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The Study of Sufism and Sufi Saints of Medieval Bihar

*¹ Dr. Tahir Hussain Ansari

^{*1} Associate Professor, CAS, Department of History, A.M.U. Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India.

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Abstract

In this paper I have made an attempt to understand the origin of Sufism and its spread from West Asia to India and especially in Bihar and its principles and teachings which played a very significant role in creating harmony among the people and the development of liberal society in Bihar. It is fact that Islam and Sufism in the beginning were not welcomed in India easily but slowly this new religion began to have its impact on the Indian people specially the non-Muslims and the latter began to accept it. This research paper describes about the different Sufi saints who entered in the different localities of Bihar and their teachings and presentation of Islam in simple and sophisticated way to the people of Bihar. The Sufi saints welcomed the people specially the poor people of Bihar at their Khanqah or residential place, irrespective of their race, caste, communities, gender, etc. The Sufi saints not only taught them religious and moral teachings but also took care of them.

*Corresponding Author

Dr. Tahir Hussain Ansari

Associate Professor, CAS, Department of History, A.M.U. Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India.

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Introduction

Sufism and Bhaktism were two significant movements in India which established valuable impact in the society. It created brotherhood, tolerance to each other religious beliefs, harmony among the diverse people of India, etc. Sufism was a common appellation of all Muslims who wanted to attain the knowledge of, get nearer to, and find union with God, through certain spiritual experiences and devotional exercises and not by mere observance of empty rituals and outward formalities. The aim of the Sufi is to realise the one reality diffused over the whole universe. He considers human life as a journey (safar) and himself as a traveller (salik), a seeker of God. The Sufi has to go a long course of austere and exacting disciplines prescribed by a spiritual preceptor, called Shaikh, Pir or Murshid to whom he must surrender himself completely.

Before discussing in details about the Sufism and the Sufi saints of Bihar it is important to understand the origin and evolution of Sufi ideas and its spread from West Asia to the different part of the World. A new kind of mysticism appeared in the Islamic world and spread it in many areas in a special form. This mystical trend is beginning to be called Sufism, a word derived from suf, "wool". From this term it appears and one can easily understand that the beginner

ascetic character of the movement, of the early Christian ascetics in the near East used to wear woollen cloaks, thus early Muslim ascetics too wore a dark, usually dark blue, woollen garb. The reason for the growth of such movement was that soon after the death of Prophet Muhammad, tension arose between the world-conquering Ummayyad rulers and pious believers, who were deeply influenced by the terrible descriptions in the Quran about the last Judgement and felt the need of incessant repentance. Hasan al-Basri (d. 728) that is quoted by most theological schools as a witness for their opinions, always emphasized the fear of Hell:

O son of Adam! You will die alone and enter the grave alone and be resurrected alone, and it is with you alone that the reckoning will take place! O son of Adam! It is you who is intended! It is you who is addressed! ^[1]

Under the influence of Hasan al Basri, the first known ascetics of the Iraqi and Syrian lands appeared, men and women who devoted themselves as far as possible to nightly vigils, who extended their fast far beyond the prescribed times, and who carefully avoided not only things prohibited or disapproved of but even those which were permitted but were, in the eyes of sensitive people, perhaps of doubtful merit.

They constantly fought against the nafs, the lower soul principle that “instigates to evil”. According to a saying of the Prophet, struggle against the nafs is “the greatest jihad”, the true “Holy War” in the service of God. Unceasing control of each and every thought and action were refined to become a science of its own, so that one’s whole life could be led in perfect ikhlas, “purity of devotion”.^[2] According to Jami, Abu Hashim Kufi, was the first to get the name ‘Sufi’ in 766. A little earlier than him, Hasan-al-Basri flourished the sufi ideas through Ali, the Prophet’s son-in-Law, that almost all the important Sufi orders trace their origin.^[3]

Ascetic movements developed in Mesopotamia and even more in Eastern Iran, in Khorasan, where it seems that it got the influence of Buddhist monastic ideals. The first noted ascetic of the East, Ibrahim ibn Adham (d. ca. 777) hailed from Balkh, in the ancient province of Bactria. Although he was the scion of Arab settlers, a central motif of the Buddha legend was transferred to him: he becomes in legends the prince who leaves home to wander into homelessness. For Ibrahim and his compatriots, one of the most important aspects of the true and strong religious life was absolute trust in God, tawakkul. The early Sufi saints refrained completely from carrying money or food while travelling and refrained also from taking any medical help and even refused food that was offered to them. For later Sufis, tawakkul remained central as an ethical attitude but was not practiced in this overstressed form. One understood that tawakkul was basically nothing but the practical aspect of tawhid: one trust in God because there is no bestower of goods but Him, and His name ar-razzaq, “the One Who nourishes,” is a promise that He will care for all the needs of His creatures.

Another important central concept of early Sufism is faqr, “poverty.” The Sufis relied on the Prophet’s saying: Faqri Fakhri, “My poverty is my pride.” Faqr in the first place requires that one renounce any worldly possessions. Such material poverty remained the Sufi ideal for a long time (even though in later centuries many of the “poor” (faqir, dervish) turned into influential landlords and contrary to the early ascetic ideals, even cooperated with the ruling classes). So tawakkul and poverty were interiorized into ethical ideal of Sufism, which means to feel poor and destitute in the presence of the eternally Rich, self-sufficient God. Nothing really belongs to a human being; the wealth of this world lasts only for a few days. For this reason, some Sufis claimed that the spiritual rank of a grateful rich person able to part with all his wealth in a single moment without regret is comparable to that of a poor person who patiently suffers his poverty. The poor, however, who is grateful- even for not receiving anything- is superior to all others, for gratitude, like all other stations on the mystical path, has three stages: thanks for receiving something, thanks for not receiving it, and gratitude for the capacity of being grateful. Faqr, however, could be taken in the sense of “giving up every good,” and even more “giving up hopes and wishes for the next world.” It can become almost a coterminous of fana, “annihilation.”

Rumi pointing to the danger that one may be all too pleased with one’s own piety, with one’s devotional works, and with one’s renowned as a “saintly” person. It is better to be outwardly sinful and draw people’s anger and blame than to attract praise by a show of piety. This was at least the view of the so called Malamatiya, a group of intensely pious seekers in the tenth and eleventh centuries, whose sobriquet is derived from malama, “blame.” However, as other Sufis objected, even that attitude is far from perfect, for as long as the Sufi cares at all for people’s reaction, be it praise or blame, he has

not yet reached true insight. The goal is, first of all, rida, “contentment,” grateful acceptance of whatever comes. A story from the tenth century tells that a Sufi addressed God in his prayer:

“O Lord, are you satisfied with me that I am satisfied with thee?” He heard a voice: “You liar! If you were satisfied with Me, you would not ask whether I am satisfied with you!”

The purely ascetic way of life did not remain a goal in itself. In the middle of the eight centuries, the first signs of genuine love mysticism appear among the pious. Its first representative was a woman, Rabi’a of Basra (d. 801). Numerous are the legends that surround this great woman saint of Islam. The following one was famous enough to be taken over into medieval and modern European literature, though without mentioning Rabia’s name:

She was seen one day in the streets of Basra, carrying a bucket in one hand and a torch in the other one. Asked the meaning of her action, she replied: “I want to pour water into Hell and set fire to Paradise so that these two veils disappear and no body worships God out of fear of Hell or hope for paradise, but only for the sake of His eternal beauty.”

So, this absolute love, which does not care for Hell and its punishments nor for the pleasures of the paradisaal gardens, became central themes of mystical poetry down to this day. Most theologians understandably, refused to use the term ‘love’ for the relation between man and God. Love, they claimed is love for God’s commands, hence, absolute obedience to the Law. Yet the strong element of Love could not be pushed aside. Like Rabia, the Sufis believed that “He loves them and they love Him.” These words, although taken out of context, seem to prove the possibility of mutual love,- like every act in the world- begins in and from God.

One finds in Baghdad a psychologist, Muhasibi (d. 857), developed mystic faith that stated “Only God has the right to say ‘I’.” He thus prepared the ground for the extension of the formula of tawhid into its later form, e.g., “There is nothing existing but God.” Muhasibi’s contemporary in Egypt was Dhu’n-Nun, of Nubian descent (d. 859). He seems to be the first Sufi to rediscover nature as a witness to God’s wondrous activities, thus giving creation a certain value.

In the backdrop of origin of Sufism and Sufistic ideas it is important to look into the position of Islam and its influence in India. Islam entered into India through the Umayyad commander Muhamaad bin Quasim who conquered Sind and Multan in 712 A.D and through the Arab merchants who had settled down in the coastal region of southern India almost during 8th century. The mystic tradition of Islam gained significant ground spreading from Baghdad into Persia and Afghanistan to Kashmir through various invasions. In 901 A.D. a Turkish military leader, Subuktigin, established an Turko-Persian kingdom in the city of Ghaznah. His son, Mahmud, expanded their territories into the Indian Punjab region during 1027 A.D. The resources and riches annexed from Punjab went into the Ghazni coffers to expand further into India’s northwest areas. During the early 11th century; the Ghaznavids brought a wealth of scholars into India’s borders, establishing the first Persian-inspired Muslim culture succeeding prior Arab influences.

In 1151 A.D., another Central Asian group, called the Ghorids, overtook the lands of the Ghaznavids who did very little to monitor their lands in India. Muizuddin

Muhammad Ghorī a governor of Turkish origin initiated a major invasion of India, extending the previous Ghazni territories into Delhi and Ajmer. By 1186, northern India was indistinguishable; a combination of Baghdad's cosmopolitan culture mixed with Persian-Turkish traditions of the Ghaznah court accelerated Sufi intellectualism in India. Scholars, poets, and mystics from Central Asia and Iran became integrated within India. By 1204 A.D., the Ghorids established rule in the following regions: Benaras (Varanasi), Kanauj, Rajasthan, and Bihar, which introduced Muslim rule into the Bengal region.

An emphasis on translation of Arabic and Persian texts (Qu'ran, Hadith corpus, Sufi literature) into vernacular languages helped the momentum of Islamization in India. Particularly in rural areas, Sufis helped Islam spread generously into prior polytheistic populations. Subsequently, the general consensus among scholars remains that there was never any forced mass conversions recorded during this early history time period. Between the late 12th century and 13th century, Sufi brotherhoods became firmly consolidated in northern India and a number of popular Sufi saints like Nizamuddin Auliya, Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, Nasiruddin Chirag Dehlavi, Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, etc., settled down in Delhi and Northern India. Apart from them a number of other Sufi saints who were disciples or relatives of above-mentioned Sufi saints moved towards different direction of India and settled down in different provinces of India. So, the Sufi saints continued to spread the teaching the principles of Islam and settled down in the different regions, locality, towns, qasbas, etc. throughout Sultanate and Mughal period. The simple teachings of Islam attracted the local non-Muslims population of India. It appears that the people's social condition, rigidity of the caste system, poverty, suffering, ignorance and illiteracy attracted the lower strata of the Indian people towards the Sufism and Islam in India.

The Sufis of Bihar like Sufis of elsewhere were different from Mullas and unlike dry theologians or the clergy; they clung not the letter but went to the spirit of the faith. They preferred a mystic and spiritual interpretation of the Quranic law and practice of it in proper way. They considered to pay service to the God's creatures and fulfilment of their duties and responsibilities towards their fellow beings as essential for their discipline. They put aside their own desires to render themselves agreeable to all, irrespective of caste and creed, and they were free from all complexes and shackles of colour and race. They believed in gentle persuasion and good character and devotion rather than dialectics and argumentation to win others over to their side. It is the Sufis, not the Mullas, who proved to be the best and the most successful missionaries of Islam. They believed that a 'Kafir', (non-believer) unlike a 'Mushrik' could be a 'Muwahhid' (unitarian) and they quoted Ain-ul-Quzzat who said that all religions or at least a majority of them, were in essence the same. But as Muslims they were quite true to the principles of Islam. [4]

North Bihar had been the important seat of Shuttari Sufi saints since very early days. We find Humayun making a grant to such a saint, which suggests that his control over it was real. Mir Qutubuddin, Shaikh Abdul Hai Chisti, Makhdum Shahi Sultan of Darbhanga, Makhdum Syed Hasan of Saran and his son, Pir Damaria of Hajipur, Raja Qattal of Darbhanga, Maulana Khwaza Ali of Teghra were some of the important saints of the Middle Ages in Tirhut. [5]

The author of the Maadaan-ul-Asrar refers to and names himself "as this mean slave of God, Mohammad Qazin bin

Ola Bin Alam Tirhuti Maneri." Ismail [6] was deputed to preach the Islamic faith in Tirhut and the southern portion of Muzzaffarpur was the special field of his activity. We are told by Mulla Naseer (Maqabir-i-Aulia-Bihar) that Humayun had bestowed a considerable property in Tirhut on saint Abul Fatah Hadiatullah Sarmast, who lied buried at Tankol near Hajipur, for the expenses of way farers etc., which was confiscated from his son Rukn Alam by Sher Shah. [7]

According to the Bayaz of Mulla Taqia of Akbar's time and Futuh-at-i-Asfia, written in 1660 only a few extracts relating to Tirhut, were copied out by the late Maulavi Ilyas of Darbhanga before the rare manuscript was destroyed in the great earthquake of 1934, Ismail lived upto the time of Alauddin Khalji and fought thrice with the Raja of Tirhut and was eventually victorious. Perhaps Mulla Taqia really meant Ali Mardan Khalji who is said to have murdered Bakhtiyar after the latter's return from his unsuccessful expedition to north of Assam and succeeded him for a time. Seventh in direct descent from Ismail was the celebrated 15th century saint of Bania Basarh near Vaishali, named Shaikh Muhammad Faizullah Qazin bin Ola Shuttari (d. 1495), the greatest disciple of Shaikh Abdullah Shutari of Mandu, the pioneer of the Shutari order in India. The saint of Mandu was fifth in direct line from Shaikh-us-Shayukh Shihabuddin Suharawardi. [8]

Qazin bin Ola was the progenitor of a long line of saints of the Shuttari order. Of the three sons of Shaikh Qazin, Makhdum Owais Shahid, according to the Nasab-i-Nama-i-Maner, died at the hands of a Chero chief attempting to build a mosque at Bania Basarh where he is buried. The tomb of Shaikh Abdul Rahman the second son, is situated in Mahallah Thrayaganj of Muzaffarpur town, and Abul Fath Hidayatullah Sarmast, the third son worked and died at Tankol on the bank of Gandak at Hajipur. The Tankol saint born in 1477 A.D. and death in 1539 A.D. was observing his 'Tai' (continuous) fast at the age of 14 when Sultan Husain, the exiled Sharqi king of Jaunpur, paid a visit to his revered father, and he himself received the visit and devotion of emperor Humayun when the latter was in a state of war with Sher Shah. The fame of Shaikh Qazin, the author of Madan-ul-Asrar, and of his youngest son, Abdul Fath, spread far and wide through their chief disciple, Shaikh Zahur Haji Hamid Huzur (birth 1431) of Ratansarai in Saran now in Gopalganj district of Bihar state. He was the spiritual guide of the two famous brothers, Shaikh Phool (murdered by Prince Hindal) and the renowned Muhammad Ghaus of Gwalior who died in 970 Hijri and has been mentioned by Babur and Abul Fazl etc. [9]

The last was the Murshid of the scholarly and saintly Shaikh Wajihuddin Gujarati of Ahmadabad. Thus, the influence of Shaikh Qazin Ola travelled beyond Bihar in UP., Gujarat, M.P. and also to the Punjab. Among the other most notable and representative saints of the Shuttari Order of Bihar, mention may be made of Shah Ali, the son of Makhdum Owais Shahid, and the founder of Jandaha, his son, Shah Alauddin, and the latter's great grandson Ruknuddin Abdul Bari (death 1705). Syed Ali Manjhan Danishmand Rajgiri, the son-i-law of Shaikh Qazin of Bania Basarh, his son, Mir Shihabuddin (d. 1575), and the latter's famous descendants, Maulana Syed Mansur Mahdith Sufi alias Mir Syed Jiwi, the founder of the Rajgir Madarsa, and his brother's son, the celebrated Pir Syed Imamuddin, the author of many works, including Manahij-us-Shuttar finished on 1st Rajab in 1793 were other representative saints of this Order. Makhdoom Shaikh Mangan and M. Shaikh Taj who lie buried in

Maharagghat, Patna City, near mosque of Aurangzeb's time also belonged to the Shuttari order and were the disciples of H. Abdul Fath Hadit-ullah Sarmast of Tankd. ^[10]

More important than the Shuttaria were the orders of the Suharwardia and Firdausia, specially in South Bihar, the most celebrated and the earliest personalities whereof were the descendants of, or connected with, the family of Imam Taj Faqih. His eldest son, Israil, and youngest, Abdul Aziz, and the former's son, Makhdom Yahya Maneri, and the latter's two sons, Jalal Maneri and Sulaiman Langar Zamin Kakavi, were all Suharwardia saints. The father-in-law of M. Yahya Maneri and Sulaiman Kakavi, was Shihabuddin Pir Jagiot, a former Qazi of Kashghar who came to preach the faith in Bihar, settled down and died at Jethuli, on September 15 1266, in the time of Balban, and was buried at Kachchi Dargah, on the bank of the Ganges, at a short distance to the east of the old Patna City. Pir Jagiot belonged to the Suharwardia Silsila and was having his four mystic daughters, one was married to H. Yahya Maneri, the father of H. Sharfuddin and to his three other brothers and last to Musa Hamdani, the father of the celebrated Suharwardia saint of Bihar, H. Ahmad Chirmposh of Amber who died in 1373. H. Ahmad Chirmposh was the disciple of Maulana Alaaddin Chirmposh of Puraini in Bhagalpur district who was himself the disciple of Maulana Sulaiman Suharwardi of Mahsum in Bengal. Pir Jagiot's daughter who was married to Sulaiman Langar Zamin gave birth to the famous female saint Bibi Kamal, the mother of another important Suharwardi saint, H. Husain Gharib of Tajpur in Purnea. He died in October 1490. The fourth daughter was married to Syed Hamid Sufi's son of Adam Sufi and father of Taimullah Sufaidbaz who is buried at Bihar Sharif. The 'Chillakhanas' (still found in Bengal, a place for spiritual practice of penance and solitude by sufi saints), of the famous Suharwardi saint, Shaikh Jalal Tabrizi, disciple of Shihabuddin Suharwardi came to Bihar and from here went to Bengal. ^[11]

Makhdom Syed Hasan, a contemporary of Humayun and Sher Shah, after whom Hasanpura village in Siwan district is named and his sons and grandsons, Syed Ahmad of Hajipur, Syed Muhammad of Mansurganj in Patna and Syed Husain of Bhagalpur all called 'Pir Damaria' were Suharwardia saints and were linked in the chain of spiritual discipleship to Makhdom Jahanian. Maulana Taqiuddin Suharwardi was the author of Multaqat, which is an abridged version of 'Ihya-ul-ulum' of the celebrated Imam Ghazzali and he was the inspirer of many Suharwardi saints of Bihar including M. Yahya Maneri, the father of the renowned Makhdom Sharfuddin the greatest Muslim saint that Bihar produced. ^[12] The tomb of Makhdom Yahya Maneri is called Barhi Dargah at Maner, different from the mausoleum of Shaikh Bayazid, known as Shah Daulat; eight in direct descent from Imam Taj Faqih through Shah Khaliluddin, a son of Shah Yahya Maneri, and called Choti Dargah, has always been held in great respect and was visited, among others, by princes and kings including Sultan Sikandar Lodi and Babar. Khwaja Abdus Samad, the sister's son of Abul Fazl and Faizi, in his rare work, Akhbarul Asfia, writes "Shaikh Yahya bin Israil, the author of Siraj-ul-Majd, was one of the great personalities of his time. His grandfather (Imam Taj Faqih) came from the holy place of Khalil (Jerusalem) to Maner where he fixed up the standard of Islam and then went back to his home. Shaikh Yahya received spiritual inspiration (indirectly) from Shaikh Shihabuddin Suharwardi and Shaikh Najmuddin Firdausi (Kubra). Although he was a product of the Indian realm, yet in this very country he traversed the world of reality with his

bold steps and stuck to the right path laid down by his predecessors. He perfected his spiritual experiences at Maner where he found his final resting place on 11th August 1291. Although he had reached a very advanced age and his physical strength had declined, yet for fulfilling the spiritual inspiration of God's creations he continued to seek help from the sacred teachings of the holy personages of his times." The statement of this 16th century biographer of saints that Yahya Maneri met H. Sharfuddin of Panipat in 1324 and named his eldest and greatest son after him, may or may not be true, but he was certainly misinformed to say that the former was a contemporary of Muhammad Tughlaq. He has himself given the correct date of Yahya's death as A.H. 690.

Raja Man Singh was governor of Bihar from 1589 to 1594. Raja Man Singh constructed a Siva temple at Baikantpur near Fatwa in Patna district and another at Gaya. According to a sanad dated 1590, 15 bighas of land was granted to upkeep the mausoleum of Mamu-Bhanja in Jaruha (Hajipur). The mausoleum had been built with the help of Raja Shiva Singh, Brahman ruler of Tirhut, (Oinwara Dynasty) and the patron of Vidyapati (a poet of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Maithili literature). It is said that three relatives of Saiyid Hussain Khingsawar, a Sufi of the Chishti order (who was killed by the Hindus and lies buried at Taragarh Hills near Ajmer) came to Bihar. One of them, Saiyid Hasan, a direct ancestor of Diwan Saiyid Ja'far, the saint of Barh of Shahjahan's time, has a tomb ascribed to him at Neora, in Patna district, while the two others, Saiyid Ahmad and his sister's son Saiyid Muhammed, popularly called Mamu-Bhanja (Uncle-Nephew) are said to have been killed and buried at Jaruha near Hajipur. Their mausoleum had remained intact till the earthquake of 1934. The interesting part of it is that the sanad is bilingual, the text being written in Persian and kaithi Hindi. ^[13] There is the reference of one inscription of the reign of Sher Shah which has been identified and written in Persian and Sanskrit languages. ^[14] The Mausoleum of mamu-bhanja is the attraction of Hindu-Muslim communities.

Bihar has been a stronghold of the followers of the Islam and Sufism of various orders; Chisti, Suharwardi, Qadri and especially of the Firdausi and Shuttari. These Sufis orders flourished here and exercised abiding influence on a considerable section of the population. The burial grounds of the Sufi celebrities, such as Hazrat Yahya Maneri, Makhdom Shah Sharafuddin Bihari, and Shah Arzan, ^[15] have become objects of veneration for the Muslims. They still attract a large number of people both Hindus and Muslims. Makhdom Yahya Maneri popularly known as Makhdom-ul-Mulk Bihari (1263-1381) was a 13th century Sufi saint and his tomb Badi Dargah is situated at Bihar Sharif, Bihar. This shrine has remained a place of pilgrimage for a long time. Sikandar Lodi and the Mughal emperor Babur had visited the mausoleum of Yahya Maneri. His son Makhdom Sharfuddin Ahmed bin Yahya Maneri's books Maktubatesadi (hundred letters) and Maktubate-do-sadi (two hundred letters) are collection of spiritual teachings of Sharfuddin and have been written in Persian language. These letters have been translated by Paul Jackson. ^[16]

The Firdausiya Sufis of Bihar were large-hearted in their views and very liberal in their attitudes of sympathy and understanding. There are many references to their written recommendations for help to the poor and deserving people to the kings and nobles. They would not accept jobs and jagirs from the high and mighty, but would go out of their way to help the poor, and never ignored them. ^[17]

Besides the major orders of Sufism like Ba shara (with law) there were others called Be Shara (outside law) such as the Qalandariya, or a set of vagrant Darweshes who travelled about with shaven head and beard, wearing an iron-ring with a club also provided with an iron-ring at the end. There were also the Majdhub or ecstatic, attracted, distracted Faqirs who had withdrawn themselves from all relations and friends and all worldly pursuits. There were also a group of people called Malamati (blameworthy or reproached) because they had given up the prescribed duties of Islam such as prayers, fasting, etc. Among such people mention has been made of saintly Muhammad Arif whose tomb is situated at Kaiwan Shikoh, mis called as Kawwa Khoh. He was the spiritual guide of Shah Karak who lies buried in mohallah Nanmuhian. Shahibzada Singh (1794-1826), the father of Kunwar Singh of the Mutiny fame was very much devoted to Shah Karak.^[18] Another valuable collection of letters is that of Raja Ram Narayan, 'Mauzun',^[19] which contains his correspondence with his poetical guide, the renowned Shaikh Ali Hazin, who visited Patna twice at his invitation, staying once near Idgah of Saif Khan. It is replete with matters of socio-religious and cultural interest and highlights the spirit of fraternization that was exhibited by the major two communities. We are told among other things, about the care and attention shown by the Kayastha Raja of Bihar for celebrating the Majlis during the first 10 days of Muharram, in the mausoleum of Nawab Zainuddin Haibat Jung, the father of Sirajud Dawla at Begampur, under his personal supervision.^[20]

Conclusion

The Sufism and the Sufi Saints played quite significant role in creating a harmonious relation between the different communities of Bihar. They presented Islam and the teachings of Islam in a very liberal and lucid way and their attitude towards non-Muslims was not orthodox like mullas and that is why it drew the attention of the masses. The teachings and principles of Islam spread almost every nook and corner of Bihar and a large number of people attracted towards Islam and converted to this new religion. It seems that mostly the people from the lower strata of the society influenced by Islam as they were facing social and religious discrimination in Indian society and also it was great challenge for them to practice the Hindu religion which had developed as full of complex and rituals. The Sufism and the Sufi saints also got the patronage of the Sultanate and the Mughal state.

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4. Ibid., 14-15.
5. Radhakrishna Choudhary, *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut (1206-1765 A.D.)*, The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Office, Varanasi, 1970, 104.
6. His brothers were Israel and Abdul Aziz and their father was Imam Taj Faqih of Jerusalem. They were given the responsibility to work for the Islamic faith in both south and north Bihar. They were the Suharwardi Sufi saints. (S. H. Askari, *Islam and Muslims in Medieval Bihar*, 17-18).
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10. Ibid., 19.
11. Ibid., 19-20.
12. Ibid., 20.
13. *Bihar Past & Present (Souvenir)* KP. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, p. 48. Also see R. N. Prasad, *Raja Man Singh of Amber*, 1987, 216, 226.
14. Askari SH. *Islam and Muslims in Medieval Bihar*, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, 1989, 95.
15. Hazrat Shah Arzan was a Quadriya Sufi saint and his tomb is situated at Sultanganj, Patna, Bihar. He is also known as Qalandar Shah Arzani. (Jackson, Paul, *Letters from Maneri, Sufi Saint of Medieval India*, (translated from the original Persian), New Delhi, Horizon India Books, 1990.
16. Paul Jackson, *Letters from Maneri, Sufi Saint of Medieval India*, (translated from the original Persian), New Delhi, Horizon India Books, 1990.
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19. Deputy governor of Bihar around 1750s and a poet who composed a verse on the martyrdom of Husain in Karbala which has been recorded in S. Abdullah, *Adabiyat-i-farsi men hinduon ka hissa*, Delhi, 1942, 176.
20. Ibid., 385.