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## ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONALITIES OF CHISHTI ORDER RENOWNED FOR SOCIAL AND LITERARY SERVICES

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#### **Abstract:**

This historical investigation draws attention towards the significant and enduring effect of Chishti order on social setup and literature of medieval subcontinent. Chishti order is one of the prominent and dominant Sufi orders of medieval India. It also highlighted how the Chishti Sufis used local tendencies and accustoms to form the social structure. It also put emphasis that Chishti saints broke the blockade of caste-ridden society and united them together with the bonds of love and respect apart from religion, faith, caste and creed. Chishti saints also brought prominent changes in the literary work of the era. Their literary work and scholarly writings gained dominant place in literature. Their writings also provided guidelines about spirituality and oneness of Allah. This study throws light on the social and literary works of three marvelous personalities of Chishti order; Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA), Khawaja Fareed Uddin Masood (RA) and Khawaja Nizamuddin Auliya (RA).

**Keywords:** Chishti Order, Nizamudin Auliya (RA), Fareed Uddin Masood (RA), Moin Uddin Chishti, Social services, Literary work.

### **Introduction**

Historically it is evident that in spreading Islam and its values far and away, sufis, Saints and Ulmas contributed a lot. Their piety, humanistic, loving and peaceful attitude towards the mass contributed richly to the social and religious life of the people. They lived with common people and served them. They proved healers in sorrows and griefs of the wretched people, especially in the history of the subcontinent. They inspired the castridden setup of Indian society and affected their social livings and standards. A large number of Sufi orders emerged in Indian subcontinent. From them most famous and commonly known Sufi orders are Qadria, Chishtia, Seharwardia and Naqshbandia orders.

This study is conducted to highlight the social and literary contributions of the Chishtia order. Chishtia order is known as one of the oldest, largest and most famous order of Tasawuuf. It is the dominant and most influential sufi order of India and Pakistan.<sup>(1)</sup> Chishtia order started from “Chishtia”, a small town situated near Herat, a province of Afghanistan.<sup>(2)</sup> Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami Chishtia is known as the founder of this Chishtia order. It spread from Afganistan and kharasan to India. Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti considered as reviver and pioneer of introducing Chishtia order in Indian Subcontinent. Chishtia order exercised a great influence on the native people of India. Chishtia order was further subdivided into two orders, “Chishtia Nizamia” and “Chishtia Sabria”. Both the sub-orders were ramified by the followers of two khulfa’s of Farid Uddin Masood, Khawja Nizamuddin Auliah (Chishtia Nizamia) and Allauddin Sabri (Chishtia Sabria). Both the sub-orders contributed to the methodology and principles of the Chishtai order according to the need of the society.

Chishtia order put great emphasis on love, charity, tolerance, social uplift and generous attitude towards humanity.<sup>(3)</sup> Chishtia Sufis spread the message of Islam through morality and love rather than by sword.<sup>(4)</sup> their followers also escalated this message and built their character according to the wish of their leaders. Chishtia saints welcomed the people of all religions and races. They remained away from worldly power and ranks.<sup>(5)</sup> They treated the rulers of their time like other devotees, and they did not get any rank in the court and remained aloof regarding the matters related to state and

politics. They have the supposed that worldly affairs corrupt the soul of a saint (Sufi). Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti said,

“Never seek any help, charity, or favours from anybody except Allah. Never go to the courts of kings, but never refuse to bless and help the needy and the poor, the widow, and the orphan, if they come to your door”.<sup>(6)</sup>

On the other hand they put great emphasis on developing the relations with common people and they showed generosity and love for the poor. The actions and words of Chishtia Sufis divulged the true spirit of Islamic humanism which quashed the idols of superiority existed in the cast system of India.<sup>(7)</sup> Chishtia order retained cohesive, effective and well-organized centralized setup to control the actions and behaviours of their Khalifas and their disciples.<sup>(8)</sup> Traditions and code of conduct set by early Chishti Sufis are still cherished by the followers of Chishtia order specifically and other orders generally.<sup>(9)</sup>

Keeping in view the importance of Chishtia order in the history of the subcontinent researcher decided to explore the social and religious services of three great Chishti Sufis; Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA), Khawaja Fareed Uddin Masood (RA) and Nizamuddin Aulia (RA). This study was completed with the help of relevant literature, collected from both primary and secondary sources of data. Books, manuscripts and writings of concerned personalities and the works of the persons who wrote anything about these personalities was considered for the writing of this paper.

### **Social and Literary Services of Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA)**

Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (known as Khawaja Gareeb Nawaz) laid the foundations of Chishtia order in Indian subcontinent.<sup>(10)</sup>

There is divergent views regarding the date of birth of Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA). Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) was born in 536 Hijri (1136 AD) at Sanjar, a town of Sistan situated in Iran.<sup>(11)(12)</sup> Author of Siayr-ul- Aarfeen, quoted date of birth of Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) 534 hijri.<sup>(13)</sup> He was the son of Syed Ghayas Uddin RA who died when Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) was fifteen years old.<sup>(14)</sup>

Once Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) was planting trees in His garden, a Majzooob named Ibrahim Qandozi came there. Khawaja

Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) welcomed him and presented him a bunch of grapes to eat. He felt happy and converted his spiritual and intuitive powers to Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) by offering him something to eat (Bread or may be something other used to eat at that time.<sup>(15)</sup> After eating that piece a spiritual light blink into his heart, he sold out all his property and distributed the money among the needy and the poor people. Then Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) travelled to Samarqand, Bukhara and Iraq to boost his spiritual power. He memorized the Holy Quran by heart and gained the worldly knowledge. Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) established the center of His proselytization in Ajmer which influenced the spiritual life of the Indians and spread the Chishti order far and wide in the subcontinent.<sup>(16)</sup> According to Abu-al- Hassan Nadvi, “Moin Uddin Chishti laid strong foundation of Chishti order in India Subcontinent”.<sup>(17)</sup>

His social, religious, literary and spiritual services are so large in number that are not possible to cover in this short article. Here some of his services would be discussed below. Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) was a great scholar, philosopher and thinker. He used his potentials for the benefits to community and mankind and inspired the souls of millions of people. His preaching’s equally appealed to the Muslims and the Hindus. He enchanted all through his glorious character, love for mankind and by helping the penurious.

Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) was well known for his piety, helpful attitude and he played a marvelous role in serving the humanity. He consoled the people in their griefs, provided food to the hungry and shelter to the homeless. Owing to his piety, truthfulness, worship, friendly conduct and love for humanity, he earned deep love and respect from community. He always helped the poor and needy. To show his social services some incidents from his life history are presented here.

Yadgar Muhammad was the ruler of Sabzwar. He was strict, chaotic and cruel in nature and always hated the first three caliphs of Islam, Hazrat Abu Bakar (RA), Hazrat Umar (RA) and Hazrat Usman (RA). He always tortured the people who has named similar to the first three caliphs of Islam. Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti converted the proud and haughty ruler into a true Muslim and servant of

humanity. He distributed his property and money among the poor and started to provide relief to the anguished humanity.<sup>(18)</sup> His piety and blessings amazed his enemies who came to harm him due to his spiritual thought. His spiritual look inspired his opponents and they became his disciples and true followers. He gave the lesson of universal peace and love of humanity. When Prithviraj Chohan sent a spy to kill him, Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) recognized him, invited him to meal and showed hospitality as a guest and apologized him.<sup>(19)</sup>

He, without any sword and strength, ruled over the hearts of millions of people. He was a paragon for humanity for his services and softness.<sup>(20)</sup> Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) did not make any difference between the rich and the poor. He provided guidance to all these who came to him to seek knowledge and assistance without any distinctions.<sup>(21)</sup> When a visitor came to him, he always welcomed him warmly and expressed hospitality by offering to eat, whatever was available at that time. He (RA) also attracted the Hindu community as well by offering sincerity, help and guidance to them. Tired souls came to him to attain comfort, Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) always welcomed them for soothing.

Once a weeping woman came to him and complained that the King had killed her son. Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti visited the place with her and prayed for his son. After his prayer the boy woke up alive by reciting the Qalma.<sup>(22)</sup> He always respected the people without any discrimination of the status. One of his sayings showed this concern about love and respect of humanity. He said'

“A sin committed does not harm an individual so much as witnessed humiliation of one's own fellow human beings.”<sup>(23)</sup>

His disciples followed him with great respect and love. One of his followers Sheikh Ali was traveling with him, when a man came and ordered Sheikh Ali harshly to return his money. Khawaja Moin Uddin (RA) requested the man to let him go and gave some concession to return the money. But he refused and abused his disciple. To see this situation Khawaja Moin Uddin (RA) spread his shawl on the earth and asked him to take as much money as he had given to Sheikh Ali beneath the shawl. Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) also warned him not to take extra money. But due to greed he

took some extra money from it. At that moment his hand shrank, he became afraid, confessed his mistake and requested for pity. He was apologized by Khawaja Moin Uddin and advised for good deeds.<sup>(24)</sup> Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) was all the time ready to provide assistance to the followers, scholars and common people who visited him, without any discrimination of cast and religion. This practice gained for him attraction and attention of the Hindu community that came to their “khanqa” (a place selected by saint for their worship and religious rituals, also known as monastery) for self-pleasure.<sup>(25)</sup> Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) always helped the poor and the needy. He was given the title “Gareeb Nawaz” due to this helpful nature by the people. This title in itself explores the social services of Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA). Once he said, “There are four cardinal virtues to keep away from hell; (i) feed the hungry, (ii) listen to the poor and help them, (iii) maintain cheerfulness at the time of sorrow”.<sup>(26)</sup>

Once a poor man came to him with the complaint that king of Delhi had occupied his agricultural land and he did not have any other source of living. He requested Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti to indorse to Hazarat Qutab Uddin (RA) go with him to the king for the return of land. Rather than recommendation Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) himself went with him and recovered his land from the king.<sup>(27)</sup>

Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA) preached the philosophy of Islam orally (which is an orthodox style of preaching) but on different occasions he delivered lectures (Khutbat) also. Although He was well educated by renowned teachers of the time, he did not focus much on writings. Indeed, he is considered as the author of many books on Sufiism, Islamic code of life, Humanity, Love and Peace. He was the marvelous author who expressed his inner in writings. Anees- ul-Arwah and Israr-e-Haqi are his manuscripts.

Asrar –e- Haqiqi is the famous book written by Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA). This book is the translation of pieces of advice (Malfuzat) that he (RA) gave to Khawaja Bakhtiar Kaki (Caliph of Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti). It is the oldest book on Sufiism. Originally, It was in Persian language and then it was translated into Urdu and English. In this book Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti advised about the secrets of spirituality and Sufiism to Khawaja

Qutab Uddin Bakhtiar Kaki (RA). In the start of the book he (RA) made him aware of the reality of Oneness of Allah, reality of Prayer, Fasting, Zakat and of the Hajj. He (RA) advised his caliph in the light of the sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW). To give full understanding he narrated the incident from the life of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW).<sup>(28)</sup>

Seven Letters (Haft Maktobat) is another writing of Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA). These letters were also in Persian language and translated into Urdu and English latter on. He (RA) used simple language and referred Quranic verses to explain the thought. These letters were sent to Khawaja Qutab Uddin Bakhtiar Kaki (RA) by Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA). Now these are also included in the book *Israr-e-Haqiqi*. In these letters he (RA) advised his caliph about the reality of life and spirituality. He also advised him to convey his message of spirituality to upcoming followers and caliphs as his (RA) preacher and predecessor conveyed to him. These letters also expressed Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti's (RA) affiliation with and love for his Murshid (Teacher). He (RA) narrated many incidents and pieces of advice which he gained from his Murshid. In the start of first letter he said,

“Dear friend: one who recognizes Allah, will not ask any question or desire or wish anything. The one who does not recognize, will not be able to understand this thing. The second thing is to curb lust and desire. One who curb lust and desire, will get the set sights on (aim) in this matter.”

In the second letter he advised that a person should involve himself in worship of ALLAH at day and night so that he can enter his name in pious people and save his heart from devil (Shaitan). In other letters he told the secrets of Maarfat (Sufiism), and principles of Maarfat. All the seven letters depict that every Sufi should believe in the Oneness of Allah, avoid the materialistic life, save the heart (Nafas) from evil, believe in the day of Judgement, focus on the worship of ALLAH and help the needy people.<sup>(29)</sup>

Anees Ul Arwah is another writing of Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA). This book consists of sayings and pieces of advices (Malfoozat) of Khawaja Usman Harooni (RA), teacher of Khawaja Moin Uddin (RA).<sup>(30)</sup> In this book he articulated the different instructions and pieces of advice which Khawaja Mon Uddin Chishti

(RA) obtained from his teacher (Murshad). He also narrated the incident about his spiritual training and life. This book consisted of twenty seven sitting (Majlis) with Khawaja Usman Harwani (RA) in which he learned about spirituality, Islamic code of life, Tasawuf, morality, Immorality, humanity, peace, love, sin, wrong and right, and malicious things.<sup>(31)</sup>

### **Social and Literary Services of Fareed Uddin Masood (RA)**

Khawaja Fareed Uddin Masood born in 569 Hijri at Kothiwal, a village near Multan.<sup>(32)</sup> He is one of the famous Sufis of Chishti order. Sheikh Fareed Uddin Masood attained his early education from Multan which was the largest center of knowledge and excellence at that time.<sup>(33)</sup> One day he was busy in reading a famous book of Fiqa “Nafai” when he met Khawaja Bakhtiar Kaki (RA), Caliph of Khawaja Moin Uddin Chishti (RA). After completing his education Khawaja Fareed Uddin Masood joined Khawaja Qutab Uddin Bakhtiar Kaki (RA) at Delhi. He learnt the Islamic principles and doctrine from Him (RA). After the death of Khawaja Bakhtiar Kaki (RA), he settled at Ajudhan (Pakpatan) permanently and became the spiritual predecessor of Khawaja Bakhtiar Kaki (RA).

Like other Chishti Sufis he also devoted himself to Islam, humanity, well-being of others, love and piety. His house (Khanqah) visited by millions of people without distinction of cast and creed. He was like a light that inspired everyone who come to meet him. He served the humanity to relieve them and proved a refreshing breeze for his followers. He always welcomed the people without any discrimination of status and religion. He himself bore hunger and starvation but provide food to hungry. His disciples walked through the woods to brought “Pelu” and “Delah” to eat. He always adopted the way of forgiveness.

Qazi of Ajudhan was not happy with him and he had tried his best to make Khawaja Fareed Uddin Masood relinquish his task. One day he sent a man to kill him. Khawaja Fareed Uddin Masood was offering prayers at that time when he entered his Hujra. Khawaja Fareed Uddin was in Sajida but he recognized his intention and informed one of his disciples to catch him. After warn him Sheikh Fareed Uddin Masood (RA) forgive him and let him go back.<sup>(34)</sup> His door always remained open for everyone till night. The Hindus, the



Muslims, the Sikhs and all other communities visited him for guidance and help. He did not refused to help anyone.

Once a tax collector of Ajudhan (Pakpatan) came to him and requested to recommend the governor not gave pain to him. The governor was displeased with the tax collector and tortured him. Tax collector requested to intervene the matter to relive him. After the instructions of Khawaja Fareed Uddin Masood (RA), the governor stopped to disturb him.<sup>(35)</sup> One day, a person came to him and requested him to give something to remove poverty and misery. Sheikh (RA) advised him to recite surah “Juma” every night. Khawaja Fared Uddin Masood (RA) was a social reformer and helper. He had true spirit of humanity in himself. He always ordered his followers not to annoy anyone with their hands and tongue. He exhorted them to devote themselves to the service of humanity.

One day a man came to him with the appeal that ruler of Depalpur had demolished his village and in this destruction he had lost his wife. He told that his wife was a pretty lady and he loved him much, that’s why he wanted to reach her. Khawaja Fareed Uddin listened him and offered some food to eat but due to agonized he could not eat. Sheikh Fareed Uddin Masood (RA) asked him to stay with Him for 3 days and wait. He accepted the offer with a broken heart and stayed there. At last he met his wife due to Khawaja Fareed Uddin Masood (RA).<sup>(36)</sup>

He was a knowledgeable personality and widely involved in literary work. He was a great poet, philosopher and thinker. He wrote poetry in Urdu, Persian and Punjabi.<sup>(37)</sup> His work provided a new direction to literature. Amir Khurd in his book *Siyar-al- Aulia* have quoted the verses of Fareed Uddin Masood (RA) at different places. At one place he quotes,

“You will get honor and leadership for the pains that you undertake in your work, so keep awaking at night will bring greatness”.<sup>(38)</sup>

His poetry expresses his divine love and affiliation. In his poetry, he showed satisfaction with his life. He said,

“We are satisfied with the division of Allah. He gave knowledge to us and wealth to ignorant”.<sup>(39)</sup> (Translation of Arabic Verse)

He was not fond of name and fame and wanted to spend a life in nomination. For this purpose he traveled to Hansi, Delhi and Ajudhan. He expressed his wish in a verse by saying,

“One who is in search of fame his house is out of his door”.<sup>(40)</sup> (Translation of Arabic).

He expressed that search of knowledge is difficult and hardest task. For true and real knowledge one has to suffer a lot. He explained this situation in one of his verses written in Arabic, quoted in Siayr Al Aulia,

“If it would be possible to acquire knowledge through wish and desire then no one in the world would remain ignorant. You should struggle and shed away lethargy because on the Day of Judgment only indolent would be ashamed”.<sup>(41)</sup>

His poetry in the language of Punjabi is collected and printed in the form of book named “Kilam Baba Fareed”. In his poetry he put emphasis on spirituality, oneness of Allah, Day of Judgment, reality of mutualistic life, moral ethics, purity of soul, love for Murshid (Teacher), immortality of death and pardon from sins. He advised humanbeings through poetry to spend their lives according to the Islamic code of life. He used symbols and metaphors continuously in his poetry.<sup>(42)</sup> He also compiled the dictums of his “Murshid” , Khawaja Qutab Uddin Bakhtiar Kaki (RA) in a book named Fawaid-al- Salkin.

### **Social and Literary Services of Nizamuddin Auliya (RA)**

Nizamuddin Aulia was born on 624 hijri at Badayun, Uttar Pradesh.<sup>(43)</sup> His forefathers traveled from Bagdad to India Subcontinent. Nizamuddin Aulia is also one of important and famous Sufi in the chain of Chishti order. He got his basic education related to Fiqa from Molana Alauddin Asooli at Badayun. When he was sixteen years old he went to Ajudhan to meet Baba Fareed Uddin Masood (RA).<sup>(44)</sup> Four years he stayed in Delhi to complete his education. When he was twenty years old he joined Sheikh Fareed Uddin Masood (RA) permanently. He got his spiritual training from Sheikh Fareed Uddin Masood and proved himself a devoted disciple. Khawaja Nizzmuddin Auliya (RA) is the founder of a new branch of Chishti order named Chishtia Nizamia.

Like his predecessor he was also renowned for his simplicity, love and equality, service to humanity, charity, and religious syncretism. He was soft hearted and pious. In short period of time his popularity spread throughout the subcontinent. He was determined to purify the innersole of mankind. He established his Khanqa (Monastery) at Delhi, a place of religious and spiritual guidance for all the people of India. Her disciples and followers visited him across India and attained guidance and purification of heart. He served the humanity with open heart. He became popular on account of his charity. He distributed everything which he got from different sources including gifts sent by rulers and well off followers. Khawaja Hassan lived in the company of Nizamuddin Auliya (RA) when he was younger one. He involved in drinking of wine in the company of his friends. Khawaja Nizamuddin Auliya (RA) prohibited him for drinking wine by saying,

"For years we have been in each others' company, But your company did me no good. Your piety could not correct my sinful life. My sinful life is therefore stronger than your piety."<sup>(45)</sup>

After listening this, Khawaja Hassan fell down, give up drinking of wine and became his true disciple. There lived a man near Gyaspur (Place where Khawaja Nizamuddin Aulya stayed for some years) who always tried to creat troubles for him. But on his death Khawaja Nizamuddin Auliya (RA) participated in his funeral, prayed for him and forgave him.<sup>(46)</sup> He believed in the unity of mankind and shunning distinctions based on social, religious and economic status. He always focused to the help the needy, to feed the hungry and to be sympathetic to the troubled people.

Once a trader came and said that his possessions had been robbed by a dacoit. Khawaja Nizamuddin Auliay (RA) ordered his financier to give whole money and gifts which people sent as gift. The trader received twelve "tinky" (yardstick to count money) that were more than his loss.<sup>(47)</sup>

He settled a "Dastar Khawan" (Dinning table) at his khanqah (Monastery) for people. His royal "Dastar Khawan" daily provided food to the hungry people. People were allowed to eat food and take it away to their homes. People belonged to any community came to eat food, they were served without any discrimination of

caste, creed and status. At that time daily two thousand tinky (rupee) were spent for food of poor and needy.<sup>(48)</sup> He always consoled the troubled and sorrowed hearts. Once, one of his disciples came with the request of prayer for his wife. She was suffering leprosy. She recovered from this disease as a result of his prayers.

He was not only a spiritual guide but also an outstanding scholar. His memory was very sharp and exceptional. He wrote “Rahat al Qalooob” that is about the Malfozat of Baba Fareed Uddin Masood (RA). In this book he narrated the pieces of advices from his Murshid. It consists of 24 sections which have different philosophies.<sup>(49)</sup> Instructions and sayings of Khawaja Nizamuddin Auliya are collected by Amir al Hasssan Sanjri in “Fawaid-ul-Fuwad”. These “Malfozt” provides a glimpse of his literary thought.

Chishtia order brought drastic changes in the spiritual thoughts, cultural rituals and social livings of the natives of India. Character and personalities of Sufis provide help in teachings of spirituality, harmony, love and humanity. Chishtia Sufis left lasting effects on the social life of people and literary work. Their personalities and character inspired the people who came to them to get guidance about the Islamic code of life. Chishtia Sufi became prominent and altered the history of the region with their characters.

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