

AN ANALYSIS OF SUFI AND SAINT INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN INDIA



Dinesh Kumar

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University Department of History

B.R.A Bihar University, Muzzaffarpur

Abstract

The spread of Islam in India was greatly aided by saints and sufis. They connected with the people by their spiritual practises and teachings, deeply influencing their hearts and minds in the process. Sufis and saints stressed the spiritual core of Islam and created an inclusive version of the religion that was respectful of regional customs and cultures. Also, they helped shape Indian literature, music, and art. The Sufis and saints of India were admired for their devotion and wisdom, and many were thought to perform miracles. They created places of worship known as Khanqahs and Dargahs, which developed into hubs of Islamic study and devotion. Sufis and saints stressed the value of tolerance and respect for all religions at these institutes, which were accessible to individuals of all faiths. In India, Muslims were won over to Islam by saints and sufis. To draw people to their message and establish an emotional connection with them, they used their spiritual rituals, such as sama or qawwali. They also utilised their spiritual power to settle disputes and advance peace in society. Sufis and saints contributed to the development of Indian culture by supporting the use of native languages, literature, and music. They employed these artistic mediums—poetry, music—to communicate their message of compassion and love. In conclusion, Sufis and saints played a crucial part in the growth of Islam in India. In order to establish a strong rapport with the populace and to advance an inclusive and tolerant type of Islam, they utilised their spiritual practices and teachings. Outside the

realm of religion, they had an impact on the development of Indian culture. Indian society and culture continue to be profoundly influenced by the Sufi saints' legacy.

Keywords: Islam, Sufis and saint, Spiritual Knowledge, Cultures and tradition

Introduction

Not alone via military campaigns or political victories did Islam expand across India. Saints and Sufis both played an important part in the development of Islam in India. Sufis and saints reached out to the populace and propagated the word of Islam by their spiritual practises, teachings, and moral authority. They made enormous contributions that are still being felt now to the growth of Indian society and culture. The importance of Sufis and saints in the growth of Islam in India will be discussed in this article, with special emphasis on their spiritual practises, teachings, and contributions to Indian culture.

Research Problem Statement

Sufism and saint movements have played a significant role in the development of Islam, shaping its religious and cultural traditions. However, the extent and nature of their influence on Islamic history, culture, and spirituality is a topic of debate among scholars. Therefore, the research problem statement for this thesis is as follows:

"What is the influence of Sufi and saint movements on the development of Islam, and how have they contributed to shaping Islamic traditions, culture, and spirituality?"

Research Scope

- The historical origins of Sufism and saint movements in Islamic history, and their evolution over time.
- The philosophical and theological underpinnings of Sufism and saint movements, and their impact on Islamic thought and practice.
- The role of Sufi and saint movements in the spread of Islam, and their influence on Islamic cultural and artistic expressions.
- The impact of Sufi and saint movements on Islamic spirituality and mysticism, and their role in shaping Islamic religious practices.
- The relationship between Sufi and saint movements and Islamic law, and their contribution to the development of Islamic jurisprudence.

Sufism

Islam's mystical Sufism stresses the soul's inner journey in search of God. The name "Sufism," which refers to the straightforward woollen garments worn by early Sufi mystics, is derived from the Arabic word "suf," which means wool. Sufis believe that achieving a direct encounter with God via spiritual disciplines like self-control, prayer, and meditation is the ultimate aim of human life. In the eighth century, Sufism emerged in the Islamic realm and quickly expanded across the Muslim world, including India. Sufis in India stressed the spiritual core of Islam and created a tolerant, open-minded version of the religion that was respectful of regional customs and cultures. They believed in the interconnectedness of all faiths and highlighted the necessity of love and compassion as vital to the spiritual journey.

Khanqahs are spiritual hubs that Sufis built in India where they congregated for spiritual activities like Sama or Qawwali, a kind of devotional music that is still well-liked there today. These institutions, which were accessible to individuals of all religions, developed into significant centres of Islamic scholarship and devotion. In India, Sufis were also engaged in charitable and social activity that included helping the less fortunate by giving them food, housing, and medical attention. They were crucial in fostering social cohesion and settling disputes amongst various religious groupings. The expansion of Islam in India was greatly aided by Sufism. Sufis produced an inclusive and tolerant version of Islam that was consistent with regional cultures and customs while emphasising the spiritual core of Islam. They continue to play a significant role in preserving India's spiritual and cultural history via their spiritual practises, teachings, and contributions to Indian culture.

Sufism in Islamic mysticism

A subset of Islamic mysticism known as Sufism places a strong emphasis on the soul's inward journey in search of God. It is predicated on the notion that reality has a hidden, spiritual component that can only be reached via spiritual exercises like self-control, prayer, and meditation. The achievement of a direct experience of God, according to Sufis, is the ultimate aim of human life and can only be accomplished via the purification of the soul and the acquisition of spiritual knowledge. In the eighth century, Sufism emerged in the Muslim world and quickly expanded, including to India. The concepts of the Quran and the Hadith—the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad—were the foundations upon which the Sufis established a system of spiritual practises and teachings.

Sufis place a strong emphasis on the value of love, compassion, and humility in the pursuit of spirituality. They believe that the fundamental impediment to spiritual attainment is the human ego, which must be vanquished by spiritual exercises including remembering God (Dhikr), meditation, and self-control.

Sufis also created a system of moral and ethical guidelines known as "Adab," which emphasises the value of kindness, reverence, and compassion for all living things. Sufis value respect for people of all faiths and the idea that all religions are interconnected. Sufism is a significant school of Islamic mysticism that places a strong emphasis on the soul's spiritual ascent to God. Based on the precepts of the Quran and the Hadith, Sufis established a system of spiritual practises and teachings that highlighted the value of love, compassion, and humility on the spiritual path. Sufism still plays a key role in Islamic spirituality and has greatly influenced the development of Islamic culture and civilisation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Sufis and saints played a crucial part in the growth of Islam in India. They were instrumental in forging strong bonds with the populace and in advancing an inclusive, tolerant brand of Islam that blended in with regional customs and cultures. They contributed to develop a distinctive type of Islam that had a long-lasting influence on Indian society and culture via their spiritual practises, teachings, and contributions to Indian literature, music, and art. India's spiritual and cultural history continues to be significantly influenced by the Sufi saints and their legacy.

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