

Literary Contributions of Sufism to Peacebuilding: A Journey of Harmony and Spiritual Insight

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Abstract

The study discovers social outline within Sufism (Saintism) instrumentalized by Sufis (saints) to settle peace in the formerly feudal Indo-Pak subcontinent. This research discovered that Sufi's doctrine, methodology and approach is significant, essential, and valuable to put an end to aggression, extremism, and terrorism that humanity faces now. Sufism as a magical movement attempted for the self-development of human being by following zealously the conducts and fictional character of Prophet Muhammad to achieve supreme surmounting to God. In Subcontinent (Indo-Pak), Sufism as an organization developed parallel to the expansion of Delhi Sultanate (reign of Delhi Sultnas, the kings), in 11th and 12th centuries as a mystical, rational, and communal authority aimed to build and strengthen connections among numerous communities for advancement of spirituality, social justice, human growth and multiplicity. Sufis from various academic regulations adopted different approaches to keep relations with rulers. Sufi movements stressed on the self-determination, self-respect, universality of humanity, fairness, peace, and harmony as vital promoting factors for the development of the planet. Sufi saints typically instrumentalized human growth through spiritual exercise formally besides informal schooling for promotion of peace, harmony, interfaith discourse

through their mediatory role in consistent with Maslow's grading of needs as circulated by Davis Chowning, and well-established communication tactic as enunciated by critical philosophers. Regardless of several opposing groups within, Sufism continued, and the practice is still relevant for managing the contemporary-day challenges comprising extremism, prejudice, and terrorism. In modern-day World, though there are some mystical movements but there is need to reinforce these movements with the help of modern state approach to have consistent peace and development of society at substantial.

Keywords: Sufis, Equality, Peace, Interfaith and Harmony

Introduction

This study is an effort to explore Sufism (Islamic mysticism) from ancient perspective with special attention on its impacts for peace and development. The countries like Pakistan cope with modern day challenges of extremism, brutality and terrorism impairing because of diplomatically motivated ideologies reducing from social, religious, cultural, and political differences in beliefs, attitudes, and practices. The socially different countries need universal social, legal and policy structure to address this problem. The current study aims to explore peace and development framework from spirituality. Therefore, this study replicates upon the religious regeneration from within Sufi (saints) positions, especially the contributions of scholarly Shaykhs (Sufi mystical leader/ guide/ master) who were noted for their logical and spiritual accomplishments in Islamic learning or juristic propensities; the Sufi (saint) who stayed busy for their self-development and dedication to the spiritual life; and, certainly the Sufi linked with specific Sufi guidelines or tariqas (methods/ path) that adopted the reforming of followers and humanity at large. This is an experimental study which covers the source and development of main Sufi orders, their distinctive characteristics, their peculiar ideology, and specific techniques of seeking knowledge and further expand it to masses particularly in less developed countries. This study attempts to explore how the Sufi arrangements common in Subcontinent (Indo-Pak) extensively contributed to peacebuilding, conflict solution, and human development and how their philosophies, method, and orders are still reflective of that role in

modern world. Sufism (Saintism) is the holy movement within the crease of Islam in which a Sufi associated his life to an inner journey for spiritual unity with his creator.¹

One of the most obviously identified practices of Sufism is the distinguished Muslim writer and philosopher al Ghazali's wisdom influences from the 11th century: I knew that the complete magical 'Way' includes both logical belief and functional activity. The latter comprises in getting rid of the barriers in the self and in stripping off its base elements and vicious morals, so that the heart may achieve to freedom from what is not God and to constant remembrance of Him.² Historically, Sufism (Saintism) widely recognized and admired in Muslim World during the 11th and 12th centuries. With this amount of applause, institutionalization and practices, Sufism (Saintism) transformed into a new kind of "committed mass religion."³

Literature Review

There is valueable literature available on Sufism (Saintism) and Sufi beliefs and development of Sufi instructions for spreading peace, sympathy, and spirituality. Anna Suvorova gives the detailed descriptions of the Sufis in her book, *Muslim Saints of South Asia: Eleven to Fifteenth centuries*. The book includes the life, Sufi order, stuffs, and the specific way of practice (tariqa) of Sufi order. The book gives details about the life of Al- Hujwari (1009-1077 CE), Muin' al Din (1141-1236 CE), Baba Farid al-Din (1173-1266 CE), Nizam al-Din (1238-1325 CE)-, and Baha al-Din Zakariya (1170-1262 CE).⁴ Richard M. Eaton, in his book talk about Sufis of Bengal frontier and their affairs with rulers. He noted that Sufis and Kings are disappointingly bound to one another by relations of fascination and repulsion. In general, the rulers were actively seeking authority from powerful saints when they first established themselves diplomatically and especially when they instituted new empires. Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Balban (1200-1287 CE) earliest storyteller situated the launching of Bengal's first independent empire (1213 CE) in the perspective of the grace, or blessing (Baraka) of two dervishes (wondering saints) in Afghanistan.⁵ Though, these studies significantly be deficient in the details about the role of Sufi orders developed particularly between 11th and 13th centuries for peace building and human development of society in

words of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, ⁶ statements by James Davies Chowning about people's fulfillment and tendency of reform, and development of efficient communication by Sufis in terms of vital theory. Davies contends that "People who are vulnerable in the satisfaction of their material, social emotive, or dignity needs form the dull tinder of revolutions." Why does the postulation of a chain of command of needs require an understanding of revolution? ⁷ Therefore, the current study tries to discover how Sufism (Saintism) developed with esteem to responding human needs of the era particularly reference to the peace and harmonay building and contributed to emerging those needs and avoiding social unrest to arise during that period and this approach and input of Sufis is still relevant in modern world.

Methodology/Design/Approach

This paper design to study the current dilemma is combination of probing and historical research. The main reason behind adopting this approach is to explore the problem with appropriate hypothesis. However, the research depends on primarily on secondary data previously available in historical reports and frame of reference work that have shaped and reshaped the social realism. The primary data is gathered by using formless interviews of subject specialists. The target band for these interviews consist of faculty member involved in research on Sufism, PhD scholars performing studies on Sufism, the mystics who are called as spiritual inheritor of saints sitting in spiritual seat (gaddi). Similarly, for the sake of practical proof the bulk of data is collected from secondary resources, especially of historical data such as books, journals, articles, archives, films, biographies, and autobiographies of Sufis. This research limited to the essential analysis of contributions of peace building and human development based on the testimony collected through secondary and primary sources. The data reveales that sufi teaching and prectices foster peace building and human development and circumwent extremist and haterd. Here Sufi teaching and practices are independed variables crubing the violent and extremism is intervening variable peace building and human development is determined variable as given in table.

Sufi Teaching and	Reducing	Violent	Peace Building &
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Practices	Extremism	Human Development
(Independent Variable)	(Intervening Variable)	(Dependent Variable)

The current study can be described from both the educational, practical and policy perspectives. As stated previously, there is no substantial work available in any discipline about contribution of Sufis for peace, development, co-realism, interfaith coordination in plural and diverse backgrounds. Indeed, this research will be extremely useful contribution to the previously available literature in this area.

Results and Discussions

The Sufis Contribution in Education and the Development of Society:

Sufis in feudal Subcontinent (Indo-Pak) realized of the basic needs of people needed for advancement of individuals and society entirety. They significantly realized the significance of education exercise and spiritual couching of individuals in general and followers and visitors exclusively. Hagiographic reports show that Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya used to prepare his believers and followers in terms of spiritual altitude as well as to spread note of Islam. To spread idea of Islam he skilled special preachers and instructors through teaching them various languages. He founded special department of languages in which language of several cultures were educated to preachers. Every delegate comprised of four to five participants, where everyone was taught in the qualities of patience and tolerance, kindness, and piety, and they were acquainted of the morals of culture and civilization. Every expounding delegation was presented with expenses of the journey along with things of trade to earn their employment while their visit to other locations and countries to spread point and learning beyond. He was the benefactor of preaching commissions and for their assistance he built rest houses after each ten miles. ⁸ His boarding academy soon gained notoriety farther than the then Subcontinent (Indo-Pak). Pupils from Java, Sumatra, Indonesia, Philippines, Khorasan, and China began to come for education. He founded habitation and hostel for educators and students from his expanses. In his academy, teachers were also taught in the skills of tilting, horse riding, swimming, and

swordsmanship. He paid special notice to the needs of orphan pupils and those residing in the hostel. ⁹ From his own sources Baha al-Din Zakariya formed trade markets and enterprise centers throughout the Subcontinent (Indo-Pak). In Sukkur, Bhakkar and Mansurah (Capital of Muslim Caliphate in Sindh) he had his own departmental shops from where preachers carried trading items to other territories. ¹⁰

As indicated above, Makhdum Abd-ar Rashid of Qadiriyyah also set up the institution 'Madrassa Haqania' in the village Rawaha where he stayed busy in educating and training of the pupils on sharia matters, logic, self-development, and love for humankind. Similarly, Mir Sayid Ali Hamadani (1314-1384 CE), renowned as Shah-e Hamdan other than expanding peace in Kashmir carried cultural and financial reforms in 14th century. Along with him seven hundred people landed at Kashmir across the Central Asia, among whom were religious academics, spiritualists, and artists. Those artists taught their skills to local people. Shah-e Hamadan founded various training complexes for people to acquire skills that earned them living through handicraft, wood carving, papier-mache and carving on silver. For its art and craft Kashmir valley is currently world famous. Other than this he took art of hat making and he himself utilized to earn his income through hat making. It is saying that in Kashmir the "art of shawl weaving is as old as the mountains of the valley". Before his entrance, Kashmir's nearly left their conventional art of shawl (weaved woolen cloth) weaving, but Shah-e Hamadan pushed people to continue their traditional art and it touched its highest. ¹¹

Mediational Role of Sufis for Peace, Tolerance, and Diversity

Sufis believed that the world can be succeeded with the policy of love and peace. For that, Sufis set up the Khanqahs (Sufi lodge) and began training of the public through formal and informal education. They spread the idea of mutual respect, interfaith harmony, honored virtues of variety and spreading peace and love regardless of religious identity. In the jama'at khanah, Sufi used to meet individuals, listen Sama and perform raqs. Here triumphed an environment of impartiality as these places were visited by persons from various classes, color, creed, age, and gender from already graded Indian society. ¹² Maslow in his paper described A Theory of Human Motivation, according to which hierarchy of desires of humans can be seen in a

categorized pyramid of five levels including self-actualization, self-esteem, belongingness, safety, security, and biological needs. The urgency of basic human demands goes in order of the physical needs, the social and emotive or love needs, the self-esteem/ dignity/ equality needs, the self-actualization and 5th safety needs. ¹³ Reasoning on this, Huma Ismail says that when Muslim state emerged in 11th century, South Asia and Sufis began reaching here, the local people was already separated into several social groups and people were not regarded on equal basis. The honor was only associated with high social class. Sufis welcomed the impoverished and respected them and made them accomplished that they are all equal and revered human being of God as He loves His creature. Sufis taught the governing elite and rich to help the humanity as they are accountable to God against their 'commitments to serve humans' (Haqoq al-ibad).¹⁴ This attitude of Sufis can be clarified in terms of Davies who maintains that men indeed desire equality, and when any individual think insecure or their safety requirements come under threat their propensity to revolt is improved achieve equality. ¹⁵

Dr Muhammad Hussain claimed that Chishti Sufis purposefully adopted the path of mutual tolerance of variety in Subcontinent (Indo-Pak). ¹⁶ For him the verse of Amir Khusraw, the follower and murid of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya (the supreme leader of Sufis) reflects their ideology: *Main tu, tu main ho Gaya* [Trans: I have become you, and you have become me] *Main jism hua, tu roh ho Gaya* [Trans : I became body, and you became soul] *Ab koi kia kahe kon kia ho Gaya* [Trans : Nobody can decide, who has become what?] This was the pantheist ideology and Sufi said that when God is shown in every human being, then how can one dislike others belong to different castes, colors, and faiths. When God does not discriminate among his creatures, then how can we be permitted to differentiate among them? When the light of Sun is offered equally for everyone that is messages that Sufi's repeated in their therapy of humans. Sufis always built their interfaith attitude on the example of treat of Medina held between Muslims and Jews by Prophet himself and the time of victory of mecca by Muslims when Prophet gave general mercy to all. Sufis adopted this approach and treated with humans with kindness, sincerity, and above any religious or cultural biases. ¹⁷ The jama'at khanah designed space to listen to unorthodox and

unconventional theories, expressions. This means the jama'at khanah offered a breathing space and peaceful atmosphere in ever developing and boosting intolerant society.¹⁸

Similarly, Shaykh Baha 'al-Din also encouraged inter-faith harmony. Behind the tomb of Baha-al Din Zakariya, there is appropriated the small Hindu temple of Prahalad Mandir which is believed to have one of the oldest Hindu temples on earth. Its existence inside the dargah enclosure is itself evidence of Sufis acceptance of variety.¹⁹ If a Muslim like Baha-al Din Zakariya is very connected to people of another faith, even if he is retrospective, and is the harshest, fundamentalist, and intolerant to "disbelievers." The temple is believed to have been built in the site of a previous sanctuary of the god of the Sun, the renowned image of which is a golden statue developed by jewels, written at length in 614 CE on the visit to Multan by the Chinese traveler Xuan Zang.²⁰ In Subcontinent (Indo-Pak), however the most renowned numbers were the reorganizers Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564 – 1624 CE) and Shah Wali Allah (1703 – 1762 CE). Shaykh Ahmad believed the title of mujaddid that literally means the renewer, widely recognized by his followers.

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Conclusion and Contributions

The history of Sufism (Saintism) shows that Sufis effectively played their mediational role in wide-ranging diplomatic and socio-cultural circumstances, from the time when in pre-modern politics Sufism (Saintism) and its societies offered a place for mediation. The pre-modern Sufis played the contemplative role both regarding state and society.²² Thus Sufism (Saintism) and its relations can be construed in pre-modern cultures as one of the many terms of civil society. While it seems earliest to create the expressions of a modern trend in pre-modern periods, the theoretical roots of the civil society sense can be claimed from the pre-modern history.²³ Sufis role as facilitator between two religions, and state and society, and mediator for invaders. This is the most valuable and essential doctrine of Sufi rituals, particularly when Sufis engage in spread of peace and tolerance in social conduct among all fabric of society cooperatively. Critical philosopher such as Linklater claimed that human liberation stresses on non-coercive discourse for social and political preparations through establishing relationships and bonds that bind

communities organized to pursue for equality, justice, impartiality, and any injustices in any form for instance terrorism, and sexual violence, forced relocation, forced alteration, climate change and resource reduction. In modern day perspective, the critical theory therefore can be assumed as a tool for the defenseless states, societies, and groupings to struggle and improve more impartial global relations.²⁴

As acknowledged earlier, Sufi has combined an all-encompassing approach regarding all persons regardless of variety in their language, caste, color, culture, and religion. Particularly during colonialist era of Abbasids rule, the Muslim empire spread universally, and Muslims got interface with citizens from different religions, cultures, and traditions. However, especially it was the Sufis who held dialogues with Jewish scholars, Christian priests, Hindu, Buddhist and Zoroastrian monks and philosophers. As the Muslims were themselves split on sectarian lines, therefore Sufis left over an indelible influence on the believers of various religions as well as curing all Muslims further than their sectarian associations.²⁵ In fact, Sufism believed that religion is something which is “personal commitment with the Divine”.²⁶ In this background, Sufi leaders from several orders often played a vital role of being peacemakers, mediators, and sometimes supporters within public differences, whereas the saints’ shrines presented illustrative coordination and sacred control to the life of groups of Islam defenseless both to the weakness of the rural and urban locations.²⁷ The Sufi lodges served as extraterritorial sites for the discussions, mediations, and agreements among various conflicting groups and therefore these were known as the safe havens from sectarian violence.²⁸ The comprehensive and humanistic doctrines of the Sufis played a huge role in bridging/ linking the gap among the participants of the lower levels of Hindus and Muslims. What was crucial for the Sufis and their disciples was not the external tradition of the mosque or temple, but merely to acknowledge that divinity can best be expanded through the doorway of the heart.²⁹ The Sufi saints educated their followers that actual pleasure is in kindness and spending wealth, and not accumulating it. Therefore, Sufis used to devote whatever surplus was obtained within the *khanqah* (Sufi lodge).³⁰ Sufism is the mystical group and an obscure part within the fold of Islam. Sufis in Sub-continent donated in a great deal to meet rudimentary needs of

people to mature society, particularly in terms of teaching, spiritual training, raise of religio-cultural multiplicity, upholding of social rights, and establishing peace, tolerance, and upholding social and public security and safety for all residents irrespective of religious, class, caste, color, and gender difference. Sufism evolved in different phases in Islamic world; Sufi lodges were used for multi-purposes where people were assisted by providing them food, education, shelter.

In Subcontinent (Indo-Pak), Sufism (Saintism) established as an organization parallel to the advancement of Delhi Sultanate (reign of Delhi Sultans, the kings), in 11th and 12th centuries. So, Sufis articulated their tactic towards humanity and incorporated through their exclusively crafted technique the development of humanity in terms of education, capacity improvement for socio-economic equality, preservation of justice, social-order and development, advancement of diversity, interfaith dialogue, sustainable peace, and harmony. Sufis always gave priority to guiding principles of fairness, unity of mankind, social-justice, peace, and kindness. Similarly, Sufism also has a rich history to present its role for protecting of human rights. The importance of Sufis attitude and approach continued on core principles of humanism, tolerance, harmony, and love for mankind that Sufis seen as heavily focused on solidarity of God. In nutshell, opposing to commonly held view that Sufism, the message and pathway of reconciliation, Sufi leaders can be deemed as substantial principles by the world's communities to create, improve and maintain worldwide as well as local peace and harmony. Finally, yet fundamentally, the message of love, peace, and prosperity by all Sufi leaders from every part of the world can be communicated and generated institutionally as a way forward to respond to extremism and sustain peace and harmony in the entire world. By knowing the reality that without paying significant response to meet fundamental needs of society such as education, health, food, clothing, and shelter, Sufi assumed that the propensity of people headed for adopting a course of extremism, violence and rebellion cannot be prevented. Sufism can be very influential for establishing peace and prosperity in the world. Although, peace building is a very complex procedure but essential coded policy of Sufism for the service of God and his human being can be adopted and advocated through curriculum developments, literature

production, state sponsored joint programs, and propagation through print, electronic and social media.

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