



## Sufism and the Socio-Legal Services of Hazrat Moinuddin Hasan Sanjari of Ajmer Urf “Khwaja Gareeb Nawaz”

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### Abstract

*The Sufi saints, Ulemas and Mashaikhs always had an important place in the history of mankind. These Sufi saints belong to different tariqas but their basic belief has been same and that is “oneness of Allah”. A ‘tariqa’ is a school of thought or a concept for the mystical teaching and spiritual practices with the intention of seeking the ultimate truth. The history of Moinuddin Chishti, the Sufi saint of Ajmer is much mired in mythology. Therefore, it is often infuriating to shift fact from fiction. Loveable and the legends declare Moinuddin Chishti a great saint, many are curious to know why he is considered to be so. This paper explores why Moinuddin Chishti is considered greater above all in the Chishti tariqa. In addition to this, this paper also explores the socio-legal services of Moinuddin Chishti for Muslim world generally and for Rajasthan particularly.*

**Key Words:** Asrar-E-Haq, Shariah, Islamic Law, Monotheism (Wahdaniyat), Sufism, Mysticism

### Introduction

Sufis strictly follow Islamic law belonged to Islamic jurisprudence – a core subject of legal education. Resultantly, the *muridins* also observe the principles of law as they are bound to follow the teachings of Allah and secondly the footsteps of their *murshid*. Therefore, Sufis and Sufism play a significant role in the implementation/enforcement of law which is highly necessary for the deterrence of crimes and protection of society.

In Sufism and mysticism, there are different kinds of *tariqa* based on the chain of pedigree, slightly similar to the cast and creed. The major difference in cast group and pedigree in *tariqa* is that any person can be chosen by Allah to be a saint. It is not compulsory that all individuals from a particular will be saints and sheikh. The most popular *tariqa* in west is *Mevlevi* order used with the name of Mevlana Jalal ad –Din Muhammad Rumi in Turkey. In South Asia four main *tariqas* are generally popular: Chishti, Naqshbandi, Qadri, and Suharwardi. The Qalandri *tariqa* has its roots with Buddhism and Hinduism. The Sufi saints belong to these *tariqas* are chosen people who act as representatives of Allah. They are spiritual heads who mend and ameliorate the rotten and decayed societies morally, ethically and politically; as well as they show the path to their followers (*muridin*) to know and love Allah.

In Chishti order, Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Hasan Sanjari of Ajmer is most popular saint. The Chishti Sufi order was originally founded in Central Asia and Moinuddin was the first one to introduce the Chistiya way of life in India, where he lived for over four decades. His *muridin* (disciples) Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (RA), Baba Farid Ganj Shahr, Mubarak Hamiduddin Nagauri, Nizamuddin Awlya and Khwaja Nasiruddin Chiragh Later fanned out into different parts of the Indian Subcontinent and spent their lives trying to match their deeds to their words. This paper focuses on the biography and socio, religio and political efforts of Khwaja Moinuddin for the miserable and backward people of Rajasthan (Ajmer).

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## Socio-Legal and Political Services of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri (RA)

The pedigree (shajra-e-nasab) of Hazrat Moinuddin Hasan Sanjari of Ajmer also known as Sultan ul Hind and Khawaja Ghareeb Nawaz in history is: Hazrat Imam Ali (as), Hazrat Imam Husain (as), Hazrat Imam Zainul Abedin (as), Hazrat Imam Muhammad Baqir (as), Hazrat Imam Jaffar Sadiq (as), Hazrat Imam Musa Kazim (as), Hazrat Imam Ali Musa Raza (as), Hazrat Imam Muhammad Taqi (as), Hazrat Imam Ali Naqvi (as), Hazrat Musa RA, Hazrat Askari RA, Hazrat Mehdi RA, Hazrat Khwaja Abdul Aziz Hussain RA, Hazrat Khwaja Najamuddin Tair RA, Hazrat Hassan Ahmad RA, Hazrat Ahmed Hassan RA, Hazrat Khwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan RA, Hazrat Khwaha Gareeb Nawaz Moinuddin Chisti RA.

Moinuddin was a man who born in an Arab family on Persian soil in 1142, and died in Ajmer in 1236 CE. Before his birth, his father Ghiyasuddin saw a dream in which Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Ghiyasuddin Allah will give you a son, who will be very kind to all humans and who will be a near friend to Allah". After that dream, Hazrat Ghiyasuddin had been praying that "May Allah turn my dream into reality as soon as possible". On 14<sup>th</sup> Rajab, 530 Hijri, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1142 CE, in a small town of city Isfahan, the dream of Ghiyasuddin came true and Moinuddin was born.

When Moinuddin Chishti was born, his father was so happy that people were asking the reason of his happiness anxiously and then he shared his dream with them, that my son will be a blessing from Allah. When he was born, there was a mole on his chest whose resemblance in Arabic meaning was like Allah. Due to that mole, the whole family was proud of him. He was very fond of *Ibadat* since childhood. He used to say to his father that he feels that the things he see, he has already seen them. His father used to say in response that my son, you will be a great heir in future and from your Dargah hundreds and thousands of people will be benefitted.

That time was very tough and miserable for liege lords (Sayed o Sadat); they were being killed in different places miserably. Moinuddin's father thought that my son is the mandate of Allah and it is my responsibility to protect him. That is why he left his city and travelled towards Khurasan. Moinuddin could not live peacefully even in Khursan. The time passed and when he turned fifteen, his father Hazrat Kwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan RA died, adding to the pain, his mother also died in the same year.

Moinuddin inherited a garden from his parents. He sold that garden and distributed the money among poor people. After that he went to Bukhara for learning the Qur'an by heart. He continued his education there. When he used to feel sad for his father he used to travel towards Mashhad to see his forefather Hazrat Imam Ali Raza and then returned to Bukhara for continuation of his education. He was very determined and curious about his education. He learned Qur'an for several years in a way that if someone asks any question, he used to answer with the reference of Qur'anic verses. When he was 32 years old he wished to see his grandfather Ali Ibne Abi Talib and Imam Husain RA. For that purpose he travelled towards Iraq. He spent some nights at the Roza of Imam Ali (as) and some at Imam Husain RA.

After that he reached to Bughdad. While roaming in Bughdad, he entered into the mosque of Hazrat Junaid Bughdadi RA. Upon entering the mosque, he saw Hazrat Khwaja Usman Harwani sitting on the pulpit (member) educating the people of Bughdad. When he saw the mesmerising style of conversation and a contentment and lucency on the face of Hazrat Usman Harwani, he became his *murid* (disciple).

Moinuddin said to Hazrat Usman that he was impressed by his spellbinding way of communication and educating the people; he also want to educate people like this. Hazrat Usman smiled and accepted him as his *murid* (disciple). Hazrat Usman asked: "Ae Moinuddin will you go for Hajj"? Moinuddin said, "Huzoor what else can make me happier". Both *murshid* and *murid* went for hajj, when they started twa'f, Hazrat Usman Harooni held his hand and finished the last 7<sup>th</sup> round of tw'a'f and said to Allah: "Ae Allah I give Moinuddin to you, he is the most pious and kind among all of my *muridin* (disciples). Bestow him with your blessings and give him those responsibilities to fulfil which you want.

Later on, they travelled towards Madina. In front of Roza-i-Rasool (PBUH) Khwaja Usman held Moinuddin's hand and said: "Ya Rasool Allah, this Moinuddin loves your Ummah a lot, if a poor and needy person come to him, he never let him go with empty hands, Ya Rasool Allah make him aware with the eternal abilities and blessings hidden inside him and help him to achieve his destination". Just after this dua Khwaja Usman embraced and kissed the forehead of Moinuddin. Moinuddin said to khwaja Usman: my dear *murshid*, "I am seeing a huge love and affection in your eyes today"; Khwaja Usman replied: "ae Moinuddin Allah's Prophet (PBUH)

has given you the *laqab* (alias) of "Gareeb Nawaz". From today to onwards, whatever you will pray for a poor person that pray will not be denied.

After that they returned to their city Baghdad. After coming back to Baghdad, Khwaja Usman used to be in Chilla (a spiritual practice of penance and solitude in Sufism) continuously. One day, Usman Harwani patched together a robe for Moinuddin. Usman Harwani presented the garb of succession to his disciple; the *murshid* said that he had taught him everything he could. He bequeathed Moinuddin his personal staff, a rosary, a pair of wooden shoes and a prayer rug and declared that Moinuddin was now on his own. Usman Harwani further mentioned that while he saw his own grave being eventually levelled away by time, Moinuddin's was certain to survive long into the future.

Moinuddin took the title of Chishti from Usman Harwani. Harwani was belonged to the spiritual house of Abu Ishaq Shamsi, founder of the Chishti school of Sufism in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Shamsi had fled the materialism of the Syrian court in Damascus to meditate in the solitude of Chisht, a hamlet nestled on a mountainside near Herat in Afghanistan. Shamsi found all egocentric rulers and the verbal squabbles and dry-as-dust arguments of legalists distracting. He kept his distance from all of this and spearheaded an alternative movement of extraordinary sensitivity among the simple people of the verdant valleys and mountains of Khorasan. The Chishtis had little in common with the clergymen who lived in cities and circled the Kaaba. The Sufis preferred to be in the midst of nature. Shamsi's followers were ascetics at first, devoted to finding ways of exploring the self. But at some point in their lives they returned to civilisation to practice amongst people the spiritual ideals they had learned and contemplated in seclusion.

Well aware that mysticism often attracts the best minds from society, some Chistis were against a total renunciation of the world. They were afraid of leaving important affairs of the state entirely to mediocre people and to the unthinking. But even those who returned to civilisation shunned pleasure of the flesh like feasts and fanfare and wore simple clothes made from rough material. Members of the Chishti family often ate leaves and concentrated on nourishing the spirit. They believed that music illuminates the heart. They considered the musical soirees they regularly enjoyed as meditation of the most effective sort. To those who objected to music as being un-Islamic the Chishtis replied that lovers of music may seem to be strangers to the world but they were friends of the divine.

*"There is no entry into the heart except through the antechamber of the ears. Musical tones, measured and pleasing, bring forth what is in the heart and make evident its beauties and defects... whenever the soul of the music and singing reach the heart, and then there stirs in the heart that which preponderates in it".*

Right after when Usman Harwani left Moinuddin on his own, Moinuddin started to go to different villages and towns to ameliorate the people and educate them regarding religion. His way of communication was so sweet that whoever talks to him becomes his *murid* (disciple). The time continues to pass like this and Moinuddin went for Hajj with all his *muridin* (disciples). He performed Hajj, while went to sujud he said: "Ae Allah bestow my followers with jannah". After that he went to the Roza-e-Rasool and said: "Ya Rasool Allah, what is the next order for me"? He spent the whole day there and slept at night, while sleeping, Moinuddin saw in his dream, Rasool Allah (PBUH) saying that: "Ae Moinuddin, go! I have awarded you the Sultanate of Hind. Go and ameliorate the people of Hind". Moinuddin started his journey towards Baghdad and then to Multan, from Multan to Lahore, from Lahore to Patiala and then to Ajmer.

While passing through Lahore, Moinuddin mediated for forty days at the Shrine of Ali Hujwiri, the 11<sup>th</sup> century Islamic scholar who died in 1077. Hujwiri was the author of *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* (The Unveiling of the Veiled), the pioneer book on the Sufism, where he said that he who knows real love feels no more difficulties and faces no doubts.

*"Man's love towards Allah is a quality which manifests itself in the heart of the pious... so that the believer becomes impatient and restless in his desire for vision... Repose becomes unlawful and rest flees... he is cut off from all habits and associations, and renounces sensual passion and turns towards the court of love and submits to the law of love... It is impossible that man's love of Allah should be similar in kind to the love of His creatures towards one another, for the former is desire to comprehend and attain the beloved object, while the latter is property of bodies".*

The actual name of Ajmer is "aja mere" "aja" means "sun" and "mere" means "Mountain". The foundation of Ajmer was put in seventh century. This place was the sultanate of Prithvi Raj Chohan. The life of poor people

was miserable in Ajmer. Injustice and tyranny was at its peak that the voice of a weak and poor person could not be heard by the authorities. Moinuddin started to walk in the streets of Ajmer gently along with his forty *muridin* (disciples). When the people of Ajmer saw luminous and bright face of Moinuddin, they astonished as they never saw such resilient and highly educated person in Ajmer.

One evening, Moinuddin went to a place with his *muridin* which was considered a low and disdained place. He sat there, while few persons came and they said rudely that: "O baba leave this place, this place is to sit for government camels". Moinuddin smiled and said: "Allah's earth is quite vast, go and let your camels to sit at another place". A person among them shouted and said: "O baba get up and go somewhere else, this is the place for the camels of Prithvi Raaj Chohan". After listening this, Moinuddin stood up and said: "Let the camels sit, they will be sitting here forever and will not be able to stand again". Moinuddin left that place and went at the bank of a nearest canal called "Ana Sagar".

There were thousands of people at the bank of canal who started staring at Moinuddin with strange eyes but Moinuddin did not bother and stayed busy in his ibadat. He spent the whole night at that place, the next morning, government soldiers came running towards Moinuddin and said: "O Allah's friend, we have committed a mistake, camels are unable to stand even after several efforts. Please forgive us and help us". Moinuddin said: "go your camels have stood up". When the soldiers came to their camels, they saw that all camels were in standing position and their heads were down towards Moinuddin. Soldiers told this story to Prithvi Raj. Everyone in the city was talking about this incident.

Prithvi Raj and his mother were astronauts; they knew that a fakir (mendicant dervish) will come to Ajmer who will be dangerous for his sultanate. Prithvi Raj thought probably this person is the one who will be a danger for his sultanate. After few days, the people who used to live near canal came to Prithvi Raj and said that: "Our Lord, there is a fakir sitting at the bank of Ana Sagir, he is always busy in his ibadat, he used the water of canal for his wazu, he is wasting and diluting the canal water. Therefore, order him to leave that place. After two days, there is our carnival festival, if you do not ask him to leave, we will beat him and force him to leave that place". Prithvi Raj said, I allow you to force that false fakir to leave.

When *muridin* (disciples) of Moinuddin went for taking the water from canal, the people beaten and injured them badly. The disciples requested to Moinuddin to leave that place and go somewhere else. Moinuddin replied: "this water does not belong to a single person, it belongs to Allah, come with me, let's talk to them". It was the time when the festival was going on. At the time when Moinuddin stepped into that place, his face was so luminous that no one could be able to talk to him. He said, who says that we cannot use this water, come and talk to me. No one could dare to talk, except one who said: "go baba go, this is our pure water and you contaminate this water, go somewhere else".

Moinuddin said: "this water is not yours; it is for everyone bestowed from Allah. Ok! We are going and taking our part of water with us". Moinuddin put a small pot into the canal and the whole water of canal came into that pot. All the people gathered there were astonished to see this and started to beg for water. Moinuddin said: "never consider anyone inferior than you, you do not know that a person to whom you are humiliating and considering inferior is very special near Allah". After saying this Moinuddin put the water back into the canal and the canal filled again. After witnessing this miracle, all the people assembled there turned to be Muslims.

When Prithvi Raj heard this story, he became even more frightened and thought that no doubt this is the person who will demolish my sultanate. Moinuddin became famous in the whole Rajasthan. The person, who comes to him with a grievance, leaves his place happily after resolving their problems. Childless couples were getting children; jobless people were getting jobs, any person having any worry was getting relief with the prayers and blessings of Moinuddin. Prithvi Raj was depressed and annoyed with this increasing fame of Moinuddin. He called expert pundits and scholars to disrespect and defame Moinuddin by proving that Moinuddin does not know anything. But whoever comes becomes disciple of Moinuddin. Then, Prithvi Raj sent his most senior scholar, Saduram to Moinuddin in order to defeat him in him knowledge, that scholar continued to do everything what he could do; Moinuddin lifted his head and said:

*"Saduram, for how long will you lie to yourself, you are a Muslim from inside".*

When Saduram heard this, he was stunned that only Allah knows that I am Muslim from inside. He bowed to Moinuddin and became his *murid* (disciple). When all the scholars of Prithvi Raj failed, he started to get support

from magicians. He called the most senior magician of Rajasthan to disrespect Moinuddin. That magician continued to try his magic the whole night but he could not be successful. After trying every magic he accepted that this man has a mercy of Allah and who has mercy of Allah, no one can harm him. That magician said, the luminous and bright face of this fakir is evidencing that he is truthful; and the religion he preaches will also be truthful. He became Muslim with all his 400 pupils. This incident added fuel to the frustration of Prithvi Raj and increased the fame of Moinuddin throughout Rajasthan.

Prithvi Raj started cruelty and tyranny on the *muridin* (disciples) of Moinuddin. He imprisoned them and said, he will relieve the disciples only if Moinuddin will leave the Rajasthan, otherwise they will be killed. Moinuddin loved his disciples a lot, he said: Ok! I am leaving Rajasthan, but now this sultanate will call me and you will soon be arrested by Muslims. Prithvi Raj laughed to hear this and Moinuddin left that place with his disciples. During those days Shahabuddin got defeated by Prithvi Raj, and due to this he was in the state of depression. One night, he saw in his dream that a saint is saying to him:

*"ae Shahabuddin go and fight with Prithvi Raj, he will be arrested by you".*

Shahabuddin started his journey from Afghanistan, occupied the Rajasthan and arrested to Prithvi Raj. As soon as he arrested Prithvi Raj, people started conversation among themselves that just a few days before, a fakir said that Prithvi Raj will be arrested by Muslims. Shahabuddin said to his soldiers, go and find that fakir (friend of Allah), I want to meet him. Soldiers find Moinuddin, they bowed to him, kissed his feet and said, Khwaja Sahib, the King of Rajasthan, ruler of Ajmer is desperate to see you, and he wants to kiss your feet. When Khwaja sahib entered Ajmer along with his *muridin* (disciples) magnificently, Shahabuddin bowed to him and said: "You are the saint who came to my dream and said to me to arrest Prithvi Raj, I will be your follower and disciple for the rest of my life".

The fame of Moinuddin was increasing day-by-day. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) granted him the *laqab* of "Gareeb Nawaz". Thousands of people were coming to him for their self-amelioration and people started to call him "Gareeb Nawaz". On 5<sup>th</sup> Rajab, 633 Hijri, at the time of Isha, he went into his room (Hujra) and advised to his *muridin* (disciples), no one should come to my room. Till the morning (*tahajud*) time his voice of Ibadat was coming outside which disappeared after that. At the ending time of Namaz-e-Fajr, disciples stepped into his room and saw that Khwaja Gareeb Nawaz had been gone towards his eternal life.

## **Conclusion**

Khwaja Gareeb Nawaz spent his whole life making sure that he remained humane when times were most hostile. He has been preaching the teachings of Shari'ah in all his soft and hard times. He made himself so at home at his adopted land that when he died he was most mourned by those who did not belong to his creed. Khwaja Gareeb Nawaz is portrayed as a person who stood up to the diverse challenges of the day but without offending the people he chose to live with. He was the person who was able to perfect the art of love in the midst of hate and follow the right path of Islamic law. The spirit of Moinuddin soars beyond the single-dimensional image of him as a man of one religion. He emerges as a major cultural broker, a person whose only politics was that of love. His history is an invitation to ordinary people that it is possible to balance the material with the spiritual here in his life.

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