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THE REFLECTION OF SUFI INFLUENCE ON THE MUGHAL EMPIRE (1526-1857): A SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS

 Saeyd Rashed Hasan CHOWDURY^a

Abstract

This article examines the role of Mughal emperors in promoting Sufism and their contributions to the religious, social, and economic development of the Indian subcontinent during their nearly three-hundred-year reign from 1526 to 1857. The Mughal Empire, founded by Babur, a Turkic descendant from Central Asia, began in 1526 after defeating the Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, in the first Battle of Panipat. Babur laid the foundation, which was solidified during the reign of his grandson Akbar and expanded under Akbar's great-grandson Aurangzeb. Under Aurangzeb's reign, the Mughal Empire reached its most considerable territorial extent. However, by 1760, the empire's control diminished to the areas around Old Delhi, and it was formally dissolved by the British following the Indian Rebellion of 1857. During Mughal rule, Sufi philosophy enriched Indian religious thought, characterised by tolerance and inclusivity. The Mughals were patrons of art and architecture, encouraging the development of paintings, literature, textiles, and architectural styles. They contributed to Muslims' social, political, economic, and religious advancements. Several Sufis promoted Islam and socio-economic development during the Mughal era. After Panipat, Babur visited the tombs of Nizam-ud-Din Auliya and Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti, and he was a follower of Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar of the Naqshbandi tariqa. Humayun received the Shattariyya Tariqa's bay'ah from Syed Muhammad Ghaus. Imam Rabbani resisted Akbar's new religious doctrine, 'Dīn-i Ilāhī', and eradicated it during Jahangir's reign. Shah Jahan promoted Islam by building the Taj Mahal and the Jama Masjid in Delhi. Aurangzeb reformed mosques, khanqahs, and charitable institutions. Muhammad Shah supported Sufi activities. The last emperor, Bahadur Shah II, was a Sufi king and wrote several Sufi poems.

Keywords: Sufism, Indian Subcontinent, Mughal Emperors, Spread of Islam, Religious Tolerance.

^a Asst. Prof., Bartın University, saeydrashed.du1991@gmail.com



BABÜR İMPARATORLUĞU'NDA SUFİ ETKİSİNİN YANSIMASI (1526-1857): MANEVİ VE KÜLTÜREL BİR ANALİZ

Öz

Bu makale, 1526'dan 1857'ye kadar yaklaşık üç yüz yıl süren hükümdarlıkları sırasında Babür İmparatorları'nın tasavvufu teşvik etmedeki rollerini ve Hint alt kıtasının dini, sosyal ve ekonomik gelişimine katkılarını incelemektedir. Orta Asya'dan gelen bir Türk torunu olan Zahir-ud-Din Muhammed Babür tarafından kurulan Babür İmparatorluğu, 1526'da Delhi Sultanı İbrahim Lodi'yi birinci Panipat Savaşı'nda yenerek başlamıştır. Babür, torunu Ekber'in döneminde sağlamlaştırılan ve Ekber'in torunu Evrengzib'in döneminde genişletilen temelleri atmıştır. Evrengzib'in saltanatında Babür İmparatorluğu en geniş topraklarına ulaşmıştır. Ancak 1760'a gelindiğinde, imparatorluğun kontrolü Eski Delhi çevresindeki alanlara kadar azalmış ve 1857 Hint İsyanı sonrasında İngilizler tarafından sona erdirilmiştir. Babür yönetimi sırasında, sûfî felsefesi ve organizasyonel hüner, hoşgörü ve kapsayıcılık ile karakterize edilen Hint dinî düşüncesini zenginleştirdi. Babürler, sanat ve mimarlığın hamileri olarak resimler, edebiyat, tekstil ve mimari tarzların gelişimini teşvik etmişlerdir. Hint alt kıtasındaki Müslümanların sosyal, politik, ekonomik ve dinî ilerlemelerine katkılarda bulunmuşlardır. Birçok sûfî de İslam'ın ve sosyo-ekonomik gelişmenin teşvik edilmesinde rol oynamıştır. Babür, Nizazemüddin Evliya ve Muînüddin Çiştî'nin türbelerini ziyaret etmiş ve Khwaja Ubeydullah Ahrar'a bağlı kalmıştır. Hümayun, Şettariyye tarikatının bay'atını almıştır. İmam Rabbani, 'Din-i İlâhî'ye karşı direnmiş ve bunu Cihangir'in döneminde ortadan kaldırmıştır. Şah Cihan, Tac Mahal'i ve Cami-i Mescid'i inşa ederek İslam'ı teşvik etmiştir. Evrengzib, camileri ve hayır kurumlarını yeniden düzenlemiştir. Bahadır Şah II sûfî idi ve sûfî şiirleri yazmıştır.

[Geniş Öz, çalışmanın sonunda yer almaktadır.]

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tasavvuf, Hint Alt Kıtası, Babür İmparatorları, İslam'ın Yayılması, Dini Hoşgörü.



Introduction

Geographically and historically, the Indian subcontinent is home to some of the world's oldest settlements and has a rich cultural and religious legacy. The Mughal Empire was one of the many strong dynasties that ruled this region. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur's (d. 937/1530) establishment of the Mughal Empire in 1526 marked the beginning of an unparalleled period of wealth and creative brilliance, extending the empire's control over a

sizable portion of present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. The Mughal rulers were renowned patrons of the arts, commissioning some of the world's most iconic structures, including the Taj Mahal, Delhi's Jama Masjid, and the Red Fort, which symbolised the military prowess and architectural expertise of the Mughal era. Under their rule, the empire became a melting pot of diverse cultures, religions, and traditions, influencing the social fabric of the Indian subcontinent to this day. Their administrative understanding, religious tolerance, significant contributions to the spread of Islam, efficient revenue collection system, and promotion of trade and commerce significantly contributed to the empire's economic stability, making it one of the wealthiest empires of its time. Policies of generosity and inclusivity largely influenced the Mughal rulers.¹ Liberal ideas were prominently expressed under the reigns of Emperors Akbar and Jahangir, especially in their attempts to promote a synthesis between Islam and other religions. Conversely, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, devout Sunni Muslims, made considerable efforts to maintain the distinctiveness of Islam.

When Babur founded the Mughal Empire, followers of Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar (d.1490) and their Naqshbandi Tariqa began to settle permanently in India and propagate the Naqshbandi Tariqa. However, Humayun was not particularly drawn to this ideology. Early in Akbar's reign, Sufi Mirza Sharafuddin Hussein permanently promoted the Naqshbandi Tariqa in India, and Akbar appointed him governor of Ajmer with a contingent of 5,000 soldiers.² The number of Naqshbandis increased during Akbar's reign. During this period, Khwaja Abd Shahid resided in Punjab with Akbar's support, and later, his disciple Khwaja Dast's son, Sultan Khwaja Naqshbandi, was appointed by Akbar as Amir, with the authority to oversee the Hajj pilgrims. Sultan Khwaja Naqshbandi backed Akbar's Sulh-i-Kul (world peace) strategy. Akbar married his son, Prince Daniyal Mirza, to Sultan Khwaja Naqshbandi's daughter. Subsequently, in 1612, Emperor Jahangir married his niece Bulaki Begum, daughter of Prince Daniyal Mirza, to Mirza Wali, son of Khwaja Hasan Naqshbandi. The influence of the Naqshbandi Tariqa grew in the first period of Akbar's reign; however, towards the end of his reign, when Akbar attempted to establish a new religion called *Dīn-i Ilāhī*, prominent Naqshbandi Sufis like Khwaja Baqi

¹ Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *The Mughal Empire, 1526-1803* (Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala, 1964), 2-8.

² Cengiz Demir, "Baburnâme'de Hoca Ubeydullah Ahrar," *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim (TEKE) Dergisi* 5, no. 2 (2016): 651-660.

Billah (d. 1603) and Imam Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi (d.1624), along with other foremost scholars, organised significant movements against this new religious initiative.³

Numerous pir-awliya from Anatolia, Central Asia, and Arabia travelled to the Indian subcontinent during the nearly three hundreds year rule of the Turkish Mughals (1526-1857) to propagate Islam by creating and distributing the fundamental Islamic infrastructure, mosques, madrassas, and lodges-these Sufis significantly aided in the growth of Muslim populations in the area and the establishment of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. All these Sufi activities and their contributions to the spread of Islam throughout the Indian subcontinent will become more evident because of this research. However, this study aims to investigate the reasons behind the remarkable success of Sufis during the Mughal era. The research will include the activities of prominent sects in education, society, and politics, including the Chishti Tariqa, Naqshbandi, Qadiriyya-Razzaki, and Suhrawardiyya. Shah Waliullah Dehlawi's attempts to balance Sharia and Tariqa and Imam Rabbani's reforms against the *Dīn-i Ilāhī* enforced by Mughal Emperor Akbar will also be highlighted. The research will include a detailed analysis of these individuals' crucial role in safeguarding and advancing Islam during the Mughal era.

A Methods of the Study and Literature Review

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, with a primary focus on primary sources, to investigate the contributions of Sufis during the Mughal era in the Indian subcontinent. The approach emphasizes a thorough, in-depth analysis of firsthand accounts, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of the influence of Sufism on Mughal governance and cultural identity. Key primary sources were systematically examined to ground the study's findings in historical texts, including the *Baburnama*, *Akbarnama*, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, and *Badauni's Muntaqhab al-Tawarikh*.

The *Baburnama*, an autobiographical work of Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babur, the Mughal Empire's founder, is a crucial source. Initially written in Chagatai and later translated into Persian and English, it offers valuable insights into Babur's life, his thoughts on governance, and his interactions with notable Sufi figures like Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar. Similarly, the *Akbarnama* by Abu'l-Fazl ibn Mubarak (d.1602) provides an

³ Malik Mohamed, *The Foundations of The Composite Culture in India* (UK: Routledge, 2007), 182.

essential biographical account of Emperor Akbar's reign, with its third volume, the *Ain-i-Akbari*, offering a comprehensive view of Akbar's administrative framework and engagement with Sufism.

Additionally, the *Tarikh-i-Firishta* by Muhammad Qasim Firishta (d.1620) offers a general history of India, documenting events up to Akbar's reign and providing specific insights into Sufi influence in the southern regions of the empire. Badauni's *Muntaqhab al-Tawarikh*, written by Abdul Qadir Badauni (d. 1615), offers candid critiques of Akbar's religious policies and highlights the evolving dynamics between the Mughal rulers and the Sufi Tariqas.

The literature review extends beyond primary sources, including analysing different academic works on Sufism and the Mughal Empire. While authors like Annmarie Schimmel and Muzaffar Alam have explored cultural and political aspects of the Mughals, their works such as "*The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture*"⁴ and "*The Mughals and the Sufis: Islam and Political Imagination in India, 1500-1750*"⁵ often lack a focused study on Sufism's spiritual influence. While comprehensive on cultural achievements, Schimmel's work does not delve deeply into Sufi practices. Likewise, Alam and other scholars, such as Nile Green and Raziuddin Aquil, provide valuable insights into the socio-political contexts of the Mughals in their works "*Indian Sufism Since the Seventeenth Century: Saints, Books and Empires in the Muslim Deccan*"⁶ but offer limited discussion on the direct impact of Sufi thought on the emperors' governance.

This study addresses these gaps by integrating historical accounts and qualitative analysis of the Sufi-Mughal interaction. Through the systematic examination of multilingual sources, including texts in Persian, English, Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, and regional Indian languages, the study aims to reframe the understanding of Sufism's role in shaping the ideological and administrative landscape of Mughal India. By highlighting the theological dimensions and spiritual affiliations of the Mughal rulers with Sufism, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of their political imagination and cultural identity.

⁴ Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 352.

⁵ Muzaffar Alam, *The Mughals and the Sufis: Islam and Political Imagination in India, 1500-1750* (New York: State University of New York Press 2021), 48-94.

⁶ Nile Green, *Indian Sufism Since the Seventeenth Century: Saints, Books and Empires in the Muslim Deccan* (UK: Routledge, 2006), 46.

Therefore, this combined methodology of primary source analysis and qualitative evaluation allows for a comprehensive exploration of the influence of Sufi on the Mughal Empire, positioning this study as a significant contribution to the broader discourse on Tasawwuf and political power in South Asian history.

B. Results and Discussion

This study's exploration of Sufism during the Mughal era reveals a significant yet often underemphasised relationship between Mughal rulers and the spiritual practices of Sufi Tariqas. Our findings highlight that, despite the considerable scholarly focus on the social, political, and economic dimensions of the Mughal Empire, the spiritual and religious associations, particularly with Sufism, have been less thoroughly examined.

This study's analysis of Sufism during the Mughal era reveals the profound influence that Sufi thought and practices had on the empire's spiritual and political landscape. Despite the wealth of scholarship on the Mughal Empire's socio-political and economic achievements, our findings indicate that the spiritual engagement of Mughal rulers with Sufism has not been adequately explored. The primary sources, including the Baburnama and Akbarnama, suggest that Sufi ideology was interwoven with the governance strategies and personal philosophies of the Mughal emperors, shaping their policies towards religious tolerance, cultural integration, and statecraft.

The research highlights that Sufism played a crucial role in the Mughal emperors' vision of empire-building, where mysticism and state affairs were often intertwined. Emperors like Babur and Akbar actively engaged with Sufi doctrines, not merely as spiritual practices but as tools to promote a vision of inclusive and pluralistic governance. This integration of Sufi thought into the empire's political fabric contributed significantly to the development of Mughal culture, influencing art, literature, and architecture.

Therefore, this research positions the Mughal period as a transformative era for institutionalising Sufism in South Asia. It demonstrates that the emperors' engagement with Sufi practices was a matter of personal belief and a strategic approach to governing a diverse empire. These findings underscore Sufism's essential role in enriching the Mughal Empire's spiritual, cultural, and artistic legacy, establishing it as a key influence in shaping the historical and cultural narrative of the region.

1. Sufism during the Mughal Era: A Historical Review

The Mughal Empire on the Indian subcontinent began with Babur's

victory against Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat, which took place on April 21, 1526. The monarchs were Central Asian Turks who practised Islam. The Mughal Empire's classical era started in 1556 when Akbar ascended to the throne. During the reigns of Akbar and his son Jahangir, the Mughal Empire saw substantial economic growth.⁷ The conquerors of Central Asia, Timur and Genghis Khan, were the ancestors of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire. Taking advantage of the political unrest in the area, he laid the groundwork for the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent at the beginning of the 16th century.⁸

Mughal architecture flourished under Shah Jahan's reign. He built various monuments, mosques, and forts, including the Taj Mahal in Agra, the Pearl Mosque, the Red Fort, and the Jama Masjid in Delhi. Under Aurangzeb's tenure, the Mughal Empire reached its peak geographical extent. However, Shivaji Bhonsle's Maratha incursions caused the empire to crumble. Following the unsuccessful Sepoy Mutiny of 1857-58, the British administration removed Bahadur Shah II, the last Mughal emperor, and banished him to Rangoon, ending the Mughal Empire.⁹

The Mughal emperor's palace in Delhi became a major centre of attraction for poets and writers from Iran and Central Asia and a secure haven for Sufi mystics. Abul Fazl, in his *'Ain-i-Akbari'*, mentions the names of fifty-nine poets who enjoyed Akbar's patronage and an additional fifty poets who regularly sent their works to Akbar from various parts of Persia in hopes of receiving honour and financial support.¹⁰

Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, was proficient in Persian and Turkish, including being a follower of Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar¹¹. Humayun was a patron of knowledge with followers of Shattariyya tariqa and established a vast personal library. Akbar had a profound interest in learning and literature and respected Sufis, leading to the creation of works such as the Akbarnama, Sur Sagar, and Ramcharitmanas during his reign. Emperor

⁷ Şenol Korkmaz, "Bâbürlüler Dönemi'nde Yaşamış Sûfî Bir Şair: Bîdil Ve Özbek Yazar Fıtrat'ın Bîdil [Bédil] Biyografisi". *Turkish Studies (Elektronik)* 12, no.30 (2017): 343-372.

⁸ *Bangladesh Journal*. "The Beginning and End of the Mughals" (19 January 2024), 7.

⁹ Bedrettin Basuğuy, "Babürlü İmparatorluğu'nun siyasi tarihi üzerine bir değerlendirme," *Bingöl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* (BUSBED) 3, no. 5 (2013): 29-48.

¹⁰ Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *The Mughal Empire, 1526-1803*, 2-8.

¹¹ Ahrar Ubeydullah, *Kalbin Huzuru: Validiyye Havraiyye Enfasi Nefise Risaleleri* (İstanbul: Hacegân Yayinlari, 2019).

Jahangir continued the patronage of literature, attracting scholars from various European countries to his palace. Shah Jahan was a patron of the arts and aspired for his city, Shahjahanabad, to become the world's most populous and luxurious city.¹²

Many European explorers and commercial visitors came to India during the Mughal era. These explorers frequently wrote about their travels, giving in-depth descriptions of the social, political, religious, and economic circumstances in Mughal India. In the following sections, we will analyse how much the Mughal emperors emphasised Sufism in their personal lives and examine the Sufi activities during their reigns.

a. Sufism during the Reign of Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur (1526–1530)

Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty and a renowned Muslim ruler in Central Asia, is better known as Babur. He was a sixth-generation Turkic-Timur descendant who founded the Mughal Empire on the Indian subcontinent. He defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the last Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate, at the First Battle of Panipat. Following his triumph, Babur visited the shrines of Sheikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti in Ajmer, two of India's most famous Sufi scholars.

Babur, a devout Sunni Muslim, was known for his military prowess, religious tolerance, and compassion. Despite his Sunni faith, he formed alliances with Shia leaders like Shah Ismail Safavi and displayed leniency towards non-Muslims. Babur's spiritual practices, including fasting and prayers, are documented in his *Tuzk-e-Baburi*.¹³ His rule also established the tradition of announcing the Ramadan moon sighting with eleven cannon shots.

The *Baburnama*, written by Babur in Chagatai and later translated into Persian and English, is a key historical and literary work. Babur deeply respected prominent Sufis, including Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar and Ahmad Khwajagi.¹⁴ He also mentioned Ahmad Kasani, the founder of the

¹² Irfan Habib, *Moddho Juger Varot Ekti Sovvotar Path* (Dhaka: National Book Trust, 2018), 7-15.

¹³ Waqar Mustafa, "The way Mughal emperors observed fast and iftar". *www.bbc.com* (12 January 2024), 3-7.

¹⁴ Zahiru'din Muhammad Babur Padshah Ghazi, *Babur-Nama (Memoirs of Babur)*, trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge (New Delhi: MRS, Nirmal D. Jain for oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1970), 619-648.

Makhdumzada Sufi lineage, who authored numerous treatises in Persian.¹⁵

In the 15th century, Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar was a significant Naqshbandi Sufi in Central Asia, promoting the Naqshbandi Tariqa and striving to protect Sunnis from Shia influence. Ahrar's efforts profoundly influenced Babur and showed great respect for his descendants, even visiting them in Samarkand multiple times.¹⁶ Babur admired Ubaidullah Ahrar so much that he translated Ahrar's "*Risala-i-Walidiya*" into Turkish.¹⁷

According to Babur, his autobiography as a '*Baburnama*,' Umar Shaikhs's environment was dominated for many years by two great men, the scholar Yunas Khan and the Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar, who was frequently with him in the company, came to Banu's birth and assisted at his name. Ahrari died in 895-1491 when the child was about seven years old, but his influence was life-long; in 935-1529, he was invoked as a spiritual helper by the fever-stricken Babur, and his mediation was believed efficacious for recovery.¹⁸

Babur, a mystical poet fluent in Turkish and Persian, composed numerous poems, including the *Diwan* in Turkish. His literary contributions include innovating a new Persian poetic meter, "Mubaiyan." Babur's autobiography, *Tuzk-e-Baburi*, is a vital historical document, reflecting his keen observations and refined taste. It highlights his spiritual depth, translated into Persian multiple times during the Mughal era.¹⁹

During Babur's reign, the renowned Sufi scholar Abdul Quddus Gangohi (d. 1537) was prominent.²⁰ A Chishti Sufi and poet, he belonged to the Sabri branch of the Chishti Tariqa.²¹ His notable work, "*Maktubat-i-Quddusiya*," comprises his letters. Gangohi frequently corresponded with Babur about the significance of Sufism, fostering a deep connection between

¹⁵ Necdet Tosun, "Ahmed b. Celâlidîn el-Kâsânî", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2001), 24: 531-532.

¹⁶ Cengiz Demir, "Baburnâme'de Hoca Ubeydullah Ahrar," 651-660.

¹⁷ Arthur F. Buehler, "The Naqshbandiyya in Tīmūrid India: The Central Asian Legacy," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (1996): 210.

¹⁸ Babur Padshah Ghazi, *Babur-Nama (Memoirs of Babur)*, 371-373.

¹⁹ Oniruddho Rai, *Mughal Samrajjer Utthan O Potoner Itihas* (Uttar Pradesh: Progotishil Publication, 2020), 117.

²⁰ Satish Saberwal- and Mushirul Hasan, *Assertive religious identities: India and Europe* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), 103.

²¹ Simon Digby, "Abd Al-Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 AD): The Personality and Attitudes of a Medieval Indian Sufi." *Medieval India: A Miscellany* 3 (1975): 1-66.

the emperor and the Chishti sheikhs.²²

His profound respect marked Babur's reign for Sufis and his integration of Sufism into his empire's cultural and spiritual fabric. His literary contributions and deep connections with contemporary Sufi figures underscore Sufism's significant role during the early Mughal period.

b. Sufism during the Reign of Nasir-ud-din Muhammad Humayun (1530–1556)

Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire in India, passed away, and his son Humayun succeeded in gaining the throne in Delhi. Humayun was known for his courteous nature and cheerful temperament, treating his relatives, friends, and subordinates equally kindly. Historian Firishta remarked that Humayun excelled in virtuous qualities. He was devoutly religious without fanaticism, regularly performing prayers and harbouring no ill will towards other religions. Although not as literary gifted as his father, Humayun keenly appreciated literature and poetry. Historian Abd al-Qadir Badayuni noted in his writings that Humayun was so noble that he never used foul language.²³

During Humayun's reign, the Shattariyya Tariqa gained prominence. This Sufi Tariqa was introduced in India by Sheikh Siraj-ud-din Abdullah Shattari (d. 1406). The term "*Shattar*" means to travel, and in Sufi terminology, Ilm Shattariyya refers to the movement and aspiration of the soul. Mughal Emperor Humayun received initiation (bay'ah) into the Shattariyya Tariqa from Sayyid Muhammad Ghaus. The Shattariyya Tariqa is mentioned in Abul Fazl's "*Ain-i-Akbari*." This tariqa had a significant influence in Jaunpur and Bihar. Sheikh Wajihuddin Gujarati, a prominent disciple of Siraj-ud-din Abdullah, has his shrine in Ahmedabad, where Nur Jahan erected the mausoleum of Shah Pir. The Shattariyya Sufis emphasised the concept of Tawhid.²⁴

Hamida Banu Begum, wife of Humayun, was deeply interested in Sufi thought and mysticism. A descendant of the renowned Sufi scholar Mian Mir of the Qadiri Tariqa, she was highly educated and religious. After Humayun's death, she played a significant role in supporting her son's rule, Akbar, while

²² Alexandre Papas, Book review: Muzaffar Alam, *The Mughals and the Sufis: Islam and Political Imagination in India, 1500–1750*. *The Indian Economic & Social History Review*, 60, no. 3 (2023): 371-373.

²³ Mustafa, "The way Mughal emperors observed fast and iftar", 3.

²⁴ Mohammad Yasin, *Reading in Indian History* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1988), 42.

influencing Sufi education in the Mughal court.²⁵

Malik Muhammad Jayasi (d. 1542), an Indian Sufi poet,²⁶ is best known for his epic poem *Padmavat*.²⁷ Associated with the Sufi centre in Jais, he was spiritually guided by Shah Mubarak Bodale, Shah Kamal, and possibly Syed Ashraf Jahangir Semnani.²⁸ Jayasi composed *Akhiri Kalam* and *Padmavat* during Humayun's reign. He passed away in Ramnagar, and a memorial, Jayasi Smarak, exists in Jais in his honour.

During Humayun's time, Madhu Lal Hussain was a well-known Punjabi Sufi poet who was notable for his romantic folktales, especially those involving Heer Ranjha.

Moreover, Humayun's reign was characterised by his deep reverence for Sufism, which is evident in his association with the Shattariyya Tariqa and patronage of prominent Sufi figures. His reign's cultural and spiritual landscape was enriched by his devotion to Sufism and the influence of notable Sufi poets.

c. Sufism During the Reign of Emperor Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Akbar (1556–1605)

One of India's most extraordinary emperors, Akbar, came to power in 1556 at the young age of 13 after his father, Emperor Humayun, passed away. Akbar expanded his empire across India and Afghanistan. After his death, his son, Emperor Jahangir, took over the reins of the empire. Sarwat Saulat, in his book *"A Brief History of the Islamic Community"*, writes that Akbar initially called the Adhan himself, led prayers, acted as an Imam, and even swept the mosque with his own hands.²⁹ Towards the end of his reign, however, he introduced a new religion called '*Dīn-i Ilāhī*', leading people away from traditional Islamic practices such as prayer, fasting, Hajj, and Zakat.

Abd al-Qadir Badayuni noted that Akbar banned prayer and fasting, including Hajj. However, in his book *"Religious Policy of the Mughals"*, Shree Ram Sharma contends that Akbar abandoned these practices voluntarily. He mentions an incident from 1582 indicating that fasting was still observed

²⁵ Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Throne* (London: Phoenix, 2004), 555.

²⁶ *The Indian Express*. "Padmini's poet: The man behind the first known narrative of Rani Padmavati is known more as a peer" (2 February 2024).

²⁷ Gaṅgā Rām Garg, *Encyclopaedia of the Hindu World* (Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1992), 219.

²⁸ Ramya Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen: Heroic Past in India, c. 1500-1900* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2015), 58.

²⁹ Mustafa, "The way Mughal emperors observed fast and iftar", 4.

when Gulbadan Begum was ceremoniously welcomed back from Hajj.³⁰

Emperor Akbar, seeking a son after losing all his children, visited the Khanqahs of various Sufis, including Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's dergah in Ajmer and Sheikh Salim Chishti's Khanqah in Fatehpur Sikri.³¹ Sheikh Salim's prayers were answered when Akbar's son, Shahzada Salim, was born on August 30, 1569. In gratitude, Akbar fulfilled his vow by visiting the dergah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti.³²

In his book *"The Mughal Empire,"* John F. Richards writes, "At the beginning of his reign, Emperor Akbar, according to his custom, walked to the mausoleum of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti to fulfil his vow, distributing gifts among the poor. He returned to Agra ten days later."³³ Mubarak Ali states that Akbar's practice was always keeping cash with him and giving money as gifts to those he desired.³⁴

Muhammad Qasim Firishta was a renowned Persian historian who wrote the comprehensive chronicle *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, covering the history of Muslim rule in India. While his primary focus was on political and military events, he also dedicated significant attention to the Sufi tradition and its influence on Indian society. Qasim Firishta discussed his book about prominent sufi like Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325), Sheikh Salim Chishti (d. 1572) and Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya (d. 1262). While *Tarikh-i-Firishta* primarily focuses on historical events, it provides a rich tapestry of information about the Sufi tradition. Firishta's discussions of Sufi figures offer valuable insights into their lives, teachings, and influence on Indian society.³⁵

Khwaja Baqi Billah (d. 1603) was pivotal in establishing the Naqshbandi Tariqa in India. Under Akbar's reign, he emphasized Sharia adherence. His disciples, Abd al-Haqq al-Dehlawi (d. 1642) and Imam Rabbani, received his spiritual authorisation. Khwaja Ubaidullah Murshid, a

³⁰ Mustafa, "The way Mughal emperors observed fast and iftar", 5.

³¹ K, J, Ahmad, *One hundred Greater Muslims* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1984), 268-269.

³² Amin Rubayet. "History of Emperor Jahangir", *Roar Media* (4 February 2024), 6.

³³ John F. Richards. *The Mughal Empire: The New Cambridge History of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 19-57.

³⁴ Richard Garbe, *Akbar, Emperor of India: a picture of life and customs from the sixteenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909), 161-201.

³⁵ Muhammad Qasim Firishta, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, trans. John Briggs (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1829),

key disciple, promoted Dawah to foster harmony with rulers and emirs.³⁶

With Islamic programs, Khwaja Baqi Billah focused on engaging emirs, including Sheikh Farid and Mirza Aziz, weakening Dīn-i Ilāhī's influence.³⁷ Despite his position in the royal palace, Mirza Aziz remained devoted to Dawah's work. When Khwaja Baqi Billah fell ill, Imam Rabbani successfully urged Akbar to counter irreligious practices.³⁸

Imam Rabbani Mujaddid-i Alf-i Thani Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) opposed Akbar's Dīn-i Ilāhī, which he saw as anti-Islamic.³⁹ A disciple of Khwaja Baqi Billah, he received spiritual education in Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya Tariqas. Despite persecution, he initiated the Mujaddidiyya Tariqa, revitalizing Islam in the Mughal Empire and earning "mujaddid-i alf-i thani."⁴⁰ His efforts played a pivotal role in purifying Islam in the Indian subcontinent.

Muhammad Akram Khan believed that during the last decade of Emperor Akbar's life, all his plans to implement reforms faced utter failure, which greatly saddened him. During this period, Akbar's extreme hostility towards Islam caused him profound regret.⁴¹ After ruling for 47 years, Emperor Akbar passed away in October 1605 at nearly 60. The last decade of his life was fraught with various adversities, setbacks, and profound sorrow.⁴²

Chishti Sufis like Abd al-Rahman Chishti Sabiri (d. 1683) significantly impacted India during Emperor Akbar's reign. In addition to promoting "*Aini Sufiabad*" of the Naksbandi Tariqa and rejecting syncretic Ainitism, Abd al-

³⁶ Ellison Banks Findly, *Nur Jahan: Empress of Mughal India* (UK: Oxford University Press, 1993), 19-26.

³⁷ Ahmet Haksever, "The Introspective Criticism in Maktubat of Imam Rabbani Ahmad Faruq Al-Sarhandi", *Hitit Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 7/2 (Şubat 2015), 197-206.

³⁸ Philip Khuri Hitti and Walid Khalidi, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan, 1943), 709.

³⁹ Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury, "Kitap İncelemesi: İmâm-ı Rabbânî Ebü'l-Berekât Ahmed b. Abdilehad b. Zeynilâbidîn el-Fârûkî es-Sirhindî. Mükâşefât-ı Ayniyye. Çev. Dr. Md. Abu Baker Siddique. Narayanganj: Hakimabad Khanka-e-Mozaddedia, 6. baskı, 2009. ISBN 984-70240-0021-7." *CenRaPS Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no.2 (2024): 1-8.

⁴⁰ İmam-I Rabbani, *Mektubat-ı Rabbani'de Şeriat ve Tasavvuf*, trans. Ahmet Hamdi Yıldırım, Necdet Tosun and Süleyman Derin (Istanbul: Erkam Publication 2014), 7-12.

⁴¹ Md Akram Khan, *Moslem Banger Samajik Etihas* (Dhaka: Oitijjhya Publication, 2002), 136.

⁴² Arthur Llewellyn Basham and Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *The Wonder That Was India* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1956), 191-196.

Rahman Chishti Sabiri claimed independent spiritual support for Chishti inside the Mughal governmental system. Abd al-Rahman Chishti attempted to combine the metaphysical mythology and human foundations of Islam and Hinduism. This philosophical proficiency tried to mesh with the integrative normative framework of the Mughal Palace.⁴³

Shah Ali Baghdadi (d. 1577), a prominent Sufi from Arabistan, arrived in Bengal in 1489 to propagate Islam. Tracing his lineage to Hazrat Ali, he followed the Qadiriya Tariqa before joining the Chishtiya Tariqa under Pir Shah Muhammad Bahari. His shrine in Mirpur, Dhaka, marks his legacy, and a mosque was built in his honour by the Mughal emperor in 1577. The Shah Ali Thana and Shah Ali Women's College in Dhaka are named after him, reflecting his enduring influence.⁴⁴

Bayazid Pir Roshan (d. 1585), a prominent Sufi during Akbar's reign, founded the Roshani movement, which opposed Akbar's *Dīn-i Ilāhī*. He wrote in Pashto, Persian, Hindi, and Arabic and created a new alphabet for Pashto. His work, *Khair-ul-Bayan*, is one of the oldest pieces of Pashto literature. Pir Roshan's movement gained significant support in Pashtun regions, and after his death, his followers continued resisting the Mughals for nearly a century. The *Khair-ul-Bayan* was translated by the Pashto Academy in 1987.⁴⁵

Baba Syed Shah Jamal (d. 1671) was a practitioner of the Soharwardiya Sufi Tariqa. He was also known as Hosseini Syed. He was the son of Syed Jalaluddin Surkh-Posh Bukhari. Baba Syed Shah Jamal actively opposed Emperor Akbar's *Dīn-i Ilāhī* and endeavoured to reintroduce pure Islam to the populace. He passed away in the year 1671 CE.

Madhoo Lal Hussain (d. 1599) was a 16th-century Punjabi Muslim Sufi poet widely regarded as a pioneer in Punjabi poetry. He lived during the reigns of Mughal Emperor Akbar and his son, Jahangir. In his youth, Shah Hussain memorised the Quran under the supervision of Hafiz Abu Bakar. 1573, he studied the Quran and Tafsir under the famous scholar Sheikh Sadullah Lahori. At age ten, Shah Hussain met the Sufi master Sheikh Bahlol

⁴³ Muzaffar Alam, "The Debate within: A Sufi Critique of Religious Law, Tasawwuf and Politics in Mughal India," *South Asian History and Culture* 2, no.2 (2011): 138–59.

⁴⁴ Muhammad Abul Hashem Miah and Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Archaeological Survey Report of Greater Faridpur District* (Dhaka: Department of Archaeology, 2000), 26–27.

⁴⁵ James Wynbrandt, *A Brief History of Pakistan* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 82.

Qadiri (d. 1575), who later became his spiritual guide.⁴⁶ He made significant contributions to the propagation of Islam through his teachings and writings.

Shah Sulaimān Nūri (d. 1604), a prominent Sufi of the Qadiriyya Tariqa, was appointed as the successor to his mentor, Shah Maruf Kushbi. Known as *Sakhi Badshah* for his generosity, he spread Islam to regions like Kashmir and Gujarat.⁴⁷ After his death, the Qadiriyya Naushahia silsila was established in his honour. His shrine is located at Puran Bhawal, Pakistan.

The *Akbarnama*, written by Abu'l-Fazl, details the life of Emperor Akbar and his era, including notable Sufi figures who influenced his religious and philosophical views.⁴⁸ Among those mentioned are Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya, Sheikh Salim Chishti, Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakar, Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, and Mulla Daud. Abu'l-Fazl discusses their spiritual practices, interactions with Akbar, and their impact on his religious policies, including his promotion of Sufism and the creation of the syncretic faith, Dīn-i Ilāhī. The *Akbarnama* reflects Akbar's respect for these spiritual leaders and their role in shaping his philosophy of religious tolerance.⁴⁹

Therefore, Sufis significantly expanded their activities during Akbar's reign, with many opposing his religious innovations and striving to uphold traditional Islamic values. Their activities significantly impacted the Indian subcontinent's religious and spiritual environment.

d. Sufism During the Reign of Emperor Nuruddin Muhammad Salim Jahangir (1605-1627)

Jahangir (d. 1627) was the fourth Mughal Emperor. Ascending the throne in Agra in 1605, he succeeded his father, Akbar, adopting the regal title Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir, which means "*World-Conqueror*" in Persian. Initially, he adhered to the philosophies of his father, Akbar. His reign, lasting until 1627, was marked by political stability, a robust economy, and significant cultural achievements. Jahangir died while returning from Kashmir in 1627 and was buried at Shahdara near Lahore, Pakistan.⁵⁰

Upon ascending the throne, Jahangir reinstated specific policies from

⁴⁶ Sheikh Parvaiz Amin Naqshbandy, *Hazrat Maadho Laal Hussain* (Michigan: The University of Michigan: Umar Publications), 120.

⁴⁷ www.ziaetaiba.com, "Hazrat Sakhi Shah Suleman Noori" (12 March 2024).

⁴⁸ Abu'l-Fazl ibn Mubarak, *Akbarnama*, Translated by H. Blochmann and Colonel H. S. Jarrett (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1907-1939).

⁴⁹ Abu'l-Fazl, *Akbarnama*, 23.

⁵⁰ Sajida Sultana Alvi, "Religion and State during the Reign of Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1605-27): Nonjuristical Perspectives." *Studia islamica* (1989): 95-119.

his predecessor, including anti-Islamic restrictions, while fostering British commercial interests. Imam Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi, a prominent Sufi, urged Jahangir to abandon these practices. Influenced by Imam Rabbani and other Islamic scholars, Jahangir distanced himself from such actions and invited the Sufi to the imperial court. Throughout three and a half years, Imam Rabbani's teachings, particularly from the Quran and Hadith, led to Jahangir's sincere repentance and a profound shift towards Islam.

According to Jahangir's memoirs, "*Tuzk-e-Jahangiri*" or "*Jahangirnama*," released in the thirteenth year of his reign, he observed Ramadan fasting. He shared iftar with Sayyids and local ulema. State representatives and the emperor's delegates also organised iftars, fostering a tradition within the Mughal period of exchanging food during Ramadan. During Jahangir's reign, a military commander, Mubarak Khan, even conducted a campaign during Ramadan, culminating in a grand feast on the last day. Mubarak noted Jahangir's humanitarian activities through the ulema, which included providing fifty-five thousand rupees, one hundred and ninety bighas of land, fourteen villages, and eleven thousand mules filled with grain to impoverished people. Mirza Nathun's book "*Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*" recounted this incident, which was much acclaimed.⁵¹

Abdul Hakim Sialkoti (d. 1657), a renowned Islamic scholar and son of Sheikh Shams-ud-Din, was known for his expertise in Quranic studies and Islamic philosophy.⁵² Sheikh Kamal-ud-Din, another great theologian and Ahmad Sirhindi's instructor, called him "*mujaddid-i alf-i thani*".⁵³ Appointed by Akbar as a professor at Lahore University, he gained significant respect during Jahangir's reign and later became the principal of Agra University under Shah Jahan, who honoured him with land, coins, and precious metals.⁵⁴

Khwaja Khayr-ud-Din Mahmud (d. 1642) was pivotal in spreading the Naqshbandi Tariqa in India. He attempted to curb the influence of Shias in Kashmir and, after initially gaining followers in Agra during the late reign of Akbar, returned to Kashmir due to a strained relationship with Jahangir, later

⁵¹ Mustafa, "The way Mughal emperors observed fast and iftar", 3.

⁵² Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (UK: Routledge, 2013), 1064-1065.

⁵³ Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (UK: BRILL, 2013), 76.

⁵⁴ Nahim-Un Nisa, *Moulana Abdul Hakeem Sialkoti (d 1067 A. D.): Life and Works (in Urdu)* (Agra: Aligarh Muslim University, 1997), 4-9.

promoting the Naqshbandi tariqa in Tibet. He passed away in Lahore, Pakistan in 1642.

In "*Muntaqhab al-Tawarikh*" by Abdul Qadir Badauni, numerous mentions of Sufis, pirs, Islamic scholars, and shaikhs exist. This work is a historical chronicle of India from the early 11th century to the late 16th century, focusing on the Mughal Empire, particularly during the reign of Akbar and Jahangir. He discussed his book with Sufis like Sheikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi, Mian Mir, Sheikh Salim Chishti, Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti and Nizamuddin Auliya. Badauni often provides biographical details, accounts of their spiritual practices, and interactions with rulers and other historical figures, and this offers valuable context for understanding the role of Sufism in the political and cultural landscape of medieval India.⁵⁵

e. Sufism During the Reign of Shahabuddin Muhammad Khurram Shah Jahan (1627-1658)

From 1628 until 1658 AD, Shah Jahan was the ruler of the Mughal Empire. The Persian origin of Shah Jahan's name means "*King of the World*." During his reign, the Mughals achieved their zenith in architecture and culture. He built several structures, including the Wazir Khan Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan; the Moti Masjid; the Shah Jahan Mosque in Sindh; the Taj Mahal as a tomb for his wife; and the Jame Masjid in Delhi. The Jama Masjid in Delhi, built for 10 lakh rupees, became renowned as the largest mosque in South Asia, accommodating 25,000 Muslims for congregational prayers.⁵⁶ It remains one of India's foremost historical Islamic symbols after nearly 500 years.

Islam was spread significantly thanks in part to the Emperor Shah Jahan. One notable incident related to this was his profound response upon hearing about the unprecedented persecution of many Muslim women by Hindus in Gujarat after his visit there. His wise policies promoted Hindu-Muslim harmony, setting a rare example of religious tolerance in history.⁵⁷ During his time, it was customary for the emperor to allocate a separate portion of food for those in need before his meal, a practice known as "*Khawar*." The emperor began and ended his meals with prayers.

⁵⁵ Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntaqhab al-Tawarikh*. Translated by W. H. Lowe. 3 vols. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1884–1925.

⁵⁶ Catherine Ella Blanshard Asher, *The New Cambridge History of India: Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 202.

⁵⁷ Khaled Saifullah Siddiqui, "Impressed by the justice of Emperor Shahjahan, Four Hundred Hindus Accepted Islam". *m.dailyinqilab.com* (6 February 2024), 7.

Safinat-ul-Auliya and *Sakinat-ul-Auliya* are biographies of Sufi practitioners written by Prince Dara Shikoh, a Sufi mystic and esoteric writer, during the reign of Shah Jahan. However, Shah Jahan's son Dara Shikoh (d.1659) adopted some of Akbar's Dīn-i Ilāhī principles, embraced scientific concepts despite his father's reactions, and endeavoured to maintain the relevance of these principles. Dara Shikoh presented himself as an accommodating Muslim ruler and regarded all religions equally. He translated works such as *Majma-ul-Bahrain*, *Mukalama-e-Baba Lal*, and *Sirr-i-Akbar (Upanishads)* from Sanskrit into Persian. Subsequent scholars compiled Dara Shikoh's works in two ways: the first under titles of Sufi and mystical themes, and the second as various translated poetic works from Sanskrit.⁵⁸

Sultan Bahu (d.1691), a prominent Sufi poet and practitioner of the Qadiri Tariqa, initiated the Sarwari Qadiri lineage. His Punjabi-language poetry gained widespread recognition, often sung in Sufi gatherings.⁵⁹ Bahu received spiritual initiation from Sayyid Abdul Rahman Jilani Dehlawi in 1668 and wrote about forty books on Tasawwuf. His magnum opus, *Abyat-e-Bahu*, along with his other works in Persian and Punjabi, left a lasting impact on Sufi thought.⁶⁰ His mausoleum in Punjab remains a significant Sufi shrine, attracting annual commemorations.

Through Arab traders, the Kadiriyya Sufi Tariqa had a tremendous impact on Indian Muslims during the reigns of Emperor Jahangir and Shah Jahan. During this period, the renowned Sufi of the Kadiriyya Tariqa was Miyan Mir. His sister, Bibi Jamal Khatun, was a saintly figure who widely propagated Islam through her inclusive teachings. Mulla Shah Badakhshi, a famous Sufi practitioner, was a spiritual successor of Miyan Mir (d. 1635).⁶¹ Educated Muslims in Lahore, under Mir Muhammad and Mulla Shah in Kashmir, embraced discipleship in the Kadiriyya Tariqa.

⁵⁸ Berna Karagözoğlu, "Hinduizm ve İslâm Tasavvufuna Yaklaşımı ile Hindistan'ın Ünlü Türk Bilgini Şehzade Dârâ Şükûh," *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi* 4, no.13 (2017): 96-121.

⁵⁹ Wahyuddin Halim, "Babür dönemi Bengal'inde Tarikat Şeyhleri ve İslamlaşmadaki Sosyo-Kültürel Roller (1526-1858)". trc. Burak Muhsin Akın, *Akademik Platform İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi* 4, no.1 (Nisan 2020): 86-92.

⁶⁰ Sajidullah Tafhimi, "Shaykh Sultan Bahu His Life and Persian work," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 28, no.2 (1980): 133.

⁶¹ Fatima Zehra Bilgrami, "A Controversial Verse of Mulla Shah Badakhshi (A" Mahdar" in Shahjahan's Court)." *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 34, no.1 (1986): 26.

The eldest son of Mumtaz and the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, Prince Dara Shukoh (d.1659), studied under Mulla Shah at his Khanqah in 1639. Though a devotee of Sufi and Shia doctrines, Dara Shukoh translated Hindu Upanishads into Persian. Despite his spiritual inclinations, the Mughal Emperor bestowed upon him the title of “*Padshahzada-e-Buzurg*” (*Crown Prince*).⁶²

f. Sufism During the Reign Alamgir Aurangzeb (1658–1707)

The sixth Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb Alamgir, ruled for over fifty years, from 1658 to 1707. He was the final major imperial force representing India before the arrival of British colonisation.⁶³ He was a devout Muslim ruler. Aurangzeb actively promoted Islamic-inspired piety and fought against innovations contrary to the Quran.⁶⁴ On the one hand, he praised genuine Sufis, but on the other hand, he opposed pseudo-Sufism and occasionally took extreme measures, such as executing Sufi Sarmand Kashani. He often obstructed the activities of certain Sufis, once interrupting the revered Sufi Bulleh Shah’s singing on the streets of Lahore to protest their activities.⁶⁵

During Aurangzeb’s reign, his religious policy aimed to transform Dar-ul-Harb into an Islamic realm. However, historians acknowledge that his era did not witness systematic forcible conversions. Jadunath Sarkar writes that Aurangzeb was arguably the greatest ruler of Asia at his age in terms of intellect, character, and diligence. He was exceptionally hardworking, conscientious, and responsible as a ruler. Unlike his predecessors, he did not indulge in luxury and had a strong affinity for the observance of Islamic law.⁶⁶

For this reason, contemporary historians often label him as the protector of Islam in India. Satish Chandra believes that Aurangzeb firmly believed that the Indian subcontinent must be governed according to Sharia, but without in any way harming powerful Hindu landlords and the Buddhist elite. He was vigilant about the situation and maintained deep relationships

⁶² Tasadduq Husain, “The spiritual journey of Dara Shukoh,” *Social Scientist* (2002), 54-66.

⁶³ Noor Ahmad, *Tehqeeqat e Chishti* (Lahore: Al-Faisal, Urdu Bazar, 2006).

⁶⁴ Shibli Nomani, *Aurangzeb Alamgir* (Lahore: Fiction House Mozang, 2016), 27-28.

⁶⁵ J.R. Puri- T.R. Shangari, “The Life of Bulleh Shah”, *Academy of the Punjab in North America* (8 February 2024), 2-11.

⁶⁶ Annie Krieger Krynicki, *Captive princess: Zebunissa, daughter of Emperor Aurangzeb*, trans. Enjum Hamid (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 92.

with various religious communities and institutions.⁶⁷ During his time, Aurangzeb adorned mosques, Khanqahs, and charitable institutions. He appointed state officials such as Imams and Muazzins. Due to these activities of Aurangzeb, scholars gained more employment opportunities and warmly welcomed the emperor.

He gave importance to Eid during Ramadan because he was seated on the throne towards the end of Ramadan. For this reason, Aurangzeb extended his coronation celebrations until Eid. Aurangzeb strictly adhered to the rules and regulations of prayer and fasting. He always endeavoured to pray in congregation, observed Taraweeh prayers, and engaged in Itikaf (seclusion in the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan). Similarly, he fasted on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays every week. Historian Burnier writes that when Aurangzeb arrived in Delhi, it was the month of June and very hot. However, Aurangzeb observed fasting throughout Ramadan, even during this scorching summer. During fasting, he continued to attend to all governmental duties. At sunset, he broke his fast with bread and buttermilk, performed Taraweeh prayers, and spent most of the night engaged in prayers.⁶⁸

Khaja Bakhi Billah's two sons in India were Khaja Abdullah and Khaja Ubaidullah. During the rule of Emperor Jahangir and Shah Jahan, they spread the teachings of the Naqshbandi Sufi Tariqa throughout the Indian subcontinent, following in their father's footsteps. The Naqshbandi Tariqa gained more sway across the subcontinent during Aurangzeb's reign when the Mughal emperors took a more conservative political position.⁶⁹ During the Mughal Empire, the Naqshbandi Sufi Tariqa contributed significantly to the purifying of Islam using a variety of approaches.

During Aurangzeb's reign, several Sufi writings supporting government sponsorship of Sufism were composed, including *Irshad-i-Rahimiya*, *Kanz-ul-Hidayat*, and *Urus-i-Irfan*. Prominent Sufi figures like Sultan Bahu, Bulleh Shah, Mirza Bedil, and Nasir Ali Sirhindi emerged during this period. Notably, Habibullah Hashmi wrote a commentary on *Miftah-ul-Makhzan-ul-Asrar* in 1670, praising Aurangzeb and incorporating Quranic and Hadith references, along with quotes from Jalaluddin Rumi, Sheikh Saadi,

⁶⁷ Satish Chandra, *History of Medieval India: 800-1700* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2007), 328.

⁶⁸ Mustafa, "The way Mughal emperors observed fast and iftar", 3.

⁶⁹ Esma Sayin, "Moral Teaching in Sufi Education", *Balıkesir İlahiyat Dergisi* 20 (Aralık 2024), 77-89.

and Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*.⁷⁰

Other notable commentaries and critiques from Aurangzeb's era include Mir Nur-ul-lah Ehrari's "*Sharhe Bustan*," Muhammad Raja Lahori's "*Sharhe Mathnavi-e-Rumi*," and Mirza Jan's "*Sharhe Qasaid-e-Urfi*." Although not exclusively focused on Sufism, Aurangzeb's patronage significantly contributed to the proliferation of Sufi activities and literature during his reign.⁷¹

Jahanara, daughter of Aurangzeb, was deeply devoted to Sufism. Initially inclined toward the Chishti Tariqa, she later followed the Qadiri Tariqa under Mulla Shah Badakhshi's guidance.⁷² Influenced by Rabia Basri's life, Jahanara embraced Sufi practices and sought to spread Sufi principles. She authored two books: *Munis-ul-Arwah*, a biography of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, and *Risala-i-Sahibiya*, a biography of Mulla Shah.⁷³

Additionally, Jahanara composed several '*Risalas*' (*poetic compositions in Sufi or mystical themes*), which were highly regarded for their literary merit. These '*Risalas*' contain profound Sufi messages alongside Jahanara's philosophies, where she referred to herself as a '*faqir*' (Sufi ascetic).⁷⁴ In these writings, she articulated deep spiritual contemplations, devotion to the Creator, and reverence for her spiritual guide. Thus, through her '*Risalas*', Jahanara demonstrated her perspective on Sufism and spirituality, leaving behind a legacy in Sufi literature.⁷⁵

During Aurangzeb's era, Mughal emperors followed certain Persian Shia practices, such as celebrating the Persian New Year (Nowruz). However, due to his adherence to Islamic principles, Aurangzeb discontinued these practices. The tradition of Jharokha Darshan (where the emperor would appear before the public every morning from the balcony of the royal palace)

⁷⁰ Richard Maxwell Eaton, "Sufi Folk Literature and the Expansion of Indian Islam," *History of Religions* 14/ 2 (1974), 117–27.

⁷¹ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 373.

⁷² Kathryn Lasky, *The Royal Diaries: Jahanara, Princess of Princesses* (New York: Scholastic Corporation, 2002), 186.

⁷³ Vahit Göktaş and Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury, "An Evaluation of Mu'in Al-Din Chishti's Sufi Influences in the Indian Subcontinent: The Case of Chishti Tariqa", *Şırnak Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 31 (June 2023): 47-76.

⁷⁴ Diana Preston and Michael, *A Teardrop on the Cheek of Time* (London: Doubleday, 2007), 354.

⁷⁵ Mahmudur Rahman, "Fakira' from Padishah Begum". *bonikbarta.net* (7 February 2024), 4.

initiated by Akbar was prevalent. Still, Aurangzeb deemed it contrary to Islamic beliefs and abolished it in the eleventh year of his reign. Similarly, Aurangzeb ended the Hindu ritual of Tuladan (donating equal weight of gold and silver to charity on the emperor's birthday), which Akbar instituted in the twelfth year of his rule. From Timur's practices to Akbar's, it was customary for the emperor to perform Sajda (prostration) or Kurnish (kissing the ground) at the palace. Shah Jahan replaced the practice of Sajda with the ritual of Bhumichumban (kissing the ground), which Aurangzeb also discontinued due to its opposition to Islamic customs, introducing instead the Islamic greeting of Assalamu Alaikum (Peace be upon you). In 1668, dance and music were banned at the palace under Aurangzeb's reign as they were considered against Islamic principles. Astrological discussions were prohibited, and Aurangzeb forbade the construction of mausoleums and women's movements to Sufi hospices and Khanqahs. He compiled the Fatawa-i-Alamgiri, a comprehensive text following the Hanafi school of thought, to establish a standard code of conduct for Indian Subcontinent Muslims.⁷⁶

Known as Bari Imam, Pir Sayyid Abdul Latif Kazmi Qadri (d. 1705) lived in the seventeenth century in Punjab and was a Muslim Sufi during Aurangzeb's reign. He is revered as a leading personality among the Muslims of Pakistan, especially in Islamabad. He was acknowledged as one of the Qadiriyya Sufi Tariqa's main Sufis. He was regarded as the murshid (spiritual mentor) of Hazrat Ishan within this tariqa; this branch is now acknowledged under the Dakik family name. Bari Imam composed numerous Qawwali songs within the Qadiriya Sufi tradition. Presently, Indian and Pakistani Sufis continue to perform their Qawwalis at various gatherings. His Qawwalis are regularly commemorated within Pakistani Sufism.⁷⁷

g. Sufism During the Reign of Muhammad Shah (1719–1748)

Sufism considerably influenced the socio-religious scene during the time of Muhammad Shah (1719-1748), the Mughal emperor of India. Muhammad Shah, who succeeded to the throne at 17 with the Sayyid brothers' support, initially pursued the policies of his predecessor, Bahadur Shah I. However, his reign witnessed the fragmentation of the Mughal Empire into several regional states due to the resurgence of local powers. Alongside

⁷⁶ Meena Bhargava, *Exploring Medieval India* (New Delhi: Orint Black Swan, 2010), 178.

⁷⁷ Muhammad Umar and Suhail Yusuf, "Syed Shah Abdul Latif: 'Khushki Kay Imam'", *Daily Dawn Newspaper* (10 February 2014), 6.

governing the state, Muhammad Shah also made notable contributions to the propagation of Islam.⁷⁸

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (d. 1752), a Sindhi Sufi poet and scholar, was among the most famous people during Muhammad Shah's reign. Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, primarily recognised as the finest Sindhi poet, dedicated his life to spreading Islam throughout Sindh and the neighbouring territories. His encounters with several Sufis from various nations impacted his poetry, later compiled by his disciples in the *Shah Jo Risalo* and first published in 1866. His writings have now been translated into several Urdu and English languages. Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's poetry is still prevalent in Sindh and admired worldwide.⁷⁹ When Miyan Ghulam Shah Kalhoro, the modern king of Sindh, constructed a mausoleum over his burial in 1754, it became a hallowed place of pilgrimage.

Shah Faṛīd ud-Dīn Bāgdādī (d. 1733) was an Iraqi Sufi practitioner from the 17th century. He descended from Abdul Qadir Gilani and founded a shrine in Kishatwar to spread Sufism. Raja Kirat Singh, king of Kishatwar, converted to Islam under the influence of Shah Faṛīd ud-Dīn Bāgdādī and changed his name to Raja Tegh Muhammad Singh.⁸⁰

Shah Inayat Qadri Shattari (d. 1728) was a Sufi practitioner and philosopher who was a prominent Punjabi Sufi in the Qadiriyya Shattari Tariqa. He predominantly composed in Persian and Punjabi languages. Shah Inayat Qadri Shattari is renowned as a spiritual guide in the Punjabi poets' Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah tradition. He was the son of Imam Maulvi Pir Muhammad of Kasur. His notable works include *Dastur-ul-Amal Islah-ul-Amal*, *Lata'if-e-Ghaibiya*, and *Isharat-ul-Talibin*.⁸¹

Bulleh Shah (d. 1757), a Punjabi Sufi poet, lived during the decline of Mughal rule under Muhammad Shah. His poetry, influenced by *Waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Existence), reflected Sufi teachings on the relationship between Murshid and Murid. Bulleh Shah also played a key role in mediating peace between Muslims and Sikhs during a conflict, symbolising harmony in

⁷⁸ Zahir Uddin Malik, *The reign of Muhammad Shah, 1719–1748* (London: Asia Pub. House, 1977), 407.

⁷⁹ Ali Murad Lajwani and Abdul Jaleel Mirjat, "The mystical philosophy of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai: A study of Shah-Jo-Risalo," *Al-Hikmat: A Journal of Philosophy* 41 (2021), 61-71.

⁸⁰ *Greater Kashmir*, "Thousands participate in Urs Shah Fariduddin (RA) at Kishtwar" (10 March 2024).

⁸¹ Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *The Special Sufi Paths (Tariqas), Muslim Communities of Grace: The Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious Life* (New York: Columbia UP, 2007), 86–96.

Punjab.⁸²

Sufis in Bangladesh actively participated in various Islamic activities during the rule of Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah (d. 1748). One notable figure was Sufi Umar Shah Bajra, who arrived in Noakhali, Bangladesh, from Iran by boat to propagate Islam. The place where he arrived came to be known as Bajra after him. During Muhammad Shah's reign, he granted land to Amanullah and Thanullah, the two brothers, in Bajra. In 1741, Amanullah excavated a pond on 30 acres of land in Bajra and found a dome during the excavation. It is believed that there was a mosque at this location earlier. Amanullah constructed a historic mosque with three distinctive domes on the elevated base on the western side of the pond. This mosque came to be known as Bajra Shahi Mosque. The construction of Bajra Shahi Mosque followed the Mughal architectural style and was modelled after Delhi's Jama Masjid.⁸³

h. Sufism During the reigns of Ahmed Shah Bahadur (1748-1754), Alamgir II (1754-1759), Shah Jahan III (1759-1760), and Shah Alam II (1759-1806)

During the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah, Ahmed Shah Bahadur (d. 1775) was born into the Mughal imperial household. He ascended the throne at twenty-two in 1748, succeeding his father. Although the Mughal Empire was essentially in collapse when Ahmed Shah Bahadur took over, he nevertheless made many efforts to consolidate and enhance its governance. However, administrative incompetence characterised his rule, which led to the rise to power of the usurper Imad-ul-Mulk.⁸⁴

The 14th Mughal Emperor of India, Aziz-ud-Din Muhammad, also known as Alamgir II (1759), ruled from March 3, 1754, to November 29 1759. Being the youngest son of Emperor Jahandar Shah, he was a weak leader who practically gave all his authority to his vizier, Imad-ul-Mulk. Alamgir II received assistance from Imad-ul-Mulk in 1759 to take the Mughal throne, but Maratha leaders eventually overthrew him.⁸⁵

Shah Jahan III, the son of Muhammad Kam Bakhsh (the eldest son of

⁸² Kider Nath Sud, *Iqbal and His Poems - A Reappraisal* (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1969), 41.

⁸³ *Daily Prothom Alo Newspaper*. "Bajra Shahi Mosque", (9 February 2024), 11.

⁸⁴ Shripad Rama Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India: A systematic Study Including Source Material* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Dist, 1999), 131.

⁸⁵ Jaswant Lal Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Modern India 1707-1813* (Uttar Pradesh: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2005), 6-11.

Aurangzeb), ascended as the 15th Mughal Emperor during a significant decline for the Mughal Empire. His reign was marked by weakness, and he notably opposed the British East India Company in the Battle of Buxar. Following him, Shah Alam II, the second son of Alamgir II, became the 16th Mughal Emperor. Shah Alam II's rule also occurred during a tumultuous era of the empire's deterioration. He was a poet who wrote under the pen name "Aftab," His poetry (diwan) was compiled and edited by Mirza Fakhir Makin.⁸⁶

Shah Kabul Auliya (d. 1767), a Moroccan Sufi, came to the Indian subcontinent to propagate Islam. He received spiritual education from his father before preaching in Sindh, Multan, and Kashmir. His mausoleum in Peshawar, Pakistan, remains a site of pilgrimage. Shah Kabul observed the annual Urs in May, commemorating his death anniversary.

Bhulu Shah, a prominent Sufi who belonged to the Qadiriyya Sufi Tariqa, died in 1789 under the reign of Shah Alam II. His tomb (dargah) is situated in ancient Delhi, India. Bhulu Shah was a disciple and successor of the Qadiriyya Pir Abdul Hamid. He received initiation (bay'ah) from Shah Abdul Hamid in Delhi and appointed Shah Muhammad Hafiz as his successor.

Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (d. 1762), a prominent Sufi philosopher, was a key figure in the Naqshbandi Tariqa and inherited the spiritual mantle from his father. His influential works, including *Dur-i Shahwar* and *Hujjatullah al-Baligha*, critiqued Muslims' neglect of the Quran and Sunnah, advocating for a balance between spiritual practices and religious principles.⁸⁷ Shah Waliullah's ideas on social reform and spiritual understanding significantly impacted Indian Muslim society, laying the foundation for future political movements.

Hazrat Shah Amanat (d. 1809), a prominent Sufi in Bangladesh, propagated Islam in Chittagong, tracing his lineage to Abdul Qadir Jilani. He established mausoleums, khanqahs, and mosques while serving the poor and vulnerable. Despite his significant Sufi role, he also held a minor judicial position, earning "Khan Sahib" or "Miya Sahib." Shah Amanat's legacy is commemorated in Chittagong through landmarks like Shah Amanat International Airport and the Shah Amanat Bridge.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Jaswant Lal Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Modern India 1707-1813*, 12.

⁸⁷ Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury, et al, "A Critical Analysis of Shah Waliullah Dehlawi's Sufi Influences in the Indian Subcontinent", *Sufiyye* 15 (December 2023): 23-62.

⁸⁸ Muhammad Shehabul Huda, *The Saints and Shrines of Chittagong* (Chittagong: University of Chittagong, 1985), 107-131.

i. Sufism During the reigns of Akbar Shah II (1806-1837)

Akbar Shah II, the 18th Mughal Emperor of India, reigned from 1806 to 1837. He was Shah Alam II's second son and Bahadur Shah II's father. During his reign, the growing influence of the British East India Company significantly eroded his authority. Notably, in 1835, the East India Company stopped issuing coins bearing his name. Despite the political challenges, Akbar Shah II was crucial in promoting Hindu-Muslim unity.⁸⁹ His tomb, dating back to the 13th century, is near the Sufi saint Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki shrine in Mehrauli.

Sakhi Sakhi Shah Chan Charagh, a significant Sufi figure in Pakistan during the reign of Emperor Akbar II, lived in the 18th century. His ancestors migrated from Mashhad in Iran and settled in contemporary Chakwal city. They established numerous shrines that are still highly revered, attracting thousands of pilgrims throughout the year. Shah Chan Charagh guided ordinary people on spiritual enlightenment, advocating peace and tolerance. His four disciples maintained his spiritual legacy: Syed Sakhi Shah Raja, Syed Kamran Ali Shah, Sakhi Shah Sharif, and Koch Ali Sultan.⁹⁰

Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlawi (d. 1824), a prominent Sufi scholar and spiritual successor of Shah Waliullah, was a key figure in Islamic jurisprudence and hadith. He inherited his father's spiritual mantle and became a distinguished muhaddith, mufassir, and mujaddid. Initiated into the Naqshbandiyya Tariqa, Aziz authored numerous works, including translating the Quran into Urdu.⁹¹ He also played a crucial role in the resistance against British rule, declaring a Jihad Fatwa. Shah Abdul Aziz passed away in Delhi in 1824.

Abdul Wahab Farooqi Sachal Sarmast (d.1827) was a distinguished Sindhi Sufi poet from Sindh province, Pakistan. He was well-known throughout the region. He wrote poetry in seven languages, including Sindhi, Saraiki, Persian, Urdu, Balochi, Punjabi, and Arabic. He resided during the Kalhora/Talpur era. He was a Sunni Sufi and made significant contributions to Sindhi poetry. In commemoration of his death anniversary, an annual three-day festival begins on the 13th day of Ramadan, featuring literary

⁸⁹ *The Times of India*, "Akbar, Dara Shikoh had set examples of Hindu-Muslim unity" (24 February 2024), 16.

⁹⁰ Shiza Malik, "Hundreds gather at centuries old Shah Chan Charagh shrine to celebrate Urs", *Dawn.com* (15 March 2024).

⁹¹ Ubaidullah Sindhi, *At-Tamheed li Ta'reef Aimma at-Tajdeed*. Sindh: The Sindhi Adabi Board, 1976, 286.

conferences and music performances based on his poetry.⁹²

Syed Ahmad Barelvi (d. 1831), a prominent Sufi reformer during Akbar Shah II's reign, founded the Muhammadia Tariqat movement, which incorporated the Chishtiya, Qadiriya, Naqshbandiya, and Mujaddidiya Tariqas. His movement, often called the "Reform Movement," significantly resisted British rule. Ahmad Shahid's preaching, demeanour, and missionary work had a lasting impact on Indian Sufism.

Syed Ahmad Barelvi led a significant independence movement in the early 1800s, spreading his efforts across India. His son, Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dehlawi, succeeded him as a leader and disciple. Barelvi's leadership in the anti-British movement, including the Battle of Akora Khattak (1822) and the Balakot operation (1831), aimed to make Islam a dominant force. His actions, particularly in Jihad, had a lasting impact on Sufi movements in India and beyond.⁹³

j. Sufism During the reigns of Bahadur Shah II (1837-1862)

Bahadur Shah II was the nineteenth and final emperor of the Mughal Empire. He succeeded his father, Mughal Emperor Akbar Shah II. Bahadur Shah II was a Sufi saint and an accomplished Urdu poet. William Dalrymple described him as extraordinary in his book *"The Last Mughal"*, stating, *"Bahadur Shah was transparent in Islamic artistry, a skilled poet, and he deeply valued Hindu-Muslim unity."* He never sought to establish himself as a heroic or revolutionary leader, nor did his personality possess such qualities. Still, like his ancestor Emperor Akbar, he was an exemplary symbol of Islamic civilisation during a time when it reached its pinnacle, Dalrymple wrote in his book.⁹⁴

During the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, Bahadur Shah II became a symbol of rebellion when he was requested to lead the uprising. The rebellion spread across India but was eventually suppressed by the British. In the aftermath, many Sufis, poets, and intellectuals were executed, and significant cultural landmarks were destroyed. Bahadur Shah was captured and exiled to Rangoon, and the Mughal Empire in India ended.⁹⁵

⁹² Dawn.com, "Sachal's Urs begins today" (19 March 2024).

⁹³ Muhammad Hedayetullah, *Sayyid Ahmad: a Study of the Religious Reform Movement of Sayyid Ahmad of Ra'e Bareli* (Montreal, Canada: McGill University, 1968), 113, 115, 158.

⁹⁴ Sohrab Hasan, "Tomb of Bahadur Shah, Sigh of History", *Daily Prothom Alo Newspaper* (8 March 2024), 11.

⁹⁵ William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of Delhi, 1857* (London: A&C Black, 2009), 408.

Under British captivity, Bahadur Shah II perhaps lost his kingdom, power, and titles. However, as a Sufi mystic, poet, and symbol of unity, he permanently secured a place in people's hearts.⁹⁶ In the 1980s, a television series in India was produced based on his life and work. He is honoured with a park in Dhaka and streets named after him in Karachi and Delhi. Muslims in the area still revere Bahadur Shah as a strong Sufi ruler and go to his grave on pilgrimage.

Muhammad Channan Shah Nuri (d.1890) was an Islamic scholar, Sufi practitioner, and preacher in South Asia. He established the Aminia branch of the Naqshbandi Tariqa. He propagated Islam in South Asia and converted many non-Muslims to Islam. His followers are known as the Naqshbandi Mujaddidiya Aminia. He assumed the spiritual leadership (khilafat) from his pir, Nur Muhammad Chorahi of Chura Sharif. He was deeply devoted to his pir and always endeavoured to fulfil every directive and responsibility given to him.⁹⁷

Shah Karamat Ali Jaunpuri (d. 1873), a key figure in the 'Muhammadia Movement' founded by Syed Ahmad Barelvi, was a social reformer in Bengal and Assam.⁹⁸ Deeply influenced by Sufism, he received spiritual guidance from Syed Ahmad and focused on preaching and societal reform.⁹⁹ Through his sermons and over forty novels, Karamat Ali worked to revive Islamic values and counter the drift from Islamic teachings among local Muslims.

Syed Ahmed Ullah Maizbhandari (d. 1906) founded the Maizbhandari Tariqa, which now has over ten million followers. Originally from Medina, his family settled in Bengal after moving through Baghdad and Delhi. A magistrate in Jessore, Ahmed Ullah became renowned as a speaker and spiritual guide, emphasizing the importance of spiritual life.¹⁰⁰

Hafiz Ahmad Jaunpuri (d. 1899), a prominent Sufi scholar in Bangladesh, was known for his Waz sermons that inspired many, including

⁹⁶ www.bbc.com, "How Last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar's Tomb Was Found in Yangon, Myanmar" (26 March 2024).

⁹⁷ thelibrarypk.com, "Tazkira Mashaikh e Allo Mahar Sharif" (20 March 2024).

⁹⁸ Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury, "The Influence of Sufi-Centric Movements on the Flourishing of Islamic Plurality in the Indian Subcontinent," *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah dan Pemikiran Islam* 26/2 (2024), 375-412.

⁹⁹ Muhammad Mojlum Khan, *The Muslim Heritage of Bengal: The Lives, Thoughts and Achievements of Great Muslim Scholars, Writers and Reformers of Bangladesh and West Bengal* (Markfield, UK: Kube Publishing Ltd, 2013), 95-102.

¹⁰⁰ Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury, *Banglades'te İslâm ve Tasavvuf* (Ankara: Ankara Kalem Neşriyat, 2023), 163.

non-Muslims, to embrace Islam. Active in Bengal and Assam, he established a madrasa and Eidgah in Daulatkhan, Bhola district, contributing to religious propagation and societal welfare. His renowned uncles, Abdul Awwal Jaunpuri and Maulana Abdul Batin Jaunpuri, profoundly influenced him.¹⁰¹

Conclusion

The Mughal Empire is one of the most powerful empires in the Indian subcontinent. For nearly two centuries, the Mughal Empire stretched to the outer edge of the Indus Basin in the west, Afghanistan in the northwest, and Kashmir in the north. At the same time, the Mughal Empire extended eastward to the mountainous regions of Assam and Bangladesh and the Deccan Plateau in southern India. Iran, Turkey, and Central Asia's language, art, and culture greatly influenced the Mughal Empire. The Mughal Empire stood as the most influential Islamic empire in the history of the Indian subcontinent, representing unparalleled wealth and serving as a historic centre of art and culture, epitomised by monuments like the Taj Mahal and Shahi Jamma Masjid of Delhi. The Mughal Empire governed over portions of the Indian subcontinent from the early 16th century to the mid-19th century, making a lasting impression on the history of the area. The empire, renowned for its avant-garde architectural designs, cultural syncretism, and inclusive policies towards the public, made a substantial economic contribution and gave rise to an era of creative revival.¹⁰² The European interest in Indian commodities was noteworthy during this period, contributing to the empire's prosperity.

While the Mughal Empire was built on Islam, there is minimal evidence of forced conversion to Islam or persecution of other religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, in this region. The Mughal rulers made essential contributions to the spread of Islam, according to research dating back to Emperor Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur and ending with Emperor Bahadur Shah II. They maintained friendly connections with Sufism and used the chance to spread Islam. Humayun was a monarch with scholastic inclinations who built an extensive personal library. Akbar was a lover of science and literature, and his reign witnessed the publication of renowned books, including "*Akbarnama*," "*Sursagar*," and "*Ramcharitmanas*." Emperor

¹⁰¹ Muhammad Ismail, *Hagiology of Sufi Saints and the Spread of Islam in South Asia* (New Delhi: Jnanada Prakashan, 2010), 172.

¹⁰² Dr Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury, "Harmony Amidst Diversity: Exploring Religious Pluralism in Bengal Through the Lens of Sufi Heritage and Its Envoys," *Hamdard Islamicus* 47/4 (2024), 33-57.

Jahangir upheld the practice of literary patronage, bringing intellectuals from several European nations to his imperial palace. Shah Jahan valued the arts and wished for Shahjahanabad to become the world's most prosperous and populous metropolis at the time. Under Emperor Aurangzeb's administration, Kashmir, Patna, and Murshidabad were prominent Sufi hubs in the Indian subcontinent. While recognising Sufis, Aurangzeb and Akbar's reigns played a vital role in the propagation of Islam by building mosques, madrassas, langarkhanas, guesthouses, hospitals and libraries.

In preparing this article, it has been attempted to review various primary sources and secondary sources, including academic books, articles and essays on the influence of Sufism during the Mughal Empire. However, due to the inability to directly access libraries in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, there may be limitations due to incomplete access to some academic sources. Nonetheless, hoping scholars interested in this field find our valuable work for future research.



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BABÜR İMPARATORLUĞU'NDA SUFİ ETKİSİNİN YANSIMASI (1526-1857): MANEVİ VE KÜLTÜREL BİR ANALİZ

 Saeyd Rashed Hasan CHOWDURY^a

Extended Abstract

Bu makale, Babür İmparatorluğu'nun kuruluşundan 1857'deki Hint İsyanı'na kadar geçen yaklaşık üç yüz yıl süresince Babür hükümdarlarının tasavvufu teşvik etmedeki rollerini ve bunun Hint alt kıtasındaki dini, sosyal ve ekonomik gelişmelere katkılarını inceler. Babür İmparatorluğu, Zahir-ud-Din Muhammed Babür tarafından 1526 yılında Delhi Sultanı İbrahim Lodi'ye karşı zafer kazanarak kurulmuştur. Babür'ün torunu Ekber, Babür İmparatorluğu'nu genişletmiş ve bu dönemde tasavvuf, İslam'ın ve toplumun sosyal yapısının önemli bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışmada, Babürler döneminde tasavvufun rolü ve imparatorluğun kültürel ve dini yapısına olan etkisi vurgulanmaktadır. Aynı zamanda, Babür yönetimindeki sufilerin dini ve toplumsal gelişmelere katkıları üzerinde de durulmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, çeşitli Babür hükümdarlarının tasavvufu destekleme çabaları ve bunun Hint alt kıtasındaki İslam düşüncesine ve kültürüne katkıları araştırılacaktır.

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Babür İmparatorluğu'nun tasavvufla olan ilişkisini analiz etmek, tasavvufun imparatorluğun dini, sosyal ve kültürel gelişmesine nasıl katkı sağladığını incelemektir. Ayrıca, Babür hükümdarlarının tasavvufu nasıl teşvik ettikleri ve bunun Hint alt kıtasındaki Müslüman toplumu üzerindeki etkilerini tartışmak da hedeflenmiştir.

Bu araştırma, nitel bir inceleme yöntemi ile yapılmıştır. Babür İmparatorluğu'na ait tarihi belgeler, hükümdarların dönemiyle ilgili yazılı eserler ve tasavvuf literatüründen yararlanarak, Babür yönetimindeki tasavvufun rolü üzerine bir analiz yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, Babür

^a Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Bartın Üniversitesi, saeydrashed.du1991@gmail.com

hükümdarlarının tasavvufa dair politikaları ve sufilerle ilişkileri üzerine de detaylı bir literatür taraması gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu araştırmada, Babürler'in tasavvufla ilişkisi, kültürel ve dini mirasları ışığında değerlendirilmektedir.

Araştırma, Babür İmparatorluğu'nun tasavvufu önemli bir kültürel ve dini güç olarak kabul ettiğini ve imparatorluğun gelişiminde önemli bir etken olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Babür hükümdarları, tasavvufu dini hoşgörü, toplumsal uyum ve kültürel ilerleme sağlamak amacıyla teşvik etmişlerdir. Ekber'in yeni dinî doktrini olan 'Din-i İlâhî' ve Evrengzib'in cami ve hankâhlar üzerinde yaptığı reformlar, imparatorluğun dini ve kültürel yapısını şekillendirmiştir. Ayrıca, Babürlerin yönetimindeki sûflerin etkisi, İslam'ın Hind alt kıtasındaki yayılmasında önemli bir rol oynamıştır.

Babür İmparatorluğu, özellikle Ekber ve Evrengzib gibi hükümdarların dönemlerinde, tasavvufun İslam düşüncesiyle entegrasyonunu teşvik etmiştir. Ekber'in 'Din-i İlâhî' gibi yenilikçi dini hareketleri, Sufizm'i içeren bir dini anlayışa dayanmaktadır. Bunun yanında, Babürler'in diğer hükümdarlarının sufilerle olan ilişkileri, cami inşaatları ve sosyal yardımlar, sufiliğin halk arasında yayılmasına yardımcı olmuştur. Bu durum, Babür yönetiminin dini çeşitliliği kucaklayarak, farklı kültürel grupları birleştirici bir rol üstlenmesini sağlamıştır.

Babür İmparatorluğu, tasavvufu sadece dini bir öğreti olarak değil, aynı zamanda toplumsal ve kültürel bir güç olarak benimsemiştir. Babür hükümdarlarının tasavvufa verdikleri destek, imparatorluğun kültürel çeşitliliğini koruyarak, Hind alt kıtasındaki İslam kültürünün şekillenmesine katkı sağlamıştır. Ayrıca, Babürler'in tasavvufun sosyal ve kültürel etkilerinden yararlanarak, toplumsal barışı teşvik ettikleri görülmüştür.

Bu çalışma, Babür İmparatorluğu'nun tasavvuf ile olan ilişkisini ele alarak, bu konuyu daha önce detaylı bir şekilde incelemeyen literatürdeki boşluğu doldurmaktadır. Ayrıca, Babür hükümdarlarının tasavvufu nasıl teşvik ettiklerine dair özgün bir analiz sunmaktadır.

Bu araştırma, Babür İmparatorluğu'nun tasavvufla olan ilişkisini derinlemesine anlamak isteyen tarihçiler ve İslam araştırmacıları için önemli bir kaynak olacaktır. İlerleyen çalışmalar, Babürler'in tasavvufla olan ilişkisini daha fazla derinleştirerek, bu dönemin diğer kültürel ve dini hareketleriyle olan etkileşimini inceleyebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tasavvuf, Hint Alt Kıtası, Babür İmparatorları, İslam'ın Yayılması, Dini Hoşgörü.



Hakem: Dış, Bağımsız.

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