Malfuz literature, the recorded discourses of Sufi saints, not only gave an insight into the socio-economic situation of the period, but was crucial to ensuring the continuation of Sufi influence after the fourteenth century. As we have seen, the formation of Sufism in India was a process that took centuries, and its origin is available to us only through a series of reconstructions. From the time of Hujwiri\(^1\) (d.1074), the northwestern cities of India were home to a number of Sufis, though Hujwiri is one of the few whose teachings are accessible to us in written form. By the 12\(^{th}\) century, Sufism had become a universal aspect of Islamic social life, whose influence had not only spread widely among Muslims, but to a large segment of the population, regardless of religion or caste. In the words of Professor K.A Nizami, Sufism gave meaning and mission to the religious feeling and beliefs of a wide cross-section of society in India and other Islamic countries\(^2\). It was during this period that the Chishti order first established itself in India.

Although later authorities such as Jami\(^3\) (d.1492) told stories of the early Sufis of Chishti, the first Chishti themselves did not engage in writing, nor do their contemporaries tell us anything about their lives. Even in the case of

\(^1\) Abul Hasan Ali bin Usma bin Ali al-Ghazali al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri was the author of ten works of which only Kashf-ul-Mahjub has been accessible in written form. Nicholson declares Kashf-ul-Mahjub to be "the oldest Persian treatise of Sufism". Shaikh Ali Hujwiri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, lies buried at Lahore. His object in this book is to set forth a complete system of Sufism. His attitude throughout is that of a teacher. His discussion of mystical problems and controversies is enlivened by many illustrations drawn from his personal experience.

\(^2\) K.A. Nizami, "On History and Historians of Mediaeval India", p. 163

\(^3\) Abul Makarim bin Aliul Mulk Jami authored Khulasat al-Maqamat. Written in 1436 – 1437, it is a biography of a famous saint Shaikh Ahmadi Jam (d.1142). It is divided into 10 babs and one fasl.
Muinuddin Chishti who is identified as the founder of the Indian Chishti order, we don’t come across anything written about him in contemporary writings of his age. To find any connected written account of Chishti, we must refer to the 14th century, when the Chishti order suddenly revealed itself in a full-bloom literary tradition in Persian.

The explosion of Sufi literary activity in India in the 13th and 14th centuries had a powerful formative effect on Indian Sufism. The widespread Suhrawardi order, which originated in Baghdad, boasted outstanding mystical writers in its Indian branch, such as Hamiduddin Nagori (d. 1244), who wrote sophisticated meditations on the 99 names of God and on mystical love. While the Chishti did not at first express themselves in writing, they eventually produced a more sustained and far reaching literary tradition than any other Indian Sufi order.

Neither Muinuddin Chishti, nor his two main successors, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar, wrote any books. The first generation of the Indian Chishti continued to place emphasis on oral instruction. But in the following generation, the Chishti master Nizamuddin Auliya had such a profound effect on his contemporaries that a new genre of literature, the malfuz, emerged to embody his teachings.

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4 Amir Hasan Sijzi decided to record the conversation of his master in 1307 A.D.
5 “The discourse delivered by a leading Sufi to a select gathering of disciples and visitors gave rise to a distinctive genre of Persian literature. This was known as Malfuzaat, a conversation of discourse that also contained didactic poetry, anecdotes and apothegms”. S.A.A. Rizvi, in History of Sufism in India Vol. One.
The birth of such a distinct type of mystic writing, the *malfuz*, is one of the most important contributions to Persian language and literature from the fertile literary soil of Delhi. The term ‘*malfuz*’ derived from a word “*lafz*” meaning “word”. ‘*Malfuzaat*’ – the term that defines Sufi mystic literature – is its plural form and means ‘conversation of saints’. *Malfuz* writing is arguably the pinnacle of literary achievement in medieval India. Though works of a similar nature were compiled outside India⁶, the credit must go to a disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, Amir Hasan Sijzi, for giving it shape and popularizing it in religious groups throughout the country. The oral teachings of the Chishtis, as revealed in the oral discourses of *malfuz* literature, took on a canonical textual form that soon became the authoritative genre both for members of the order and their followers. The transition from oral to written form was reflected in diverse literary styles, such as *maktubaat, siyar-ul-auliya,* and *malfuzaat*.

In theory, the *malfuzaat* was as close as one could get in words to the actual presence of the Sufi master. Although the authors of *malfuz* did not actually take dictation at the time when the master was speaking, they typically endeavoured to record the talks from memory as soon as the daily session by

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their masters was over. Nonetheless, in the act of rewriting the master’s words, the writer inevitably exercised some kind of selection and interpretation, and so produced a narrative structure depicting the Sufi teaching from a particular point of view. This combination of oral transmission and narrative recasting naturally had precedents in Sufi tradition. Usually the discourses were on an unplanned basis, being products of the response of questions raised by those gathered around the Sufi saints. Even in one assembly one can see the change of topics, customized for its appeal and relevance depending upon the audience. For example, in one of Nizamuddin Auliya’s assemblies, the conversations switched from music (sama) and ecstasy (wajad) to Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, a Sufi who was opposed to music for the purposes of spiritual realisation. Auliya’s conversation then changed to the topic of saints’ tombs at Lahore, then pioneering Sufi, Al-Hujwiri. The discourse included conversations about poetry and finally ended with a lecture on the variations of the Morning Prayer, which he said at the direction of Shaikh ul-Islam Fariduddin. The nature of questions asked are wide-ranging and are interesting clues as to the socio-economic background of the people who visited the Sufi hospices. The questions were often related to religious, economic or social issues. On Sunday the 21st of Dhul-ul-Hijja, Auliya began to talk about reciting the Quran and the

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7 As cited by Lawrence in “Fawaid-ul-Fuad”, p.119-120.
deeper perception of Truth\textsuperscript{8} that comes from reading and chanting it. The conversation then turned to almsgiving\textsuperscript{9} and the five conditions related to this, followed by Abu Abakr Siddiq’s story on emphasizing the legalities of almsgiving. The master commented on the meaning of forgiveness and redeeming the cost of a bad purchase, then the merits of feeding others came into the discussion. Auliya quoted a saint that “one diram spent for food set before a friend is better than twenty diram expended on alms”. It was followed by the conversation about the commercial transactions of Sufis.\textsuperscript{10} In the above records of the two assemblies several topics have been covered, and it can be seen that some of them do not have a direct relation to the preceding anecdote. This indicated that the saint was responding to a myriad of questions one by one and encouraging the audience to ask a wide range of questions. The discourses also included references to religious texts such as the Quran and Hadith, and the anecdotes and sayings of previous Sufis. On Sunday, the 17\textsuperscript{th} of Jumada-al-ula 720 A.H, Amir Hasan Sijzi wrote two anecdotes about the nature Hadith.\textsuperscript{11} They were intended to fulfill the religious, ethical, and personal needs of those who visited the khanqahs\textsuperscript{12}. It was not a hardcore religious sermon in the real

\textsuperscript{8} “Truth” in Sufism denotes the concept of a personal realization of God.
\textsuperscript{9} Almsgiving was the act of helping others in trouble by offering them food or money.
\textsuperscript{10} As cited by Lawrence in “Fawaid-ul-Fuad”, p.122-124
\textsuperscript{11} For complete story about the above discussion see Lawrence’s comments in “Fawaid-ul-Fuad”, p.341-2.
\textsuperscript{12} Sufi institutions, which were essentially an ‘open home’ to the public, where people could listen to sermons, socialize, eat, and sleep if necessary.
sense of the word, rather public counsel based on spiritual matters and described in anecdotal form.

Once Sijzi was disturbed due to a problem related to his salary. When Nizamuddin Auliya, from whom nothing could be kept secret, realized this problem of Sijzi’s, he narrated a story about a once-wealthy Brahman’s response to coping with days of a poverty-ridden life. It was September 19, 1310 A.D (a Friday in the afternoon). The story goes like this:

“There was once an urban Brahman. Though he was very wealthy, the chief magistrate of that city fined him, seized all his possessions, and reduced him to poverty. The Brahman became destitute. He was hard pressed to make ends meet. One day he came across a friend. 'How are you?' asked the friend. ‘Well and happy’, replied the Brahman. ‘How can you be happy, retorted the friend, 'since they have seized everything that you have possessed?'

'With me still,' replied the Brahman, 'is my sacred thread (zunnar). On finishing the story, the master - may God remember him with favour - asked me. 'Did you understand the context of this story?' ‘Yes’, 'I replied, I did.' For on hearing this story, I left an inner contentment. I realized that the master had told the story to calm the heart of this helpless creature. He added, ‘You should never experience distress on account of the interruption of your salary or the non-attainment of worldly goods. If the whole world passes you by, don’t fret; you must maintain love of God all times.’

It was reported that not only the questioner but the entire audience benefited by the answer. This was the beauty of the masters of that period. Nizamuddin Auliya

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13 Zunnar is a sacred thread wore by a twice born Hindu. A pious Hindu is born twice. The sacred thread ceremony is the mark and celebration of the second birth of a child. In the Ancient period Vaishyas were also entitled for this thread but with the time it was confined to the Brahmans and Kshatriya. Now a days mostly Brahmans wear this thread.

14 Fawaid-ul-Fuad, p. 93.
always generalized his response to any questions, which is why people who
came with problems, troubles, anxiety and a heavy heart, went back full of
happiness, grace and feeling like a liberated person. It is interesting to note that
those who visited the *khanqahs* did so with full confidence and rights. Like a
child’s expectations of its parents, those who sought counsel at the *khanqahs* did so
with a natural expectation that the master would oblige them. Even today people go
to *dargahs* with similar expectation. The following is a popular couplet which is
heard in almost all *dargahs* of Sufi saints and sums up this notion succinctly:

Tere dar par aaya hoon  
I have come to your door
Kutch kar ke jaoon gaa  
To do something before I leave
Jholi bhar ke jaoon gaa\textsuperscript{15}.
To fill my sack before I leave

In 1307, Sijzi decided to record what he had heard from his spiritual master
Auliya. This was a historic decision, which introduced this new mystic
literature\textsuperscript{16} known as *malfuzaat*. His collection, *Fawaid-ul-Fawad*, was
welcomed in spiritual circles and it became a *dastur* (guidebook) for those
eager to experience the mystic journey. The importance of this book is
demonstrated through Amir Khusrau’s desire\textsuperscript{17} to give over all his works to

\textsuperscript{15} A popular *qawwali* which can be heard at most of the *dargahs* across the Indian sub-continent.
\textsuperscript{16} Mystic literature falls under the following broad categories:
   i)  Works on mystic thought, practices and litanies;
   ii)  “*Malfuzaat*”, conversation of saints;
   iii) “*Maktubaat*”, collections of letters;
   iv)  Bibliographical accounts of saints – “*siyar-ul-auliya*”.
\textsuperscript{17} “Amir Khusrau expressed the wish that all his works would have been from Hasan’s pen and *Fawaid-ul-Fuad* from his “*Siyar-ul-Auliya*” p.308.
Sijzi, in lieu of this work. The tradition established by Sijzi became an indispensable part of the Sufi practice, and was followed by the saints of Chishti, Suhrawardi, Naqshabandi and Firdausi. Later on, an enormous amount of malfuz literature appeared in India from “Uch to Maner, and from Delhi to Daulatbad”.\(^{18}\)

There were two types of malfuz compilations. First, there were those collected by a descendant or disciple of the Sufi long after his death. These were based on the memory of the compilers, and are not considered reliable or authentic. The compilers of these malfuzaat also collected information from the master’s friends and relatives, and this information was also included in the malfuzaat. Since these authors were not present at the time of the sermons, the malfuzaat were compiled topic wise. The authors first decided what to write and then started collecting conversations accordingly. That is why this form of malfuzaat were generally divided into a brief biographical sketch of the Shaikh, his main teachings, miracles, and an account of the type of contemplation and ascetic exercises undertaken by the master. Such works were based on anecdotes which members of the Sufi’s family and his disciples remembered. Letters exchanged with important personalities may also have been

incorporated. The flavor of this kind of literature was similar to those of Christian hagiological works\textsuperscript{19}.

The \textit{malfuzaat} of the second category are the most important and dependable. These consisted of discourses recorded soon after they were delivered by the \textit{pir} (master). They are dated and on occasions revised by the Sufi masters themselves, who confirmed the accuracy of the statements. In \textit{Fawaid-ul-Fuad}, each and every assembly has a date, day and year, and in some instances, the time of discourse is also noted, for example, in the following recording, Sijzi writes “Friday, the 28\textsuperscript{th} of Dhul-Qada, A.H. 711. I obtained the benefit of Kissing his feet in … the Friday Congregational mosque in Kilogarhi. Before the time of the day prayer, conversation focused…”\textsuperscript{20} He has recorded the conversation in an exact, accurate and systematic manner. The topic of the discussion changes depending on the demands and nature of those in the audience. This shows such sensitivity and flexibility on behalf of the saint. He exactly knew what, when and how to speak keeping in mind his audience, which is why some conversations are very basic and general, and some are highly philosophical. But overall, \textit{malfuzaat} of the \textit{Fawaid-ul-Fuad} are, it seems, addressed to the lay followers.

\textsuperscript{19} S.A A Rizvi, “A History of Sufism in India”, p.3.
\textsuperscript{20} As cited by Lawrence in “Fawaid-ul-Fuad”, p.137.
By comparison, though Khair-ul-Majalis does not contain dates, it has the flavour and touch of Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Delhi’s khanqah. The malfuzaat of Nasiruddin is one of the most authentic. Like Auliya, Nasiruddin himself supervised Hamid Qalamdar’s work regularly. On compilation of the first juz (fasciculus), Hamid showed it to Nasiruddin who read and approved it. Hamid had hardly completed seven juz before the Shaikh asked him about the progress he had made in compiling the conversations. The master exercised a significant amount of control over his malfuzaat, as he did not want the work to degenerate into a book of miracles or of adulations. “Shaikh Nasiruddin”, Hamid wrote, “has so broken his nafs (ego) that if I call him a Shaikh, he resents it; if I attribute a miracle to him, he gets angry.”

This attests to the authenticity of the malfuzaat under discussion. Unlike authors of political chronicles, they did not have to prove a point to political authorities. The message of truth and love was the objective, the subject was the message of humanism, and the audience were the masses. Sufis were least

21 Hamid Qalamdar was the authorized compiler of Nasiruddin Chirag-I-Delhi’s discourses, Khair-ul-Majalis.
22 Khair-ul-Majalis p.28
23 See Prof. Nizami’s Introduction to Khair-ul-Majalis in which he quotes several scholars of the Sultanate period: It appears that Shaikh Nasiruddin was very stiff in this matter. He did not want people to prepare inaccurate records of his conversations. He stopped a disciple from attempting this work (Jawami-ul-Kalim, p. 134). Sayyid Muhammad Gesu Daraz one day told his audience: “Maulana Kamaluddin, nephew of the Shaikh (Nasiruddin) once presented before the Shaikh two juz of a Malfuz prepared by Hamid Qalandar. The Shaikh glanced through them and remarked: ‘I have said different thing and Maulana Hamiduddin has recorded different thing’. So saying he threw away (the malfuz).” Maulana Kamaluddin submitted: “A malfuz has survived as the memory of Shaikh Nizamuddin. There should be one such (malfuz) of the Khwaja also”. What can I do? I have no time to correct this (Jawami-ul-Kalim, p. 135). Some such things could have happened in the earlier stages of compilation but it is certain that the Shaikh ultimately undertook to supervise the work and made it as accurate a record of his conversations as was possible.
24 Supplement to Khair-ul-Majalis p.289
bothered about the elite class. They seldom addressed their contemporary rulers. Unlike orthodox ulema, they did not seek to impress the ruling class. They did not indulge in controlling state authority through misinterpretations of the Quran and Hadith. Making people aware of their importance – the importance of being born a human - was the greatest task before them. Many individuals learnt that God resided everywhere including in one's own body, but too few realized this fact. It is widely believed that when an individual realizes this fact, they attain a sense of self-respect and inner satisfaction. It was in the khanqahs of Sufi saints where not only the principles of egalitarianism were taught, but those who listened to the teachings also experienced first hand these principles in practice. It is little wonder then why those who feared the ulema, chose to queue for hours to hear Sufi wisdom in the sphere of the khanqahs. These things can be clearly seen on the pages of malfuzaat.

As mentioned earlier, the Fawaid-ul-Faud became the guidebook for both lay followers and mystics, and as a result, Sufism was transformed from being a tool for individual spiritual salvation and training, into a movement for mass spiritual culture. According to Muhammad Ghauthi Shattari, Nizamuddin Auliya sent 700 deputies (khalifahs) to different parts of the country. As a result, khanqahs were built throughout many states, and as such, a common lingua franca was adopted for the purpose of communicating ideas, which

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25 Quoted by B.B. Lawrence from Gulzar-I-Akhari of Muhammad Ghauthi Shattari. P.54.
brought about significant change in the nature of mystic literature. It shifted the focus of mystic interest from the abstract thought to concrete conditions of life and discipline. Instead of expounding the lofty principles of mysticism announced by great theorists, the Sufi illustrated through his action and words, the accumulated wisdom of mystic tradition. Auliya would say that what the *ulema* proclaim through speech, the Sufi express through behaviour. On the subject of pilgrims and pilgrimages, Auliya asserted that pilgrims unnecessarily gloated about their pilgrimages, and that this was not proper. He commented that altruistic service to others was more necessary and important than conspicuous and self-centred pilgrimages. He made a final brief comment about good conduct, “Some one once wrote a poem on ten traditions, five of which related to the head, five to the rest of the body. He concluded the poem with a beautiful couplet that goes like this:26

*Ten points in just two lines you have packed.*

*But these are words, while you should act!*27

The Sufi enhanced the impact of his teachings through frequent recourse of self-scrutiny and criticism. He would tend to find something wrong with himself even when others intended to do wrong to him.

What are the historical contexts that led to the emergence of *malfuz* literature in the early 14th century India? The answer to this question lies in a

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26 As cited by Lawrence in "Fawaid-ul-Fuad", p.195.
27 Translation of the original text has been taken from Lawrence in "Fawaid-ul-Fuad", p.195.
number of factors working together. The most important among them could be the personality of Nizamuddin Auliya himself.

Auliya was a multidimensional person – a poet, thinker, philosopher, visionary, and saint. He was a ferocious reader of books of diverse nature, and would study late into the night. He was an erudite scholar of his age, and even during the last days of his life, he was a prolific reader. It was routine throughout his life to spend some hours at night in quiet study, making summaries, taking down notes, and writing his own comments on books and articles. To then share his thoughts and findings with his disciples was his passion. He had his own library with books of diverse genres. It seems that Auliya endowed his library not only for his own use but also for the use of his disciples and other visitors. Amir Khurd used his library extensively as a source for his famous work *Siyar-ul-Auliya*. Even Sijzi consulted books from Nizamuddin’s library. Nizamuddin’s love for literature is reflected through his use of books as a vehicle for spreading his message to solve many of society’s problems. He was cognizant that ignorance largely contributed to many problems and that a small but influential number of people actually benefited due to other’s ignorance. Auliya believed that the most effective way to relieve the exploited was to make them aware of their value in society. However Auliya was also aware of the fact that even if he was given a second life, he

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28 As cited by Lawrence in “Fawaid-ul-Fuad”, p15.
would never have been able to reach the millions across the country. It is because of this that he sent his deputies numbering over 700, to different corners of India in order to spread the message. Auliya was also aware of the vast ranging capacity of the human mind, that every individual had his/her own peculiar way of functioning. To harmonize the thought of the disciples he dispatched to spread the message, it was considered important to have a uniform text which would give consistency to the doctrine of Sufism. Hence the birth of malfuzaat - first in the mind of Nizamuddin Auliya and put down on paper with the hands of Amir Hasan Sijzi.

Service of human kind was the Sufi’s prime concern. As a visionary, Auliya visualized important role Sufism would play in days to come. But the greatest challenge before him was how to take this message in to the hearts and minds of the common people, and those who were far away from his khanqah. Sijzi, the Saadi of India, was highly affected by his master’s teachings, and as a true Sufi, he too wanted others to experience emancipation through the teachings. So Sijzi began by writing whatever he heard during the flow of discourse in the khanqah. On March 30, 1309 he broke this news before his master. Here is the conversation of that meeting in the words of the poet

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29 Nasiruddin Chirag-I-Delhi called Sijzi the “Saadi of India”, after Persian poet Saadi, who was a master of ghazal, a form of Persian poetry. Khair-ul-Majalis, p.143
himself. Note that in this conversation holds the answers to many questions which may be on the mind of a researcher. Sijzi wrote:

"I obtained the blessing of kissing his feet. That day I informed him of my wish to compile these discourses. It happened as follows: the time was auspicious, and he granted me a private audience. 'With your permission,' I said, 'I would like to ask something of you.' 'Permission is granted,' he replied. 'For more that a year,' I explained, 'I have been continuously in your service. Every movement that I have obtained the blessing of your feet, I have also derived counsels (Fawaid) from your elegant words. What exhortation and advice and inducement to obedience, what stories about the saints and their spiritual states have heard from you! Every kind of soul-inspiring discourses has fallen on my years, and I wanted to make that the foundation for my own life--indeed, to use it as a guide on the Path for this broken person at least to the extent that I could record with the pen what I understood. Also, I have heard the Shaikh say many times that novice must consult a book on the Sufi masters and their guidelines for spiritual progress. Since no collection has been made of the inspiring teachings of the master’s predecessors, I have compile those of your blessed words which I have heard and till now I have not shown them (to anyone) awaiting your command, that I might do what you want in this regard."

In this paragraph of Fawaid-ul-Fuad, Sijzi is expressing his desire to collect his master’s words and compile it for the sake of his own personal guidance. In fact at the time of this quote he had already started this work, and had been writing it for more than a year. It was in 1309 when he broke this news that Nizamuddin Auliya came to know about this work. Until then, no one knew about the silent revolution that was taking place in the khanqah of Auliya. It was not the only reason that Sijzi “derived counsels from soul-inspiring

30 “Fawaid-ul-Fuad”, p.49.
discourses” of Nizamuddin Auliya, but it also had many things to do with the personality of Sijzi himself. Auliya’s khanqah was at various times home to scholars like Amir Khusrau, Amir Khurd, and Ziauddin Barni. But it was Sijzi who started collecting the words uttered by his master. Tolstoy said that mysticism without poetry is superstition, and there is no doubt that Sijzi was a great poet of his time. All the important scholars including Khusrau, Barni and Faizi had recognized Sujzi’s skill of poetry, who wrote a diwan, a prose elegy on the death of Prince Muhammad, and Mukh al-Maani, a book of mystic aphorisms. The poet in Sijzi responded very positively and quickly to the passionate and far-reaching effect of his master’s words. It was a natural response for a poet to pen down what he felt at the bottom of his heart, and the conversations of Auliya clearly had a profound effect on Sijzi.

The meeting of Nizamuddin and Sijzi worked as a catalyst to the literary revolution that would change the face and course of action of the Sufi movement. Both of them shared the same longing to bring happiness to lives of people. Auliya had heard in a spiritual trance that no work would be more highly rewarded on the Day of Judgement than “bringing happiness to the human heart.”31 In the eyes of God no spiritual exercise, no penitence, no prayer, no vigil had greater significance than removing the misery of fellow human beings, bringing consolation to distressed hearts, and helping the

31 “Siyar-ul-Auliya” p.128
downtrodden. Both were passing through the same spiritual phase and when Auliya saw Sijzi’s work, he could not wait to express his happiness. He told him a story of his interest in collecting and compiling his own master’s conversation, the conversation of Baba Farid. He immediately recognized the potential in Sijzi to create a medium to spread his message to the masses. It is very important to note that although it is clear that both Auliya and Sijzi shared a common vision, it was due to the fact they were at the right place and time in history to pursue that vision. They realized the importance of the time and its demand, and it is this realization which made them distinct from the galaxy of poets, scholars and above all, other Sufi saints.

Though works of a similar nature were compiled in other Muslim lands, the credit of defining malfuaat goes to Sijzi and his editor Nizamuddin, whose regular inspections of the work contributed to ensuring it was an effective piece of writing, comprehensive and authentic. He ensured that the miracles did not overshadow the importance of the message in his teachings, as Sijzi would write from memory at the end of Auliya’s sessions. Some times he left gaps between lines, which Auliya himself would fill. Hence Auliya actively contributed to the compilation of the Fawaid-ul-Fuad.

The significance of this work cannot be overemphasized considering the fact that Fawaid-ul-Fuad not only started a new genre of literature but also remained the touchstone by which all the subsequent malfuz writing was
judged. Because of its unique position in the history of *malfuz* literature, a critical examination of the 'event' of *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*’s writing can be used to historicize the origin of the *malfuz* tradition. This is done here by examining both the individual character and predisposition of the author(s), as well as their socio-cultural concerns and influences that resulted in the writing of *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*.

One of the points in this research is the assertion that the writing of *Fawaid-ul-Fuad* was a turning point in the history of Sufism in India. It was this event that marks a new direction in Indian Sufism by transforming it from a largely individual spiritual quest practiced within the closed group of initiates and the Master, to a popular mass movement so that it came to touch the lives of hundreds and thousands of people across the subcontinent irrespective of their caste, class or religion. Among many factors, one could say that the coincidences of history or the necessity of the hour, depending on one’s position, led to such a transformation. It is in this context that the position of Nizamuddin Auliya in the history of Islamic mysticism in India acquires a new significance. As Bruce B. Lawrence says “This led to the proliferation of hospices (*khanqahs*) in the country and the adoption of a common lingua franca for the communication of ideas, and brought about a significant change in the
nature of mystic literature. It shifted the focus of mystic interest from abstract thought to concrete conditions of life and discipline.³²

Among other important reasons for compiling the *malfuzaat* could be a need to provide an authentic reference source for lay followers. In an earlier quoted verse of the *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, Sijzi emphasized the concern of his master that, “Novice must consult a book on... spiritual progress.”³³ One thing which is apparent is Nizamuddin Auliya’s concern to provide authentic literature to the seekers of the truth. In the beginning of the 14th century the message of Sufism had touched a significant portion of the population, via their flexible use of communicating in the languages of common people. Yet the demand to know more about early Sufi saints resulted in the exploitation of the Sufi message such to the extent that people started compiling phony *malfuzaat* to sell on the market. These faux writings were claimed to be written by certain famous Sufi saints. This religious and literary forgery took its toll on the original teachings of the saints. The fake malfuzaat consisted not of authentic discourse but words and messages which the fraudulent authors perceived that the market wanted to hear.

As mentioned earlier, no one prior to the fourteenth century was seriously interested in *malfuzaat*. It has been asserted by Sufi saints themselves, that

³² Lawrene, B.B., Nizamuddin Auliya: Morals for the Heart, p.6
³³ "Fawaid-ul-Fuad", p.49.
Sufism had its rise through the Prophet Muhammad, and that all religious orders trace their lines of succession back to him. He is said to have been the recipient of a two-fold revelation, the one embodied in the contents of the Quran, the other within his heart. The former was meant for all, binding all, the latter to be transmitted through a chosen few via lines of succession. Hence it is said that Muhammad’s knowledge in popular language is described as being “ilm-I-safina”, book knowledge and “ilm-I-sina”, heart knowledge. The former is incorporated in the doctrinal teaching of ilmna, the latter, strictly esoteric, being the mystical teachings of the Sufis.

As a matter of fact, Sufism itself passed through several phases in the process of its development. Undoubtedly the germ of Sufism is found in certain passages of the Quran, where one can find justification and support for mystical tendencies, so strongly manifested in some of Muhammad’s companion’s and friend’s tendencies, which inevitably resulted in a life of detachment, poverty and fortification. So that one may say that the companions of Muhammad and their successors were, in a sense, forerunners of the Sufis.

There are several questions, which naturally come to mind. If Sufism is as old as Islam, then why did it take centuries to realize the important of compiling malfuzaat (malfuzaat started committing to paper only in the beginning of the

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Some of the scholars believe that ‘Sufis’ were called Sufis only “because they are in the first rank (Saff) before God, through the elevation of their desires towards Him, the turning of their hearts unto him and staying of their secret parts before him”. Quranic Sufism, p.1
14th century)? Any layman could come with the idea that *Ilm-I-sina* is not to be written on paper but to be transmitted from heart to heart as in the Vedic tradition (Vedic texts were committed to paper no earlier than 6th century BC, whereas the period of Rig Veda has been calculated from 1500-1000B.C.\(^3\)^.

That *Ilm-I-Sina* is to be transmitted from heart to heart does make some sense, but then why Auliya and his disciple and gifted scholar, Sijzi decided to start a project of writing *malfuzaat* is a question which needs to be explored. The basic philosophy behind *Ilm-I-Sina* knowledge of heart, i.e. that is to be shared with the chosen gathering only, was in danger. Both Auliya and Sijzi understood the danger that the fake *malfuzaat* posed, in that it compromised the very purpose of communicating knowledge of the heart. This knowledge could not be replicated by fakes. For example, Sijzi records on Wednesday, June 1309 A.D in the *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, “A friend was present, and said ‘A man showed me a book in Awadh and said it was written by you’. Auliya replied ‘‘*Tafaawat guf teh ast. Man heech kitaabee nah nawishteham’*”\(^3\). (Translated “he spoke wrongly. I have not written any such book”). In the same way, Hamid Qalander records in his *Khair-ul-Majalis*, “A friend represented ‘There is difficulty in the *malfuz* of Shaikh Uthman Harvani’. Nasiruddin replied, “These *malfuz* are not

\(^{35}\) For detail see A.L. Basham’s “The Wonder That Was India”.

\(^{36}\) *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, p.75

\(^{37}\) Shaikh Uthman Harvani was the spiritual master of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti R.A. He, after 20 years of attendance on and travels with his spiritual preceptor, Uthman, he was aware of ‘*Khitrag-i-Khilafat*’ (robbers conferred on succession upon a Khalifa in 1186 A.D at Baghdad before parting with his Murshid. He thus
his. I have also come across this manuscript. Shaikh-ul-Islam Fariduddin, nor Shaikh-ul-Islam Qutbuddin nor the Chishti saints nor any of the preceding Shaikhs of my order have written any such book".  

In the beginning of the fourteenth century, there was a number of such literature which mushroomed throughout India. As mentioned above, during the lifetime of Auliya, a book allegedly written by him came onto the market, and he denied the authorship of this. Later on, Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-I-Delhi categorically refuted that any of his predecessors had written Sufi texts based on his teachings. The reason for this 'pious' forgery was simple: to cater for the spiritual curiosity of naïve admirers, the spurious malfuzaat of the great Indian Chishtis were embroidered by anonymous authors who were bereft of both a feeling for history or a first hand knowledge of the lives of their heroes. In his article “Historical Significance of the Malfuz Literature of Medieval India”, Prof. K.A. Nizami discusses in detail such authentic and unauthentic malfuz literature. He scientifically rejected the faux malfuzaat of that period. But how to put check on such literature was a challenge for the Sufi teachers of that time. Demand for information about the early Chishti saints encouraged people to engineer with their own words purported original writings on Sufism and became the recognised Khalifa of his spiritual master and receive the Mustafawi Tobarrukat (sacred relics) coming down from the Holy Prophet, traditionally handed down by the Sufi dervishes of Chishtia Siksila (order) to their successors from generations to generations.  

attributing them to famous Sufi preachers to authenticate their work\textsuperscript{40}. These phony texts, which distorted the Sufi image, was another cause behind the birth of the distinct \textit{malfuzaat} literature. Sijzi said of the \textit{Fawaid-ul-Fuad}, \textquotedblright Since no collection has been made of the inspiring teachings of the master\textquoteright s predecessors, I have compiled those of your blessed words\textquotedblright\textsuperscript{41} It is clear from this statement that no such literature was available at the time of its compilation, and that there was considered a need to create a written doctrine.

The other important reason for the creation of \textit{malfuzaat} can be found in Auliya\textquoteright s vision of creating an institution to consolidate the \textit{silsila}. At the time of Auliya, Sufism had matured to a point where consolidation was required. Its fragrance had already touched the hearts of many across the country. Institutionalization of the \textit{silsila} then was the next logical and important step to be taken. To implement this \textquoteleft institutionalisation\textquoteright, guidelines were required, the most important backbone of any institution. Hence the birth of \textit{malfuzaat}. It was the last step in fulfilling Auliya\textquoteright s desire to provide unadulterated divine messages straight to the heart of the common man.

\textsuperscript{40} For example, \textit{Anusul-Arwah}, was the alleged \textit{malfuzaat} of Shaikh Usaman Harmani and collected by Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti; \textit{Dalil-ul-Arifin}, was the alleged \textit{malfuzaat} of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti and collected by Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki; the \textit{Fawaid-us-Salikine}, was the alleged \textit{malfuzaat} of Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and compiled by Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-I-Shakar; the \textit{Asrar-ul-Azefya}, the alleged \textit{malfuz} of Shaikh Fariduddin, compiled by Maulana Badr Ishq; and \textit{Rahatul-Qulub}, the alleged \textit{malfuz} of Shaikh Fariduddin, compiled by Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, to quote just a few. None of them were genuine discourses of the Shaikhs.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Fawaid-ul-Fuad}, p.49.
Where does *malfuzaat* fit in to putting the pieces together about our history? The relevance of studying the Persian *malfuzaat* for a more informed understanding of society during medieval India is evident. Drawing on the Sufi’s interaction with diverse social groups, some modern scholars\(^4\) have suggested that no meaningful study of medieval India can be made without a careful analysis of the Sufi literature of that period. Sufi literature is particularly valuable in light of the fact that many historical chronicles are narrowly centred on the activities of the king and his court. But it must be remembered that the beliefs and practices of Sufis of various *silsila* were not uniform, hence the perceptions and images of society in this genre vary from Sufi to Sufi. Family background, education, religious and political influences, and a whole range of social factors moulded each individual saint’s perceptions.

When reading historical chronicles of the sultanate period, for example *Tarikh-I-Firoz Shahi* of Ziauddin Barani, another book of the same title by Isami, and *Tabqat-I-Nasrit* of Minhaj Siraj, one is given a narrow account of life at this time, purely centred around political events, governmental changes and economic measures of the ruling dynasty, for example Alauddin Khalji’s market reforms and its effect on military restructuring. In these limited chronicles, there is much information about Khalji’s military campaigns and

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measures to check the Mongol onslaught. Barani’s *Tarikh-I-Firoz Shahi* discusses the token currency of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, and the digging of several canals under the instruction of his successor, Firoz Shah Tughlaq, are well recorded in the pages of this and other contemporary political chronicles. But there is another side of the story to Alauddin Khalji’s market reforms, and it is in the *malfuzaat* where one can see that Khalji’s policy was not wholly guided by his ambition to expand his empire and become *Sikandar-i-Saani* of his time. The historian Ziauddin Barni considered a major objective of Alauddin’s control of markets was his desire to punish the Hindus since most of the traders were Hindus and it was they who resorted to profiteering in food grains and other goods. But Barni forgot to note that most of the overland trade to the West was in the hands of the Khurasanis who were Muslims. Multanis were also dominant partners in the western trades and most of them were also Muslims. To understand further the reasons for the market policy of Alauddin Khalji, we have to turn the pages of the *Khair-ul-Majalis*. It shines a different light on the king’s life and reveals that his market policy was not only inspired by the imperialistic nature of the king, but also his humane and benevolent traits. Nasiruddin had a high regard for Alauddin Khalji’s

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43 Contemporary historians attribute his market reforms to strengthen his military power so that he could fulfill his desire to become “Second Alexander”.
44 Quoted by Satish Chandra in his book “Mediaeval India”. P. 64
philanthropic activities in and around Delhi. Khalji was so popular among the people of Delhi that after his death, the many visitors to his grave tied threads on it in order to get their prayers granted by God. Nasiruddin was himself very much impressed by Alauddin Khalji's welfare policy and as a result he used a word _Rahmat-ul-lah_ (The blessing of God to him) with the name of the king.

The *malfuz* literature of medieval India then must be consulted supplementary to the court chronicles, to ensure a complete understanding of life during those times, as well as providing a rich source of information regarding the religious, cultural and literary movements of the period. One such movement is discussed in detail by Nasiruddin in his *Khair-ul-Majalis*. The Ibn-I-Taimiyya movement was an orthodox religious movement opposed to any kind of liberal interpretation and implementation of the Quran. As mentioned earlier, the traditional writing of the time regarding the Delhi sultanate was centred mainly around the activities of nobles, princes and kings. But the majority of people, the commoners, contributed greatly to the socio-economic development of this period - farmers, artisans and other working classes, and it is due to the Sufi’s interests in the lay person that we come to know about their lives and problems in the pages of *malfuzaat*. For example:

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45 See page no. 261, 240, 185 & 88 of “Khair-ul-Majalis.”
46 “Khair-ul-Majalis” p. 241.
"I have several daughters to marry but without any source of livelihood." 47

"The Governor is very harsh on me." 48

"My brother is ill and might have expired since I left him." 49

"I cannot drink the water of Jamuna because it increases appetite and I am very poor." 50

These problems of the common man were not discussed by court journalists. Newsworthy issues for them included security problems for traders, rebellion by others and non payment of revenues by farmers because of bad harvest or revolt. But problems for the majority of the people are neglected by these writers, and are addressed in malfuz literature only. And it was with sensitivity that the mystics addressed the issues of the lay people. The heart of a mystic beats for every one, and they adopted other’s pains as if they were their own. Auliya was always in pains to see their condition. While discussing the problems of his time, Nasiruddin narrated a story about his master Auliya. He was explaining how his master pained and agonized over the problems of the society. In Khairul-ul-Majalis, Hamid Qalandar records the words of Auliya heard from Nasiruddin. He wrote "Nobody in this world has more worries and agonies than myself. So many people come to me and report their woes and

47 Ibid. p. 37
48 "Fawa'id-ul-Fuad" p. 147
49 Ibid. p. 232
50 Nizamuddin observed an old woman fetching water from a well while the Jamuna flowed nearby. He enquired as to why she was taking the trouble of sourcing well water with the river so close. She answered "my husband is poor, we have no food, the Jamuna is like an appetizer. To avoid hunger we drink water from the well". The reply brought Nizamuddin to tears and he arranged a regular supply of food and water to her. Jawami-ul-Kalim, p. 123, quoted by K.A. Nizam, "On History and Historians of Medieval India", p123.
misfortunes to me. All these (accounts) sear my heart and my soul". Sufi saints never considered themselves as different from others. And that is why the issues of the lay person became issues of the Sufi and are discussed on the pages of *malfuzaat*.

The mystics were very much alive to the exigencies of time and situation. How they behaved in the Indian milieu and contributed in constructing the linguistic and social bridges between the Indians and Muslims is evident throughout *malfuzaat*. The mystics in opened their *khanqahs* to all people. *Khanqahs* and markets were the only two places where people of all walks of life could be found rubbing shoulders. Commenting on the role of mystics in the growth of civilization, Professor Toynbee remarked that it was through the innate development of personality, that individual human beings are able to perform these creative acts; it is the outward field of action that causes the growth of human societies.\(^5\text{2}\)

One is constantly reminded of this remark while assessing the role of Muslim mystics within the social and cultural historical framework of India, with its multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual society. India is known for welcoming those individuals imbued with sound moral ideals who could, in the words of Rabindranath Tagore, "set at naught all differences of man by the

\(^{51}\) "Khair-ul-Majalis", p.105

\(^{52}\) Quote by K.A. Nizami. In his work "Life and Times of Baba Farid".
overflow of their consciousness of God”.

The Muslim mystics of the Sultanate period belong to this category of God-fearing individuals - those who transcended the limited and parochial nature of the world around them, to strive for unity of humankind in the diversity of the Sufi religion - truly a unique belief system and way of life.

The scripts of the Fawaid-ul-Fuad, Khair-ul-Majalis and Siyar-ul-Auliya are important writings in terms of understanding the environment of their time. In the Fawaid-ul-Fuad, the foundation of writing malfuz literature was laid down in Delhi, the capital of the Sultanate period. Though Siyar-u-Auliya is not a malfuz text, it is still highly relevant. Its author, Amir Khurd, was a disciple of Auliya. His association with such literary giants as Amir Khusrau, Amir Hasan Sijzi, Fakhruddin Zarradi and Ziauddin Barani, helped him develop his own intellectual and mystical sensitivities. He wrote a detailed biography on Auliya, referencing his many disciples and numerous teachings, the material based on first-hand information as he had access to the Shaikh’s papers. This provided a valuable and reliable source of Sufism.

It is rather paradoxical that while in the past there has been a welcome spurt in Indian medieval studies, primarily covering ruling dynastic regions, the

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53 See P.N. Chopra’s edited ‘Society, Religion and Literature’ in “Gazetteer of India” vol. two.
54 I am grateful to Prof. A.W. Azher, who not only made available these scripts, but also taught me how to read them. His lectures on several topics related to these works were very helpful, as the task of reading the original manuscripts is not easy.
55 All of them were regular visitors of Auliya’s Khanqahs.
corresponding exercise of utilizing unpublished sources, let alone tracing new or unknown ones to illuminate historians on this era, has not been explored not nearly as much as it warrants. The publication of known original sources and the search for unknown ones has been on a steady decline. *Fawaid-ul-Fuad* is the only work which is readily available. A lack of concerted effort has been made to publish either in original or translated form the vast historical material that lies waiting in public libraries as well as private collections. Sir H.M. Elliott, of the Indian civil service, published the first volume of his "Bibliographical Index to the Historians of Muhammadden India" which was later on compiled in English, edited by Professor John Dowson in eight volumes under the title "The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians". However the work was purely based on political chronicles compiled by court historians. Following in the footsteps of Elliot and Dowson, Professor K.A Nizami collected mystic works of the same period, and introduced them under the title "Supplements to Elliot and Dawson's History of India" (Delhi, 1981). After reviewing this work, one can more fully understand the non-political medieval India. Munshi Naval Kishore and other Indian publishing houses, also took interest in bringing out historical works like "Babur Name of Babar", "Akbar Name of Abul Fazl", "Ain-I-Akbari" also by Abul Fazl, "Tabaqat-I-

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56 For this, credit must go to Mr Mansur Ahmad Usmani, Director, Urdu Academy, Delhi, for doing a commendable job of publishing such manuscripts.
Akbari” by Nizamuddin Ahmad, “Muntakhab-u-Tawarikh” of Nulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni, and “Gulshan-I-Ibrahim” of Firishta to name a few.57

The 14th century is an important period in religious history as shown above. Both Sufi and Bhakti movements were influencing the people all throughout India. The first half of the 15th century saw the extension of Sufistic activities to the states of Gujrat and Deccan. The Sufi establishments, their Khanqahs and the Jamat Khanas not only served as hospices for travellers and wayfarers, but also as training centres for novices, replete with lessons and discussions on theology, mysticism, scholastic philosophy, ethics, and morality, which was presided over by the saint. Devoted disciples with the express or tacit approval of the saint, covetously recorded their words. In this manner, a considerable number of works came to be compiled in different parts of the country, faithfully recording discourses and proceedings of such meetings which were open to all sectors of society. Malfuz literature then constitutes an important non-political history source material on one hand, and on the other hand provides us with a reading of great literary achievements of the era. In no

57 A major contribution in the field of making easy the accessibility of original material was made back in the early 1950s, under the auspices of the Department of Advance History, Aligarh Muslim University. Professor S. Nurual Hasan and Dr. Zakir Husain (Head of Department and Vice Chancellor respectively) were the driving forces behind this thrust. Professor Hasan, a prominent historian, held several important posts under the Government of India. As a Minister of Education, Social Welfare and Culture, he assisted in the formation of “The Gazetteer of India”, and its second volume, “History and Culture”, is especially important to understand Indian culture. Dr. Zakir Husain was a great educationist. He founded the university Jamia Millia Islamia. Aligarh Muslim University was established by Sir Syed. Professor K.A. Nizami, who with a special blessing from Sir Syed, is one of the earliest scholars who started work on this subject. Along with Professor Muhammad Habib, he opened a new avenue of research, which still has scope for further work. He edited Khair-ul-Majalis and has written a number of books and articles on Sufism and Sufi literature. He has done a thorough job collecting and identifying original and fake malfuzaat.
other country has this branch of hagiological compilation been systematically and methodically cultivated. Primarily intended to serve as a guidebook for people at large, a manual of spiritual instructions and codes of exemplary conduct to disciples, the theme of these works revolved around the personality and spiritual achievement of the saint and his place in contemporary society. Thus, this literature came to encompass almost every aspect of life in society at all levels, and in all matters, temporal or spiritual. Few other sources of medieval literature provide such a vivid picture of contemporary lives of the laity as well as elite, bringing into sharp focus the varied and intensely human qualities of the spiritual mentor.

The saintly individuals, who at their time were the cream of society, emanated a worldly normality that the common person could relate to, despite their extremely strong aura of otherworldliness. From the pages of the *malfuzaat*, we are shown a profile of the daily routine of the household, the servants at work, and the wide range of people visiting. Perusing these works, one is struck at just how 'normal' these chosen ones, the Sufi saints, were, leading a life on earth not so different from the man on the street. Even people discussed with the saints the naming of their newly born child. For example a visitor came and announced that 'A son has been born in the house of your servant.' The master - may God remember with favour - asked: 'What name have did you give him?' 'I gave him no name (*khair nam)*', said the servant, 'so
that I might ask the master what name to give him; Replied the master - may god remember him with favour - ‘Since you said “I have gave him no name (khair nam), let it be his name,” that is let him be named Khair ‘which also means “happy” or “good”! This shows that how frank he was with his lovers.

The malfuzaat tells the medieval ambience of the day. What is striking when reviewing the literature is that certain aspects of social life and behaviour is markedly different, but in some areas, there is little change, and there are many synergies between people now and those living during medieval times. Sufi saints also discussed social problems like adultery and how one should treat adulterers. The following is a very fine example of an anecdote in which he is telling a story related to an illegitimate pregnancy of a woman. Auliya told a story of Umar - may God be pleased with him. “Once a woman came to him and said, ‘O commander of the faithful, I have committed adultery and conceived a child.’ Umar then ordered this woman to be stoned. The commander of the faithful Ali was also present there. ‘One ought to delay carrying out this order,’ he observed. ‘Why?’ asked Umar. ‘though a sin has been committed’, replied Ali, ‘it was that woman who committed the sin. That child is in her womb, what sin did he commit?’ .... spare that woman and keep her under surveillance till the child is delivered.’”

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58 As cited by Lawrence in “Fawaid-ul-Fuad”, p.301.
59 Ibid p.358.
The *malfuzaat* cover a wide range of topics in theme and depth, generally not found in other historical work and chronicles. From religious, theological and spiritual matters and discourses on ethical themes, to anecdotes from the lives of prominent saintly personalities of the past. The works are replete with indicators of manners, beliefs, creeds, prejudices and predilections, modes of behaviour, food, dress, games, and pastimes. In addition, the *malfuzaat* also refer to medieval education systems and curriculum.

In the field of political history, the information contained in the *malfuzaat* in respect of the imperial government and departments of state administration of the day, is found to be valuable in understanding the era. But the *malfuzaat* are more helpful in terms of understanding local history, especially that of relatively minor regions outside of capitals, e.g. mofussil towns and villages, which in historical works are generally given low priority or entirely overlooked. In *malfuzaat*, it is possible to get a feel for, through topographical data, historical geography, archaeology, roads and communication of various sites, even gardens and monuments.

**The Importance of *Malfuzaat* on Language and Literature**

The contribution of *malfuzaat* to the development of Persian language and literature is also an undeniable fact. Contemporarily, most world languages are emphasizing short and simple sentences. On the pages of *malfuzaat*, especially
Fawaid-ul-Fuad and Khair-ul-Majalis, these facts are very evident. Their language is user-friendly, as though it has been written keeping in mind the audience who are not well versed in Persian language. To understand malfuzaat one does not require proper training in language or literature. The only criteria is to have a passion and motivation for Sufi ideology. The rest will be cleared the moment one turns its pages. There is no artificial creativity on the pages of this literature. The writes of malfuz never played with words to make complex sentences. Instead their efforts were directed at ensuring the teachings were as simple as possible. Those who have an interest in discovering the language of that period, they should include a consultation of this literature.

Fawaid-ul-Fuad and Khair-ul-Majalis are typical illustrations of the Persian language spoken in India in the 14th century. The language of common people was the language generally used in the Khanqahs, where local expression was adopted to give a colloquial touch to their thought. For example, Amir Khusrau, disciple of Auliya, composed poetry in which one line would be in Persian, and the next in Hindi. The masters explained the most complicated thoughts in a very simple way. This simplicity in their expression of thought is the most important jewel in the garland of Sufism. Conversely, the ulema expressed the most simple ideas in a very complex manner, most likely to prove

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60 See notes and references for original text.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
their intellectual superiority over others. But, as earlier mentioned, Sufi saints did not have such mentality. Clarity of ideas and lucidity in expression was their trademark.⁶³ This can be practiced only by those who have a proper understanding of their subjects. Only such individuals can explain the most abstract ideas in the simplest way. So there was a deliberate effort to ensure their messages were understandable to those from the lowest socio-economic levels. This added a new style to Persian in which local dialects were incorporated into the language, and short and easy sentences were written. This proves the educative and moral values of the malfuzaat.

Another area in which the malfuzaat can prove useful is in understanding the history of language and literature of local languages such as Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. It is said that the first Punjabi language⁶⁴ was spoken in the khanqah of Baba Farid. Faithful records of utterance, these memoirs provide information on the form of language spoken at various periods and in different regions, and as such, are of great help in tracing the history and development of Hindi or proto-Urdu. They also give some mention to poets and authors, verses being quoted in Arabic, Persian and local dialects of Hindi and proto-Urdu, and names of treatises and works, elusive in other historical sources.

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⁶³ Ibid.
⁶⁴ For detail please see K.A. Nizami’s “Life and times of Shaik Farid al-Din Ganj-I-Shakar”. 
The Religious Importance of *Malfuzaat*

“Religion is a belief in the existence of a God or Gods, who has/have created the universe and given humanity a spiritual nature which continues to exist after the death of the body. It is a particular system of faith and worship based on such a belief: *the Christian, Buddhist and Hindu religions*”⁶⁵ This is a contemporary and internationally recognized definition of religion. A.P. Cowie, the editor of the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, has failed to show his impartiality even in editing a dictionary. Compiling a dictionary for the consumption of students across the world, and he has excluded one of the major world religions. Christianity, Islam and Hinduism are the prevalent religions in the contemporary world. It is possible that this editor had no intention of leaving Islam out from a religious point of view, but how can one justify his selection of two religions from one country, one of which has almost disappeared from its country of birth (Buddhism). This would suggest a biasness on the behalf of this editor.

If one turns the pages of *malfuzaat*, he/she will find human hearts as the target audience. Each and every individual held the same importance in the eyes of the Sufi. The primary importance of the *malfuzaat* lie in their approach towards human problems. As discussed already, Auliya had the propensity to

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⁶⁵ Cowie, A.P., Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary p. 1064
become the most unhappy person in Delhi because of his concern of the common people.

The religious importance of the *malfuzaat* can be seen in the way religious doctrines are explained. The writers of the literature were very clear in conveying their thoughts and understanding of spiritualism. Spiritualism for Sufi saints did not mean leaving the world and living a reclusive life. It is clear from their teachings they wanted to live among people. There was a time when Nasiruddin expressed his desire to retreat to the forest and engage himself in contemplating God. Auliya strongly advised him to be among the people, and explaining the meaning of 'tark-I-diniya' (renouncing of the world), he said that “Renouncing the world does not imply that one becomes naked, wearing only a loincloth or sitting in solitude. Renouncing worldliness means instead to wear clothes and to take food while at the same time squandering the material wealth on other human beings. Thus, no attachment to material wealth is tantamount to renouncing worldliness.”  

This is the true interpretation of *tark-I-duniya* in Sufi teachings.

The expressions of the Sufis throughout the *malfuzaat* is clear and lucid. Unlike the traditional teachers of Islamic ideology, the *ulema*, the ideals, aims and activities of Sufi saints were neither diluted nor made complex and complicated to impress people. They, their ideals and their teachings were

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66 See notes and references for original text.
always people-friendly. That is why people centuries later have found solace in reading *malfuz* books. When Sir Syed Ahmad Khan started his pioneering work in spreading scientific education in the second half of the nineteenth century, he noticed the popularity of Sufi literature in not only among educated men of the elite class but also among the masses. Men and women, young and old, all found spiritual solace in its study. B. B. Lawrence, while discussing the importance of the *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, writes that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, nineteenth century Indo-Muslim educator, informs us that in his day not only men but also women used to read it\textsuperscript{67}.

Only on the pages of *malfuzaat* can one come to know about all Sufi saints, major and minor, of all Sufi orders. The *malfuzaat* is the only source which refers to a wide range of Sufis. It is the message, not source, that is important in these writings. In the assembly 7\textsuperscript{th} Ramadhan, A.H. 721 Auliya not only discussed Qutbudin Bakhtiyar Kaki (Chishti order), but also Shaikh Mahmud Muinaduz, Khwaj Fariduddin Attar, Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria, Khwaj Hakim Sanai and Shaikh Saifuddin Bakharzi\textsuperscript{68}.

The majority of Sufi orders remained aloof from the courts of kings to avoid identification with the centre of imperial power. Their very avoidance of the king's circle contributed to an increased respect from the lay person, who

\textsuperscript{67} See Lawrence's notes in "*Fawaid-ul-Fuad*", p. 4
\textsuperscript{68} "*Fawaid-ul-Fuad*", p.p. 360-363.
could more closely identify themselves with the saints. Auliya deliberately refused admission to kings in his *khanqah*. This meant more time to engage himself in servicing the poor and the oppressed. Mystic discipline pursued without extravagance was an important prerequisite for the moral well being of the individual and society. To the individual, discipline encourages balance, clarity, tolerance and love. It is a solvent of narrow prejudices and is an inspiration for human service. It exalts the spirit above the pressure of the mind’s immediacies – the pressure of instinct, inclination and passion, and uplifts the mind to the contemplation of a striving for God. The mystic is one who is free in his spirit. Such an attitude makes for a liberal society. It is inevitable that a mystic chafes against the barriers of creed, wealth, power and even of law and learning, and promote an open society to which access is not hindered by the accident of birth or fortune.

How did the Sufis react and adjust themselves to the existence of a political order that did not represent the true political spirit of Islam? Again, the answers to this question are well documented in various *malfuzaat*. The Sufis placed little importance on the political leaders of their age. Through the *malfuzaat*, we know that Jalaluddin Khalji tried to meet Nizamuddin Auliya but failed in his efforts. Alauddin Khalji’s sons, Princes Khizra and Shadi Khan - were accepted into Auliya’s discipleship but only after much persuasion and
pressure on Auliya, and after becoming his disciples, they worked in his langarkhanah (community kitchen).

Through the Khair-ul-Majalis, we know that during Nasiruddin’s period of Khaliafat, there were many disputes between the mystics and the ulema. The conflict between mystics and ulema peaked with the arrival of Iman Abdul Aziz Ardbeli, who was a student of Ibn Taimiyya\(^\text{69}\), in the court of Tughluq. Taimiyya’s movement had a great influence on Muhammad bin Tughlaq, who adopted a policy of hostility towards mystics and sought to change their way of life and ideology completely. This tension during Nasiruddin’s period of Khaliafat can be seen in the pages of the Khair-ul-Majalis. Nasiruddin himself took the task to purify those aspects of mystic life which had invited criticism from the orthodox quarters and made a serious and sincere effort to bridge the gulf between the jurists and the mystics.

In closing this chapter, it should be reiterated that the birth of this literature in the beginning of the fourteenth century was essentially a marketing tool for the masses. As there were no newspapers, radio, television, or internet, apart from public speaking, the written word was the only mass communication method that the Sufis had to spread their message. Sufism traditionally being based on teaching via oral discourses, Auliya’s history-making Fawaid ul-Fuad

\(^{69}\) Ibn Taimiyya (1263-1328) launched a movement against the Khanqah life and mystic institutions. His movement found a support in Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq.
became the prototype for all subsequent malfuzaat, and was the catalyst for the creation of a distinct written language, amalgamating Persian, Hindi and other dialects, in order to spread the Sufi net out as wide as possible. An almanac for its followers, the malfuzaat documented the life and activity of saints, both contemporary of the period and historically. It also mirrors the social and ideological condition of the Indo-Muslim society at that time, and even reveals the influence of Hindu religious thought on Muslim mystics, a subject which is dealt with in the fifth chapter of this thesis.