

Sufis and the Pre-colonial Muslim Rulers of India

Umber Bin Ibad*

ABSTRACT

This article brings forward the relationship between pre-colonial Muslim rulers and Sufis. It follows the position of Muzaffar Alam who maintains that pre-colonial Muslim rulers established good relations with Sufis to subvert the religious position of the Islamic elite. His position shows that the relationship with Sufis allowed building State policies in the flexible although juristic Sharia-based Islamic principles. In the presence of the sympathetic courts, the Sufi space prevailed and gained currency among the common people. Drawing upon the instances of Sufi biographies, this article, however, argues that there were occasions when the Muslim rulers, despite consistently giving respect to the Sufis, opted to distance and checked their influence; it happens whenever the rulers felt that Sufis started interfering in State affairs, and whenever the practices of Sufis seemed to be going off the embed of principles delineating Muslim identity. While employing primary sources, it establishes that the rulers showed reluctance and distaste whenever the Sufistic ideas threatened the Muslim identity.

* Associate Professor, History and Pakistan Studies, Foreman Christian College, Lahore. Email: umberibad@fccollege.edu.pk

Introduction

In the context of the debates around Political Islam, especially in its radical forms, the Sufis and Sufism have already found a significant place for the non-political and softer version of Islam in Pakistan. This softer version of Islam, directed towards devotional and peaceful practices, is conveniently set against militant Islam. The global reach and appeal of Sufistic voices and practices also make it easy for the state of Pakistan to showcase Sufistic sites as an Islamic face. There is, however, a tendency of Sufism to outflow through pluralistic practices, in most cases considered deviant, especially in the religious-political ideology of the state that jealously guards the Muslim against non-Muslims including Hindu identity. It is against this backdrop, the state took control of Sufi shrines in 1959 as a solution to check deviant flows that might clash with the state's religious national ideology.¹

The policy of taking control of the shrines to control the deviant Sufistic voices helped the state align with the past narrative of Muslim identity in India as well. It reduced the Sufistic 'medieval aberration,'² and in around 50 years, turned these sites into Islamic Heritage.³ The state acted without any precedence; however, its strategy comes closer to the precolonial Muslim rulers of India engaging pragmatically with the Sufistic voices. This article dwells on the accounts showing a peculiar engagement with the Sufistic voices during the precolonial Muslim rulers. The engagement helped spread the Sufistic space and voices within the common people although remained sensitive to their ability to thwart Ruler's Muslim identity.

This article focuses only on the engagement of the pre-colonial Muslim rulers with the Sufistic voices. It follows

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- 1 Umber bin Ibad, *Sufi Shrines and the Pakistani State: The End of Religious Pluralism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2018).
 - 2 Javaid Iqbal, *The Ideology of Pakistan and its Implementation* (Lahore: Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1959), 13-29.
 - 3 Ibad, *The Sufi Shrines and the Pakistani State*, 134-138.

Muzaffar Alam's argument that Islam is not a singular ideology and is inclusive of diverse voices.⁴ The argument follows that the political and social context opens the delimitations of the core principles defining Sharia or the definition of Islam. There have been Sharia and Sufistic trends defining the core of Islam in the past. Sufistic voices showed openness to diversity and engagement with non-Muslims. The Sufistic voices and practices attracted therefore people from across the religious and economic divide. This article, however, emphasises that the Muslim rulers were also sensitive to the Muslim, albeit flexible, identity in many cases. The rulers, therefore, did not hesitate to check the deviant, even the popular, Sufistic voices.

When the first Delhi Sultan, Shams al-Din Iltutmish (r.1211-1236) was busy in consolidating his rule, during the first decade of thirteenth century, and laying the foundation of first Muslim rule in India as Delhi Sultanate, Sufistic abodes and ascetic practices had already populated the coasts, plains, and hills of India. Well before Iltutmish, even before Mahmud of Ghaznavi, the iconoclast, and almost contemporaneously of the young Muslim General, Muhammad Bin Qasim, the southern coasts, and the northern part of India had already attracted *sufi* souls from the Muslim world to visit, reside and practice their way of life. Their ascetic practices and trans-religious teachings, embedded within humble and trans-ethnic dispositions, had developed a respected halo, if not charismatic aura within Muslim and non-Muslim population. Filled with the existential crisis, these souls, largely, remained immersed in search of 'Reality' and seldom hesitated to engage with non-believers. Itinerant, as they usually remained, and lonely dwellers, as they often resided at the outskirts of settled life, kept them usually indifferent from the political life.

For Iltutmish, while consolidating his rule as a Muslim empire and collecting investiture from the Abbasid caliph of his time,

4 Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004)

the aporia arose to promulgate Shariat that necessitated transforming the Muslim empire as a true Islamic state.⁵ Muslim Ulama, while delivering investiture from Khalifa also put forward condition as either slay Kafir or convert each person to Islam, *immal Islam or immal Qatl*, in order to make empire a true Muslim land. In an empire founding upon the non-Muslim majority, it was impossible to meet theologian's demand. To respond the situation, Iltutmish chose an evasive position standing upon pragmatic disposition and brought forward sufistic mode of life-world as an alternative to the Shariat minded Sunni Ulema. While accepting the ground realities of his empire, as presented by his able Wazir Nizam ul Mulk Junaidi, during a *Majlis* (conference), that the "Hindus are in such an overwhelming numbers that the Muslims in their midst are like salt in a dish. If this injunction is enforced they may unite and raise a commotion. The disturbance will be widespread, all round; we will be too weak to suppress it,"⁶ Iltutmish accepted the pragmatic solution of the theological crisis and promised the Ulama that when "in the capital and in the provinces and small towns, the Muslims and their army grow in strength I shall then give the Hindus the choice of *Islam or Death*."⁷

5 Barani reports that Qazi Wajih, and others, approached Sultan Iltutmish soon after he received investiture from the Abbasid Caliph, Abu Jafar Mansur Almustansar, in 1229 and put forward the demand to take strict action against non-believers and maintain a policy of *Immud Qatl* or *Immud Islam*. See, Zia al-Din Barani, *Sahifa-I Nati Muhammadi*, M. S Raza Library, Rampur, cited and discussed by Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 85. See also speech of Syed Nur ud Din Mubarak Ghaznavi (d.636 H), a Khalifa of Shihab ud Din Suhrawardi and a Sheikh ul Islam in Iltutmish's time. Zia-ud Din Barani, *Tareekh-e-Feroz Shahi*, trns. Dr. Syed Mueen-ul Haq (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 1969), 95-99.

6 Barani, *Tareekh-e-Feroz Shahi*.

7 Barani, *Tareekh-e-Feroz Shahi*. It was the wisdom of Nizam ul Mulk Junaidi who, other than being Wazir, also worked as Sadr-e-Jahan or Sheikh ul Islam during Iltutmish's most of the rule, found it expedient and pragmatic to follow liberal, tolerant and humane line of action as a policy against Hindu local majority. Nizam ul Mulk Junaidi was a well-versed scholar having very close ties with sufis. In hagiographical literature, especially, that of Nizam-ud Din Aulya we find lot of appreciation for this able Wazir.

Ilutmish, to provide an Islamic structure to his state, instituted a full-fledged department having Sheikh-ul Islam, Qazis and muftis. The position of Sheikh al-Islam was responsible for taking care of the affairs regarding Sufis, Mendicants (*Fuqara*), and Dervishes in the kingdom. The position of Sheikh al-Islam, along with Qazis and Muftis was also supposed to provide suggestions regarding Islamic Laws and the principles for the rulers.⁸ Despite all kingly grandeur, Ilutmish allowed his Sheikh al-Islam to give him advice regarding Islamic principles of kingship. The Ulama and scholars as Sheikh al-Islam or Qazis received so much liberty from Ilutmish that they could openly condemn the manners of kingship as against the Sunnat e Mustafwi, and an attempt to participate in the powers of God. The actions of Ilutmish, as a king, for many therefore were not Islamic.⁹ The personal life of Ilutmish, however, never allowed criticisms to move beyond a certain point. He usually remained immersed within religious practices, and whenever found time, offered prayer with common people. Even once his life encountered a severe danger when a group of Ismailis attacked him while offering Juma prayer at Jamia mosque.

At the same time, Ilutmish elevated Sufistic positions to such an extent that he gave Sufis credit even to his ascendancy to power. He used to claim publicly that his wealth and power is due to the blessings of a Dervish of Bukhara who supported him in his childhood when Ilutmish lost all his coins, and when he was only a slave. The Dervish purchased some grapes for him and blessed him, while saying, that when “you obtain wealth and dominion do show respect to dervishes and take care of their rights.”¹⁰

8 Barani reported in detail the discussion between Syed Nur al-Din Mubarak Ghaznavi (d.636 H) and Ilutmish in which Syed Nur al-Din Mubarak Ghaznavi suggested the Islamic ways for ruling the land.

9 Barani reported through the memories of King Balban that Syed Nur al Din Mubarak Ghaznavi, at least twice advised Ilutmish regarding the Islamic Darbar (palace).

10 Minhaj-ud Din Siraj, *Tabakat-e-Nasiri*, 167

Mentioning further, Iltutmish used to say that the “wealth and power that I am endowed with is all due to the blessing of that Dervish.”¹¹ He also mentioned his relation with Shuhab-ud Din Suharwardy with respect.¹² On another occasion, he mentioned a saying of Sheikh Auhad-al Kirmani (d.1298) regarding him that he (Iltutmish) will not only find the highest possible power but also the religion of Islam will get secure from his hands. Sheikh Kirmani said, “due to your grace, in his worldly kingdom religion too will be secure.”¹³

Accepting Sufistic life-world within his rule Iltutmish succeeded in placing alternative religious position transcending the rules of *Shariat* to a respected realm, and thereby succeeded in giving legitimacy to a political alternative that matched with the ground realities. The relation of Sufis and *Dervishes*, with ruling elites, as developed through Iltutmish, remained undisturbed in all the later years of Muslim rule in India. From Balban (r. 1266-1287) through Tughlaks (r. 1321-1398) and Lodhis (r. 1451-1526) to Mughals (r.1526-1857), no Delhi Sultan or Muslim King revived the policy of giving respect to the Sufis and seldom resisted their engagement with Darbar.¹⁴ As Balban only consolidated what Iltutmish had already achieved, he never stopped showing respect for Mashaikh and Sufis.¹⁵ Even such a secular personality as that of Ala-ud Din Khilji

11 Siraj, *Tabakat-e-Nasiri*, 167.

12 Iltutmish narrated that one day, he went to the Khankah of Sheikh Shihab al Din Suhrawardi (d.1235) and presented him with some coins. The Sheikh accepted the money, recited the *fatiha* and remarked: “I see gleams of royal power (sultanat) shining in the face of this person.” See, Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 85.

13 Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture* (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1966), 17.

14 Exceptions were there. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was suspicious of the activities of Sufis. He even inflicted pains on them. However, even his position was that the sufis/dervishes must not reside in capital and interfere in local politics.

15 Barani writes that Balban often after Juma prayer visited the *Mazarat* (shrines) and *Khankahs* of *Mashaikh*. See, Barani, *Tareekh-e-Feroz Shahi*, 103.

(d. 1316), though kept aloof from the need of involving Shariat-based policies, never hesitated showing respect to Sheikh Rukn-ud Din Suharwardi (1251-1335) and even to Nizam ud Din Aulya(1238-1325).¹⁶ His both sons were also Murid of Nizam ud Din Aulya and often visit his Jamatkhana. Another secular Sultan, Muhammad Tughlak (r. 1325-1351), developed distrust against Sufis. However, his distrust was due to the overwhelming presence of Dervishes or sufis in Delhi. He used to say why these recluses did not go to the remote areas where they needed it most. Later, Lodhis, especially, Sikander Lodhi (r. 1489-1517) was very keen to keep close relations with Mashaikh. However, his Muslim bias and his strictness went even so high that to implement the rule of Sharia he sometimes moved beyond the decision of the Ulema, and showed disposition towards taking a cruel decision.¹⁷

Illutmish's policy not only provided Delhi Sultanate with an opportunity for a political alternative without attracting lot of objections, at the same time, supported the development of *Sufistic* spirits within India. It is no coincidence, therefore, that his age witnessed the development of *Sufistic* titans those guided, if not shaped the history of Sufism in India in all the later years.¹⁸ His age saw the blossoming and

16 Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, *Aab-e-Kausar* (Lahore: Idara Saqafat-e-Islamia, 2009), 161.

17 The death sentence for Brahman Buddha showed the keenness of Sikander Lodhi in the favour of cruelty. Ulema and Mashaikh of Sikander Lodhi's Darbar convicted Brahman Buddha for holding ideas considering both Islam and Hinduism as a true religion. This was not an innovation. The Bhakti movement was on the rise, and Kabir and Nanak were already of the same views. Even many Muslim sufis, including Chishtis, and one of the most famous Sufis of the time, Abdul Qaddus Gangohi held ideology of *Wahdat-ul Wajud* (Unity of Being) that considered oneness behind the multiplicity of existence. However, the Ulema who were against that of the Brahman made a point that because he accepted the truthfulness of Islam he has to accept Islam as his religion. Ulema of Sikander Lodhi's Darbar were divided upon the nature of sin committed by Brahman Buddha. However, Sikander Lodhi opted for the harshest sentence and got him murdered.

18 The development of sufistic thought, historically speaking, was more an international phenomenon at that time. In the Muslim world, sufistic personalities and practices were already widespread. The sufi history had

development of three important Sufi *Tarikas* those later on developed into great Sufi orders (*Silsilai*). From the teaching and practices of Baha ud Din Zakarya (d.1262 A.D.), who was also nominated as Sheikh ul Islam by Iltutmish the order of Suhrawardy found its development in India. From Usman Marandi (Jhulay Laal), whom Balban's son Khan Muhammad Shaheed held very dear, and who was himself a Khalifa of Baha ud Din Zakarya Suharwardi, emerged a great Qalandri order that though remained unpopular within Muslim power center, yet its Dionysian Be-Shariat prevailed within larger public for its transcending religio-ethnic boundaries. Chishtis, the third order, found its father figures through the personalities of Khwaja Mueen-ud-din Chishti Ajmeri (d.1236), Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (1173-1235) and Baba Fareed Ganj Shakkar (d.1265 A.D.).¹⁹ Despite the Chishti saints' reluctance to intermingle with the rulers, the sufi-saints attracted respect and close relations with many Delhi Sultans of India.²⁰

already entered into their Tariqa traditions, and orders were in the making. However, within India, the state policies provided a powerful support, and legitimacy for the popularity and acceptance of sufistic traditions.

- 19 Bahaud-Din Zikrya (d.1262 A.D.) came to India and settled in Multan in the later first half of thirteenth century. He was contemporary of Fareed-ud-Din Ganj Shakkar (d.1265 A.D.) who was disciple of Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki who himself was a disciple of (d.1235 A.D.) Mueen-ud-din Chishti Ajmeri (d.1236), the founder of Chishti order in India. See, Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*. Vol.1, 141-197.
- 20 Though Mueen ud Din Chishti Ajmeri was not that sought after personality, because he resided in Ajmer that was still a frontier of Iltutmish's Saltanat, yet his khalifa, Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki was persuaded by Iltutmish many a times to accept the title of Sheikh ul Islam. It was Iltutmish who himself read Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki's Namaz-e-Janaza (funeral prayer). Further, Baba Fareed (1188-1280) spent his life in the wilderness of Ajodhan and always advised his Murids and Khalifas to stay away from power centers. He used to say who among our earlier masters intermingled with the kings, and this practice must not be pursued. However, he achieved a fame and prestige in his lifetime. In his later life even Balban, when he was the most influential Wazir of Nasir-ud Din himself visited him. After enthroned, Balban exalted the position of Baba Fareed (1188-1280), though Baba Fareed (1188-1280) had already died, even higher. See, Barani, *Tareekh e Feroz Shahi*.

The respect for Sufi-Dervishes though remained a hallmark of Delhi Sultanate, yet whenever it challenged the disposition of Sultan, Sufi-dervishes had to meet fatal consequences. During the rule of Jalal-ud Din Khilji (r.1290-1296 A.D), the death of Syedi Maula, during the reign of Muhammad Tughlak (r.1325-1351), the death of Sheikh Shihab ud Din Sheikh zada Jam, and during the reign of Feroze Tughlak (r. 1351-1388 A.D) the death of Ahmed Jam are the cases in point. Syedi Maula was a khalifa of Baba Fareed and after coming to Delhi developed a Khankah that soon attracted a lot of Delhi's population. The Khankah gradually developed into a large spiritual abode receiving funds in an enormous way. The popularity of Khankah not only increased its influence, it also transformed it into a convening center of disgruntled elements of the capital. As soon as the king Jalal-ud Din Khilji came to know regarding the Khankh's activity, and its potential to revolt against him, he ordered a strict action against the Khankah. Many of his Murids were murdered and Syedi Maula himself found his last breath through the sword of an opposing Khankah's murid.²¹

The Mughals, as they consolidated their dynasty through Akbar's kingship also did not change the policy initiated by Delhi Sultanate and kept close relations with Sufis and Mashaikh. The relationship though kept on changing with the shift in the religious inclination of the Mughal kings, as Akbar (r. 1556-1605) opted for having close relations with liberal Sufis during most part of his rule, while Aurangzeb (r.1658-1707) appreciated *Shariat* minded approaches, yet the relations remained close, rather increased in their intensity. Akbar paved the way and developed very respectful relations with Chishti saints.²² He frequently visited the tomb

21 A Qalandar from Haidri Dervishes, a group led by Sheikh Abu Bakar Tusi, injured Syedi Maula on king's request and later on killed him.

22 It is interesting to note that during Babar's invasion most of the sufi saints, including Chishti saints, like that of Abdul Qaddus Gangohi, showed disliking for the Mughals. Most of the saints even favoured Humayyun's exclusion from power, and welcomed the rule of Sher Shah Suri. However, Akbar soon developed a respectful relation with Chishti saints and later on favoured even many eccentric branches of order, like that of Mahdawis.

of Mueen ud Din Ajmairi (1141-1230) and developed this tomb from a humble condition into a larger shrine. His love for Saleem Chishti and Taj-ud Din Chishti, his contemporary Chishti Sufis, was also notable. The emperor Shah Jahan (r.1628-1658) and his son, Dara Shikoh (1615-1659), developed close relations with Qadris, especially that of Mian Mir (1550-1635) of Lahore. However, Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707) developed affinity for Naqshbandi order due to the order's emphasis upon following Sharia. The Later Mughals (1707-1857) also developed an affinity with the sufi-saints, especially with the students of revivalist Chishti saints, led by Shah Kaleem Ullah and his student Nizam-ud Din Dakkani.

During Akbar's early phase, the religious department of Sheikh-ul Islam, Qazi ul Qazzat and Sadr ul Sadur were stronger than ever.²³ The pro-Shariati policies of Islam Shah Suri (r. 1545-1554) were underway and many eccentric *Tariqas* and Sufi teachings, like Mahdawi movement originated from the teachings of Muhammad Jaunpuri Chishti (1443-1505), had to find secure places.²⁴ The Ulema and Mashaikh in the Darbar remained vigilant and ready to take punitive actions for anti-Sharia or *Biddati* (innovative)

See, Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, *Mauj-e-Kausar* (Lahore: Idara Saqafat-e-Islamia, 2009), 72-77.

- 23 Sheikh Abdul Nabi, Sadr-al-Sadur, even once hit Akbar with his *Asa* (stick) for doing non-Sharia activity. Sheikh Abdul Nabi was the grandson of Abdul Qaddus Ganguhi, but already developed an affinity for Hadith and Sharia than Wahdat al Wajudi's openness.
- 24 Mahdawi movement developed through the teachings of Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri (1443-1505) from Chishti order in Jaunpur. He claimed to be a Mahdi and that he could literally see God from his eyes. He maintained that after passing one thousand years, the interpretations of Islamic teachings needed to be revived. Mahdawis developed socialist circles and preached for a state having just *Imam*. In the days of Islam Shah Suri, a severe crack down took place on the movement. In the early days of Akbar, Mahdawis were given very tough time through the activities of Makhdum ul Mulk. Mahdawi movement is important because Mubarak, the father of Abul Fazl and Abul Faizi remained under the influence of the message of this movement. See, Ikram, *Mauj-e-Kausar*. However, Mahdawi movement remained unable to impress significantly in the Punjab. See, J. S Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 16.

activity.²⁵ However, soon Akbar started following his own ways of spiritual development and sought for ideologues supporting religio-political plurality.²⁶ In order to develop syncretic approaches, and develop ideological streams favouring religious plurality, Akbar opened up his administration for liberal ideologues. Influence of Sheikh Mubarak, personal and through his sons, Abul Fazl and Faizi started taking place around 1578 A.D. The attraction for Chishti saints was, however, older than that and became a positive influence for his liberal development. Akbar used to visit the shrine of Khwaja Mueen ud Din Chishti (d.1236), and became an admirer of Saleem Chishti. To take blessings for having male child, Akbar visited many a times to the Khankah of Saleem Chishti around 1567-6 A.D.²⁷ In early 1570s, he was transforming a small town of Fatah Pur Sekri into a large city in honour of Saleem Chishti, and later he was spending lot of his time in Sufistic practices in Ibadat Khana (place for Worship) in the same city.

Akbar's turning towards Sufistic discourse opened the possibility for transforming Kingship into an *Imam-e-Aadil* (Just Ruler) whose decision could transcend, in some matters, even Sharia. For finding solution through the multiplicity of religions and their conflicting positions, Akbar took a position of finding one's own way through rationality and with justice.²⁸ However, soon Akbar took over the role of spiritual guide as a *Jagat Guru* (The Spiritual Leader of the world). He started initiating *Bait* (taking oath) system, and

25 Sheikh Abdul Nabi, who was a grandson of Abdul Qaddus Gangohi and Sadr-al Sudur in Akbar's time got killed Khizar Khan Sherwani on the crime of disrespecting Prophet (PBUH) and another Mir Habsh on the accusation of being *Rafzi*. See the discussion of the accusations of Makhdum ul Mulk on Sheikh al Nabi in *Rod-e-Kausar*, 96.

26 The impact of many sufis coming from Iran (Persia) had a strong influence on Akbar. Also, the influence of Harem's beliefs and practices made an impact upon the developing mind of Akbar. See, Three Authors, History of India

27 It is, however, interesting that today one can find many such shrines imbued with the stories claiming that Akbar came to the shrines to ask blessings for having his son.

28 *AkbarNama*, Vol. III, 256-257.

started giving orders for spiritual practices, as he developed his own *Tarika* or cult.²⁹ His circle of *Murids* (spiritual disciples) however even went further, and some of the *Murids* (spiritual disciples) and *Darbari* (courtly) scholars even started considering him as a prophet able to initiate his own Sharia. Akbar's *Din-e-Ilahi* (religion of King) became a notorious version of what Akbar was trying to do in his *Darbar*, what Abul Fazal termed sympathetically as *Aain-e-Rahnumani* (rules for the guidance).

Akbar's religious debates and liberalism coincided with the development of spiritual movements heavily indebted by the ideologue of *Wahdat-ul Wajud* (Unity of Being), especially in Punjab.³⁰ Akbar made Lahore as his capital from 1584 to 1598 A.D. and during this phase his ideas regarding *Sulah-e-Kul* (Peace for all) and *Aain-e-Rahnumani* (rules for the guidance) found maturity.³¹ The activity of the *Darbar* coincided with the flowering of the similar spiritual activity. Sufi figures like, Shah Hussain and Mian Mir (1550-1635) who developed *Wahdat-ul Wajudi* (Unity of Being) ideologue through their practices were active to make their impression. Both extended their love for the non-Muslims and threw away any social and political restrictions. Both figures belonged to Qadri order that had already blossomed into subcontinent,³² but at that time heavily indebted by *Wahdat*

29 It is difficult to understand Akbar's religious activities more than a cult formation. His murids included not only such administrative figures as Khan e Azam and Miran Sadr e Jahan, but also such religious figures as Musa Pak Shaheed of Multan. See, Badauni, *Muntakhab al Tawarikh*, 92. Also, *Aab e Kausar*, 130-131.

30 For Mughals, Lahore was the Suba comprising from Ferozepur to the hills of Kashmir, and further from Sutlej to Attock. Lahore was the capital and major city of this Suba. See, Abul Fazl, *Ain e Akbari*.

31 Fazl, *Ain e Akbari*.

32 The Qadri order has already set foot in India when Babar invaded and started its rule in India. Makhdum Muhammad Gilani Halabi (d.1517) can be termed as the oldest Qadri figure in Punjab, and even in India. He himself found favour with Sikandar Lodhi, however, his son, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Sani (1533) made this order popular. The grandson of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Sani, Syed Hamid Ganj Bakhsh further promoted the order. Musa Pak Shaheed, buried in Multan, is a grandson of Syed Hamid Ganj Bakhsh.

al Wajudi ideologue.³³ Shah Hussain, after leaving the scriptural teaching of Quran in Madrasa, immersed himself in Qalandri frenzy. His Dionysian dancing, his romance for a Hindu Lad,³⁴ his friendship with non-Muslim saints³⁵ and his abhorrence for the beard, coupled with his *Karamat* (miraculous powers), where developed a lot of political heresy, there it also enabled gathering of *Murids* in a large number around him. *Shahi* Darbar's (king's court) authorities ordered the *Kotwal* (police administrator) of the city many a time to keep an eye upon him and some other times to take even a punitive action. He did not only escape many of his explanations but also enabled to develop a respected position in the eyes of king and many of the king's family members and courtiers. Prince Saleem, also the governor of Lahore at that time, and who was fond of *jogis*, developed so much 'interest' in him that he ordered the *Kotwal* to keep record of his activity.

In the time of a conflict for the ascendancy of throne during the last years of Akbar's reign and after the death of Akbar between Emperor Jahangir and his son, Prince Khusrau (1587-1622 A.D.), orthodoxy had to put his weight on the side of Jahangir. Developed out of a liberal tradition, Prince Khusrau became a favourite candidate for kingship by Akbar. However, Jahangir controlled the situation and gained last minute gasping Akbar's approval for the throne. Prince Khusrau did not accept the inheritance of dying Akbar and remained steadfast for becoming the king of the Mughal kingdom. Jahangir, however, defeated Khusrau and, with

33 Qadri order started blossoming at that time. There were many Qadris in Suba Lahore along with Shah Hussain. Saints like, Sheikh Daud Karmani Shergarhi (d.1574), Shah Abul Maali (d.1617), Mian Natha (d.1617) and Mian Mir (1550-1635) belong to Qadri order and remained immersed in Wahdat al Wajudi ideologue.

34 Shah Hussain developed a romance for a Hindu Lad, named Madhu Lal who became his disciple and later on buried at the same place. The two names intertwined in a way that the shrine later on became famous as Madhu Lal Hussain.

35 Shah Hussain had a very close association with Chhajju Bhagat, a famous Hindu jogi of his time, and with Guru Arjun Dev, fourth Sikh Guru.

him, severely punished all those involved. Kings' *Subaidar* of Lahore, among many others, also found Guru Arjun Dev Ji,³⁶ the fifth Sikh Guru in the line of ten gurus, guilty and reported to the king Jahangir accordingly. Jahangir, as his memoirs itself suggested, ordered a strict punitive action³⁷ against him as the case was established against the Guru Arjan (1563-1606) that he had put a saffron mark on the forehead of the rebel Prince Khusrau.³⁸ Mian Mir (1550-1635), another Qadri and Wahdat al Wujudi (Unity of Being) saint from Lahore,³⁹ and remained a traditional ascetic Dervish disposed towards the *Maarifat* of highest Reality without showing bias for any particular religion or sect,⁴⁰ was a close friend of Guru Arjun Dev Ji. Mian Mir, who enjoyed good relations with the king Jahangir, interfered and requested Jahangir to stop the sentence. However, he could not succeed in saving him from the hands of the local administrators.⁴¹ Jahangir, though already developed a respectable relation with Mian Mir, however, could not find strong evidence in favour of the Sikh

36 Guru Arjan was not only an influential Sikh guru but also found respect from the emperor Akbar. On an occasion, he requested Akbar to abrogate *lagaan* (tax) of *Suba* (province) Lahore, where-after Akbar ordered for the abrogation for one whole year. See Maulvi Zaka ullah, "Tareekh e Hind" in *Tareekh Mashaikh Chisht Vol. V*, Professor Khaliq Ahmed Nizami (Islamabad: Daira tul Musannafeen, 1982), 24.

37 It is interesting that in muslim tazkaras the punitive action was interpreted as Capital Punishment, however in the Sikh tradition, there is hardly any reference to the capital punishment. See the discussion of Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 63.

38 Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 63.

39 Lahore, as a capital city, in the time of Akbar was thriving intellectually. Other than Qadri order, Chishti and Naqshbandis were also active along with many other Mashaikh. Shah Kaku Chishti opened a famous Madrasa outside the city wall. His son, Sheikh Ishaq Kaku, was running the Madrasa during the rule of Akbar. He was very strict in the matters of Sharia and even rejected the argument of Makhdum ul Mul, Maulana Abdullah Sultanpuri, regarding the disrespect of prophet (PBUH). In his last age he was found guilty against Akbar and had to spend sentence for five years.

40 Once, Mian Mir (1550-1635) sent a Muslim woman to Guru Arjun Daiv Je. The woman wanted to become a follower of Sikh teachings.

41 Mian Mir (1550-1635) went to meet Guru Arjun Dev and asked him for his permission to destroy Jehangir. Guru Arjun Dev Ji however said that he would bear his pains patiently and stopped Mian Mir (1550-1635) to take any non-required action.

Guru. The Sikh Guru had to bear the pains in the fort of Lahore. His pains ended with the end of his life during the sentence when he slipped into the depths of the river Ravi while tried to take bath.

Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658 A.D.), the fifth king in Mughal's dynasty, though showed disposition towards Shariat-minded approaches and had to align with them to win over the throne⁴², yet he also developed respectful relations with little more eccentric Sufis, in general and Mian Mir in particular. Searching for the balance where he allowed his son, Dara Shikoh, to develop himself freely there he also manifested his urge to follow the path of Shariat.⁴³ When a conflict emerged against few Sufistic verses of Mullah Shah Qadri, in which he urged to find a trans-Shariati path for meeting with God, the orthodox elements resisted strongly and insisted to give him capital punishment. It was hard for Shah Jahan to go against the *fatwa* and he even turned down the request of his dearest son, Dara Shikoh, for the same cause. However, on the request of Mian Mir, Shah Jahan dared to go against the *fatwa*. Shah Jahan also took his son, Dara Shikoh, to Mian Mir, when Dara Shikoh was seriously ill and unable to find his health back even from the best of the *Hukama* (physicians). As after few weeks Dara Shikoh got his health back, he developed a deep impression of Mian Mir's spiritual healing powers. Dara Shikoh, later became a Murid (disciple) of Mullah Shah Muhammad Qadri and developed himself in Wahdat ul Wajudi (Unity of Being) model and wrote many works highlighting not only history of Sufis and Qadri order, but also efforts to understand Hindu

42 As a prince he (prince khurram) made Khusrau killed during his sentence. Jahangir, though made Khusrau blind and kept him in a prison found his love back for his son. With the efforts of physicians, Jahangir made an effort for Khusrau to find his eye-sight back. It seems physicians started having some sort of success, upon hearing which Prince Khurram, the future's Shah jahan, got Khusrau killed in his prison.

43 Once he had to visit the areas around present-day Gujrat to curb the tradition of marriages taking place among Hindu and Muslims on the request and insistence of the orthodox, Shariati Ulema.

philosophy in order to find a synthesis between Islam and Hinduism.⁴⁴

Mughal rule of Seventeenth and Eighteenth century in Punjab, particularly, and in India, generally, was witnessing a smooth prevailing of *Wahdat ul Wajudi* ideas and association of Islamic ideas with Hindu Vedantic ideas, along with an ambience of religious plurality.⁴⁵ The Sufistic discourses opened up by Baba Fareed (d.1265 A.D.), Sheikh Hussain (Madhu Lal) (1538-1599) and Mian Mir, kept on flowing and helped promoting such *Majzub* (absorbed) and *Faqir* (ascetic) like Sufistic ideas as those of *Shattari*, *Naushahi* and *Malamatya* orders.⁴⁶ The circles of ecstatic experiences found blossoming, along with *Malamatya* and *Wahdat al Wajudi* poetry triggered evaporating religious elitism and promoting emphasis upon Practice (*Aamal*) instead of religious rituals. However, the stream of opposition holding the ideologue of Muslim identity within strict Sharia rules never stopped flowing though remained under the surface for the time being.⁴⁷ Since the arrival of Aurangzeb, the

44 Dara Shikoh wrote his first work, *Safinat ul Aulya* (p.1640) detailing the biographical history of famous sufi saints. His second work, *Sakinat ul Aulya* (p.1644) narrated the history of Mian Mir (1550-1635) and his followers. Next came a small sufi digest, *Haq Numa* (p.1646). *Shatihat* or *Hasnat ul Aarafin* (p. 1648) came later in which Dara Shaikoh narrated statements of sufis in the condition of *Sukr* (Frenzy). Next came, *Majma al Bahrain* (p.1654) in which Dara Shikoh gathered the ideas of Muslim sufis and Hindu jogi.

s. Later on, a digest having a dialogue between Dara Shikoh and Baba Lal Ratan appeared by Dara's Mir Munshi, Chandar Bhan. Dara Shikoh, afterwards, helped translating Upanishads into Persian (p.1656).

45 Mohsin Fani wrote *Dabistan e Mazahib* in the time of Dara Shikoh and while sitting in Lahore in mid-seventeenth century. The book is about the manners of religions, and it portrays essence and teachings of number of religions and glimpses of their adherents. See, Mohsin Fani, *Dabistan e Mazahib*.

46 Shattari ideas initially prevailed independent from Qadri influence. However, soon Shattaris merged their Tariqas with Qadris and turned into its sub order. However, Naushahi movement emerged as a sub order of Qadri order and initiated a more intoxicating practices of Sheikh Haji Naushah Ganj Baksh (d.1692).

47 Shah Jahan, though showed a sympathetic attitude towards sufis, especially Mullah shah Qadri, did not hesitate to follow Mashaikh's fatwas

youngest son of Shah Jahan and as a sixth conqueror of Delhi throne, the underlying stream surfaced and found once again such a strength that for a long time its effect did not deteriorate. With Aurangzeb, Naqshbandi order came into dominance⁴⁸ and *Wahdat ul Shahudi* disposition and ideologue opposed *Wahdat ul Wajudi* position fiercely. Instead of showing respect for the types of Mian Mir⁴⁹ and Mullah Shah Qadri,⁵⁰ or a taste for Faqirs and Majzub

regarding non-Sharia acts. For instance, during his visits, when he reached Gujrat and Bhimber, on the complaint of Mashaikh, he ordered all the already taken place marriages between Muslim women and Hindu men as cancelled. He ordered that if a Hindu turned into Muslim, he could keep his wife with him. On the contrary, the Muslim women must be taken back. See, *Badshah Nama* within the description of 1634, and also *Rod e Kausar*, 423.

- 48 Naqshbandi order found its prevalence in India through the teachings of Baki Billah and Hazrat Mujaddad Alif Sani during the later years of Akbar and Jahangir's rule. The order however found favorable circumstances during Aurangzeb period when the king himself started learning the ways of spiritual practices of the Naqshbandi order. Another, Khawand Mahmud Al-Hazrat Ishan was making Naqshbandi order famous and was finding its sympathizers and followers even from within rulers. In the last years of sixteenth century Khawaja Baki Billah, also stayed in Lahore for some time to promulgate his teachings, though the order of Naqshbandi became famous when he reached Sirhind and made Mujaddad Alif Sani his student. However, during his stay in Lahore, the governor of Lahore, Qaleej Khan who was a strict Muslim, also developed a close association with Baki Billah. Theoretically, it was the writing and teachings of Sheikh Mujaddad Alif Sani those paved the way against *Wahdat ul Wajud*. Politically, it was Sheikh Fareed's, an important *Mansabdar* of Akbar and Jahangir, backing that enriched this mode of Sufism.
- 49 Aurangzeb ordered to make a huge mosque, later named Badshahi mosque in front of the Lahore fort with the same bricks piled up by Dara Shikoh for constructing a road-passage from the shrine of Mian Mir (1550-1635) to Lahore Fort. However, Aurangzeb gave importance to some other Shari minded Qadri sufi, like Shah Chiragh whose tomb was constructed by Aurangzeb.
- 50 A murid of Mullah Shah Qadri, in his last days reminded him of Aurangzeb's love for spiritual Tariqas and hoped Aurangzeb will visit Mullah Shah after becoming King. Mullah Shah however did not endorse the hope. Aurangzeb never turned back for Qadri Tariqas, and when he arrived, he ordered for the construction of Badshahi mosque with all the same red brick already piled up for making Mian Mir (1550-1635)'s shrine earlier by Dara Shikoh. See, Ikram, *Rod e Kausar*, 433.

poets,⁵¹ Aurangzeb paved the way for implementing rules of Sharia abstractly. Aurangzeb's strictness against non-Shari acts, Hindus, Shias, and music, including all forms of Sama, have a justification in Naqshbandis sufistic ideologue along with the Shariati minded Ulema. During his rule, even Chishti saints had to change their approach and guise it within the dress of Sharia.⁵² The primacy of Muslim identity for religious recognition remained a hallmark of the revivalist spirit of not only Chishtis, but also that of Shah Wali Ullah (1703-1762) and Mian Mazhar Jaan-e-Jana's (1699-1781) spiritual awakenings reflecting the dominance of Naqshbandi's emphasis. However, during the time of later Mughals, after a strict rule of Aurangzeb, oppositional strands started finding strength. Where Aurangzeb showed high respect for Naqshbandis for religious justification of anti-Shia and anti-Hindu policies,⁵³ later Mughals, including Muhammad Shah II and Bahadar Shah Zafar showed great respect for Chishti revivalist sufi-saints encouraging them to keep alive their traditional universal love.⁵⁴ However, Chishti revivalists

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- 51 On the orders of Aurangzeb, the Kotwal killed Sarmad Shaheed who was a sufi-mystic poet and most of the time remained undressed for showing disrespect for Shari rituals.
- 52 Chishti revivalism emerged with the teachings of Shah Kaleem ullah during a time of Aurangzeb. Shah Kaleem Ullah's student (*Murid*), Sheikh Nizam ud Din Dakkani remained influence in promoting Chishti Tarqia in Hyderabad Deccan during Aurangzeb's stay there. Sheikh Nizam ud Din Dakkani's student (*Murid*) Shah Fakhr e Alam Dehlvi's influence stretched even towards Punjab and Noor Muhammad Mahrvi, Sulaiman Taunsvi and later on Shams ud Din Sialvi developed Khankahs and promoted Chishti Tariqa through its revivalist spirit in Punjab.
- 53 Hagiographical literature claims that on the advice of Khwaja Masum, the son of Ahmed Sirhindi and Qayyum II, who was also a Pir of Aurangzeb advised the king to put Jizya on Hindus and proclaimed a stop on Sama and music even on the khankahs of Chishti saints. Further, that Aurangzeb took expedition against the Shia states on the advice of Khwaja Hujjatullah Naqshbandi, Qayyum III, the son of Khwaja Masum, the Qayyum II. See, Abul-Fayd Khwaja Kamalud-Din, *Rawdatu I-Qayyumiya*, Part I, 108. Also, discussed by John A. Subhan, *Sufism: Its Saints and Shrines* (Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House, 1960), 270-290.
- 54 Bahadar Shah Zafar even eulogized Shah Fakhr in many of his verses. See, Prof. Khaleeq Ahmed Nizami, *Tareekh Mashaikh Chisht* (Islamabad: Daira e Musannafin) 245. Shah Fakhr stood for pro-shia stance and manifested sympathetic disposition towards Hindu.

though kept their tradition of openness for other sects and religions alive yet their emphasis upon *Sunna* (Prophet's practice) and religious rituals increased.

Conclusion

The political disposition of the Mughal rulers though kept on moving between liberal and orthodox approaches, yet never let loose the development of extreme liberal approaches. Despite all liberalism, Akbar never hesitated to take punitive action against spiritual anarchic activities. Even such a person, like Mullah Shah Qadri, who was a *Sheikh* (spiritual mentor) of Dara Shikoh and a *Khalifa* (spiritual disciple) of Mian Mir had to face death sentence on the *fatwa* of Ulema of Kashmir, and Shah Jahan could not find courage to interfere in implementation. Dara Shikoh's *Wahdat ul Wajudi* stance, his close association with Baba Lal, a Hindu *jogi*, and his claims of understanding Quran through Upanishad, couldn't make him won over majority of the Muslims. Aurangzeb's long rule and his emphasis upon Sharia, coupled with the larger political situation, left very little space for the eccentric religious voices gained central position. The Mughals tolerated those sufi acts that balanced the concrete political situation. The liberal or eccentric Sufistic practices, especially those emerging out of *Wahdat ul Wajudi* ideologue though enabled individual spirits to prevail and *Sufistic* orders to flourish through gaining popularity within common people yet seldom found all out encouragement through rulers. The political interference of *Sufis* remained alive throughout the activities of Muslim rule, and often strategically used to match *Shariat-based* conservative forces. However, the rulers always tried to keep the interference in control.