

Sufism, State and Society in Premodern India: The Place of Saiyyid Jalal al-Din Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht of Uch

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Abstract

The apprehension of socio-cultural and political dynamics can never properly be grasped without developing its context with reference to the Sufi traditions in premodern India. Sufis by incorporating the principles of Shariah into Sufism were successful in attracting disciples and patrons. Following this pattern they established themselves as spiritual and religious authority in an environment of Shariah-oriented Sunni society. Sufis, however, played an important socio-political role and acted as a counterweight against the arbitrary nature of the premodern Indian state. Saiyyid Jalal al-Din, popularly known as Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht (d. 1385), was one of the most eminent Sufis of the Fourteenth Century India, who was initiated both in Suhrawardi and Chishti Silsilahs. The present study intends to assess his approach to intertwine the Sufi path with Shariah and attain the legitimacy to mediate between the people and the state. Moreover, he reconciled various socio-political stakeholders of the state including common masses, nobility and the rulers. Parallel to the criticism of some scholars on the

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associational approach of Makhdum towards the court of Delhi Sultanate, it is argued that by adopting the reconciliatory approach towards Sultan Firuz Tughluq (r. 1351-88) of Delhi proved helpful to get introduced various people-friendly reforms in the Sultanate. The present paper is an attempt to evaluate Saiyyid Makhdum-i Jahaniyan's place in the state and society of premodern India, and also analyze his contribution towards the existing Sufi traditions. The study will also explore and analyze his efforts to mediate and reconcile the myriad segments of the society and the state in political and socio-cultural settings of Sultanate period. So as to draw callous assessment of the character, mission and achievements of the Makhdum, both the primary and secondary sources have been given an ample attention.

Introduction

The tradition of mysticism is part of many great religions. Sufism, also known as *tasawwuf*, represents this tradition in Islam that deals with the esoteric aspect of Islam. Scholars have defined Sufism in different ways; as "Sufism" according to A. J. Arberry, "is the mystical movement within Islam, whereas a Sufi, the one who associates himself with this movement, is an individual who is devoted to an inner quest for mystical union with his Creator. It also involves a 'personal trafficking with God.'¹ Murray Titus holds that Sufism is "an attitude of mind and heart towards God and the problems of life."² Tanvir Anjum describes Sufism as "an attitude of soul that entails an individual's direct relationship with God with a profound comprehension of the Real and Absolute Truth."³ The opinions regarding origin of Sufism are also as different as those are about its definition. Some

1 Farid al-Din Attar, *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Auliya* (Memorial of the Saints) trans., A. J. Arberry (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 1-2.

2 Murray T. Titus, *Indian Islam: A Religious History of Islam in India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), 111.

3 Tanvir Anjum, *Sufism in History and its Relationship with Power* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 2007), 15.

scholars like E. H. Palmer opine that roots of Sufism lay in pre-Islamic traditions,⁴ while others like Edward G. Brown are in favour of the theory that Sufism represents the esoteric doctrine of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH).⁵ There is no denying that all mystical traditions have something in common but it does not mean that Sufism largely borrowed doctrinal system, methods and practices from other religions.⁶ The history of Muslims in South Asia appears difficult to comprehend without studying distinct patterns of immigration of Sufis into South Asia from different regions of the wider Muslim world, chiefly from Arab, Middle East, Persia and Central Asia. The patterns of interaction between the Muslim sufis originated from India. The wider indigenous cultural factions of India are essential to understand because the pre-Muslim Indian religious and cultural forms got incorporated with new orientation of Islamic mysticism.⁷ Sufism started gaining popularity in early centuries of Islam. By the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries, Sufism gained popularity to such an extent that India grew to be 'Islamicate'.⁸ The Indian Subcontinent or the 'Indo-Islamicate' was among those regions where Sufis started their activities quite early. The course of history of spreading Islam in India is different from the Middle East. Islam was

4 E. H. Palmer, *Oriental Mysticism: A Treatise on Sufistic and Unitarian Theosophy of the Persians* (London: Luzac, 1969 report, first published 1867), as cited in Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 9.

5 Edward G. Brown, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977 rpt., first published 1902), 418-21.

6 Anjum, *Sufism in History and its Relationship with Power*, 19.

7 Nile Green, "Emerging Approaches to the Sufi Traditions of South Asia: Between Texts, Territories and Traditions," *South Asia Research* (New Delhi) 24, no. 2 (November 2004): 132.

8 The term Islamicate was coined by Marshall G. S. Hodgson. According to him, the term Islamicate refers "not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims". It refers to regions where Muslims left an impact on their culture and society. For details see: Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Consciousness and History in a World Civilization*, Vol. I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 59.

confronted with Hinduism in this region, having a strong and deep-rooted system of religious and philosophical thought. There are different theories on conversion to Islam in India like theory of the religion of sword, political patronage theory and theory of religion of social liberation. Richard Maxwell Eaton presented theory of 'Accretion and Reform' to explain this process.⁹ The role of Sufis in the process of accretion through which Islam spread gradually in the masses of the Indian Subcontinent, and in maintaining high levels of moral and spiritual life in the society has been more effective than any other single religious group, sect or agent. Sufis continued to settle in India, and started working individually. The Ghaznavid conquest and annexation of the Punjab, Multan and some parts of Sindh in the early Eleventh Century accelerated migration of Sufis towards Northern India. The Sufis belonging to different Sufi *Silsilahs* established their *khanqahs* in the urban centers of India. With the passage of time, many of these *khanqahs* were transformed into shrines and played an important role in the processes of urbanization and acculturation.¹⁰

In first quarter of the Thirteenth Century, Chishti and Suhrawardi *Silsilahs* were introduced in India almost simultaneously with the foundation of the Sultanate of Delhi. The Suhrawardi *Silsilah* founded by Shaykh Abu al-Najib Abd al-Qadir Suhrawardi (b.490/1097-d.562/1168) and was introduced in India by Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariyya (d. 1262) in early decades of the Thirteenth Century.¹¹ Multan and Uch remained in succeeding centuries the two principal centers of its activity in India.

Saiyyid Jalal al-Din, popularly known as Makhdum-i Jahaniyan 'Jahangasht' (d. 1384) was grandson of Saiyyid Jalal al-Din 'Surkh' (d. 1291), literally meaning red, of

9 Richard M. Eaton, ed., *India's Islamic Traditions, 711-750* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 14-20.

10 Singh, Surinder and Ishwar Dayal Gaur (edt). *Sufism in Punjab: Mystics, Literature and Shrines* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2009), 1.

11 S. Moinul Haq, "The Suhrawardis," *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*, XXIII, Part II (April 1975): 71.

Bukhara who was the disciple of Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariyya and the founder of Uch branch of *Silsilah* Suhrawardiyyah. Makhdum-i Jahaniyan received *khirqah* from his father Saiyyid Ahmad Kabir.¹² It was under Makhdum's stewardship that the Uch branch of the Suharwardi *Silsilah* rose into prominence, and became an important center of religious life in North India. Makhdum-i Jahaniyan was a widely travelled person. He journeyed through several countries and regions including Hijaz, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Balkh, Bukhara and Khurasan.¹³ It was on account of these journeys that he came to be known as 'Jahangasht' [the World Traveller].

Makhdum had multiple initiations or *bayts* in various Sufi *silsilahs*. He also joined the Sufi circle of Shaykh Nasir al-Din Mahmud Chiragh-i Dehli (d.1356) and thus acquired an affiliation with the Chishti *Silsilah*, in addition to his existing association with the Suhrawardi discipline.¹⁴ Shaykh Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlavi records in *Akhbar al-Akhyar* that the Makhdum received the robe of *khilafat* from fourteen different *silsilahs*.¹⁵ He received *khilaphat* from Shaykh Abd-Allah al-Yafai (d. 1366) in Suhrawardi as well as in Qadiri *Silsilahs*¹⁶ and from Shaykh Abd-Allah Matri, in Suhrawardi *Silsilah* along with *khirqah* and *khilaphat* from his father Saiyyid Ahmad Kabir.¹⁷ Due to his multiple initiations, he

12 Muhammad Ayub Qadiri, *Hazrat Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht* (Karachi: H.M. Saeed Company, 1983), 77.

13 Hamid ibn Fadl Allah Jamali, *Siyar al-Arifin*, 2nd ed., Urdu trans., Muhammad Ayub Qadiri (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 1989), 152.

14 Jamali, *Siyar al-Arifin*, 226.

15 Shaykh Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlavi, *Akhbaral-Akhyar*, Urdu trans., Mawlana Iqbal al-Din Ahmad (Karachi: Dar al-Isha'at, 1997), 205.

16 Sayyid Ala al-Din 'Ali b. Sa'd al-Qurayshi al-Husayni, *Khulasat al-alfaz-i Jami' al-Ulum*, ed., Ghulam Sarwar (Islamabad: Markaz-i Tahqiqat-i Farsi Iran o Pakistan, 1992), 22, 420.

17 Ahmad Baha' b. Yaqub al-Bhatti, *Khizanat al-Fawa'id al-Jalaliya* (MS 15427)(Islamabad: Kitab Khana-yi Data Ganj Bakhsh), 258b.

served as a key link in the spiritual lineages of Sufis from all the major Sufi *Silsilah* and of different regions.¹⁸

Reconciliation of Shariah and Sunnah with Sufi Traditions

It is often believed, particularly in the Indian Subcontinent that Sufism and *Shariah* are two divergent ideologies. This perception further developed as Sufis of premodern India were critical of the mere textual interpretation of the Islam by traditional *Ulemas*. Many Sufis were of the opinion that a journey of spiritual insight is more important than the mere ritual adherence of *Shariah*. However, the study of the teachings of Makhdum found in his *Malfuzat* rejects the above mentioned understanding of the views of the Sufis. Makhdum-i Jahaniyan repeatedly emphasized the importance of the study of Islamic Jurisprudence and other religious braches of knowledge as well complete observance of *Shariah* especially for the seeker of a Sufi path and rejected the claims of sanctity which were contradictory with *Shariah*.¹⁹ He followed the great Sufi Masters like Hassan al-Basri (d. 728), Junayd al-Baghdadi (d. 910), Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 1073), Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 996), Ali ibn Uthman al-Hujwiri (d. 1073), Imam Ghazali (d. 1111), Shahab al-Din Umar Suhrawardi (d. 1234) and Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariyyah Multani (d. 1262) while emphasizing the need for a balanced attitude in the matters of *Tariqah* and *Shariah*. Makhdum-i Jahaniyan's approach to give equal importance to the teachings and practices of *Tariqah* as well *Shariah* earn him great followings both in masses as well as in ruling circles and established his stature as a great Sufi master and a religious guide in the settings of fourteenth century India. Makhdum's teachings and practices negate the understanding of Sufism and *Shariah* as two conflicting and hostile ideologies in premodern India.²⁰

18 Amina M. Steinfels, *Knowledge before Action: Islamic Learning and Sufi Practice in the Life of Sayyid Jalal al-Din Bukhari Makhdum-i Jahaniyan* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2012), 3.

19 Husayni, *Khulasat al-Alfaz-i Jami' al-Ulum*, 164-357

20 Steinfels, *Knowledge before Action*, 80.

The settings of Fourteenth Century Muslim polity of the Indian Subcontinent show a trend in which Firuz Shah Tughluq (r.1351-88) as well as his nobles built numerous *madrasahs* and patronized the works on *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *hadith*.²¹ In this period *Shariah* oriented Sunni ideology was gaining more strength in Muslim society. On the other hand, Sufi masters were also well respected and venerated by much of Muslim population. In these settings the personality of Makhdum-i Jahaniyan was well respected due to a balanced approach towards the principles of *Shariah* as well as Sufism. He obviously sensed the need of rejuvenation of Sufi path which experienced an unfavourable environment during Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughlaq (r.1325-51) rule. The Fourteenth Century was also the period in which Suhrawardi *Silsilah* in Multan experienced decline after the death of Shaykh Rukn-i Alam and the center of Chishti *Silsilah* shifted from Dehli to Deccan. Makhdum-i Jahaniyan who was initiated both in Suhrawardi and Chishti *Silsilahs* as well as an established authority on religious sciences, captured that space and was revered by the Sultan as well as masses.²² Through his travels to different parts of the Islamicate and his instruction of numerous disciples and students, he also served as a link between the developing Indo-Islamic community and the larger Muslim world.

Reconciliation between Chishti and Suhrawardi Sufi Traditions

Another important contribution of Saiyyid Makhdum-i Jahaniyan in Indian Sufism was reconciliation between Chishti and Suhrawardi traditions. Khaliq Ahmed Nizami in his work *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (1961) describes that “there were certain factors behind the success of Chishti *Silsilah* in India. The Chishtis believed in the control of internal or

21 Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Salatin-i Delhi kay Mazhabi Rujhanat* [Urdu: Religious Tendencies of the Kings of Delhi] (Dehli: Nadwat al-Musannifin, 1958), 396-401.

22 Steinfels, *Knowledge before Action*, 153.

emotional life prior to the control of external behaviour. The Suhrawardi tackled this problem *vice versa*. This decreased the chances of Suhrawardi expansion in non-Muslim environment".²³ However, Makhdum not only rejuvenated *Silsilah* Suhrawardiyyah which had begun to lose significance after the demise of Shaykh Rukn-i Alam in Multan but also adopted new strategies to popularize the *Silsilah* over India. One of the important factors behind his popularity was his multiple initiations in various Sufi *Silsilahs* especially in Chishiti *Silsilah*. He enrolled disciples in Suhrawardiyyah as well as in Chishtiyyah *Silsilahs*, and trained them according to their inclination. He also enrolled thousands of people in his discipleship in contrast with the early Suhrawardi Sufis who enrolled only a few persons. The Makhdum had also moderate attitude towards the non-Muslims. According to his *Malfuz* titled *Jawami al-Ulum*, [Persian: Description of Knowledge] once he fell ill during his stay at Delhi and was treated by a Hindu doctor despite the fact that many Muslim doctors were present there.²⁴ It shows that the Saiyyid had no hesitation in cultivating good social relations with the non-Muslims.

Makhdum's blend of Chishti and Suhrawardi traditions ultimately contributed in his popularity among the masses as well among the ruling circles. He followed the associational approach of Suhrawardis towards Sultan and his nobles and on the other hand he initiated and trained the disciples according to their inclination thus making room for all segments of the society.

The Nature of Makhdum's Relationship with the State

Sufism is generally considered to be another-worldly phenomenon, and have generally been viewed from spiritual and religious perspectives. But Sufism has a political

23 K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (Aligarh: Department of History, Muslim University, 1961), 179.

24 Saiyyid Ala al-Din, *Al-Durr al-Manzum fi Tarjama Malfuz al-Makhdum* [Persian: The Pearl of Poetry of Translation of the Manuscript of the Makhdum] (Multan: 1957), 191.

dimension too. The relationship between Sufis and the state authorities is a complex one. It is due to the diverse responses of Sufis towards state as well as policies of the state towards the Sufis. The Sufis played an important socio-political role and sometimes acted as a counterweight against the state. But sometimes they collaborated with the rulers and tried to redress the grievances of the masses through various means. Many Sufis used their cordial relations with the political authorities to influence the state policies in a positive and constructive manner. The ruling elite benefited from the Sufis in order to tackle political problems. In premodern India, Sufism served as an expression of civil society. The Indian Sufis did not lead passive and contemplative lives as portrayed and generalized by some studies undertaken on this period. Many historians have challenged and rejected such generalizations about the role of Sufis in the Indian society. For instance, Richard Eaton in his book, *Sufis of Bijapur (1300-1700)* described a variety of social roles played by the Sufis. According to him, “some of them wielded a sword, others a pen, others a royal land grant, and still others a begging bowl. Some were introverted to the point of reclusive withdrawal, other extroverted to the point of zealous puritanism, other unorthodox to the point of heresy.”²⁵ Nile Green’s recent work *Sufism: A Global History* also redefines Sufism’s social location. Green opines that mostly Sufism was connected to power, and Sufis were part of political and economic establishment of many Muslim societies and points out that “for many millions of Muslims Islam appeared to be inseparable from Sufism, something that might actually make it better to speak about “Sufi Islam” rather than Sufism”.²⁶

Makhdum-i Jahaniyan’s response towards his contemporary state can be treated as oppositional as well as associational. Although he rejected the official assignment

25 Richard Maxwell Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur (1300-1700): Social Role of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 283.

26 Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 8.

and title offered by Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq (r. 1325-1351), he enjoyed most cordial relations with Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq (r. 1351-1388), the successor of Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq. Makhdum-i Jahaniyan had different approaches towards the state simultaneously. Although he had good relations with Sultan Firuz and the ruling elite, he somehow criticized the court life and sources of their income. According to Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, this contradiction in his thought was probably due to his spiritual affiliation with both the Chishtis and the Suhrawardis, who held opposite views on political matters.²⁷

Mediational Role of Mukhdum between the Rulers and the Ruled

Mediation refers to conflict resolution between the state or political authorities and the people and also among varied social groups. In premodern India, Sufism and its institutions provided a mediating space. The Sufis in premodern India played a mediational role vis-à-vis the state as well as the society. The Sufis influenced the state policies in favour of the people by affecting the conduct of the rulers towards other political and social groups and also mediating between the rulers and the ruled, and successfully used their influence for redressing the grievances of the aggrieved.²⁸

Saiyyid Makhdum-i Jahaniyan had very friendly relations with Sultan Firuz Tughluq. There was immense affection between them. According to Shams Siraj Afif, after two or three years, the Makhdum travelled from Uch to Delhi to meet the Sultan. Sultan Firuz used to welcome him with great respect and honour, and always showed profound reverence for him.²⁹ Whenever he visited the Sultan, people

27 Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, 250.

28 Tanvir Anjum, "Mediational Role of the Sufis in the Islamicate South Asia: A Conceptual and Empirical Study", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 51, no. 1 (Jan-June 2014): 157.

29 Shams Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*, Urdu trans., Mawlawi Muhammad Fida Ali Talib (Hyderabad: Dar al-Tab Jamiah Uthmaniyya, 1938; rpt., Karachi: Nafis Academy, 1966), 331.

used to put their petitions in his palanquin. He never prevented the people from doing so. The Sultan considering it an honour, used to pass instant orders for the redress of these grievances.³⁰ Whenever Makhdum left Delhi for Uch, the Sultan saw him off up to one stage of the journey.³¹ He kept on visiting Delhi for several years.

Makhdum-i Jahaniyan never hesitated to help the people in trouble. Some nobles of Sultan Firuz did not like Makhdum's influence and nurtured a hostile attitude towards him. Khan-i Jahan, the Sultan's *wazir* [prime minister], was among them. Hamid ibn Fazl-Allah Jamali, a Sixteenth Century hagiographer, narrates an event in *Siyar al-Arifin* that once the Khan-i Jahan imprisoned the son of a petty government functionary, who was a follower of Makhdum-i Jahaniyan. He requested the Makhdum to make a recommendation to Khan-i Jahan for the release of his son, who had unjustly been thrown into prison. Makhdum went to see Khan-i Jahan for the recommendation. However, Khan-i Jahan sent an angry message through a servant and refused to meet him and asked him not to come again. It is said that he went to the Khan-i Jahan's door as many as nineteen times, but every time he met with the same refusal. When he went for the twentieth time, Khan-i Jahan sent a message stating that "Oh Saiyyid! Are you not ashamed of hearing my repeated refusal to see you?" Makhdum-i Jahaniyan replied that he earned divine reward every time he attempted to meet him, and that he (the Makhdum) wanted him also to share it by undoing the injustice that had done in the case. Hearing this, Khan-i Jahan felt immensely ashamed of his previous conduct and released the detainee and joined the circles of the Makhdum's disciples.³² This incident shows that Makhdum was very keen to redress the grievances of the masses, and tried his utmost to persuade state officials to act justly while dealing with them.

30 Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*, 331-32.

31 Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*, 332.

32 Jamali, *Siyar al-Arifin*, 227-28.

Mukhdum's Approach of Political Reconciliation and Consolidation of the Sultanate

Makhdum-i Jahaniyan played a very significant role at critical junctures. He resolved conflicts between the rulers and saved the lives of hundreds of people.³³ Shams Siraj Afif narrates an event in his work *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* that the two Samma Chiefs, Banbhina and Jun, established their rule in Sindh in the mid-Fourteenth Century, and with the support of the Mongols, posed a serious challenge to the Delhi Sultanate. Makhdum-i Jahaniyan had a great influence in Sindh. Sultan Firuz used Makhdum's influence to tackle this problem. The conflict was settled but after some time the Samma Chiefs again started conspiracies against Delhi Sultanate. Sultan Firuz Tughluq initiated a campaign against the Samma Chiefs and besieged Thatta in 1362-63. As the siege prolonged, it became hard for the local inhabitants. Local resistance was weakened by a severe famine and scarcity of food grains in the region. In these circumstances, the Samma Chiefs approached the Makhdum and sought his mediation and help in securing peace from the Sultan of Delhi. The Makhdum travelled from Uch to Thatta, and ultimately succeeded in persuading the Sultan to accept the submission and apology of the Samma Chiefs. The Samma Chiefs presented themselves before the Sultan and were forgiven. Sultan Firuz Tughluq wanted to punish the people of Sindh because of their resistance to his invasion of Thatta, but Makhdum-i Jahaniyan recommended their remission and the Sultan obliged. So the military operation was stopped and peace was restored in Sindh.³⁴ This particular episode of mediation shows that Saiyyid used his influence to tackle political confrontation between the rulers, thus saving the lives of common men in warfare.

Another event is noted in *Al-Durr al-Manzum* that at one occasion, the Makhdum was approached by the people of Alamabad, when some people of Langah Clan residing in

33 Nizami, *Salatin-i-Delhi Kay Mazhabi Rujhanat*, 414-20.

34 Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*, 170-75.

Alamabad, were inclined to rebel against the government and to undertake a night assault at the city. The people of Alamabad requested Makhdum-i Jahaniyan to come to the city. When the Makhdum went there, the rebels gave up their plan to assault the city.³⁵ So the presence of Makhdum in the city saved the lives of innocent civilians.

Analysis of Makhdum's Response to Firuz Regime and Policies

The Makhdum did not favour disaffection against the Sultan, saying if the ruler was just, offer thanks to God; if he was unjust, practice *sabr* [patience].³⁶ The Makhdum cited the oft-quoted tradition that one moment spent in administering justice was better than sixty years of worship.³⁷ *Khazana-i Jawahir-i Jalaliyyah* [Persian: Treasure of the Pearls of Jallal], a *Malfuz* of Saiyyid Makhdum-i Jahaniyan, compiled by Fazl-Allah records that while giving his opinion about relationship between the Sufis and the rulers, the Makhdum was of the view that the *Mashaikh* (Sufi guides) of the *Silsilahs* were unanimously of the view that for Sufis to meet the *Muluk* [ruling elite] and the Sultans was *haram* [unlawful], and was indeed like poison for the former. The Makhdum further explained that the Sufis might meet the rulers either for the sake of *arz-i amr-i maruf* [guidance towards good conduct] or *nahi un al-munkar* [warning against evil deeds], or for the sake of *hajat al-nas* [needs of the people].³⁸ Makhdum-i Jahaniyan used his influence on the ruling elite to fulfill the needs of the people. It is noted in Firuz Shah Tughluq's work *Futihat-i Firuzshahi* [Persian: Conquest of Feroz Shah] that due to the efforts of the Makhdum, Sultan Firuz abolished twenty two different taxes imposed on the

35 Ala al-Din, *Al-Durr al-Manzum fi Tarjama Malfuz al-Makhdum*, 97.

36 Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia: Impact on Fourteenth Century Muslim Society* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 281.

37 Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, 281.

38 *Khazana-i Jawahir-i Jalaliyyah* (Malfuzat of Saiyyid Makhdum-i Jahaniyan compiled by Fazl-Allah) quoted in Muhammad Aslam, *Malfuzati Adab ki Tarikhi Ahammiyyat* (Lahore: Idara Tehqiqat-e Pakistan, 1995), 229.

people and introduced various reforms in his kingdom.³⁹ Saiyyid Makhdum-i Jahaniyan warned the rulers and state officials against evil deeds. Once the Makhdum addressed the masses, nobles and Sultan Firuz Tughluq after Friday prayers and asked them not to take bribes. He also stressed that during the early days of Islam, the Companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to warn the political authorities against bribery.⁴⁰

Conclusion

Saiyyid Makhdum-i Jahaniyan not only rejuvenated *Silsilah* Suhrawardiyah, that was declining after the demise of Shaykh Rukn-i Alam in Multan, but also injected a new vigour into the Indian Sufism. His judicious blend of associational and oppositional approaches towards the state posed an effective check on the arbitrary nature of premodern Indian state. He served as mediator between the state and society, and also successfully redressed and resolved the grievances of the people by asserting the spiritual authority, social credibility and political influence that he owned. On many occasions he successfully mediated between the marginalized masses and the ruling classes. Further, he also resolved, many times, the conflicts between the Sultan and disintegrating factions of the Sultanate i.e., the rulers of Sindh. As to his contribution in the doctrine of Sufism, his ideas and personal conduct vitally played a role in strengthening and popularizing an offshoot of Suhrawardi *Silsilah* of Uch. Another distinct characteristic of Makhdum-i Jahaniyan's Sufi approach is that he reconciled and bridged up the Chishti and Suhrawardi ideologies, teachings and practices. This is why, he initiated and trained disciples in both Chishti and Suhrawardi *Silsilahs*. His balanced approach towards *Shariah* and Sufism contributed a lot in enhancing his prestige, stature and credibility, that helped him a lot in bringing both the aggrieved marginalized common people and the authoritative patrons coming of the ruling classes closer to each other and resolving the conflicts between the state and society during premodern India.

39 Sakhawat Mirza, *Tazkirah Hazrat Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht* (Hyderabad: Institute of Indo-Middle East Cultural Studies, 1962), 39. For details, see Firuz Shah Tughluq, *Futuh-at-i Firuz Shahi*, ed., Shaikh Abdur Rashid (Aligarh: Department of History, Muslim University), 1954.

40 Mirza, *Tazkirah Hazrat Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht*, 38-39.