



RESHIS OF THE KASHMIR VALLEY: A CASE STUDY OF BABA SHAKUR-UD-DIN WALI R.A

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Abstract

Kashmir commonly referred to as "heaven on earth," is home to countless mystics, saints, sufis, and reshis. The word "Rishi" itself is unmistakably derived from Sanskrit and Indian customs. The Rishi Silsilah in Kahmir was founded by Sheikh Nuruddin. Akbar Nama of Abul Fazl, a significant historian from that time, praises them. He states, "Reshis are the most respected class of people in Kashmir Valley." They are sincere in their worship, even if they haven't given up on the conventional and traditional forms of worship (taqlid). They do not disparage men who practice other religions. They lack the tongue of desire and do not pursue material possessions. In order for humans to profit from these, they grow fruit-bearing trees. They avoid eating meat and getting married.

Keywords: *religious toleration, reshi philosophy, sharikot hill, reshe vaer, Baba Shakur-ud-din*

Introduction

The fact that the name "Rishi" has its roots in Hinduism has led to widespread confusion among historians about the true historical character of the Reshi Movement. As a result, the Reshi Movement merits at least a brief explanation. In Sanskrit literature, Rishi simply refers to a saint or an ascetic, but in the context of the history of Kashmir between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, it refers to a movement of indigenous mystics within the framework of Islam, improperly identified as a branch of the Bhakti movement. Kashmiri Muslims, who make up nearly 95 percent of the total population of the Kashmir valley and reside primarily in rural areas, owe their conversion to Islam to Shaikh Nuruddin and a host of his disciples and followers known as Rishis, to the extent that they are proud to call their vast mountainous region the Rishwaer, 'the Valley of Rishis'. Rishi is unquestionably a Sanskrit word that means "hymn singer" or "inspired poet or sage." The Rishis are "inspired personages to whom these hymns were revealed," according to traditional Hinduism, and the phrase "the Rishi says" is comparable to "as it is written in the sacred text." However, in ordinary Hindu use, the term "reshi" denotes "a saint or sanctified sage, an ascetic anchorite."

The uniqueness of Kashmiri Sufism stems from the fact that the form and personality of this order, which was finally founded in the Kashmir Valley, were entirely indigenous, blending with the local customs and way of thinking. A Hindu-Muslim syncretic and capricious form of Sufism known as "Rishism or Rishi request" took root in the Kashmir Valley and spread its influence among the Kashmiri people. Kashmir is the only region on the Indian Subcontinent to be referred to as "Reshe Vaer" or "Pir Vaer," which translates to "the abode of saints." These deities are honored and venerated in various regions of the

Kashmir Valley. One of them is Hazrat Baba Shakur-ud-din Wali (R.A.) at Sharikot Hill (Kraale Sangri) in Watlab Sopore.

Spiritual Journey of Baba Shakur-Ud-Din Wali (R.A)

It is evident from the many sources that this great mystic was born in the year 790 Hijri (or 1368 CE) in the hamlet of Arwath Pargana of Machama, which is located within the district of Budgam. He was honest and of good character from an early age, and he had a deep love for Allah and His Prophet (PBUH). He spent time memorizing the Quran and was always punctual for Nimaz. He started working in his professions as he grew older. According to reports, Baba Shakur-ud-dinWali (R.A) consumed a lot of food and did not stop eating. When two religious people encountered his mother as she was carrying a large basket of food for him, they questioned her for whom she was carrying so much food. She said that she was carrying food for her son, who was working in the fields. The two pious gave a Quranic verse (Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim) to the mother and said her to tell her son to say this before eating food. They also told her to reduce the size of the food basket every day; the mother of Baba Shakur-ud-din did the same. A time reached when appetite of Baba Shakur-ud-din was getting over with a little food, a lot of changes began to appear in Baba Shakur-ud-din. This was indeed the beginning of his spiritual journey. He was very much amazed at the change and once he asked his mother about the matter, she narrated this whole episode to her son. On hearing this Baba Shakur-ud-din asked his mother, where the two pious have gone! The mother pointed towards south Kashmir. Then Baba Shakur-ud-din started his spiritual journey through dens, jungles and reached to place known as "Char Sharief".

When Baba Shakur-ud-din arrived in Char Sharief, he met Hazrat Shiekh Noor-ud-din Wali (R.A.), the founder of our native Reshi movement. When Hazrat Shaikh Noor-din-Wali heard about the entire incident from Baba Shakur-ud-din Wali (R.A.), he dispatched Baba Shakur-ud-din and an aide to Ashmuqam (Anantnag) so they could benefit from Hazrat Zain-ud-din Reshi's spiritual wisdom. In this sense, he considered it an honour to spend a lot of time studying under Hazrat Zain-ud-din Reshi in order to gain spiritual insight. Baba Shakur-ud-din spent nearly twelve years in meditation at Shangpal (the forest) in Khoiham pargana under the guidance of his guru, Hazrat Zain-ud-din Reshi. He acquired the fundamentals of mysticism under the guidance of Hazrat Zain-ud-din Reshi and quickly rose to high heights. As far as we know, the majority of the Reshi cult's Sufi saints are said to have meditated in caves. He was instructed to remain and practice meditation in a cave by his spiritual guide, Hazrat Zain-ud-din Reshi. Baba Shakur-ud-din then migrated towards the "Zaingair Area" with the approval of his Murshid, where he lived on a hill called Sharikotat Watlab Sopore.

Miracles related to Baba Shakur-ud-din

Baba Shakur-ud-din is also recognized for his social works and is thought to be capable of neutralizing ills for the benefit of the people. He is credited with several miracles. Once, the government fired a Hindu Pandith who had been working for them and stopped using their services. He asked him, "I took out a loan, and I can't pay it back." He was blessed by Baba Shakur-ud-din, who also urged him to have faith in God for all his needs. All of the Pandith's family members were joyful when he arrived home. He joined the office after receiving a letter from the government instructing him to do so and receive some money. Another miracle of the reshi saint narrated to me by a local citizen of the



area. That once a cow used to visit every day to Baba Shakur-ud-din and he used to collect milk from her. Once the owner of the cow followed his cow and reached Baba Shakur-ud-din's cave he saw Baba Shakur-ud-din collecting milk from the cow. The owner came close to him and told him it was his cow. The owners know the miracles of Baba Shakur-ud-din, so he requested him that his cow has not given birth to any calf from last few years. Baba Shakur-ud-din told the owner to go home and had faith in Allah. Next morning the owner found more calves in his cow shed. Another miracle attributed to him is that once a girl, whose one hand was not functioning, came to the shrine of Baba Shakur-ud-din and touched the mystical door, after that her hand became normal and became functional as normal person. These miracles spread like wildfire, and people began to go to Baba Shakur-ud-din's shrine with their difficulties in order to receive the great saint's blessing; still today, people from other religions and places come to the shrine with their issues.

Holy Shrine of Baba Shakur-ud-din

The shrine of Baba Shakur-ud-din is a lovely spot to visit; it is situated on the shores of Asia's largest freshwater lake, Wular Lake. It has a mystic outlook and breathtaking beauty, making it ideal for a day out. It is located 17 kilometers north of Sopore and around 75 kilometers from the capital city of Srinagar. Kashmiris are referred to as "Pir Parast" (Saint Worshippers) by Punjabis. The shores of Wular Lake have been fertile ground for shrines, mosques, and temples, and such religious structures dot the Kashmir skyline all along its length. The shrines have enormous religio-cultural importance because the people linked with them have had a significant effect on the lives of the local people; among these, Baba Shakur-ud-din stands out extremely clearly in the grandeur of Muslim preachers and religious men in the area. The people of that region are entirely Muslims; they pray in mosques and celebrate all holidays with great ease and vigour. According to a popular urban legend, Baba Shakur-ud-din dug a grave in the year 870 Hijri and then walked into it; the grave then got covered automatically. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, a new mosque was constructed on the site of the previous one, and the shrine where the holy saint meditated was also rebuilt in 1947. The sacred wooden entrance is located to the west of the mosque, and on the bottom level of the shrine is a Langer Khana, and underneath it is a Musafir Khana, which was newly created for pilgrims' accommodation. Baba Ragi Reshi's cemetery is located to the west of the shrine, while Baba Roop Reshi's grave is located on a hillside overlooking Wular Lake. Devotees visit the shrine all year; therefore, Langer is always open to offering meals to the devotees.



Holy Shrine of Baba Shakur-ud-din wali (R.A)

Peer Mureed Relationship (Baba Shakur-ud-din and Baba Reshi)

People of various religions went to Baba Shakur-ud-din as his notoriety increased in order to seek his advice and spiritual guidance on a variety of life-related issues. When it came to this, Baba Reshi approached Baba Shakur-ud-din to work as his assistant. He put forth a lot of effort and ovided him with honorable services. For Baba Shakur-ud-din, he used to carry water on his shoulders from a great distance. When Baba Shakur-ud-din noticed some deep scars on his shoulders that were infected, he was struck by his magnificence. Baba Shakur-ud-din prayed for him and told Baba Reshi, "God will undoubtedly compensate for all the service you've given me. Baba Shakur-ud-din launched an arrow and entrusted Baba Reshi with locating its last resting place. After searching for the arrow, Baba Reshi discovered it at Tangmarg in the Baramulla area. After that, he made Tangmarg his home and, using the spiritual strength that the Almighty had given him, and presented a beautiful wooden door to his Murshid Baba Shakur-ud-din. The sacred door allegedly fitted itself and is still present. The door was once moved by the locals, but the next day it was back in its original location



Holy Door

Belief System of the People Regarding the Holy Shrine

Baba Shakur-ud-din is also known as ‘Toop Andaaz-i-Kashmir’ a voice of tanks is sometimes heard near the shrine; probably that is why he is known by this name. People in general visit Baba Reshi; however Baba Shakur din is believed to be visited by special devotees throughout the year. The Urs pak of this great saint is celebrated on 27th of Jamadu Sani every year. People in large number visit the shrine with lot of hopes and wishes. Innumerable wishing rages are tied to door handles, ceiling and windows. People use varieties of cloth to make wishing rages with the confidence that all their wishes would be granted because of the votive rag. The shrine is visited by the people of different sects, every year thousands of devotees came to the shrine and worship there. The people still believe that a visit to the shrine will secure the object of their wishes. Sick people will regain health, women will be vouchsafed children and the litigant wins his case. So they visit and make offerings at the shrine. While entering the shrine people smear their bodies

and countenance with the dust of the shrine and bow their heads in the honour of the holy saint. People visit the shrine for different purpose, but the most dominant characteristic of the folk religion as has been mentioned by Sir Walter Lawrence has always been to seek the fulfillment of the immediate material wishes. The people in the region too visit the shrine of Baba Shakur-ud-din for full filling the material gain. While elevating the deep rooted attachment of an average Muslims with the shrine, Sir Walter Lawrence remarks. "It was a customary for almost all to visit a particular shrine on different occasions for the fulfillment of the wishes and cherished gods". Not only on the occasion of historic importance, but the visit to the shrine was considered obligatory on the occasions like marriage and other related pursuits. Such tradition is still followed by the people to visiting the shrine of Baba Shakur-ud-din.



Wishing Rages



Conclusion

In modern times, the influence they had on Kashmiri society is still palpable, as adherents to their beliefs continue to live a simple life and advise others to follow the path of a sufi sage in order to achieve salvation after death. Sufi Silsilas' teaching was global in nature, making no distinction between humans; whoever comes their way, they guide them to the straight path. During medieval times, a huge conversion to Islam was observed in Kashmir as a result of their teachings. Not only do ordinary people adopt Islam as their religion, but rulers of the period are influenced by their actions and accept Islam as a way of life. As a result, both rulers and regular people support Sufism in Kashmir. I realized while exploring the holy saint of Kashmir that the reason Kashmir is called "heaven" or "Jannat-e-benazir" is not just due to its stunning natural beauty but also because it is the home of mighty and powerful spiritual forces.

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