

Sūfiyā-i Khattak and Their Popularity among the Masses

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The Khattaks, not to be confused with Shitaks or Bannuchis, originally moved from Shual i.e. Sulaiman Range now occupied by Waziris, into their present habitat in the NWFP perhaps sometime during the Mughal period. While the Khattak tribe has produced numerous distinguished personalities in various fields, the present study is focused only on one aspect, i.e. the Sūfis (or mystics) of this tribe. The Khattak Sūfis played a vital and dynamic role in spreading Islamic education in the NWFP especially Nowshehra. The *Sūfiyā* maintained a unique family tradition of receiving education from their parents and other well known scholars/teachers of the time. Only then would they take up the assignment of educating the people. The education was based upon creating awareness amongst the masses regarding the basic principles of Islam.

The first Sūfi of this tribe to enter the NWFP was Hazrat Adam (the ancestor of the present Kaka Khel's). He hailed from Khost (in Afghanistan) and reached Karbogha, a small village located in the western part of the present Kohat District in 806/1403 CE (Kakakhel 1988: 40). He settled there and for the rest of his life devoted himself to teaching and preaching Islam. He died in 872/1467 CE (Quddusi 1966: 269; see also Uqab 1964: 26) and was buried there. He was followed by one of his sons named Ghalib al-Din popularly known as Ghalib Gul Baba (Kakakhel 1988: 35, 41; Quddusi 1966: 269; Afghani 1967: 576; Shakirullah 1997-98). Ghalib al-Din left Karbogha and moved to the eastern part of the present Nowshehra District where he settled at Maroba (Nizampur) on the right bank of the river Indus in 900/1524 CE (Shakirullah 1997-98). One of his sons, Sayyid Nadir (commonly known as Mast Baba) (Shakirullah 1995) also actively participated in teaching with his father in the same *madrasah* (school). Later on, he settled in a village called Shaikhi in the Khattak territory. There he built a *madrasah* and started teaching not only how to recite the Holy Quran but also how to interpret it in very simple language which could reach the hearts of his pupils and other listeners. After his death in 969/1561 CE (Uqab 1964: 26) his son Shaikh Bahadur known as Abak Baba (Shakirullah 1996) came to Kana Khel in the same area and settled there.

Quite in line with his family tradition, he also built a *madrasah* and spent his entire life in the services of Islam, preaching its fundamental and basic principles both to the uneducated masses and the educated elite. In 1027/1617 CE (Husain 1989: 57), he died and was buried there. Of his sons the most famous, Kastir Gul, known as Hazrat Shaikh Rahamkar Kaka Sahib (Shakirullah 1994), came to the present village of Ziyarat Kaka Sahib (now a famous place in the present Nowshehra District). This great *sufi* established seven religious schools in his life time at different places in the same territory for spreading Islamic teachings. Of them, the one established in his home town (Ziyarat Kaka Sahib), is still functioning. From here students were selected to be sent as preachers to Kashmir, Afghanistan, Punjab, Sindh and other parts of the subcontinent (Shakirullah 1994).

After the death of this great *sufi* in 1063/1643 CE (Afghani 1967: 573; Qadri 1964: 39-44), his third son Shaikh Khalil Gul known as Zamari Baba, according to his family tradition, shifted to

Malakand Agency and settled at Kot Maina, where he kept himself busy in the promoting Islamic education. While the fourth son Shaikh Abd al-Halim, known as Halim Gul Baba (Shakirullah 1993), was a great *sufi* and scholar of his time. Throughout his life he continued his father's mission and kept on teaching and preaching. He is said to have been a good scholar and prolific writer. The following books are attributed to him (Shakirullah 1996: 14):

1. *Chehal Hadith - wasiqa Akhirat* (Pashtu), Delhi, 1890-91
2. *Rahat-i Muhkam* (Pashtu), 1898-99
3. *Muqamat-i Qutbiya wa Muqalat-i Qudsiya* (Persian), Delhi, 1900-1901

Of them, the last one is written on the life of his father, Kaka Sahib. He also built the tomb building of his father in 1661 CE (Quddusi 301). Halim Gul Baba died in 1092/1681 CE (Kakakhel 213) and was buried in the same graveyard.

Amongst the well known followers of Kaka Sahib were Shaikh Darya Khan, Shaikh Gul Nur, Shaikh Babar (Shakirullah 1996c) and Faqir Jamil Beg (Shakirullah 2001), Shaikh Allah Dad and Shaikh Karim Dad (District Kohat) (Shakirullah 1998). Shaikh Gul Nur and Shaikh Babar shifted to Dag Ismail Khel village with the same agenda. While Faqir Jamil Beg known as Faqir Baba was also a scholar and poet. He is the author of *Tazkirat al-Auliya* (Persian), and lies buried in Tangaro near Akora Khattak.

All these saints had very good relations with the contemporary rulers. This is also reported that the rulers themselves and their high ranking officials used to visit them in as long as they were alive and thereafter to their graves. They played a very important role in spreading Islamic teaching amongst their fellow tribesmen in the area. Thousands of people daily visit the last resting places of these saints. The visitors are provided free food and free religious education to the poor students in the attached schools.

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