 years have elapsed since the collapse of the Soviet Union and there is still such a dearth of reliable information that it is impossible to predict with any degree of certainty the likely course of future events. Nevertheless, it is clear that whatever direction this may take, Islam will be of some significance.

## Glossary

**Alim:** a learned man, a religious scholar.

**Baqa:** It is the final stage of a mystic who has been annihilated (fana) in God and lives in Him and through Him.

**Bast:** An expansion of the soul experienced in joy. The word is derived from the divine name al-Basit, The Expander, or He Who Gives Joy. In Sufism bast is a term for an expanding state of the soul when the heart experiences a state of well-being.

**Chilla:** A period of 40 days spent in continuous fasting and spiritual exercises.

**Dairah:** a small mystic center of like-minded persons.

**Darwish:** the term is used in the sense of a member of a religious fraternity. The Arabic word is faqir.

**Dhikr:** Remembrance of God. Combined Quranic recitation with physical movement prescribed by the founder of the orders and elements of song

**Fana:** In Sufism it means to die to the world and to subsist in God alone. This state of subsisting in God is called baqa' and is the end of the Sufi journey.

**Faqr:** Poverty. In Sufism, it means emptying the soul of the ego's false 'reality' to make way for the realization of God.

**Faqir:** the poor a Sufi mendicant, a disciple who embraces the way of poverty as a means of realizing God.

**Farz:** Sing. farz, pl. faraiz, meaning 'that which is obligatory', 'a duty'. A term used for those rules and ordinances of religion, which are enjoined by God. These include: witnessing the truth or pronouncing the shahada, prayer, fasting, etc.

**Fiqh:** Jurisprudence, Islamic Law. The science of fiqh deals with the laws regulating the ritual and the religious observances (ibadat). There are four Sunni schools of fiqh: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, Hambali. Of the Shiite schools of fiqh the most famous is the Jafari school of jurisprudence founded by Jafar as Sadiq (699-765)

**Futuh:** Voluntary contributions given to the Sufis.

**Hal:** Sing. hal, pl. ahwal. The ecstasy, a rapturous state.

**Ihsan:** Literally: ‘to do well’ or ‘to do everything as beautifully as possible.’ In Sufism it refers to the level at which the devotee is completely absorbed in prayer to God. It is defined by the Sufis as the attainment of that degree of devotion at which one begins to experience the presence of God.

**Ilm-i-safina:** The knowledge obtained from the books, meaning the revealed books.

**Ilm-i-sina:** The knowledge of the heart, or the knowledge obtained from the spiritual masters.

**Iman:** Literally, ‘to know’, ‘to believe’, to put one’s trust in something or someone.’ Usually translated as ‘belief’. In Islam, it means putting one’s trust in and having complete faith in God, His Prophets, His angels, His books, and the Day of Judgement.

**Ishq-e-majazi:** Love of a human being, as opposed to *ishq-i-haqiqi* or the true love.

**Ishq-i-haqiqi:** The true love or the love of God.

**Jamaat Khana:** A Sufi hospice, a *khanqah*.

**Khalwat:** Literally: solitary spiritual retreat.

**Khanqah:** Persian name for a meeting place of dervishes or the Sufis, a Sufi hospice. The terms *zawiyah* or *ribat* are used as synonyms.

**Khirqah:** Literally, “a rag”; a patched cloak worn by some Sufi orders. The *khirqah* is a sign of poverty and renunciation of the world. The cloaks were not replaced when torn but repeatedly patched instead until the whole garment was reduced to patches.

**Kufr:** Literally: “covering”, “hiding”; thence, denial of God and disbelief in face of clear revelation. It is the only sin which God will not forgive as it rejects Him and His Mercy.

**Langar:** Free food distributed in the Sufi hospices to the devotees.

**Mahabbah:** Literally: “love”. It refers to the devotion and love for God filling the soul of the mystic. In Sufism makhafah or ‘fear of God’ precedes mahabbah or ‘love of God’, which in turn culminates in ma’arifah or ‘the realization of God’.

**Majlis:** Sing. majlis, pl. majaalis. An assembly, a meeting; a formal dhikr or sama’ session.

**Makhafah:** Literally: “fear”. In Sufism it refers to the state of being in fear of God. It also implies purification. According to a saying of the Prophet Solomon, “the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.”

**Malfuzaat:** Literally, ‘discourse’, ‘conversations’, meaning the conversations of the Sufi mystics recorded by the disciples and compiled in the form of a book.

**Maqaam:** Literally, ‘a halting place’, ‘a stage in the journey’, ‘a station’; a salik must go through a number of stations to reach his destination.

**Masnawi:** A long narrative poem, often used by the Sufi poets.

**Mendicant:** Members of religious orders dependent on alms

**Mujaddid:** The revivor of Islam; a title bestowed on Ahmad Sirhindi who was hailed as Mujaddid Alf-i Sani or the revivor of the second millennium.

**Majzub:** Literally, ‘attracted’. A term used by the Sufis for a person whom God has chosen for Himself, to manifest His love. A majzub is thus able to attain to the highest stages of the Sufi knowledge without any effort or exertion.

**Muraqaba:** Literally: ‘vigilance’. In Sufism it refers to a permanent state of awareness and to the act of meditation. The Prophet once observed: “My eye sleeps but my heart is awake.” It also implies an introspection of the self, which has to be performed on daily basis.

**Murid:** A Sufi disciple, one who follows the spiritual path under the guidance of a mentor. Murid is akin in meaning to faqir and dervish as well as salik.

**Murshid:** A spiritual guide, a mentor, a teacher. See also: pir, shaykh.

**Nafs:** The animal soul, ego, or the baser self, responsible for all the evil. The Sufis believe that this baser self in human beings can be controlled only by spiritual exercises, worship and meditation.

**Pas-i-anfas:** Controlling the breathing; it was the essence of the Sufi discipline practiced during meditation. The Sufis believed that when breathing was controlled, thoughts were not diffused, and time was properly utilized.

**Pir:** A spiritual master, a teacher, a mentor, also called murshid (guide), shaykh (leader). The term ‘pir’ is used in India in preference to the Arabic word ‘shaykh’.

**Ribat:** Literally, ‘a strong-point’, ‘a post’; used to describe a Sufi center, a hospice. Synonymous with zawiyah and khanqah.

**Qabz:** Literally, ‘a contraction’. In Sufism this term denotes contraction or depression of the soul; the state when the soul experiences its limitations and subsequently, the heart is depressed.

**Qurb:** Literally, “nearness”. It refers to the state of ‘the nearness to God’. According to the Qur’an the most exalted of God’s servants are those who are “brought near” God. They are called al-muqarrabun.

**Qutb:** Literally, ‘an axis’, ‘a pole’; it is believed that the function of the spiritual center resides in a human being called qutb who is the highest of the saints.

**Sama’:** Literally, ‘a hearing’, ‘an audition’. In Sufism it is a musical assembly regarded as a means of inducing a mystical state of ecstasy. Of all the Sufi orders established in India, it was most widely practiced by the Chishtis. The Sufis in general and the Chishtis in particular were criticized by the ulama for this practice but they were not prepared to abandon it.

**Shahadah:** Literally, ‘to observe’, ‘to witness’, ‘to testify’. It is the first and the foremost of the five pillars of Islam. It is made up of two parts – the negation and the affirmation: “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His messenger.”

**Shariah:** The revealed law, the canonical law of Islam derived from the Qur’an and the sunnah.

**Shaykh:** A spiritual master, a teacher, a mentor and a mystic guide. The spiritual lineage of the shaykh goes back to the Prophet and the Sufi shaykh is the living example of one who has realized the divine truth.

**Shirk:** Literally, ‘an association’, ‘a partnership’; In Islam, it is a term denoting the act of associating something with God, who is One. It is thus a grave sin and the only sin for which there is no mercy and no forgiveness

**Silsila:** Literally, ‘the chain’, ‘the lineage’; the chain of transmission where the spiritual message, originating with the Prophet and his companions, is passed on from one master or shaykh to another. All Sufi orders are linked by such chains.

**Suf:** Literally, ‘wool’. Rough, woolen clothing worn by the early ascetics as a symbol of their renunciation of the world. The term Sufism is derived from it.

**Sufism:** The mystic trend within Islam; tasawwuf. **Suluk:** Literally, ‘travel’; thus, traveling towards God. The state of the Sufi’s soul and his activity is seen as ‘journeying’ to God. The other name for a Sufi adept is salik or the wayfarer.

**Tasawwuf:** The mystic trend in Islam, Sufism; Sufi is the follower of tasawwuf.

**Tawakkul:** An absolute trust in God. This is what the Qur’an says about tawakkul: “God is all-sufficient for the man who puts his trust in Him,” (65:3); and, “In God let all the trusting put their trust.” (14:10)

**Tawhid:** Literally: ‘Oneness of God’, monotheism. In Sufi terminology this is the ultimate realization of the oneness of God.

**Wahdat al Shahud:** ‘Unity of Witness’, ‘Unity of Consciousness’, ‘Unity of Vision’; the concept developed most fully by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi in opposition to the concept of wahdat ul wujud of Ibn ‘Arabi, which to him smacked of pantheism. By this concept, Ahmad Sirhindi meant that the experience of union or oneness with God is related to vision rather than reality.

**Wahdat al Wujud:** ‘Unity of Being’, ‘Oneness of Being’, a concept developed by Ibn ‘Arabi and followed by all Sufis of the subcontinent except the Naqshbandi followers of Ahmad Sirhindi.

**Wird:** Set litanies recited by the pious many times a day consisting of Quranic formulas, and in case of the Sufi wirts, the litanies are compiled by the famous Sufi saints.

**Wujud Zilli:** The shadow existence.

**Wujud Asli:** The real existence.

**Wuquf-i ‘adadi:** The state of being vigilant about remembering God, so that one’s attention is not diverted.

**Wuquf-i qalbi:** Keeping the heart alive and receptive to God’s messages.

**Wuquf-i zamani:** Taking stock of one’s activities, while showing gratitude to God for the time devoted to virtuous deeds, and repenting of one’s misdeeds.

**Zawiya:** Literally, “a corner”, thus: a place of religious retreat, or a Sufi meeting place where the Sufis came together for prayer and dhikr or invocation of God’s name.

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