

Sufism in Jammu

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Abstract

Sufism entered the Indian subcontinent in the twelfth century as a new socio religious force. Within a short period, it mushroomed to different parts of India. From Punjab to Rajputana, from Jammu and Kashmir to Kerala, sufism influenced the life and thought of the people. Though on the eve of its advent, Muslim population in most parts of India was virtually negligible, yet the sufis hardly faced any local resistance to their activities. Sufism received enthusiastic social response. It adjusted itself with the indigenous cultural modes in a smooth manner. As a result, it became a catalyst in shaping and consolidating the Indian regional identities from the thirteenth century onwards. In this context, sufi shrines of the different regions-Ajodhan, Sirhins, Delhi, Ajmer and Gulbarga – played a significant role. For example, Richard Maxwell Eaton has shown that the sufis of Bijapur contributed tremendously to the promotion of vernacular idiom and Dakhani language.

Keywords- Chishti, Surawardi, Qadiri, Naqshbandi

Several modern historians have studied Indian sufism. Most of them have confined their studies to the teachings and practices of sufis, as prescribed by their orders (silsilahs). Historians like Khaliq Ahmad Nizami and Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi have produced monumental works on Indian sufism. It is true that Richard Maxwell Eaton and Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi have undertaken detailed studies on the development of sufism in the regional contexts of Bijapur and Kashmir. Though these studies are just a few exceptions, yet these have been possible owing to the availability of considerable hagiographical literature, particularly the biographical memoirs and mystical discourses. Jigar Mohammed states, “Hardly any attempt has been made to explore the development of sufism in the hills, where the socio-economic life has been somewhat slower than in the plains and where the hagiographical literature is virtually non-existent. As such, vernacular sufism has received scant attention from the historians. In the hilly areas, the sufis were obliged to put in a much greater effort in their activities, so as to overcome the difficulties posed by the topographic and economic factors. In a partial attempt to fill this gap, the present paper seeks to explore the historical aspects of sufism in the Jammu hills.” (119)

Vernacular and Vernacularity

Sufism entered the Indian subcontinent in the twelfth century as a new socio-religious force. Within a short period, it mushroomed to different parts of India. From Punjab to Rajputana, from Jammu and Kashmir to Kerala, sufism influenced the life and thought of the people. Though on the eve of its advent, Muslim population in most parts of India was virtually negligible, yet the sufis hardly faced any local resistance to their activities. Sufism received enthusiastic social response. It adjusted itself with the indigenous cultural modes in a smooth manner. As a result, it became a catalyst in shaping and consolidating the Indian regional

identities from the thirteenth century onwards. In this context, sufi shrines of the different regions-Ajodhan, Sirhins, Delhi, Ajmer and Gulbarga – played a significant role. For example, Richard Maxwell Eaton has shown that the sufis of Bijapur contributed tremendously to the promotion of vernacular idiom and Dakhani language. (Jigar Mohammed, 120)

Underlining the importance of folk poetry of the Abijapur sufis, Eaton states, The bulk of the folk poetry written by the sufis was sung by village women as they did various household chores. The most common types included the chakki-nama, so called because it was sung while grinding food grains at the grindstone or chakki and the chakha-nama, sung while spinning thread at the spinning wheel orcharkha. Other types of such folk poetry included the lori-nama, or lullaby, the shadi-nama or wedding song, the suhagan-nama or married woman's song, and the suhaila or eulogistic song." Observing the continuous popularity of the sufi folk literature, Eaton further observes, "Sufi folk literature can be found today in both written and oral traditions. Despite the intrusion of modern media in the villages, folk poetry relating to household chores is still sung." (157)

The lullabies and riddles (loris and pahelis) composed by Amir Khusro (1250-1325 Ad) inspired the use of vernacular language for literary purposes. Khaliq Ahma Nizami finds sufi hospices (khanqahs) as fertile grounds for the growth of common medium of communication among people of different linguistic backgrounds. The desire of the Muslim mystics to develop social proximity with the Hindus, so as to appreciate their religious life and thought, facilitated the evolution of a common medium of communication for the exchange of ideas. The earliest known sentences of the Hindvi language are found in the mysti records. That the birth place of the Urdu language was the khanqah of the medieval sufis can hardly be questioned. In Kashmir,

Shaikh Nuruddin or nand Rishi, one of the most popular sufis of Kashmir, composed his mystical poetry in the Kashmiri dialect, which could be easily comprehended by the common people of the region. In this manner, he strengthened the concept of Kashmiri vernacular identity. It is rightly observed that Nuruddin Rishi, through the use of Kashmiri dialect, was able to create a framework for a regional culture and “to propagate a devotional religion, which was significantly outside the purview of the state.” (Jigar Mohammed, 121)

Apart from vernacular language, one may discern the vernacularity involved in the life pattern of the Indian sufis. They respectfully followed the regional cultural values pertaining to food, clothes, housing and means of livelihood. Most of the sufis lived in very simple houses, ate simple food, wore simple dress and propagated non-violence. Sufis like Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri advocated vegetarianism in deference to the local customs. Similarly, in Kashmir, Nuruddin Rishi was a protagonist of non-Violence. Social groups like that of the peasants and artisans, observing that the sufis respected their sentiments and life styles, found no hesitation in entering their circle of influence and in seeking guidance from them. The sufis adopted the life style of the common people and, thus, identified themselves with the local cultures. In this sense, the sufis contributed to the development of regional identities. Though essentially Islamic in its origin, the mystic movement spread to various regions of the Indian subcontinent, because it assimilated and imbibed elements from the cultures and religions that were different from its own. (Jigar Mohammed, 121)

The holistic vision of sufis and their mission of diffusing the message of divine love and social harmony led them to settle in all those areas where they could perform their activities and spread their teachings. They were love (ishq) oriented nomadic saints who believed in travelling

with a specific purpose. Murray T. Titus has aptly described them,,: Usually they have been individuals endowed with piety and religious zeal, frequently men of learning, who through their own personal interest in the spread of Islam, and inspired with a divine call, have been content to wander from place to place and gather disciples.” What is being suggested is that the sufis never believed in geographical boundaries, just as they did not believe in geographical boundaries, just as they did not believe in caste and sectarian barricades. They made no distinction between hills and plains, between desert and fertile land and between urban and rural areas in order to spread Sufism. For them, each place and social group had potentialities of spiritual betterment. Therefore, the topography of the Jammu region could not dampen their zeal for settling and propagating Sufism. The Different areas of the Jammu hills witnessed the arrival of sufis during the medieval period and this process continued till the nineteenth century. (Jigar Mohammed, 121)

The task of reconstructing the history of Sufism in the Jammu hills poses several challenges. The most formidable among them is the paucity of suitable contemporary sources. Most formidable among them is the paucity of suitable contemporary sources. Most sufi shrines do not possess any historical records pertaining to the sufis associated with them. Some information may be acquired from either the present spiritual heads (sajjadah nishin) or the oral traditions/folklore, preserved in the dialects such as Dogri, Kishtwari, Bhadrawahi, Gojri and Pahari. Local cultures and collective memory have incorporated the stories of the spectacular deeds of the sufis and the miraculous powers of their shrines. A large number of legends are associated with the arrival, settlement and activities of the sufis. These are narrated both by the caretakers and followers of the shrine. Some nineteenth century source such as the Gulabnama of Diwan Kirpa Ram, Rajdarshani of Ganeshdas Badehra and some travel accounts also contain

some information regarding the role of sufis and their shrines in the socio-cultural scenario of the Jammu hills. (Nizami, 264)

Arrival of the Sufis

Almost all the leading sufi orders (silsilahs), coming to India, made the Punjab region as their first abode. For instance, the Chishti, Surawardi, Qadiri and Naqshbandi orders appeared first in Punjab and only afterwards spread to other parts of India. From Ali bin Usman Hujwiri to Khwaja Baqi Billah, all the sufis, irrespective of their spiritual disciplines, found favourable social environment in Punjab for the pursuit of their sufi activities. Geographically and culturally, the Jammu region was closely associated with Punjab. Besides, during the medieval period twenty-two principalities, which existed in the modern Jammu region, were treated under the Punjab hill states. The Mughal sources such as the *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* also reveal that most of the states of the Jammu hills were either parts of the province (suba) of Lahore or that of Multan. Different routes from Punjab to Kashmir passed through the Jammu and Kashmir state was included in the political jurisdiction of the kingdom of Lahore under Maharaja Ranjit Singh (r. 1799-1839). Geographical proximity and socio-economic links of the Jammu region with Punjab facilitated cultural exchange between these two regions. Most parts of the Jammu region were hilly in character and its population was largely Hindu. Frederick Drew, who came to Jammu and Kashmir in the nineteenth century during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857-1885) and travelled to different parts of the region, found that most of the hill principalities were feudatories of Jammu, the most powerful state. Thus the Jammu region was quite close to Punjab which had emerged as the first hub of sufism in the Indian subcontinent.

Since the Jammu hill states were situated on the border of Kashmir, Sufism of Kashmir also seems to have influenced the social life of the Jammu region. Sufism appeared in Kashmir during the fourteenth century. Syed Sharfuddin, popularly known as Bulbul Shah, arrived in Kashmir during the early fourteenth century. Suhadeva (r. 1301-1320), a scion of the Damra dynasty, ruled over Kashmir at that time. Syed Sharfuddin was a Suhrawardi sufi and came to Kashmir from Turkistan. During the second half of the fourteenth century, the Kubrawi order was introduced in Kashmir by Mir yed Ali Hamadani, popularly known as Shah-i-Hamadan. In the beginning of the fifteenth century Syed Hilal, a Naqshbandi sufi, come to Kashmir and settled there. Similarly, Shaikh Niamatullah Qadiri also visited Kashmir and introduced the Qadiri order there. More importantly, in Kashmir an indigenous sufi brotherhood, known as the Rishi order, emerged during the fifteenth century. (Rafiq, 150)

Thus two border regions of Jammu of Jammu i.e. Punjab and Kashmir had nurtured various centers of sufism and, Jammu being situated between these two regions, attracted the attention of sufis from both the directions. Pir Roshan Wali Shah is believed to be the earliest sufi who came to Jammu from Mecca in the first half of the thirteenth centry (1242). But, the hagiographical traditions inform us that the majority of sufis arrived in Jammu from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Pit Lakhadata, Pir Buddhan Ali Shah, Hazrat Zainuddin Rishi, Baba Latifuddin Rishi, Pir Buddhan Pir Mitha, Pir Zahir Wali shah, Sanjha Pir or Sher Kan Shan Pathan and Baba Karam Shah lelonged to the fifteenth century. But a large number of Sufis came from Punjab during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mention may be made of /Baba Jiwn Shan, Baba Rah, Qutub aman Hazrat Jiwan Shah, Mustafa or Nau Gaza Babu. During this period, Punjab was in the grip of the political anarchy, particularly due to the repeated invasions of Ahmad Shan Abdali. But the Jammu region under the rule of Ranjit Dev

(1783) was a peaceful region, i.e. an abode of peace (Dar-ul-Aman). It seems, therefore, that sufis found a congenial atmosphere in the Jammu region for the propagation of their philosophy among the people. A number of sufis found a congenial atmosphere in the Jammu region for the propagation of their philosophy among the people. A number of sufis migrated to Jammu from Punjab in the mid- nineteenth century, owing to the political chaos and internecine struggle for throne among the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. But in the Jammu hills Maharaja Gulab Singh (r. 1846-1857) established peace and security in an effective manner. Consequently, several sufis of Punjab looked upon the Jammu Hills as more suitable than Punjab for their mystic activities. They, therefore, migrated and settled here. Political stability afforded by the region. It is important to mention that the sufis of Punjab were the followers of the creed of non-violence. It is known that when Mongol leader Amir Timur's expansionist policies created widespread dislocation in Central Asia and Persia, it became difficult for the sufis and scholars to carry on their mystic and scholarly activities. Therefore, many sufis migrated from these areas to India. It was in these circumstances that Syed Ali Hamadani migrated to Kashmir for the propagation of the teachings of the Kubrawi order. (Jigar Mohammed, 122)

The migration of sufis was not a one-way traffic, the sufis, by their very vocation, were obliged to travel to foreign lands for acquiring mystical knowledge and learning from the experience of renowned masters. It is not surprising that the natives of the Jammu hills should travel and settle in other parts of the Indian subcontinent. Let us consider the case of Miskin Shah Sahib (d.1859). A native of Kishtwar, he became a disciple of Shah Niya Ahmad (d.1834) who, in turn, was a spiritual successor (khalifa) of the famous Chishti sufi of Punjab, Khwaja Nur Muhammad Muharvi. Miskin Shah Sahib, who had received initial initiation in the Qadiri and Naqshbandi order, established a hospice (khanqah) at Jaipur at the advice of his mentor.

The sufis of the Jammu hills were addressed with the different honorific titles, which varied from period to period. The most popular appellation used for them was the 'pir,' which was/is used mostly for the sufis of the period from thirteenth to the seventeenth century. Pir Roshan Ali Shah, Pir Mitha, Pir Lakhdatta, Pir Zahir Wali Shah and Pir Shahan Shah Wali were the famous sufis of the Jammu hills for whom the term pir has been used since the medieval period. The expression of 'Shah' was also frequently used for the sufis as a suffix to their names. Bargad Ali Shah, Pir Ali Shah, Fazal Shah, Mangal Shah, Pir Bukhar Shah, Pir Sufi Shah, Qasim Shah, Khaki Shah and Sayyid Shah Ghulam Badshah were the prominent sufis whose names carried this term. The appellation of 'Sayeen' was used for some famous sufis. Similarly, the expressions of 'Shaikh', 'Syed', 'Baba' and 'Qalandar' were also in vogue. It has already been mentioned that some of the sufis of Kishtwar used the term 'Rishi' as a symbol of their identity in terms of their order. However, the terms Pir, Shah, Sayeen, Shaikh, Syed, Baba and Qalandar were not used to mark the identity of a particular sufi order. These appellations were used merely as a mark of respect. (Jigar Mohammed, 123)

Prominent sufis

The modern Jammu region comprises of districts such as Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Doa, Punch, Rajouri, Samba, Riasi, Kishtwar and Ramban. They are profusely dotted with sufi shrines. Like other parts of Punjab and Kashmir, the sufis of different orders settled in the Jammu hills. The sufis such as Pir Roshan Shah Wali, Pir Lakhdatta, Baba Budhan Shah, Pir Mitha, Pir Zahir Wali Shah wali, Pir Muhjabbat Ali Shah. Baba Sher Bukhari, Qutub Zaman hazrat Baba Jiwan Shah, Panch Pir, RahBaba and Baba Barkat Ali Shah came to Jammu and settled in the different areas such as Jammu Proper, Satwari, Akhnur, Kunjwani and Rihari.

Shaikh Fariduddin Qadiri, Hazrat Muhammad Asraruddin, Hazrat Muahmmad Akhyaruddin, Shaikh Zain Alla Din, Baba Latifuddin Rishi and Zainuddin Rishi settled in Kishtwar/ Baba Pir Tode Shah settled in the modern Kathua district. Mustafa or Nua Baba, Pir Baba Karam Shah, Hazrat Nadir Ali Shah Baghdadi settled at Ram Nagar in Udhampur district. Alla Pir settled at Punch. Hazrat Kasim Shah settled at Dera Mehta in Doda district and Hazrat Haji Muhammad Akram Did so at Doda proper. Panch Pir settled at Jammu, Basoli, Rajouri Purmandal and Ramnagar. Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani settled in Punch. Several shrines of the sufi saints exist in Punch. Several shrines of the sufi saints exist in Punch, Rajouri, Doda, Udhampur and Jammu districts.

From the viewpoint of their regional background, the sufis of Jammu hills can be situated into four categories: sufis from (i) Punjab, (ii) Kashmir, (iii) foreign land and (iv) the indigenous sufis of Jammu hills. The hagiographical traditions reveal that majority of sufis for Jammu hills. The hagiographical traditions reveal that majority of sufis of Jammu hills came from Punjab. Pir Lakhdatta, Baba Buddhan Ali Shan, Baba Jiwan Shah of Akhnur, Baba Rah, Baba Jiwan Shah of Jiwan Shah MUhallah, Pir Baba Tode Shah, Pir Wali Shah, Mustafa Baba or Nau Baba, Sain Lal Din and Pir Ghulam Badshah came to Jammu from the different parts of Punjab. Some of the sufis initiated into the sufism either by Mir syed Ali Hamadani or shaikh Nuruddin Rishi. However, arrival of the Qadiri sufi Fariduddin along with his companion intensified the processes of Kishtwar's association with sufism in a systematic way. Hazrat Miskin Shah Kishtwari, Hazrat Sayyid Abu Sikandar Ali, Zainuddin Rishi, Latifuddin and others were the products of Kashmir sufism and shifted in the Jammu hills is associated with some foreign countries also. Mir Roshan Ali or Nau Giza Pir, Hazrat Shah Muhammad Ghazi, Pir Mitha, Faqir baba Faiz Bukhari, Baba Barkat Ali And Hazrat Nazar Ali Shah came from Mecca, Baghdad,

Iran, Arabia and Kazakistan. Hazarat Shawan Sarkoti, Pir Muhabat Ali, Pir Wali Shah and Baba Sain Lal Din belonged to the Jammu hills. There were some indigenous sufis who first accepted Islam and then got initiation into sufism. Majority of such sufis belonged to the Rishi order of Kishtwar. The geographical background of the sufis shows that the Jammu hill states were well connected with different parts of India and foreign countries, so far as propagation of sufism is concerned. It becomes evident that the Jammu hills not only welcomed the arrival of sufism, but also became a common meeting ground for the diverse mystical ideologies. We can discern the possibilities of the emergence of a continuous social discourse among the sufis and inhabitants of the Jammu hills. (Jigar Mohammed, 124-25)

The philosophical background, in terms of affiliation to a specific mystical order (silsilah), is not known in the case of most sufis of the Jammu hills. Since the information regarding the life and works of these sufis is based on hagiographical traditions, the present spiritual heads (sajjadah nishins) and caretakers of the sufis. But there were sufis whose order-based identity is well established. In Kishtwar, a majority of sufis belonged either to the Qadiri or Rishi order. Hazrat Shaikh Zainuddin and Hazrat Baba Latifuddin belonged to the Rishi order. Sayyid Fariduddin, Israruddin, Shah Abdal, Sayyid Bahauddin Samani, Darwesh Muhammad and Yar Muhammad of Kishtwar belonged to the family of Shaikh Fariduddin Gani-i-Shakar of Ajodhan. (Jigar Mohammed, 125)

Charisma of the Sufis

Most sufis have been remembered as charismatic figures. This awe inspiring image has been constructed, over a period of time spanning centuries, primarily with the help of miracles which have been attributed to the sufis by their devout followers. Though the stories of miracles

appear incredible and impossible, yet they provide interesting insights into the personality of the individual sufi as well as the larger phenomenon of sufism. Most sufis of the Jammu hills were reputed to perform miracles (khashf wa karamat). Some miracles of Pir Roshan Shah Wali are described in the Rajdarshani. It is said that the miracles of Pir Roshan Shah Wali obliged the king of Jammu, Raja Sarab-li-Dhar, to see the sufi in person. The king also requested the Pir to settle in Jammu. The Pir accepted the offer of the king, who provided all facilities to the Pir. A miracle narrated in Rajdarshani is associated with the death of Pir Roshan Shah Wali. Ganeshdas Badehra writes, '... A long man of towering body named Roshan Shah Wali, one of the close associates of the Prophet, of an Arab-like gait, came to the chakla of Jammu like a faqir and met Raja Sarab-li-Dhar and gave him the tidings of safety, that the army of Islam would not endanger his life and faith, nor would it harm Jammy. But the countries of the Punjab and Hindustan would be trampled under hoofs of the steeds of the Musalman." So I am a feeble ant, has been deputed by the Holy and popular Rasul to guard Jammu. 'He uttered such words, took off his skull from his head like a turban, walked headless for some steps and going near the Gumat gate, sat in side and gave up the ghost. They buried him there as per his will. His khanqah exists to this day and enjoys the same reverence.'" (Jigar Mohammed, 126)

Similarly, Pir Mitha is acknowledged for his miracles. It is said that once he roped his horse near his hut and went away. After some time, the horse felt thirsty. There was nobody to provide water to the horse. But suddenly a fountain and two trees sprang up. The horse quenched his thirst and gratified his hunger with the leaves of the trees. It was believed that Pir Mitha could also cure a patient by his miraculous faculty. A hagiographical story says that once the Queen of Jammu fell ill. All efforts failed to restore her good health. Pir Mitha came to know about the indisposing of the queen through some royal water carriers (bhishtis) who supplied

water of rivers and wells to the royal palace, situated at modern Dalpatian Mohallah. Generally the water carriers fetched water from Pir Koh to the palace, and the house of Pir Mitha was situated on the way to Pir Koh. Once Pir Mitha, who was aware of the Queen's nagging illness, touched the container of the water carrier. The latter did not approve the action of Pir Mitha. He spilled all the water, declaring it to have become impure. Whenever the water carrier passed by the house of the Pir the latter would touch the water pot. Ultimately, the water carrier brought the water, touched by the Pir, to the place. When the queen drank it, she recovered from her ailment. It was a matter of surprise for all. When the king learnt that it was the miracle of the Pir, which had cured the queen, he became his devotee. After the death of the Pir, his shrine received royal patronage in perpetuity. Several such miracles are associated with almost all the sufis of the Jammu hills. These stories had great significance so far as the popularity of the sufis of the Jammu hills. These stories had great significance so far as the popularity of the sufis is concerned. A large number of people are said to have become their followers after hearing the wondrous tales. The sufis still survive through the stories revealing their miraculous deeds. (Jigar Mohammed, 127)

Social Concerns

The sufis performed a variety of roles while living in the midst of the common people. On the one hand, they propagated their mystical ideas by delivering sermons and holding discussions. On the other hand, they showed an equal concern for the material welfare of their followers and disciples. A significant social activity of the Jammu sufis was their organization of the community kitchen (langar). It was intended to discourage the social practice of exclusion. Segregation and untouchability were the worst social practices of exclusion. Segregation and untouchability were the worst social evils, prevalent in the different parts of the

country. In the Jammu hills, the topographical features also obstructe social practice of exclusion. Segregation and untouchability were the worst social intercourse among the inhabitants of different localities and pockets. The organization of langar by the sufis thus intended to associate people with the concept and practice of inclusiveness. The extent of the popularity of langar can be estimated from the fact that most sufi shrines of Jammu hills organize langar till date on various occasions. At the time of lagar, people cast off their respective social identities and consider their participation in langar as a sacred duty. It is also interesting to menagers of the sufi shrine were expected to conceal the name of the donor who, in turn, was expected to refrain from seeking undue sociopolitical mileage from the act.

The sufi tradition of langar, which was inaugurated by Shaikh Farid in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, seems to have been consolidated in the Ajmmu hills by the association of the sufis of theis region with Guru Nank. Secondly, a number of sufis of Jammu, who originally came from Punab, must have been acquainted with the Sikh tradition of langar. For Pir Mitha met Guru Nanak the founder of the Sikh institution of langar. He was much impressed by the personality of the Guru. He presented some grains to the Guru so that he could cook and eat it. Guru Nanak accepted the offering of the Pir and passed it on to his companion- disciple, Mardana. Assuming that the Guru did not eat grains, the Pir offered some milk to him. Again the Guru handed it over to Mardana. The Pir was much perplexed and presume that since the Guru was a non-Muslim, he did not accept anything offered by a Muslim. Guru Nanak understood the apprehension of the Pir. He called him and delivered a sermon on spirituality. Afterwards, the Pir committed himself to social services. A similar association between Baba Buddhan Shah and Guru Nanak is attested both by the sufi and Sikh traditions of Punjab and Jammu regions. According to one such tradition, both Baba Buddhan Shah and Guru Nanak enjoyed the

company of each other. They used to hold meetings to exchange their views on social and spiritual issues. Baba Buddhan Shah also went to Anand Sahib and met Guru Nanak and stayed there for some time. Thus, what is being suggested is that the sufis of Jammu hills respected the sentiment of the others'. They became a bridge among the people of different religions and social backgrounds. Their convents (khanqahs) and shrines acted as meeting places for people belonging to different religions and regions. They became instrumental in establishing the concept that "regions pray together and stay together"

Apart from maintaining and promoting social harmony, the sufis of the Jammu hills also made earnest efforts to maintain ecological balance. For instance, they participated in the plantation of trees and founded water resources particularly the baolis (wells with steps). It was believed that the leaves and fruits of these trees and water of these resources were helpful in curing certain diseases. Pir Lakhdatta is remembered for the plantation of such trees and creation of such water resources. Shah Ghulam Badshah of rajouri is said to have planted a tree, which became everlasting one, known as Sadabahar. It still survives. It yields fruit throughout the year, but their plucking is forbidden. Only those fruits can be used which naturally fall to the ground. It is believed that whoever gets the fruit and eats it, his or her prayer is granted. The uniqueness of this fruit is that it never gets perished. It is also believed that whosoever wishes to be blessed with a child should eat the leaves of this tree. The concern of the Jammu sufis with ecology led to the evolution of the culture of preserving trees and clean water. The protection and the maintenance of be a social duty in the Jammu hills. A large number of rites in the area are associated with the water resources and trees. Even in the present times, it is customary to organize festivals, fris and other religious function near the water resources and to treat the water

of these places as antidote to several common miseries. It is important to mention that both in Islam and Hinduism tree plantation is regarded as pious practice. (Jigar Mohammed, 129)

Sufi Shrines

The multifarious services of the sufis were appreciated and supported by the people of the Jammu hills. The extent of the people's attachment to the sufis can be estimated from the fact that the sufi shrines have been protected by the people for generations. Even today a large number of people visit these shrines on every Thursday. The spiritual heads (sajjadah nishins or gaddi nishins) continue to organize annual death anniversaries (urs) in the memory of the 'departed' sufis. Apart from the common people, the rulers of Jammu, since the time of Maharaja Gulab Singh, have looked after the preservation of these shrines. Gulab Singh, have looked after the preservation of these shrines. Gulab Singh, as a feudatory (jagirdar) of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, requested the latter for the grant of land to the shrine of Shah Ghulam Badshah, situated in Rajouri district. Maharaja Ranjit Singh accepted the request and granted land for meeting the expenses of the shrine. Similarly, Maharaja Gulab Singh granted an endowment of fifty kanals to the shrine of pir Wali Shah at katra in Udhampur district. Both Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857-1885) and Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925) extended financial support and Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925) extended financial support and renovated a number of sufi shrines in the Jammu hills. More importantly, Jai Singh, the king of Kishtwar, accepted Islam under the influence of Sayyid Fariduddin Qadiri during the seventeenth century and received the title of Bakhtiyar Khan. a Baba Jiwan Shah was much respected by Maharaja Pratap Singh and his brother Amar Singh. It is known that Maharaja Pratap Singh and his brother Amar Singh. It is known that Maharaja Pratap Singh extended financial support to Baba Jiwan Shah both in cash

(wazifa) and kind to meet the expenses of his palace. The Maharaja is said to have presented a hukka and a dhoosa to the Baba during his visit to the palace. (Jigar Mohammed, 130)

The location for the sufi shrines conferred a specific identity to the area concerned. Some localities of the Jammu hills are even known after the name of the prominent sufi of the place. The localities such as Pir Mitha, Lakhdara Bazar and Jiwan Shah may be cited in this connection. It may be mentioned that the nomenclature of these localities was dedicated to the sufis who had migrated to the Jammu hills. It is known that Pir Mitra came to Jammu from Persia via Lahore during the reign of Raja Biram Dev (1454-1489) of Jammu, Since Raja Biram Dev was a liberal ruler, Pir Mitha's arrival was welcomed. The real name of Pir Mitha was Syed Qutub Alam. He belonged to Sabzwar in Persia. He liked sweets and milk very much. Generally, his followers in Jammu offered him sweets when ever they came to meet him. Therefore, they started calling him Pir Mitra and he became popular with this name. The followers of Syed Qutub Alam gave him a new name (Pir Mitha) in accordance with their own perception, thus providing social legitimacy to the activities of the sufi. Rejdarshani records a very interesting account. According to it, benevolence and generosity of Raja Biram Dev inspired a number of enlightened saints (darveshes) to visit Jammu And settle here. In 867 Ah/1462 Ad a Syed named Qutub alam came to Jammu from the country of Sabazwar. A large number of Hindus and Mushlims became his followers. As sugar and sweets were his favourites, most of the visitors offered him gifts of milk, sugar, sweets and sugar cane. He also spoke sweet words to the people. Hence, he came to be known popularly as Pir Mitha. His tomb still blesses the people of Jammu. The people of Jahud Tribe, Musalmans and Gujjars celebrate a fair at his khanqah in the month of Kartik on the moon day. (Ganesh Das, Bادهhra, 122-23)

The sufi establishments became instrumental in promoting commercial activities and led to the foundation of towns and villages. Most of the sufi shrines of jammu hills are situated on the trade routes. It may be mentioned that in the hills it was very difficult to discover a route connecting one area to the other. When the sufis settled at different places of the Jammu hills, they began to be inhabited by people of different social backgrounds. Pir Roshan Wali Shah (also known as Nau Gaza Pir) settled at Gummat, which is known to have emerged as an important commercial centre of Jammu city from medieval period onwards. Rajdarshani mentions that the khanqah of Pir Roshan Wali Shah had been a hub of social gatherings and remained in a flourishing condition. Similarly, Pir Mitha is an important part of the old city of Jammu and is a very old market. Lakhdatta Bazar, named after Pir Lakhdatta, is situated in the heart of the old city of Jammu. One of the sufis of Jammu hills is known as Rah Baba i.e. a discoverer of a route. His real name was Mian Muhammad Ibrahim. Maharaja Pratap Singh has constructed the road leading up to his shrine. Therefore, people started addressing him as Rah Baba. In the popular perception, it was Mian Muhammad Ibrahim, not the king, who was the real power behind the construction of the road. The tradition of annual commemoration of the death anniversary (urs) and people's visits to the sufi shrines on every Thursday were instrumental in the organization of the commercial activities around the sufi shrines. Thus these sufis and their shrines served the purpose of connecting the people of one area with that of the other. The route followed by the devotees and travelers facilitated the socio-economic development of the area. The sense of isolation, which generally prevailed in the hills, was broken and replaced by a new binding force for the scattered communities. It is important to mention that nowadays some sufi shrines are attracting devotees on a wide scale and are receiving large unasked charity in the form of money. The endowment is utilized for public welfare activities. A huge university has been established at

Rajouri in the name of Ghulam Badshah. The university is imparting technical education to the students. Similarly, the endowment of the shrine of Fariduddin Qadiri is being utilized for the promotion of education in the Kishtwar district of Jammu region. Thus, the sufis and their shrines are working for the retention of the glorious legacy of these places, which are alive even in the present age. They are promoting dialogues between past and present in a continuous process. (Jigar Mohammed,131)

Jigar Mohammed states, “The sufis of the Jammu hills brought about social harmony during the medieval period, while their shrines have continued to promote the same social ideals in more recent times. It is not surprising that some shrines are being maintained by non-Muslims. The sufis migrated from distant places and made a permanent home in the Jammu hills. Having received a tremendous social support, they propagated pluralism and inclusiveness. They initiated a continuous dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous cultures, besides building bridges between different regions. As a result, the inter-regional contact between Punjab and Jammu, became a dominant socio-economic trend. The resilient survival of the sufi shrines in almost all the localities up to our own times, irrespective of the everlasting influence of sufism on the social life of the region. These structures, though old and silent, stand as a living symbol of a historically evolved cultural heritage. The life and work of the sufis, including their piety and charisma, continues to remind the present generation of the harmony and prosperity that prevailed in the Jammu hills under the guidance of the ‘departed’ sufis.” (132)

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