

SUFISM STREAMOLOGY IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT AND ITS PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Seyed Mehdi Taheri

Al-Mustafa International University, Qom, I. R. Iran

The Indian subcontinent is considered one of the five ancient civilizations in the world and the inheritor of a magnificent and diverse culture. India, as the largest country in this subcontinent, is considered the seventh largest country in the world. Due to its strategic importance, this region has always been favored by people from other parts of the world. Regarding the relationship of other nations, races and religions with the people of the Indian subcontinent, they were able to influence the life and culture of the region.

One of the distinctive features of this region is the existence of different religions and religious sects, among which Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam are the most important religions of the region. The mentioned religions have many sects in the region, and one of the important Islamic sects is Sufism, which has established a positive interaction with other religions by becoming indigenous in the subcontinent and peacefully coexisting.

In this article, after discussing the potentials and capacities of the subcontinent region, the author tries to investigate issues such as the importance of peaceful coexistence in Islam, interring in Islam and Sufism to the subcontinent, different sects of Sufism and its peaceful coexistence with other religions.

In this regard, the author believes that Sufism was able to influence Hindu seekers through familiarity with philosophical works, the type of worldview and interaction with mystics and also through the peaceful coexistence emphasized by Islam. By taking advantage of good morals, decent behavior and the call to philanthropy derived from Islam, not only did they gain great influence among the common people, but beyond that, throughout history, they were able to attract the devotion of kings and gain a lot of power in the courts of some rulers of India.

Keywords: *Sufism, Hinduism, Islam, peaceful coexistence, Indian subcontinent*

Introduction

Today, with the globalization of communications, the issue of the coexistence of societies, cultures and religions and efforts to reduce violence have become more important, and therefore the capacities of religions, including Islam, and their role in creating peace and coexistence have been considered and the coexistence of people (of any creed and nationality) and avoiding violence and war are considered one of the basic needs of the world today.

Sufism has been considered as a special way of worldview, an attitude towards existence and human life, a way in individual and social behavior, and it can be discussed as a thought process and method that emphasizes peaceful coexistence. In addition, the historical role of Sufism in the preservation and development of Islam cannot be ignored; because in the difficult and catastrophic periods when the Islamic world was under the pressure of rulers such as the Mongols in the distant years and also the rule of the new colonialists in the contemporary world, Sufism used to give people hope for the future by trusting and adhering to divine beliefs.

Sufism has played a huge role in the spread of Islam and its promotion in other lands and since it has allocated a huge part of the history of the Islamic world and with its deep movements, it has had many effects on the cultural and social situation of the Islamic world.

Following the political and cultural effects of the events of September 11, some powers in the world have tried to present a new approach of Sufism as an alternative to Islamic extremist thinking and by referring to the spirit of tolerance in Sufis, which has a lot of similarities with humanism, they have pursued it to present Sufism as the best communication bridge between Islam and the West and in addition to that, they should seriously examine the possibilities of the participation of the mentioned intellectual movement in political power and they are so determined in their decision that by arguing about the extensive historical and social capacity of Sufism in the Islamic world, people like Eric Geoffroy, a French orientalist, believe that the political future of the Islamic world lies in Sufism.

After the failure of modernism and postmodernism, some westerners have come to believe that one of the ways to know and gain knowledge and reach the truths of the world is mystical self-construction, which provides the basis for receiving inspiration, illumination, discovery, and intuition. They believe that it is possible to create a deep connection in the eyes of a large group of audiences of the teachings of Islamic mysticism through respect for love and mystical teachings of Sufism and they realized the concern of improving the fate of human society on a wide level with the inspiration of the sublime values of the holy religion of Islam in the form of mysticism and Sufism and defined

the doctrine of Islamic mysticism as an ideal that gives concrete manifestation of the inner mission of mysticism.

Considering the need to discuss and examine the above-mentioned issues, the author intends to discuss issues such as the importance of peaceful coexistence in Islam, the introduction of Islam and Sufism to the subcontinent, after discussing the potentials and capacities of the subcontinent, different sects of Sufism and their peaceful coexistence with other religions.

1. Subcontinent, Potentials and Capacities

The subcontinent is the peninsular part of South Asia that includes the countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar (Burma). This region is one of the five ancient civilizations of the world and a glorious and diverse cultural heritage, and India, as the largest country in this subcontinent, with an area of three million three hundred thousand square kilometers, is considered the seventh largest country in the world. One of the distinctive features of this region is the existence of different religions and religious sects, which mostly originate from Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, and historically, Muslims made up one fifth of the population of the Indian subcontinent. Most of the Muslims first lived in Sindh and Western Punjab, but with the independence of Pakistan and Bangladesh as two Muslim countries, the Muslims of India became a minority more than before. However, at present, although Indian Muslims constitute only 14% of the country's population; but in terms of the number of Muslims, after Indonesia and Pakistan, India ranks third in the world in terms of Muslim population.

It is noteworthy that the Persian language, as one of the scientific and cultural treasures of mankind, in the course of history, was the platform for the transfer of human knowledge and culture, especially during the flourishing periods of Iranian-Islamic culture and civilization in a wide area of ancient civilizations and the Dari Persian language, which was once among the major languages of the world, covered a wide territory of lands including Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and the subcontinent. It is necessary to mention that the Persian language went to the subcontinent with the Muslims and was spread by Iranian warriors and prominent Sufis. With the establishment of the Islamic government in Delhi, the Persian language became popular, and with the rise of the Babris, the support of Persian poetry and language by the rulers made all the cities of India and Pakistan become cradles of Persian literature. The Persian language, which was the official language of the Delhi court under the rule of the Mughal Empire for hundreds of years, soon spread among different ethnic groups and gradually, with the dominance of the Persian language in the fields of thought, politics, economy and culture of the people of

the subcontinent, all the important cultural, religious, political, literary works, correspondences, personal and government documents and judicial rulings of India were written in the Persian language. For a long time, this land was the cradle of Persian poetry and literature, and even now, the existence of precious works and highly valuable manuscripts in the region speaks of this fact.

This process continued until the 19th century; but with the beginning of this century and the domination of the British over India, the spread of the Persian language reached a point of weakness and the colonists decided to replace it by the English language in the offices. Therefore, in 1829 the English language officially replaced the Persian language (Shahabadi Farahani 2007: 6). Despite the British pressure to make English dominant over other languages, Farsi has remained one of the most popular languages in the vast land of India. Moreover, in many traditional Islamic schools, the Persian language is still present in the textbooks, and scholars and teachers are also familiar with the divans of great Iranian poets, especially Saadi's *Golestan*.

One of the important points regarding the spread of Islam and the Persian language in the subcontinent is Islam's emphasis on peaceful coexistence, and it is based on this that Islamic groups, including Sufism, were able to have a good position in this region.

2. Peaceful Coexistence in Islam

Coexistence is a concept beyond peace and in a society based on coexistence, different religious and social groups not only live together peacefully, but they also work together to build it. The right to peaceful coexistence can be examined in different dimensions. In terms of public international law, it includes friendly relations between nations and governments based on mutual recognition, equality of rights, non-interference and peaceful settlement of disputes. From the point of view of private international law, it also includes recognition of religious and ethnic minorities within a country, respect for their rights and freedom in performing religious activities.

Peaceful religious coexistence is an authentic Islamic thought. Islam has attached great legal value not only to international contracts and treaties, but to achieving coexistence and peace among nations and to preventing the occurrence of hostile relations and bloody conflicts. It also invites other nations and groups to conclude peace agreements and advises the Islamic community to always take the lead in this regard. This duty is even more so emphasized in cases where non-Muslim countries and groups are willing to conclude peace and coexistence agreements (Amid Zanjani 2004: III/505).

In addition, Islam considers peace and peaceful coexistence with followers of other religions and nations as a basic principle and rule in its legislative

system and rules in war are only necessary. There are many guidelines in this field in Islamic sources but unfortunately, some western theorists like Montesquieu, without a correct understanding of this issue, consider Islam to be the religion of the sword. He says in *The Spirit of Law*: “One of the misfortunes of mankind is that every conqueror imposes his religion on the defeated society. The religion of Islam has been imposed on the people by the force of the sword, because its foundation is based on coercion and force, it has caused misery and severity”.

In response to this type of attitude, it should be stated that in Islam, the right to peaceful coexistence is considered as a *principle*. War is an exceptional situation and it is when peaceful solutions cannot be reached. The Holy Quran states war and war for specific purposes, which are repelling aggression (Baqarah: 193), removing sedition (Nisa: 75), removing the weakness of the oppressed (Hajj: 39–40), defending the land (Tawbah: 13). Several verses of the Holy Quran and Islamic traditions order peaceful coexistence or religious coexistence in various ways, some of which are mentioned below:

- Non-compulsion in accepting Islam is one of the things specified in the book and tradition. “Reluctance is not permissible in the matter of religion because the path has become clear from the pathless” (Baqarah: 256). It is also stated in another place: “And if your Lord had willed, all the people of the earth would have believed (without having any authority). So, do you encourage people reluctantly until they become believers?” (Yunus: 99). Therefore, faith in God and the foundations of Islam cannot have any aspect of imposition, but the only way should be through logic, reasoning and influence in people’s thoughts and souls. On this basis, the Holy Prophet announced the Islamic call to the Jews, Christians and other religions of his time, and they were never forced to leave their religion and beliefs.
- The priority of peace in Islam: the Ashja tribe led by Masud ibn Rajila who were 700 people, came near Medina and stated that they had come to make an agreement to cease hostilities with Muhammad. A verse about this was revealed: “Then if they withdraw from you and do not fight with you, but offer peace, God will not allow you to oppose them” (Nisa: 90). Therefore, the Prophet of Islam strongly welcomed this proposal and ordered a large amount of dates to be taken as a gift for them. It is noteworthy that the Holy Prophet signed many treaties with different nations during his reign and in all cases, as long as the non-Muslim nations were loyal to their treaty, the Islamic government did not violate

the peace treaty because the violation of the treaty from the point of view Islam is a great and unforgivable sin.

- Respecting other religions for the sake of humanity: in this context, Imam Ali says in a part of his letter to Malik Ashtar: “Be kind and look at the subjects with an emotional eye and a chest full of love, you should not be like a predator to plunder their life and property. So, your followers are not outside of two classes; either they are Muslims and your religious brothers, or they are strangers to religion, in which case they are human beings just like you” (*Nahj al-Balagha*, letter 53). It is stated here that non-Muslims are respected because they share humanity with Muslims, even though they differ in belief and religion.
- Avoiding reprehensible religious arguments: undoubtedly, religious disputes and conflicts are unscientific and unethical and one of the causes of wars. When a person believes in a religion, whether it is right or wrong, it is natural that he gets upset when others insult his religion. Therefore, Islam orders its followers to seek benefit from wisdom, preaching, and good arguments in dialogue with religious opponents and to avoid using ugly and insulting words. Because they will appeal in the same way: “You believer, do not insult those who call on other than God, lest they also insult God out of cruelty and ignorance. So their return is to their Lord, and He will make them aware of what they used to do” (An’am: 108).
- Avoiding malice and insulting methods towards followers of other religions is one of the duties of Muslims. The Holy Quran mentions a group of Christians and Jews who have taken the path of mocking and blaspheming each other and always fanning the flames of war and discord (Baqarah: 113).
- Negation of racism: the Holy Quran condemns any racist thinking and considers all human beings as the children of one parent and, by force, lacking racial, ethnic and religious superiority. “O people! Indeed, We created you from one man and one woman and made you a group of peoples and tribes so that you can get to know each other. Undoubtedly, the most honorable of you in the sight of God is the most pious of you, God is All-Knowing, All-aware” (Hujurat: 13).

After explaining Islam’s view on peace and peaceful coexistence with followers of religions, we will continue to investigate the entry of Islam and the approach of Sufism in the Indian subcontinent.

3. The Entry of Islam and Sufism in the Countries of the Subcontinent

The Indian subcontinent is a collection of religions that live peacefully together and in every corner of the city there are various temples, mosques and religious symbols. Among the most important of these religions is Islam.

Regarding the entry of Islam into the subcontinent region, most fanatical Western researchers and some Indian thinkers believe that Islam first entered the subcontinent region through military conquests. It is noteworthy that the study of the historical process of the entry of Islam does not confirm this claim because, in general, the Muslims of the subcontinent are divided into two categories:

- The first group of Muslims is the descendants of foreigners who entered this land in the form of Arab, Turkish and Afghan conquerors and soldiers and considering the fact that the migration of Muslims to India, unlike the migration of Aryans, was not in a group, therefore their number cannot be large.
- On the other hand, the second group of Muslims is the descendants of the natives who converted to Islam for various motives and ways, and the way they converted to Islam was in three ways: (1) First, a group that was not large in number and was considered to be the people of power and high social classes, converted to Islam because of participation in the ruler's power or obedience to them. (2) Second, those who were mostly from the mass of people and saw Hinduism as unable to provide acceptable and convincing solutions for basic and intellectual questions in their lives, and therefore, as a result of socializing with immigrant Muslims who were mostly merchants and sailors, became fascinated with the practical way of Islam and they believed it. (3) The third group, who mostly immigrated from Iran and beyond the Nile to India as a result of acquaintance with immigrant Sufis, and presented Sufism and Islamic mysticism to the masses with practical methods that were easy for the common people to understand; written historical documents are also proof of this claim and their performance in introducing Islam and converting Hindus to Islam is confirmed (Sheikh-Attar 2004: 184–185). Finally, it should be stated that Iranian and Islamic culture, especially in mystical form, developed the religion of Islam in the subcontinent, not the wars and bloodshed of the conquerors.

Some researchers believe: "Although the Muslims took Sindh around 710–712 and conquered some areas of India during the time of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi, the Sufi monks stayed in the western and southern regions of India even before the establishment of monasteries, and they were busy preaching Sufi views. The simple sermons of the elders, especially about loving God and loving one's neighbour, attracted Hindus, especially people from the lower class and even the classless people of India" (Zarinkoub 1983: 64). In this context, factors such as the popularity of the Sufi sheikhs among the people, the holding of sermons and hearings in Persian and local Indian languages, and the belief in the equality of all human beings, were among the reasons for the success of Sufi in this matter (Razavi Athar 1997: 291–292, 326–327). "The Sufis, who were engaged in guiding and spreading religion among people, gained great influence not only among common people; rather, it also attracted the devotion of the kings, and in this regard, some of these rulers, such as Shamsuddin Iltmash and the Sultan of Delhi, gave a lot of power to the Sufis for their political interests and the expansion of their rule" (Sheikh-Attar 2004: 186).

The growth and spread of Sufism in the subcontinent is the result of Sufis' efforts in learning local languages and familiarizing with philosophical works and worldviews and their interaction with Indian mystics and the similarity of the thoughts of the inhabitants of India with the Sufi mystics, as well as their efforts in learning and applying some Indian ways of conduct like the reverse prayer, the method of holding one's breath and the use of other yogic methods of meditation are among the most important factors in the tendency of the people of the region to Sufism.

Historically, Sufism was formed in this region unofficially in the 8th century and in the following centuries it was followed in an organized manner under the influence of the efforts of people such as Abu Ali Al-Sandi, Sheikh Ismail, Sheikh Safi al-Din Kazeruni and Ali ibn Othman Hujwiri. With the arrival of Sufism dynasties from the end of the 12th century to the beginning of the 13th century, during the period of the Ghurid sultans and their successors in India, the organized activity of the Sufis gradually began and the important tariqats of Chishtiyyah, Qadiriyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, and then the Kobrawiyyah and Nimatullahi dynasties, all of which had Iranian origin, spread among the people of the region (Arya 2003: 42).

4. Sufism Sects in India

Historically, the Sufism of the Indian subcontinent can be divided into three historical periods: the pre-Mughal period, the post-Mughal period, and the post-British colonial period.

4. 1. Pre-Mughal Period

The general situation in this era was such that Sufis were more popular than religious scholars because they often avoided interfering in political affairs. This was while the scholars sometimes created limitations in the work of the sultans, and on this basis, the rulers of Delhi were generally disciples and supporters of Sufism. Sufis such as Salar Masud Ghazi and Sheikh Ismail, two famous Sufis who came to India in 11th century, despite the non-Muslim rulers of that era, thousands of Hindus became inclined towards Islam combined with Sufi tendencies (Sheikh-Attar 2004: 188). In the following, we mention the most important sects of Sufism.

Chishtiyyah. Mu'inuddin Chishti, who is one of the founders of this method, came to India a little before the Ghurid dynasty and taught religious subjects through Islamic mysticism, which was more compatible with the spirit and thought of the Indian people. In addition to the people, he also had a high position with the kings and Islamic rulers of India. For this reason, the means of progress were provided for him in every way and as a result of his activities, the religion of Islam advanced to the north and west of India. Khajah Mu'inuddin trained many students, each of whom became a source of valuable services, including Shamsuddin Iltamash, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, and Fariduddin Ganjshekhhar (Sheikh-Attar 2004: 189–190).

It is noteworthy that Chishtiyyah was the most influential tariqat of the sub-continent for many centuries and this dynasty has several important branches in India such as Nizamiya attributed to Nizamuddin Ulya and Sabriyya attributed to Sheikh Ali Sabir, each of which also has sub-branches (Hasani 1983: 181). One of the prominent characteristics of the elders of Chishtiyyah was that they refused to accept the gifts of the sultans and only accepted *futuh* (gifts from the people). Some of the Sufis of Chishtiyyah also devoted themselves to cultivating barren lands and sometimes, like Buddhist and Hindu monks, begged from house to house with baskets. After the expansion of Chishtiyyah in the provinces, Sufi sheikhs turned to asceticism less and did not hesitate to accept gifts from rulers. In addition, having a job or earning a living through civil service was considered permissible for disciples who were in low ranks (Ahmed 1988: 53–57).

Suhrawardiyyah. This tariqat following Chishtiyyah was founded in India by Ziauddin Abunajib Suhrawardi and was strengthened by Shihabuddin, his nephew and great disciple (Razavi Athar 1997: 249, 304). Suhrawardiyyah had a difference of taste with Chishtiyyah due to their strong emphasis on carrying out religious orders, and they also opposed the types of hearing that were common in other Sufi sects (Davani et al. 1983: 365). Contrary to Chishtiyyah's

initial approach, Suhrawardiyyah established friendly relations with the rulers by interfering in political affairs, which included receiving the position of Sheikh-ul-Islami from the kings. On the other hand, they also took care of the spiritual affairs of the government. (Schimmel 1997: 68) The members of the Suhrawardiyyah dynasty became close to the rulers to the point that they appeared as ambassadors in foreign courts in the 14th century (Razavi Athar 1997: 192).

4. 2. Post-Mughal Period

In this period, two important schools, Naqshbandiyyah and Qadiriyyah, were introduced to India from Central Asia, and there are also other important sects along with them, which we will discuss further:

Naqshbandiyyah. The founder of this tariqat was Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband Bukhari and this dynasty is the continuation of the dynasty of eunuchs that became known as Naqshbandiyyah from the time of Bahauddin Naqshband. The elders of this dynasty, including Nur al-Din Jami, had a special devotion to Ahl al-Bayt, and this dynasty was popularized in the subcontinent by Khwaja Muhammad Baghi during the reign of Akbar (Ahmed 1988: 59). The greatest expansion of this dynasty took place due to the efforts of Ahmed Sarhandi known as *Mujaddid al-Thani*, who was a disciple of Khwaja Baghi. He strongly criticized the philosophical monotheism based on the unity of existence of Ibn Arabi and in this way changed the path of mystical thought in India and proposed the theory of “unity of intuition” against the unity of existence. Adhering to Sharia and Sunnah, he wrote many letters to Timurid nobles and courtiers. In this way, he was able to get many nobles and courtiers to agree with him in opposing the method of the Indian Timurid court (bringing Hinduism closer to Islam) (Choudhury 1971: 23). He had a very good relationship with the nobles and the court, and since the Naqshbandiyyah considered it permissible to communicate with the rulers for the benefit of the people, they gained the most credit due to their political activities (Zarinkoub 1983: 174). After Sheikh Ahmad, with the expansion of the activities of his followers in India, the Naqshbandiyyah dynasty had many branches, including Baqiyyah attributed to Baqibillah, Mujaddidiyyah attributed to Ahmad Sarhandi, Mazhariyyah attributed to Mazhar Janjanaan, Ihsaniyyah attributed to Adam ibn Ismail Banuri and Alaiyyah attributed to Abi al-Ala ibn Abi al-Wafa Husseini Akbarabadi. It should be noted that Husseini Akbarabadi mixed Naqshbandiyyah with Chishtiyyah and gradually “this sect, expanding its activities in India, formed other branches such as Muhammadiyyah, Manamiyyah and Afzaliyyah” (Hasani 1983: 182–183).

Qadiriyyah. The founder of Qadiriyyah tariqat is Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gilani, who sent disciples from his monastery in Baghdad to preach in other parts of the world. The first person from this dynasty to leave for India was Safiuddin Gilani, the grandson of Sheikh Abdul Qadir. Finally, Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ghawth Gilani, by staying in India, founded the foundation of this dynasty in this land (Arya 2003: 56–58). This dynasty expanded further during the Timurid era and one of its leaders named Muhammad ibn Shamir, known as Mian-Mir and his successor Mulla Shah Muhammad Badakhshi, tried to promote the Qadiriyyah style (Ahmed 1988: 61–62). In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Qadiriyyah sheikhs, including Mullashah Bahauddin Junaydi, Sheikh Qamis and Muhibbullah Allahabadi, were gradually influenced by Ibn Arabi's views towards the idea of unity of existence (Hasani 1983: 182–183). As a result of the propagation and development of Islam among Hindus, many people, both ordinary people and courtiers, were inclined towards them; among them was Dara Shokuh, the son of Shah Jahan who, with devotion to Qadiriyyah, translated Sufism books from Hindu language to Persian.

Kobrawiyyah. This tariqat is attributed to Sheikh Najmuddin Kobra, which, despite its historical background, has fewer followers than the Qadiriyyah and Naqshbandiyyah tariqats. The followers of this method consider Hazrat Ali and his disciple Kumeil ibn Ziyad as their leaders (Razavi Athar 1997: 249). This tariqat is divided into two important branches: Ferdowsiyyah and Hamadaniyyah. Ferdowsiyyah takes its name from Rukn al-Din Ferdowsi, one of the elders of Kobrawiyyah in India, and its spiritual lineage goes to Saif al-Din Bakhzari, a disciple of Sheikh Najm al-Din. It turns out that it was created by Khwaja Badruddin Samarqandi. Since the Ferdowsiyyah could not achieve much success in Delhi, they went to Behar at the end of the 14th century and found many followers there (Ahmed 1988: 62–63). One of the elders of this branch was Sharafuddin Ahmed ibn Yahya Meniri (died 782), who was respected by the Seljuq sultans and had an important contribution in the spread of Sufi prose in the subcontinent and also in introducing Iranian sheikhs to India (Haddad Adel 2003: 406). Hamdaniyyah branch is also attributed to Mir Seyyed Ali Hamdani. After his preliminary education, he became interested in the way of Kobrawiyyah by Sheikh Mahmud Nizamuddin Mozdaghani, one of Ala al-Dawlah Semnani's disciples and after settling in Kashmir, he spread the Kobrawiyyah dynasty there, and as a result of his efforts, many people in those areas became Muslims. He left many works in the field of mysticism and Sufism and was also considered one of the promoters of Persian language in Kashmir (Hikmat 1951: 342–343).

Another branch of Kobrawiyyah, known as Sadat Baihaqi, operated in Kashmir and was related to the government apparatus, which is why it often did not have good relations with Sadat Hamdaniyyah. From the 15th century

onwards, with the continued migration of Sufis from Iran and Central Asia to Kashmir, the activities of the followers of Seyyed Mahmud Nurbakhshi, another leader of Kobrawiyyah, led to the promotion of Shia Imamiyyah in this area.

Shattariyyah. This dynasty is attributed to Abdullah Shattari, who started working in the 14th century in the region of Jaunpur and Malwa. The most prominent Sufi of Shattariyyah was Seyyed Muhammad Ghawth who, with the spread of Shattariyyah in Gujarat, attracted the attention of people such as Zahiruddin Babur, Humayun, Akbar Shah and the Mughal rulers. It seems that, due to the ceremonies and austerities common in this sect, this dynasty was probably more influenced by Hinduism than other dynasties (Ahmed 1988: 63).

Nimatullahiyyah. Another important way that in India, especially in the Deccan, caused the expansion of Shiism and Sufism and also promoted the Persian language, was the Nimatullahiyyah dynasty attributed to Shah Nimatullah Wali, which in the century 15th became very popular among the Sultans of Deccan (Pazuki 2004: 119), to the extent that Shah Khalilullah (son of Shah Nimatullah Wali) and Mirnurullah (grandson of Shah Nimatullah) traveled to Deccan at the invitation of Sultan Shahabuddin Ahmad I (from the Bahmani of Deccan) and there a family bond emerged between the Sultan and Mirnurullah and they settled in Deccan and in this way, the Sultan supported this dynasty. The presence of the followers of Nimatullahiyyah in the Deccan caused the influence of the followers of Gisuderaz on the people to decrease and provided the basis for the change of religion of the Sultans of the Deccan (Razavi Athar 1997: II/57). Gradually, from the beginning of the emergence of the Safavid dynasty in Iran, the Nimatullahiyyah gained a strong base in India, and its branch of the Hashim-Shahiyya, attributed to Mirhashim Jahangir, also penetrated in Delhi (Zarinkoub 1983: 215).

Non-Sharia sects. The sects that have been discussed so far were in the form of "Sharia-based" tariqats, which are common in adhering to the Islamic Sharia, but in addition to them, groups of Sufis have also been present in India, which are known as Sharia-less. This group includes the Qalandaran, Javaliqiyyah, Madariyyah, and Shekariyyah groups, which do not adhere to Sharia. The most famous tariqat in this division is Qalandaran tariqat. This sect is a follower of Sheikh Jamal Savaji, who was famous for immorality and one of their customs was shaving the head along with the face and eyebrows. Beside them, there is another movement known as Javaliqiyyah and they were followers of Hasan Javaliqi. After the Mongol attack on Iran, these two currents traveled from Asia Minor to India.

Another group of Non-Sharia Sufis in India, Madariyyah heretics, were followers of Badiuddin Qutb Madar, known as Shah Madar. Although this

movement considered itself related to Chishtiyyah, their rituals were a fusion of Islamic and Hindu Sufism and by wearing the clothes of monks, rubbing ashes on their bodies and consuming hashish, they did not pay much attention to the religious rules of Islam and until the 19th century also continued to live (Ahmed 1988: 67). Another way in which the influence of Hindu customs can be seen was Shekariyyah, which was popularized in Jaunpur and Malon states by Sheikh Abdullah Shekari, and one of its most famous figures was Muhammed Ghawth Gwaliari, who lived in Gujarat, and because of the combination of austerity with pleasure and prosperity, the scholars of Gujarat considered his method heretical (Ahmed 1988: 67).

4. 3. The Period after the British Colonialism

The most important feature of this period is the establishment of new Islamic schools and the spread of Sufism outside India because some Indian Sufi dynasties, especially Chishtiyyah and Naqshbandiyyah, went beyond the borders of India in two ways. One was through the Europeans who visited the Sufis and became interested in their teachings, such as Inayat Khan, who reached Europe and America through followers such as Rabia Martin and Samuel L. Lewis. And the other was through the students who went to Europe and America from South Asia, and this led to the establishment of branches of Chishtiyyah and Naqshbandiyyah and the joining of some Europeans and American converts to these branches (Hadad Adel 2003: 447–448).

Regarding Sufism after British colonialism in India, it should be stated that some Sufi ways fought against British colonialism, especially Muhammadiyyah, which is a part of Naqshbandiyyah. Shah Waliullah Dehlawi took the intellectual and religious leadership of Muslims by creating a reform movement, after Shah Waliullah. One of the most influential people in the intellectual life of Indian Muslims, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, was Shah Abdul Aziz. Since the East India Company replaced its definitions with Sharia in all its claims, it declared India as a land of infidels and a place of war, but it is surprising that it allowed cooperation with the British on the condition that it did not lead to a great sin.

The successor of Abdul Aziz was none other than his faithful student and disciple Syed Ahmad Bareilvi, who worked hard in the fight against British colonialism. He believed in following the pure Sunnah and tariqat of the Salaf. His Sufi thoughts were somewhat reformist and sought to restore true Islam.

5. Sufism in Pakistan

Pakistan is located in South Asia and borders the Oman Sea, India, Iran, Afghanistan and China. The history of this country goes back to at least 2500

years BC. Around 1500 years BC, the Aryans dominated this region and influenced the Indian civilization and then advanced towards the Ganges Valley (East). Later, Iran (around the 6th century BC) occupied the north of this region and had it there until the 2nd century AD. After that, the Greeks settled there in the year 327 AD, with the domination of this area by Alexander the Great. In 712 AD, the Arabs under the leadership of Muhammad ibn Qasim came to a place near today's Karachi and ruled over half of Pakistan for two hundred years, and during this period, Islam influenced the culture, life and traditions of the people of this region. From the 10th century to the 18th century, the Muslims of Central Asia dominated this region, until in the 18th century, two hundred years of British rule over this region began. In 1930, Muhammad Iqbal promoted the idea of establishing an independent state and government for Muslims in this region, and finally, in 1947, under the guidance and leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the country of Pakistan was established independently from India.

At the time of independence, this country consisted of two western and eastern parts (present-day Pakistan and present-day Bangladesh). Although the country of Pakistan declared a republic in 1956, but in 1971, it lost its shaky political and territorial integrity and was divided into two countries, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It included 77% Sunni and 20% Shia, 3% Hindu, Christian and other religions.

It is noteworthy that in addition to influencing of the authentic Iranian culture in the subcontinent region, the Silk Road, which passed through Pakistan, was considered an important factor in the promotion of Iranian culture in the region. In addition to the above-mentioned issues, racial, geographical and linguistic aspects are also considered common points of the parties, because racially, the people of the two countries are of the Aryan race, and geographically, the political geography of the two countries was the same until the time of the Timurids. In addition, from the first millennium AD to 1858, the Persian language was considered the official language of the region. Also, some celebrities and sheikhs of Iranian origin have been promoters of the religion of Islam in this country, the most important of them being Hujviri, Mu'inuddin Chishti, Mir Seyed Ali Hamedani, Osman Marandi, Mir Seyed Ali Tousi, Bahauddin Zakaria Multani and etc.

In terms of Iranian art and culture, it can be claimed that many of the inscriptions and writings of Pakistan's historical buildings are in Persian, and some ethnic groups, such as Hazara, Ghezelbash, etc., still speak Persian in Pakistan. In addition to the fact that the works of Iranian poets also played a major role in promoting Islamic culture in the region, among whom we can mention the works of Saadi, Hafez, Ferdowsi, Nizami, Khayyam, Jami, Attar and Rumi, which are very popular in the Pakistani society.

Regarding the Sufism of Pakistan, it should be stated that as soon as Islam arrived in Pakistan, attention to Sufism and Islamic mysticism also arose in this land. And therefore, the history of Sufism and Mysticism in the Indus Valley (Pakistan) is as old as the history of the emergence of this phenomenon in countries such as Iran and India; currently there are many Islamic and Sufi ways in Pakistan.

Chishtiyyah. With the arrival of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti Ajmiri in Lahore, this dynasty became very prosperous in Punjab, and great mystics, such as Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki Oshi, Khwaja Fariduddin Masud Ganj Shekar, Khwaja Nizamuddin Dehlavi and many other great mystics, started preaching and other dynasties and sects were born from this tariqat. Chishtians are one of the Hanafi elders and the closest Sunnis to the Shia religion, who were very successful in promoting Islam in the subcontinent, and the most important dynasties in this sect include Chishtiyyah Nezami and Chishtiyyah Sabri.

Suhrawardiyyah. Suhrawardiyyah dynasty, whose main founder was Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, was introduced in Pakistan through Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria Multani, who was a disciple of Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi. One of the important points about Suhrawardiyyah and Chishtiyyah is that despite the time symmetry of these two with each other and their efforts in promoting Islam, there are some differences in their beliefs and actions towards each other. One of them is that Suhrawardians avoid Sama except for a few special cases that do not conflict with Sharia, while the Sufis of Chishtiyyah consider it a part of worship. Unlike Chishtiyyah, who tend to be isolated, and so they are often poor people, Suhrawardiyyah tend to travel, have asocial life and are rich. In order to solve people's problems and serve God's people, Suhrawardiyyah establish a friendly relationship with rulers, while Chishtians consider this relationship for any purpose reprehensible.

Naqshbandiyyah and Qadiriyyah. The Naqshbandiyyah and Qadiriyyah sects (Gilaniyyah) are also active in Pakistan, which entered this land from the 15th and 16th centuries. The method of Naqshbandiyyah, which is based on the remembrance of the heart, was developed by Bahauddin Muhammad Bukhari in Pakistan and the Qadiriyyah dynasty is also attributed to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gilani known as Ghawth A'zam, who is known as Ghawthiyyah in Pakistan.

Deobandiyyah. The founder of this sect is Shah Waliullah Deobandi. He believed that Islam had lost its original spirit in the region. Therefore, we should try to revive Islam by creating a reform movement. He considered that the only way for the unity of Muslims was to gather around the axis of the reign of Tipu Sultan and considered the Shah as the Caliph of Allah. Unlike

many Sufis, they did not believe in matters such as mourning, honoring the dead, etc., and were openly opposed to it. This sect belongs to Darul Ulum Deoband school, whose main goal of the establishment of this school by the founders was to strengthen the foundations of Islam based on the Hanafi religion, and therefore the beliefs of Deobandis are very close to Wahhabism (followers of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab).

Barelvi. Today, the supporters of this tariqat in Pakistan are more inclined to the flow of hadith than to Sufism. It is shown that, since the British gave the title of Wahhabism to the movement of Seyyed Ahmed Barelvi, for this reason, the title of Wahhabism is usually used for those who follow their path. This is why the famous Wahhabi relationship with Deobandiyyah and Barelviyyah is not an absolutely good relationship. However, in recent years, their hadith approach has increased and they have come closer to Wahhabism (Arefi 2006: 180).

It is noteworthy that the Barelvīs were close to the Shiites in some issues, including respect for the saints, especially the innocent imams, prayer, vows, pilgrimage and mourning, and because of their belief in some rituals such as respect for the dead, asking for ablution in blessed places and following the method of a follower, a mentor, they are severely criticized by Deobandis.

Nurbakhshiyyah. Nurbakhshiyyah is the name of a sect in Pakistan's Baltistan that respects Imams. The followers of this sect act on the basis of a treatise called Fiqh Ahwat or Fiqh Imamiyyah, which was authored by Seyyed Muhammad Nurbakhsh. He believes that the source of imitation should be a divine scholar, so if you find someone who is better than you in this quality, imitate him. Suhrawardiyyah of Pakistan, who are called Shajarah Tariqat, believe in clear and hidden remembrance, and in terms of personality, they are simple people who do not pretend among them.

Due to the extensive propaganda and efforts, the ideas of Sufism flourished very quickly in all of Pakistan, and the special feature of Sufism in this country, compared to other countries in the region, is the non-sectarian character (Shia and Sunni) of Sufis. This point of view attracted the attention of the followers of other religions and also this tendency was strengthened due to two other factors, one of which was the sincerity of Sufi elders and the other was the expression of special love and affection towards Hazrat Ali by the Sufis (Arefi 2006: 180).

In this regard, currently there is a trend of Sufism in Pakistan in the Shiite areas and these groups have made the mausoleum of Imam-Zadegan and the elders their gathering place. In recent years, some of these centers have been taken over by young clerics who, with their reformist ideas, have turned some of these places into seminaries (Arefi 2006: 181–182).

6. Sufism in Bengal and Bangladesh

Bengal was a region and a state of India that was divided into two parts of West Bengal state in India and East Pakistan after the independence of the subcontinent. In 1971, East Pakistan became independent under the name of Bangladesh. Bangladesh, as one of the sub-continental countries located in the southeast corner of India, is surrounded by India on three sides, the west and north, a part of the south and a border with Burma (now Myanmar) and a coast with the Bay of Bengal in the south. In this country, 86% are Muslims, 10% are Hindus and the rest are Buddhists and Christians, and the geographical and strategic location of this country has drawn the attention of world politicians and exploiters to this country.

Regarding the arrival of Islam in this land, historians believe that the arrival of Islam in the land of Bengal, especially in the port of Chittagong (the largest city and port of Bangladesh), is related to the beginning of Islam and the era of the second Caliph. Arab merchants who had established trade relations with the East Indian archipelago used the port of Chittagong as their stopover and in this way the Muslims of this land accepted Islam. In contrast to this view, some others believe that the arrival of Islam in this land dates back to the era of Harun al-Rashid. They believe that this possibility is strengthened due to the lack of historical documents related to before this era and the finding of an old coin related to the Caliphate of Harun al-Rashid in this region. Also, following the Arab traders, Sufi immigrants from the lands of Iran and the Arab subcontinent entered this land with the message of philanthropy and love for God. Historically, historians believe that after the attack of Hulegu Khan on Baghdad and the destruction of Baghdad as the center of Muslim culture and civilization, Sufis from Baghdad and Iran entered Bengal in large numbers and permanently settled in this area. This is because Sufis lived in different regions of the subcontinent whose spiritual activities spread in these regions and their moral and spiritual works remained in these regions. A large group of the above-mentioned Sufis lived in Bengal and their influence in Bengal was greater than in other regions, and the large number of Muslims and the Sufi nature of the people of that region are proof of this (Sehasrami 2004 10–11). Until today, the growth and development of Islam in Bangladesh has been mainly the result of the effort and propagation of the two schools of Chishtiyyah and Qadiriyyah (Asadi 1987: 16). Moreover, the mystics of Bengal provided many services to Islam and their society in different ways, and hundreds of their disciples and followers also reached the cities and villages and even the farthest parts of this region during different periods.

Sirajuddin, one of the students of Nizamuddin Ulya, was one of the first ones who, in the 12th century, encouraged the spread of Islam in Bengal, Bihar

and Assam. Also, Sheikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi converted many people of Bengal to Islam after entering this land. The first Muslims of this land were from the lower classes of the society and Islam initially developed mostly in the villages of East Bengal. This was more than anything due to the restrictions that the Hindu leaders imposed on the natives. It is noted that most of the people of this land followed Hinduism and sometimes Buddhism before Islam. In the development of Islam, religious clerics played a prominent role in expanding and consolidating the Islamic government in Bengal, and this was done either by the Sufis themselves or through cooperation with Islamic leaders. And in this way, the Islamic possessions were extended to the farthest regions. The participation of Sufis in the Islamic army caused the moral and spiritual excitement of the soldiers, and as a result, the Islamic forces won over the non-Muslim masses (Abdul Rahim 1963: 13). Gradually, the Sufi mystics, by influencing non-Muslim areas, spread the religion of Islam among the people there, and with the support of Muslim sultans and rulers, and actions such as the establishment of schools, mosques, and monasteries, they established the basis of an Islamic society there (Asadi 1987: 16).

During the time of the Muslim sultans, the activities of Sufis in Bengal increased and thus the people of the region were directly influenced by Sufism. In the monasteries, Muslims and Hindus gathered together and talked freely, and through brotherhood, they drew the attention of Hindus to Sufi and strengthened their motivation to convert to Islam. As a result, some Hindus converted to Islam, and some others, although they remained in their religion, got into the circle of Sufi's devotion and they clung to them to fulfill their wishes by the Sufis.

The second stage of the spread of Islam in Bengal was formed from the eclecticism of the popular forms of Islam and Hinduism; a popular and eclectic religion in which Sufi elders and Hindu saints are honored by Hindus and Muslims, and indigenous sages and magicians also derive their healing powers from the Quran and Krishna. Despite this, there was still a large gap between the popular religion of the majority of rural Muslims and the Muslim elite or aristocracy and still, the Muslim elites, due to their Urdu and Persian languages, adhere to an interpretation of Islam based on the beliefs of the people of North India, Iran, and Arabia.

The third stage of the transformation and expansion of Islam in this land began with the formation of Islamic reformist movements in the 19th century. The main goal of these movements was to remove the Islamic beliefs and customs of Bengali Muslims from doubts and superstitions. The most important of these movements was the Fardiyyah movement led by Haji Shariatullah in 1818, which spread throughout East Bengal during 9 decades, and this movement played an important role in the independence of the Muslims of Bengal in the form of the Pakistan independence movement.

Conclusion

The leaders of Islam have always advised observing justice, fairness, paying their rights and refraining from harassing the followers of other religions. In addition, the peaceful coexistence derived from Islam and creating a relationship of Sufism with non-Muslims is something that Muslims in other regions can benefit from. Because Islam is the religion of nature, it never contradicts the natural and human feelings of man. Sufism, as an active Islamic trend in the strategic region of the Indian subcontinent, has played a huge role in the spread of Islam among the countries of the region, and by being localized in this region, it has created a positive interaction with other religions. Sufis in all the countries of the subcontinent, with measures such as using Indian ways of conduct, ordering followers to be philanthropic, establishing friendship and brotherhood with Hindus, respecting the traditional customs of other religions, believing in the equality of all human beings and sympathizing with them in problems, were able to create a good interaction with other religions in the region and as a result draw the attention of people of other religions to Islam. Sufism with its mystical approach, in addition to being successful in the spread of Islam in a region that was the heir of the most ancient religions of the world and combined with a profound worldview and philosophy, had a great impact on great reformers and rulers. It is noteworthy that the mystical characteristics, along with their belief sharing with the non-Muslim natives in actions such as the followers' adherence to the leader, *dhikr*, meditation, *sama*, the unity of existence and disregarding the material manifestations of life, provided the reasons for the attraction of the people of the region towards Sufism.

Finally, it should be stated that in the contemporary world, in the face of issues and problems that have exposed all religions to common concerns and threats, not only is the dialogue between religions necessary and inevitable, but, in order to deal with the existing threats and concerns, by sharing the efforts of religions, they should adopt a single policy and a specific and common policy, the most important of which are:

- The necessity of dialogue and interaction between religions in order to reach the stage of adopting common positions regarding issues such as peace and peaceful coexistence.
- Developing a common charter for global religious life inspired by the sacred source of religions.
- Acquaintance of followers of different religions with each other and revival of the spirit of anti-tyranny, spread of justice and peace based on human equality.

- Fighting against anti-values such as killing people, destroying spiritual, religious and moral values.
- Creating social justice in the world based on common values among religions and emphasizing attention to the needy and weak.
- Discovering or fostering common spiritual rituals between religions through spiritual exchange in dealing with apostasy and the crises of the contemporary world.

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