

The Role of Sufis in Construction of Peaceful Society

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Abstract

In present time, it is commonly observed that the people and society are facing many problems which are disturbing the social, Economic religious and political structure of state. This situation becomes double where problems like terrorism, poverty, illiteracy, corruption, religious controversies, political and economic disturbances, human rights destruction, religious disharmony and problem of enduring peace are the main issues of the society. So, the need of time is search the exact truth of finding complete solution harmonized world where every creed, sect and religion enjoy the freedom of expression under one umbrella of peaceful society and prosperity which is only thought the Tasawwuf. The Sufis played an important role with their teachings and character for making a peaceful society. The role of Sufis has very importance to promote social and moral values among all people to tolerate and maintain the Socio-Political and religious harmony for sake of people's prosperity and for construction of peaceful society.

Key Words: Terrorism, Religious controversies, Peace, Tasawwuf, Harmony, Sufi, Moral values

The religion of Islam in a general sense approaches the human being both at an individual level as well as from a societal perspective. Those who accept that Islam is the religion of all age, then he will also accept that Tasawwuf is also a need for all ages because Tasawwuf is an important element from among other elements of Islam. The reason for the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) came into this world include the recitation of the verses of Allah Ta'ala, teaching of the instruction present in the book of Allah, wisdom and purity of inner soul. Just like Islam is incomplete without learning of the Holy Quran, similarly Islam is incomplete without purifying the inner soul and the basis of Tasawwuf is to acquire purification of own self which is used to gain the will of Allah Ta'ala. The nearness of Allah and for worldly society construction and religion fortune. We now know that without Tasawwuf a Muslim cannot become a complete Muslim and until one becomes a complete Muslim, one cannot become a complete human because the teachings and practices of Tasawwuf are the same of the Islam.

The Tasawwuf creates a balance in a man, the sickness of greed, pride and hyrierisy is eliminated. When these illnesses are not present then we will work gatherly for the benefit and the peace of entire nation and state unity and discipline will be developed in us and with these qualities, we can perform an important role for creation of good governess and prosper more in society.

Tasawwuf represents the very pinnacle of faith. It is the supreme standard of one's spiritual state. It is also very compulsory to know the meaning and definition of Tasawwuf. Shaykh-ul-Islam zakariyya Ansari says about the definition of tasawwuf.

Tasawwuf teaches one to purify one's self, improves one's morals and build up one's inner and outer life in order to attain perpetual bliss, its subject matter is the purification of the soul and its aim is the attainment of eternal felicity and blessedness. ⁽¹⁾

Hazrat Iman Ghazali states Tasawwuf in these words,

I have come to know with complete proof that those who practice Tasawwuf are called "Sufi". The Sufi is the one who walks on the path to Allah. Their nature is the best of all nature, Their nature is the moral values are purer than all, in fact if you collect all intelligences together, all hikmat together, all knowledge of the scholars together so that you find an alternate method of the Sufis which is better than theirs, then that will not be possible because their act whether is visible or invisible is taken from the source and light of Nabowwat and there is no other light in the entire universe that can give light and Guidance instead of light of Nabowwat. ⁽²⁾

The role of Sufis was made positive in the formation of peaceful society. Because the Sufis teach the human being to attain oneself for the purification of heart and actions. When a man adopts himself in light of teachings of Tasawwuf and Sufi's way of actions, He will take peace and restness in society and state. Holy Quran also announces that those peoples are successful who purified themselves.

The Holy Quran states as

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّىٰ بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ

خَيْرَ وَالْبَقِيَّةِ- (٣)

The one who will take admonition and purify himself shall be successful, who remembers the name of his Rabb and prays. But O men! You prefer the life of this world, while the hereafter is better and everlasting.

A successful society is that in which there is lack of problems and pure from any kind of evil. This is only possible due to having an environment of Ehsan.

Ehsan is a practical form of Tasawwuf, "It is the supreme standard of one's spiritual state. One is perfect in his faith who has himself wealth of Ehsan"⁽⁴⁾. The famous tradition of Prophet ﷺ consisting of the dialogue between him and the angel, Gabriel, the manner in which the term Ehsan occurs in it after Iman and Islam "Testifies to the truth of the assertion that Ehsan marks the ultimate stage in the evolution of faith and peace in society. ⁽⁵⁾

When the Holly prophet ﷺ was asked about the Ehsan. He answered as

قال فاخبرني عن الاحسان- قال ان تعبد الله كأنك تراه فان لم تكن تراه فانه يراك- (٦)

He (Gabriel) asked "What is Ehsan" The Prophet answered "Ehsan means to worship Allah as if one is actually seeing Him or is being seen by him.

In other words the stage of Ehsan is reached when the awareness of God becomes the greatest reality of one's life and one's every act is performed under a constant sense of His presence for although man

cannot see God. It is just not possible in this material world, Allah does see him all the time.

The Holly Quran also announced the importance of Ehsan

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ. (٤)

Allah commands doing justice, doing good to others and giving to near. Relatives, and He forbids indecency, wickedness, and rebellion. He admonishes you so that you may take heed.

So, by means of Ehsan, a person can close with each other Muslim and save himself from each kind of vice when, there were no evils, crimes and immoral habits in society. The peace and calmness surrounds the populace.

The verses of the Holly Quran and a tradition of the Prophet ﷺ on the subject of Ehsan tells that

A person whose state may be that when he loves, he loves for hates, he hates for the sake of God and when he gives, he gives for the sake of God and when he with holds his hand from giving, he with holds it for the sake of God. He has attained perfection of his faith, in result of heart satidfaction and peace. (8)

The Sufis identified service of God with the service of the man

“Shaikh Junaid Babhdadi was quoted in the mystic circles of Dehli as saying that he found God among the poor people in the streets of Madina.” (9)

Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya classified devotion to God into two

categories: Ta'at-i-Lazmi and Ta'at-i-Muta' addi, Ta'at-i-Lazmi consisted of prayers and penitences that an individual performed, while

“Ta'at-i-Muta'addi consisted in helping the needy, poors and feeding the hungry for creating the peace and restness in the society and also ten strengthen the bond among the human beings”⁽¹⁰⁾

Abu Nasr Al-Sarraj al-Tusi (3781988) points and declares that the “Muraqaba is also the complenentory of Ehsan, He views as it is very root of all good”.⁽¹¹⁾ The expression, ‘even if you do not see Him’ He truly sees you” which is employed in the famous prophetic tradition as the definition of “Ehsan indicates the state of Muraqaba, Describing Muraqaba or vigilant awareness as “Realesing the spiritual station of Ehsan”.⁽¹²⁾ Literally meaning, surveillance, preservation, being in expectation of some calamity. Muraqaba is indicated in such Quranie verses as

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَّقِيبًا- (١٣)

God is ever watch full over everything.

At another place Quran says

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ- (١٤)

And He is with you, where ever you may be.

Muraqaba is a form for remembering the Allah Taala in any moment through which a Muraqaba holderan come very close to his Lord and attained the state of self-purification, And these Sufis play an important role for making a peace full society.

States about the Muraqaba:

Muraqaba is a person's knowing without a doubt that God is aware of everything occurring to their heart and all the preoccupying thoughts deterring them from remembrance of their Lord and Master. ⁽¹⁵⁾

Says also that Muraqaba is a source for earning God's good pleasure and enabling the persons an ideal inhabitant of the state.

Muraqaba entails a person's monitoring their heart at each breath, every action and behavior with a view to earning God's good pleasure and enabling their heart to become a site where God directs His gaze. On the other hand, it involves their feeling themselves to be under God's watch at each thought and deed and attaining. The realization that they can never leave the sphere of His disposal. ⁽¹⁶⁾

Sufis work individually for purification of heart and also trains their disciples for this practice too. Because the heart and mind are basic sources of all good and bad actions. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also said that the heart is the central organ of the body. If its work is right, all body is right and if it is disturbed, all work of body disturbed.

The Holy prophet ﷺ says:

وَإِنَّ فِي جَسَدٍ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ
الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ إِلَّا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ. (١٧)

And undoubtedly, the body having a hump of flesh, if its working proper good, then all body became safe sound and when it became vicious, resolutely all body lost modesty. Be aware! That(Hump of flesh) is heart.

Due to the philosophy and central Idea of the said tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the Sufis try their best to pure their heart and acts and this is only done by the Muraqabas in their compnies of with their disciples. When common people attained this of the purification, it means that their work will be the good and righteous. The righteous and virtuous working create and constructs a successful and peaceful society. Tasawwaf also includes in its teachings. The spirit of “Ithar” which is very important is Islamic society to close and strengthen.

The brotherhood among eachother. Mustafa cagreci defines the Ithar

“A person using the resources at their disposal in meeting the need of others, even when they themselves are in need, and their sacrifice for the good of others.”
(18)

The words ‘Jud’ and ‘Sakha’ are also essentially synonymous with the term. Imam Qushayri also states about these two words as

These words (Jud, Sakha), denote “bountifulness” and “generosity”, cab be interchange able, there are nuances between them so, Sakha is the first degrece, Jud the second, while Ithar is the third and highest degree. (19)

And Al-Jurjani says that Ithar means

“A person’s preferring the interests to their own interests, or protecting them from any harm first and foremost.” (20)

The teaching of Ithar has also be indicated in tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which are also an emblem of great hospitality,

generosity and social service of mankind Hazrat Abu Hurayra said as

A man came to the prophet ﷺ and said, "Messenger of God, I am afflicted by great hunger" So, he was sent to his wives and he did not find any food with them. The prophet said, "who will host this man tonight. A man from the Ansar (Abu Talha) stood up and he took him in his home and asked his wife whether, there was anything to offer him. She told him that only food for children. He said his wife, present this food to the Guest and put the children to sleep and put out the light is give the guest an impression that we too are eating. We will bind our bellies tonight. She did just that. In the morning, when he met the Prophet ﷺ who said God was pleased for the treatment they showed their guest last night. Then God revealed this verse. (21)

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ. وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَحْنَهُ فَآوَىٰ إِلَىٰكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ. (٢٢)

And those who accepted this city as their home and accepted faith before them, befriend those who migrated towards them and in their breasts do not find any need for what they have been given, and prefer the migrants above themselves even if they themselves are in dire need: and whoever is saved from the greed of his soul. It is

they who the successful.

This concept of Ithar and service of Humanity which is given in the Hadith and Quran, also adopted Sufis in their daily life and they also taught this lesson to all their followers

Khwaja Mu'in-ud-din chishti advised his followers as

You should develop yourself river like generosity, Sun like affection and earth like hospitality. As these Phenomena of nature make no distinction between any creature of God, likewise man should not discriminate between one human being and another. ⁽²³⁾

Similarly, it is said that once, Hazrat Shaikh Nizam-ud-din was sitting with his disciples and told the audience that "once prophet Ibrahim was reluctant to ask a non-believer to partake of food with him. Prophet came the admonition from God "Oh Ibrahim !We can give to life this man but you cannot give food to him". ⁽²⁴⁾ So, due to this reason, the Sufis khanqahs supplied food and shelter to all sorts of people, no matter to what religion they belonged. Shaikhe Nizam-ud-din

"Used to fast regularly. When food was brought to him at the time of sahri, morsels would stick in his throat as his mind went back to persons who had gone to bed without food". ⁽²⁵⁾

It is looked and observed that in each society, there are lying present poor, needy, orphans and disables communities. They cannot earn so much for livings. So, these groups of individuals create

disturbance and disability for state and society. But the Sufis in their teachings and practices tried their best to solve these basic problems of populace. And they also established in states a successful and peaceful society.

For establishment and construction of a restful and balanced society, the tasawwuf also teaches for adopting the “Tolerance and patience.” Tolerance is the basic principle of the Islam and Tasawwuf. It is religious and moral duty. It does not have the meaning of lack of principles or lack of seriousness about one’s principles. Sometimes it is said, “People are tolerant of things that they do not care about.”

But this is not the case in Islam and Tasawwuf. Tolerance according to Islam does not mean that all religions are the same and we do not believe in the supremacy of Islam over other faiths and ideologies. It also does not mean that we do not convey the message of Islam and Tasawwuf to others and do not wish them to become Muslims.

Tolerance literally means “to bear”⁽²⁶⁾ and in common concept it is defined as “respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of the world’s cultures, forms of expression and ways of Human beings.”⁽²⁷⁾

There are also other words that give similar meanings such as “Hilm” (forbearance) and “Afu” (pardon, forgiveness).⁽²⁸⁾

While in Urdu language, this word is used as “Rawadari” which comes from “Rawa” meaning ‘acceptable or bearable’.⁽²⁹⁾

The Sufis adopted in their lives the element of tolerance and patience. Because this creates the humbleness humility, in human beings and made society and environment spotless. Having in itself the tolerance and patience, are also the direction of the Holy Quran as:

فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا (٣٠)

So, leave them and be tolerant.

And on another place, it is said as:

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ (٣١)

And they should forgive and forbear, do you not like that Allah may forgive you.

These verses of the Holy Quran give the populace, the lesson and exhortness for excuseness on any mistake of other brother. But another places, the Holy prophet ﷺ also advises the Muslims for avoiding any type of angerness, Irritation and usurpation. Once, a companion of the Holy prophet ﷺ asked for advice many times but the Prophet ﷺ again and again answered for negating the angerness.

The word of Hadith are as:

عن ابي هريرة ان رجلا قال للنبي او صيني قال لا تغضب فردد مرارا قال لا تغضب (٣٢)

Abu Hurairah(R.A) narrated that a person requested the Holy prophet ﷺ for giving him an advice, the prophet ﷺ said“Do not angry.” He (Questioner) repeated his question many times but He(The prophet) said“Do not angry.”

The Holy prophet ﷺ said is another Hadiths that a powerful

and strong wrestler is that who controls himself when he is angry.

قال فماتعدون الصرعة فيكم؟ قال: قلنا الذي لا يصرعه الرجال. قال ليس
بذلك ولكنه الذي يملك نفسه عند الغضب. (٣٣)

(The Holy prophet ﷺ) said, "Whom do you count as a wrestler among you?" we said, "He whom people cannot defeat him in wrestling." He said, "No, it is not so, but he is one who controls himself when he is angry."

From the teachings of Quran and Hadiths, it is clear that negation of angry and adopting the Tolerance is an individual quality of Muslims. So Sufis also adopted these teachings and they change circumstances and traits of society in light of these teachings. Shaikh Ali bin Usman Al-Hajvari states an incident of shaikh Abu Tahir Haraqī in which the shaikh was faced very insulting words by a layman but He did not feel it and also forbade his disciple to do any street activity against the man. It is stated as:

Shaikh Abu Tahir Haraqī was passing a bazar with riding on donkey attended by one of his disciples, A person cried out, "here comes that old freethinker," The indignant disciple rushed at the speaker to strike him. The Shaikh said to disciple for having silence instead of angry. They returned home and the Shaikh gave him a box which contained letters which were addressed to Shaikh with honor able titles like 'the Shaikh of Islam' "The pure shaikh", "The ascetic Shaykh." "The Shaikh of the two Sanctuaries" and so on. The Shaikh said, "They are titles but I am none of these things' but every person gives me the title with his firm belief

concerning me. If that poor fellow did the same just now, why should you quarrel with him” (34)

Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khair said that

“There were myriads of routes and roads leading to God, none was quicker and more effective than bringing happiness to the hearts of men with love, Tolerance, faith and sympathy.” (35)

All these verses, Hadiths and other teachings of Sufis that Muslims do not coerce people, They must present the message of Sufis to them in most cogent and clear way, invite them to the truth and do their best in presenting and conveying the message of Allah Ta'ala and Sufis teachings to humanity for creation of peaceful society.

The teachings of Islam and Tasawwuf emphasize the establishment of equality, justices, Ehsan, Ithar and Mohabbat, all of these are the basic elements, necessities and requirements of a peaceful society. But these values of successful society cannot be established without some degree of tolerance, because the intolerance is on the increase in the world today, causing death, genocide, violence, religious persecutions as well as confrontations on different levels. Sometimes it is racial and ethnic, sometimes it is religious and ideological, other times it is political and social. In every situation it is evil and painful. The solution of these problems and evils is only in the teachings of Sufies which are discussed for the construction of a peaceful and successful society.

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