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## Influence of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani on Religious Education in Kashmir

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### **Abstract:**

*Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani, the apostle of Kashmir was born in Hamadan, Iran. He belonged to Kubraviya order of Sufis. The Kubraviya silsalah was an offshoot of the Suharwardi Silsalah. He received his early education from his maternal uncle, Saiyid Alau Din, a great Sufi of his time. Shah-i-Hamadan travelled across the continents for twenty one years, in pursuit of knowledge. The Shah of Hamadan reached Kashmir in 1372. The arrival of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani is by all standards a turning point in the history of Kashmir. It heralded the dawn of a new era in the sense that the history of Kashmir took a decisively new turn and a vigorous process of socio-cultural change got activated.*

*At the time Shah-i-hamadan arrived in Kashmir, morality was at its lowest ebb. The sheltered economy, prevalence of castes and sub-castes in the society, exploitation of common people at the hands of traditional Brahmins, frequent inter and intra group civil wars between various sections of society, confusing paths and lawlessness had rendered average people helpless. People were ready to welcome any change in the system. Thus a good number of 37000 people got converted to Islam within a brief period of time. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani's influence is a major factor behind changing the demographic character of Kashmir. Under his impact, Brahmanical influence declined and most castes embraced Islam.*

*Amir-i-Kabir's great influence on Kashmiri society was the result of his accessibility. His Khanqah was open to all from sultan to poor Hindu. He had no reservation in counseling monarchs because he saw that their policies were key to the welfare of people. Hamadani's introduction of the tradition of zikr was motivated by his desire to bring different sections of Kashmiri society together. The zikr of Awwad-i-Fathiya ceremonies after the Fajr (morning prayers) and Isha (night) prayers served the social purpose of gathering different people together twice a day without reference of their wealth and poverty.*

*One of the Shah-i-Hamadan's impacts of great significance was the emergence of a network of Khanqahs which served as great centers of proselytization especially at Hindu rich centers. In the state there are four shrines dedicated to Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani: the Khanqah-i-Mualla (Srinagar), Tral, Doru and Shey (Ladakh). There are also several lesser known shrines which are situated at Pampore, Sopore etc.*

*Shah-i-Hamadan was a multi-dimensional personality. He was a social reformer besides being a preacher. Among the 700 followers, who accompanied him to Kashmir were men of Arts and Crafts who flourished here. Several industries of Hamadan (Iran) became well introduced in Kashmir. The Shawl industry was in its moribund condition when Saiyid Ali Hamadani came to Kashmir. It was due to his fervent support to this industry that this industry received a new lease of life. Besides shawl industry the local and Iranian crafts were given a big boost by Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani.*

### **1. Influence of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani on Religious Education in Kashmir**

Islam made its way into Kashmir not by forcible conquest but by gradual conversion for which the influx of foreign adventurers both from the South and Central Asia had prepared the ground.<sup>i</sup> The adoption of Islam by the great mass of the population began towards the close of Hindu rule and became an accomplished fact during the latter half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>ii</sup> During the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Muslims were in small minority. They were generally Turks who entered Kashmir to serve in the army. They do not seem to have been well versed in Islamic knowledge. Shah Mir who in 1313 came to valley with his tribe in search of fame and fortune<sup>iii</sup> was not an educated Turk. Shah Mir arrived in Kashmir during the reign of Suhadeva (1301-1320).<sup>iv</sup> Suhadeva granted him the village of Davar-Kunail, in the district of Baramulla<sup>v</sup> for his maintenance. Shah Mir rose to prominence and became one of the important personalities of the time.<sup>vi</sup> He captured power in 1319 and laid down foundations of his dynasty. It may be pertinent to mention here that Shah Mir's accession to the throne was a normal transition of power from a weak king to a powerful noble who managed it with the help of local populace including the grandees.<sup>vii</sup>

Shah Mir and his immediate successors do not seem to have shown any remarkable zeal in the spread of Islam. They were primarily interested in consolidating their political authority which was not possible without the whole hearted cooperation of the Hindus. The need for befriending the Hindus was felt to such an extent that the founder of the sultanate entered into matrimonial relations with the Hindu nobility.<sup>viii</sup>

The population of the valley of Kashmir in 1913 was over 13 lakhs of which over twelve and half lakhs were Muslims. In the census of 1941 the Muslims numbered 1369620 out of 1464034. One must deplore with the late Sir Thomas Arnold that definite Historical facts which might help us in clearly accounting for the existence of such an extra ordinarily overwhelming majority of Musalmans among the population of Kashmir are somewhat scanty. Whatever evidence is available leads us, however to attribute the spread of Islam in the valley, on the whole to a long continued missionary movement inaugurated and carried out mainly by Faqirs or Friars or Darveshs and the Ulemma or theologians.<sup>ix</sup>

Islam is essentially a missionary religion like Buddhism and Christianity and the Muslim missionary be he a Pir that is a spiritual guide or a preacher carries with him the message of Islam to the people of land into which he penetrates. The spirit of truth in the heart of the missionary cannot rest till it manifest itself in thought, world and deed.<sup>x</sup>

## 2. Bulbul Shah's Conversion of Rinchana

The original name of Bulbul Shah is said to have been Saiyid Sharaf-ud-Din, while others call him Sharaf-ud-Din Abdul Rehman Turkistani. This much is certain that he was a widely traveled Mosavi Saiyid from Turkistan. Saiyid sharaf-ud-Din was a disciple of Shah Niimatullah Wali Farsi who in turn was disciple of Shihab-ud Din Suharwardi.<sup>xi</sup>

Bulbul Shah is stated to have visited Kashmir first in the time of Raja Suhadeva, the pre-decessor of Rinchana. Rinchana became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir after his conversion by Bulbul Shah. In order to pay tribute to his memory the Sadru Din (Rinchana) constructed a Khanqah after his name and endowed it with a rent free land grant.<sup>xii</sup>

The conversion of the ruler to Islam marked a turning point in the history of Islam in Kashmir. Not only Islam now receives political patronage but also became a reference group culture- a status improving way of life.<sup>xiii</sup> it should be made clear that Rinchana embraced Islam after having discussions with the Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim religious personages of the period.<sup>xiv</sup> Rinchana's conversion to Islam was followed by the large number of people including his Hindu Prime Minister, Rawanchandra.<sup>xv</sup>

## 3. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani's Role

During the reign of Sultan Shihabu-Din the process of Islamization got activated again primarily because of the arrival of four Kubravi Sufis accomplished by their families. They were Saiyid Hussain Simnani, Saiyid Taju-ud-Din, Saiyid Hassan Bahadur and Saiyid Haider. These Saiyids were close relations and murids of Saiyid Ali Hamadani.<sup>xvi</sup>

The advent of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani with a well organized mission marks the turning point in the history of Islam in Kashmir. At the advent of Saiyid Ali Hamadani the number of Muslims in Kashmir seems to have been insignificant as compared to great majority of Hindus. A large number of non-Muslims formed the main prop of the Government.<sup>xvii</sup> Islam in fact, had not yet gained a firm foothold even in the capital city of Kashmir. In dress, manners, and customs there was nothing to distinguish them from Hindus.<sup>xviii</sup>

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani for the first time launched a movement of total Islamization in Kashmir. In Alau'd Dinpur, for example there was a temple which was visited every morning both by Sultan and his Muslim subjects. To avert famine Qutubu'd Din once performed the *yagna*, and distributed large gifts to the Brahmins.<sup>xix</sup> In contravention of Islamic teachings he had two wives who were sisters.<sup>xx</sup> Saiyid Ali denounced these practices and called upon Qutbu'd-Din to divorce one wife and retain the other. The sultan, in accordance with the saint's instructions, divorced the elder sister and remarried the younger named Sura who became the mother of his two sons, Sikander and Haibat. He also enjoined the Sultan to wear the dress, common in Muslim countries. He held discussions with the Brahman priests and in this way secured many converts to his faith<sup>xxi</sup>. Probably no words can better express the contribution of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani towards the Islamization of Kashmir than the glowing tributes paid to him by the poet ruler Sultan Qutbu'd - Din:

“May my life be consigned at your feet, O Amir,  
 May soul be sacrificed for the grandeur of your name.  
 Your advent led me into the fold of Islam,  
 May my eye sight serve in the path of your coming.  
 I wish you could intercede for me on the Day of Judgment,  
 My four elements are for You, O Amir.  
 Although Qutubi has committed sins beyond limit and number,  
 May in the end, your intercession comes to my rescue.<sup>xxii</sup>

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani won large conversions both within and without Shahr (Srinagar). We not only find the sultan and the noble families becoming his dedicated Murids<sup>xxiii</sup> but the great Guru of Kali Mandir (Srinagar) and his thousands of followers also embraced Islam at his hands.<sup>xxiv</sup> In order to inspire the Muslims to live a simple life, Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani quotes the austere life style of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the four caliphs. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani not only addresses the issues faced by mankind but also the Islam's basic orientation towards bringing about a just society. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani worked for the Islam in Kashmir and believed in active life rather than shunning the world. He regarded the missionary work for Islamization of the life and conduct of the people as the best service in the way of Allah.<sup>xxv</sup>

Sir Herbert Risley while appreciating the teachings of Islam with which Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani was able to win large conversions were i. Genuine religious conviction of the purity and simplicity of Islam, derived from the study of the Muhammadan scriptures or from preaching of the Maulavis who go round the village. The conversion of high caste Hindus, Brahmins, Rajputs, Kayasths and the like is commonly ascribed to this cause. ii. The growing desire on the part of the lower Hindu castes to improve their social position leads individuals among them to embrace a creed which seems to offer them a fair chance of life. iii. The proverb “love

laughs at caste” accounts for a large number of conversions.iv. Causes connected with Taboos on food and drink and with various caste misdemeanours have also to be taken into account. Hindus in sickness or distress are tended by Muhammadans and take food and water from their hands; the caste ex-communities them and they join the ranks of a more merciful faith.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani paved the ground for the progress of Islamic culture, the concepts of unity of God, universal brotherhood etc. Islamic egalitarianism found full expression in his teaching and practice. Tawheed or Monotheism is the basic theme of all works of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. An earnest effort is made to explain the nature of Creator (Allah<sup>SWT</sup>) and the nature of most perfect creation (the Man) and the relationship between them while doing so Shah-i-Hamadani does not lose sight of the man as a member of society. Awarad-i-Fathiya is one of the best examples to show the social approaches of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. The manifest function of the prayer is to instill the spirit of Monotheism among the believers but the latent function is to create an organic solidarity among them. This is evident as it is intended to be recited at the group Halqa.<sup>xxvii</sup> The loud recitation of Awarad-i-Fathiya by faithful was and still is the most distinctive feature of the Kashmiri Khanqahs.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Awrad is the plural of Wird. Wird means to come to a watering place. Hanswehr’s English Arabic Dictionary describes it as “Watering Place” and plural “Awrad” as “Specific time of day or night devoted to private worship in addition to five time prescribed prayers”. Awrad also means specified portion of prayers, supplications, Zikr, salutations and litanies which is recited by a group of individuals under the guidance of a teacher or by an individual separately.<sup>xxix</sup>

J.G Hava’s English Arabic dictionary describes “wird” as coming to water and “Awrad” as selection of Quran recited privately, party of travelers coming to water, herd of camels. It hereby means that Awrad is water for life and its existence. Awrad is a source spiritual elevation and through it a novice and an initiated reaches to his goal easily and fastly.

Professor H.N. Rafiabadi, in his book “Islam and Sufism in Kashmir” says “Wird” is often translated as “Litany”. It is a regular spiritual exercise. It is the daily sometimes twice or thrice recitation of Quran, Adiya (supplications) from the Quran and Sunnah, making Istighfar, doing Salwat on the messenger of Allah. They are arranged in a particular order by the Shuykh of this Ummah.<sup>xxx</sup>

He continues:

→ “The focal point of the practice of Awrad recitation is that the potential member is initiated into a coherent socio-spiritual organization that transcends the normal time/space framework. It deals with issues of learning the code with spiritual kin-group relationship and with the content of the spiritual cosmos. It suggests that the liturgical dimension of Sufism is the central ingredient of an independent minded spiritual movement; it both holds the desperate social elements together and connects the ordinary world with the supernatural world in a apparently seem less manner”.<sup>xxxii</sup>

It may be mentioned that Awrad is actually a collection of blessings, Dua and Adhkar, Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani was bestowed with by about four hundred Sufi Masters whom he met in the court of Sultan Abu Said in a religious gathering during his noviciate.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Professor Muhammad Ashraf Wani in his book “Islam in Kashmir” says that loud recitation of Awrad was not something innovated in Kashmir, instead it formed an important attribute of Tariqa Sufism on account of which it has become a common and favourite form of prayer among the Muslims living in the neighbourhood of Kashmir long before Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani introduced this practice in the valley. In this regard he quotes Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani’s own statement which he recorded in his Risala-i-Auradiya:

“In most of the Muslim countries you will not find any ground of Hanfi’s, Shafi’s and others who follow Sunnah without reciting a prescribed Aurad. They recite it aloud in groups twice a day after Fajr (Morning Prayers) and Asr (Afternoon Prayers). And each group strictly follows Aurad prescribed by its Imam (Leader).<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Noor-ud-Din Badakshi in his book “Khulasatul Manaqib” quotes Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani who is reported to have said in one of the meetings which Noor-ud-Din Badakshi had with Shah-i-Hamadani:

“I was also present in Rabi-ul- Awal of 778 A.H., after Zuhr prayer he during his discourse that ‘During my journeys I have met fourteen hundred saints and in one meeting with Sultan Abu Said<sup>(RA)</sup> I have met four hundred saints. When I took leave from them I requested each of them to provide me with an invocatory prayer for me and asked for some Wird and when I collected all of their prayers and supplicatory selections these become the prayers now found in Awarad-i-Fathiya. Then I turned to the book of Ahadith and I found that all these prayers consisting in these Awrad are existing in a summary form in the traditions of Prophet<sup>(SAW)</sup> also. Then after I went for pilgrimage to the House of Kaabah, when I reached Bitul Muqadas I saw the Prohet<sup>(SAW)</sup> took out a booklet from his sacred sleeves and gave that to me when I saw it minutely it was the same Awrad-i-Fathiya which I had collected from the sayings of grand Sufis. Thus witnessed the blessings of Awrad myself.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Professor Fida Mohammad Hussain in his book “Shah Hamadan of Kashmir” also describes the event as:

“Exalted is He that the gate of mercy was opened for Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. The chief of the two worlds our Noble Prophet was kind to grant him the holy vision of his countenance. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani describes this extra marvelous state in these words: “When I was in deep contemplation, I was blessed with the holy vision. The Noble Prophet<sup>(SAW)</sup> uttered these pious words: Hold this Incantation of Victory”.

“How fortunate I am that I received this pious gift from the holy hands of our Master Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa(PBUH). When I glanced over this pious gift, I saw that it was the treatise compiled by me. This sacred compilation, Awarad-i-Fathiya or the incantation of victory is the divine way to success and felicity”.<sup>xxxv</sup>

According to Dr. Shamsud Din Ahmad, this Awrad is that popular Arabic treatise of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani in which all the Quranic verses supplications and invocatory prayers have been collected which were received by Shah-i-Hamadani from the great saints numbering fourteen hundred. This Awrad is very favourite with the Muslims of central Asia and the older generations of Central Asia who generally offer prayers in their homes and recite Awarad-i-Fathiya at evenings and mornings.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

The Awwad-i-Fathiya is memorized by heart by almost most of the Muslims and they recite it after Fajr (Morning Prayer) and Isha (late evening prayer). At the shrines of different saints when the Khatmat Majalis are organized at such occasions after the congregational prayers Awwad-i-Fathiya is invariably recited.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Dr. Farooq Fayaz in his Folklore and History of Kashmir says that one of the striking characteristics of popular Islam in Kashmir is the loud group recitation of Awwad-i-Fathiya by majority of the Kashmiri Muslims in mosques immediately after the morning prayers. The pioneers in the formative phase of the history of Islam in Kashmir in the 14<sup>th</sup> century reconciled itself to and without disturbing the socio-religious cultural fabric of the society, a legacy of the Hindu-Buddhist religious system. It had been the age old practice of Hindus in the valley to recite mantras loudly in the temples especially in the early morning hours. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani who had keen anthropological sense understood the efficiency of the popular mode of social behavior, drafted a unique prayer under the title of Awwad-i-Fathiya. He allowed the new converts to recite it in chorus loudly to lessen the captivating effect of the Hindu-Mantras.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Prof. Ishaq Khan while appreciating the wisdom of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani writes:

“It goes to his credit that instead of taking a narrow view of the religious situations in Kashmir he showed an acute discernment and a keen practical sense in grasping the essential elements of popular Kashmiri religion, cultures and ethos and gave his followers in the valley to recite Awwad-i-Fathiya aloud in chorus in Mosques”.<sup>xxxix</sup> Such a simple practice of invoking God’s help did not call for either animal sacrifice or the beating of Drums as it was the case of Kashmiri Pandits. The loud recitation of Awwad-i-Fathiya produced such an appealing effect in the minds of Hindus that they willingly come forward to embrace Islam. While showing regard for the local religious ethos in allowing neo-Muslims to read Awwad-i-Fathiya aloud in chorus.<sup>xl</sup> The Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani according to professor Ishaq Khan “demonstrated a keen sense of practical wisdom and judgment in laying a firm foundation for the gradual assimilation of the folk in Islam”. A conservative chronicler like Srivara seems to have been so impressed by the novelty of God being praised collectively by the rich and poor together that he could not conceal his feelings about the loud prayers of the faithful in the Jamia Masjid of Srinagar. Thus he writes, “it was here that the Yavanas (Muslims) chanted mantras and looked graceful like thousands lotuses with humming bees”.<sup>xli</sup>

Right from the time the prayer was drafted by the exalted scholar saint, the tradition of reciting the prayer loudly in Kashmiri mosques continued with the same vigour and zeal. In continuance no doubt, provides an index of the commitment of the people to the deep rooted popular tradition and their cultural psyche. By providing a folk orientation, to new message of Islam in Kashmir- Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani not only made Islam intelligible to the majority of common folk but it provided a tremendous psycho-religious comfort to neo-Muslims.

#### 4. Khanqahs

It was only after the advent of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani that through the organization of the Khanqahs the gradual process of Islamization began in the Kashmir. A Khanqah was a community centre for the brotherhood where they could stay, eat, pray and obtain guidance. Attached to the Khanqah or around it, there were working centers known as Karkhanas, where the brothers of the community engaged themselves in various handicrafts and earning a living. The head of the Khanqah also worked and stitched fur caps. There was a common Langer where meals were prepared for all the inmates of a Khanqah or guests.

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani institutionalized and organized Islam in Kashmir. He did not keep all the hundreds of disciples and associates with him and confined to Srinagar or few places. Instead the hundreds of preachers who no doubt were having knowledge and conscience of Islam, travelled the different corners of Kashmir and built such religious institutions (Khanqahs) in Kashmir, was a turning point in the history of Kashmir towards Islamization.<sup>xlii</sup> Combined with this Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani unleashed an intellectual wave in Kashmir. Thus by the system of Khanqahs, serving a permanent schools of learning- the process of Islamization of Kashmir was kept fast on the road of progress. This Khanqah system in Kashmir had its important ramification: the preachers of religion were not wanderers. Normally a preacher comes to a place, preaches and leaves for another locality. But this Khanqah system was altogether a different style. It was the end of the religion wandering of preachers as used to be common in earlier times.<sup>xliii</sup>

Jaffer Badakshi, the biographer of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani while highlighting the role and importance of Khanqahs, quotes the Saiyid, saying that when he intended to enter in to the Khanqah of Shaikh Muzdaqani, he was told at the very outset that the primary condition for anyone to enter into his Khanqah would be to shun ones family and worldly pride. Therefore, you first keep in order the shoes of Negro slaves and sweeper of the Khanqah, so that you consider yourself nothing.<sup>xliv</sup> It was this spirit of Islam which was imbibed by the saints who promoted conversions in Kashmir. They not only preached it through their homilies but also practically demonstrated it in Khanqahs established at the different places in the valley.<sup>xlv</sup> They gave strict instructions to the muatwalis (managers) of the Khanqah not to make any discrimination between rich and poor or low-borne and high-borne.<sup>xlvi</sup> As per the Khanqah rules the junior inmate however rich or high he may be had to remain obedient and subservient to his senior colleague irrespective of his social background. It was necessary for a rich Murid to forget his position and consider himself no more than a begger.<sup>xlvii</sup>

To preach such Islamic teachings a network of Khanqahs was built in different parts of the valley, particularly amongst the Hindu localities and very close to their places of worship so that the depressed sections among them would be able to compare their own caste-ridden society with the caste-less social system of Islam.<sup>xlviii</sup>

#### 4.1. Khanqah-i-Mualla

Abul Fazal in his *Ain-e-Akbari* says that Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani resided for some time in the city of Srinagar and a Monastery was founded by him known as Khanqah-i-Mualla. In fact the Khanqah was built later on in 1392 on the cloisters occupied by the great Saiyid and his disciples. Since then many additions and alterations have been carried out, till this day.

The inner hall 63' by 43' is surrounded by 14 chambers including the special chamber known as Khilvat khana which was used by Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. This spacious hall is artistically decorated with glass inlay work, papier-mâché and wood work. The wooden panels in the hall have been carved to exhibit the gold painted compositions from the *Awrad-i-Fathiya*. The Holly Names of Allah have been carved out of the wooden panels in an artistic manner and there are the specimens of the Arabic calligraphy. The inner ceiling is supported by four wooden columns decorated with pieces of wood in fish bone pattern. The dado of the walls and the columns consists of carved floral pattern such as lotus flowers and leaves.<sup>xix</sup>

Syeda Ashraf Zaffer in her book, "Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani" says that, "Khanqah-i-Mualla" has been the Islamic centre since 8<sup>th</sup> century Hijra. It was here that Islamic education regarding Quraan, Hadith, Fiqh and tasawuf was imparted to the people. It is here that in 996 H., the famous book *Hasan Husain* was written by Haji Mohammad Kashmiri".

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani was remarkable for the proselytizing zeal with which he documented his advices, decisions and judgements for the elite and common people. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani enhanced his prestige in the eyes of the public with his knowledge. In order to win large conversions, learning was one of the basic requirements. He was a prolific and versatile writer. He was having command over Persian, Arabic and Islamic learning and was equally good in Logic, Philosophy, jurisprudence, political sciences, sociology, psychology, medical sciences, prose and poetry and art of pleading and preaching.<sup>1</sup> Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani was not only equipped with bookish knowledge in different subjects but he had a practical knowledge of the rationale of human behaviour, human experience and social processes as he travelled widely and interacted with different people of different countries and of different backgrounds. He considers it a religious duty for all those who wield power and influence to make recommendations to meet the ends of justice to solve the problems of people. In support to this he quotes a hadith, "the Prophet said that no Sadqa is more excellent than a sadqa of tongue. On being asked is meaning, the Prophet replied it means that kind of recommendation which would prevent shedding blood and help providing benefit to people and stop one from wickedness."<sup>ii</sup>

A treatise called *Risala-i-Dah Qaida* was entirely devoted to the contemplative life by Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. In this treatise he writes that the ways to God are as numerous as men themselves but they can be classified into three different types according to their excellences:

- i. The first path is that of the common man, which consists in performing the obligatory duties and following the external laws of Shariah.<sup>iii</sup>
- ii. The second path is that of the people of penitence, which consists in the purification of heart and self through mortification.<sup>liii</sup>
- iii. The third path is the most perfect and the noblest of all. To attain this path Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani has laid down ten basic principles<sup>liv</sup>: Tauba, Zuhd, Tawakkul, Qannat, Uzlat, Zikr, Tawajjuh, Sabr, Muraqaba and Riza.
  - Tauba means to return. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani believes that Tauba is an act by which man can return to God. In order to do so one has to make conscious efforts to give up all those things which can keep one away from God.<sup>lv</sup>
  - Zuhd or renunciation demands the voluntary abandonment. According to Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani one should not only give up world and worldly objects but even the desires for these should be renounced.<sup>lvi</sup>
  - Tawakkul or trust in God. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani writes that traveler in the spiritual path should entrust himself and all his ways and works to God in a spirit of complete and unqualified trust.<sup>lvii</sup>
  - Qannat or Resignation. According to Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani qannat is an act of stripping of the garments of worldly and beastly desires. The seeker after truth must accept only what is necessary to maintain his existence.<sup>lviii</sup>
  - Uzlat means retirement or seclusion. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani divides the seclusion into two stages: In the first stage the seeker must turn his back on mankind and keep oneself away from the people except his guide who purifies his heart and mind. The retirement from the world removes traces of the "other than God" from his heart and mind. The second stage of Uzlat is to divert the senses from forbidden to the lawful. In this stage a person, although he lives among the people is isolated and severed from the rest of the world.<sup>lix</sup>
  - Zikir means remembrance. It means to forget voluntarily the remembrance of everything except God. It is a medicine for heart. The best Zikir according to Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani is "La ilaha illa l-lah" (There is no God but Allah).<sup>lx</sup> In the treatise *Risal-i-zikriya* Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani categorically rejects the Zikr-i-Jahr (Zikr recited aloud or outwardly) and recommends only Zikr-i-Khafi (zikr recited silently or inwardly)<sup>lxi</sup>. On the basis of certain verses of Quran (7:55,49:2) and Hadith, Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani pleads that Zikr-i-Khafi is superior way of reciting the names of God. It is more respectful and leads the seeker to God in most befitting manner.<sup>lxii</sup>
  - Tawajjuh means attention or concentration in the mystic sense it means to present one's self entirely with all devotion before God. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani writes that one is diverting one's attention to God his thoughts should be completely absorbed in Him and should not be distracted by things other than God. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani says that if a true seeker treads on the path of God for thousands of years shows negligence for a single moment, he loses all those blessings earned during a thousand odd years.<sup>lxiii</sup>
  - Sabr means patience and is mentioned in the Quran in many places and a patient man is highly praised.<sup>lxiv</sup> Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani says that patience is the basis of all worship. It is obligatory to remain patient on the illness, grief and hardships.

Those who bear hardships and remain content on the will of God are bestowed with gifts by him.<sup>lxxv</sup> It is only through Sabr that connections to all the attractive objects of world are severed and the soul is brightened.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

- Muraqaba means contemplation. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani says that it amounts to giving up all authority and activity over which the seeker has control. The light of divine contemplation abundance the dark lane which leads to an ephemeral goal and travel on the wide lane of the divine light.<sup>lxxvii</sup>
- Raza the literal meaning to Raza is to be pleased. It is the highest stage of the Sufi course it means to accept voluntarily and pleasingly that what comes from God. It also implies that one should give up his wish and will for the will of God. Leaving all the qualities aside he should relate himself with the attributes of God.<sup>lxxviii</sup> Raza is the last of the stages and denotes a condition in which the seeker is always pleased with whatever befalls him.<sup>lxxix</sup> According to Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani when a person thinks no more of his own and entrusts to God, he receives limit less grace and start to shine with the divine light.<sup>lxxx</sup>

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamdani gives an extensive list of the virtues in his Risala-i-Fuqriya: Remembrance, Thought, Determination, Fear, Hope, Lament, Attention, Humility, Abstinence, Self-restraint, Sincerity, Trust in God, Submission, Total Surrender, Patience, Conciliation, Thankfulness, Modesty, Truthfulness, Sacrifice, Will, Conviction, Devotion, Poverty, Knowledge, Forbearance, Wisdom, Insight, Understanding, Peace, Love, Yearning, Unity of God and Annihilation.<sup>lxxxi</sup>

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani's Zakhirat-al-Muluk is written in ten chapters. **Chapter 1:** Pre-requisites of Faith and commands thereof and necessary avenues by which to accomplish them in order that a man might safeguard himself from perdition and come by the eternal bliss of Heaven.

- Chapter 2: How to fulfill obligations of devotion.
- Chapter 3: Relates to the ultimate in good behaviour and good disposition and also the need for the sovereign king to live up to the ideals of the first four caliphs.
- Chapter 4: Concerns the rights of parents, husband, wife, children, slaves, relatives and friends.
- Chapter 5: Deals with privileges of the kingdom, state government and public, terms of administration, attendant risks and necessity of justice and benevolence.
- Chapter 6: Concerning the kingdom of spirit and secret of man's vicegerency.
- Chapter 7: Is about commands and prohibitions and their characteristics, terms and modes.
- Chapter 8: Talks of the essence of gratitude in regard to divine blessings, rewards and favours.
- Chapter 9: Relates to fortitude amidst ordeals and misfortunes of earthy life, which attend administrative matters.
- Chapter 10: Concerns nature of arrogance and anger and their undesirability and also contains the conclusion of the book.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

The first chapter is devoted to Faith/Pre-requisites of Faith and commands thereof and necessary avenues by which to accomplish them in order than a man might safeguard himself from perdition and come by the external bliss of Heaven.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> The essence of Islam consists in five principles (pillars):

- a. Attestation of Faith
- b. Prayer
- c. Fasting
- d. Paying Zakaat
- e. Performing Hajj (Pilgrimage)

Of these five two do not apply to a poor man which are Paying Zakaat and performing Hajj.<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

- Faith, Anyone whose Faith is strengthened by these four elements is admitted into God's presence. (1) Attesting from the core of one's heart. (2) Declaring by Tongue. (3) Physical actions and (4) Following the Prophet's(SAW) custom. He who does not follow these four principles is in absolute infidel. He who's testimony is verbal but does not come from heart is a hypocrite and he is worse than a Kafir (unbeliever). He who testifies to his faith both from the heart and by the tongue yet fail to act upon his beliefs is Fasiq (Miscreant and reprobate). The person is destined to remain in hell in proportion to his shortcomings in his submission to God.
- He who testifies to his Faith from his heart, by his tongue and by his actions but does not follow the Prophet's (SAW) tradition is a heretic, and the heretics will be the dogs of those who will devil in Hell and is stated by the Prophet (SAW) Kalab ahli-Naar.<sup>lxxxv</sup>
- Prayer, Like all Muslim scholars Saiyid Ali Hamadani lays great stress on Salaat or Namaz. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani quotes various traditions from the books of Hadithin his Zakhiratul Muluk.in one tradition Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "There is but one point of difference between a believer and unbelief that is the renouncing of prayer. That is to say, determined observance of prayer offered at due times with essentials and with humbleness is an indication of true belief while their renunciation is a sign of unbelief.<sup>lxxxvi</sup>
- According to Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani the key to prayer is purification which is of three kinds- firstly of clothes and body, secondly of the Nafs (lower soul) and thirdly of the heart.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> He who performs his prayers in time and goes properly through ablutions and genuflects and prostrates in an appropriate manner and in the prayer express his helplessness and humility to God, his prayer says 'May God protect you and assist you as you have protected me'.<sup>lxxxviii</sup>
- Fasting: Everyone has a field of himself and Satans field of activity is the being of Man. This field is the passions whose fierceness has only on antidote- the fierceness of hunger. The flow of tide in Satan's field can only be stopped by fasting. The efficacy of fasting is that it blocks the way of the devils for the believer which otherwise would be an impediment in his way

and bashes with the weapons of hunger and thirst, the head of the poisonous snake of lust, and overpowers with the strength of devotion the forces of anger and passion which are the ghoulish spirits of the light on intellect and with strenuous efforts cleans the mirror of heart making it eligible to receive hidden facts. And this is why God has given it among other fundamentals of Faith, a distinction and has promised great reward for its observance.<sup>lxxxix</sup>

- Zakaat: Zakaat literally means "Purification". In Islam the term is used in the sense of a contribution of two and half percent of certain categories of property for the use of the poor and needy as a means of purifying the remainder.<sup>lxxx</sup> Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani strongly recommends that zakaat should be paid secretly. He who gives charity with the right hand and keeps the left unaware is going to be among those seven people who are blessed by God's mercy on the Day of Judgment. However Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani says that men who are free from hypocrisy should give zakaat openly In order that the act might serve as a precedent to the hesitant.<sup>lxxxii</sup>
- Hajj: Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani says very little about Hajj. He says that those who have the means are bound to perform Hajj.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> But he adds that if a ruler or Government officer finds that their absence was likely to endanger the internal or external peace of country they were not bound to perform the pilgrimage.<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani through his works exhorts the people to control the mundane desires and reject pompous life. While dissuading the people from becoming the slaves of nafs, the Saiyid says:

"If the dig of nafs is under your control then believe Paradise is yours; This dog (nafs) worse than a dog is your enemy, so don't be beguiled by its tricks".<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani not only preached against the social vices like greed, miserliness, extravagance, perfidy, hypocrisy, conceit, pride, jealousy, backbiting, anger, cruelty, selfishness, faultfinding, lying, ill-manners, and like but the Saiyid brings to fore the social, economical, cultural and politico-administrative aspects of Islam which are aimed at serving the interests of the poor, weak and destitute sections of society. He persuasively preaches in favour of sharing wealth with the poor and needy, good treatment towards one's parents, wives, servants, slaves, neighbours, friends and relatives.<sup>lxxxv</sup>

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani by his teachings also harmonized the social life in Kashmir. In order to support his views he had cited examples from the wholly Quraan, Ahadees, sayings and anecdotes of famous saints and has also quoted historical incidents from the time of early khalifas. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani has quoted, "Your lord has decreed that do not worship any but Him; be good to your parents and should both or any one of them attain old age with you do not say even to them fie, neither chide them but speak to them with honour".<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani wanted to develop social, moral and spiritual qualities among the young ones. Being a Sufi, he brought his knowledge, wisdom and experience into operation within the society in which he lived. The principle of brotherhood as propounded by Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani did produce a distinct class of chivalrous people in Hamadan, Khatalan, Balkh, Kashmir and other parts of Central Asian Countries. In fact he exerted the rulers of some countries to help in establishing centers of this brotherhood. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani preaches a moral code and exerts a person to remain steadfast in fulfilling a promise, never to make false declarations, never to abuse others and never to utter a word which hurts. It is in this way that one can improve his conduct provided he has made a solemn vow to improve his self. It is necessary and binding that one should desist from using his hands and tongue in such a way which results in hurting others. A truthful person must lead simple life physically or materially.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

In the field of anthropomorphic his treatise entitled *Insan-i-kamil* is very important for in it of the perfect man are summarized in a beautiful way. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is termed as *Insan-I-kamil* or the perfect man. By following his example a human being can attain heights and attributes towards perfection and completeness.<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

The perfect man is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is endowed with the ability to cognize or understands the whole universe. All the elements of universe receive the munificence of God through him.

Perfect man or the *Insan-i-kamil* is another name for the reality of realities which is the perfect manifestation of God. The universe can only be realized through the perfect man. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani holds prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the spiritual head of the prophets and Saints and comprehends all the attributes of God. He is the centre of the universe. He is the macrocosm; in him all the manifestations are united.<sup>lxxxix</sup>

## 5. Mir Mohammad Hamadani

Mir Mohammad Hamadani the only son of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani was born in 774/1372 at Khattalan and was only 12 years old when his father died. After the death of his father Mir Mohammad Hamadani continued his mission of his father and his disciples. When only 22 years of age Mir Mohammad Hamadani arrived in the valley in 796 A.H., when Sultan Sikander was the Monarch, and was accompanied by three hundred Saiyids. Shah Hamadan his father having as already noted brought 700. Kashmir had therefore a total influx of one thousand Saiyids at that time from Turkistan.<sup>xc</sup> It is said that before his death in Khattalan Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani had handed over to Maulana Surai for transmission to two of his prominent Khilafas- Khwaja Ishaq of Khattalan and Nooru-ud Din Badakshi of Badakshan, certain documents which contained his Wasiyatnama and Khilafatnama.<sup>xcii</sup> Khwaja Ishaq in turn delivered the documents to Mir Mohammad Hamadani with the exception of the Khilafatnama, which the former retained with himself, saying that it could be made over to one who proved worthy of it. This was apparently a hint for Mir Mohammad Hamadani that he should exert himself to follow the footsteps of his great father. Mir Mohammad Hamadani studied under these two prominent admirers of his father and in course of time acquired the succession to his father's position of spiritual pre-eminence.

On his arrival in Kashmir, Mir Mohammad Hamadani was received with great honour by the reigning Sultan Sikander. At that time Sikander's Prime Minister of the Military force was Malik Siya Butt, a Brahman convert, who appears to have been impressed with the personality of Mir Mohammad Hamadani and to have embraced Islam with the whole of his family. Mir Mohammad Hamadani whose

first wife Bibi Taj Khatun, who was a saintly character, had died was offered the hand of his daughter renamed Bibi Barea, by siya Butt after his conversion. Siya Bitt adopted the Islamic name of Malik Saifu-ud Din.<sup>xcii</sup> Although Mir Mohammad Hamadani came to Kashmir at a young age of 22, he was so mature a scholar that two works he wrote in Kashmir- one on logic and other on Sufism were mistaken for the compositions of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani by the murids of the later, so identical were they in depth and scholarship with the writings of his father. It was on account of his outstanding scholarship and piety that Sultan Sikander according to Janoraja “waited on him daily, humble as servant, took his lessons from him and was attentive to him like a slave” because “although he was a boy, he became their chief by learning”.

Sultan Sikander under the influence of Mir Mohammad Hamadani enforce the Shariah with great strictness. He banned the use of wine and other intoxicants and prohibited gambling, the dancing of women and the playing of musical instruments like flute, lute and guitar, allowing only the playing of drum and fife for military purposes.<sup>xciii</sup>

A famous Hindu writer Shrivar writes:

→ “As the bright moon is among the stars, as was Mohammad of Miran country (Mir Mohammad Hamadani) among these Yavanas (Muslims) and although he was a boy, he became their chief by learning.”<sup>xciv</sup>

Mir Mohammad Hamadani left from Kashmir in 817A.H. with the intention of Hajj. From Hajj he went to Khattalan where he lived his remaining life in propagating the Islamic principles and elements. Mir Mohammad Hamadani died on 854 A.H. and he is buried just adjacent to his father Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani.<sup>xcv</sup>

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