

PLURALISM AND COMMUNAL HARMONY: STUDYING THE CONTRIBUTION OF SUFIS

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ABSTRACT

The concept of peace and communal harmony and coexistence and the subsequent prospects for establishment of Pluralistic Society in the global context vis-à-vis the role of Sufis has become an advanced discourse of contemporary academic activity. Appreciating and evaluating all discussions and conjectures about communal harmony and also giving a due space to the definitions that are being assigned to it in the modern world, the present paper is an attempt to discover the roots and origin of peace both as a concept and as a process are found in the early Islamic period. Most of the features of the current wave of peace and co-existence, in fact, owe its origin to the persuasion of Holy Quran and the sayings of Prophet. March of prominent Sufis in the far off lands, dissemination of knowledge and learning, establishment of khankahas and maktabas, the process of migration, Promotion of Sufi institutions and the concept of peace and justice are some of the features essentially with Islamic orientation which encourages Pluralistic viewpoint at doctrinal and practical levels. The paper as such would sketch out the scope, role as well as the impact of all such factors on the mode of pluralism that has got roots both in the civilization of Islam and Sufi way of life. Furthermore the proposed paper is an attempt to evaluate the role of Sufis and their institutions in secularizing and harmonizing the cultural and civilizational ethos of mankind in all periods of history. The paper is getting exceedingly important in its relevance in present day human circles as Sufis have played a wider role in bringing peace prosperity and co-existence in entire humanity. A Sufi right from his dawn up to desk always creates concept of brotherhood irrespective of color, caste, creed or religion and accordingly their teachings from ancient times till date and in future have strengthen human bonds by their modest and compassionate nature. Sufis are examples in this regard as it is evident from pages of history that their role has been bringing of humans in on circles i.e circle of love and fraternity.

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Introduction

Sufism played a significant role in the history of mankind. Different Sufi orders not only fought with the self-ego, but also provide platform for Peace and Co-existence and also took active part in the promotion of harmony and love. According to *Gregory T. Massel*, Sufi orders had been the only effective Muslim response to the Mongols particularly in the twelfth and thirteen centuries. Bennigson says that the activities of the *Tariqa* were generally centered on the Holy places like tombs of Muslim saints. These places acted as a forum which the Sufi used for the promotion of peace and communal harmony. As a result of this, Islam became deeply rooted among the northern sedentary Turks, Tatars, Bashkirs, Kazak and Kirghiz nomads. It is, therefore, rightly advocated that from 12th century, the history is influenced by the activities of Sufi brotherhood.¹

Sufis not only take in to cognizance the fundamentals of Islamic law but respect native traditions and customs and assured the people that Islam's liberalism could encompass their individualism. Though unconcerned with affairs of state, the Sufis had a profound influence on the Muslim polity. They humanized its rigors and reduced the area of conflict between religion and politics. By providing Islam a broader base, Non- Muslims flocked to Sufi hospices in large numbers and in due course hundreds of thousands came into the fold of Islam. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, large numbers of people, particularly in Central Asia had accepted Islam through the preaching of Sufis. Under their impact, the Mongols, who had been the scourge of Islam, became patrons of Islam.²

Sufism, which did not rely on the strict letter of the law, also respected native traditions and customs and assured the people that Islam's liberalism could encompass their individualism.³ This was particularly so in the Kirghiz tribes, who found in Sufism a type of psychological and collective self-defense of their identity during periods of disorientation in the late 19th and early 20th century.⁴ There are a number of parallel concepts in Sufism which are intelligible in other traditions, including Vedic concepts of non-dualism, paralleling the oneness of being, and the Buddhist nirvana, paralleling notions of annihilation and subsistence.⁵

¹ Naseem Ahmad Shah, op. cit., pp. 4-11

² Rafic Zakaria, *The Struggle within Islam: the Conflict between Religion and Politics*, N.Y., Penguin, 1988, p.94.

³ Ibid, p.103.

⁴ Guy Imart, "The Islamic Impact on Kirghiz Ethnicity", *Nationalities Papers*, 14 nos. 1-2, Spring-Fall 1986, pp.83-86.

⁵ Rafic Zakaria, op. cit., p. 104.

Sufism emphasizes raising awareness of the Real, as distinct from a distorted understanding of what is taken to be real everyday life, through genuine knowledge of the self and the „veils’ which divide it from any experience of the truth. This is also the search for genuine Existence.⁶ It can therefore suggest an emphasis on individualism which approaches that found in Western humanism. It also emphasized compassion from one human being to another, regardless of all other distinctions. This trend greatly widened Islam and aided its attraction throughout Central Asia, India, Southeast Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. We see this tolerant trend in the fact that the Mulla Abu’l Hakim issued a *fatwa* (ruling) that it was wrong to build a mosque by demolishing a temple, while the Sufi poet Sarmad argued that Hindus and Muslims were both seeking the same truth, though using different verbal formulations.⁷ The pragmatic and humanitarian elements of Sufism can be found in the ten principles of proper human conduct as outlined by Abd al-Qadir Jilani (1077-1166):

- *Never swear by God.*
- *Never speak an untruth even in jest.*
- *Never break a promise.*
- *Never curse anyone.*
- *Never harm anyone.*
- *Never accuse anyone of religious infidelity.*
- *Never become a party to anything sinful*
- *Never impose a burden on others.*
- *Never accept anything from human beings - God alone is the giver.*
- *Look for in others the good points and not the bad.*⁸

These conceptions, of course, link back to the central idea in Sufism, that of love (*mahabba*), in which the trinity of Lover, Loved and Love are based ultimately on a compassionate and merciful Allah.⁹

The Sufis were closer to the general masses than to the rulers. In fact, rulers were often tempted to be seen in their company to acquire some legitimacy. The noted theologian cum Sufi Al-Ghazali, says that one should not look at the face of tyrant and unjust sultan, and even if it becomes necessary, one should turn one’s face away while talking to such ruler. Al-Ghazali also defined *tasawwuf* in a broader way as: **التعظيم الامر الله والشفقة على خلق الله**

⁶ Lloyd Ridgeo, *The Felicitous Life in Sufism*, Sufi, No. 28, Winter 1995-96, p.30.

⁷ Rafic Zakaria, *The Struggle within Islam: the Conflict between Religion and Politics*, N.Y., Penguin, 1988, p.140.

⁸ Ibid, p.106.

⁹ A.J Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1950, p.21.

*"Reverence to the commandments of God and kindness towards His creatures."*¹⁰

Saiyyid Ali Hamdani although considered himself to be chosen by God and charged with the responsibility of the revival and consolidation of Islam. But he strongly advocated the principle of universal justice. Both in his letters and the *Zakhiratu al- Muluk* he repeatedly underlines the fact that one of the important obligations of ruler is:

کَلِّهِ فِیضِ عِزِّهِ وَجِوَدِ رَحْمَتِهِ
اَنْتَ اَرْحَمُ رَحِمٍ اِیَّاهُ لَمْ یَلْ وَلِیْ لَمْ یَسْ
حَکِّ اسْدِ چَ اَکْهَ رَحُودِ حَکِّ عِیْلِ وَهَ کَلْفَرِ وَ دَوْدِ رَاشِ اَهْلِ
اسْدِ مَوِجَّهِ عِزِّهِ وَ اَحْیَا اَکْهَ تَنْفِیْ کَ مَوِیْ کَوْتِ رَاشِ اَهْلِ تَوْدِ

*"To provide protection to his subjects through strict administration of justice. Those who follow the cardinal principles of justice and public welfare, he says, shall attain salvation and those who go astray shall face rack and ruin."*¹¹

Thus, it is obvious how Sufis maintained their distance from the power centres; and it was for this reason that they were so dear the common people. Though there was always an exception to any rule, most of the Sufis maintained this distance. They did not want religion to be misused by rulers. Religion for these Sufis, was not a means for acquiring power and influence, rather it was meant for their spiritual needs.

One of the great Sufi Shaikh is Khawaja Ahrar whose contribution is noteworthy in establishing peace and co-existence in Sufi history. Khwaja Ahrar regularly helped broker peace between rival Timurid princes. One of his letters addressed to Sultan Husayn Bayqara, states his opinions on a land distribution plan meant to appease belligerent princes.¹² The Khwaja approves this scheme, giving the highest priority to peace in a kingdom. He writes, "What good will come from two Muslim factions who are related to one another being at war?"¹³ The Khwaja was known as a political mediator and this can be judged from biographical accounts of his life. An account that is present in both *Rashaḥat*, *Ain al-Hayat* and the *Silsilat al-'Arifin* attests to this popular image.¹⁴ The Khwaja was accompanying the forces of Sultan Ahmad Mirza as the latter rode against the combined forces of Umar Shaykh Mirza and Sultan Mahmud Mirza. Once camped, The Khwaja asked the Sultan,

¹⁰ Asghar Ali Engineer, *On Developing theology of peace in Islam*, Sterling publishers, Okhla, New Delhi, 2003, p. 106.

¹¹ A. Q. Rafiqi, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

¹² Jo-Ann Gross and Asom Urumbaev, *The Letters of Khwaja 'Ubayd Allah Ahrar and his Associates*, Brill, 2001, pp.117-18.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 118-19.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp.118-19.

Mirza and Sultan Maḥmud Mirza. Once camped, The Khwaja asked the Sultan, "Mirza! Why did you bring me along? I am not a man of war! And if you desire peace, what then is the delay?" The Mirza replied, "What authority do I have? All affairs are subject to your will!" The Khwaja arranged for the three parties to meet each other. The Khwaja is reported to have said, "I have become weak from old age. I bear the burden of these negotiations so that you don't entangle yourselves (with your quarrelling)." In the end, all three parties made peace with each other. Referring to this event, Mirza Haidar Dughlat remarks, "No one could resist the entreaties of the blessed mind of the holiness."¹⁵ This account shows that not only was the Khwaja close to the Timurid princes, but that he also bore the responsibility of having the three Timurid family members make peace with each other. This demonstrates the importance of peace and stability in the eyes of the Khwaja and how he reminded the Timurids that they should maintain cohesion among themselves.

Likewise, there may be a greater scope for an independent role by women within the Sufi tradition than in some strict interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence. Rabi'a al-Adawiya (717- 801 A.D.), for example was a prominent woman saint who never married, while Fatima Nishapuri (d. 838 A.D.) was respected as a great Sufi teacher.

Sufism became a major progressive force that helped to spread Islam in the Indian and Malay world.¹⁶ In many ways, it underpins the more everyday form of Islam lived in villages and communities in these societies. This trend continues today in the privacy of small communities, as well as in a revival of Sufi literature and academic societies. Through its love of music, dance, poetry, story-telling and humor, Sufism helped create a vigorous culture which penetrated much of Central Asia, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia. In this guise Sufis are often known to the West as *'dervishes'*, or spinning dervishes, whose practices like the special chants and breathing exercises lead to a trance state (*wajd*) designed to bring the participant closer to God. Likewise their humorous, insightful stories have been spread to the West by Idrees Shah.¹⁷

The Sufi artistic tradition greatly enriched both Arabic and Persian culture. Sufi liberalism had other important effects. While music and dance were anathema to the *ṣulama*, these were encouraged in Sufi hospices.

¹⁵ Mirza Muhammad Haider Dughlat, *A History of the Moghuls*, Forgotten Books, 2018, p. 113.

¹⁶ AL-Hujwiri, Ali B. Uthman Al-Jullabi The Hashf Al-Mahjub: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism, trans. Reynold Nicholson, London, Luzac and Company, 1976, Chapter XI, pp140-141

¹⁷ Imos, Zos "Sufi Traditions", (Internet Source), 1994

Their songs were full of passionate devotion to God, the unity of the soul and the body and the oneness of mankind. They indulged in *sama*, (Sufi audition) or the chanting of song and music, which led to a state of mystic exaltation. The theme is as common in the poems of Ibn al-Arabi and some of the Arabic poets as in the Persian compositions of such literary giants as Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-73), Farid al-Din Attar (d. 1190) and Muslihuddin Saadi (1193-1292). One of the greatest Sufi saints of all time was Abd al-Qadir Jilani (1077-1166), better known as *Gauth al-Azam* or 'the Sultan of Saints' who preached in Baghdad. He was a disciple of Ghazali and his eloquence was as soul-stirring as the radiance of his personality. He founded the Ghauth al order which spread to most parts of the Muslim world and may be regarded as the mother of all Sufi orders. According to H.A.R. Gibb, The Qadriyya order is, on the whole, amongst the most tolerant and progressive orders, not far removed from orthodoxy, distinguished by philanthropy, piety and humility and averse to fanaticism, whether religious or political.¹⁸

*Sufism thus unfolded both as a religious science and as a social movement, with each society or order commanding large numbers of adherents. Indeed, as these orders continued to unfold and spread across the Islamic world, their masters came to wield tremendous authority, not just in the spiritual realm, but in the temporal world as well. These masters came to command the reverence and allegiance of thousands, even tens of thousands of disciples, each of whom had given an oath of obedience to the Shaikh, and through the Shaikh, to the Prophet and ultimately to God.*¹⁹

Thus, Gianotti concluded the Sufism that helped to spread Islam through Central and East Asia, the Southeast Asian archipelago, the Indian Sub-Continent and sub-Saharan Africa was both a spiritual and a social force. The legacy it left was an Islam that preached with cultural sensitivity, promoted tolerance and inter-religious cooperation, and never abandoned the inner life and the spiritual core for the sake of solely political activism.

All these aspects, however, were all directed towards achieving *wilayah*, or identification of man with God.²⁰ Thus, Sufi propagated Islam did not make any violent uprooting but offered immediate values without displacing the old. In a society that was divided on more than one fronts and engaged in continued internal warfare destroying thereby the precious resources of a region that was otherwise most fertile from the cultural and civilizational point of view and possessed such human resource energies that, once channelized properly, brought momentous and

¹⁸Rafic Zakriyya, op. cit., p.105.

¹⁹ Rentz, George "The Wahhabis", in Arberry, A.J. (ed.) Religion in the Middle East Three Religions in Concord and Conflict, Cambridge, CUP, 1969, Vol. 2, pp.270-271.

²⁰ Rafic Zakria, *The Struggle Within Islam: The Conflict Between Religion and Politics*, N.Y., Penguin, 1988, p.109

historical changes in to the whole landscape of human civilization, Islam provided an inner impulse to the movements of change and worked as a cohesive factor that gave meaning to the whole social structure and new social revolution was set in motion that rested upon a universal religion.²¹ It was in Central Asia that Islam found the host to its philanthropic version and formulated, promulgated and propagated the Sufi perspective of Islam. In course of time the Turks Sufi became the torch bearers of Islamic worldview, value-system and religious philosophy. Rather the values that emanated from the Central Asian civilizational background. The interaction between the local traditions and the mainstream Islamic legacy gave this region the abiding values of coexistence, tolerance, fellowship of faith and brotherhood of man. Its peoples have been great advocates and exponents of religious tolerance and horizontal humanist values.²²

Sufism spread more rapidly due to its openness to and acceptance of other religions and its clear yet simple emphasis on simplicity, piety, and purity. Sufism represents the cosmopolitan, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of Islam, which are capable of and willing to engage in discourse with other cultures and religions (especially the other Abrahamic faiths). Sufi history in Central Asia bears out this point: upon entering the region, it faced a variety of religions and religious traditions ranging from Zoroastrianism to shamanistic animism. Yet Sufism accepted them all as different manifestations of a single Truth, treating them with respect (and earning their respect in turn). Since Sufism spread predominantly by merchants and traveling scholars, it was able to gain access to a ready audience in both urban and rural areas. Once established, it remained nearly unchanged for several centuries. He mentioned that as late as 1988 an observer noted that organized networks of Sufi brotherhoods that have been popular in Central Asia since medieval times continue to exercise considerable influence on the Muslims. Of these, the Naqshbandi order is the most popular, followed by the *Qadiriyyah*, the *Suharwardi*, the *Yasawiyah* and the Chistiyyaorders in India as well.²³

In spite of all the Russian atrocities Central Asia is perhaps the only region with Muslim majority population, who did not advocate armed revolution against the Russian atrocities inflicted upon Muslim population of the region. There would be many reasons responsible for this compassionate behavior of Central Asian people but the influence of Sufi traditions that had molded the mind set of Muslim population for centuries together is one of the significant reasons to advocate a harmonious life. *Das Bha Kaar, Dil Bha Yaar* was not the guiding force for the

²¹ Ibid, p.109.

²² Ibid, p.109.

²³ Understanding Sufism and its Potential Role in US Policy, ed., Zeyno Baran retrieved from, WWW.NIXONCENTER.ORG

emergence of Sufi orders of Central Asia, it stemmed down to the general masses of the region as well, consequently after going through the different phase of central Asian history, Islam with a *Sophistic* connotation developed peace, harmony and co-existence among the masses of Central Asia. All the Sufi orders that developed on the soil of Central Asia advocated and recommended such teaching that would enhance man God relationship in particular and man-man relationship in general. They demonstrated compassionate attitude towards the sufferings of the people and their (*langer*) common kitchen open to all was the sign of love, benevolence, brotherhood. Central Asian Sufis engaged not in struggle for power, but to overpower their desire and greed, and cultivate compassionate attitude towards others. They communicate with great care the Divine message of truth, justice, benevolence, love, compassion, human dignity and equality.²⁴

Though devout, most of these Schools of Sufism are much more able to accommodate modern and secular trends compared to certain radical forms of Islam found in other parts of the world, e.g. the Wahhabism exported from Saudi Arabia. Previously, the Sufi orders in Arabia were fiercely suppressed by the Wahhabi movement, which helps explain the fact that Central Asia has not proved the most fertile of grounds for Wahhabism, in spite of financial resources pumped into the region from Saudi Arabia. Wahhabis, in particular, are opposed to the notion of ecstatic mysteries, as well as the visiting of the tombs of saints which is viewed as potentially leading to idolatry.²⁵

Sufism: A Global Message of Pluralism and Harmony

Historically speaking, Sufism appeared in Islam towards the end of the first century of the Islamic calendar. Some Sufis, of course maintain that the Prophet (SAW) of Islam himself is the mainspring of Sufism and they draw the inspiration from him for their spiritual and devotional practices. Although there is a debate about the meaning of the word Sufi but every human being whether Muslim or non-Muslim believed that the message of Sufis is based upon love, peace, benevolence, harmony. The word Sufi has been widely used in the Islamic history for a distinct set of doctrines and practices within Islamic framework, and has set a vast following among the Muslims.²⁶

²⁴ Understanding Sufism and its Potential Role in US Policy, ed., Zeyno Baran retrieved from, WWW.NIXONCENTER.ORG.

²⁵ Ahmad Rashid, *Revival of Islam*, Far Eastern Economic Review, 1992, p.33.

²⁶ Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, "Sufi Cults and the making of a pluralist society", ed. Anup Taneja, Sufi Cults and evolution of Medieval Indian Culture, Indian council of historical Reseach, New Delhi, 2003, p. 34-36

The Sufi Islam, it is interesting to note, is love and peace oriented and their God is God of love and *Ar-Rahman ir-Rahim* (Merciful). It is for this reason the huge masses of people of different faiths and Muslims have been attracted by the Sufi Islam, which was spiritual and emotional appeal and also flexible and soothing to the soul.

Ibn Arabi has exercised great influence on Sufis of whole globe as his doctrine quite accommodative and flexible in many ways. According to this, the real existence (*wujud*) is that of Allah whereas all of us are His manifestations. Such a doctrine leads to demolition of barriers between people of one religion and the other. In fact, it brought Muslims and non-Muslims together in world especially in India and helped evolve a composite culture.²⁷

The fundamental doctrine of the Sufi thought is what has been called *sulh-i-kul*, i.e. peace with all. Thus peace, coexistence, friendship, brotherhood and love have been at the centre of Sufism. Moulana Rumi, whose *Masnavi* (an epic poem running into several volumes) is considered by many as the Qur'an in Persian, (درای) puts great stress on love and peace. In one of his couplets, he says, you (Sufi) have come to effect union (between people) and not for separating them. He also says that dogs fight for the bones and the wise take the marrow, meaning thereby that it is not dogmas which contain the truth of religion; rather the essence of religion, its kernel is important. One of the greatest Sufi thinkers of Islam, Maulana Rumi has inspired and continues to inspire generation after generation of Muslims and others.²⁸

The contribution of the Sufis to society lies in their sincere and dedicated struggle to find a unity for the heterogeneous elements that make up its totality. They appreciated the multi-racial, multi-religious and multilingual pattern of world society. For them God was not a logical abstraction of unity, but a living reality who can be approached through the service of mankind. Their efforts were, therefore, directed towards the creation of a healthy social order free from dissensions, discords and conflicts. It was a herculean task but they undertook it as a divine mission. In love, faith, toleration and sympathy they found the supreme talisman of human happiness. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya often cited in his assemblies a remark of Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khair (b. 1049) that though there were myriads of routes and roads leading to God, none was quicker and more effective than bringing happiness to the hearts of men. Ibn Battuta found in Damascus a trust which existed for providing balm to afflicted hearts.²⁹

²⁷ Asghar, Ali Engineer, op. cit., p.104.

²⁸ Ibid, p.105.

²⁹ Ibid, p.105-7.

It is interesting to observe that Sufism - which has been widely known as a silent movement for approaching God and purifying the heart to become a „Perfect Man’ (*al-Insan al-Kamil*) - has to some extent become an active and sometimes radical movement when it encounters situations where injustice exists. Example of this can be observed in some cases such as Al-Ghazali, who wrote some treatises in relation to giving advice and criticizing some unjust acts by rulers. These letters were a token of Al-Ghazali’s concern about the injustice of the ruler of his time. In his treatises Al-Ghazali wisely advised the ruler to be a just ruler and moreover Al-Ghazali bitterly criticized unjust rulers. According to Al-Ghazali - who drew his wisdom from Islamic teachings - the ruler’s duty is to serve the people. Al-Ghazali is actually a good example of how Sufism is not associated with passivity. A real Sufi is one who cares about justice and prosperity for the people, and is ready to become involved in political and social affairs for the sake of people and society³⁰

The second example is the case of Sanusi of Cyrenaica in Libya. Before the coming of Sheikh Sanusi and Sayyid al-Mahdi, the Cyreneican people, although they were Muslims, did not care about the Islamic teachings. After those two Sufis mentioned above transformed the spirit of Islamic teachings through right guidance and well organized preaching, the preaching of Islam was the basis of the dynamics of change in the social and political life of the Muslims in Cyrenaica.³¹

³⁰ Abdul Qayyum, *Letters of al-Ghazali*, Indonesian translation by Haidar Bagir (Jakarta, Penerbit Hikmah, 2000) . This book is a compilation of letters of *al-Ghazali*, from many letters in Arabic and Persian, such as *Tabaqat-i-Syafi’ah*, *Mama’ul Insya*, *Atsarul Wuzara etc.* The 26 letters are as follow: 1.) To Sultan Sanjar al-Saljuqi about the advice to Islamic scholars not to try to get a good position in the court, 29-32. 2.) To Nizamuddin Fakhrlul Mulk about the obligation of the ruler to live simple life, 33-43. 3.) To Nizamuddin Fakhrlul Mulk about the importance of a judge to be fair and honest, 45-48. 4.) To Nizamuddin Fakhrlul Mulk about the obligation of the ruler to prioritize the poor people, 49-58. 5.) To Nizamuddin Fakhrlul Mulk about the obligation of the ruler to be just and fair to all the people, 59-67. 6.) To Nizamuddin Fakhrlul Mulk about the obligation to hold the power honestly, 69-72. 7.) To Nizamuddin Fakhrlul Mulk about the ban to worship the power, 73-83. 8.) To Shihabul Islam about the obligation to protect the ulema (Islamic scholars), 85-89. 9.) To Shihabul Islam about the obligation of the rulers to understand the wisdom of Sufis, 91-95. 10.) To Shihabul Islam about the ban to be a hungry for power, 97-99. 11.) To Mujiruddin about the obligation of the ruler to promote the fair and honest judge, 101-110. 12.) To Mujiruddin not to be trapped into the falseness of worldly life, 111-121. 13.) To Mujiruddin about the obligation of the ruler to abolish the practice of corruption, nepotism and collusion, 123-129. 14.) To Mu’inul Mulk about the obligation of the ruler to fire the mean and corrupt officers, 131-135. 15.) To Sadat Khan is a warning not to be a hungry for the property, not to be greedy for it, 137-141. 16.) To one of the rulers that giving the alms and contributions to the needy is a moral therapy, 143-151. 17.) To all the Head of Administration of the departments in the governments to spend the money and property in God’s path, 153-156. 18.) To all Judges in Maghrib about the ban to work for the sake of ruler but for the sake of God, people and justice, 157-168. 19.) To Khawaja Imam Abbasi to remember God in any circumstances, 169-172. 20.) To Abul Hasan Mas’ud bin Muhammad bin Ghanam about the Sufistic life style as a tool to understand worldly life, 173-178. 21.) To all the Ulemas (Muslim scholars) about the obligation to respect the ulama (Muslim Scholars) and the pious people, 179-180. 22.) To Khawaja Abbas Khawarzam about the meaning of real life, 181-182. 23.) To Ibnul Amie about the dangers of collecting knowledge without practicing it, 183-188. 24.) To whom it may concern that is to all the scholars to understand spiritual world, 189-192. 25.) To Judge, Imam Sa’id Imaduddin Muhammad al-Wazzan about the importance of the judge to ask for the advice from Muslim scholars (Ulemas), 193-195. 26.) To all the people wishing to live in harmony and piety, orientation of social life which directs to the height of the spiritual life, 197-204.

³¹ E.E. Evan Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, p.64.

The third example of the dynamics of Sufism is the Sufis in Egypt. A good understanding of Islam has made the Sufi group in Egypt active in both spiritual and worldly life. The understanding of destiny does not make them passive to surrender to the will of God. Moreover, their understanding of destiny as has been decided by God makes them active in the Muslim community, as members of society and as members of *Tarekat*.³² An example of this worth mentioning is *Tarekat Shadhiliyyah* whose members use the practice of Sufism as the vital driving force in social and spiritual life, without neglecting their social neighborhood.³³

The Sufi *weltanschauung* was based on three basic postulates which determined their attitude towards God, man and society.

1. All people are the children of God on earth (*الخلق كعيال الله*) The *Sunnan-i-Abu Da'ud* reports that the Prophet used to pray at night: „Oh God! I bear witness that all Thy creatures are brothers. (*يا الله انا اشهد ان كل خلقك اخوة*)

Sa'di said that the reason for human brotherhood was that all human beings were made of the self-same clay and were as interdependent on each other as the limbs in the human body.³⁴

It would be vain and whimsical to think that they did not believe in their religious identity. While firmly adhering to the basic principles of their faith, they did not carry this difference to social relationships. Their toleration was the toleration of a spiritually powerful man who, while jealous of the frontiers of his own faith, admires other forms of thought and behavior. When Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya saw Hindus bathing in the Jamna and singing devotional songs, he said:

(مرلوم راس درامیدی "مولانا گامے")

"Every people have their own path, their own religion and centre of worship"

A whole world of religious broad-mindedness and tolerance is epitomized in this hemistich which came to be frequently cited inside and outside the *khanqahs* of medieval saints. Iqbal considered the following verse of Amir Khusrau as the best illustration of religious toleration and coexistence:

³² Michael Gilson, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt, An Essay in the Sociology of Religion*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, pp. 129-133.

³³ Ibid, p.133-139.

³⁴ Neeru Misra, *Sufis and Sufism: Some Reflections*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 2004, pp. 4-20.

ایسے کہ ز بت طعنہ بہ ہندو بری

ہم زدے آموز پرستش گری

“O you! Who sneer at the idolatry of the Hindu, Learn also from him how worship is done”³⁵

Common to both paths was also ascetic's mot or the life of simplicity, and use of the language of the commoners to express the principles of the path. It was this assimilating approach of Sufism in South Asia that became the bonding factor of the society.

The spirit of toleration, as Gibbon has remarked and Iqbal has approvingly quoted, springs from very different attitudes of the mind of man. There is the toleration of the philosopher, to whom all religions are equally true; of the historian, to whom all are equally false; and of the politician, to whom all are equally useful. There is the toleration of the man who tolerates other modes of thought and behavior because he has himself grown absolutely indifferent to all modes of thought and behavior. There is the toleration of the weak man who, on account of sheer weakness, pockets all kinds of insults heaped on things or persons whom he holds dear. It is obvious that these types of tolerances have no ethical value. On the other hand, they unmistakably reveal the spiritual impoverishment of the man who practices them. True toleration is begotten of intellectual breadth and spiritual expansion. The Sufis' toleration was an expression of confidence in their faith. For them all people were the children of God on earth and any social discrimination was a negation of the true spirit of faith.

The second foundational principle of the Sufi approach and ideology was their firm faith in *تخلقوا با اخلاق الله* (pattern yourself upon the nature of God).³⁶ It meant that the aim of human life is to reflect in one's own thought and activity the attributes of God. Perfection in human life could be reached only by expressing in one's life more and more divine qualities. God's way is that He extends his bounties to all – the pious and the sinner, the believer and the non-believer, the high and the low. When the sun rises, it gives light and warmth to all living beings; when it rains, all benefit from the showers; the earth keeps its bosom open for all. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad calls it the mark of *Rububiyat* and thus explains its spirit: „The strangest thing about this scheme of Providence, though the most patent, is the uniformity and harmony underlying it. The method and manner of providing means of sustenance

³⁵ Ibid, p.18.

³⁶ Ibid, p.13.

for every object of existence are the same everywhere. A single principle is at work in all things. The stone may appear different from the fragrant flower, but the two receive sustenance in the same way, and are granted growth in the same style. '³⁷

Shaikh Muninddin Chisti insisted that man could inculcate qualities of God:

اول سخاوتے چوں سخاوت دریا، دوم شفقتے چوں شفقت آفتاب، سوم تواضع چوں تواضع زمین

*To develop river-like generosity, sun-like affection and earth-like hospitality (Siyar-ul-Auliya).*³⁸

As these phenomena of nature make no distinction between any creatures of God, likewise man should not discriminate between one human being and another. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya told his audience that once Prophet Abraham was reluctant to ask a non-believer to partake of food with him. Prompt came the admonition from God: „Oh Abraham! We can give life to this man but you cannot give food to him.’ The Sufi *khanqahs* supplied food and shelter to all sorts of people, no matter to what religion they belonged. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya used to fast regularly. When food was brought to him at the time of *sahri*, morsels would stick in his throat as his mind went back to persons who had gone to bed without food.³⁹

A necessary concomitant of this approach was that man promptly responded to human misery and strained his every nerve to save people from hunger and misery. *Sahih Muslim* contains the following *Hadis-i Qudsi*:

On the Day of Judgment God will address a particular individual: “O Son of Adam! I fell ill but you did not attend on me.’ Bewildered, this individual will say: „How is that possible? Thou art the Creator and Sustainer of all the worlds.’ God will reply: „Doesn’t thou know that such and such a creature of mine living near thee fell ill, but you did not turn to him in sympathy? If you had but gone near him you would have found Me by his side.’ In like manner, God would address another individual: „O Son of Adam! I had asked of you a piece of bread but you did not give it to me!’ The individual would submit: „How could this happen? Thou doesn’t stand in need of anything’. And God will reply: „Do not you remember that so and so among the hungry creatures of Mine had asked you for food and did you not refuse to give it to him? If you had fed him, you would have found Me by his side.”⁴⁰

³⁷ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *Tarjuman ul-Qur’an*, Sahitiya Academy, New Delhi, 1964, trans. Syed Abdul Laeef. Basic Concepts of the Qur’an, Academy of Islamic Studies, Hyderabad, 1958, Vol. I, p. 24.

³⁸ Neeru Misra, op. cit., pp. 14-17.

³⁹ Ibid,

⁴⁰ Sahih Bukhari,

Another major contribution of Sufism was an immense service to humanity through message of love and brotherhood. Mir Khurd in his *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, had categorically stated that Nizamuddin used to say, "the followers of *tariqat* and *haqiqat* agree that the main purpose and objective of man's creation is love of supreme Being. From the love of God, he arrives at the love of humanity. There are two specialties invaluable and precious i.e. *tasbih-i- mllat* (improvement of people) and *tajrid-i- khidmat* (love of humanity). Love of humanity was an "ethical ideal" carried further by most of the Sufis in whole globe. The Sufi advocated the path of peace and coexistence and asked people to avoid rift and bloodshed. Sheikh Farid ud.din Ganj Shakar advised his disciples to placate one's enemies. He once told a visitor: "do not give me a knife, give me a needle for. The knife is an instrument for cutting asunder and the needle for sewing together." Jamal ud-din Hansi, a disciple of Shaikh Farid Ganj, remarked Sufis main aim as:⁴¹

يا احمد لا ينال المقصود بكثرة الصلوة والصيام بل ينال بقضاء حوائج الانام

"The mystic goal is achieved not through the rituals of fasting and prayers but by fulfilling the requirements of the needy"

Bibi Fatima Sam, a very respected mystic woman of medieval India whose hut in Delhi attracted people from far and near, used to say that the divine reward for giving a piece of bread and a glass of water to the hungry was greater than offering thousands of genuflections of prayer and keeping thousands of fasts.⁴²

Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya classified devotion to God into two categories: *ta'at-i lazmi* and *ta'at-i muta'addi*. *Ta'at-i lazmi* consisted of prayers and penitence's that an individual performed; the *ta'at-i muta'addi* consisted in helping the needy and the poor and feeding the hungry. He told his disciples that the reward of *ta'at-i-muta' addi* was greater than that of obligatory prayers. Sa'di, the famous Persian poet, echoed the same sentiments when he said:

طریقت بجز و خدمت خلق نیست

به تسبیح و سجاده و دلق نیست

"Higher spiritual life is nothing but service of humanity, It is not (chanting) the rosary, (remaining on the) prayer carpet or (wearing) coarse garments."

⁴¹ K.A.Nizami, *Impact of Sufi saints on Indian culture and society, in contemporary relevance of Sufism*, pp. 139-167.

⁴² Riazul Islam, op. cit., p. 325.

Sa'di places service of God's creatures at the forefront of not only Sufism but even religion in general. It is undoubtedly represents a worthy ideal which unfortunately has remained largely unrealized. This, it will fair to remark, is a versified *qaul* (saying) with its normal share of poetic exaggeration.⁴³

Sa'di in most of his poems and anecdotes gives attention to other human beings and recommends people to help and love each other as all of them are from one essence. He always thinks on the life of others and philanthropically says that the burden of others should bring pain to the others: When I see the poor dervish unfed My own food is pain and poison to me. Sa'di reverences and respects the dervishes and poor people as he writes: ⁴⁴

One night a king dreamt that he saw a king in paradise and a dervish in hell. The dreamer exclaimed: what is the meaning of this? I should have thought that the positions would be reversed.' A voice answered: The king is in heaven because he respected dervishes. The dervish is in hell because he compromised with kings.

The Sufis identified service of God with the service of man. Shaikh Junaid Baghdadi was quoted in the mystic circles of Delhi as saying that he found God among the poor people in the streets of Medina.⁴⁵

The third foundational principle of Sufi ideology was their faith in the Unity of Divine revelation, which paved the way for contact with people of diverse faiths and denominations.

This basic approach opened the doors of deeper ideological contact and communication with people of different faiths, and put an end to 'all notions of exclusiveness which had hitherto prevailed among mankind assigning divine blessings and favors to one's own community' ⁴⁶Amir Khusrau, who had delved deep into the Hindu religious literature, said:

نیست بنود ارچہ کہ دیندار چوما

بست بے جاے باقرار چوما

⁴³ Riazul Islam, op. cit., pp. 324-336.

⁴⁴ Neeru Misra, op. cit., pp. 15-18.

⁴⁵ Riazul Islam, op. cit., pp. 236-250.

⁴⁶ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *Tarjuman ul-Qur'an*, Sahitiya Academy, New Delhi, 1964, trans. Syed Abdul Laeef..Basic Concepts of the Qur'an, Academy of Islamic Studies, Hyderabad, 1958, Vol. I, p. 24.

"Though Hindus do not believe in the religion in which we do, in many matters they and we believe in the same thing."

Toynbee has very correctly observed that the missions of the higher religions are not competitive but complementary. If the unity of Divine Revelation is accepted, it would automatically lead to this attitude of mind and soul. The Sufis not only preached it but practiced it and helped in pulling down the barriers between various religious groups. Shah Niaz Ahmad of Bareilly thus declared the essential unity of all religions:⁴⁷

یہ سب ادیان وملتیں شاخ ہائے یک درخت

اک جڑ سے ہیں نکلی ڈالیاں سب پھوٹ پھوٹ

"All these religions and faiths are branches of the same tree; They have sprouted from one and the same root."

All religions have three essential elements — metaphysical, institutional and social, i.e. a conception of a Supreme Being, rituals and a code of ethics. The code of ethics assumes two forms: personal morality and social ideal. Richard Gregory in his *Religion in Science and Society* and Salter in his *Ethical Religion* have considered these as the central themes of any religious enquiry. After having surveyed the march of humanity in space and time, Toynbee has come to the conclusion that the practical test of a religion, always and everywhere, is its success or failure in helping human souls to respond to the challenges of suffering and sin.⁴⁸

The ethical part of Sufi teachings is undoubtedly the most important dimension of Sufism. There is much emphasis on compassion, companionship, kindness, generosity, munificence, self-sacrifice (*ithar*), manliness, forgiveness, forbearance, *infaq* (giving away charity), and similar qualities in the treatise on Sufism and in the *malfuzat* and *maktubat* of the Sufi masters.⁴⁹

The Sufis in world have played the same role. They lived in the midst of the lower strata of society and identified themselves with the problems and perplexities of the people. Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din Sufi lived in Suwal, a small village of Nagaur, like Rajasthani peasants, mixed with people of all castes and creeds and adopted vegetarian habits. Shah Waliullah, in a very illuminating chapter on urban life and

⁴⁷ Neeru Misra, op. cit., pp. 22-26.

⁴⁸ Engineer Asghar Ali, *The Prophet of non-Violence*, Vitasta Pub. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2011, p. 155-157

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp.155-57.

organization in his *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, advocates the peaceful integration of all the components of society and their harmonious functioning to achieve human well-being. In fact, peace and goodwill between human beings was the end all and be all of Sufi endeavors.⁵⁰

Maulana Rumi who represents the Sufi ethics and real spirit like this:⁵¹

"Come to me if you are a Jew or Christian or a Muslim or even if you are a sinner as you are all humans."

The Sufi saints were anxious to create in society the harmony of a perfect orchestra. Their principle was to return hatred with love, violence with affection. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya used to recite the following verse of Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khair as his motto in life:⁵²

بر که مارا رنجہ دار دراحتش بسیار باد

"Whoever causes grief to us, May his life get more and more happiness"

A non-violent approach, sympathy with the weak and the downtrodden and consciousness of a divine mission to bring happiness to the hearts of men characterized the efforts of the Sufi saints of world. They did not indulge in criticism of other customs or practices. They disliked linguistic chauvinism and regarded all languages as different vehicles for the communication of feelings. They helped in the development of regional languages of their nations. They were instrumental in the rise of a common lingua franca. The example is that Turk recites Qur'an their native language in early periods of Sufis and also earliest sentences of Hindi were spoken in the *khanqahs*. In the matter of language, their approach was:⁵³

سخن کز بہر دین گوی چہ عبرانی سریانی

"When you are talking about faith what does it matters it whether the words you utter in prayer are Hebrew or Syriac?"

The Sufi orders, had played an important role in bringing various communities closer and in encouraging the composite culture. It is said that the success of these Sufi saints in Central and South Asia was partly due to their understanding of their society's conditions, religious attitudes, and the aspirations

⁵⁰ Neeru Misra, op. cit., p. 22-24.

⁵¹ Engineer Asghar Ali, op. cit., p. 58.

⁵² Riazul Islam, op. cit., pp. 324-336.

⁵³ Zaheer Ahmad Siddiqi, *The Sufi influence and other essays*, Educational book house Aliharh, 1982, p. 48.

of the people. They adopted many customs and ceremonies of different religions in the initial stages of the development of the order, such bowing before the Shaikh, presenting waters to visitors etc. Just imagine a small cottage or monastery with practically no furniture. It is occupied by a Muslim Sufi, clad in a patched mantle or cloak, who lives in it alone, or in the company of four or five of his disciples. We should remember that he neither lives on alms, nor remains aloof from human beings. He and his adherents, after having offered their midnight and morning prayers, hasten to the jungle in order to collect wood for sale, and then return to spend the whole day in devotion to God and service to humanity. At sunrise, you might see his cottage thronged by thousands of men, women and children both Muslims and non-Muslims, of high and low rank, from princess and nobles down to so-called depressed and backward classes asking for his blessings. Meanwhile he hears that one of his non-Muslim neighbor is suffering from some severe contagious disease. He at once gets up with his chief disciples, passes through the reverent crowd, and arriving at the house of his neighbors, inquires into his health and attends on him with warm love and disinterested care.⁵⁴

This is no exaggerated account of the daily routine of Sufi *dervishes*. We can easily get it verified by studying the biographies of Sufis, such as *Nafha-ul-Uns* by Jami, *Tazkirat-ul-Awliyya* by Attar etc.⁵⁵

Kindness to animals also formed a part of the moral obligation of Sufis, and in their biographies, we come across special instructions pertaining thereto.⁵⁶

We should however, keep in view that, if on one hand the true Sufis humbly served the common folk, they on other hand, deliberately ignored kings and nobles. There is famous saying current among the Sufis.

نعم الامير على باب الفقير وبنس الفقير على باب الامير

"How good is a noble at the door of a faqir, and how bad is a faqir at the door of a noble."⁵⁷

The teaching of Sufis, served as a means for maintaining equilibrium in the Muslim Society, both at the time of its ascendancy and decline. In other words, they

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 50.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p.50.

⁵⁶ Riazul Islam, op. cit., pp. 324-33.

⁵⁷ Zaheer Ahmad Siddiqi, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

prevented the society from materialistic tendencies, peculiar, to a rising nation; and from despondency and pessimism, characteristic of a conquered people.⁵⁸

Sufis motto was service to humanity at large irrespective of caste or creed; they always showed kindness to persons professing other religions. This treatment attracted the latter, and also created a sense of tolerance among Muslims. There is a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in which he says, "*God has laid so much stress on the rights of a neighbor, that the latter almost holds the status of a relative*"

Sufi literature is full of these rights and duties towards other human beings especially neighbors, parents etc. Hazrat Mehboob Elahi, so often referred to in his article, says, "The right of a neighbor, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, is that you should advance him a loan, when he requires it, help him when he is in need, visit him, when he is sick, comfort him, when he is involved in trouble, and attend his funeral, when he dies," "He is not a true believer, who annoys his neighbor." Can there be a surer way to the world's peace and tranquility?⁵⁹

Their approach towards human relationships is neatly expressed in the imagery of eyes:

یگانه بودن و یکتا شدن ز چشم آموز
که بر دو چشم جدا و جدا نمی نگرند

"Learn from the eyes the way to develop unity and oneness. The two eyes appear different but their vision is one."⁶⁰

We have already seen, true Sufis did not accept royal service or *jagir*, nor amassed riches or worldly equipment. Still they did not like to be a burden on the society. When we look at the list of Sufis of the Baghdad, Khurasan, Bukhara, Indian region in say the *Risala* of Imam Qushairi, or the *Tadhkirat ul-Awliya* of Farid-ud-din Attar or in the *Nafahat-ul-Uns* of Maulana ,Abd ur-Rahman Jami,⁶¹ Sufi earned their living by some craft or trade. In *Nafahat ul-Uns*, over fifty professional *nisbah* surnames appear tacked on to the names of the various Sufis. There are all kind of professional, *nisbah*, from the respectable *Zargar* (goldsmith), ,*attar* (perfume or drug dealer), *khazzaz*, (silk merchant), *sairaf* (Banker), *jouhari* (jeweller), *warraq* (copist), to a such lowly ones as *kharraz* (cobbler), *khaffaf* (boot-maker), *na'lain-doz* (clog-maker), *hallaj* (cotton dresser), *sakkak* (cuttler), *juwalgar* (sack maker), *saqqa* (water carrier),

⁵⁸ Riazul Islam, op. cit., pp. 216-229.

⁵⁹ Zaheer Ahmad Siddiqi, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

⁶⁰ Neeru Misra, op. cit., p. 23.

⁶¹ Zaheer Ahmad Siddiqi, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

saqati (pedlar), *qassab* (butcher), *haddad* (blacksmith), *khawwas* (vendor of palm leaves), *qassar* (fuller), *gazur* (bleacher), *khabbaz* (baker), *haffar* (digger), *kulal* (potter), *sifalfarosh* (seller of earthen wares), *nassaj* (weaver), *sammak* (fish monger), *hammal* (porter), *hajjam* (barber), *falez-ban* (keeper of melon field), *hatter* (cutter), *zaqqaq* (maker of skin bags), *sabbag* (dyer), *dabbagh* (tanner, etc.⁶² They spent the greater part of their earning on the poor and needy, thus they practically insisted on living on an equal status with the most destitute members of the society. The Muslim society as a rule, never adopted love for riches and money or contempt of poverty or trade, as a national character.⁶³

To be brief, if we sum up the entire activities of the great Muslim Sufis, we can do so in two phrases as said by Ghazali:

التعظيم الامر الله والشفقة على خلق الله

"Reverence to the commandment of God and benevolence to his creatures"

Conclusion

Sufism can play a double role in the contemporary world. It can become a constructive part in the political process because, on the one hand, it is capable of "Islamizing" democracy; on the other hand, it is capable of democratizing Islam. It can also contribute to political stability in whole world by bringing about understanding among competing political groups and factions and much-needed tolerance toward other religions, ideas and currents.

From the Sufi literature and poems, we see that Sufism is a subject that works as a social power to bring people together. It is a bridge between different cultures, which, in part, explains Sufis success in almost all parts of the world. Sufis main objective was never to become the leaders of a country, but rather to become its social workers. They blend together with the people of the country and learn its languages. They ease communication among peoples, especially in times past when there were no visa requirements. They embark relationships by intermarriage, and so in many ways built understanding between different kinds of peoples.

The intolerance, chaos, conflict, disharmony and fear in the contemporary global world, make scholars and intellectuals more interested in Sufism. Institution

⁶² Riazul Islam, op. cit., pp. 199-200.

⁶³ Zaheer Ahmad Siddiqi, op. cit., p. 53.

of Sufism, particularly in Europe and America has been established in order to curb mindless terrorism with massive state violence. They admitted that the Islam and Sufi teachings are based on peace and harmony. It also marks the awakening of a fresh quest for harmony and inter-civilization understanding. Some universities are reported to have launched regular courses in Sufism in Indian, Punjab and Lahore, because it supports and favors the humanistic approach.

Fortunately, some Central Asian countries have also realized how important the recovery of Sufi culture is for their societies. It has been notice that some countries like Uzbekistan; there has been an increase in the publishing of works about Sufis such as Baha ud-din Naqshband and Najmuddin Kubra. Most recently in 2004, the state has supported the publishing of an important masterpiece of Central Asian Sufi literature, translating into modern Uzbek Alisher Navai's *The Language of the Birds*. There has even been a governmental public educational attempt to combine the Western concept of "civil society" with recast elements of Sufism. For example, in Uzbekistan, in 1994 a ministry called the "Public Center for Spirituality and Enlightenment" was established.

While concluding it can be said that Sufi values and principles constitute a solid base for a peaceful relationship and co-existence with all, irrespective of their religious choices. It may be noted, however, that authentic and ever lasting peace must to be protected and safeguarded against those who try to destroy it. Real peace does not certainly mean the total absence of use of force or even war as a lesser evil and as a last resort.

Therefore, in promoting religious tolerance and coexistence among the members of multi-culture, multi-religious and in a pluralistic world efforts should be made to understand and then appreciate the essential diversity between the various religions before commemorating their imaginative and misconstrued unity.

Furthermore, since the beginning of the seventh century, Islamic international law has played a significant role in protecting the personal, economic, judicial and political rights of civilians during armed conflicts. It has introduced a human revolution, consisting of a number of human jural principles, as early as fourteen centuries before the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and eight centuries before the appearance of Grotius, the godfather of European international law. These declarations have been acknowledged by a number of European scholars who have emphasized the fact that Islamic international law has made great contributions to international humanitarian law. As a matter of fact, from time to time the substantive postulates of Islamic humanitarian law exceed the

norms decreed by „The Hague and the Geneva Conventions.’ Consequently, the principles of human rights used in international humanitarian law are not only the outcome of Western civilization, but also the occurrences and teachings of non-European peoples, whose traditions have also made great contributions.

There is no doubt; we must understand the fact that Sufism was a product of a feudal society. It was, so to say, feudal humanism. The contemporary social structure is not congenial to the Sufi practices and hence it has nearly disappeared from our socio-religious scene. But it is part of our socio-cultural and religious heritage and must be valued as such. The Sufistic values, though not its practice, are still quite relevant for us as we are torn with communal conflict today.

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