

SUFISM AND ITS IMPACT ON BIHAR (PART-2)

सूफीवाद और बिहार पर इसका प्रभाव (भाग-2)

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SUFISM IN BIHAR

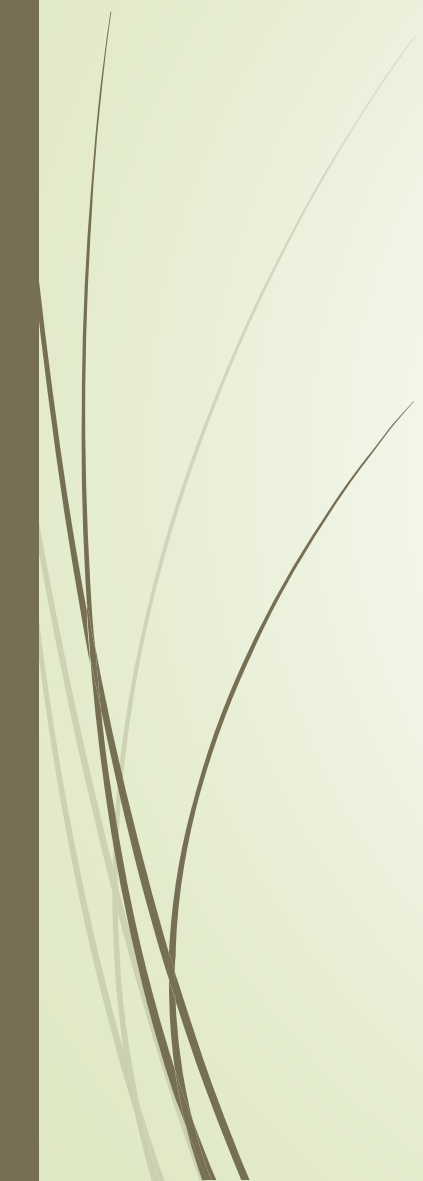
बिहार में सूफीवाद

- ▶ Bihar is one of the Indian states, which has played a prominent role in the promotion of Persian language and literature in India. The developmental role played in the arena of culture was carried on by Persian poets, writers and Sufis. It is quite remarkable that this particular region gave to world not only noble thinkers, reformers and humanists as Gautam Buddha, Mahavir and Ashoka but also great Sufis like Makhdoom Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri, Sultan Ahmad Chirmposh, Muzaffar Shams Balkhi and many others.



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- ▶ Apart from these brightest stars of Sufi galaxy, there were innumerable other Sufis who contributed to the development of Persian literature in Bihar. All of them have left behind a considerable literature in the form of Maktubat, Mulfuzat, Isharat, Aurads and other mystical tracts from which we can form an idea of their beliefs, preachings and outlook along with something that is of cultural and historical value.
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- *Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri* is considered one of the most important revered Sufi saints of Bihar. His *Maktubat-e-sadi* and *Maktubat-dosadi* are considered to be a best collection of letters on mystical doctrines and principles of Islam. Regarding the *Malfuzats*, *Lataif-i-Maani*, is an abridged version of *Madanul-Mani*, which was compiled by Zain Badr-i-Arabi, which contains the discourses delivered by Maneri.
- Similarly we find Maulana Muzafar Shams Balkhi's *Maktubat* which contains 181 letters.

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His *Sharah-i-Mashriq-ul-Anwar*, a standard work on tradition, *Sharh-i-Auida-Hafizia* and a small *Diwan* of poems have been preserved in *Khudabaksh* library, Patna.

- Shaikh Husain's *Malfuz*, entitled *Ganj-i-la-Yakhfa* contains his discourses of 57 *Majlis* and his *Maktubat* consists of letters on mystic subjects including one addressed to Ibrahim Shaqi of Jaunpur, a treatise in Arabic named *Hazarat-i-khams* (5 different planes of existence) on the problem of divine unity and his collection of mystic poems, including a *Mathnavi* entitled

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- ▶ Chahar Darwesh, are more generally known, but the Futuha Khanqah of the Balkhi saints has some other works also such as Risala-i-Khair-o-Sharr, Qaza-o-Qadar, Risala-i-Muhammadia, Aurad-i-Dah Fasli, Risala-i-Tauhid and Risala-I Akhasy-ul-Khas. (*Askari, S.H. Sufism and Sufi orders of Bihar and Bengal*)

Husain's son Shaikh Hasan Balkhi wrote small tracts such as Risala-i-maani-dhat- wajh-o-Nafs, Risala-i-Hasht, and was the compiler of Lataef-ul-Ma'ni, but his most well known work is Kashif-ul-Asrar, a commentary in Persian of his father's Arabic Risala.



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- Husain's son Ahmad Lngar Dariya is well known because of his valuable Malfuz, Munis-ul-Qulub, which contains a mine of information about the Firdausia order of Sufis of Bihar. This Malfuz supplements the earliest works such as Manaqib-ul-Asfia, Malfuz of Maulana Amun, and Risalai-Bahram Bihari and it amplifies the references in them and gives additional information of historical and cultural value.

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- Bihar had such a long series and such a galaxy of Sufi mystics of the various orders that they may claim to be regarded as the home of Indian Sufism. Out of the fourteen orders or Khanwadahs those of the highest repute were represented in Bihar, and each had a share in the general spread and development of Islam in different parts of the province. There was no difference in the cardinal principles and tenets of the various orders and there was no bar to people of one order getting „permission“ (Ijazat) and „initiation“ (Bai‘at) from the saints of the other orders.

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- They differed from one another in name, sometimes in respect of garb or dress and mostly about rules and methods of meditation (Fikr) recitation (Zikr) and their attitude towards Dhikr audition (Sama) and vocal music. The Shuttaria called Madhhab or Mashrab (mode of conduct) rather than order (Khanwadah) were closely connected with the Firdausia and Suharwardia, but unlike them and the Chistia, and like the Naqshbandia, and even the Qadria, they rejected Sama, music or singing.



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The Shutaria and also the Madaria and Qalandaria which at one time occupied an important position in Bihar have now sunk into the background. The Naqshbandiya did not attain any vogue in early times in Bihar. the oldest and the most widely – dispersed where the orders of the Shaharwardia and Chistiya, and though they still hold the field like the Qadriya in many parts, they were all eclipsed by the Firdausia order.

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- In fact, owing to the towering personalities of Hazrat Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri and of his immediate successors, the Balkhi saints, the Firdausia order has always held a position of special prominence in Bihar. The saints of this „Silsila“ which was an offshoot of the great Suharwardia order constantly added to its strength and what is more important, fortunately for us they have left behind a considerable literature in the form of Makhtubat, Malfuzat, Isharat. Aurads and other mystical tracts from which we can form some idea of their beliefs, preaching and outlook and also get something that is of cultural and historical value.

(To be continued)