Chapter VII

Conclusion

We have in the foregoing pages that the Sufis took up on themselves the sacred duty of propagating Islam in India in the early 13th century A.D. and by the middle of 14th century, to a great extent, their task was complete. This rapid success in the field was due to two reasons: Firstly the spade work, codifications, doctrines, institutions and books were already at their disposal. Abu Yazid Bistami (874 A.D.), Junaid Baghdadi (909 A.D.), Abu Nasr al-Saraici (d. 988 A.D.), Abu Sayid Abil Khair (d. 1011 A.D.), Abu Ali Najwiiri (d. 1072 A.D.) and Ibnul Arabi (d. 1240 A.D.) provided the material to construct the edifice of Sufism and its various institutions so essentially needed for a project of durable base.

Secondly, when the Sufis entered India by its northern gate, the Aryans found in them something common in respect of social habit and mystical thought. India itself was humming at that hour with the Bhakti movement. The Siddhas and the Bhaktas were trying hard
to bring relief to the people in the midst of their growing miseries and hardship.

Sufi monotheism appealed to India's intellectuals, who believed in the doctrine: 'ekam eva adityam brahma' (Only Brahman without a second is true) as preached through the sacred books of the Hindus, thus a new vista of collaboration between the Sufis and the Mahatmas were opened up in this country which helped both to develop their ideology on broad lines.

The movements started by Ramananda (d. 1572 A.D.)

Dadā Kabīr Dās (d. 1516 A.D.), Chaitanya (d. 1533 A.D.),

Guru Namak (d. 1538 A.D.) and Sankaradeva (d. 1568 A.D.)

1. Dayal and Barrow refer in their *An Outline of Indian History and Culture*, Vol. I, p. 10, that the Aryans believed in one God as is clear from this hymn. "They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, and Agni he is the heavenly bird Garutmat; To what is One, the poets give many name. They call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan." Al-Biruni also refers in his *Fi Tafsir al-Ma'lil Hind*, Text, p. 20, (Tr. E.C. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 27), That the Hindu believe with regard to God that he is one, eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free will almighty, all wise, living, giving life, ruling, preserving, one whose sovereignty is unique, beyond all likeness or unlikeness and that He does not resemble anything nor does anything resemble him. The Qurān also supports the doctrine:

> laIPA la mislihi shaina

and 'hnaul awwalna wa-lakirna wa-zahira wal-batin' (Nothing is like a likeness of Him) another holy verse (He is the First and the Last and the Ascendant (ever all) and the knower of hidden things), Qurān, Chapter XLII, II and Chapter XLI, 54 And holy verses says:

> "الله اعدهن اجل الله العبد له بيدل دلولولا و لترككم لنا كفوا حد"
seem to be the result of this fusion of religious thought of the two great communities of India. They mutually borrowed from one another mystical thought and enriched the religious literature for all times to come. That is why we find close affinity between the songs sung by the sadhus and the poetry composed by the Sūfīs of India. India's Islām is a clear departure from the established conventional teachings and practices of Sūfīs in other parts of the Muslim world. Similarly, the Bhaktas of the middle ages are quite different from the religious men of the ancient India, when the preshne teaching of the holy Vedas and Upanishads ruled supreme.

With the advent of Shihab-ud-Dīn Muhammad Ghori (d. 1206 A.D.) in India and the fall of the Pala kingdom in Bihar and Bengal, the Sūfīs got a congenial home in this part of the world, which was already humming with activities of the saints and siddhas, to spread their Sūfī doctrines with minor adjustments to local conditions.

1. 'quī kuliAllāhu akhād, Allāhu sammād. lamāyalid wa laṣyūḥad, wa lam yu kalā-lāku kufi an akhād' (Say: He is Allah, the One, Allah, the eternally Besought of all. He begetteth not nor was begetteth. And there is none comparable unto Him), Qurān, Chapter CXIII, 1-4
The missionary activities of Sābū Adham Shahid in East Bengal (Bangladesh) resulted in his conflict with the ruling Raja Ballāla Sena (d. 1119 A.D.) and the death of the saint in the battle field. This incident gave a spur to his followers in the response to which they became more active. The influx of Sūfīs in Bihar, West Bengal, Bangladesh and Assam became a regular event. They had their own organisations mostly backed by the disciples and the masses, quite independent of the temporal authority of the Sultans. They took their mandate from the central Sūfī Order of Delhi, Lahore, or even Baghdād, Khurāsān, etc. The saints were so powerful and popular that the kings and rulers deemed it a favour to them if they were allowed to see the Sūfī saints at their khānqāhs (monastery).

By the close of the 15th century, a number of Sūfī Orders were set up in the old Suba Bangla (which comprised in those days of the modern States of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Bangladesh and, for a while, Assam). The arrival of Imam Muhammad Tāj Faqīh and his conflict with the Raja of Munayr Sharif in Bihar,
establishing a khanqah there by his son Nasrat Mahdum Tahya Manayr. The establishment of the khanqah at Bihar Sharif by Tahya Manayr (1268-1300 A.D.)^ the khanqah of Nasrat Shah Shash Jadal (d. 1421 A.D.) at Shilhkor, Monghyr; later on the khanqah-i-Rahmānī at Munayr, established by Hāfiz Muhammad Ali, the disciple of Shah Fasiur Rahmān of Uttar Pradesh; the khanqah of Nasrat Shahbul Bhagalpur at Bhagalpur rendered valuable services to the spread of Islam and Sufism in Bihar.

Reverting to Bengal, Mangalkot, Midnapur, Birbhum and khanqahs of adjoining areas played an important role in furthering the cause of Islam. Nasrat Shāhī Shāh Hamid Dānishmand Bengali at Pūrbi-Hum Tufail Ali at Midnapur and Mahdum Zail, the son of the celebrated Mahdum Zail of Bihar Sharif devoted their whole life to the propagating of the Islamic mission. A scion of Nasrat Tufail Ali moved to Kishangange, Gaur in Malda which was known as Jamshedpur had already turned out to be the centre of Islamic studies and culture, besides being the seat of the rulers of Bengal, Nasrat Shāhī Shāh Jalālud-Dīn Tabrīzī.

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(d. 1225 A.D.) had his khānqāh at Pandua Sharif where he is said to have been buried.  

§ Akhī Shāj (d. 1306 A.D.) preached Islam at Lakhnavati (Gaur). Nasrat Shāh Jalāl Mujarrad (d. 1346 A.D.) came to Sylhet with three hundred and sixty disciples and made central khānqāh there.³

Shāh Badar, Shāh Adam Khātī, Shāh Dīyand-Dīn, Shāh Abdul Malik and Shāh Nātavan—the khulafa of Shāh Jalāl Mujarrad earned fame and respect in Assam and Bengal and made Badarpur and Katigerah centres of their missionary activities.

Later on Nasrat Haṭīm Ali Sahib made his khānqāh at Badarpur and Nasrat Faqar Shāh’s missionary activities was in Silchar. The name of Asān Faqīr is found on the lips of every Assamese. He is said to have possessed great miraculous powers and a large number of disciples. He introduced Islam and Islamic teachings through the Zikra and Zaris in Assamese language which enabled the masses to grasp the message of Islam.

Hence his name became a byword in every Assamese home.


Both the Hindus and the Muslims adorned him and appreciated his efforts to uplift the down trodden from the moras of degradation and moral turpitude.

In order to have complete union with God which according to the Indian Bhaktas means Nirvana, the Sufis in Eastern India laid down four stages to attain its: (i) self annihilation (فْتَمَّا ذَاتُ, 'fana fizzat), (ii) complete resignation to the spiritual guide (فتَمَّا الشَّيْحُ, 'fana fashiakh), (iii) strict observance of the saying of the Prophet (فْتَمَّا ﴿الْفَرُوجُ ﴾, 'fana fira Rasul), (iv) and complete union with God (فتَمَّا ﴿اللَّهُ ﴾, 'fana fillaah). At each of these stages a devotee has to practice certain devotional practices.

A close study of Indian mysticism will clearly show that similar practices were inveque to attain Bhakti. Thus we see that Sufism in Eastern India underwent a great change when its entered India from Persia, Bukhara and Samaqand, etc. It was greatly influenced by Indian thoughts as have already been hinted in previous chapters. The doctrine of the

unity of Godhead and the philosophy that God is in the
universe and the universe is in God, is the Vedantic
and the platonic philosophy of Divinity. The doctrine
of soul as preached by the Sufis is the same as expounded
by the upanishads. The divine soul is pure but it becomes
impure after it touches the human body. Hence an impure
soul is subject to punishment on the day of judgment.

The Sufis in Eastern India preached that the
soul of man is a part of divine soul it unites with
it after man's death and also can be united with the
divine soul even before death if he tries to develop
his power. This union of soul during the life time is
called the stage of self annihilation and abiding in
God (ناَناَویَبی) 'fanā wa baqā'. The theory of divine
infusion ( حَالِیل ) 'kulūl' may be considered from the
very beginning as poletheistic and monestical by the
doctors of Islam.

The Yoga system of Indian philosophy as a
means of attainment of union with God was accepted by

9. Al-Birūnī, quotes from the Bhagavad Gītā, Chapter,X,
verses 2-3 "I am the universe without a beginning by
bring born, or without an end by dying. I do not
aim by whatever I do, any recompense." Fi Tadhīg
wa lih Mīnī, Text, p. 21, Tr. E.C.Suchan, Vol. I,
p. 29
the Indian Sufis though some modification such as controlling of breath, meditation, regulars of diet etc. The 'atma' or 'jiva' (اَنْتُما) 'ruh' in various system of the Upanishad became soul 'brahma' the only reality is the truth (الْحَقّ) 'al-haq' of the Indian Sufis. A man is infinite and his body is as myrecism which fully represents universe within itself. If he succeeds in subduing his plain, afflict, sorrows and desires he becomes eluminated in his body and soul (الْمَانِعْ) 'manawar'. By going through these regresus practices in sittisatable for attaining union with God, according to the Sufis man's cast becomes fit to see divine light and his soul is identified with the real being.

According to the Upanishad when a man knows his own self he becomes Brahman, fit to attain Muki or emanipication which favourables conforms to "one who knows his own self knows the real God" (زَنْتَ نَفْسَكَ فَقَدْ نَفَسَالله) 'man arofa nafsahu faqad arofa rabba' as preached by the Sufis. The strong pessimistic attitude of the Indian Sufis towards the world seems to be the out come

10. R.C.Zealmer, Hindu and Muslim Mysticsian, p. 9
of Vedantic influence of Sufism. The Vedas preach shan eva advitiya brahma (only one God without a second) besides Him all is Maya (illusion). This finds favour in the Sufi doctrine of 'fana' which declares that life is but a momentary dream. The Sufis preached कुलम नास नास नास नास नास नास (all things are perishable only God is eternal). Thus we find the Sufism in India is the sum and total of mysticism developed in Persia, Bukhara, Samarkand and India. The theory of 'hama nai' (all is No) is identical with the Hindu pantheon of the Nammahada. The rigid monotheism of Islam underwent a change when it came to India. The theory of Fana and Baqa (self annihilation and abiding in God) perfectly resembles the Buddhist doctrine of Nirvana and siddha. The Sufis conception of passing away of individual self in universal being first expounded by Persian mystic Bayazid Bistami (d. 674 A.D.), was of Indian origin. His forefathers were Indian origin. His teaching was followed zealously by the Sufis in Eastern India and was highly welcome by the Bhaktas and Siddhas.\[11\]

The Sufi's four stages of celestial journey

Masūt, Malakūt, Jabaruṭ and Lahūt are at par with the three stages of Buddhist way of attaining sainthood namely, Sota, Panna, Bhara (the stages in which one is put in the right current; Saka degani bhara (the stages when a man has only one birth to undergo; Aṃbhat (when a man attains nibbana or nirvana). ‘taqwa' (piety) in Sūfīsm is eita (refrainment from simple deed) in Bhaktī; marifat of Sūfīs is the Nirvana of Buddhism.12 in which the gnosis by its help is promoted to the stages of Arahat which is reached by a Sūfī through 'marifat'. Both the Wali and the Arahat types of saints are free from the bondage of the world when they attain perfection.13 The Qur'an is also support of the above idea

alain wuliallaah falal khawfna alaihim wa la yahsamun' (Now surely the friends of Allah - they shall have no fear nor shall they grive ) is a reference to this 'makk or slavation.

In short, the Sufī movement in Eastern India, as in India as a whole, is a golden chapter in the history.

12. The Mysticism of Islam, pp. 16-19
of Islam, which requires volumes to assess its various effects on the social and political life of this country. The untiring zeal and services rendered by the Sufis the cause of Islam resulted in a large number of new adherents to the creed in this part of the country which was far away from the seat of any Muslim government. Thus, Islam spread by sheer force of appeal and simple Islamic doctrine of peace, equality, fraternity and common brotherhood which the Sufis and their disciples demonstrated in public and practised in their private life.

Lastly but not the least, the success of the Sufi movement in Eastern India was due to the positive co-operation of their counterparts, whose progressive ideas and peaceful behaviour enriched the mind and thought of the local Sufis which helped their missionary activities to be crowned with success.