SUFIS AND THE SULTANATE: RELATIONSHIP OF INCOMPATIBILITY

Sufi practices which did not seem to derive their sanctity from the *Shari'at* such as, establishment and functioning of the *khanqah*, organising *sama*, concepts of 'wallayah', 'wilayat', 'Pir-murid relationship' and 'futuh' etc. appear to have become the bone of contention between the Sufis and the Sultanate, on a number of occasions. Further, if one went entirely by the Sufi, especially Chishti self-image or the image projected in hagiographic literature, the Sultan and the *dervesh* stood at opposite ends of the spectrum. Some modern writers also have accepted this image and emphasized this long distance, indeed a dichotomous relationship between them. Such, for instance, is the focus of the scholarly work of Prof. K.A. Nizami. Such attempted distance from the Sultanate also became a contributing factor for incompatibility in their relationship. The projection of keeping away from the Sultanate was with a view to projecting an image of independence, notwithstanding their sympathies and implicit support for the Sultanate. Despite this projection at a number of occasions, the Sufis and the Sultan came in contact – face to face or through intermediaries, wittingly or unwittingly, which some times caused incompatibility in their relationship.

The Sultans on their part made constant efforts to highlight the dependence and subservience of the Shaikhs on them. They tried to employ
them in state service. The Sufis, specially the Chishtis, firmly refused this, for they could ill-afford to be seen under the patronage of the de-facto ruler of the region. The Shaikhs possessed spiritual power, whereas, the Sultans had political authority backed by coercive force. Chishti Shaikhs refrained from performing any such gesture, which was designed to highlight the supremacy of the political authority over the spiritual authority. This was mainly why they rejected government service and avoided meeting the Sultans and accepting gifts from them.

The concepts of 'wilayat' and 'wallayah' and the establishment of 'khanqah' and its functioning as a parallel institution to the state system were concern for the Sultan. The heads of silsilahs appointed their Khalifas and the Khalifas appointed their deputies and a hierarchy of saints came to be established, with the chief saint at the apex of the system. This was identical to the system of the state, where the Sultan was at the apex with governors as head of provinces and so on. The head of the silsilah was often referred to with high-sounding titles such as Sultan al–Arifin, Sultan al-Mashaikh, Shahi Din, Sultan al–Hind, and Qutab-i Alam, possibly to the utter 'jealousy' and 'concern' of the Sultan. Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya was called Mahboob-i Ilahi, as well. Such titles were more common among the Chishtis, which were apparently, used to indicate their position and sphere of spiritual activity.

The use of political terminology by a Shaikh seemed to parallel the
position of political power, creating a situation of great ambivalence, in which, the parallel could either remain stationary, compliment with the other, merge with it or challenge it. The Sultan’s response to this situation was also multifaceted: ‘it was imbued with respect, envy, suspicion and fear.’ When, suspicion overpowered the desire to draw legitimacy from the Shaikh, incompatibilities arose. Thus, Ala al-Din Khalji was jealous and suspicious of the ongoings in the khanqah and popularity of the Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya, and had sent spies to find out the details. The fear and respect also was vividly reflected, when he sent a letter to the Shaikh seeking his blessings and guidance. He was relieved when he learned that the Shaikh was not concerned about the governance and was busy in prayer. Similarly, Muhammad Tughlaq was a regular visitor to Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya, when he was a Prince. Out of respect and possibly also out of fear, he was reluctant to sit on the cot, when asked by the Shaikh. His visit, apparently, was for seeking the support and blessings of the Shaikh for becoming a Sultan. But, once he became a Sultan, his attitude towards the Sufis changed. He did not require the support from the Shaikhs any more and hence, attempted to subjugate the ‘murids’ or Khalifas of Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya out of suspicion and envy, due to their popularity and acceptability among the masses.

Use of high sounding titles were in conformity and furtherance of the concept of ‘wilayat’. The concept of wilayat could be explained through
various anecdotes. When Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya visited Ajodhan for
the last time to meet Shaikh Farid al-Din Ganj-i Shakr in Jamadi 1, 664 AH/1265 AD, Shaikh Farid al-Din said:

"I have given you both the worlds; go and take the kingdom of Hindustan."

The strength with which the concept of spiritual jurisdiction or *wilayat* was adhered to also is obvious from other anecdotes. For instance, once Abd’allah Rumi, a musician stayed with Shaikh Farid al-Din Ganj-i Shakr at Ajodhan, and when he left for the southwest journey to Multan, he requested Baba Farid to pray for his safety. The Shaikh replied:

> ازین جاتا بدن موضوع که چندین گروه باشد
> آنجا حوضی ست یا ناجاحد من است
> سلامت خواهی رسید یا، آنجا اتملتان
> در عهده شیخ بهای الدین است

"My territory is from this place (Ajodhan) to that mauza, which is at a distance of so many *karohs*, up to the point of a water reservoir. You will reach that point safely. The area from that point to Multan is under the charge of Shaikh Baha al-Din."

Further, when Shaikh Qutub al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki reached Multan from Baghdad, Qubacha requested him to settle there permanently. Suspecting an intrusion into his spiritual territory, Shaikh Baha al-Din Zakariya went to visit Shaikh Qutub al-Din and conveyed to the Shaikh his desire to
leave his territory by placing his shoes in the direction of Delhi. The Chishti Shaikh got the hint and immediately left for Delhi.  

Similarly, nearly a hundred years later, Sultan Mubarak Khalji requested Shaikh Rukn al-Din Multani, a grandson of Shaikh Baha al-Din, to set up a khanqah in Delhi in order to divert the attention of the people from Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya, whose spiritual power the Sultan resented. Shaikh Rukn al-Din, however, refused to interfere in the spiritual jurisdiction of his Chishti contemporary. Such non-interference in each other’s spiritual dominion was not necessarily on quid-pro quo or reciprocal basis. This was primarily because of reverence towards each other.

This demonstrated the presence of spiritual sovereignty, which paralleled or went beyond the political sovereignty in spatial terms. In the socio-religious ethos of South Asia, supernatural power is deemed to be on a higher pedestal than temporal power. The protection provided by spiritual power had a definite edge over the latter. Thus, in the times of distress, the Sultans looked for help from the Sufis. Moreover, Sultans like Khalji rulers conveyed their desire to meet the Shaikh, which was turned down. The higher pedestal of the Sufis is also vindicated by the fact that their murids risked their life by showing allegiance to the Sufis in preference to the Sultans.

The popularisation of the concept of ‘wallayah’ further enhanced the relative position of the Sufis vis-à-vis the Sultans. The term ‘wallayah’ is
derived from the word ‘Wali’ (pl. Auliya), which means ‘friend of God’. The Sufi was called ‘Wali’, ‘Wali-Allah’, Shaikh or Pir. The concept of wallayah means sainthood. Shaikh Nizam al-Din was known as Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya. He was addressed in a plural form (Auliya) because of his high status among the Sufis. The main difference between them and the Prophets (Nabis) is that the Nabis were born before the birth of Prophet Mohammad, whereas Sufis were people with Prophetic qualities, who were born after Prophet Mohammad. The concept of wallayah became very popular during the medieval period and placed the Sufis far above the temporal power in popular perceptions.

The Sufis believed in ‘tawakkul’ i.e. trust in God. For them God was the Provider. With this in view, they generally did not involve in ‘kasb’ i.e. working for living. They rejected ‘shughl’ i.e. government service and lived on ‘futuh’. Moreover, they often rejected futuh i.e. unasked for gift from the Sultanate as well. This was partly to avoid dependence on the Sultanate and partly because of their isolationist attitude, based on - pragmatic, legal and historical considerations. It was believed that government services (shughl) created serious obstacles in the development of one’s spiritual personality and in the attainment of gnosis (ma’rifat). Government service was not contributory to the service of religion, but that of dynastic class interest. The income of the Sultans was also perceived as the income from prohibited
sources, sans the sanction of the Shari'at. Political organizations including the ‘darbar’ and the court had precious little to do with Islamic ideals and way of life. Apparently, therefore Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya instructed his disciples, “You will not go to the doors of kings and seek their rewards.”

The Sufis lived on futuh i.e unasked for gift, which was voluntary and apparently would not have been a cause of dispute. But like Shughl, Futuh also was a factor for incompatible relation between the Sufi and the Sultan. Not only did the Sufi Shaikhs rejected shughl unless compelled by a despotic Sultan, they also often refused gifts or futuh from the Sultanate.

Thus, Shaikh Qutub al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki not only refused to enter the service of the state, but also refused to accept the monetary gift offered by Sultan Qutub al-Din Aibek, which he sent through a messenger, Malik Ikhtiyar-Uddin. He, instead, lifted a corner of the rug on which he was sitting. The Malik saw a ‘dariya’ (river) and a ‘jungle’ full of gold under it. The Shaikh, thereupon, asked him:

“You take away the gift you have brought (from Sultan).”

Incidents of this kind are numerous, which portray that whatever the rulers possessed, the Shaikhs possessed in greater abundance. The Shaikhs were one up on the rulers. The Chishti Shaikhs often refused to accept gifts from the nobles too, as it would indirectly mean their dependence on the Sultan.
Ilutmish, a saintly Sultan, once asked Shaikh Hasan to accept the post of the Qazi, but in vain. When the Sultan insisted, the Shaikh pretended to have become insane in order to avoid the Sultan's anger. When Shaikh Qutub al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki learnt this, he remarked, "Shaikh Hasan is not insane, he is dana (wise)." The Saint thus, thereafter, came to be known as Shaikh Hasan Dana.

Baba Farid had developed an attitude of indifference towards the government, and advised his disciples: "If you desire elevations in your spiritual ranks, do not mix with the princes of blood."

During his time, due to political upheavals many theologians had chosen political life. Baba Farid did not deviate from his earmarked path. He advised Sayidi Maula, who came to Ajodhan on his way to Delhi for settlement:

"But, keep in mind my advice. Do not associate with kings and nobles; regard their visits to your house as calamities. Every durvesh, who opens the door of association with kings and nobles is doomed."

But, he disregarded Baba Farid's advice and had to pay a heavy penalty for it, by losing his life.

There is a detailed description of Sayyidi Maula's imprisonment and death in Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi of Barani, which is as follows.
"Saiyyidi Maula was tied up and brought before the court of the Sultan (Jalal al-Din Khalji). The Sultan engaged himself in a discussion with Saiyyidi Maula. On the occasion, Shaikh Abu Bakr Tusi Haidari was also present. The Sultan asked him as to 'what was to be done' to Saiyyidi Maula. In the meantime Bahri, a sepoy, injured the Maula with his knife. Further, Ar Quli Khan from the top (first floor of mahal) instructed by (waving) his hand, upon which a man with his elephant came to the front and crushed Saiyyidi Maula under its feet. Thus, the Sultan could not save a durvesh."

However, Akhbar al-Akhyar, which is a later primary source, gives a different version and attributes the responsibility for the killing to the Qalandars of Shaikh Abu Bakr Tusi. It describes the picture as follows: 

"Sayyidi Maula was alive during Sultan Giyas al-Din Balban. He had
large number of *murids* and followers. He used to serve large number of people. In addition, he distributed medicines and treated patients. Some people considered him ‘*jadugar*’, while others attributed it to his spiritual power as he successfully treated patients. He was killed or executed during the time of Jalal-uddin Khalji by *Qalandars* of Shaikh Abu Bakr Tusi.”

Barani’s reference on this that the Sultan could not save a *durvesh* is important. It leaves us to wonder, whether without the implicit approval of the Sultan such a thing could have taken place in his presence, while he had not pronounced any judgment. The same is also testified by the fact that there is no reference to the Sultan’s doling out any punishment either to Ar Quli Khan or to the killer.

Barani describes the after effect of this, narrating that ‘there was heavy storm and rainfall never seen before, which was considered as a bad omen. It was followed by draught and starvation. On seeing the heavy storm (after Maula’s death) people thought it to be the ‘*Qayamat*’ i.e. end of the world. The Sultan, who did not have faith in Sufi saints, thereafter, became a believer.”

Forcing for ‘*shughl*’ was confined to two to three Sultans, during the entire of period of the Sultanate and could not be viewed as a regular feature. Such aberration also included killing of the Sufis at the hands or with the
tacit or implicit support of the Sultanate, including the above one. As regards refusal of *sughal*, Maulana Kamal al-d in Zahid's case was a classical one for his reply. He was a teacher of Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya. When asked by Balban to accept the office of the royal *Imam*, the Maulana rejected the proposal and said: "Our prayer is all that is left to us. Does the Sultan wish to take that away too."

Though the Chishti Sufis generally refused *futuh*, instances of acceptance of *futuh* were also there. But, such instances also portray an incompatible relationship. For instance, once Balban sent to Baba Farid a tray of *tankas*, which the Shaikh accepted and got it distributed amongst the poor. Out of that, one coin by mistake could not be distributed. Maulana Badr al-Din kept it in his cap to give away to some one in the morning. Baba Farid that day while leading the *Isha namaz* (night prayer) started the prayer and then discontinued it. He asked the Maulana if all the coins had been distributed, and on leaning that there was one coin left, he picked it up and threw it away. He also lamented as to why he had touched the coin. Incidentally, Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya had also referred about a saint, Khwaja Karim, who never touched any coin after taking up 'faqr'.

The incident of Baba Farid was an example of disquietude arising out of a relationship. His distaste and apathy towards the Sultanate is apparent from this. It is believed that Balban had great faith in the Shaikh, but in no
way it could influence the Shaikh’s position on the Sultanate.

Further, Shaikh Nizam al-Din had accepted some money as *futuh* from Khusrau Khan, who had killed Sultan Mubarak Khalji. Subsequently, when Khusrau Khan was defeated by Ghiyas al-Din Tughlaq, who succeeded the throne, he sought to recover the donation that was claimed to have depleted the royal treasury. Shaikh Nizam al-Din argued that he had received the sum from the public treasury of Muslim believers and distributed it among the deserving, keeping nothing for himself. Though the Sultan kept quiet, his heart turned against the Shaikh. Thus, while non-acceptance of ‘*futuh*’ from the Sultanate reflected elements of incompatibility in the relationship, acceptance of ‘*futuh*’, as a paradox had also contributed to the furtherance of incompatibility in the relationship.

The Sufis were perceived as ‘spiritual people’ who could redress temporal grievances as well, besides providing spiritual guidance and healing effect to the distress or other seekers. The Sufis sometimes subconsciously assumed the responsibility of advising the Sultans or making recommendations to them that they thought were just and imperative. On the other hand, the Sultans also often issued decrees to show that the Sufis were subservient to the system of the Sultanate and owed their allegiance to them. Such attempts from either or both sides made the relationship uncomfortable, particularly when such decrees, advice or recommendations went unheeded. Just before
the dawn of the Sultanate, the first stretch of incompatible relation arose between Pithaura (Prithvi Raj Chauhan) and Moin-al-Din Chishti. The details have been reported in *Akhbar al-Akhyar* as under:

“When Muin al Din came to Ajmer, Pithaura was reported to be the king of ‘Hindustan’; Muin al-Din was busy praying to God at Ajmer at that time. One day, a Muslim devotee of Shaikh Muin al-Din narrated to him some discomfort caused to him by King Pithuara. The Khwaja, thereupon, sent some recommendations to Pithaura in his favour, but the King did not accept the recommendations.” He said:

اين مرد در اينجا آمده است و نشسته سختان غيب مي گوید

“He (Khwaja) had come here and on settling down at the place, (merely) talked about otherworldly matters.”

When the Khwaja learnt this, he uttered:

پتهورا را زنده گرفتیم و دادیم

“I captured Pithaura alive and handed over (as a prisoner).”

Subsequently, the army ofMuiz al-Din came to India, confronted and defeated Pithaura’s army and captured him.

The Sufis not merely advised the Sultans, but also occasionally rectified an unjust act of the Sultanate. For instance, once an old woman came crying before Shaikh Qutub al-Din Chishti and complained that the King had executed his son without proving the crime. The Shaikh carried his *lathi* and set forth
towards the dead body with his followers, being guided by the woman. Hundreds of Hindus and Muslims had gathered there. The Khwaja said:

اللهِ اگرای ی بادشاہ سردار کرده است اورا زندہ گردن۔

“Oh God! If the King has executed him without he being involved in any crime, then make him alive”.

The old woman’s son became alive, before the Shaikh had completed his sentence.17

This makes the old proverb ‘the savior is greater than the destroyer or executer’ hold good. It also indicates that the Sufis possessed immense spiritual power and they rarely used it and when they did, it was to rectify an unjust act perpetrated by the Sultanate.

Some incidents indicate incompatible relations between the Sufis and Governors of the respective provinces as well. For instance, Balban had appointed his cousin Sher Khan as the Governor of Multan, who unlike the Sultan did not have any faith in the Shaikh. Sometimes, he spoke ill of the Shaikh. In response to this the Shaikh recited a couplet: 18

افسسوس کہ از حال منت نیست خبر
آنگھ خبرت شود کہ افسوس خوڑی

“Alas! You have no knowledge of my condition. When you come to know, what would be the use of being sorry.”

In a related story of incompatibility between Shaikh Sadr al-Din, the
eldest son of Shaikh Baha al-Din and Mohammad Shah, the eldest son of Balban and governor of Multan was for an altogether a different reason. Once, the Governor in a state of intoxication divorced his wife, the grand daughter of the late Sultan Iltutmish. On recovering his senses, he was deeply grieved and wanted to revoke the ‘talak’. The Qazi of Multan contended that only when the lady was be married to another man and then divorced, could he remarry her in accordance with Islamic law. Shaikh Sadr al-Din was asked to act as the intermediate husband, as he was considered the most pious one. The records state that on the following morning, after the marriage, on the request of the bride Shaikh Sadr al-Din refused to give her up. The Governor was enraged and decided to put him to death on the next day. But, the same day, the Mongols invaded Multan and the Governor was killed. 19

Apart from the above incidents of prosecution of the Sufis or their murids, there are numbers of instances bringing home the point that the allegiance of the murids was total and relentless and if there was a dilemma between that allegiance to the Sufis and the Sultanate, the former would prevail. This was a concern for the Sultan.

During the reign of Sultan Jalal al-Din Khalji, Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya had earned fame. The Delhites had great reverence for him. The Sultan, out of admiration for him, offered a few villages and orchards for meeting the expenses of the khangah. The Shaikh declined politely conveying
that ‘it was not befitting for a durvesh to have orchards and villages to look after.’

Sultan Jalal al-Din also desired to meet Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya. On this Amir Khurd reports:

“Sultan Jalal al-Din desired to meet the Shaikh but the Shaikh did not grant permission. Then the Sultan told the court poet, Amir Khusrau that he would visit the Shaikh without notice. Amir Khusrau thought it proper to inform this to his Pir, for if the Shaikh learned later, it would cause him despair. On learning this, the Shaikh immediately left for Ajodhan to meet his Pir, Shaikh Farid al-Din Shakr Ganj.”

He further reports:

“When the Sultan knew of it, he got very angry and said that ‘he deprived him of the opportunity of meeting the Shaikh’. Amir Khusrau clarified his position by saying that ‘the anger of Sultan could cause loss of his life, but the disappointment of the Shaikh would have caused the loss of ‘Iman’ or ‘belief’’. The Sultan, as was wise, cooled off (on
learning this)."

This shows that the employees of the Sultans also had full allegiance towards the Shaikhs and in case of a contradiction between their allegiance to the Sultan and to the Shaikh; the allegiance towards Shaikhs would prevail. Apparently, the devotees prioritised their faith in spiritual authority over and above the worldly powers.

However, Barani while dealing with Khaljis gives a different picture of Sultan Ala al-Din who succeeded Sultan Jalal al-Din. He says:

"Ala al-Din never wanted to meet the Shaikh, while traders and travellers from thousand of miles and amirs, the illiterates, the literates, the ignorant, the old, the young and the children came to see and obtain (his) blessings. But Sultan Ala al-Din neither took pain to visit the Shaikh nor invited him over."

'The popularity of the Shaikhs was a major concern for the Sultans. The popularity of one becomes the ground for suspicion and jealousy for the other. This was an important factor for leading to discordant relations between the Sufis and the Sultans. Thus, Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji had become
suspicious and jealous of Shaikh Nizam al-Din’s fame.

Amir Khwurd reports: 23

"Some people out of jealously told the Sultan that Shaikh Nizam al-Din had become a world leader (religious head) and the dust of his door is ‘crowned’ by one and all.”

The Sultan became worried on such instigation and wrote a letter to the Shaikh with a view to knowing the Shaikh’s intention or attitude towards politics. The purpose was to find out the reality and also to seek the Shaikh’s guidance. However, when the letter was given to him, without caring to open it, he asked the public to recite Surah Fateha (an important verse from Quran).” 24

Then the Shaikh said: 25

“A durvesh has nothing to do with the Sultanate. I reside in a corner engaged in prayer for the Sultan and mussalmans. If the Sultan is not happy with my presence, let him say, so that I will move out to some
other place, as Allah’s land is so vast.”

Mir Khurd summarises the gist of the letter as under:26

سلطان المشاغب مختوم عالمان است وأر بين ونیاهوکارا خاجیہست ای آن حضرت بری آباد موضع زمام سلطان نمایندہ نیا
بنه دادن ویس پنہ پر سادات میر کاری و مسلمان کہ سلطنت پش آباد سلطان مشاغب مرض دار دتا ہوئی ای آن حضرت
خوئہ سلطان و خلاص ہیں اس بنے پنہ دنیا مین دئو ای سی تا اس بنہ بستی آن روضہ تودیا خلاص ہیں و سلطان خوئہ لا ہوئے

“The Shaikh is popular the world over, as people bring their problems to him for guidance and blessings. The Sultan, on the other hand, has been bestowed with the kingship and hence, the Sultan being concerned about the well being of the people, seeks his guidance. Whatever is considered correct by the Shaikh, will be immediately implemented.”

The content of the letter reflects the worry, the anxiety and the subordination of the Sultan, who attempted to declare that he would carry on the instructions of the Shaikh without any reservation. The Shaikh’s not caring to open the letter sent by the Sultan, apparently, was a way of keeping distance from the Sultan. The statement of the Shaikh also reflects his annoyance for not letting him live and pray in peace, indicating an element of incompatibility in the relationship.

However, after this, the Sultan took care to not to annoy the Shaikh. Instead as reported in both Siyar al- Auliya and Akhbar al- Akhyar, he was pleased with the outcome and desired to meet the Shaikh. The latter, however, conveyed:27
"There is no need for the Sultan to come, as I am busy in 'ghaibana dua' (prayer in absentia), which was more effective."

This also indicates that the Shaikh while maintaining a distance was extending support to the Sultanate through his prayer. Notwithstanding this, the Sultan wanted to visit him. The Shaikh, on knowing this, said:

"The old man (he) has two doors in his house; if the Sultan comes by one, I would go away by the other."

This entire episode is paradigmatic in revealing the coexistence of all three aspects of the distance, support and incompatibility in the relationship between the Sufis and the Sultanate. Probably, after this, Ala al-Din Khalji’s attitude towards the Shaikh took a ‘U’ turn. Seeing the change in his attitude, Zia al-Din Barani, probably at this juncture reported:

"Although, the Sultan never met the Shaikh, he did not speak a word, which could have annoyed the Shaikh in any way. Jealous people still..."
criticized the Shaikh and reported with considerable exaggeration to the Sultan (about the great gifts of the Shaikh, the crowd of the people frequenting his place and the Shaikh’s feeding of the people and his generosity towards them). But Ala al-Din paid no attention to what they said about him. In the last days of his regime, he became a sincere and firm believer of the Shaikh. Nevertheless, the two never met.”

It is clear, however, that the Shaikh desired to keep a distance from the Sultan and the Princes, which is further reflected in his refusal in accepting of Princes, Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan, as his disciples. It is another matter that with much reluctance, later he accepted them as his disciples. This was indeed not by virtue of their royal lineage, but due to the fact that they were apparently serious contenders for his discipleship with earnestness and sincerity. This is vindicated by the fact that they cherished their association with the Shaikh till death. Thus, depriving them from his discipleship on account of their relationship with the Sultanate would have been unfair, notwithstanding the Shaikh’s deliberate attempt to keep away from it. Nevertheless, their discipleship had no way affected the attitude of the Shaikh towards the Sultanate.

The popularity of the Sufis and the functioning of their khanqahs were subject of ‘worry’ and ‘jealousy’ for certain Sultans. This ‘worry’ and ‘jealousy’ gripped a powerful Sultan of Ala al-Din Khalji’s stature as well. In
“Popularity of the Shaikh had reached its pinnacle (at that time) and all kinds of people, ordinary persons, Amirs, Princes and officials, traders as well as Sultans of other states paid visit to have a glance of Shaikh’s miracles and (spiritual) personality. They came with proper respect and belief and to be in the gracious company of the Shaikh.”

The Sultan, apparently, did not like this. Mohamand Jamal Qawam in this connection illustrates a happening at the khanqah of the Shaikh in following words:

“Some persons, close to the Sultan, kept informing him about the ongoing at the khanqah of the Shaikh. The Sultan did not like the gatherings in his Sultanate (as groupings, specially of amirs etc., had in the past been the cause of change of guards in the mahal). At that time, the doors of the Shaikh were open for all and food was served (on dastarkhwan) to
all visitors at the khanqah. They ate, and also took food to their home. The Sultan on learning this became concerned, but as he was wise, did not let his feelings known to others."

The Sufi’s dastarkhwan served an opportunity to display and determine etiquette. Thus gastronomic ostentation matched the ecclesiastical ostentation, which was the cause of concern for the Sultan because of its striking similarity to court ritual. This reveals another aspect of the Sufi, that he was adeipro sophist.

In this case the Sultan sent an informer to verify the truth.

Jamal Qiwam reports:32

"The informer came (at the khanqah) and sat at the dastarkhan. Khwaja Imam Pahelvi, who was sitting next to the Shaikh at that time, informed the Shaikh that the person, who was sitting in the front row, was an informer. Thereupon, the Shaikh loudly said that ‘other than the fact that the Shaikh was eating meat and bread with his friends, what else would he (the informer) convey (to the Sultan)’. Then he ordered Mubashshir to not to put excess of bread and meat to avoid distaste and instead place
more of ‘tahri’ i.e. a preparation of rice with vegetables and meat flavoured with spices and saffron in such a way that it enables two persons to eat out of one plate.”

The Shaikh also once said: 33

اگر از جهت خلق نباشد که یزبان خواهان افتد.

“The food is meant for people and if it were not so, I would be considered untruthful”.

He also had suggested once and said: 34

از آن جاتا شهر بفرماليم تاکندوری نصب کنند

“The food from khanqah could be taken to the city (Delhi) and served on dastarkhwan (for people for eating and taking the left out to home for use of family).”

When the Sultan learned the details, he again sent another informer for further information. Jamal Qiwam, in this connection, reports: 35

میشیریا پارانی یک، صائم می باشند، حال سحر ایشان چه熟ود؟ قرص و حلو، سنیوسه در مائده مزید کن پیش هر فرظ یک قرص و دو سنیوسه به، و یگوتا آن بگیرند.
ایشان را وقت سحر کار اید همچنان کردن و این حجر نیز به سلطان رساله دند، سلطان علاء الادین به فرست دانست که این کار خاص برای حق است تا کسی را گوئی به کمال از جهت نباشد از اینها نتواند کردد.

“The Shaikh this time ordered Mubashshir to ‘place more of shambosas on dastarkhwan and asked (people) to take one each for the sehri (food taken before dawn after which one fasts for the day) also’. The Sultan,
on learning this, felt satisfied considering it as a righteous act. After that, he became a believer and refrained from doing anything that could be incompatible with the Shaikh’s activities."

The entire episode with the Sultan ultimately reconciling to the ongoings in the *khanqah* falls far short of a conflict and can best be viewed one reflecting incompatibility between the two. As regards the informer, Prof. K.A. Nizami while quoting from the same source has held that a person sitting near Khwaja Muhammad Imam was an informer. In this connection, the relevant portion in *Qiam al-Aqaid* reads as follows:

خواجة محمد امام پهلوی خدمت شیخ نشسته بود بر شیخ گفت که آن مرد که صف تعال نشسته است مخبر است.

"Khwaja Imam Pahelvi who was sitting next to the Shaikh at that time informed the Shaikh that the person sitting in the first row was an informer."

It is important to note that Ala al-Din did not allow any gathering or feasts in Delhi. However, the activities in the *khanqah* went on unhindered. The *khanqah* of the Shaikh was some what like today’s embassy offices, which have extra-territorial jurisdiction. The Sultans dared not interfere in the affairs of the *khanqahs*, lest it boomeranged on their authority in terms of ‘popular disapproval’ of their act and wrath or ‘bad-dua’ (curse) or ‘jalal’ of the Sufis.
The practice of 'sama' and raqs was another cause of incongruence between the Sufis and the Sultans. The Ulama, who claimed to be the custodian of Islamic law and custom, were the staunch supporters of orthodox Islamic principles. However, their intemperate diatribe against the practice of sama at the khanqah of Shaikh Qutub al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki failed to evoke a response from Sultan Iltutmish as he considered the Shaikh as his spiritual leader. During the time of Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq, the Ulama objected to the holding of sama by Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya. Shaikhzada Husan al-Din Farzam, Qazi Jalal al-Din Soranji and Naib Hakim-i Mulakat instigated the Sultan against the practice. The Sultan convened a mahzar (meeting) to discuss the religious aspects of the problem. The Shaikh went to the meeting, which was his first and the last visit to the court. The ensuing synodal discussion turned out to be unpleasant; the Ulama invoked the tShari'at, whereas the Shaikh retorted by citing from the Sunna i.e. the practices of the Prophet, which the Ulama objected to. Though, the Ulama could not convince the Sultan to promulgate any decree against the Shaikh, the experience led to estrangement between the Shaikh and the Sultan.\(^{38}\)

The arbitrary decrees or orders issued by the Sultans for adherence by the Sufis had also led to skirmishes. Such skirmishes some times reached serious proportions. Sultan Qutub al-Din Mubarak Khalji had several altercations with Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya in connection with his decrees,
which smacked of arrogance. For instance, the Sultan had built a congregational mosque (*masjid-i jama*) at Siri. After the completion of the mosque, the Sultan sent for all the leading *Ulama* and *Mashaikh* to assemble in the mosque and offer their Friday prayer (*namaz-i jama*). Shaikh Nizam al- Din Auliya did not turn up and conveyed:

“The mosque closer to my place has greater right over me than the new one. It is befitting for me to offer prayers in the mosque, nearer to my *khanqah*.”

This recusant behaviour of the Shaikh made the Sultan very angry. However, the fact that the Shaikh was the spiritual mentor of Khizr Khan, Mubarak’s competitor in the succession to the throne, was the actual cause of his ill will towards the Shaikh. Mubarak thought that the Shaikh was in favour of Khizr Khan’s accession to the throne and thus, developed a hostile attitude towards him. He made scatological remarks about him in the court and offered a reward of one thousand *tankas* to any one, who brought the Shaikh to him. He also had ordered that no one from the *haram* (*mahal*) should ever visit the Shaikh. 39

Further, a convention had developed that the *Imams*, the Shaikhs and the men of religion assembled on every full moon day (first day of the month) to greet and pay respect to the Sultan. However, Shaikh Nizam al-Din would
send his murid and servant, Iqbal to represent him. Bent upon humiliating the Shaikh, Mubarak Khalji sent him the message: "Shaikh Rukn al-Din comes to see me from Multan. How is it that, you, stationed in Delhi, do not visit?"

The Shaikh expressed his inability to pay the visit on the ground that "it was not the practice of his elder saints." However, this did not pacify the Sultan, who was acting on the instigation of 'hasidan' (envious people). The young Sultan, in his pride said that if the Shaikh did not come on the first day of the next month, he would have him brought forcibly.

The Shaikh went to his mother's grave (see Plate - VIII) and told her that 'if the issue was not settled by that time, he would not visit her, thereafter.' The Sultan was executed before the stipulated deadline.

The Chishtis also wanted the government to be run in a just and righteous manner. They often, directly or indirectly, rebuked the rulers for what they considered was wrong. Shaikh Nizam al-Din Awliya often quoted the traditions of the Prophet in order to highlight what an ideal government or society should be like. He used to say, "If in any kingdom, an old woman goes to bed hungry, the ruler would be held responsible and questioned on the Day of Judgment." At another instance, Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya told an assembly of visitors that the construction of Hauz-i Shamsi by Iltutmish, in order to fulfill the water requirements of the people of Delhi, had led to his
salvation. In this way, the Chishtis indirectly advised the Sultans about the functioning of the government for the good of the society. In another incident, Shaikh Nizam al-Din’s effort to maintain distance from the Sultanate and at the same time, availing of the opportunity, when it came his way, to counsel the Sultan is vividly reflected. Once, Sultan Mubarak Khalji and the Shaikh met at the siyyum (40th day of death of an individual when fateha is recited for bringing peace to the departed soul) of Shaikh Zia al-Din. Barani says that the Shaikh greeted the Sultan, but the Sultan did not reciprocate the Shaikh’s greetings. However, Ferishta gives a contradictory account saying that the Shaikh himself refrained from greeting the Sultan and explained his conduct by saying that ‘as he was reciting the Quran, there was no need of greeting to him’. Nizami, however, on this comments that Barani’s account deserves greater credence. The account either way could indicate that there was a strained relation between the Shaikh and the Sultan. Even if Ferishta’s account is construed as correct, the greetings could be offered afterwards i.e. after the recitation of Quran as per Muslim tradition. For instance, when some body is busy in prayer or in eating food, one is not supposed to offer salam at that time. However, immediately after the completion of the same one can offer salam, if desired so.

Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya, advised Sultan Mubarak Khalji indirectly at the siyyum in the following words: 

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“Whosoever sits in the (bad) company of any body even for a short while, will be interrogated by God on the Day of Judgment as to whether he fulfilled his duty towards God in that (bad) company.”

This was an effective and indirect way of rebuking an arrogant Sultan, with a hint for him to mend his ways to become ‘good’. It was also possibly a reminder to the Sultan that deeds, good or bad, are subject to evaluation on the Day of the Judgment.

During the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, the Sufis were made to suffer due to the Sultan’s reclame. He was a tyrannical and oppressive king, who inflicted injuries on saints, through his words and actions. But the Sufis, generally, neither heaved a sigh of pain, nor prayed to God for the destruction of the foundation of the Sultan’s power.

On one hand, he engaged the Sufis in the governance by force and on the other, he showed annoyance towards them. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, as described by Gisu Daraz, once mentioned to one of his confidants: 50

اِیشان طائِفہ ائندے کہ مارا با ایشان کاری نے، ایشان را با ما تعلقی نہ

بگوید کہ از شہر ما برون شوئن۔

“These are the people (Sufis) with whom we have nothing to do. Nor have they anything to do with us. Tell them to get out of our city.”

This is to be referred in regard to shifting of the capital to Daulatatabad, to which many of the Sufis, though reluctant, had to go. Shaikh Nasir al-
Dingo to Daulatabad, Chiragh Delhi, however, refused to leave the Shrine of his Pir behind and go to Daulatabad. This, apparently, embittered the Sultan against him.\textsuperscript{[51]}

Another incident involving bitterness took place when Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq was engaged in the programme of transferring the population of Delhi to Deogir and was planning an expedition against Turkistan and Khorasan to overthrow the descendants of Chengiz Khan. The Sultan requisitioned an assembly of the leading citizens and grandees of Delhi and the neighbouring region. He wanted them to exhort the people to undertake a 'jihad' against the 'kafirs' (Mongols).\textsuperscript{[52]} The Sultan also summoned Shaikh Fakhr al-Din Zarradi and Shaikh Shams al-Din Yahya on that day. Shaikh Fakhr al-Din Zarradi, who was reluctant to meet the Sultan uttered repeatedly:\textsuperscript{[53]}

\begin{quote}
من سر خود پیش این در سرائی این مرد غلطیده می‌بینم یعنی او مسامحت نخواهم کرد و او از دنیا نخواهند گشت.
\end{quote}

"I see my head rolling in dust in front of the palace of this man. I am not going to treat him gently and he will not spare me alive."

When the Shaikhs assembled at the court, the Sultan began discussing his plan with Maulana Fakhr al-Din and said, "I want to overthrow the descendents of Chengiz Khan and I need your kind co-operation in the matter." The Maulana replied, '\textit{Insha Allah}' (God willing). The Sultan objected to the use of this term and said, "It indicates indecision." The Maulana justifying
the use of the term said: "It is used for the action to be carried out in the future." The Sultan and the Shaikh had a vociferous intellectual argument over the use of the term. Finally, the Maulana brought the argument to an end by saying, "No enterprise can succeed without the use of this term. It indicates affirmation and not avoidance."

The Sultan then ordered the mid day meal to be served thinking that the Shaikhs would consider this as an honour. A Chishti saint had never dined with a ruler before this and the Maulana ate with great reluctance. While eating, the Sultan took out chunks of meat separating it from the bones and gave to Shaikh Fakhr al-Din. During this the Sultan asked Maulana Fakhr al-Din for some advice on which he could act. Without hesitating for a moment the Maulana advised the Sultan: "Get rid of the beastly anger that has gripped you". The Sultan asked: "Which anger?" The Maulana replied: "Beastly anger."

Apparently, the Sultan took the advice, at least for that moment, because he did not react in the typical ruthless manner characteristic of him even after being rebuked so bluntly. Such counselling or advice by the Sufis to the highest temporal power of a kingdom underlines the fact that the Sufis were not concerned about the authority the Sultans held and did not hesitate in counselling them, when they found the Sultans arrogant or overbearing.

After the meeting and the lunch, the Sufis and others were gifted of
bags full of tankas and some expensive green and black cloth. However, Maulana Fakhr al-Din Zarradi paid no attention to the gifts. An employee of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, who was a disciple of Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya, stepped forward; picked up the Shaikh's shoes under his arm and carried the gifts to the servant of the Shaikh for distribution among the needy.57

On seeing this, the Sultan was enraged. In a fury, he said:58

"You short stature fellow of a secretary (dabir-i kolah)! What happened to you that you carried the presents of the Shaikh and picked up his shoes in my presence? You saved the Maulana from my sword and took the same upon yourself."

The Sultan's hand went to the hilt of his sword. At this the secretary said:59

"He is the Khalifa of my Pir and hence, picking up his shoes was an honour for me. If you want to kill me for my love towards Sultan al-Mashaikh (Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya), I am ready. I will get rid of the torture of your company and become a shaheed."

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However, the Sultan inflicted no injury to the disciple.

This incident highlights the relationship of ambiguity between the Sultan and the Chishti Shaikh. Although, the Shaikh was reluctant to meet the Sultan, yet, he went to his court and also dined with him. However, while dining he appeared reluctant to eat and paid no heed to the gifts given by the ruler. This was a cause of concern for the Sultan, because things which were considered an ‘honour’ by others, were not considered so by the Chishti Shaikh. In fact, it seems from the Shaikh’s behaviour that it was an ‘honour’ he was conferring on the Sultan by visiting the court, dining with the Sultan and allowing the gifts to be given to his servant.

Not only were the Sultans relegated to an inferior position by the behaviour of the Shaikhs themselves, but also by the behaviour of their own nobles whom the Sultans employed and paid. There were many other incidents, when the employees of the Sultans paid more respect to the Shaikhs, than they did to the Sultan. It was to counter this attitude of the nobles that Sultan Mubarak Khalji issued orders banning the visit of the ‘amirs’ and the ‘maliks’ to the khanqah of Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya.

Talbegha Boghdah, a noble of Sultan Mubarak Khalji was an ardent follower of Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya. Once, Mubarak Khalji (referred to as Sultan Qutub al-Din by Barani), in a state of intoxication asked Talbegha Boghdha to put off the cap, which was symbolic of his
association with Shaikh Nizam al-Din. The Sultan asked him thrice and even took out his sword, but, Talbegha did not disgrace the cap bestowed by his spiritual mentor. Then the Sultan took out his sword and told:

"If you do not obey and remove the cap, your head will be chopped off."

Upon this, he came forward, bowed his head and said:

"Oh Sultan! For the sake of life, I will not remove the cap given by the Shaikh, even if the head is separated (from the body) along with the cap."

The Sultan was pleased (or pretended to be) with his steadfastness and said the gathering: "A murid be like this."

He then enquired as to how he could know whether they (people gathered there) were like that. This was, apparently, told by the Sultan to his men to induce or advice them to be loyal to him, as per the standard set by Talbegha’s loyalty to the Shaikh.

The Sultan then asked Talbegha the cost of the bread he had (nans from Shaikh’s khanqah). Talbegha said that each nans’s cost was thirty five thousand tankas. The Sultan offered him seventy thousand tankas and a khirka (a garment symbolizing his appointment to a higher position), apparently, due to his devotion.
Talbegha Boghdah (تالبغا بخده) is referred so in Qiwam al-Aqaid, but as Talbegh Yaghdah by Nizami & others.

Boghdah thereafter went to the Shaikh, narrated the episode and offered the entire money to facilitate the spending on the kitchen of the khanqah. The Shaikh refused to accept that and asked Iqbal to get something for him. Iqbal brought two handfuls of gold coins and gave to the malik. The Shaikh, then, asked him to look out into the arch and on doing so Talbegha saw a dariya (river) and a jungle full of gold.

This incident highlights the fact that if a noble was a disciple of a Shaikh, he displayed great respect to the Shaikh even at the cost of the displeasure of the Sultan and even if he was threatened with death. It also further reveals that whatever the Sultan possessed and could offer, the Shaikh probably possessed in greater abundance and was still not concerned about the possession. This was a matter of worry for the Sultans and a cause for incompatibility in Sufi-Sultan relations.

During the time of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, the saints bore the fortune of torture through words and deeds. Abdul Haqq Muhaddith had expressed surprise and pain at the insolence of the Sultan in annoying a Shaikh of Nasir al-Din’s stature. Once, the Sultan sent him food in gold and silver plates. This was with twin objectives i.e. he if took the food, the Sultan could question
the legality of eating from costly metallic bowls by a Sufi and if he did not, the Sultan might punish him for disobedience. The Shaikh, in an attempt to balance out the ideal and the practice, took out some pickle, placed it on bread and ate it. Thus he disappointed the Sultan. By consuming a small quantity, he conveyed that he was not interested in eating the princely, luxurious food. By taking out and placing it on the bread before eating meant not eating directly from the expensive metal platters. Instead it was eaten out from the bread. Thus, he indirectly rejected the Sultan’s direct offer by eating out the food after transferring it to the bread.

It is also recorded that the Sultan appointed him in charge of the wardrobe (*jamadar*) to humiliate him. The Shaikh bore all these, in deference to the instruction of his master. The Sultan had developed an aversion towards the Shaikh and assigned to him the task of minions, like serving betels, tying turban, and clothing the Sultan. When he refused to perform these, the Sultan gave a blow on his nap and imprisoned him. The Shaikh, then, unwillingly accepted the service and managed to get out of the prison. This account has not been mentioned by any other contemporary writer and hence, was rejected by many including Abdur Rahman Chishti and Muhammad Bula Chishti as gossip. However, irrespective of the validity of the story, it is evident that the Sultan attempted to torture him, time and again. Shaikh Burhan-al-Din, in this connection had written a letter
to him expressing his sympathy.

The letter contained the following quotation: 

"So long as some calamity does not (befall on) visit the lovers, their fame of love does not reach the Beloved. Go and behold the heads of the brave men fixed as turrets; not a thorn pricks the feet of the coward."

The Shaikh replied with the following couplet:

"As the source of the torture and thrashing is different (from what people think), I feel ashamed to say I am aggrieved with such and such person."

The Shaikh refused to curse or wish ill for the Sultan, which shows the magnanimity of a Chishti Shaikh. From the *Siyar al-Auliya*, however, one can easily infer that the Sultan used to assign missionary and administrative works to the saints, because of their morality and piety. Shaikh Nasir al-Din himself appeared to have said that Caliph Umar once refused to appoint a man as governor, because he had not read the *Quran*. The *Siyar al-Auliya* reports that the Sultan assigned nine important saints important tasks. They included Shaikh Fakhr al-Din Zarradi, Shaikh Shams al-Din Yahya, Shaikh Qutab al-Din Munawwar, Khwaja Karim al-Din Samarqandi, Syed
Qutab al-Din Hasan Kirmani, Syed Kamal al-Din, Shaikh Muizz al-Din, Shaikh Iman al-Din and Shaikh Mazhar al-Din. 76

He engaged Maulana Fakhr al-Din in his scheme against the Mongols, as explained earlier, Shaikh Shams al-Din for propagating Islam in Kashmir, Khwaja Karimu al-Din as Shaikh ul Islam, and so on. Mir Khurd mentions that the Sultan used to force the Sufis to engage in *shughl*.77 He coerced the Sufis to accompany him in the military campaigns. He had taken Shaikh Nasir al-Din to Gondal, apparently, as he was not happy with the Shaikh. However, the Sultan fell ill there and subsequently died. It is left to imagination, whether, it was a natural death or was a result of forcing a Shaikh to perform tasks, which his mentors had never practiced and had asked him to not to perform.

The attitude and behavior of Muhammad-bin Tughlaq as a Sultan towards the Sufis was in striking contrast to his behavior as a Prince. As a Prince he used to visit Shaikh Nizam al-Din, wait for him, was reluctant to sit before him out of reverence, felt happy when referred to as Sultan indicating prophecy of kingship. But, when he became Sultan, his attitude and behavior towards the Khalifas of that Shaikh whom he revered so much, was far from considerate and respectful. This indicates that whenever the Sultans or Princes were on a weak wicket, they sought moral and spiritual blessings of the Sufis. It also indicates that the Sultan's attitude and behaviour towards the
Shaikhs was transformed by the inputs of the people around them. Thus, when the *Ulama* or the *maliks* instigated them, they used to behave differently. As far as Muhammad bin Tughlaq is concerned, he was suspected of being under the influence of a disciple of Ibn Taymiya (d. 1328 A.D.).

Barani, however, has a different story to tell. He says that the Shaikh installed Firuz as the Sultan, in the absence and illness of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. The Sultan got both of them arrested and ordered for their execution. But before it materialised, he breathed his last. However, no other contemporary record corroborates this. Prof. K.A. Nizami, however, believes that the Shaikh was unlikely to be involved in a coup. It has been recorded that the Shaikh had requested Firuz to ascend the throne after the death of the Sultan.

During the last phase of his life, Sultan Mohammed bin Tughlaq had gone to 'Tehta', which was at 1000 karohs away from Delhi. There he called for Shaikh Nasir al-Din, and when Shaikh Nasir came, he did not treat him with the respect that is due to a Sahikh.

Mir Khwurd reports:

"The weight of the disrespect shown to them (Shaikhs), brought him down
from the ‘Takht-i Saltanat’ (throne) to the ‘Takht-i Tabud’ (coffin).”

People, on the death of the Sultan, asked the Shaikh as to why the Sultan ill-treated him. The Shaikh replied: 80

“که میان من و حق جل و علی معاملة بود آن را بدين برداشتند

“There was a dilemma between me and God. It was settled like this.”

Mir Khurd believes that the Shaikh considered it as a God sent punishment for certain lapses. 81

Similar had been the fate of his father, Sultan Ghiyas al-Din Tughlaq. Barani holds that the Sultan while coming back from his Bengal expedition had issued an imperial order to Shaikh Nizam al-Din to leave Delhi, before the Sultan reached there. When the Shaikh received the imperial order, he remarked: ‘Hanuz Delhi Dur ast’ (Delhi is still far away). The Prince, Juna Khan (future Mohammad bin Tughlaq) had made elaborate arrangement for the reception at Afghanpur. However, during the reception, the pavilion that had been constructed for the purpose collapsed and the Sultan was buried under it.

It could be seen that the Sufis’ participation in the warfare by registering their presence or dua or spiritual support by offering an arrow or staff could bring victory for the Sultanate, but their withdrawal from the campaign as in case of Ibrahim Lodi (refer to previous chapter) or curse on a King (refer to Muin al-Din’s curse on Pithaura) or ill treatment of the Shaikh in a campaign

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such as in the present case, could bring about defeat or death to the Sultans.

Forcing for *sughal* was indeed a major cause of incompatibility between the Sufis and Sultans. Shaikh Nasir Al-Din was not the only one who suffered at the hands of Mohammad bin Tughlaq. The Chishti Shaikhs usually, firmly refused to join government service (*shughl*) though they did have followers who were in the service of the State. Once, Shaikh Shihab al-Din was asked to join government service, which he refused. This made Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq became furious and he ordered the jurist, Zia al Din Sunami, to pull out Shihab al Din's beard. The jurist refused; so both he and the Shaikh had their beards pulled out. The Sultan then forced Zia al-Din to go to Telangana and Shihab al-Din to Daultabad.

Shaikh Shihab al-Din, who was called *haqq-gu* (the truth teller), came back to Delhi at a time when the Sultan had commanded everyone to call him Sultan Adil, 'Sultan Muhammad, the just'. In fact, Muhammad Tughlaq even had his coins struck with this epithet (*Adil*) and named the fort in Delhi as Adilabad. Provoked by the irony of the situation, Shaikh Shihab al-Din told the Sultan on his face that he was a tyrant and enumerated his injustices, including the ruining of Delhi and the transfer of the populace to Daulatabad. The Sultan responded by having the Shaikh brutally killed, which itself is a curious proof of his justice.

Once, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq summoned Maulana Shams
al-Din Yahya, an eminent Sufi and disciple of Shaikh Nizam al-Din, and ordered him to migrate to Kashmir and spread Islam there. However, the Shaikh saw his Pir in dream, who was calling him; consequently developed a boil in his chest. The Sultan considered it as a trick to evade going to Kashmir and summoned him to inspect personally. On knowing the reality, the Sultan allowed him to go back home. Subsequently, the Shaikh died.

Similarly, another disciple of the Shaikh Nizam al-Din, Shaikh Qutub al-Din Munawwar neither showed any concern when the Sultan visited Hansi, nor cared to meet him. This annoyed the Sultan, who sent Hasan to bring him. The Shaikh explained the reasons for not going to visit him. The Sultan, then offered him one lac tankas through Zia al-Din and Firozshah Tughlaq, who was then a Prince, which he refused to accept. On repeated requests, he accepted two thousand tankas with much reluctance and got them distributed among the people there and at Delhi. This shows that many Sufis, specially the Chishtis, had little interest towards the gifts from the Sultan; if they accepted, after being compelled to do so because of persistent requests the gifts were immediately distributed among the deserving, indicating thereby that it was the people and not Shaikhs who were the real receivers. They were mere intermediaries for the redistribution of the economic surplus of the state.

Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign was a reign of terror, as he resorted
to forcing the Sufis for *shughl* and hence, the Sufis heaved a sigh of relief at his demise, though ostensibly, they did not wish him ill. The visitation of a scourage (Taimur’s invasion) in 1398-99 A.D. dealt a mortal blow to the Sultanate of Delhi. It was a politically volatile situation. In such a situation, the Shaikh sent a message to Firuz asking him, ‘whether he would treat the people with justice and equity or should he pray for some other king’. Firuz promised to behave justly and requested the Shaikh to pray for him. This again shows the Sufi’s warning towards the future Sultan by keeping the option of blessings open. Probably, it was also a caution to the future Sultan to refrain from forcing the Sufis for *shughl* or any thing else.

Earlier, we have seen that the *murids* of the Sufis had shown their total faith towards the Sufis. Amir Khusrau and Talbegha Bogdha had displayed tremendous respect for them at the risk of losing their lives. In an incident when Khwaja Jahan was brought to the scaffold, he put the cap of the Shaikh on his head and tied the dastar he had received from Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya and surrendered to the executioner.85 This reflects immense faith in a Shaikh, which a follower upholds till death and probably believes that he would be stronger to face the calamity befalling on him unjustly at the hands of the Sultanate, if he had the blessings of the Shaikh through his *tabarrukat* or other wise. A murid was not afraid of death while upholding ‘*haq*’ and ‘*halal*’. The same is testified by the incidents of execution

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of Khwaja Jahan, Khizr Khan, Shadi Khan and Shaikh ‘Haqq-gu’.

The execution of Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan does not amount to persecution of Sufis, as they were merely murids of Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya. Moreover, their execution was mainly due to political consideration, as they were claimants to the throne. However, their faith in God and the Shaikh was unshakable, despite calamity befalling on them. In regard to Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan, when Malik Kafur ordered the blinding of the princes, some claimant or complainant (مدعى) asked them what use was the faith in the Shaikh, meaning thereby if they had faith and the Shaikh had the power, he could have saved them. The Princes replied: 86

"O misguided and ill informed Muddai! This has neither caused any loss nor ill fate...."

Turning the table on the prosecutor, they also said: 87

"If a man kills a Believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abode therein (forever)."

They further said: 88

"He also saved us from the punishment as laid down in the Quran:"

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They spelt out the same as under:

 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُعْتَفَفُونَ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِةَ ظُلْمًا انَّمَا يُعْتَفَفُونَ فِي
بطونٍ نَارٍ وَسَيَصُلُونَ سَعِيراً

Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans!

Eat up a fire into their own bodies:

They will soon be enduring a blazing Fire.”

*(Al-Quran-S. IV: 10)*

The Princes, further, clarified their position by saying:89

"If the eye sight has been taken away from us and the inner light has been opened (in our hearts), it is all due to the blessings of the Shaikh. This was precisely why we held his hand as disciples and entrusted all our affairs to him. We hope that tomorrow, on *Qayamat* (the day of the judgment), we shall be under the banner of the Shaikh."

However, despite the tension that existed between the two, the Sufis could not be viewed either as conspirators against the state or as ill wishers of the Sultanate. Even when they seemed to have distanced themselves from the State, the link between the *khanqah* and the Sultanate was too strong to be snapped off by metaphysical distance. In fact, by distancing themselves from the state, the Sufis were, in a way extending invisible support to the
state machinery. Despite all its shortcomings, the Sultanate was still an 'Islamic state' or at least it claimed to be so and the Sufis could never be it's ill wishers. Therefore, the dissent did not amount to questioning the existence of the State itself.

Yet, the Sufis, especially the Chishtis were perceived as standing in opposition to the Sultanate. Due to this image of the Sufis, people, who had grievances against the state, felt that they had something in common with the Sufis. As such, they began identifying themselves with the Sufis and shared their grievances with them.

The Sufis satisfied these people by articulating their urges against the State. In the process, they also did a great service to the Sultanate. For, any functioning system of government, society or thought works best with built in space for dissent; the absence of such space can cause systemic collapse of the system, as is evident from the collapse of the socialist regimes of the erstwhile Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

The Sufis by distancing themselves from the State and thus acting as the articulators of public opinion against the state, were able to provide this 'in-built system of dissent' to the medieval Indian State. Thus, the Sufis provided a kind of "safety valve" which could vent the urges of dissent against the State. This "safety valve" was an essential factor in preventing the collapse of the Sultanate because, if dissent is accumulated and bottled up, at the time
of release, it possesses immense momentum to even break down the State system. Thus, even when their relations with the rulers were incompatible, the Sufis did not actually possess any antagonistic force towards the Sultanate.
NOTES

1. K. A Nizami, State and Culture in Medieval India, New Delhi, 1985, pp.196-7.


5. Siyar al-Auliya, op. cit., pp.295, 204 etc.


7. Rawzafat-aqtab, Ali Rawanug, p.84.

8. Siyar al-Auliya, p.75.


10. Ibid, pp. 211-212.

11. Ibid, pp. 211-212.


15. Fawa'id al- Fu'ad, op. cit., p.11.

16. Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dehlawi, Akhbar al-Akhyar, Delhi, 1914 A.D., p.27.

17. Siyar al-Auliya, p.69.

18. Fuwa'id al-Fuad, p. 221.


30. Mohammad Jamal Qawam, Qiwam al-Aqaid, reproduced in Qande Farsi, No. 7, ed. Nisar Ahmed Forooqui, Cultural House of Iran, Delhi, May 1994, pp. 74-75

31. Ibid, p.73

32. Ibid , p. 73

33. Ibid, p.73.

34. Ibid, p.73.

35. Ibid p.73.


37. Qiwam al-Aqaid as reproduced in Qande Farsi, No. 7, op. cit., p. 73.


41. Ibid, p.75.

42. Ibid, p.75.

43. Ibid, pp.76-77.

44. Siyar al – Auliya, p.151.

45. K.A. Nizami, Satte and Culture in Medieval India, New Delhi, 1985, p.201.


47. Zia-al-Din, Barani, Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, p.396


57. Ibid, p. 283.


60. Qiwan al – Aqaid, as reproduced in Qande Farsi No. 7, May 1994, p 81.

61. Ibid p. 81.

63. Ibid p. 81.

64. Ibid, p. 81.


67. Ibid, p. 81.

68. *Akhbar al – Akhyar*, p. 94.


70. *Akhbar al – Akhyar*, p. 94; M Qasim Hindu Shah Ashrabadi (known as Firishta), *Tarikh-i Firishta. II*, p. 399.

71. *Tarikh-i Firishta II*, p.399


79. Ibid, p.77.


81. Ibid, p.256.


84. Afifi, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 78.

85. Ibid, p. 77.


87. Ibid, p. 78.

88. Ibid, p. 78.

89. Ibid, p. 78.