

Swami Vivekananda: **SUFISM AND ISLAM**

By

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KHUSRO FOUNDATION

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: SUFISM AND ISLAM

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Preface

Khusro Foundation takes immense pride in presenting another invaluable addition to its bouquet of priceless publications. The book in your hands titled “**Swami Vivekananda: Sufism and Islam**” enlightens readers about Swami Vivekananda's views on Islam and his opinion on Sufism. The author Dr. Hussain Randathani puts in hard labour to research and write this useful compendium.

Chapter 1:

Swami Vivekananda: Sufism and Islam

It is a well-known fact that Swami Vivekananda emphasized the need to study Vedas from the Islamic perspective. This chapter focuses on delineating Swami Vivekananda's perception of Islam and his approach to studying the Vedas via Islam.

Chapter 2:

Sufism in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century India with Special Emphasis on Amir Khusro

The spotlight of this paper is on Amir Khusro and his Sufi poetries. Amir Khusro's love for India stems from various factors. He revealed that he loved India due to its wide variety of flora and fauna, climate, natural landscape and more importantly the First Prophet Adam (PBUH), after being expelled from Heaven, landed in India.

Chapter 3:

Indian Sufism as an Ideal of Reformation and Assimilation

The philosophy of *Sulh-i-Kul* (Peace for All) is the cornerstone of a just and social order. The simple and pious living of Sufis acted as a magnet to attract the masses to Islam. This paper makes a meaningful attempt to trace the history and evolution of Sufism in India and the factors that helped it flourish in this sacred land. It also successfully drives home the point that only Sufism can bring eternal peace and harmony to the world.

I sincerely hope that this book successfully carves out a moderate image of Islam, Sufism and Swami Vivekananda's perception of Islam. Certainly, the

readers stand to profit from this book in ways more than one.

Khusro Foundation is committed to bring out literature that goes a long way in spreading love and harmony and promotes the concept of Unity and Diversity, as Swami Vivekananda emphasized "Love is life and hatred is death."

Dr. Hafeezur Rahman

Convenor,

Khusro Foundation

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: SUFISM AND ISLAM

Swami Vivekananda was a man of universal love and universal religion. He glorified the spiritual values of Hinduism against its ritual and ceremonial aspects and insisted on the importance of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* in explaining the universality of Hinduism and Godhood. His comments on Islam were considering this aspect and he praised the Islamic concept of Godhood and brotherhood and exhorted his people to study *Vedanta* through Islam. He also believed that the ideals of every religion are the same.¹ By undermining this fact many writers in the past have misquoted Swami Vivekananda, forgetting the fact that he stood for love and brotherhood among all the religions and

creeds. Swami explicitly said, "In whatever community, in whatever country, in whatever belief one is born and brought up, we pay our homage to all the spiritual men who had traditionally rendered advice and the straight path. Whatever may be their race, birth and colour, we bow before all those divine-oriented souls who came forth to integrate the human race."² We had his historic address to the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago on 11th September 1893 in which he clearly remarked, "I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions are true."³ Regarding religious differences, he said, "You may have different ways to reach God. Yours may be different from mine. The idea that everyone should follow a single religion is dangerous. When everybody maintains the same opinion on religion and everybody seeks a single path to reach God, it is meaningless. Then all the religions and thoughts will perish. It is in vain and should be avoided...It is also absurd to talk about love by those who try to destroy their brother and seek a different way to reach God. There is no value for his love..... Let the religions teach to worship either Christ or Budda or the Prophet. We do not quarrel with them."⁴

In November 1993, the London School of Oriental Studies held a workshop coinciding with the centenary of Vivekananda's speech in 1893 at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. The workshop unanimously concluded that portraying Vivekananda as a fundamentalist contradicted the evidence. Tapan Raychaudhuri from Oxford University stated that Vivekananda was one of the first thinkers to recognize the Indo-Islamic period as part of Indian heritage. Sister Nivedita, Vivekananda's earliest and closest disciple, documented his deep appreciation for the artistic legacy of the Mughal era.⁵ In his article, 'On the Future of Bharata', Vivekananda wrote, "The Muhammadan rule was experienced as a liberation to the poor and downtrodden. That is how one-fifth of our people became Muhammadans. To think that all these were brought by sword and fire is sheer madness."

According to him, Vedanta celebrated a multitude of religions and beliefs, acknowledging, "Whether you are a Christian or a Buddhist, a Jew or a Hindu, regardless of the mythology you follow, whether you honour The Prophet of Nazareth, Mecca, India, or elsewhere, whether you are a Prophet yourself... Vedanta advocates the principle that underlies every religion, with all Prophets, saints, and seers serving as mere examples and manifestations of

it."⁶ He considered toleration as the basis of religion. "We cannot develop reform without stopping arrogance, bloodshed and barbarism. No reform can raise its head without bringing generous consideration. The first step to this inevitable generosity is to view the religion of others with love and generosity... Not only that, even if our ideals and cares are differed from others, we should help the people of other faiths. This is what we are doing in India. In India, it was the Hindus who built mosques and churches for Muslims and Christians respectively. This is what we have to do."⁷

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), the teacher of Vivekananda had preached earlier, the universality of all religions by saying, "*Jat mat tata path*" (all religions are only different paths to the same God). Sri Ramakrishna said that idol worship and shapeless concept of God or monotheism and polytheism all had their values and were different paths to God.⁸

As his disciple, Vivekananda had travelled across India and had lengthy discussions with several Muslim *maulvis* on both Islamic and Hindu philosophies. He concluded that the differences between the Hindu and Muslim worlds were more apparent than real. The national ideal, for Swami Vivekananda, was drawn from the teachings of the

ancient sages and thus essentially Hindu. But he saw no inherent conflict between this and the distinct stream of Indian Islam. "Shah Jehan would have turned in his grave to hear himself called a 'foreigner'," the Swami once told a disciple who had erred in so describing the Mughal emperor.⁹

Christopher Isherwood, an American writer records the statement of Vivekananda given in a speech at America, "Mohammed – the Messenger of equality. You ask, 'What good can there be in his religion?' If there was no good, how could it live? The good alone lives, that alone survives... How could Islam have survived if there was nothing good in its teachings? There is indeed much good... Mohammed by his life showed that amongst the Mohammedans there should be perfect equality and brotherhood. There was no question of race, caste, colour or sex. The Sultan of Turkey may buy a Nigerian African from the mart of Africa, and bring him in chains to Turkey; but should he become a Mohammedan, and have sufficient merit and abilities, he might even marry the daughter of the Sultan. Compare this with the way in which Nigerian Africans and the American Indians are treated in this country (the United States of America)! As soon as a man becomes a Mohammedan, the whole of Islam receives him as a brother with open arms, without

making any distinction, which no other religion does. If one of your American Indians becomes a Mohammedan, the Sultan of Turkey would have no objection to dining with him. If he has brains, no position is barred to him. In this country, I have never yet seen a church where the white man and the Nigerian African can kneel side by side to pray...It is a mistaken statement that has been made to us that the Mohammedans do not believe that women have souls...I am not a Mohammedan, but yet I have had opportunities to study them, and there is not one word in the Koran which says that women have no souls, in fact, it says they have...Vedantic spirit of religious liberality has very much affected Mohammedanism. Mohammedanism in India is quite a different thing from that in any other country. It is only when Mohammedans come from other countries and preach to their co-religionists in India about living with men who are not of their faith... Practical *Advaitism*... is yet to be developed among the Hindus universally... Therefore, we are firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of *Vedantism*, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind...For our motherland, a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam – *Vedanta* brain and Islam body – is the only hope... I see in my mind's eye, the future perfect India rising out

of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with *Vedanta* brain and Islam body.”¹⁰

Swami credited Islam with the destruction of priesthood and remarked that Protestantism borrowed it from Muhammedans probably under Moorish influence.¹¹ Vivekananda had a deep contempt for all those who used force to spread their religion. He vehemently denounced the violence of Muslims and Christians in certain phases of their history. But he also knew that coercion alone, could not keep followers. Islam won adherents with its message of equality and Christianity with its message of love. His concluding words in the famous Chicago speech clearly envisage his whole concept of religion, “Similar is the case with religion. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth. If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this. It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him

from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: 'Help and not Fight', 'Assimilation and not Destruction', 'Harmony and Peace and not Dissension'."12

Swami Vivekananda's idea is again recalled in his speeches, "My idea, therefore, is that all these religions are different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind; and that not one can become dead, not one can be killed. Just as you cannot kill any force in nature, so you cannot kill any one of these spiritual forces. You have seen that each religion is living. From time to time, it may retrograde or go forward. At one time, it may be shorn of a good many of its trappings; at another time it may be covered with all sorts of trappings; but all the same, the soul is ever there, it can never be lost. The ideal which every religion represents is never lost, and so every religion is intelligently on the march."¹³ In the same speech he touched upon Islam, "Take Mohammedanism, for instance. Christian people hate no religion in the world so much as Mohammedanism...As soon as a man becomes a Mohammedan, the whole of Islam receives him as a brother with open arms, without making any distinction, which no other religion does. ...Just think of that: Islam makes its followers all equal – so, that,

you see, is the peculiar excellence of Mohammedanism. In many places in the Holy Quran, you find very sensual ideas of life. Never mind. What Mohammedanism comes to preach to the world is this practical brotherhood of all belonging to their faith. That is the essential part of the Mohammedan religion, and all the other ideas about heaven and of life etc... are not Mohammedanism. They are accretions."¹⁴

Here again, Swami, while describing *Vedanta* praised the view of Islam on the subject. In 1898 he wrote to his friend Mohammed Sarfaraz Husain, "Whether we call it *Vedantism* or any ism, the truth is that *Advaitism* is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love. I believe it is the religion of the future enlightened humanity. The Hindus may get the credit for arriving at it earlier than other races, they being an older race than either the Hebrew or the Arab; yet practical *Advaitism*, which looks upon and believes all mankind as part of one's own soul, was never developed among the Hindus universally. On the other hand, my experience is that if any religion approaches this equality in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone."¹⁵ Therefore, without the help of practical Islam, the *Vedanta* theories, to whatever extent it is keen and

amazing, for the majority of human beings, it is worthless.”¹⁶

Swami Vivekananda knew very well the religious background of India and found that Hindu-Muslim Unity is essential for the sake of the national freedom movement. Hence, he fervently strove to bridge the gulf between the followers of the two major religions of the country, Hinduism and Islam. “Thus, highlighting the genuine merit of Islamic faith, he wanted to draw the attention of the people of either sect and sought to eliminate the deep-seated distrust between Hindus and Muslims in India”.¹⁷ Swami further said in the same letter, “We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the *Vedas* nor the Bible nor the Holy Quran, yet this has been done by harmonizing the *Vedas*, the Bible and the Quran. Mankind ought to be taught that, the varied expressions of the religion, which is Oneness, that each may choose the path that suits him best.”¹⁸

Equality of all, irrespective of caste or creed, was an important feature of Vivekananda's vision of an ideal society. But this by no means implied the equalization of all human beings. He explained that human beings were not and could not be equal. Indeed, to entirely do away with the differences would bring about death and annihilation. And yet,

Vivekananda struggled for the abolition of privileges of any one nation, community, sect and individual over another. "The idea that one man is born superior to another has no meaning in Vedanta", he wrote. He also told his followers: "Never judge the customs of other people by your own standards". Nor was he particularly enamoured of his own customs or rituals. He did not accept, for instance, that bathing in the Ganga would negate sins; if this was so, he said, fish would be the purest of all beings. He wanted to demoralize the British people so that the freedom movement would gain strength in India. Comparing the Muslims with the British he said: "You look to India. What has Hindu left? Wonderful temples everywhere. What have the Muhammadans left? Beautiful palaces. What has the English men left? Nothing but mounds of broken brandy bottles"¹⁹

Vivekananda praises the role of Arabs and Islam in creating the Renaissance in Europe. With the downfall of the Roman Empire, the lamp of Europe was put off. It was Islam which brought back the Europeans into the light. "The Muslim wave struck Europe from the east and the west. It cleared the darkness and ignorance of Europe and lighted the lamp of knowledge."²⁰ He declared that it is monism-Advaita- the last word of dharma and thought and the

only place where all the religions and sects can be viewed with love. That is the dharma of the enlightened race of the future. Since the Hindus are older than the Arabs and Hebrews, they have got the quality of reaching it a bit earlier.

Despite all the above views and statements, the communalists continuously project Vivekananda as their leader. He has been depicted as an anti-Muslim saint and for this purpose, some statements have been misquoted at many instances by others. "Now, the Muslims are the crudest in this respect and the most sectarian. Their watchword is: there is one God (Allah), and Mohammed is His Prophet. Everything beyond that not only is bad but must be destroyed forthwith, at a moment's notice; every man or woman who does not exactly believe in that must be killed; everything that does not belong to this worship must be immediately broken; every book that teaches anything else must be burnt. From the Pacific to the Atlantic, for five hundred years blood ran all over the world. That is Mohammedanism (Islam)!"²¹ "The more selfish a man, the more immoral he is. And also, with that race which is bound down to itself has been the most-cruel and the most wicked in the whole world. There has not been a religion that has clung to this dualism more than that founded by the Prophet of Arabia

(Mohammed), and there has not been a religion (Islam) which has shed so much blood and been so cruel to other men. In the Quran, there is the doctrine that a man, who does not believe these teachings, should be killed; it is mercy to kill him."²² These and similar statements are taken from his so-called speeches which are said to be delivered in London and California in 1890 and 1896 respectively.²³ Since these statements are paradoxical to what he had always said and written, their authenticity has to be tested and proved. It is unbelievable that a sage-like Vivekananda who had his education at the feet of his master Sri Rama Krishna Paramahansa would make such an inimical statement when he had been an admirer of Islam and its stand on *Advaita*. It is pity that a man with human ideals and a universal outlook is maligned for justifying the vandalism of the communalists. My study of the teachings of the great Swami shows him as a champion of Hindu-Muslim unity. He was more a unifier than a divider. Mahatma Gandhi, after going through Vivekananda's works, said: "The love I had for my country became a thousand-fold." Indeed, Vivekananda was a proponent of a broad humanism that both he and Gandhi believed to be the basis of Hinduism.

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SUFISM IN THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURY INDIA WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON AMIR KHUSRO

Sufism developed as a world movement in the twelfth century when it was transformed into distinct orders or *tariqas*. By this time there developed a well-knit network through which the Sufis spread their ideas in different parts of the world. This system guaranteed the transmission of mystical knowledge acquired by the founders of the order to further generations of Sufis through their successors or *khalifas*. It was about the same time the movement reached as a spiritual force in the Indian sub-continent.

Though Sufism as a reforming system reached India in early times, there were Sufi settlements in different

parts of India, clear evidence of Sufi activities is found only in the early part of the thirteenth century with the arrival of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti and his order, the *Chishtiya*. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti came from Chisht in Afghanistan and settled at Ajmer, a remote place, in 1206¹ when Muhammed Ghori was founding his empire in India. Ajmer developed into a Sufi centre with visitors coming from different parts seeking the Sheikh's blessings. After he died in 1236, a shrine was constructed and it became a pilgrimage centre which was the first of its kind in the country.

After dividing the country into spiritual territories called *vilayats*, the Khwaja sent his disciples to various parts to spread his mission. Among the disciples, Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri settled at Nagaur where he lived as a cultivator among the peasant community who found him as a guide and spiritual preceptor. His successors actively engaged in spiritual practices and when Muhammed bin Tughluq ascended the throne he constructed a mausoleum for the sheikh and a *khanqah* was built for the disciples.

When central Asia and Iran were hard pressed by the Mongol invasions at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Sufis of the area moved to Delhi where the Sultans provided them all the facilities for preaching. Sultan Iltutmish had moved his capital to Delhi which

was made a seat of learning by constructing the Quwatul-Islam complex and inviting Sufis and scholars to it. He invited Khwaja Bhaktiyar Kaki, a disciple of Moinuddin Chishti to Delhi. Kaki actively worked among the common people and many of them accepted his mission. He had nine important disciples among whom Baba Farid settled at Ajodhan and others spread the Chishti order in and around Delhi.

Sheikh Farid trained and tutored a very large number of disciples who later set up independent spiritual hospices and disseminated the teachings of the Chishti order. Among them, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was the most famous and he was the greatest Sufi saint in the fourteenth century. He gave the Chishti order an expansive character, his disciples having settled at various places throughout Northern and Central India. Nizamuddin hailed from Badaun, a small township near Delhi. He belonged to a very poor family and always suffered to meet both ends. At Delhi, he often lived with Imadul Mulk, the maternal grandfather of Amir Khusro. He moved from one place to another without finding an abode to live. Though many asked the Sheikh to meet Sultan Balban for some help, he refused to do so. When Sultan Jalaluddin ascended the throne in 1290, he sent the Sheikh some charity and promised some villages, but the Sheikh rejected the

offer² and decided to suffer all the hardships as a part of his retreat and renunciation. By the time of Sultan Alauddin Khalji the fame of Nizamuddin had reached far and wide that the Sultan provided all facilities to the Sheikh's visitors by constructing inns and other amenities. However, the successors of Alauddin were not on good terms with him. But they could not defeat him or expel him from Delhi. His popularity was so great that even the Sultans dared to do any harm to the Sheikh that would create anarchy in the empire. Nizamuddin died in 1325 and Sultan Muhammed bin Tughluq constructed an imposing dome over his grave. Both Hindus and Muslims were attracted to the shrine and considered its dust a sacred relic.

Amir Khusro, The voice of India (*Tooti-e-Hind*) was a very close disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya. His forefathers migrated to India from Balkh during the time of Sultan Iltutmish. He could learn Arabic, Persian and Hindustani from the court and became a fine poet at an early age. He was a poet, historian and a Sufi as well. He dedicated five poetical collections (*mathnavis*) to Alauddin Khalji along with the history of his reign. Khusro is believed to have invented the musical instrument, the Sitar meaning seven bars and several melodies. They were designed to produce novelty in Sufi *Sama*(music) rituals in which he

participated. Though Khusro was very close to court circles his real dedication remained within the Sufi movement and on the completion of his official duties he would escape to Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya's monastery. When Nizamuddin Auliya died, Amir Khusro was with Giyasudin Tughluq on his Bengal expedition. On hearing the news of the death, he hastened to Delhi and recited the following verse by standing beside the grave of Nizamuddin Auliya with tears-

*"Gori So-ye sej par mukh par dare kes,
Chal Khusro ghar aapne rain bha'i cho des."*

(The beloved sleeps on her couch with her face
covered with her curled lock

Oh, Khusro! Return to your own house for the Entire
world is now covered by night).

In the words of S. A. A. Rizvi, the author of *Sufism in India*, the curled lock in Sufi symbolism represents mysteries and the home is eternity. Khusro was predicting his death and he became so overwhelmed at his Shaikh's loss that he was unable to weep³. Khusro survived further six months after the Shaikh's death and died in September 1325.

Music formed a major part of the life and biography of Amir Khusro. Nothing in music could be named and not found connected to Khusro, not even the mystical dance performed by the Sufis. In the mehfils (music session) at the *khanqah* of Hazrat Nizamuddin, dancing was not allowed. But during one such performance, Khusro stood up to dance. Hazrat Nizamuddin requested him, "Dance in such a way that your hands are raised to the sky as if calling to God, and your feet should hit the earth as if denouncing it." And it is so, that the Sufis raise their arms and whirl while stamping their feet on the ground.

Khusro's love for India's flora and its favourable climate is evident in many other places. While arguing why India is the most beautiful place to live in the world, he uses the example of Adam, who when exiled from heaven to earth, first set foot in Sri Lanka, the Indian continent according to the Biblical and Islamic traditions. Adam was sent to India, since the only place, as favourable after heaven, was India.⁴

Besides Amir Khusro, Nizamuddin Auliya had many important disciples. Hasan Sijzi, the poet and Ziauddin Barni, the historian are few among them. Many disciples actively engaged in Sufi preaching in different parts of Hindustan. In Delhi, Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh remained as his successor and when Muhammed Bin

Tughluq asked him to move to his second capital at Daulatabad he decided to remain in Delhi itself. He was behind the installation of Firoz Shah Tughluq on the throne after the death of Muhammad bin Tughluq. He came to be known as Chiragh-e-Dilli (The spiritual light of Delhi) and after his death in 1356 he was buried in Delhi and his grave became a centre of attraction to the people.

The Chishti saints lived under conditions of abject poverty and they looked down on possession of private property as a serious impediment to the growth of one's spiritual personality.⁵ They considered fasting to be a remarkable expedient for weakening those desires that lead never to happiness but either to disillusionment or further desire. They reduced their diet to control the calls of the flesh. Once Shaikh Nizamuddin was asked why he was taking very little food, he replied, "So many poverty-stricken people are sleeping without dinner in the corners of the mosques and before the shops. How can this food go down my throat."⁶ A *Chishti* hospice or *khanqah* is a simple hall where all the inmates live a community life. They all slept, studied, and prayed on the ground and no discrimination, not even on the basis of seniority, was permitted to prevail in the hospice. If food was

available, all would partake in it; if not all would suffer jointly the pangs of hunger.

Like the *Chishtis*, the *Suhrawardi* order also found its way to India. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariyya was the first preacher of the *Suhrawardi* order in the sub-continent. He was close to Sultan Iltutmish who appointed him as the head of religious affairs, the Shaikh al-Islam. His disciples Sayyid Nuruddin Mubarak Gaznavi, Sayyid Jalaluddin and Qazi Hamiduddin and his successors actively engaged in the propagation of the order in the country.

Sufism played as a movement for the social and cultural integrity of the Indian society. Sufis looked up to social service as the supreme object of all their spiritual exercises. The *piri-muridi* (Guide and disciple) system, metaphysical doctrines, ethics and precepts, the prayers and litanies, and the community life of the *khanqah*—together formed a consistent, integrated almost individual whole. The common people found solace for their worries and mental and physical illness in the prayers of Sufis. That is why we see the Sufis living amongst the people by bearing their sorrows and worries. They were able to gauge the motives of the people who came to them and accepted them as disciples. The constant contact with the needs and the sorrows as well as the weaknesses and voices of the

people were the anvil on which the Sufi's personality was hammered out. They were believed to have acquired supernatural powers because of their supernatural gifts. Moinuddin Chishti said, "To answer the call of those in distress, to fulfil the needs of the helpless and to feed the hungry are the best acts of obedience."⁷

The *Chishtis* and *Suhrawardis* maintained different attitudes towards the state. When the *Chishtis* completely abstained from the rulers the *Suhrawardis* accepted their gifts and lived with them. During the lifetime of Nizamuddin Auliya, seven rulers ruled over Delhi, but he never visited any one of them except Sultan Jalaluddin who summoned him to give his evidence for permitting *sama* or music in the *Shariath*. The *Chishtis* declined to accept honours and titles or to visit the court though the officers of the government came to their assemblies and princes could be regarded as their disciples.

Shaikh Fariduddin and Nizamuddin had connections with *Yogis* who often visited them and talked about spiritual matters. Nizamuddin had a very open mind and he appreciated the devotion of Hindus. Shaikh Nasiruddin studied Hindu yoga practices and asked his followers to follow the yoga practice of holding their breath in order to concentrate.⁸ Shaikh Gesu

Daraz, the Chishti Sufi mentions conversing with yogis on Hindu spirituality studying it by himself and arguing with gurus on spiritual matters.⁹

When Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya saw Hindus bathing in the Yamuna (Jamna) and singing devotional songs, he said,

ہر قوم راست را ہے، دینے و قبلہ گا ہے

“Har qaum raast raahe, Deene wa qibla gaahe.”

(Every people had their own path, their own religion and centre of worship).¹⁰

Amir Khusro, who had delved deep into the Hindu religious literature, said:

نیست ہنودا گرچہ کہ دیندار چوما

ہست بے جائے باقرار چوما

(Though Hindus do not believe in the religion in which we do, In, many matters they and we believe in the same thing.)¹¹

By the end of the fourteenth century, the devotional character of Hindi songs and the appeal they made to the Sufis brought Hindus and Muslims closer together. Amir Khusro played an important role in synthesizing

the Sufi language at par with Hindi. Shaikh Nizamuddin was very sensitive to the music of words and to the tender charm of the Hindustani of those days. By the time of Gesu Daraz Indian Music had been studied and Hindustani devotional songs had come to occupy a very significant position in the *sama* gatherings. As told by Mr. Mujib, “the Sufis made an intuitive choice of the common ground of spirituality between Hindus and Muslims and opened the way for a mutual appreciation of aesthetic values which could revolutionize the whole cultural attitude of Muslims.”¹²

Reference:

1. SAA.Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Delhi, 1978, p. 122
2. *Siyarul Auliya*, pp.114-15
3. He was the most loved disciple of his master. He was so close to his master that once Nizāmuddīn Auliā' said, "If sharī'ah allows me I would like him to be buried with me in the same grave"
4. For details, See Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, 1969, p.115-118
5. SAA Rizvi, op.cit., p.172
6. M.Mujib, *Indian Muslims*, 1971, p.146
7. K.A.Nizami, op.cit., p.199
8. Ibid., p. 201
9. M.Mujib, *Indian Muslims*, Delhi, 1971, p.146.
10. Ibid., p.165
11. Ibid., Nuh Sipihr, p.163
12. *Indian Muslims*, 166

INDIAN SUFISM AS AN IDEAL OF REFORMATION AND ASSIMILATION

Sufism as a moral and spiritual way of life with its universal appeal of love and humanism found an exceptionally congenial ground for its growth and spread in India from the earliest phases of its history. India had a strong inclination towards mysticism always which found their clearest expression in the *Vedic* and *Upanishad* literature and this outlook provided easy access to Islamic mysticism to the country. Besides, the growth of the Sufi movement was accelerated by the peculiar social and cultural system based on caste laws. The caste structure had deprived the Indian society of that dynamic energy which sustains societies in times of crises and makes them respond to new situations and challenges. All amenities of civic life were denied to the majority of the

Indian population who were regarded as outcastes. The spiritual style of the mystics, their broad human sympathies and the equal atmosphere of their hospices attracted these deprived sections of Indian society to its fold. They could free themselves from discrimination imposed upon them. The Sufis exemplified to the people the Islamic doctrines of *thouheed* (monotheism) as a working principle in social life.

Sufis started their mission in India long before the establishment of Muslim political authority. Their policy of '*Sulh-e-kul*' and simple and pious ways attracted several people to Islam. Malik Dinar, who had been responsible for the spread of Islam in Malabar, was himself a disciple of Hasan al Basri, the famous mystic of Iraq. Dinar had with him a number of disciples, most of whom were his relatives. Later, when Sufism developed as a cult in the Middle East, several Sufis migrated to India, and dividing the country into socio-cultural territories called *wilayats*, they started an intensive social reformation by establishing monasteries in different parts. They lived amongst the lower sections of the society firstly because of caste taboos and secondly for the facility of establishing contacts with the Indian masses. It appears that nearly half a century, before the *Ghurid* conquest of northern India, isolated Muslim cultural groups had secured a foothold in the country. At Bahraich, UP, India there was a Muslim settlement around the mausoleum of Syed Salar Mas'ud Ghazi. In

some towns of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, there were Muslim shrines of which those of Miran Mulhin (Badaun), Khwaja Majduddin Bilgrami and Lala Pir at Gopamau and Imam Taqi (Maner) were important. In South India, Malabar, Gujrat and many other places grew as Muslim centres exclusively due to the life and work of Sufis and not by the exertion of any political power. The political supremacy, however, "helped the mystics in extending the sphere of their work to the cities where previously caste taboos had prevented them from establishing their hospices. But it also added to their problems by exciting the fury and frown of a section of the Indian population."¹ Once they established their centres at some place, their humanism and simple way of life endeared them to the 'public and this had nothing to do with the political power'. "At a time when the country was resounding with the din and clatter of the arms of the *Ghurids*," writes K. A. Nizami, "the atmosphere of their (Sufi) humble dwellings acted as a corrective to the political hysteria of the period. They sat cool, collected in their *khanqahs* and taught lessons of human love and equality."² When the rulers and governing class hesitated to make direct contact with the common people due to their veined racial pride, the mystics opened their hospices to all sorts of men, rich and poor, high and low, townsfolk and villagers, men and women.

Almost all the Sufi orders had their centres in India. Of all, the first and foremost is the Chishti order founded

in India by Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. Both medieval and modern scholars have showered copious praise on Khwaja Moinuddin but no reliable information regarding his early life remains is found. However, he was the embodiment of Sufi virtues and was famous for his outstanding spiritual achievements which included the performance of miracles. He was the disciple of Khwaja Usman Harwani, an eminent Chishti saint of Nishapur. Most of the historians say that the Khwaja came to India and settled at Ajmer when it was ruled by Prithvi Raj Chauhan. According to another version, the Khwaja settled at Ajmer after it was conquered by Muhammad Ghorī and Qutubuddin Aibak was appointed as viceroy.³ Many people accepted Islam at the feet of Khwaja Moinuddin. He died at Ajmer in March 1236 A.D. and his shrine became a centre of pilgrimage not only of the *Chishtis* but also of all sorts of people despite their religion, caste or creed.

Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri (d. 1276 A.D.) and Qutubuddin Bhaktiyar Kaki (d. 1235 A.D.), the disciples of Khwaja Moinuddin popularised the Chishti order in northern India. Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar (d. 1265), the disciple of Shaikh Bhaktiyar transformed the Chishti order into an organized spiritual movement. He trained and tutored a large number of disciples who later set up independent khanqahs and disseminated the teachings of Chishti order. Among them the most outstanding was Hazrat Nizamuddin of Delhi. For nearly half a century he

lived and worked in Delhi. All sorts of men visited him and found spiritual solace in his company.⁴ Other renowned Chishti saints are Shaikh Nasiruddin (d.1356), Khwajab Husain, Shaikh Abdul Quddus (d.1537) Shaikh Jalal Thaneswari, Shaikh Abdul Aziz, Shaikh Salim and Khwaja Gesu Daraz.

The Chishti saints generally lived in extreme poverty, without sufficient food and dwellings. Most of them lived on charity offered by the devotees. They developed an attitude of contempt and indifference towards the rulers who themselves felt humble before the spiritually elevated saints. Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar advised one Sayyid Maula, "Do not make friends with kings and nobles. Consider their visit to your home as fatal (for your spirit). Every *darvesh* who makes friends with the kings and nobles will end badly."⁵

The order was planted in India by Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariyya (d. 1182 -83) whose *Suhrwardi* order was radically different from that of his Chishti contemporaries. He believed in living a normal and balanced life - a life in which both the body and the spirit received equal care. Neither did he fast perpetually, nor did he recommend a life of starvation and self-mortification to those associated with him.

Unlike the *Chishtis*, the *Suhrwardis* believed in accumulating wealth. Shaikh Bahauddin said, "Wealth is the illness of the heart but in the hands, it is a cure." Besides, they did not abstain from taking part in

political matters or associating with the political powers. Shaikh Bahauddin was a man not only of great organizing capacity but a very remarkable understanding of human nature. He organized the order on a firm foundation and attracted to his fold a very large number of talented disciples. Shaikh Sadaruddin Arif, his son, Sayyid Jalaluddin Surkh and Sayyid Jalaluddin Makhdum-i-Jahanian are important saints of *Suhrawardis*.

Shaikh Muhammed Husain Jilani started the Qadiri order, founded by Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, in Uchch in the fifteenth century. His sons Abdul Qadir Sani, Shaikh Davud, Shaikh Nau Shah, Mian Mir and others spread the order in different parts of the country. Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of emperor Shah Jahan was a disciple of Mian Mir. Dara had some important Sufi works to his credit. In his *Majma-ul-Bahrain* he asserted Hinduism and Islam as the rays of the same Sun.

The *Naqshbandi* order of Sufism was planted in India during the period of the Mughals who had maintained a close relationship with the Sufis of Central Asia. Babar himself was a disciple of Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar, of *Naqshbandi* order at Tashkant. However, Khwaja Baqi Billah (d. 1603) started the order in India. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), the most famous Sufi of the *Naqshbandi* order in India was his disciple. Sirhindi was a radical reformer of the religion and was a critic of Akbar for his religious experiments. He declined the invitation of Akbar to the discussions at

Ibadat Khana (the hall constructed by Akbar for religious discussion). He propounded the theory of *Wahdatus-Shuhud* (Phenomenological monism) instead of *Wahdatul-Wujud* (Ontological monism). He found that the latter leads to misunderstanding the true nature of existence and is often mistaken as pantheism or Vedanta. So, he explained that God is existent and unique in His self, qualities and action as in no way any created object can be a part of Him. It would be wrong to say, all is God but better to say all is from Him.⁶

With the settlement of Muslims in India, conciliation and concord between the various cultural groups became an urgent social necessity. The Muslim mystics, not the rulers, rose to the occasion and released synthetic forces which liquidated social, ideological and linguistic barriers, and helped the development of a common cultural outlook. They adopted an attitude of sympathy and understanding towards all cults and creeds. The communal intercourse among the Indian masses and the role of Sufis in bringing the different groups together has been described by Athindranath Bose in his contribution to the 'Cultural Heritage of India.'

"...Then Islam knocked at the western gates of India, and the Sufis, inspired by the Islamic idea of equality, came as the torchbearers of a liberal folk philosophy. Their spirits were free from those superstitions and rigidities which caused stagnation among the classical Indian and Islamic schools. Against the sterility of the

orthodox systems, the new popular appeals awakened a fresh spiritual fervour and let loose great creative power which so long lay dormant. A new philosophy grew up based on the material of human values. It trusted in the latent divinity of the human soul, in the universality of love and the dynamic power of emotion. It released powerful spiritual energy hitherto pent up by social barriers among the dumb millions of the soil".⁷

Hindu-Muslim Mystical Ideals

There are numerous points of agreement and affinity between the Hindu and Muslim mystical ideas and they present similar tenets and tendencies not only in higher spheres of philosophical speculations but also on popular and devotional levels. Al-Biruni points out the resemblance between the views expressed in *Samkya* and those of the Sufis regarding their allegorical concept of paradise, between the Hindu doctrines of *Moksha* (liberation) and Muslim and Christian mystical parallel and between the ontological monism of Abu Yazid Bistami and similar doctrines in *Patanjali*.⁸

The pantheistic monism or *Advaita Vedanta* and *Wahdatul-Wujud*, of the Sufis are different expressions of the conceptions of divinity, of man and of the universe. Though both theories bear basic differences, for both of them the Divine Being, which is the sole ground of all that exists, manifests itself as the world and diversities are nothing but various modes of its

appearance. This self-manifestation of ultimate Being is spoken of in such *Vedantic* terms as *vivarta*, *prathibhasa* and *pratibimbha*, which are literally the same as the Sufi concepts of *tajalli*, *zuhur*, *aks* and *numud*. The Sufis identify the Supreme Soul with the soul in man leading to the state of *Thathwam Asi* or *anal Haq* which comes very near to the *Vedantic* idea of *Aham Brahmasmi*. In both Vedanta and Sufism, we set parallels even in terminologies. In both cases, *gyana* or *ma'rifat* is the only state in which the ultimate truth can be realised and the path for this is called *marga* or *tariqa*. The successive stages in the transformation of the self are called *bhumika* or *maqam/ maqamat*. For the Sufi terms of *fana* and *baqa*, the corresponding *Vedantic* terms are *nirvikal pasamadhi* and *mukti*. Other terms are as follows:

Nirgunabrahmam- zat ul Mutlaq

Vyakta- avyakta –Zahir-batin

Nirupadhika-Sopadhika – mutlaq- muqayyad

Sat and satyam – haq-wa- haqaiq

Sadhaka and siddha – Salik and wasil

Dhyana and dharna – zikr-wa-muraqaba

Satyasyasatyam- Haqiqat ul haqaiq

JyotismJyoti - nur ul anwar

Apparently, unconnected parallels of the doctrines of the Upanishads are found in Al Ghazzali's distinction

between the worldly and spiritual, in Al Hijwiri's differentiation between human and divine knowledge and the doctrine of the descent of the absolute found in some Sufi paths.⁹

It has been suggested that some of the parallelisms between Hindu and Muslim mysticism might have been explained by direct and indirect Muslim influence on the Hindu centres of learning where *Vedanta* was developed and systematized by Shankaracharya (788- 820 A.D.) and classical *Bhakti* by Ramanuja (1017-1137 A.D.). As pointed out by A. Barth, it was precisely in those parts of the Deccan where early Arab travellers had established their colonies that from the ninth to twelfth centuries those great religious movements connected with the names of Shankara, Ramanuja, Anantatirtha and Basava took shape and out of which the majority of the historical sects came and to which Hinduism presents nothing analogous till a much later period.¹⁰ However, many historians reject the view of Muslim influence on Shankara and his doctrine by saying that the doctrines were already there in Vedas and Upanishads and that Shankara was only bringing out those hidden ideals and giving them a new life. Bhattachatterjee is more correct when he suggests, "... though the exact extent of Christian and Muslim influence on Hinduism is difficult to assess, there is definitely a theistic urge in Hindu religion in the periods of early Muslim settlements in the Deccan which finds powerful

expression in many Vedantic writers who came after Sankara.”¹¹

Mystical ideas of Islam and the Sufi way of life were so appealing to the Indian mind that even the Brahmins did not remain unaffected by the influence. Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji writes: “We learn from one of the sixteenth-century biographies of Chaitanya that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Brahmins were taking a recourse heterodox way like wearing a beard instead of being clean shaven, walking with a big stick, reading Persian and reciting the *mathnawi*, and these, the author of biography did not like, and he called them evils of Kali or iron age.”¹²

The Sufis often criticized vehemently the unfair dealings of the rulers and persuaded them to act fairly and righteously with the subjects. Mian Abdullah Ajodhani condemned openly the attempts of Sultan Sikandar Lodhi (1498-1517) to demolish certain temples and sacred places. When Muhammad bin Tughlaq titled himself the *Sultan-e-Adil* (The Just Sultan), Shaikh Shahabuddin Haque criticized him by saying, "Those who are unjust cannot be called the just ones."

Hazrat Nizamuddin avoided the company of kings. During his lifetime, seven rulers ascended the throne of Delhi but he visited none of them. When Alauddin Khalji decided to visit him, he said: “My hospice has two doors, If the Sultan enters through one, I will run away through the next door.” Shaikh Abdu Rahman

Naqshbandi refused the land provided to him by Aurangzeb.¹³

Sufi monasteries became a refuge for all communities. The doors of the *khanqahs* were open to any person of any community who might be willing to associate himself with the Sufis. When Kumbhadev and Bahram Khan were defeated in their rebellion against Muhammad Shah Bahmani (1358-1375), they fled to the *khanqah* of Zainuddin Daud who offered shelter and allowed them to flee to Gujrat.¹⁴

Some of the Sufis had acquainted themselves with Hindu religious thought and mystical ideas. Amir Khusrau admires the customs of Hindus, he said, "Oh, you sneer at the idolatry of Hindu learn also from him how worship is done."¹⁵

Shaikh Mohammad Gesu Daraz was well-versed in Hindu tradition and had studied Sanskrit. Mohammad Ghouth of Gwalior had contact with Hindu saints and yogis and had studied Hindu philosophy. He translated the Hindu philosophical work on yoga, *Amritha Kunda* to Persian. Mir Adbul Qasim Findiriski (1562-1640) studied the *yoga-vasista*, wrote marginal notes on it and arranged a glossary of its technical terms. Dara Shukoh, son of Emperor Shahjahan and a member of the Qadiri Sufi order had great respect for Hindu saints. He translated fifty *Upanishads* into Persian and wrote a treatise on *Vedanta* in Sanskrit and several works in Persian, dealing with *Vedanta* and Sufism.¹⁶ His masterpiece *Majmaul Bahrain*, deals

elaborately on Hindu Muslim fusion. Shaikh Muhammed Afzal Sarkush stayed at the Ashram of a Sadhu for twenty-five days to study the unity of Islam and Hinduism. Husain Ambar Khan, a seventeenth-century Sufi wrote a commentary in Marathi on the Bhagawat Gita called *Ambar Husain*.¹⁷ Many Sufis regarded the Hindu heroes like *Rama* and *Krishna* as Prophets and Khwaja Hasan Nizami, a descendant of Hazrat Nizamuddin wrote a book exclusively on the subject viz, *Hindustan ke do Peghamber Rama aur Krishna* (Rama and Krishna two Prophets of Hindustan). Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janaan (1699-1780) a poet-saint regarded Vedas as directly inspired and Hindus who had their revealed scriptures and Prophets are like the 'Men of the Book' (*Ahl-i-Kitab*), monotheists. Shah Waliullah's son and successor Shah Abdul Aziz regarded *Krishna* among the *Auliya* (Saints) because of the impact Bhagawat Gita made on his mind.¹⁸

Sufi saints were in general highly respected by non-Muslims who treated them with a deep sense of trust and veneration. Khwaja Moinuddin of Ajmer and other saints of the Chishti order were highly esteemed by Hindus who visited even their shrines to fulfil their desires as that of Muslims. Syed Sultan Ahmad had a large number of Hindu followers who called him Lakhidada. Lal Shah Baz Qalandar Suhrawardi was called by Hindus as Raja Bharati. When the Hindus of Sindh, under the oppression of Kalhora kings were fleeing in numbers to save their life and faith, many of them were given shelter by Shaikh Inayat Shah.¹⁹ Baba

Farid was respected by all communities and the fact that his devotional composition in the Punjabi language had been included in the *Adigranth* of Sikh religion, bears witness to this. Chatrapati Shivaji and his family were closely connected with the Sufis of the Deccan. We are told in a legend that Shivaji's grandfather Maloji, having no sons approached Shah Sharif of the Deccan with whose blessings he became the father of two sons and the name of the Sufi was given to them as Shahji and Sharifji. Shivaji is the son of Shaji.²⁰

The Hindu mind was moved to a large extent by the Sufi teachings of the Unity of God and the brotherhood of men. "The fact that, says K. A. Nizami, "the religious leadership of the *Bhakti* movement in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries came from the lower stratum of Hindu society section which had been deeply influenced by Muslim mystics and their *khanqah* life is too significant to be ignored. Probably never before in the long history of Hinduism, religious leaders had sprung from those strata of society to which Chaitanya, Kabir, Nanak, Dhanna, Dadu and others belonged. There was hardly any saint of the Bhakti school who had not spent some of his time in a *khanqah*."²¹ The Sufi arguments against idol worship and polytheism, their strong condemnation of caste discrimination and their idea of equality must have inspired the Hindu bhagats to start a counter-reformation among themselves to avert the challenges to the Hindu society. They challenged the monopoly of Brahmins in religious

leadership and insisted that none could be deprived of loving and worshipping God. Like the Sufis, the Bhakti leaders also laid stress on *Bhakti*, instead of knowledge and admitted non-Brahmins and even low-castes into the religious fold. The preaching of the Sufis on the one hand and the development of the *Bhakti* movement on the other, brought the Indian masses together and created an atmosphere in which the two could live and co-operate. To quote the words of Kshitimohan Sen, "Hinduism and Islam strictly bound by the tenets of their scriptures had no points of contact with each other. They were like the two banks of a river ever separated by the stream flows between them. Who was to build the connecting bridge? The orthodox Hindus as well as the orthodox Muslims were unfit for the task, and it was left to the free spirits and lovers of humanity from both these groups, the Hindu Bhaktas and the Muslim Sufis to devote their lives to the construction of the bridge."²²

This, along with the spread of Islam in India, Sufism continued to serve as a major medium of sympathetic inter-relationship between the two communities and brought the true spirit of Islam, its higher values, and its principles of universal equality and brotherhood and its active realistic outlook to the notice of the Hindu society. A new channel of sympathy and community feeling was opened between Hindus and Muslims. The Sufis began to compose mystical and devotional songs in local languages, which were used

as medium for preaching faith and love of God and high moral values.

The Sufis turned each of the folk languages into an independent standard language with its treasure of literature. In Sindhi Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (d.1690); in Punjabi, Baba Farid, Sayyid Shah Waris, Sultan Baba and Ali Hyder; in Hindi and Urdu, Amir Khusro, Mulla Dawood, Gesu Daraz and Malik Muhammad Jaisi; in Bengali, Jalaluddin Tabrizi and Doulat Kazi; in Gujarati, Shaikh Ganjul-Alani, Sayyid Burhanuddin in Kashmiri, Mahmood Ghani and Khwaja Habibullah had widely contributed to the development of regional language and literature.

Music was another field to which the saints contributed generously. Many of the mystic orders came to realize that music also elevates emotions to the ecstatic state necessary for union with God. Amir Khusro was the first Sufi poet to introduce innovations in Indian music. He introduced dholak and sitar and at least six new modes - *qaul*, *qalbana*, *naqsh*, *gul*, *tarana* and *khiyal*. They contributed much to the evolution of Karnatic and Hindustani music.

Sayyid Nizamuddin Madhu Naik and Makhdum Bahauddin Bunnais are Sufi poets who have produced many books and treatises on music. Schools were opened to foster music under Sufi poets at different places and they were often patronized by local rulers.

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Khusro Foundation

A New Initiative

India is at the cusp of a historic transformation. As an economic, military and cultural superpower, India is making its presence felt in the world. Being a land of tremendous religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity India's distinction is that the civilizational tradition of unity in diversity continues to be celebrated despite gargantuan changes in the world around. As has been rightly said true Indian spirit is that the salvation of the inhabitants of the earth is in love.

However, it is equally true that India's multicultural tradition and the spirit of co-existence have always had its enemies and today is no different. Always efforts were made to sow division between people and communities and misuse religion to create disharmony. But at the same time, India's true

strength has been that most of the people of this country have always seen through these conspiracies and maintained the unity and integrity of this diverse nation.

Given the challenges and threats to the fabric of social harmony and mutual understanding, there is a need to revive all the symbols that keep people connected with love and affection. The people of this country should be made to realize that their religion, language and region may be different but their relationship with this homeland is a divinely ordained fact of life that no power on earth can alter. And that in which the Lord is pleased, there is good for all. The traditions, writings, ways of life, thoughts and actions that have held this nation together in the past are our most precious national heritage and we must keep reminding our younger generations about that. We must not lose our connection with the treasures of our past.

The "Khusro Foundation" has been founded for this noble cause. Amir Khusro was a versatile genius and universal figure of medieval India who has been and will always be remembered for centuries to come. He was a Sufi, a Soldier, a Musician, a Poet, and a Historian. It is because of his contribution to diverse streams of human endeavour that Amir Khusro continues to be celebrated to this day. Khusro's name and words have always been with

us in terms of their attractiveness and universality in our moments of joy or hours of sorrow.

The patriotism of that “Turkish man” is not only exemplary but also enviable. For Khusro, this land of India was a paradise and the people were dear to him. To him, in comparison to the royal palaces of India, the palaces of Iran, Turan and Khorasan were insignificant. The people here were unique in every field of science, literature, arts and military training. Despite being an orthodox Muslim, the monotheistic cult of the people of India was dear to him. He once said that although the people of India have different religions, most of their beliefs are similar to his own. Khusro, whose mother was a native and father a Turk, was an Indian who not only sang the praises of India's greatness but also wanted to be a part of this great land as it was everything to him. Altaf Hussain Hali expresses his love for this land in his words:

“Teri ek musht-e-khak ke badle,

Loon na har giz agar behisht miley.”

(I will never accept even a handful of its dust in
exchange for heaven.)

True to the teachings of Khusro, the Khusro Foundation intends to spread patriotism, non-violence, humanity and harmony among the people of the world by creating literature that

celebrates commonalities between all faiths, cultures and civilizations.

According to Sheikh Ibrahim Zauq:

“Gulha-i- ranga rang se hai zeenat-e-chaman,

Ai-Zauq is jahan ko hai zeb ikhtilaf se.”

(This garden is adorned with blossoms of different colours.

O Zauq, the beauty of this world is in its diversity.
And the beauty of it is due to differences).



Introduction

Dr. Hussain Randathani, rooted in the tenets of Sufism, stands as a distinguished historian and author specializing in Indian history. Hailing from Malappuram in the state of Kerala, India, he has contributed significantly to the field of education as a history professor at MES College in Mannarkkad and the Kunhali Marakkar Centre at the University of Calicut. Currently, Dr. Hussain holds the esteemed position of Director at the Institute of Malabar Research and Development, where Dr. K. K. N. Kurup serves as the Chairman. He also serves as the Chairman of Mappila Kala Academy and Governing body member of State Resource Centre, under Government of Kerala. He had published different works on Sufism, Mappila Muslims, Indian History, and Islam in English and Malayalam languages.

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