PREFACE
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The present work seeks to investigate the Development of Sufism in Bengal from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. No attempt has yet been made to reconstruct the Development of Sufism in Bengal. The attention of the most of the scholars has centred round the political history of Bengal, making occasional references to its Saints, but their accounts are uncritical and generally based upon the later hagiological material.

In the present work an attempt has been made to make a fairly extensive and critical use of all sources available. Throughout the work we have attempted to justify by reasonable argument our reliance on a particular source, wherever there has been a conflict of evidence or a contradiction.

In fact the Islamic proselytization of India did not begin with coercion and bloodshed; the first conversions were made by its Saints. Bengal's contact with the Muslims, in the field of trade, colonization, and missionary work, began much earlier than its conquest in the thirteenth century. After the establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal Sufism was the continuation of
Sufism in Northern India. From the beginning of the thirteenth up to the end of the fourteenth century, the Sufis of Northern India predominated over the Sufis of Bengal. The predominance of Northern India over Bengal in the realm of Muslim thought came to an end with the close of the fifteenth century A.D. During the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries a number of Sufi orders and Sub-orders of Northern India were introduced into Bengal by the disciples of the Northern Indian Saints. No connected account of the activities of these deputies and their followers is now available. Stray bits of information regarding different Sufis of Bengal, that we have gathered from different sources do not enable us to build a connected history of these orders. Owing to this difficulty we arranged the Development of Sufism in Bengal centurywise.

First we discussed Introduction which is divided into four sections i) Sources, ii) Origin and Development of Sufism in Islam iii) The Advent of Islam and Early History of Sufism in India iv) The Advent of Islam in Bengal.

The first chapter of the thesis is, early history of Sufism in Bengal. The second chapter discusses the
Development of various Sufi Orders into Bengal. Then from chapter III to chapter VI are discussed the life and activities of various Sufi Saints of Bengal during the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th centuries. Chapter VII discusses Un-Islamic Beliefs and Practices among the Muslims of Bengal. Chapter VIII discusses the reform movements of Bengal by the Sufi-Saints. Chapter IX discusses the life and activities of Sufi Saints of Bengal during the 20th Century. Chapter X discusses Sufi Saints of Bengal of un-known dates. Finally Chapter XI discusses the Impact of Sufism in Bengal.

The term 'Saint', in this study, is used in a general sense to refer to the Sufis and the Hindu ascetics called Sant and Sidh. We realise that in the Christian context a corrupt saint is a contradiction in terms, but this usage has long been common in the subcontinent, and we retain it for the sake of convenience.

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