

From Simnan to Kichowcha

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Abstract: The most powerful wave of expansion of Islam in Indian subcontinent is indebted to the migration of scholars, mystics, and Jurists to India. Scholars believe that the contribution of Sufis in preaching Islam in India was both positive and enormous. They developed close contacts with the local people socially and culturally and preached Islam amongst them. Four Sufi orders i.e. Chishtiyeh, Sohrawardiyeh, Qaderiyeh and Naqshbandiyeh have been popular in India from early days till our times and are known more than other orders in India. The Sufis of the subcontinent are in some way or the other connected with these four schools of Sufi order. The shrines and tombs of prominent Sufis of all these orders are situated in Indian subcontinent and are centers of congregation during annual URS i.e. the date of death of the master Sufi. One of followers of Chishtiyeh is Mir Seyed Ashraf Jahangir Simnani from Simnan city of Iran. He left Iran for his destined goal in 8 century. After the long distance and passing through different cities of India, he reached to Sheikh Ala al-Haq in India. Then he went to small town called Kichowcha and their expansion of Islam and mysticism there. This article is about Seyed Ashraf Simnani's life and his influence among Indian and unknown small town called Kichowcha near Ahmedabad and Lacknow.

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1. Introduction

One of the most powerful waves of expansion of Islam in Indian subcontinent is indebted to the migration of scholars, mystics, and Jurists to India. Scholars believe that the contribution of Sufis in preaching Islam in India was both positive and enormous. They developed close contacts with the local people socially and culturally and preached Islam amongst them (Zeidi, 1356 (1977)). Admitting this fact Nehru says that before Mahmood Ghaznavi invaded India, the Muslim preachers used to come to India and were welcomed everywhere. They came to India peacefully and were successful in their Mission. Those days even if there was some unfavorable feeling towards Islam, it was weak and nominal. Mahmood though called himself Preacher of Islam, damaged Islam's reputation more than anything else in India, says Nehru (Ershad, 1365(1986)).



Fig 1: Babe Rahmat

Chishtieh is one of the most prominent schools of thought in India and this was very much instrumental in spreading Islam in that country. It was under their influence that very large number of Hindus embraced Islam. Chishtieh has lived in India for centuries as a reality and has gone beyond Indian borders.

Chishti School of mystic thought which continues to be the most prominent branch of mysticism in India is unfortunately, not so well known in Iran. As I went ahead in my studies about Chishtieh, I was attracted by the personality of Saiyid Ashraf who himself is the founder of a branch of Chistieh called Ashrafiyeh. This encouraged me to work on it.

Mir Saiyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani is an eminent and outstanding spiritual personality of the world of mysticism. His name is Mir Auhaduddin Saiyid Ashraf and his Titles are Jahangir, Ghousul Alam, Mahboobe Yazdani. It is different in his date of born. It is said, he was born in 708-712 A.H. (1309-1312) A.D. in 8th century in Simnan (Iran) (Wahid Ashraf, 1975).

Pedigree of Saiyid Ashraf are: Saiyid Ibrahim Noor Bakhshi, Saiyid Imaduddin Noor Bakhshi, Saiyid Nizamuddin Alisher, Zahiruddin Mohammad, Tajuddin Bahlol, Saiyid Mohammad Noor Bakshi, Saiyid Mehdi, Saiyid Kamaluddin, Saiyid Jamaluddin, Saiyid Hasan Sharif, Saiyid Abu Mohammad, Saiyid Abul Moosa Ali, Saiyid Ismail Sani, Saiyid Abul Hasan Mohammad, eyed Ismail Arij, Hazrat Jafar Sadique (AS), Imam

Mohammad Baquar (AS), Imam Zainul Abedin (AS), Imam Hossain (AS), Hazrat Ali (AS) (Wahid Ashraf, 1975).



Fig 2: Astana of Hazrat Sultan Saiyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani



Fig 3: Neer Water



Fig 4: Pilgrims around Neer Lake



Fig 5: Grave of Mir Ashraf Simnani

Saiyid Ibrahim Noor Bakhshi was the father of Saiyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani. He was the king of Simnan and governed the city for approximately 20 years. He was not only a king, but a proficient scholar of theology, and inwardly inclined to mysticism (Tasawwuf). He respected Islamic savants and patronized Islamic institutions. He often met mystics (Sufia) of his time and gained mystical knowledge. He got constructed a Khanqah (an abode for holy men) of Shaikh Hasan Sakkak and shrine of Imame Azam. He was deeply fond of studying books particularly *Tarikhe Tibri* was in his regular study. Nezame Yamani in *Lataefe Ashrafi* has mentioned that Simnani used to say that twelve thousand Islamic institutions were functioning in his father's regime.

Bibi Khadija Begam was the mother of Saiyid Ashraf Simnani. She belonged to the dynasty of Khwaja Ahmed Yeswi who was a distinguished Sufi (Mystic) of his time and founder of Yeswaisia order. She was brought up in a neat and pure religious surroundings as result of which she was deeply religious minded, pious and godly. She passed most of his time in prayer and recitation of the holy Quran. She often observed fasting in day and woke up at night to be engrossed in prayer. She was very punctual to Tahajjud (Prayer said after midnight) In short; Khadija Begam was the trustworthly of spiritual trusts of her ancestors.

Prophecy of Birth: His father, Sultan Ibrahim married with Bibi Khadija Begam at the age of twenty five years. He had only two or three daughters and no son, after the birth of daughters, there was any issue up to eight years. He was grieved at heart. It is narrated that one night Prophet of Allah Mohammad Mustafa (PBHU) came in his dream and predicted that a waliullah (Friend of Allah) was to be born in his house; His name will be Saiyid Ashraf. After of times they had one son.

Education: Saiyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani started education at the age of 4 years. His father got performed the tradition of Bismillah Khwani (Beginning reading with the name of Allah) by a

highly learned Sufi of his time named Imaduddin Tabrizi. It is said that Saiyid Ashraf was very intelligent beyond description.

By the age of 7 he had already acquired and memorized the entire Qur'an al-kareem by heart with seven types of Qiraat. After completing it, he got himself engaged in the education of different branches of theology like Tafseer (Commentary) Hadith (Narration of Sayings of the holy prophet) Fiqah (Islamic jurisprudence) and other allied subjects.

He Perfected in Religious and Worldly Education in 722 A.H. /1322A.D. at the age of 14. His name and fame as a proficient Islamic Scholar reached in the Madrasas of Iraque. Amongst his notable teachers were His Eminence Mawlana Imad al-Din Tabrezi, Imam Abd'ullah Yafai at Makkah Mukarramah, Baba Mufarah (the great Najm 'al-Din Kubra) at Iskandaria and Mawlana Ahmad Haqqani. Ashraf had overwhelmed even the great scholars and theologians from as far as Baghdad with his remarkable talent which was recognized in the historic and famous Persian book Lata'if-e-Ashrafiya.

Accession to the throne: Saiyid Ashraf was only 15 years old when his dear father passed away. It was not long after that he was crowned the sixth sultan of Simnan. He ruled over Simnan for 12 years. During his reign he appointed men of knowledge and wisdom as his counselors, so they would rule the kingdom with total honor, dignity, and grace in serving his people.

Journey towards India: He left for his destined goal with twelve thousand soldiers. They accompanied him up to three stages; but he asked them to return to the country. From there he started Journey only with a servant to some distance and he was also asked to return to Simnan after accompanying him for some days. From there he marched towards his cherished place leaving behind even the animal on which he was riding. It is also a historical fact that a renowned Sufi; Alauddola Simnani, accompanied him up to some stages.

Journey to Bokhara, Uch, Multan, Lahore, Delhi, Bihar, Malda, Pandawa: When he arrived in India, Feeroz Shah Tughlaque was ruling over India. In search of his spiritual guide (Morshed), Ashraf was totally engrossed and absorbed in the love of his Creator since this was a pilgrimage ordained. Along the travels he was to visit and meet some of the most illustrious and spiritual personalities in Islamic history.

Passing through Bokhara, he arrived at Uch Sharif, Multan, Where he met Jahan Ghasht Jalal uddin Bukhari who welcomed him and endowed with spiritual bounties and blessings. He bid him farewell and said, "Congratulation on this journey; Shaikh

Alaul Haque Waddin is anxiously waiting for your arrival; don't be late in the way.

After staying for some days and nights, he left for Pandawa Sharif and arrived at the shrine of Data Ganj bakhsh Lahouri at Lahour where he also availed spiritual guidance. From there he reached Delhi where he attended at the Shrines of Qutbuddin Bakhteyar Kaki and Nizamuddin Mahboobe Ilahi and obtained spiritual blessing and benediction.

The spiritual attraction of Ala al-Haq Wadeen was so great that he didn't stay at any particular place for too long, rather striving to journey on towards his destined goal. This journey took him through large rivers, mountains, and deserts, encountering many difficulties on the way. When he arrived at Bihar, Sharfuddin Yahya Muneri (his title was Sharaf-e-Jahan).

Had passed away the same day. Before his death, he willed that his funeral prayer would be performed by a Saiyid who was Hasani and Hossayni - noble on sides (that is -najibut tarfain), a Hafiz with seven Qirats, and a deserter of throne who would be coming westwards. Ashraf Simnani had known this beforehand by revelation (Kashf). The funeral prayer was offered according to the will of this departed saint by Shaikh Mir Ashraf Jahangir Simnani.

From Bihar, Ashraf Simnani, left for Bengal and arrived at Malda where his Morshed was anxiously waiting for him. It was here that he had started his spiritual journey towards his destination of fulfilment.

When he was nearing Pandawa, suddenly Alaul Haq woke up and said "Saiyid Ashraf Simnani is coming: let us go and greet him". Ala al-Haq Wadeen went out with large number of his followers to receive Ashraf, which was surprising to the locals as they had never met him. This shows the extraordinary spiritual status of Saiyid Ashraf in the eyes of Ala al-Haq Wadeen. No sooner did Ashraf see his Shaikh then he placed his head on his Shaikh's feet and tears rolled down his eyes. This was a spiritually emotional time for Saiyid Ashraf and was the reason for him leaving Simnan.

After the fulfillment of the usual rituals Shaikh Ala al-Haq Wadeen made him his disciple in the Chishtiya and Nizamiya order and gave him permission of orders. This led to extreme joy for Saiyid Ashraf as this was what he had Longley cherished.

He remained in the service of his morshed (teacher) and got all benefits from him. He stayed there from 735 To 741 A.H. 1334 – 1340 A.D.

Departure from Pandawa: After years in the company of his Shaikh, during which he was attributed with the honor of all secrets of akhlaq and ihsaan, Shaikh Ala al-Haq Wadeen said; 'O' Ashraf,

I have completed all haqiqah-al-marif (realities and knowledge) on you: I would like to set a place for you where you have to light the candle of rectitude and reformation." Tears filled Saiyid Ashraf's eyes at the thought of being separated from his Shaikh but he knew he had to leave Pandawa for his destined and final place - Kichowcha. It was explained that this was to his permanent place of reformation and eternal abode.

Ashraf Simnani left for Kichowcha passing through different areas of Bihar, Zafarabad, and Jaunpur. He stayed at Jaunpur for a few days where Sultan Ibrahim Shah Sharghi and Qazi Shahab al-Din Daulatabadi were amazed to see his sublime spiritual dignity and purity of character. This personality left a lasting impression on them as he went onto Kichowcha. Kichowcha is at the distance of 29 Kilometer from Akbarpur. Akbarpur is 55 kilometers from Faizabad near Lucknow in India. There is shrine of Saiyid Ashraf in this area.

In direction of my research on Mir Ashraf Jahangir Simnani, I had a trip to Kichowcha (his residing place) that my observation has come in following. One can easily go to Kichowcha from Akbarpur by various means of transportation.

Kichowcha is a small town with narrow roads and alleys, and residential areas located mostly around Dargah itself. But daily many pilgrims and a lot of eager people and patients endure the voyage to it, hoping to meet their requests in The Dargah of Mir Saiyid Ashraf Semnani. Then they can be seen to sit in front of a gate named Bab e Rahmat. Where victims of evil spirits and demons sit on Scheduled time of Court it presents a very amazing scene as someone is crying. Someone is weeping and someone is beating chest.

He, who visits the shrine of Ashraf Simnani first time, wonders to see the scene of Court just like a worldly king. There is scheduled time of Court viz in the morning upto 7oclock up to 10 a.m. and in the evening after ASR's prayer till Maghrib. Victims of asaib & jinn (demons & evil spirits) and persons suffering from incurable diseases, attend the adalat observing principles laid down for this. It does not matter to sit and go away after the scheduled time; what matters is to attend the Court carefully with devotion and humbleness abiding by directions given by khadims and other learned persons.

One should sit there silently reading rubai (couplet) of Simnani and looking at tomb of Ashraf Jahangir Simnani seeking his kindness and mercy on deplorable conditions. The victims should drink the water of Neer regularly with belief (aqeda). The sehan (courtyard) of the shrine is not as spacious as to accomodate all the victims of asaib & jinn (demons & evil spirits). Hence, people sit in

every side of the Neer at the time of court. The more one is sincere and firm in belief, the more he benefits from the Dargah of Simnani. There is no need of despair and suspicions in this court of Simnani but one should have firm faith in the kindness and benedictions otherwise could be deprived of faiz-o-barkat (benedictions & bounties).

It is interesting and amazing to say that he got his grave constructed in his life time. He Made and Constructed His Dargah (Shrine) In 793 A.H./1391A.D. He laid the foundation stone of his grave and placed in its foundation stone from Mecca brought by Ruknuddin Sair within minutes. He asked to make grave with brick and it should be as wide and high that he could say prayer standing Jamshed Qualandar was engaged in its construction for twelve years. Noorul Ain, Shaikh Mohammad Durre yatim and Shaikh Marauf Addwmwi also participated. He used to visit grave daily. In his last time he passed whole day and night in the grave and wrote Resalae Quabria and Basharatul Moridin. He also predicted that he who would come to his grave, he would get his desire. Saiyid Ashraf Simnani's Chellgah is placed in Kichowcha, beside of a stream, where people wash themselves in it, because of this idea that this water is holy and can make them released from pain, illness and disease. Chellegah is a small room in a greenish yard and surroundings where people pray for the fulfillment of their needs.

There are Mosque, Library, and Jame Ashraf near dargah Ashraf Simnani Mosque. The foundation stone of the mosque was laid by Saiyid Mokhtar Ashraf Sajjadah Nashin in 1982 and he made all efforts to complete it soon. As a result of his untiring endeavour, the construction of this Masjid completed very soon. Shaikh has designed it in such an exquisite manner that one enjoys the manifestation of Masjid Nabwi and Gumbade khizra (Green dome) at khanqah Ashrafia because Minaret and domes of this mosque resemble of Minaret and dome of Madina Monawwarah. In the southern and northern side of verandah of this mosque the model of Harame Mecca and Harame Madina has been placed to see so everyone is lost in the world of Mecca and Madina.

This mosque has the capacity of nearly one thousand people to pray at a time. May Allah bless the designer and maker of this mosque and grant him long life.

Jame Ashraf was established in 1978 at khanqahe Ashrafia Hasania Kichowcha Sharif, Ambedkarnagar U.P. It has been named as Jamia Ashraf signifying its attachment with Saiyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani who was not only a Sufi of his time but also a great learned man having full competence and proficiency in every branch of theology. It has been established just near the shrine of Simnani and

very close to Khanqah Ashrafia Hasania Sarkar-e-Kalan Kichowcha Sharif.

At present the library has fourteen thousand five hundred books on different subjects and different languages which have been kept according to the modern method of library. The number of manuscripts is four hundred six in this library.

There is a small museum named Saiyid Shah Ashraf Husain who was the elder brother and Shaikh of Ala Hazrat Ashrafi Mian in the library in which the clothes and equipments used by Sajjadah Nashins are kept and exhibited. Saiyid Izhar Ashraf built Maulana Ahmad Ashraf Hall. He thought that no Madrasa can be deemed well developed having all modern facilities if it does not have a spacious hall where different types of educational functions take place. Hall is used for ceremonies and special programs.

Noor Al Ain Park in the center of Masjid, Madrasa and Khanqah. It looks very attractive and beautiful. It is related to Saiyid Abdur Razzaque NoorulAin. There is an exquisite fountain in the center of 10/10 reservoir surrounded by grassy roads beside which flowers are blooming. People perform ablution in the reservoir of this park.

During the period of Ashrafi Mian and Maulana Saiyid Mokhtar Ashraf, Khanqah Ashrafia Hasania had earned distinguished position among the Khanqahs spread in different corners of India. Other Khanqahs were lacking many requisites essential for it. But Khanqah Ashrafia had been a fountain of knowledge (Marfat) and Tariqat (Path) and serving the purposes laid down in the doctrines of Khanqah. Though the Khanqah looked attractive where fountain of spirituality were quenching the thirst of the seeker of truth and reality. But it lacked amenities and facilities essential in this modern age. He formed all his planning and presented it before Sarkar-e-Kalan who not only approved but encouraged with good wishes. At present Sajjadah Nashin is Saiyid Mohammad Izhar Ashraf. He visits followers and people in place named Neshastgah every day.

2. Religious Services

It is an accepted fact that the mystics of Islam have rendered valuable services to the cause of Islam in every period. He lighted the candle of reformation and spirituality in the darkness of infidelity at Kichowcha and brought astray people on the right path.

It is a historical fact that Saiyid Ashraf made Kichowcha the spiritual and guidance centre at the intimation of his Shaikh Ala al-Haq Wadeen Pandawi. He built Khanqah-e-Ashrafiya taking part in the construction work with his disciples. Together

they built two Mosques as well as the tomb - a final resting place in his own private room. This wasn't an easy time for Ashraf as Hermits and other unsavoury people frequently darkened the facade of Kichowcha with their antics. But such was his spiritual presence and purity of character that he was able to light the candle of Islam. This special characteristic as a Sufi made the non-believers spellbound, and in a short period, millions of non-believers accepted Islam and came into Order of Ashrafia.



Fig 6: Chellegah



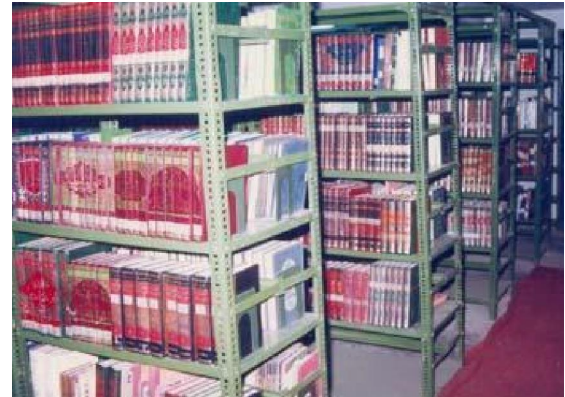
Fig 7: Lake of Chellegah



Fig 8: Mosque



Figs 9, 10: Jamia Ashraf



Figs 11, 12: Mokhtar Asraf Library



Figs 9, 10: Jamia Ashraf



Figs 13, 14: Museum



Figs 11, 12: Mokhtar Asraf Library



Figs 13, 14: Museum



Fig 15: Mukhtar Ashraf Library and Maulana Ashraf Hall



Figs 17, 18: Khanqah



Fig 16: Noorul Ain Park



Fig 19: Neshastgah



Fig 20: Sajjadah Nashin is Saiyid Mohammad IzharAshraf

It is narrated that twelve thousands non believers accepted Islam being impressed with his

purity of character and sublime of spirituality. He was not only a great mystic but also a renowned savant of Islam having unimaginable proficiency in different branches of Islamic theology. Nizame Yamani in his book, *Lataefe Ashrafi*, has written that wherever he went he delivered spiritual lectures in the dialect of that area and wrote 4 books in the same dialect and left the written books there for their benefits.

Another important contribution of Saiyid Ashraf is organization of Moharram mourning and display of its symbolic flag (Alam). This was done for the first time by him and later became customary. *Lataef-e-Ashrafi* speaks about devotion of Sufis to the martyrs of Karbala.

Saiyid Ashraf used to stay in Jamia Masjid of city of Jaunpur during first ten days of Moharram and organize mourning there. Alam used to be kept there and theologians, scholars and general people used to visit and pay respect to Alam. (Nafisi, vol. II p. 756)

Saiyid Ashraf would perform rites of mourning of tenth Moharram even during his travels. He used to perform special prayers from 8th to 10th of Moharram and used to sit under the shadow of Alam during these days. These practices became customary in the sub-continent gradually (*Lataef-e-Ashrafi*, 2,268).

In short, Ashraf's services to the cause of Islam and tasawwuf are undoubtedly of great value and a landmark in that period of history of Islam.

Ashraf Jahangir during his lifetime wrote a number of books on many different subjects which indicate that he was deeply motivated scholar, thinker, philosopher who researched and studied many different aspects of life, nature and theology. Books and booklets written by him are as follows:

- (1) Kanzul Asrar.
- (2) *Lataefe Ashrafi* (a collection of his spiritual sayings)
- (3) *Maktubate Ashrafi*
- (4) *Sharhe Sikandar Nama*
- (5) *Sirrul Asrar*
- (6) *Sharhe Awereful Marif*
- (7) *Sharhe Fosusul Hakam*
- (8) *Quawaedul Aqaaed*
- (9) *Ashraful Ansab*
- (10) *Bahrul Azkar*
- (11) *Ashraful Fawaed*
- (12) *Ashraful Ansab*
- (13) *Fawaedul Ashraf*
- (14) *Tanbihul Akhwan*
- (15) *Bashara Tuzzakerin*
- (16) *Basharatul Ikhwan*
- (17) *Musta Lehate Tasuwuf*
- (18) *Manaquibe Khulfae Rashedin*
- (19) *Hujjaluzza kerin*

- (20) *Fatwa Ashrafia*
- (21) *Tafseere Noor Bakhhia*
- (22) *Irshadul Ikhwan*
- (23) *Resala Wahdatulwajud*
- (24) *Resala Dar Tajweze tane Yazid*
- (25) *Bahrul Haquaque*
- (26) *Nahve Ashrafia*
- (27) *Kanzuddaquaque*
- (28) *Basharatul Mureedin*
- (29) *Diwan –e– Ashraf.*

The book *Lataef-e-Ashrafi* has been written by Haji Shaikh Nizamuddin Gherib Yamani who became Saiyid Ashraf's disciple in 750 A.H.1349 A.D. and lived with him for about 30 years. The book is about Saiyid Ashraf's place of prominence. Similarly Nizamuddin also published collection of letters of Saiyid Ashraf "*Maktoobat –e–Ashrafi*." The first volume was brought out in 787 A.H.1385A.D. The second volume was published by his other disciple, Abdul Razzaq-hasani Husaini in 869 A.H. 1464 A.D. (Zabet Hameed, *Fasnameh Meshkat*, issue Numbers 76, 77, *Naqsh-e-Iranian dar Tarveej-e-Azadari dar Shebhe Qare Hindustan*).

Two copies of old manuscripts of *Lataef-e-Ashrafi* and *Maktoobat-e-Ashrafi* are available in the library of Aligarh Muslim University.

As regards his poetic contribution, the author of *Tazkere-e-Rooz-e-Roshan* has quoted two lines from his poem:

خوبتر زين دگر نباشد کار
يار خندان رود بجانب يار
سیر بيند جمال جانان را

جان سپارد نگار خندان را

Meaning: These mean that there is nothing better than this that a friend goes smiling to his friend, sees his glory fully and surrenders life to him (Nafisi, vol. II p.75).

Shaikh Ashraf and Shaikh NurQutbAlam of Pandawa were fellow-students. Both of them received spiritual training from Shaikh Alaul Haq, father of Shaikh Nur Qutb. Some letters written by both Shaikh Ashraf and Shaikh Nur Qutb have been discovered, and they throw important light on the ascendancy of Raja Ganesha in the politics of Bengal. During Ganesha's ascendancy Shaikh Nur Qutb Alam invited Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi of Jaunpur to invade Bengal and to free the Muslim kingdom from the clutches of Raja Ganesha. He wrote a letter to Shaikh Ashraf Jahangir, who was then living at Jaunpur, requesting him to induce the sultan of Jaunpur to invade Bengal. Shaikh Ashraf, in turn, wrote to the sultan of Jaunpur requesting him to invade Bengal.

In his letter to sultan Ibrahim Sharqi, Saiyid Ashraf wrote among other things,

"If the sons and descendants of these holy personages and particularly the son and family

members of Hazrat Qutb Alam are rescued from the clutches of the black infidels with your aid and assistance and the courage and bravery of your troops it would be an excellent thing ... I, the afflicted Darvesh of the Alai order (sufis following Shaikh Alaul Haq) congratulate you on the firm resolve that you have made and I offer my prayer for the deliverance of Bengal from the hands of the infidels. I have already recited the Fatiha (prayer seeking the assistance of God) to God to render justice. As your object and that of your nobles is to free the land of Bengal and to champion the cause of Islam, if God wills, you will achieve your aims in the best manner possible. As the firm resolve and the sound judgment of the king are directed towards helping the cause and satisfying the heart's desire of the son of Shaikh Alaul Haq you should not neglect showing favor to that dear holy personage (Shaikh Nur Qutb Alam) and you should never refrain from meeting him and Fighting for his cause."

Some later writers erroneously hold that Ashraf Simnani died in 1405 AD. However, Shaikh Ashraf's letters suggest that he lived at least upto 1415 AD which is the accepted date of the death of Shaikh NurQutb Alam. Ganesha grabbed power a little before his death (Saba, Molavi Mohammad Muzaffar Husain, 1343).

3. Death

Ashraf Jahangir Simnani left this world on 28th Muharram 808 A.H. /1405 A.D. (792A.H. /1390 A.D.), (798 A.H./1396 A.D.), (808 A.H. / 1405 A.D.), (840 A.H. /1436A.D.). Merat-ol-Asrar and Akhbar-ol-Akhyar (808), Tabaghat-e-Shahjahani (840) His age was 120. Before his death; he had got prepared his grave. He went on 26th Muharram to visit his grave where he saw pen and paper kept in the side of grave. He sat in the grave and wrote two booklets namely Basharatul Muradin and Resalai Qubria some extracts from Resalai Quabria are presented below:

In this short time (how long I stayed in the grave) seventy thousand splendor (Tajalli) of glance (jamal) of Allah descended on this Faquir ; and intimate friends (Moquarraban) of Allah (Angels) showed so much exalting (Izaz) and kindness that can't be expressed in words; the announcer from the Sublime court of Allah (Bargehe Ilahi) announced in the world of angels (Alame Malakut) That " Ashraf is my beloved (Mahboob) I (Allah) write kindness and forgiveness on the forehead of his disciples; and cares his disciples with absolution (Magferat) and forgiveness (Mafi)". All prais to Allah this glad tidings for our companions. After that it was the order of Allah, eight thousands angels Thirty thousand of Haramain sharifain, one thousand from baitul Moquaddes, one thousand Abdal of Maghrib (west)

one thousand Rejalul Ghaib of Sarndip and one thousand maradane Ghaib from yaman will perform your bath your funeral prayer will be said in front of baitullah Sharif and you will be buried in the earth for the benefit of slaves (Bandagan); he who comes on your grave will get his end and absolution (Maghferat).

The story about his death is widely known in India. According to this story, Mir Jahangir called all prominent personalities on 27th of Moharram and bid farewell to the group and bestowed upon Abdul Razzaq, the robe of succession and declared him his successor. After Mid-day prayer called Qauwals and arranged a gathering of devotional songs. When Qauwals recited following couplet of Saadi he went into ecstasy.

گر بدست توآمده است اجلم

قد قضا بما جرى قلم

Meaning: If it is my fate to die by your hands (I don't oppose) since it is determined by God.

This changed him, Qauwals went on repeating the line and his state of ecstasy increased beyond control, then subsided and there was a lull. The Qauwals started

خوب تر زین دگر نباشد کار

یار خندان رود بجانب یار

سیر بیند جمال جانان را

جان سپارد نگار خندان را

The lines mean that there is nothing better than a friend going smiling to the other friend, seeing his glory fully and surrendering his life to him.

Saiyid became so restless on hearing this that he rolled like a half-dead bird on the ground or like a fish outside water. Ultimately one sigh and he passed away and buried in Kichawcha.

The following Quatrain brings out his year of death.

Urs of Saiyid Ashraf Simnani takes place in the Khanqahe Ashrafia Hasania Sarkare kalan with great pomp and show. Pilgrims from different parts of India and abroad come in large number. It is from the night of 26th Moharram up to day of 29th Moharram.

4. Conclusion

Tasawwuf as suited to Indian environment grew and expanded more on Indian soil. Sufis from other countries particularly from Iran migrated to India and contributed to growth of Islam in that country.

In Indian, people in general, were attracted to Tasawwuf through Persian language and literature. In fact Islamic Tasawwuf in India can be called Iranian from all aspects.

Founders of all Sufi orders of the sub – continent were Iranians, like, Chishti, Sohrawardi, Naqshbandi, Qaderi or any other group.

Atmosphere in India was more favorable and receptive for Tasawwuf and hence it grew more here than in any other country. That is why Iranian Sufis migrated to India and settled here.

Some of Sufis migrated to India in search of Tasawwuf. One of them is Saiyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani from Iran who migrated to India in 8 century. He joined Chishtieh order by declaring allegiance to Shaikh Ala- ol- Haq. He contributed a lot in spread of Islam and Islamic mysticism in India. He founded a Sufi order known as Ashrafieh. Followers of this order are both in India and abroad.

Kichowcha is small city near Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh's state located in the northern part of India. It is where Saiyid Asraf was settled there.

An Iranian scholar raised doubt about existence of Simnani and be-fitting answer to this were given by some scholars.

Dr. Nazeer Ahmad, Ex-professor of Aligarh Muslim University tells us that in 1960 he wrote an article on this issue in an Aligarh Journal titled, Fikr-o-Nazar and discussed about two works of Simnani, one Lataef-e-Ashrafi and other Maktoubate Ashrafi. This was in Urdu language and Dr. Ali Asghar Hekmat published its Farsi translation in Adabiyat of Shiraz University publication in 1341 (1962 A.D.).

It was in 1350 that Dr. Ruknuddin Farrukh in a book on Hafiz, edited and published by Dr. Mansoor Rastgar had written an article and expressed views that the above two books were fake and fictitious and had raised doubt even about existence of Saiyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani. Dr. Nazeer Ahmad refuted it and stated that he did exist and his tomb exists in Kichawcha and his followers are spread all over. Dr. Nazeer Ahmad also said that he personally knows some members of this family. He lived and founded a Sufi order called Ashrafieh.

Dr. Nazeer Ahmad has supported his views with valid documents and has proved existence of Saiyid Ashraf Simnani.

Lataef has been used by historians as an authentic source. Even Jami, in Nafahatul Uns has used this work extensively. One can also see article by Dr. Waheed Ashraf which was carried by Ma'aref published from Azamgarh (India).

Dr. Waheed Ashraf at the end of his paper writes that with these details all doubts raised by Dr. Ruknuddin Farrukh about Simnani, and his books are

brushed aside. There remains no doubt about these works and there are very important source books about life and belief of Hafiz Shirazi. Since Semnani had met Hafiz, his views should be given credence (Nazeer Ahmad, 1371(1992)).

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