

SUFI MOVEMENT (PART-1)

B.A. HISTORY (HONS) PART-3 PAPER-5

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INTRODUCTION

Sufi Movement was a mystic dimension of Islam which formally originated in the Middle East between 9th and 10th centuries AD. *Safa* means wisdom or Purity. "*Suf*" refers to Wool. It was said that the development of Sufism was highly influenced by various mystic philosophies of Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism. The early spread of Islam to India was strongly influenced by the Arab traders who were responsible to the arrival of Sufi saints to Western and Eastern coast of Indian Sub-Continent. The political situation in North India was in favor of the spread of Sufism in these regions. Later the political changes in the Caliphate empire paved the way for the vast migration of Sufis in the mainland's of South India and Ceylon.

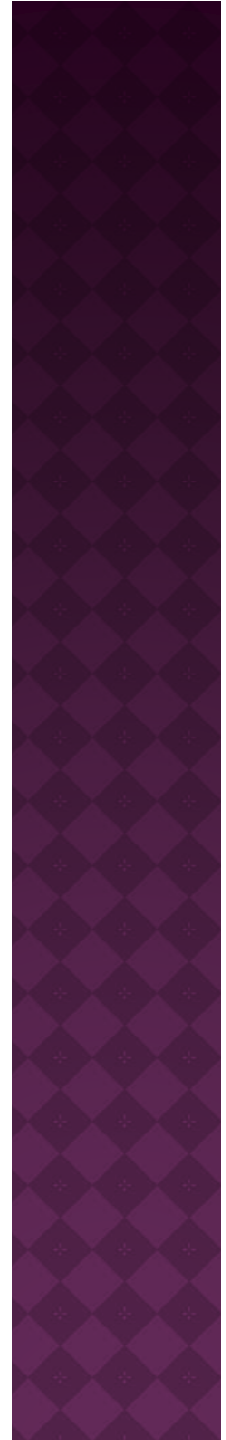
INTRODUCTION

Sufism was characterized in the one hand as a phenomenon of expressing love towards almighty and on the other hand spreading the message of truth. The Sufis in India became the Ambassadors of cultural integrity and social harmony

The *Qadiriyya* and *Chistiyya* orders of Sufism were the prominent Sufi orders of having many Dargahs throughout India. The Sufi Saints have contributed a lot for the Literature, philosophy and theological ideas.

EMERGENCE OF SUFISM

The rise of Sufism could be associated with the disenchantment among some Muslim Ulema (scholars) and disintegration of the Caliphate after the death of Hazrat Ali, the fourth Caliph. This period witnessed intense power struggle, bloodshed and empowerment of the ruling class. Many Ulema were also killed in process. Due to these tragic and anarchic incidents, the situations were completely shocked. Some scholars who were inspired by the Prophet and the early Caliph began to follow the habit of meditation and spirituality with the purpose of having a direct experience of God. They embraced poverty and started leading a life full of piety and love for fellow humankind.

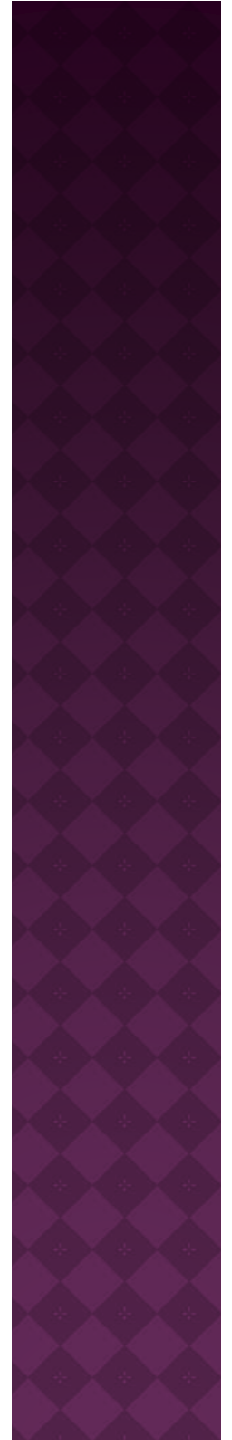


EMERGENCE OF SUFISM

In the beginning, Sufism did not exist in a properly organized form, but, at the same, one cannot underestimate or overlook the contributions made by the early Sufis (8th, 9th and 10th Centuries) to the development of Sufi thought. The earliest Sufi was *Hasan of Basra* who had a fear of God and very cautious that not to commit any sin or mistake in his life. He represented a tendency towards other world liners, piety and asceticism and considered hunger and poverty as symbols of righteousness. *AlwHashim Sufi of Kufah* is regarded as the first mystic to have used the nomenclature '*Sufi*'. He believed that inner transformation (of heart) was the essence of Sufism. *Ibrahim bin Adham* was the king of Balkh who gave up his throne and all worldly possessions and became an ascetic.

EMERGENCE OF SUFISM

Of the many *Sufi orders (Silsilas)* that have arisen in the world of mystic Islam, India became the hospitable home for a large number of Sufis. The arrival of *Shaikh Mu'in – ud – Din* in India just before the Sultanate period heralded the beginning of a new era in the religious ethos of the country. During the Sultanate period of three hundred years, Sufism had spread every nook and corner of the country.



MIGRATION OF SUFIS TO INDIA

The trade in the Indian Ocean was influenced by the Arabs. The early spread of Islam to India was strongly influenced by the Arab traders who were responsible to the arrival of Sufi Saints to Western and Eastern Coast of Indian Subcontinent. The political changes in the Caliphate Empire paved the way for the vast migration of the Sufis in the Mainland of South India . The political situation of North India was also in favour of the spread of Sufism in these regions. The social behaviour and philosophical synthesis were in practice by the Sufis. The Sufi Shaikhs (evolved at the spiritual level) came to occupy a pride of place in the society; most of them were patronized by the kings. Because of their powerful spiritual attainments, noble deeds and liberal out looking, they left an indelible imprint on the socio-religious setup (milieu) of India.

(To be continued)