

ISLAMIZATION OF INDIA BY THE SUFIS

*Growth Trends of Indian (Hinduism) and Other
Religionists (Muslims and Christians) in India,
1901-2071
(—A.P. Jishi et al, Religious Demography of India, 2003)*

—Purushottam

Islamization of India by the Sufis by Purushottam

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PREFACE

It is awfully propagated that Sufism is full of spiritualism and mysticism and could be a very effective means of promoting 'Hindu-Muslim unity' and social harmony, while the fact is otherwise.

Sufism-Another Face of Islamic Proselytization

A close examination of the history of Islamic proselytization activities in India proves that Sufism through its missionary activities complemented the conversion of Hindus to Islam. Sufism, on one hand supported the Muslim invaders and Sultans in their political activities and reckless killings of the Hindus on the other hand, influenced the gullible Hindus through their drama of spiritualism and mysticism. They did not object to the genocide of the Hindus and enslaving and selling their children and women by the cruel Muslim invaders.

Almost all Sufi masters were silent spectators of to the murderous mayhems and reckless plunder of temples and by the marauding hordes across the subcontinent. They did not object to senseless mass killings of the Hindus and destruction of Hindu temples.

Most Sufis came to India either accompanying the invading armies of Islamic marauders or followed them in the wake of sweeping conquests by the soldiers of Islam. For example : (1) Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was accompanied to Ajmer in 1233 and (2) Khwaja Qutubuddin to Delhi in 1236 both by Shihabuddeen Ghauri, (3) Shaikh Fariduddin came to Pattan (now in Pakistan) in 1265 and (4) Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Dargah Hazarat Nizamuddin came to Delhi in 1335 accompanying a contingent of the Muslim invaders.

It may be pointed out here that all Sufis supported Quran and Sharia. the great Sufi master of the eleventh century, Al-Qushairi (1072AD) had unanimously declared that there was no discord between the aims of the Sufi *Haqiqah* and the aims of the Shariah.

Similarly the great Sufi saint Al-Hujuri said that "*There is no God save Allah*" are the ultimate truth and the words "*Muhammad is the apostle of Allah*", are the indisputable law for the Sufis. In brief, the Sufism and Islamic *Ulema* represent the same two aspects of the Islamic faith which are universally accepted by all the Muslims.

Throughout the Muslim rule, all Sufis enjoyed full confidence, royal favour and support of the cruel rulers. According to well-known historian, Dr. K. S. Lal : "Hand in hand with the proselytizing efforts of the rulers was the work of Sufis and Maulvis. From the time of Muhammad bin Tughdaq (1326-1351) to that Akbar (1556-1605), Bengal had attracted rebels, refugees, Sufi mashaikh, disgruntled nobles and

adventures from North India. Professor K. R. Quanungo has noted that the conversion of Bengal was mainly the work of Barah-Auliyas. Prof. Abdul Karim has also referred to militant Sufi proselytization." (*Social History of Muslims in Bengal*, pp. 136-138).

In this context, Dr. I.H. Qureshi writes : "The fourteenth century was a period of expansion of Muslim authority in Bengal and the adjoining territories. A significant part was played in this process by the warrior saints who were eager to take up the cause of any persecuted community. This often resulted (in clash) with the native authority, followed, almost invariably, by annexation." (*The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent (610-1947)*, pp. 70-71. They (Sufis) acted mostly as peaceful missionaries, but if they saw that the espousal of some just cause required military action, they were not averse to fighting. The Sufis did not adopt the Ismaile technique of gradual conversion..... They established their Khanqahs and shrines at places which had already a reputation for sanctity before Islam. *In brief, the Sufi Mashaikh converted people by both violent and non-violent means, occupied their places of worship and turned them into Khanqahs and mosques to make Estern Bengal specially a Muslim land."*

"Muslim rulers, soldiers and Sufi Mashaikh left the high and low hardly any choice in the matter. The lower classes of course were more vulnerable....." In conclusion it may be emphasised that even when historical forces had been divided the country into a number of independent states consequent on the break-up of the Delhi Sultanate, the work of proselytization continued unabated. Small regions could be dealt with in detail and severe Muslim rulers, orthodox-Ulema and Zealous Sufis worked in the effectively." (*Indian Muslims : Who Are They* pp. 58-59, 70).

In the following pages, the author Shri Purushottam has explicitly established that Sufis systematically worked hand in hand with the Muslim rulers, their armies and Sunnie and Shia *Ulemas* in the garb of Sufi spiritualism and mysticism.

I hope this small booklet will help in understanding the true colours of the Sufis' activities during the last thirteen centuries.

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Islamization of India by the Sufis—*Purushottam*

Jafar Makki in his letter No. 28, dated 19th December 1421, states that the main aspects of conversion to Islam were fear of death, fear of enslavement of the family, economic incentives (rewards, pension and war booty), the superstitious bigotry of the ancestral faith of the converts and lastly, persuasive preaching.¹ In the entire history of Muslim rule in India, we see the play of this process.

Rulers, zamindars and employers, who had the sword, the whip and the wealth, used fear of death, fear of enslavement of the family, economic incentives (rewards, pensions and war booty). The Sufis and Ulema on the other hand, employed persuasive preaching and superstitious bigotry as their instruments of proselytization. Both the processes worked simultaneously, many times giving each other a helping hand.

Islamization of India was the main aim of the invaders, Sultans and Kings and Sufis alike. Hindu soldiers and Rajas, who resisted the process, could be mercilessly trampled upon by elephant or beheaded and their dependents enslaved. Amir Khusrau writes that under Jalaluddin Khilji (1290-96) *“Whatever a live Hindu fell into the hands of the victorious king was pounded to bits under the feet of the elephants. The Mussalam captives had their lives spared”*.² It was, however, not possible to behead the entire Hindu population which stubbornly refused to convert. Therefore, Hindus were given the alternative of living as Zimmies on payment of a tax (Jizia), which normally was an alternative offered to Christians and Jews only.

Even so, the Hindus, as Zimmies, became second class citizens in their own homeland. *“The main object of levying the jizia is the subjection of infidels to humiliation; and during the process of payment, the Zimmi is seized by the collar and vigorously shaken and pulled about in order to show him his degradation”*.³ *“Death awaited them at every corner, because, being idolators they could be given a choice only between Islam and death.”*⁴ The purpose was to give the Zimmi some time to see the light of Islam in course of time and accept it.

Sufis and the Ulema have often resented and be-moaned for this kind of “mild treatment” of the Hindus by Muslim rulers. Amir Khusrau—the “Secular Sufi Saint” much advertised as such by Door Darshan writes: *“Happy Hindustan, the splendour of religion, where the law finds perfect honour and security. The whole country, by means of the sword of our holy warriors, has become like a forest denuded of its thorns by fire..... Islam is triumphant, idolatry is subdued.*

Had not the law granted exemption from death by the payment of poll-tax(Jizya), the very name of Hindu. root and branch, would have been extinguished.”⁵

In peace time too, the process of enslavement went on un-abated. Hindu peasants, unable to pay heavy taxes, were driven away as slaves and sold to recover the tax. It was not uncommon to see the families weeping and wailing during the march to the slave market. All such slaves sooner or later, became Muslims because they were sold only to Muslim buyers. In North India, Mohd. bin Quasim entered with sword to convert Hindus to Islam in 712 A.D. His achievement in the way of converting to Islam, is described in books. With his return back, Hindu Sindh soon reverted to its old religion badly shattered, but alive.

Jihad in the Path of Allah

Mohd. Bin Quasim left Sindh, but he had sown the seed of Islam in the fertile land of India. The Muslims who had established their colonies at Debal, Mansura, Multan and Uch etc. flourished. With the rise of Fatimid Shia Caliphate from 909 to 1171, Multan became their dependency. Mansura, Capital of Sindh also accepted their lordship. Ismailis, who were a sect of Shias, were enthusiastic missionaries who unhesitatingly modified their esoteric system to suit their converts. According to 14th and 15th century legends, Ismaili propagandists evolved a belief for Hindu converts that Ali, the husband of Fatima, daughter of Prophet Mohammad, was the 10th incarnation of Vishnu, that Adam was another aspect of Siva and that Mohammad was in fact Brahma.⁶

When Sindh came under Muslim control, many Brahmins, holding high government offices, embraced Islam in order to retain their position. A large number of Buddhists who had acted as fifth columnists against their Hindu rulers and were extremely hostile to Brahmin domination converted to the faith of their conquerors.⁷ Muhammad Bin Qasim is believed to have induced several chieftains to accept Islam and for reasons of expediency some responded favourably.⁸ The Raja of Asifan in the Punjab is said to have converted to Islam, after persuasion by some *Muslim merchants who as a class had always been enthusiastic proselytizers.*⁹ The Quran was translated in local language. As a result of these efforts, by 774 A.D., Sindh had some leading Muslim literary figures well known in the Islamic world.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Islam had spread and established itself firmly in Transoxiana area. Many Sufis had migrated to that area from Persia, Iraq, Arabia etc.

Sufi literally means a person clad in woolen cloth. They were so-called because they dressed themselves in this way, said to be the way of the Prophet and his companions. In principle, Sufis believed in attaining God by

meditation, fasts and singing. His praises and achieving a state of ecstasy by singing and dancing not unlike the practice of some Hindu saints.

Many scholars find great similarity between these practices of Sufis and the advocacy by some of them of the exercises of breath control (*Pranayam*) so highly praised in Hindu Yoga Shastra. They ascribe this similarity to the fact that ancient Hindu thought and ideas on mysticism had continually aroused interest in the Khurasan region, and these naturally fused with the mystical experiences of Muslim Sufis there.

However, one thing must be made clear at this juncture. All Sufis are ardent Muslims having absolute faith in the Prophet, his traditions, Quran and Shariah. So, although their form and conduct of recollection (*Jap*) and meditation (*Dhyan*) were often different, there was no hostility among them, and they adhered strictly to the basic tenets and frame work of Islam, which of course held proselytization a very meritorious and pious work.

Mahmud of Ghazni repeatedly invaded India from 1001 to 1025 A.D. During these raids and after, many talented and adventurous Sunni Sufis from the trans-oxania area came to India and settled here. So that by the middle of the century, Sufis had well penetrated upto Punjab and spread their tentacles there and in the adjoining areas.

As is common in Hindu India, stories of miraculous powers of these Sufis were spread by gullible Hindus themselves.

Corrupted Hindu religion, after the Mahabharat had taken to sacrificial rituals involving slaughter of large number of animals and self mortification. This gave rise, as a reaction, to the extremely non-violent religions of Jainism and Buddhism.

Buddhism, supported and encouraged by powerful Kings, like Ashok, spread peacefully and quickly even beyond the frontiers of India to Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, Afghanistan, Ceylon, Burma and South East Asian countries of Indonesia, Malaya etc. The enormous Royal aid to Boddh Sanghs attracted innumerable indolent young men and women to these Sanghs. As a result, corruption grew. Aadi Shankaracharya and other Hindu saints challenged these religions in public religious debates. Some powerful Hindu Kings having come to the throne helped. Buddhism, gradually retreated from India, the land of its birth, but Hinduism, due to its absorbent character, accepted the saintly Buddha as one of the incarnations of Vishnu and his principle of Ahinsa and shankar's *Mayawad*(illusionism). In this process, it forgot and neglected the aggressive and robust national militantism of the Vedas.

While the spiritual body of Hindus was thus in convulsion, its political body was also ailing. There was no central authority, only small independent states were perpetually at war with each other. In these circumstances, they had no time to gain knowledge of the upto date military strategy, training and arms which had developed outside India.

The weakness of Hindu India in the political field, led to its defeat at the hands of vigorous and seasoned armies of Islam under Mahmood of Ghazni.

It was at this critical juncture that Sufism penetrated India un-noticed. Hinduism by now, had become victim to all kinds of superstitious bigotry, believing in good and bad spirits, astrology, miracles and miraculous power of mendicants, Goddesses and Gurus, Tantriks and Aghories, a cancer which will end only at its death. The Hindu religious psyche was therefore, quite ready to believe the fantastic stories of miracles performed by the newly arrived saints (Sufis) from across the frontiers. Consequently they flocked to them in large numbers for amulets, blessings and recommendations. Their conversion to Islam was then only a matter of time. The Sufis thus adopted a much easier path for conversions. Forced conversion involved a lot of blood shed of the Muslim soldiers. It also left behind a lot of bitterness. People so converted lapsed into infidelism as soon as the Muslim power waned as happened in Sindh after Mohd. Bin-Quasim's departure. The Sufi method achieved conversions in a pleasant and peaceful manner without leaving behind any bitterness and chances of relapse.

Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century, conversions of Hindus to Islam did occur on a considerable scale, due to the successful proselytizing techniques used by the new Sufic orders which had considerable experience of this kind of work in Persia, Iraq and Central Asia. A large number of conversions that are taking place in India today are also due to the activities of these the Sufis, dead and alive.

Although Sufis were not averse to taking up the sword and participating in Jihad, mostly they called upon the Muslim Sultans for this purpose. They themselves presented to the gullible and ignorant Hindus a face of devotional singing, dancing, renunciation and penance with which the latter was so familiar and which appeared to him, the signs of divinity in such Sufis.

Shahid Salar Masud Ghazi : The Sword or Quran

Amongst the Sufi saints who wielded the sword, perhaps the name of Shahid Salar Masud Gazi stands on the top. He was Mahmud Ghaznavi's sister's son and had persuaded him to destroy the Somnath temple.

He entered India from the North West with his father and a few thousand cavalry. From the first day, he offered to Hindus-'*Sword or Quran*'. His forces

& welled as local recruits joined him; and he marched as far as Bahraich (U. P). The route that he took is littered with tombs and graves of his solidiers and officers who were slain fighting the Hindu forces. These can be recognized by the word *Shaheed* (martyr) or *Ghazi* (a slayer of Kaffirs) attached with their names.

Two such graves in Lucknow have recently (post partition) become famous and now attract thousands of Hindu devotees who have contributed most of the money for their expansion and decoration.

Khamman Pir Baba of Lucknow

One of these is known as the Mazar of Khamman Pir Baba at the Charbagh Railway Station, Lucknow. It is awkwardly situated between the Railway lines. One day every week, the normal work of the Railways is entirely dislocated. Thousands of people keep crossing the lines to reach it. This man was a companion of Salar Masud and was killed by Hindus in the battle and buried where he lies today.

Shaheed Quasim Baba of Lucknow

Another grave is that of Shaheed Qasim Baba near Dieklusha, in Lucknow cantonment. He too was a comapnion of Salar Masud Ghazi and was killed at the place where his grave exists today. God knows how many Hindus he and his companion '*saints*' killed for refusing to accept Islam ? The news item in Dainik Jagaran Lucknow dt. 25.7.94 shall therefore always stand a historical monument of Hindu ignorance or political opportunism along with the shrine of Salar Masud at Bahraich, Muinuddin Chisti at Ajmer, Nizamuddin at Delhi and thousands of others who contributed significantly to the Islamization of India.

According to this report, Mr. Moti Lal Vora, then Governor of U. P., after offering the ceremonial *Chadar* at the Mazar of the said Shaheed Quasim Baba told the people gathered there that "The noblest message for the benefit of humanity given by Rishis, Munis and Sufi saints is not confined to any country, religious, group or community. Hazrat Shaheed Quasim Baba too, *for the liberation of human society, went beyond the narrow boundaries of religion, community, language and territory when he preached love, unity and humanism.*" His Excellency expressed happiness that the U. P. Chief Minister, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav had got a road constructed upto the Mazar and provided it with water and electric supply.

Addressing the same gathering, Mr. Mulayam Singh said that "This 900 years old shrine is worshiped by people belonging to all religions and faiths. *This is an excellent example of our Ganga Yamuni composite culture. It is our determination to fulfil the edict of Shaheed Baba to achieve National*

integration, communal harmony, mutual love and brotherhood." The cantonment land near the shrine has been transferred to the shrine.

The photographs and news items regarding similar functions at the Mazar of Muinuddin Chisti at Ajmer, and Nizamuddin Aulia at Delhi where our Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Prime Ministers, in order to prove their secularism and great respect for the Islamic faith, flock to offer ceremonial Chadar and gifts, frequently appear in national news papers.

These cruel fanatics who offered only *"death or Quran"* to innocent teachers, peasants, women and children, are presented by Hindu dignitaries as *Rishies, Munies* and Saints, excellent example of National Integration and Communal harmony who promoted Hindu-Muslim brotherhood.

How does one explain this phenomenal-ignorance, political opportunism or chicanery ?

Coming back to Salar Masud Ghazi, when he had entered India, the Hindu rulers had asked him what was the justification for invading a land without any provocation? Masud had replied in words which should remove any doubts regarding the purpose of such unprovoked invasions by Muslims from across the border. He said : *"The land belongs to Allah. He gives it to any one of His slaves whom He wants to favour; my ancestors' belief is this "To convert Kaffirs to Islam is a duty. If they refuse, they should be killed."*⁽¹¹⁾

When he reached Delhi fresh reinforcements from Ghazni helped him in defeating Mahipal the then ruler. A large number of Hindus and Muslims were killed. Masud recruited 5000 to 6000 local mercenaries and crossed the Ganga near Kannauj whose Raja, a vassal of Mahmud Ghaznavi helped him. Masud, continuing his **"Islam or death"** March reached the holy tank at Satrik in Distt. Barabanki, U. P. where he made his head quarter. From Satrik he sent his commanders in all directions. While bidding them goodbye he said : *"We commit you to the care of God. Wherever you go persuade Hindus to accept Islam. If they do, be kind and considerate to them otherwise slay them"*.¹² Thereafter, they embraced each other and departed on their mission.

The Muslim historian applauds : *"What a scene? What a friendship ? What a firmness of belief ? For the propagation of the true faith of Islam without caring for their personal aggrandizement or safety, to jump into the sea of Kufr."*¹³

Salar Masud was killed in a battle by the Pasi Raja Suhail Dev, and buried in Distt. : Baharich, U. P. where he died. His body was later on dug up and buried perhaps by Muslim Sultan Mohd. Bin-Tughlak in the famous sacred place of Hindu pilgrimage Suraj Kund. The prefix and suffix of *Shaheed* and *Ghazi* attached to his name tell the tale of his life devoted to forcibly

converting and killing thousands of Hindus, and ultimately getting killed in this effort.

Saiyed Athar Abbas Rizvi in his monumental book *'History of Sufism in India'* (2 vol.) aptly comments : *"To the Hindus who consider him a saint of miraculous powers, the number of their bretheren he killed or Islamized was then, as it is now, meaningless."*¹⁴ They worship him ! And those, who are unable to travel to the tomb at Bahraich, worship at one of the many symbolic graves scattered from Punjab to Eastern Bengal. These *symbolic graves* represent events of Salar Masud's life, and are worshipped with fervour equivalent to that of the one at Bahraich.

Bale Miyan of Nauchandi, Meerut

Mention may be made here of one such important Mazar namely that of Bale Miyan near the famous Nauchandi temple at Meerut (U. P.) It appears that a fierce battle was fought here when the troops of Masud attacked the temple. The Hindus fought and killed the commander and many others. The main grave (perhaps of the commander) has been called the Mazar of Bale Miyan (i.e. Masud), whose real grave is in Bahraich. Small graves near by appear to be of the Muslim soliders. Recently, the Muslim M.P. of the area has spent Rs. 4 Lakhs of secular public money out of his discretionary grant for development works to construct a hall at the Mazar. The Hindu temple hardly 100 ft. away across the road stands neglected and forlorn because any attempt to add a hall to the Hindu temple will be against the secular character of the Indian Government.

Some Sufi orders devoted several years of their lives to the practice of Yoga and ascetic exercises in the wilderness so that the fame of their ability to perform miracles and supernatural feats helped them to convert their Hindu visitors. It is believed that impressed by these stories of actual performance of miracles (and supernatural powers), Hindus became their disciples and ultimately converted to Islam. Not only did they convert many animists, Buddhists and Hindus in India but their activities extended from there to Sumatra and Jawa, converting their Hindu, Bouddh and tribal population to Islam.¹⁵

Suhrawardiya, Shaikh Jalalu'd-Din Tabrizi, Makhdum Jahaniyan and his brother, Raju Qattal were some of the very active propagaters of Islam. *The sufis trained in the Khanqah of Shaikh Alaud-Daula Simnani, Mir Sayyad Ali Hamadani and his son and sucessor, Mir Muhammad, considered the conversion of Hindus to Islam as one of their main objective.*¹⁶ The extent of Islamization of Hindu India by these Sufis is indeed astounding. In this brief essay, we shall mention only a few cases as illustrations of their work.

Badauni claims that Shaikh Dawud of Chati converted fifty to a hundred Hindus each day in Punjab and Sindh. Despite Akbar's prohibition against forced conversion, Shaikh Dawud's successor, Shah Abul Maali and Sufis in other Qadriyya Khanqahs never hesitated in using force in their proselytizing mission. Even Mulla Shah converted a large number of Hindus to Islam.¹⁷

The Rashidiyya Khanqahs of the Qadiriyyas between Jaunpur and Bihar, in areas sparsely populated by Muslims, were more actively engaged in proselytization.

Diwan Abdur Rashid's disciples and descendants also established Khanqahs through out Bengal. The support given to the Qadiriyya Khanqah of Shaikh Niamatullah Qadiri and his successors by Prince Shah Shuja, and later by Aurangzeb, helped to invigorate their proselytizing activities resulting in that area becoming Muslim majority area.

Shaikh Jalal of Sylhet and his Turkistani disciples Khwajgan and the Naqshbandiyyas of Central Asia, some of whom would devote a few years of their lives fighting against kafirs before converting them to Islam, were all imbedded with missionary fervour. The Sufis of the Shattariyya, Qadiriyya and the Naqshbandiyya orders who began establishing their Khanqahs during the fifteenth century were deeply aware of the proselytizing traditions of their ancestors in Persia and Central Asia, and brought their knowledge to bear upon Indian conditions in order to gain converts.¹⁸

Bengal to Malwa

They established their Khanqahs from Bengal to Malwa and later on their disciples established Khanqahs as far away as Gujarat.⁽¹⁹⁾

There is a similar story of another Sufi Shaikh Jalaulddin Tabrizi. He was living at Lakhnauti in Bengal. There he established a Khanqah and attached many lands and gardens to it. Then he shifted to Devtalla. There a Kafir Hindu or Boddh had erected a large temple and a well. The Shaikh demolished the temple and constructed a *Takiya* (Khanqah) over it. He converted a large number of Kafirs (Hindus and Boddhs). However, the Shaikh's memory is treasured by Hindus and Muslims alike. Dev Talla came to be known as Tabrizabad and attracts large number of pilgrims.

After consolidating the proselytizing work in Bengal Jalaluddin shifted to Badaun in U. P. There also he converted large number of Hindus to Islam.

The credit of Islamizing East Bengal which later opted for Pakistan goes to Sufi orders.

One Raja Ganesh occupied the throne of Bengal in 1409 A. D. He sought to establish his authority by getting rid of prominent *ulema* and Sufis who were

creating trouble in the Hindu State. Qutbul Alam Shaikh Nurul Huq wrote to Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi to come and save the Muslims of Bengal. Ibrahim Sharqi responded to the call, and Raja Ganesh, finding himself too weak to face the challenge, appealed to Shaikh Nurul Huq, the very person whom he wanted to get rid of, for help. The latter promised to intercede on his behalf, if he became a Musalman.

The helpless Raja was willing but his wife refused to agree. Ultimately a compromise was made by the Raja offering to retire from the world and permitting his son, Jadu to be converted and ascend his throne. On Jadu being converted and enthroned as Jalaluddin Shah, Shaikh Nurul Huq induced Sultan Ibrahim to withdraw his armies ⁽²⁰⁾.

The converted Raja Jadu, now Jalaluddin Muhammad forcibly converted hosts of Hindus to Islam during his reign of seventeen years (1414-1431). Dr. Wise writes that : "The only condition he offered were : **Koran or Death**....Many Hindus fled to Kamrup and the Jungles of Assam, but it is nevertheless probable that more Muhammadans were added to Islam during his reign of seventeen years (1414-31) than in the next three hundred years". And Barbosa writes that : "*It is obviously an advantage in the sixteenth century Bengal to be a Moor (Mussalman) in as much as the Hindus daily become Moors to gain the favour of their rulers.*"²¹ If a Raja of the stature of Ganesh could not face up to the Ulema and the Sufis, smaller Rajas and Zamindars were still worse placed. Petty Rajas and Zamindars were converted to Islam with their wives and children, if they could not pay their revenue or tribute in time. Such practice appears to be common throughout the whole country as instances of it are found from Gujrat to Bengal.²²

Contrary to general belief, in place of being kind to the Hindus as saints should be, the Sufis wished to Hindus to be accorded a second class citizenship if they refused to be converted. Only one instance, that of Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi (Saharanpur U. P.) need be cited because he belonged to the Chishita Silsila considered to be the most to tolerant of all Sufi Groups. He wrote letters to Sultan Sikandar Lodi, Babur and Humayun to re-invigorate the Shariat and reduce the Hindus to payers of land tax and Jiziyah. To Babur he wrote. "*Extend utmost patronage and protection to Ulema and mystics (Sufis)...that they should be maintained and subsidized by the state.. No non-Muslim should be given any office...Further more, in conformity with principles of the Shariat, they should be subjected to all types of indignities and humiliations.*"

⁽²³⁾ The list of atrocities committed upon the Hindus for forcing them to convert to Islam, is endless.

Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer

Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer is a hallowed name amongst Sufi saints of India. He is generally known as Gharib Nawaz, the friend of the poor beseechers. Akbar-the Great made several visits to his shrine many times starting and ending the journey on foot.

This must have added greatly to his status.

He is projected as an example of Sufi saintliness and secularism who tended to all needy persons irrespective of their faith. However, little is known about the major role that he played in the Islamization of India and which he continues to play even today after 800 years of his death. We give below his life sketch from '*Siya-al-aqtab*' compiled in the mid-seventeenth century as quoted in P.M. Curie's book "*The Shrine and cult of Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer.*" (Oxford)

"Muinuddin Hasan al-Husaini al-Sijzi Chishti was well known for his miracles and asceticism and was endowed with all the merits of perfection. He had high status and was a great healer. He was a Saiyid by true descent. There is no doubt about his genealogy. He wore the cloak of poverty (faqr) and discipleship from Imam al-Awliya Usman Harwani. Through his coming to Hindustan, the way (*tariqa*) of Islam was established there. He destroyed the darkness of unbelief and 'shirk' which had prevailed there since time immemorial through revealing clear reasons and arguments. For this reason Muinuddin is called Nabi-ul-Hind (the prophet of India). For seventy years his ablution was not broken without him washing before prayer. On whomsoever his propitious glance fell, that man was immediately brought to Allah. Whenever a sinner came into his illuminated presence, he immediately repented. (accepted the true faith of Islam).

"Each time he finished reading the Quran, a voice came from the unseen world saying, O Muinuddin ! your recitation has been accepted."

"Although it has been stated that Muinuddin could produce any amount of gold through his miracles, it is certain that he had no dearth of money. It is related that in the kitchen of Muinuddin so many meals were cooked every day that all the impoverished people of the whole city could eat their fill. The servant in charge of this used to go every day before the saint for the expenses. He used to stand with his hands joined in respect. Muinuddin used to take a corner of his prayer rug aside and reveal sufficient treasure. He used to tell the servant to take enough gold from this treasure to cover the kitchen expenses for that day."

"It is told that once when he went to perform the pilgrimage to the holy tomb of the Prophet Muhammad, one day from the inside of the pure and blessed tomb a cry came : "Send for Muinuddin." When Muinuddin came to

the door he stood there and he saw that presence speak to him. "Muinuddin, you are the essence of my faith; but must go to Hindustan. There is a place called Ajmer, to which one of my sons (descendants) went for a holy war, and now he has become a martyr, and the place has passed again into the hands of infidels. By the grace of your footsteps there, once more shall Islam be made manifest, and the Kafirs be punished by God's wrath."

Accordingly Muinuddin reached Ajmer in Hindustan. There he said : "Praise be to God, May He be exalted, for I have gained possession of the property of my brother. Although, at that time there were many temples of idols around the lake, when the Khwaja saw them, he said : "*If God and His Prophet so will, it will not be long before I raze to the ground these idol-temples.*"

Then follow many stories of the Khwaja over coming those Hindu deities and teachers who were strongly opposed to his settling down there. Amongst such people was a disgruntled employee of Rai Pithaura (Prithvi Raj Chauhan). The Khwaja recommended his case to Rai Pithaura who turned down the request.

It appears that shorn of miracles the story simply is that the Khwaja came to India determined to eradicate idolatry and paganism and establish Islam in its place. He met a lot of resistance from the local governor of Rai Pithaura and even by Rai Pithaura himself. With the help of the immense treasure at his disposal and having converted many gullible Hindus to his faith, he became strong enough to invite Rai Pithaura to convert to Islam. Having failed to persuade him the Khwaja went to Ghazni or sent a message inviting Sultan Shihabuddin Ghori to attack India. Shihabuddin made unsuccessful invasions. Rai Pithaura always allowed him to go back unmolested after his defeat. Ultimately, however, he defeated Prithvi Raj Chauhan and killed him. Muinuddin has a unique position as pioneer of Islam in India in spite of strong opposition of the Hindus. This theme appears throughout in the *Siyar al-Awliya* where Muinuddin is credited with the Islamic conquest of India.

Having settled his opposition and converted Jogi Ajaipal to Islam, Muinuddin moved into the formers temple which was later converted into his Dargah. There is evidence in the *Siyar al-Aqtab*, to suggest it. Sculpted stones, apparently from a Hindu temple, are incorporated in the Buland Darwaza of Muinuddin's shrine. Tradition says that inside the cellar is an image of Mahadeva in a temple on which sandal used to be placed every day by a Brahman. The shrine still employs a Hindu family to prepare the sandal which is now presented on the grave of Muinuddin. At the least, it serves as a useful explanation to his followers of why Muinuddin, elsewhere portrayed

as a powerful evangelist (Missionary of Islam), is buried on ground sacred to the Hindus.

The '*Siyar al-Arifin*' sums up the life work of this prince of saints, the refuge of the poor and a fore runner of Hindu-Muslim unity. "*Through his (Muinuddin) coming to Hindustan the 'way of Islam' was established here. He destroyed the darkness of unbelief. Because of his coming....the darkness of unbelief in this land was illumined by the light of Islam.*" Amir Khurd includes two verses which contrast the situation in India before and after Muinuddin's arrival : Before, all India was ignorant of the orders of religion and law.

"All were ignorant of Allah and His Prophet. None had seen the Kaba. None had heard of the greatness of Allah" After Muinuddin arrived in India, "Because of his sword, instead of idols and temples, there are Mosques, Mimbars and Mihrabs in the land of unbelief. "In the land where the sayings of the idolaters were heard, there is now the sound of Allah-Akbar."

Yet, almost every Prime Minister and President of India has humbled himself at the Mazar of this slaughterer of Hindus and destroyer of their temples. Recently Sushma Swaraj, M. P. disclosed in the Parliament that Mr. Ram Bilas Paswan, Railway Minister who professes to be an atheist has also been to this Mazar to seek its blessings. Is it ignorance, blind faith or political exhibitionism ? Who can say ?

Conversions Galore

The daily average of votaries staying at the Khanqah of Syed Adam Bannuri (d. 1643) as one thousand. They took their meals at the Khanqah. A great throng of men, including hundreds of theological doctors, followed the saint wherever he went. It is stated in *Tazkira-i-Adamiya* that 10,000 (ten thousand) persons formed his entourage during his visit to Lahore in 1642. Seeing the phenomenal popularity of Syed Bannuri, Emperor Shah-jehan became so apprehensive that he thought of a plan to send him out of India. He sent to him a large sum of money and then suggested that as possession of money made the Haj pilgrimage obligatory for a Muslim he should waste no time in proceeding to the Hejaz to discharge the duty. The saint, thereupon, migrated from India.²⁴

Hazrat Mujadid's celebrated son and spiritual deputy, Khwaja Mohammad Masoom (d. 1668) had as many as 9,00,000 (nine lakhs) disciples who did the *Bai-at* and repentance at his hand. Of them, 7,000 rose to be his Khalifas.

It is recorded about Shah Ghulam Ali in Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's '*Asar-ul-Sanadeed*' that "not less than 500 destitute persons used to live in his Khanqah. All of whom were fed and clothed by him."²⁵

“Unprecedented scenes of popular enthusiasm were witnessed during the missionary tours of the famous divine and spiritual leader of the 19th century, Syed Ahmad Shaheed, as also during his journey to Calcutta, while on his way to Arabia for the Haj. In many of the towns that fell on Syed Saheb’s route few persons were left who did not offer *baiat* and repentance at his hand. At Allahabad, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Ghazipur, Azimabad, (Patna) and Calcutta, specially, his disciples must have run into lakhs. The limit was that at Varanasi, the indoor patients of the Sadar Hospital sent to him a petition begging that since they were unable to move out he might condescend to visit them in the hospital so that they could take the *baiat*. *About a thousand persons became his disciples every day during his two months stay at Calcutta.* From morning till late at night a stream of men and women would pour in where he was staying. There was hardly any time left for Syed Saheb to attend to his personal needs. When it became impossible to administer the vow to everyone individually, it was arranged for the aspirants to collect in a large house where Syed Saheb went and initiated them into the fold. Seven or eight turbans were unrolled on the ground when he went there, and the aspirants were told to hold them at different places, while one end of them was held by Syed Saheb himself. He then taught them the fundamentals of the faith and read out the oath in a loud voice like *Azan* which they repeated, and thus, the ritual was completed. This was done seventeen or eighteen times each day.²⁶

Islamization of Kashmir

Kashmir is a typical example of Islamization, both by sword and by the Sufis. Amongst the Sultans who used force to Islamize Kashmir the most notorious is Sikandar-but-Shikan (Iconoclast).” About this Sultan (1389-1431) Kalhan in his “*Rajtarangini*” says : “*The Sultan forgetting all his royal duties took pleasure day and night in destroying idols. He destroyed the idols of Martand, Vishnu, Ishan, Chakravarty and Tripureshwar. Not a forest, a village or a town or a city escaped where the Turushk and his Minister Suha left any temple undestroyed.*”

But the real credit of Islamizing Kashmir goes to the Sufis. Sikandar was a passing phase having lived only 42 years. Conversion by Sufis was a continuous process almost imperceptible which lasted centuries. Sikandar’s conversions were caused by utter terror. Sufis created conditions where Hindus voluntarily came to them and got converted.

Amongst the Sufis who played a major role in converting Hindu Kashmir to Muslim Kashmir, Shaikh Nuruddin popularly known as “Rishi Nur” holds a high place.

Burning Down of Charare Sharif

On the night of 10-11 May, 1995 his mausoleum known as "Charar-e-Sharif" was burnt down by the Muslim terrorists. The Indian press, as usual, described it as "the sacred Dargah of Sufi Saint Nuruddin Nurani" (India Today), "Symbol of secularism, a most valuable symbol of cultural identity" (Front Line), "Abode of Rishis" (The Economic Times), without going into the antecedents of this secular symbol of cultural identity. The communist leader Indrajeet Gupta described him as "the symbol of communal unity." As a senior communist leader he should have known about the role of these Sufi saints who de-established Russia. Bennigsen considered an expert on Soviet Islam says *"These Sufi orders are among the most intractable and dangerous adversaries of the Soviet regime because (they) the only authentic anti-Soviet mass organisation movement in the Muslim reforms of U.S.S.R..... nucleus for communal and even national movements in the Muslim regimes."*²⁷

"In the Caucasus, Sufi orders had organised most of the Muslim resistance to Russian rule, before disappearing after 1928. They turned up after World War-II in a less political form, concentrating their energies on mystical pursuits....This is the appropriate posture for periods when Islam is recouping its forces for another round against infidels."²⁸

The final result of Sufi activities was a break up of the U. S. S. R., liberating the Central Asian Muslim States, the revolt spreading from Azarbejan-a Muslim state of U. S. S. R.

Shaikh Nuruddin was initiated into the order by Ali Hamdani. In order to know Shaikh Nuruddin, it is therefore necessary to know his pir Syed Ali Hamdani.

As the name suggests, Ali Hamdani belonged to Hamdan in west Iran. In order to contribute to the Islamization of infidel India, Syed Ali Hamdani sent one of his disciples Syed Tazuddin to Kashmir to find out the conditions there. Syed Tazuddin was well received by the then Sultan Shahabuddin (1354-73). The Sultan gave him facilities for making his Khanquah at a place 9 miles north-west of Shrinagar. It is now known as Shahabuddin Pura.

Having received a favourable report regarding the possibilities of proselytization in Kashmir, Hamdani reached there in 1381 A.D. alongwith a force of seven hundred disciples.

Mir Saiyed Ali Hamdani was imbued with the searing missionary zeal.....took the form of temple demolition and the forced conversion of many Kashmiris.

The first conversion that he affected was of the Brahman priest of Kali Mandir Shrinagar. The then Sultan Qutubuddin on persuasion by Hamdani destroyed the temple and allowed Hamdani to build his Khanquah on that

site. The seven hundred disciples of Hamdani spread over the whole of Kashmir, constructed their Khanquahs in different places and made them centres of converting Hindus to Islam. In this work, they were covertly and overtly helped by the Muslim Sultans.

Hamdani lived in Kashmir for 3 years, after which he died on his way to Mecca.

Nuruddin belonged to the Silsila of Syed Ali Hamdani. The destruction of temples and building of Khanquahs by Hamdani and his disciples had created some sort of a reaction in the Hindu public against the Sufis. Shaikh Nuruddin, therefore, chalked out a different course. At that time, a Shiv devotee lady of the name of Lal Didi or Lal-Ded was roaming about in Kashmir singing devotional songs. She had earned great fame, love and respect of the Kashmiri people. Shaikh Nuruddin projected himself as a similar mendicant. In Brahmin Kashmir, Rishi was the highest appellation used for Hindu seers who had reached the final stage of communion with God. Nuruddin styled himself and his disciples as Rishis to take advantage of this Hindu psyche. The Rishis of old used to clad themselves in striped tiger skins. This school of Rishis adopted a similar dress made of sriped woollen cloth.

The principal disciples of Nuruddin were Bamuddin, Jainuddin, and Latifuddin. All these three were Brahmins by birth and had been converted to Islam by Shaikh Nuruddin. Brahmins were the natural teachers of the Hindu society and enjoyed great respect. A converted Brahmin was, therefore a very great force on converting his erstwhile Hindu followers to Islam which was projected as a divine faith. The credit of converting Hindu Kashmir to Muslim Kashmir of today is shared equally by Sultans like Sikander-But-Shikan and Sufis like Hamdani and Rishi Nuruddin whose mausoleum was burnt down by the terrorists to embarass the government of secular India and which the government of India promised to restore at a cost of crores of rupees collected as revenue, mainly from the Hindus.

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Hindus Towards Minority

- **“Hindus will be in minority by 2060 in India.”** (A.P.Joshi etal. Religious Demography of India, p. 38, 2003)
- **“A realistic projection into the future of present demographic trends does predict a Muslim majority...in the Indian Union by the turn of the 22nd century.”** (Keonraad Elst : B.J.P. vis-a-vis Hindu Resurgence, p-119)
- **“By the year 2300, there will be only remanants of Hinduism left in the country...in view of the galloping changes in Hindu and Muslim demographic status in the Indian sub-continent...non-Muslims living in India have no option but to live within a Hindu Rashtra or Darul-Islam (Land of Islam).”**
- **As Hindu Rashtra is nowhere in sight and the secular Hindu Parties would never suffer it, an Islamic India seems to be the foregone conclusion....the only question that remains is how far in time is Darul-Islam ?** (Baljit Rai, Is India Going Islamic, p.,-113)
- **“May be the Hindus are a dying race...perhaps India will have a un-Hindu majority by 2300 A.D.”** (Madhu Limaye, Muslim India, Jan. 1986 p-133)
- **“It will take 300 years (only) for Muslims to out grow the Hindu population.”** (Sunday Mag. 7-13 Feb., 1993, p-134).

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