

AN ANALYSIS OF SUFISM IN THE PASHTO LITERATURE OF SWAT

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Abstract

Sufism is believing in mysteries. It is also a process of understanding the mysteries. Although it is used synonymously with Mysticism but Mysticism is a broader term while the term Sufism is limited to Islamic mysticism. Sufism is such a dominant theme in Pashto classical literature that almost all of the writers have discussed it in some way or the other. Pashto literature has continued this thematic tradition from the Persian and Arabic literatures. It is also found with depletion in modern literature. There are numerous Sufi orders but the dominant one in the Pashto literature of Swat is Chashtia followed by Naqashbandia. Similarly two theories of Sufism are found in the classical literary works in Swat. The dominant one is the theory of the Unity of Being followed by the theory of the unity of witness or of contemplation. Sufism has left its impacts on the culture of Swat. With the passage of time influences of Sufism on the culture of Swat have been reduced. This article attempts to analyze Pashto literature of Swat for finding out dominant Sufi initiatory chains, theories and themes. It also attempts to explore the impacts of Sufism on the society and culture of Swat as reflected in the literature.

Key Words: Mysticism, Sufism, Pashto, Literature, Swat.

SUFISM AND MYSTICISM

Sufism and Mysticism both are used synonymously. It is also known as *Tasawwuf*. Mysticism is a broader term employed in many religions but Sufism is limited to the Muslim mysticism. In

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Arabic language another synonym *tariqa* (the initiatory path), which means path is also used for Sufism (Iqbal, 2007, pp. 23,24). According to Sufis, following a particular path will lead them to the divine essence. This expression of Sufism is commonly related to the knowledge of the “mysteries,”. Mystery has its relation with contemplation and intuition. Quran distinguishes the perceptible world that is called *ālam al-shahāda* from *ālam al-ghayb* that is the world of mystery. Muslims are being told in the Holy Quran about believing in this *ghayb i.e.* Mystery. It means that which is not accessible to sight. (Eric, 2010), p.2. Sufism is an advanced stage in the journey of spiritualism. It is a significant part of one’s inner discipline. (Qutbi, 1993, p.1). The spiritual side of Islam is mysticism. It is a way of knowledge, devotion and love. It is a path which is both, the origin and destination. The basic aim of Sufism is elimination of the veils between the God and an individual. Sufis try to polish the mirror of their hearts to come closer to God. They also try to avoid habits and ideas which are veils between individuals and God (Iqbal, 2007, pp. 23, 24). According to Sufism, three organs heart, spirit and inmost ground are important for spiritual communication. Among them heart knows God, the spirit loves Him and the inmost ground of the soul contemplates Him (Nicholson, 1914, p. 68).

Various scholars in Pashto language have also defined Sufism. According to Faqir Muhammad Abbas Qadria *tasawwuf* means the religion or belief of the Sufis. It is the knowledge of gnosis or *marifat*. Gnosis or *marifat* is process of attaining of godly ethics and purification from personal wishes. Through gnosis one can one’s heart. The carnal soul or ego (*nafs*) is also purified through this process (Qadria, 1979, p.41). The same author has traced back the word Sufi in the end of the eighth century. Abu Hasham Kofi and Jaber bin Hayan Kofi are among the first Sufis (Qadria, 1979, p.42). In Sufism *Bi-at* (allegiance, initiatory pact), is

significant. According to Shah Waliullah, Bi-at (allegiance, initiatory pact) is *sunnah* (the example of the prophet). People pledged the Prophet and sought closeness to God in this pledge. He further says that those who did not pledge the prophet they are not sinful because it is *sunnah* and not the *wajib* (mandatory) (Waliullah, 1981, p.45). Sufi scholars are of the opinion that for complete understanding and realization of Sufism it is necessary for a Sufi to follow himself on the path of Sufism (Noorbakhsh, 2003, p. XVII). The ways which Sufis have followed and then shared with others are like their travelogues of this journey. Such types of travelogues are also beneficial for those who want to adopt this way of Sufism. (Noorbakhsh, 2003, p. XVIII).

MAIN THEORIES OF SUFISM

In the relevant literature we find different terms like philosophy, theory, principle, perception and approach for the different ways of Sufism. Some people don't agree to call it as philosophy because they think that philosophy is something invented by the mind which changes. They are of the opinion that this idea of the Unity of Being is a perception of the heart which is forever and does not change. They further say that it has no relevance with discourse and mind and related only to love, vision and revelation. Therefore, it is not philosophy. The difference between this theory of Sufism and philosophy is that this theory of the Unity of Being is about revelation, vision and love while the philosophy is about the the mind and discourse (Noorbakhsh, 2003, p. XVI). To avoid further complications the term "theory" will be used in this article because in and Pashto literature the term 'theory' has been used.

THE THEORY OF THE UNITY OF BEING

As already discussed that there are two theories of Sufism. Among them the famous one is The Theory of the Unity of Being

or the philosophy of *Falsafa wahdat-al-wajud* (the oneness of divine Being). *Wahdat-al-wajud* came out from Neoplatonism. Alexandria and Madyan were centers of Neoplatonism. During the Abbasside period, Greek knowledge translated into Arabic and Persian languages and this theory became popular among the Muslims. Mansur Hallaj, Maulana Rumi, Ali Hajviri, Abubakar Shibli, Ali Hajviri, Muainuddin Chishti, Shaikh Mahyuddin Ibni Arabi, Bayazid Bustami, Junaid Bughdadi and Maulana Jami promoted this theory of Sufism. Those who are believing on the theory of One Being or *Wahdat-al-wajud* say that except One Being the rest of everything is a realization or manifestation of that Being. According to Sufism God is Absolute Being, and whatever exists is a His manifestation. (Noorbakhsh, 2003, p. XV).

THE THEORY OF THE UNITY OF WITNESS

It is called *Wahdat-al-Shuhud* (the unity of witness or of contemplation). When in the eleventh century Hijra this theory reached to its peak by the efforts of Shaikh Mahyuddin Ibni Arabi. Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi opposed this theory and declared it as an incomplete one and presented his own theory of *Wahdat-al-shuhud*. Despite strong efforts to counter this theory, it got more strength and popularity among the people (Khattak, 2000, pp. 11,12).

REFLECTION OF SUFISM IN PASHTO LITERATURE

Initially, Sufism is reflected in the literary works of Bayazid Ansari and Akhund Darwiza who was a strict opponent of the sect of Pir Roshan. Bayazid Ansari was considered as the founder of a heretical sect known as Roshania. His opponents proscribed his works (Leyden, 1812). The *Silsila* (initiatory chain) of Bayazid Rokhan is known as Roshani Sufism. Arzani Khweshki was the first follower of Bayazid Rokhan in Roshani order of

Sufism (Khwishki, 2005, p.70). There are eight stages in the *Roshani Tasawwuf*. Arzani Khishki described eight stages of Tasawwuf that are: *shariat*, *tariqat*, *haqiqat* (understanding of essential truth), *ma'rifat*, *qurbat*, *waslat*, *wahdat*, *sakunat* in the following couplets (Khwishki, 2005, p. 71).

The one is *shariat* (the broad or general path intended for all believers) the other is *tariqat* (the initiatory path).

(the third) is *haqiqat* (understanding of essential truth) and the (fourth) is *marifat*

Those who followed these four stages

Are actually following the prophet Adam

Next are *qurbat* and *wuslat*

Other is *wahdat* and the other is *sakunat*

And the *Sakin* has been decorated

By following the way of prophet (Khwishki, 2005, p. 71)

As already discussed two philosophies/ theories of Sufism that are *wahdat-al-wajud* and *wahdat-al-shuhud*, Mirza Khan Ansari is also a follower of the philosophy of *wahdat-al-wajud* which he described in the following verses (Ansari, 2004).

دي	نه	خبر	نزدیکیه	د	مولا	د
کبه	له	کا	طمع	ژوندون	د	ابو
دي	هست	هستی	په	خالق	د	واره
مرتبہ	ده	ذات	په	جامه	د	صفات

Translation: They don't know the closeness of Almighty Allah/ they expect for fish to be alive without water/ all the creatures exist due to His existencemce/ attributes are reflected from His existence. (Ansari, 2004).

He further explains the same phenomenon in the following couplets.

اوکړه	جلوه	مثله	بي	ذات
شۀ	صفات	ئې	پرتوه	له
بېخه	بي	پاڼي	به	بناخ
شۀ	ذات	د	دليل	دا

Translation: The manifestation and splendor of Being is unique/ its attributes came out of Its membranes. Branch could not stand without stem/ these attributes are evidence of the Being. (Ansari, 2004)

In Pashto modern poets Hamza Shinwari is following the theory of the Unity of Being (*Wahdatul Wajud*). He is a disciple of *Chashtia* order of Sufism (Khattak, 2000, p.12). According to Hamza Shinwari, the apparent rules of *shariat* are mandatory but incomplete without the soul. It proves that he emphasizes the essence and meaning and not the apparent rules.

These two theories of Sufism are closely related. There is no real difference between these two theories as Hamza Shinwari says in the following couplets.

حمزه که شي حجاب د ما سیوا د زړه نه دور
کثرت عین وحدت دے په کثرت کښي نشته هيڅ

Translation: If one removes the curtain of Others from one's heart/ numerousness and superfluity is Unity and there is nothing else in the numerousness.

ته که په پرده کښي وے پرده به پاتي نه وے
ستا بي پردگی هم پردی دي پيدا کړي

Translation: Your existence is so much visible that it has removed the veil/your openness has created veils.

Hamza avoids to decline completely the theory of contemplation or *wahdat-al-shuhud* (the unity of witness)

که هر خو گوره کثرت زما خوین نه دے
ولې بی د دي وحدت زما خوین نه دے

Translation: I like superfluity and immensity because without it, it is not possible to understand the Unity.

حاصل له دپرو بشکلیو می وحدت کرو د بنائست
کثرت د بت خانی نه مسلمان راغله بم

Translation; I collected the Unity of Beauty from many beautiful persons/gained the beauty of *wahdat* (Unity of Being) from many beauties/I returned as monotheist from an idol house through their manifestations.

According to Hamza Shinwari *kasrat* (numerousness) is not a reality.

یا خو هیخ نشته دا واره وهم و خیال دے
او که وي نو بس د یار به وي وجود

Translation: Numerousness and immensity proves that either there is nothing or only the existence of Beloved.

ادراک دے د وجود او نور سیوا چي دے عدم دے
دا څه چي مونزه گورو هم هغه دي نور څه نه دي

Translation: Only the existence is being perceived and the rest of things are non-existing. The numerous what we look is only the One Being and nothing else.

يا محسوس په حقيقت كېنې هم هغه دے نور څه نه دي
په پټو سترگو گوره چې دا گوري دا ليدۀ شي

Translation: Only that Being is perceived in reality. Look with closed eyes which is in reality the insight.

REFLECTION OF SUFISM IN THE PASHTO LITERATURE OF SWAT

Religious leaders influenced the traditional society of Swat (Rome, 2009, p. 227). In the beginning Pashto literature was promoted by religious people in Swat. Pir and Akhund were prestigious titles in the society of Swat. A person becomes a Pir and Akhund after continuous religious activities of a few years as *Akhund* of Swat became a spiritual leader in Swat (Ahmad, 1962, p.36). Religious families in Swat have a respect and *shukrana* (thanksgiving tax) were paid to them (Ahmad, 1962, p.39). In Swat, the graves of *Pirs*, saints, and religious leaders were revered. Akhund Darweza is the first writer in Swat who has described in detail the subtleties of *Tasawwuf*. He was follower of Pir Baba. Shariat or Sufi Silsila is of paramount importance for him. There is an *Alifnama* of him in which he describes all these stages in detail. Translation of his couplets are given below.

Translation: Without a spiritual guide it is not possible to guide a *murid* (aspirant of the path)/ The caravan of faith is expected to be looted by Satans/ Only those spiritual guides can guide aspirants who themselves are following the *Shariat*. Besides, it is also mandatory for spiritual guide to have received allegiance and initiatory pact from the Prophet (Darweza, 1969).

Akhund Darwiza was the follower of the Chashtia *Silsila* of Tasawwuf (Darweza, 1969, p.80). He has praised this *silsila* in his literary works (Darweza, 1969, p.111). Akhund Karim Dad, the eldest son of Darwiza, is also follower of this *silsila* (Darweza, 1969, p.134). Darwiza has emphasized the role of good deeds and *shariat* (Darweza, 1969, p.89). Logic and reasoning is not acceptable to him in Sufism (Darweza, 1969, pp. 78, 79). According to Akhund Darwiza, it is not possible to see the Reality with the help of full senses. Sacrifices are required by Sufi to see the Reality. (Darweza, 1969, p.78). Akhund Karimdad has compiled literary works of Darweza (Darweza, 1969). As discussed earlier, Akhund Darwiza emphasizes *shariat* and Pirs whereas his son Akhund Karimdad varies from him. According to Akhund Karimdad, if a person is a seeker of Reality, he should reduce eating, sleeping, talking, money, clothing and drinking to prove himself as human being rather an animal (Darweza, 1969, pp. 198-99).

Regarding the Seeing of Reality, in the light of the theory of Unity of Being, both Akhund Darweza and his son Akhund Karim Dad varies from each other. Darweza believes that seeing Reality with eyes is possible whereas according to Karimdad one must lose his being to find the meaning (Reality). He said in this regard:

دا معني به هغه مومي كړيمداده
 چه صورت يې واړه شوے رېز مرپز ده

Translation: O Karimdad! Only those can receive the meaning who lose themselves before reaching the meaning and reality (Darweza, 1969, p. 172).

In the Pashto literature of Swat, a competition and difference is also found between Akhund Darwiza and his rival Bayazid

Ansari. Darweza has his numerous followers and descendants in Swat that is why his ideas about Sufism have been praised by his followers as compared to Bayazid Ansari.

دروېزه اخون وارد غني مولی کره
 بايذيد خدائے پھ دېر سختو مېتلاکره

Translation: Allah almighty sent Akhund Darwiza/Allah almighty involved Bayazid in great difficulties (Zebsar, 1941, p.59).

Bayazid Ansari has not been praised.

ده ته پير تاريخ وئيلے پښتنو وه
 پښتانه ده دېر وژلي پھ کينو وو
 دے اکبر او پښتنو لره افت وه
 دهر يو علتہ جور د ده صورت وه

Translation: He was called as Pir Tarik by Pashtuns/ he had killed many Pashtuns/ He was like a catastrophe for Akbar as well as for Pashtuns/His body was composed of numerous defects. (Zebsar, 1941, p.106).

CRITICISM ON SUFISM

Numerous scholars have criticized the philosophy of Sufism. They have their own grounds of criticism and opposition. Some of them rejected it being a ‘life-denying’ and ‘fact-avoiding’ attitude of mind (Iqbal, 1986, p.143). Others rejected it by considering religious experience as an individual personal and incommunicable experience (Iqbal, 1986, p.145). Iqbal is of the opinion that if the religious experience is not communicable it does not mean that religious pursuit of individuals are futile and this incommunicability is a clue to the peak of the ego (Iqbal, 1986, p.145).

INFLUENCES OF SUFISM ON THE CULTURE OF SWAT

Khushal Khan Khattak in his book *Swat Nama* described the impacts of Sufism on the society of Swat. Malpractices regarding Sufism prevailing in Swat in those days have also been described by him. The misuse of being *Pir* and *murid* in Swat has also been condemned by him.

مبتلا په خو خو رنگه پليدي دي
مريدي دي، عنيدي دي، نديدي دي

Translation: Pashtuns of Swat are involved in many indecent and profane activities/ they are *muridi* (blind following), enmity and showing up his wealth (Khattak, 1986, p.64).

که په مکر خوګ عالم شي يا دروېش شي
خوګ به نه وي چې خبر د ده په کيش شي

Translation: If a person through deceit and artifice becomes a scholar or dervish/ No one is there to know about his garb (under which he has hide himself). (Khattak, 1986, p.65).

و عالم وته پلار قطب نيکه غوث کا
خپل خان لا څه الوده په بل بل لوټ کا

Translation: to show up their status to the world, they present their fathers and forefathers as *qutab* (the Supreme Pole at the summit of the esoteric hierarchy) and as *ghous*. By doing this they pollutes themselves in a variety of ways. (Khattak, 1986, p.93).

In that time in Pashtun society there was a tradition of blind following of Pirs. Khushal Khan Khattak has described this phenomenon in these verses.

هغه وخت چې پيروېشان فساد بنياد كړ
 پښتنو ورسره ټينگ كار د ارشاد كړ
 پښتانه په هغه دور پير پرست وو
 څوك مريد د شاه عيسلي څوك د سرمست وو

Translation: When mischief was started by Pir Rokhan/ Pashtuns also followed his order/ At that time Pashtuns were followers of *Pirs*/ Some of them were following Shah Esa while others were followers of Sarmast. (Khattak, 1986, p.96).

Misuses of Sufism in Swat has also been described by another classical poet of that time, Abdul Azim Swati in the following couplets.

اوس زمونږ په زمانه كښي بزرگان
 د دروغو پيدا كيږي ډېر ټگان
 چې بي خوي خصلت عمل وته اوگوري
 ته به وائي مشرورور د شيطان
 د دنيا د سود دپاره سره نيسي
 كور په كور كلي په كلي مريدان
 يو بېخه طريقه به كړي روانه
 پري تېر باسي بي عمله جاهلان
 شكراني به كړي جاري په مريدانو
 په چاگد په [چا] چيله په چا چرگان

Translation: Now in our era, the saints and holy men/many people are telling lie and disguised themselves as saints. When you look to the character and action/ you will call him as elder

brother of Satan. They engage for mundane benefits/ *murids* (disciples, followers) in every village. They start a new method/to deceive the illiterate and ignorant people. They start getting *shukrana* (thanksgiving amount from) *murids* (aspirants of the path)/ they receiving goats, sheeps and fowls from murids (Swatay, 1959, pp.72-74)

Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani and Pir Baba were famous *Pirs* in this area (Dostay, 2014, p. 467). Another important icon is Mianoor (Khattak, 1986, p.91) and Akhund Darweza (Khattak, 1986, p.97). Makhzan-ul-Islam, the book of Akhund Darweza was highly valued in Swat. (Khattak, 1952/60, p. 879).

CONCLUSION

Sufism is knowledge of the mysteries through contemplation and intuition. It is one of the prominent themes discussed in classical Pashto literature. This themes has been transmitted even to the modern literature. Works of three classical writers (Akhund Darweza, Akhund Karimdad and Abdul Azim Swati) and two modern writers (Dost Muhammad Khan Dostay and Taj Muhammad Khan Zebsar) from Swat were analyzed and found the continuation of Sufism with depletion from classic period to modern period. Chashtia and Naqashbandia initiatory chains of Sufism are dominant in the Pashto literature of Swat. Two theories/principles of Sufism, the oneness of divine Being and the unity of witness or of contemplation, are visible in the Pashto literature of Swat. The social and cultural life of the people of Swat have been influenced by the Sufism. Impacts of the Sufism is still existing in the society of Swat. Pashto literature produced in Swat, has reflected different aspects and impacts of Sufism. In different times people have also misused Sufism by adopting the role of Pir. Such type of practices have also been reflected in the Pashto literature of Swat.

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