



Message of Peace Through Sufism

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Abstract: Baba Ghulam Shah played a significant role in spreading the teachings of Islam in and around the areas of Rajouri Kashmir. His saintly merits removed the darkness from society, which in return showed a path of peace and tranquility. Because of spiritual attainments, patriotic spirit and soft nature, he was very much popular among the people. Also proved successful socio-religious reformer, while providing justice to the oppressed people. Being the learned Sufi of the time rulers too became his devotees, but he maintained a distance from state politics. Concept of unity and equality was properly disseminated among the commoners irrespective of faith. For this purpose number of educational institutions called as Madrasas were opened. His abode at Shahdara Sharief Rajouri Kashmir became the centre of attention for the people. While propagating the message of Sufism the level of social conflicts got minimized which helped people to establish the responsible government for the overall development of society. Within a short span of time peace and prosperity engulfed the whole area.

Keywords: Education, Unity, Peace, Equality, Service, Ethical values.

INTRODUCTION

In search of truth of truths, the reality of realities of which mankind goes knocking and knocking upon a thousand doors, has been for centuries been discovered by them in the depths of their own greatness bestowed by God upon human creatures. This they have achieved by way of annihilation and extinction, through non-being and non-existence by forsaking the prescribed lines laid down by reason and tradition. However they forever concealed from the living have surely been revealed to those who found the way to escape from the world of appearances into the realm of real discovery i.e. Allah (God). After the actual realization they became free from all problems related to life, whether emotional or mental etc. They came to know all there is to know, just God himself knows everything. The essential knowledge of certainty and truth of certainty that comes with annihilation and permanent non-being. Following the path man will obviously become aware of the mysterious connection between man and God. After getting deeply absorbed into the relation of reality the reformers (Sufis) migrated to different corners of the world to propagate the message of peace among common people irrespective of religion. Mention may be made of a noted Sufi scholar and reformer namely Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah. He migrated Rajouri Shahdara Sharief Kashmir to benefit the people through the laws of Islamic Shariah. Shariah for him was an instrument of social change and mysticism is the way and basis of all knowledge be it science, art, philosophy, religion and literature. So it is very much beneficial for everyone to follow the Sufi path.

Syed Ghulam Ali Shah popularly known as Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah was born in, 1733 A.D. at village Syed Kasran, Tehsil Chakwal district Rawalpindi Pakistan. Initially he was educated by his father Syed Peer Mohammad Idrees Shah. The ancestral profession of family was teaching and preaching. Right from the early days of childhood some distinguishing changes were marked by his father in the behaviour of Baba Ghulam Shah. Worried about his actions, Baba Ghulam Shah was presented before a pious and popular Sufi Saint Imam Barry Pak in, 1738 A.D. On having a spiritual look Imam Barry asked Baba's father to go and take care of your son, in near future he will become a great Sufi of his time. And also I am observing that he will not live in and the

areas of Rawalpindi, but will stay in the mountains of Rajouri Kashmir. In the mountains he will change the Sein Dara (place of lions) into Shahdara Sharief as his final resting place. As Baba Ghulam Shah was already guided by the founder of Qadriya Sufi Silsila Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani(d.1166.A.D)through dreams about the same place and has been assigned the kingdom to patronize the people with his spirituality. Under the spiritual care of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani Baba Ghulam Shah started his journey at the age of ten years only in,1743.A.D.The prescribed distance was covered by him in 22 years from,1743 to 1765.A.D.at the age of 32 years. When Baba Ghulam Shah reached the place of Shahdara Sharief Rajouri, one lion appeared there. Baba was aware about the place, he let goat free as instructed by Murshid namely Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. Lion and goat both had seven rounds of the place and thereafter all of a sudden slipped away. Baba Ghulam Shah BadShah dug the place for five days and finally he saw the fire as he knows all. Baba instructed his followers to cut down trees of the forest to start a free lungar for the people.

People were always reminded that it is obligatory on everyone among mankind to struggle towards the goal for which he has been created. Since there are innumerable ways leading towards Allah. The ways guiding towards Allah are equivalent to the breath of whole creation.And among them the nearest path is the Tariqa under the guidance of a perfect Sufi master. Tariqa for him was the way to clean the animal soul called as Nafs enmeshed in evil and thereby the source for understanding the Haqiqat. The annihilation of one's self in the Haqiqat meant effacement of every kind of thought other than Allah. Allah indeed revealed himself only through a perception of the significance of Haqiqat in human heart. Nearness to Allah (God) was and is possible only through the observance of the rules of Haqiqat. Praying to Allah(God) with heart absorbed in thoughts other than Allah, in Babas view is clear violation of the Quranic injunction . For Baba cleanings of the heart and concentration in prayer were within the reach of righteous alone. Baba while returning gifts would remark that the giver had taken him for a Beggar(forced labour). In actual practice and fact he was rich with Allah. So deep rooted was his trust in Allah that he used to throw water out in the evening to ensure that nothing remained for the next day. So averse was he to publicity he urged upon followers not to wear such traditional Sufi dress as to distinguish themselves from others. Cleanliness and tidiness among the people was always emphasized. At the same time it also shows great deal of importance attached to the cultivation of inward piety in maintaining a balance of reverence to Allah.

His deep understanding of Zikr-i-Illahi, Taqwa and Tuba for attaining Marifah was really remarkable . Quranic references were quoted through which seekers can reach Allah. According to him those who don't live in the presence of Allah and consider themselves distant from him are guilty of following a course contrary to his injunctions. Saliks were advised to dwell in the unbounded light of Allah on this planet within the bonds of Shariah. Really Allah's light brings him closer to the view of seeing that light in the world. In the ultimate analysis Baba urges a Salik as custodian of Allah's light and every spiritual endeavour should remain in the hope of attaining the great ocean and light of Allah. Such an effort is necessary for rejecting polytheism (Shirk) within the field of Islamic Shariah. Baba always used to remind people about the world's referred to in Sufism and they are four in number, Nasut, Malkut, Jabrut and Lahut. The first is the world of humanity (alam-i-nasut),second refers to that of angels (alam-i-malkut), the third refers that of majesty of power (Jabrut) and the last world of God head (nasut). The only union one can think of between creator and creature can be best described within the framework of Islamic Shariah. In this sense Nasut, Malkut, Jabrut and Lahut merely represent the mystic idea of four spheres of existence. Even the renowned Sufis who have attained the understanding of Lahut have never claimed the divinity for themselves.

In every gathering the cause of oppressed and exploited sections of society was given the immense significance, but also as a protest against the tyrannies of an inequitable social order. Being a man of wisdom and goodness belonged to the category of Sufis who earned their means of living through hard efforts. Number of fruit bearing trees were planted by him for the comfort of poor people.As the same is testified by an evergreen fruit tree planted by him in the premises of Ziarat of Shahdara Sharief. The mission of Baba Ghulam Shah was the welfare

of people. Whatever gifts and Nazrana was offered to him were immediately spent for public good. To live for the welfare of poor was a virtue and a key to the realization of ultimate truth. According to him a moment of realization of the purpose of creation was better than a thousand years of worship. One who really knew the truth was superior to lakhs of such Zahids as merely resorted to extreme asceticism subsistence on wild herbs. Baba linked such ascetics to cows and donkeys. Similarly in his estimation men who only lived to eat rich food belonged to the category of animals like leopard and wolves. Here he actually reflects his attitude towards wealthy people whom he thought are unmindful of the miseries of poor people. Recognition of God was beyond the reach of exploiters. Nor was the cognition of God a saleable commodity for the rich to be purchased from the market. His purpose was to provide guidance to people and reveal them the kind of beauty and truth the God has bestowed upon Prophets and Sahabas. Always insisted people to earn an honest living by the sweat of their brow. Hard labour in agriculture combined with a concern for the poor and needy was in his opinion the prime virtue of a true lover of God. It was on his various sermons that he emphasized the significance of combining asceticism with social actions. Immense respect and popularity was enjoyed by Baba in the locality of Rajouri Kashmir, not only because of spirituality and social role, but also as a result of the events connected with his migration from Syed Kasran village Rawalpindi Pakistan to Shahdara Sharief Rajouri Kashmir. Scholars have rightly observed that Baba was perhaps the only Sufi of Rajouri to employ good favours with the court of rulers for truly constructive social ends. He was having sound hold over esoteric learning. The deep knowledge of esoteric sciences enabled him to argue his view point on the significance of Bai,at in Sufism with considerable force. Baba exercised appreciable influence on the non Muslim population of 18th and 19th century. Under his influence several renounced their ancestral religion and embraced new faith of Islam.

He was also known as BadShah because of learning, notwithstanding his recourse to ascetic exercises, self mortification and meditation during his life time in and around the areas of Shahdara Sharief. Teaching was imparted by him in the seminary (Madrassa). With the passage of time Khanqah was added which attracted all the people including rulers, nobles and ladies of the royal harem as devotees like, Rani Bansi Mahlee wife of Karram-ullah Khan, 1764-1808.A.D.ruler of Rajouri Kashmir.Later on Karram-ullah Khan granted him the jagir of, 25000 Kanals of land with the permission of Maharaja Rangit Singh(d.1839. A. D).The land was tax free. The land remained under the custodianship of Shahdara Sharief upto,1948-50.A.D. When Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir introduced land reforms act commonly known as Khatima Chakdari Nizam (Abolition of jagirdari system). Because of new land policy out of 25000 Kanals of land only 182 Kanals of crop producing and 2000 Kanals of fellow land remained with the Ziarat of Shahdara Sharief at Rajouri Kashmir.

Considering the fact that Baba combined in himself all the qualities of a reformer and spiritual guide. Significant spiritual and historical role was played by him in shaping the development of human society in a creative direction. As a true servant of Allah and follower of Prophet Mohammad he took upon the task of checking the illegalities in society. Being a reformer all the social evils were eradicated within a short period of time. Not only purity of Islamic Shariah was restored in its purest form, but also the differences among the different sections were resolved permanently. A new concept of development and unity emerged in society. While considering Shariah and Sufism as means of Peace, people were deeply influenced and attracted. The great socio-religious reformer departed in the year,1806.A.D,and is entombed at present Shahdara Sharief Rajouri Kashmir.

The annual Urs of Baba Ghulam Shah BadShah is celebrated on Muharram 9th and 10th of Islamic calendar. Significantly a good number of people from various faiths of society continue to visit the Ziarat Sharief throughout the year and stay for a night or more in the buildings constructed in the premises of the Ziarat for pilgrims. According to reports from the Ziarat of Baba Ghulam Shah BadShah that more than 2500 people visit the place daily for seeking blessings from the Sufi Saint. But according to local author Dr Bashir Ahmed Magray more than four to five thousand visitors show their presence at the Ziarat of Shahdara Sharief Rajouri daily. The income of a day may be roughly more than one lakh of rupees.

SUGGESTION

If a portion of offerings is utilized for, connectivity, health and educational facilities, the position of not only Rajouri but of the peripheral areas will be entirely different within a calculated time. No doubt Baba Ghulam Shah BudShah University has been established, but a lone institution cannot suffice the needs of people. The people have to walk towards other areas for higher education. Majority of the population is not economically sound keeping in view their miserable condition efforts should be taken to utilize the money for the overall development of society. As education is the gateway towards the progress, the only way to compete with the rest of world. The need of the hour is to channelize the resources for a constructive positive change.

CONCLUSION

The impact of his teaching was so profound and far reaching that even today the people of Rajouri and of other areas bear its impress. Diet, dress morals, customs, art and literature were affected by his influence. New values were assimilated by the people but the ones were not eliminated. The result was the emergence of a new society which though differing from the old was rooted in the Rajouri Kashmir. This is evident from a study of the language, literature, religious beliefs and social life of the people. Teachings of equality were communicated among commoners successfully. His reformatory activities changed the whole society and influenced its vicinities too. His patriotic spirit and peace loving nature brought peace and justice to the oppressed people. His Sainly and scholarly merit removed the darkness by imparting education to all people through a large number of educational institutions established for the purpose.

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