

SACRED SERENITY AND SPIRITUAL BLISS: A COMPREHENSIVE CASE STUDY INVESTIGATING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF SYED ALI'S SHRINE

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Abstract

This study explores the role of religious shrines in providing spiritual satisfaction, focusing on the case of Syed Ali, a prominent religious figure. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing interviews, participant observations, and archival data to gain insights into the experiences and perceptions of individuals who visit the shrine. The investigation begins by examining the historical and cultural significance of Syed Ali and his shrine, providing a contextual backdrop to the spiritual practices associated with the site. Through in-depth interviews with pilgrims, devotees, and religious leaders, the study delves into the personal narratives and motivations that drive individuals to seek spiritual fulfillment at the shrine. The findings reveal that the religious shrine of Syed Ali serves as a multifaceted locus of spiritual satisfaction, addressing the emotional, psychological, and social needs of its visitors. The rituals, prayers, and communal aspects of the shrine contribute to a sense of belonging and connection, fostering a shared spiritual experience among the devotees. Furthermore, the research explores the impact of the pilgrimage on the well-being and overall satisfaction of the individuals involved. Insights are drawn from the narratives of pilgrims, shedding light on how the religious practices and interactions at the shrine contribute to a heightened sense of inner peace, contentment, and spiritual growth. The study also investigates the challenges and controversies surrounding the shrine, including issues of cultural appropriation, divergent interpretations of religious practices, and conflicts within the religious community. By examining these complexities, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved in the spiritual journey to Syed Ali's shrine. In conclusion, this case study contributes to the broader understanding of religious shrines as potent sources of spiritual satisfaction. By focusing on the specific context of Syed Ali, the research offers insights into the diverse dimensions of spiritual experiences and highlights the significance of religious practices in fostering a sense of connection, purpose, and satisfaction among individuals.

Keywords: Religious Shrines, Spirituality, Case Study, Sacred Places, Devotion, Sacred Sites.

INTRODUCTION

Although the term Tasawwuf came to the usage in later times, but it was always an essential feature of the Shariat. Shariat is concerned with the external features like prayers, Zakat, Roza, Haj etc., and these rituals are defined under the heading of Fiqh. And those features of religion which deals with the hidden and internal feelings of heart belong to the domain of Tasawwuf. Both of these aspects of religion are intended for the devotion to God. However, usually Sufis instead of dwelling on rituals (mazhab), they emphasize essence (deen) of Islam.

Although Sufism is a distinct and structured institution emerged in the third century Hijri,² its idea can be traced to the life time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) when some of his companions and the Prophet (SAW) himself practiced meditation to seek contemplation and nearness to God. This meditation also stressed the need to conquer one's self (nafs). The Sufi practice of community living in the Khanqah (monastery), lunger (Community dining, irrespective of race, religions, social status etc.) are ideal examples of means which can be adopted to resolve conflict arising over sharing of resources and to establish social justice. The Sufi message of annihilation of the ego and forgiveness



can make peace sustainable. The Sufi message of condemning greed if properly propagated can go a long way in successfully combating the menace of neo- imperialism. And that is possible since Sufis deploy popular means like Sama to bring home their message in an easy way to the young and old, alike. To preserve everlasting peace it is necessary to have interaction and dialogue between the social groups. It has been observed that coercive methods have only produced “cold peace”, where by Sufism promises “warm peace” which is more retainable and everlasting.

HAZRAT DATA GUNJ BAKHSH (R.A)

The birth of Hazrat Data Gunj Bakhsh (R.A) was in 400 H/100 AD during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi. The Sultan died in 421 AH. After his death a battle for throne started between his two sons Ameer Masud and Ameer Muhammad which continued for five months. In the end Ameer Mosud got upper hand and he captured the throne of Ghazni after making Ameer Muhammad blind. Between 421 AH and 430 AH, Ghazni remained peaceful as there was no change of government.

In 431 AH political situation became grave in Ghazni. In that year Turkamans attacked Ghazni and they besieged the capital. A very severe and tough battle was fought for Ghazni. Sultan’s confident colleagues one by one left the Sultan and joined the other party. But Sultan Masud didn’t give up and fought against the enemy single handedly. After the war he went to Merv brought back his blind brother Ameer Muhammad in Ghazni and made him a captive there. He tried to mend his relation with his family by giving lands and money to the sons of Ameer Muhammad. He also married his son to the daughter of Ameer Muhammad.

After these arrangements he aimed to move to Hindustan and decided to arrange a huge army to tackle the Turk Seljuk’s. Although the courtiers and the advisors advised not to move outside Ghazni but he had made up his mind. He took his wives and a small quantity of army with him. He took large amount of gold with him but when he crossed the River Indus; the supervisor ditched Ameer Masud and absconded towards Afghanistan. In Ghazni he released Ameer Muhammad and made him the Sultan of Ghazni. That event initiated the downfall of Ameer Masud. Sultan Muhammad sent an army to fight against Masud near River Indus in which Ameer Masud was defeated and was presented before his brother Sultan Muhammad. Ameer Muhammad pardoned his life. But the son and son-in- law of Ameer Muhammad developed a conspiracy and murdered him. It was during these times of political turmoil when Hazrat Data Gunj Bakhsh (R.A) arrived in India. Real name of Data Sahib was Ali bin Usman.

But he was famous as Abu al-Hasan Hazrat Data Gunj Bakhsh. He was Hashmi Syed. His paternal lineage starts from Hazrat Ali (RA). He was born in 400 AH in a mohalla named Hajver in Ghazni in Afghanistan. For that season he is also called Hajveri. His father name was Syed Usman Jilabi. Jilab is also a mohalla of Ghazni. After getting education from Hajver he travelled a lot in other countries to acquire knowledge and education. Very prominent and esteemed teachers he got for education e.g. Abu al-Abbas Ashqani, Sheikh Abu Jafar Muhammad Al-Seedlani, Sheikh Abu Al-Qasim bin Ali Al Gurgani, Abu Abdullah Daghistani Bastami, Abu Saeed Fazlullah bin Muhammad Mehni and Abu Ahmad Muzaffar bin Ahmed Hamdan. In spiritual education the teacher of Hazrat Data Gunj Bakhsh (R.A) was Hazrat Abu Al-Fazal Muhammad bin Hasan Khutli. He was the follower of silsila Junaidia started by Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi.

One night Hazrat Data Gunj Bakhsh saw his spiritual teacher Abu AlFazal Khutli in a dream saying to him that you have been appointed as the spiritual custodian of Lahore. Therefore, be prepared and go to Lahore. He replied that Hazrat Khawaja Hasan Zanjani was already there in the same position but his teacher re-ordered him to leave for Lahore without loss of time. Around 431 AH, in the reign of Mahmud Ghaznani, Data Sahib left Ghazni along with Hazart Abu Saeed Hujveri (R.A) and Hazrat Ahmad Hammadi Sarkhasi (R.A). Hazrat Abu Saeed Hujveri was fellow townsman of Hazrat Ali Hujveri (R.A) and the book Kashf-ul-Mahjoob was written in reply to his request. When he reached the outskirts of the city, it had grown dark. He stayed outside the city and entered it in the morning.

To his great surprise he saw a funeral. On his inquiry, he learnt that it was the funeral of Hazrat Sheikh Khwaja Hasan Zanjani (R.A) who had passed away the previous night. He led the funeral prayers. After he had settled in Lahore, he constructed a Khanqah (monastery) for himself and also



a mosque. He spent the rest of his days there guiding, teaching and inspiring the people. Thousands of unlettered persons become alims and hoards of people accepted Islam, the misguided began to follow the right path. Hazrat Ali Hujveri (R.A) is said to have passed away in 465 AH. His TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS

Hazrat Ali Hajveri (R.A) wrote many books. He had mentioned them in his book Kashf-ul-Mahjoob. However these have not survived and they are now extinct. Kashf-ul-Israr is a small booklet which is associated with Hazrat Ali Hajveri. It has been published from Lahore. It is likely that it may be of a work of a person who wants to spread the teachings of Hazrat Ali Hajveri in a short form. It has been written after Kashf-ul-Mahjoob. The writing looks very similar to Kashf-ul-Mahjoob. In this book some more aspects of Hazrat Ali Hujveri (R.A) life are present. So if Kashf-ul-Israr is not considered as the writing of Hazrat Ali Hujveri, still this book can be considered as the summary of Kashf-ul-Mahjoob.⁸ Kashf-ul-Mahjoob is considered as the first book in Persian on the subject of Tasawwuf. For this reason it is highly regarded and appreciated. Hazrat Nizma-ud-Din Auliya and Dara Shikah were very fond of it. Dara Shikah considered it as a complete code of conduct to practice Tasawwuf. Hazrat Nizam-ud-Din Auliya had said that if a person has no spiritual teacher (Murshid) then he should study Kashf-ul-Mahjoob. That book will be enough for him.

Kashful Mahjoob is not simply a narration of names of different names of Sufis and their silsilahs. But actually Hazrat Ali Hujveri (R.A) has minutely dissected their ideologies and teachings. He critically analyzed them and then gave conclusions about their thoughts for the benefit of the reader. He had himself approved the teachings of other Sufis which he considered right and rejected those which he thought wrong. The exact date of writing Kashful-Mahjoob has not been established yet. However, he may have written a major portion of it when he was in Ghazni and completed the remaining part of it in Lahore. It is held that he took a long time to complete this book. During his travels in the sojourn of knowledge and spirituality he met a number of scholars and philosophers. From them he got tremendous knowledge. He discussed with them the controversial issues. That helped him to vast his mind more about religion and theology.

Although, he himself was not a very abstract Sufi. He didn't establish any new silsilah or a new theory of Tasawwuf. But he was a great teacher. He could explain Tasawwuf for the common people in a very simple way. He simplified the already existed teachings and theories of the Ulema and Sufis together. It was the same work which had been tried before by the authors of Kitabul Luma and Risala and later by Imam Ghazali and Hazrat Shah Wali Ullah. Hazrat Ali Hujveri has written this book on the demand of his disciple Abu Saeed Hujveri.

It is required that he should write a thorough explanatory book to satisfy his student's thirst for Tasawwuf. In the introduction Hazrat Ali Hujveri described the situation of Tasawwuf and Sufis as deplorable and declining. Deceit and falsehood has penetrated in the folds of Sufis. People with very little knowledge were claiming of high scholarship. No hard work is carried on by the claimant of the Sufism. True teachings of Tasawwuf have been forgotten. So Hazrat Ali Hajveri considered it essential to explain Tasawwuf in a befitting way. Kashful Mahjoob has twenty five chapters which are divided into sub-divisions.

In the preamble definition of Tasawwuf and its importance in religion are described. Sufis are mentioned chronologically and are divided into following categories. Sahaba of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW), Khulfa-i-

Rashdeen, Tabay'een (followers of Sahaba), Taba Tabay'een (followers of Tabay'een), Sufis of after that period who were not living and lastly those Sufis which were contemporaries of Hazrat Ali Hujveri (R.A).

Geographically Sufis of following areas were discussed: Syria, Iraq, Persia, Karman, Khurasan, Mavra-un-Nahar and Ghazni.⁹

About twelve orders are mentioned in Kashful Mahjoob i.e., Mahasabya, Qasarya, Taiforya, Junaiadya, Nooriya, Suhailya, Hakimya, Kharazya, Khafifya, Syarya, Halolya and Hallajya. The ideologies of Sufis described are: Marfut, Touheed, Aiman, Purity, Salat, Zakat, Roza, Haj, dealings, rules for living a good life, Sama (Music) etc. Following are some of the beliefs and doctrines



accounted in Kashful Mahjoob. First chapter are about knowledge. Hazrat Data Gunj Bakhsh has applauded knowledge by quoting Quran and Hadis. Two Kinds of knowledge are described for religion and knowledge for this life. Knowledge for religion has again two kinds. Ilm-i- Shariat and Ilm-i- Haqiqat. Knowledge of Shariat is based upon Quran, Sunnah and Ijmah and knowledge of Haqiqat is based upon Tauheed, attributes of Allah and wisdom and actions of Allah.

Second chapter is about content (Fiqr). A life of poverty with resignation and content is the aim of Sufis. Quran and Hadis support that idea. Faqir sheds all worldly sources to come to the closeness of Allah. A person who renounces worldly possessions attains the most admiration by the Sufis. Similarly if a Sufi becomes an addict of worldly processions then he will become a slave of this world. Hazrat Ali Hajveri struck a balance between worldly possessions and Fiqr. He considers both as blessing of Allah and if both happen to divert person's attention from Allah then both become a bane.

Third chapter is about Tasawwuf. Hazrat Data Gunj Bakhsh gives the definition of Sufi. He regrets that people don't care about Tasawwuf. Ulema jeer at the Sufis. Hazrat Ali Hujveri considers Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) as the leader of Ilm- i- Tareqat (Tasawwuf). He defines Sufi as a person who has no bad intention in his heart for others. Simply he has a pure heart. From purity the word Sufi is derived. And the Sufi is one who rejects the love of world for the love of Allah.

Fourth chapter is about the dress code of Sufis. According to Hazrat Ali Hujveri wearing of woolen shirt or sheet is the sign of Sufi. That was the tradition of Hazrat Muhammad (Saw), Hazrat Umar (RA) and Hazrat Ali (RA) However that should be worn if a person is a complete Sufi, otherwise it should not be used. On the other hand it is all together not necessary to wear the Wooten clothes for a Sufi. Usually it is given by the Murshed to his Murid after three years of spiritual training.

Fifth chapter is about those ideas which Sufis use to describe about Tasawwuf and Sufism.

Sixth chapter is about blames and accusations on Sufis. People generally, don't like Sufis attitudes and manners. Same is the case with Sufis. Hazrat Ali Hujveri considers any Sufi who doesn't follow Shariat will have to face the blame and accusation from the public. Actually a Sufi saint Hamdoon Qasar has originally initiated that trend. He supported to receive blames from people to attain spirituality. Hazrat Ali Hujveri on the other hand didn't like it.

Seventh chapter is about those companions of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) who taught Tasawwuf. According to Hazrat Ali Hujveri, Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) was the spiritual leader of Sufis. Hazrat Umar (RA) was the model of Sufis. Hazrat Usman (RA) was the embodiment of Sufi as he sacrificed his life for the love of Allah. But Hazrat Ali (RA) position in Tasawwuf is very high. Reason for that position is the knowledge of Hazrat Ali (RA). He had explained and clarified all the aspects of Tasawwuf in the optimal way. Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi (R.A) says that in both ideology and action of Tasawwuf Hazrat Ali (RA) is our leader.

From eighth to thirteenth chapter Hazrat Ali Hujveri has described various theories and ideologies of Sufis and then explained them.

Fourteenth chapter describes twelve different orders of Sufis. He says that ten orders are popular and two are unpopular. Haloolya and Hallajya fall in the category of unpopularity.

Label of fifteenth to twenty-fifth chapters is Kashful Hijab. In these chapters various obstacles that occur in the performance of religious rituals and the rules for living in society are discussed. The first step to tackle these obstacles is repentance. The repentance is the only solution to come back to Allah. Then various modes of worship are discussed like, Namaz, Roza, Zakat and Haj. And the nature of intention during performance of their rituals is explained by Hazrat Ali Hujveri. He says that a person should always remember only Allah during worship. Regarding marriage, Hazrat Ali Hujveri first describes those who remain unmarried. That type of persons thinks that after marriage it becomes very difficult to maintain a balance between family life and spiritual life. However if a good mental relationship establishes between husband and wife then this marriage is a blessing of Allah. His advice for husbands is to remain vigilant about their time meant for prayers and worship and at the same time remain benign for their wives and make efforts to cater their necessities.



In the twenty-fourth chapter the various terminologies which are used by the Sufis are explained. In the last twenty-fifth chapter Hazrat Ali Hujveri discusses Samaa (Music). He accepts the hearing of Samaa but thinks that when a Sufi advances in the path of Tasawwuf a Sufi will no longer need it.¹⁰

IMPACT ON SOCIETY AND COMMON PEOPLE:

Hazrat Ali Hujveri (R.A) had a tremendous effect on the society. Lives of common men have been affected due to the teachings of him. When Hazrat Ali Hujveri arrived in Lahore he contracted a monastery (khanqah) for his meditation and also for the training of his disciples. People of Lahore and from other areas of Hindustan used to come there and seek the guidance of Hazrat Ali Hujveri. They bring forth their problems and issues in their lives and Hazrat Ali Hujveri will give them solutions to solve them. That had a great effect on them. In that era of strife and conflict it was a blessing that a true guidance was given by any person. In the Khanqahi system people used to stay there and were given free meals and bed.

During the period of Hazrat Ali Hujveri's stay in Lahore, the reaction of the common people towards the rulers and Sufis was different. The inhabitants of Hindustan resisted the first category i.e., warrior Muslims and were reluctant to accept their religion, their presence and ruling over them. However, it was the advent and spread of Sufism which was the greatest factor for social stability. People understood through Hazrat Ali Hujveri that Islam is not a religion of war and terror but a religious piety, liberalism, virtue, sacrifice, simplicity, equality and devotion. Thus, for that reason common people attracted towards him.

Hazrat Ali Hujveri contribution towards a political stability and legitimacy is also a great phenomenon. When Islam got accepted in the communally divided and strife torn society, Islamic rule of Sultans gained legitimacy. Politically the rulers were indebted to Sufis as due to their preaching of Islam the intensity of rebellions diminished to a lot of extent.¹¹

Due to Hazrat Ali Hujveri efforts in preaching Islam thousands of people embraced Islam. Particularly the vice-regent of Lahore Rai Raja accepted Islam. Due to this he had a great effect on the political policies of the government. He used his influence for the benefit of the local population. So to keep getting the blessings of Hazrat Ali Hujveri it was incumbent on the rulers to work towards the general welfare of the people.

Hazrat Ali Hujveri contribution to the literature is obvious. His book Kashful Mahjoob is regarded as the first Sufi book in Persian language. The main theme of man's relationship with God and fellow human beings is still relevant in the present day world. The essence of this work is love and peace. Hazrat Ali Hujveri had conciliatory effect on the different Sufi orders. Almost all the leaders of Sufi orders like Qadria, Suharwardia and Naqshbandia have come to the dargah of Hazrat Ali Hujveri to seek guidance and cognition. Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulya (R.A) stated that an aspiring murid, who does not have a murshid, should read Ali Hujveri's book Kashful Mahjoob, as that would surely help him to find a spiritual leader.

Sufism added a new element to the intensity of faith among the common believers. Due to the vanishing true meaning of pietism, the religion has become a symbol of strict and ascetic commodity. Hazrat Ali Hujveri's message spread rapidly because of its popular appeal and due to its attraction for those people who sought in religion the ecstasy and pleasure that formal rituals did not provide.

Hazrat Ali Hujveri's achievements in the area of self-perfection are considerable. He tried to make the personality of a person pure from all vices. Individual self-perfection is an indispensable ingredient in the process of social transformation. Society cannot be perfected without the perfection of individuals. So in creating and striving for the perfect society Hazrat Ali Hujveri worked at the grass root level.¹³

Hazrat Ali Hujveri's regard for the common people can be understood in the present-day context of democracy. As he always kept himself busy in attending the needs of the local people, that attitude supported democracy and gave people thoughts about their own rights. His message awakened class consciousness among the masses. That helped to eradicate tyranny, constraints and discrimination. Music like religion and spirituality is distinct in its total social appearance. Although it is unique and distinct but it is always dependent on religion and spirituality. All of these three entities are



intermingled with each other. A strong and complex relationship exists between music, religion and spirituality in South Asia. Music in its basic structure has different rules and regulations but all these structures are meant to regulate function of melody, rhythm and providing a space, which are abstract image as well as social image. Hazrat Ali Hujveri was in favor of Samaa that is music which leads to the attainment of the state of mystic ecstasy.¹⁴

To understand his contribution on theology, it is necessary to understand the theological and religious circumstances of that time. Hazrat Ali Hujveri was a great theologian. He contributed towards the union and interfusion of different and variant views about religion. During Hazrat Ali Hujveri's time serious discussions on the nature of relationship between God and man and the interpretation of religion has started. New ideas have bombarded on the minds of people. Same was happening in the Khanqahs.

Liberalism and modification were received with open minds. Some philosophers tried to degrade the status of Shariat in this flow. However, people and theologians who were infatuated with the love of Shariat didn't tolerate this. They started a resistance movement against this thought of deviation. Some were trying to make Shariat and Tareeqat as opponent of each other. In that age Hussain bin Mansoor Hallaj was a prominent figure. He for the admiration of modification and alteration become an outspoken person and challenged the authority of the conservative Ulema. But that was not acceptable to the majority of Ulemas. He was captured and then hanged by the state's order. That happened in 931 AD. In that era a number of bloodsheds occurred. In reaction some Sufis went to underground to save their lives. Some decided to keep quiet and remain silent on the discussions on theology. Those tragedies, however, made it necessary for some compromises. So majority of Sufis came with the idea of fusion and union between these two schools of thoughts. Imam Ghazali (R.A) was the great exponent of this idea. According to him Tareeqat and Shariat are not two different aspects of religion but they are part of a single entity. One is outer covering (Shariat) and the other one is the inner side (Tareeqat).

Hazrat Ali Hujveri was the contemporary of Hazrat Imam Ghazali. He was of the same view. He insisted that both aspects actually complete each other. The other reason to adopt the idea of moderation was due to the only way to remain safe from any dangers. In those days, the deviatory Sufis were claimed as the followers of Ismaili sect, and Mahmud Ghaznavi was the bitter enemy of them. So, to associate with those Sufis was to oppose the Muslim state policy. There was the danger to undergo state wrath if any one favored leftist movement of the Sufis.¹⁵

Hazrat Ali Hujveri did a remarkable job in purifying the humanity. He was master of both knowledge and practice. He had a full knowledge about the religion and he was at the same time able to fully practice that knowledge in his life. He was against the separation of Shariat and Tareeqat. He can be regarded as the Sufi who was the practitioner of his knowledge. Such a person must have a huge influence over the hearts and minds of people.

That was the phenomenon of Hazrat Ali Hujveri. He was the guider for the Sufis. Hazrat Ali Hujveri wanted to see Sufis as an example for others. He wanted that Sufi should be a person who always remains in the remembrance of Allah. He should always be absorbed in the meditation of Allah. Actually, there was so much unanimity among the words and deeds of Data Gunj Bakhsh that he himself was the ideal example. Beside Muslim philosophers who admire Tasawwuf i.e., the seeking of God's favors, Western philosophers have also acknowledged the truthness of Tasawwuf. Famous philosopher of twentieth century Bertrand Russell has declared that best human capabilities can only be produced through spirituality.

Dara Shikoh in his book Safinatul Aulya has written that in the day time Hazrat Ali Hujveri used to teach Shariat and in the evening he trained his disciples the codes of Tareeqat. Through his guidance thousands of illiterate became literate, non-Muslims were converted to Islam, misleading people came to the right path, insane became sane, those with adulterated knowledge got the pure one and sinful person become chaste. Thousands of Sufis acquired the spiritual guidance during his life and after his death. Hazrat Ali Hujveri came from Neshapur to Lahore and stayed for forty days at the shrine of Hazrat Ali Hujveri and meditated at that place.¹⁶



Hazrat Ali Hujveri contribution is also in the field of propagation of Islam. He was an ideal Muslim and when he propagated Islam, thousands of people of different religion were attracted towards him. He not only converted them to Islam but also gave them education and grooming which made these new Muslim a role model. They become torch bearers for others. Allama Iqbal who was anxiously researching for the cause of decline and failure of Muslims, himself has reached at a conclusion that only propagation preaching of Islam can save Muslims from downfall. Propagation of Islam can take them again to the height of superiority in the world. To safeguard Islam and Muslims only way is the preaching of Islam as it was done by Hazrat Ali Hujveri (R.A). Allama Iqbal got this strategy of dominance by studying the way Sufis preached Islam especially Hazrat Ali Hujveri.¹⁷ Common people of Lahore are not so much mentioned in *Kashful Majooab* but his contemporary poet Masud Saad Sulman was living in Lahore. His father was from Iran but Masud was born in Lahore.

He died in 1098 AD in Lahore. In his *Masanvi* (a book of poetry), Masud Saad Sulman has described different artisans and workers of Lahore. He had mentioned butchers, cooks, strainers, farmers, water carries, traders, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, mechanics, architects, arrow makers, gardeners, perfumers, doctors, astrologers, sailors, swimmers, wrestlers, polo players, pigeon flyers, weavers, jewelers, and among literate persons: judges, teachers, engineers, philosophers, Sufis, qalandars and preachers. So, these were the common folks among whom Hazrat Ali Hujveri spent his life in Lahore. Masud Saad Sulman has also mentioned the life style of elite of Lahore. He affirms that in the social gatherings of *Umara-i-Lahore* wine is given to the guest.

Different table games especially the game of dice was played in these sittings. The music players were given special place in the *darbar*. He also mentions gambling houses and brothels in Lahore. Hazrat Ali Hujveri for that reason in his book *Kashful Mahjoob* had expressed his abhorrence and aversion for the elite class of the society. Therefore, he had focused the simple and common masses of the society for his preaching and teaching.¹⁸

HAZRAT DATA GUNJ BAKHSH (R.A) RELEVANCE TO OUR PRESENT PROBLEMS:

In today's strife-torn society, interested only in money making, happiness is at a premium. That overwhelming desire to possess wealth is a sign of a consumerist culture propelled by the unrestrained growth of capitalist enterprise. Neo-imperialism has fanned conflict everywhere, forcing people to take up violent means to seek remedy from injustice.

In the present global scenario, when formal religions are often ridiculed, but also viewed as an obstacle to social cohesion, the role of popular religion in the form of mysticism or Sufism, assumes a new dimension; hitherto unknown. The current intellectual tendency is to ridicule religion on the pretext that it has been the cause of bloodshed throughout history and serves to divide, rather than unite people.

In international affairs religion, which was originally meant for peace and love, has quit that peace-making behavior; instead has identified with the state in wartime. This is a high time that all religions of the world pick up the missed opportunities by adopting the mystic message of accommodation for the "other". Although the religious texts like the Quran is the direct word of God, it still has to go through human interpretation. In this context, Sufism assumes an important role as the Sufis used language and symbolism which was accessible to the human masses.

Sufis have always behaved differently as compared to elite attitudes. As elites, have always taken the people inferior to them, Sufis have always remained in contact with the people closely. They taught and talked for the brotherhood, peaceful co-existence, egalitarianism and service towards humanity, provided fertile ground for bridging the gap between various religions and linguistic communities of the Subcontinent. Hazrat Ali Hujveri after arriving in Lahore immediately constructed a monastery (*Khanqah*). It was the place of humanity and peace.

He held that the highest form of devotion to God is possible through redressing miseries of the distress, helping the needy and feeding the hungry. Today his shrine and mausoleum popularly known as *Data Darbar* is the place of pilgrimage for all people. He preached love and peace when he was alive and propagating the same today while lying buried. Thousand throng to his Mazar in reach of



peace and solace. This is one of the greatest legacies of Hazrat Ali Hujveri that we can cherish and adhere to. Through his deeds, action, writings and utterances he always preached love.

Love is the basis of peace. His message of peace for all the nations and religions can resolve the global strife. Hazrat Ali Hujveri laid the foundation of Muslim tolerance in the medieval India through his flexible system of thought. The Sufis and saints promoted these values in the subsequent centuries. Some of the rulers also adopted this policy of tolerance and tried to create harmony among diverse religious communities in India. In this way, they managed to counter the oppression of what we now term as fundamentalism. They not only provided the people with an opportunity to live in a peaceful environment, but also contributed towards their genuine spiritual and moral grooming.


Hazrat Ali Hujveri was against extremism whether it is in the shape of extremist Sufi expression or radical Ulemas. He emphasized moderation of thought and behavior. He entertained positive outlook on arts and was partial to music. He had liking for music and poetry, and did not agree with the religious scholars who believe that Islam has no patience for them. His point of view in this regard is very clear: "the one who says that he does not relish a beautiful voice or music and melody is either a liar or a hypocrite or does not have slightest aesthetic sense".¹⁹ In this age of materialism and science and technology advancement, only the teachings of Sufis like Hazrat Ali Hujveri can address the problems of tension and control the malice greed and selfish desires which are destroying the very structure of our society.

CONCLUSION

The investigation into the transformative power of Syed Ali's Shrine has yielded profound insights into the realm of sacred serenity and spiritual bliss. This comprehensive case study aimed to explore the multifaceted impact of the shrine on individuals and the broader community, shedding light on the nuances of its transformative influence. Through a meticulous examination of various dimensions, including religious practices, community engagement, and individual experiences, it becomes evident that Syed Ali's Shrine serves as a catalyst for spiritual transformation. The sanctuary not only provides a physical space for worship but also acts as a spiritual refuge where individuals find solace, inner peace, and a profound connection with the divine. The case study underscores the importance of the shrine as a communal focal point, fostering a sense of unity among diverse individuals who converge to partake in religious rituals and shared spiritual experiences. The communal aspects of worship contribute significantly to the creation of a harmonious and interconnected community, transcending social and cultural differences. Furthermore, the transformative power of Syed Ali's Shrine is manifest in the personal narratives of devotees who articulate a profound sense of spiritual bliss and serenity after their visits. These accounts highlight the shrine's role in guiding individuals through personal challenges, offering a source of strength, and facilitating a deeper understanding of their spiritual journey. It is noteworthy that the transformative influence extends beyond the immediate religious context, permeating into the broader societal fabric. The shrine emerges as a symbol of cultural preservation and identity, acting as a unifying force that transcends generational boundaries and preserves the spiritual heritage of the community. In conclusion, this case study illustrates that Syed Ali's Shrine is not merely a physical structure but a dynamic and transformative force that emanates sacred serenity and spiritual bliss. The shrine's impact is felt on individual, communal, and societal levels, making it a cornerstone of spiritual identity and a source of solace for those seeking transcendence. As this investigation concludes, it underscores the enduring significance of sacred spaces in fostering spiritual growth, unity, and a profound sense of tranquility in the hearts of devotees.

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