Khatab, in his introduction to the book acknowledges that Quṭb’s writings and “in particular his theory of *jahiliyyah* have been viewed as one of his literary weapons and a threat to the nationalistic regimes in the Arab and Muslim worlds from Cairo to Tashkent and are now viewed as a threat to the West as well.” (p. 1) but he intentionally refrains from a critical examination of his thoughts. This is perhaps a significant limitation.

The book is worth reading to know and understand a prominent ideologue of Islamic socio-political and the evolution of his thought process. The book highlights the need for an objective critique of Quṭb’s ideas, its conformity or otherwise with the basic philosophy of Islam, its applicability to the modern world and its implications.

Ather Zaidi

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Islam and Sufism, are they conciliatory or contradictory towards each other? This question needs tomes and bulky volumes to be answered by the scholars, and in the present case too we aren’t concerned with this question. Islam in Kashmir became dominant religion through the peaceful preaching by the Muslim Ṣūfīs, who not only brought religion but helped to usher a new innovative revolution in social, economic, political, cultural and literary spheres too. Not much has been written to specify the areas which were affected by the new religious creed and mass conversion to Islam.

Professor Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi in keeping verve with his prodigious writing as a prolific writer has penned down yet another unique, innovative and well researched tome depicting these lesser known aspects of Sufism, and its impact on various fields of life, literature and living of common man. The book is divided into a number of chapters each lucidly written and well researched depicting a certain aspect of Sufi-Islam impact and its various dimensions. The influence of Islam also resulted in the rise of a unique Shivaism philosophy which was an amalgamation of Islamic, Hindustic and Buddhistic impacts. The Sufism in Kashmir also developed a unique
indigenous aspect of its own known as *Rishism* which then spread through the poetry of Shaikh Nooruddin Noorani and works of his successor rishis.

Rafiabadi brings a reconciliation and depicts impact of *Manṣūr al-Hallāj* on Shaikh Nooruddin’s poetry when he writes on this delicate and controversial subject “Nooruddin has made Mansur a symbolic character in his poetry and I think that Nooruddin is the only Muslim poet and mystic who has made Mansur a subject of his several deliberations and has given him representative status so far as the Gnostic love is concerned” (p. 57). Rafiabadi’s writing about these delicate vital issues in the chapter entitled “Mansur Al Hallaj in the Light of Shaikh Nooruddin Poetry” instills and thrills the reader’s perception and imagination and this chapter is a living testimony of the fact that the author has the spine and nerve to debate, write and express his opinion on an issue and tread over such a path where angels are even faced with dilemma.

Writing about the *Awrad Khawani, Naat Khawani,* and *Darud Khawani* as a source of devotional catharsis author very well traces their evolution, initiation, impact, and individuality in case of Kashmir and the part they play while inducting mysticism and spirituality among the masses. Regarding Naat Khawani and Darud Khawani author traces the history of this genre in Kashmir but is surprised that this unique genre has left none beyond its sphere of influence. “Anwar Shah Shopiani is one such *Abli Hadith* Naat writer who has surpassed our many traditional na’at writers so far as the substance and content of the na’at is concerned. However wherever the boundaries of Tawhidic weltanschauung seem to get trampled, the Ahli-Hadith conscience is also aroused to protest against such transgressions. Strange enough even the hard core Islamic ideological organizations like Jamaat-e-Islami has also not lagged behind in this respect. Naim Sadiqui and Mahirul Qadri have developed their own style and stuff of Naat writing in Indian subcontinent. And in Kashmiri context, the Jamaat-e-Islami writers of Kashmir have also subscribed to the genre of Naat and some of its prominent figures in Kashmir have written very meaningful Naats. Mushtaq Kashmiri and Aashiq Kashmiri in urdu are two such prototypes” (pp. 128–129).

The contribution of Syed Ali Hamadani to Kashmiri Society is immense. He not only brought a social revolution by preaching the tenets of Islamic social justice, fraternity, love, and equality but also wrote a political treatise *Dhakhīratul Mulūk* for guidance of kings about how to rule and also ushered an Economic revolution by introducing new arts and crafts in Kashmir which even today form the backbone of Kashmiri native industry and because of which the valley is famed all over the world. Rafiabadi has well depicted these
changes in “Syed Ali Hamadani and the Advancement Of Arts and Crafts in Kashmir.”

In the present times of material pursuits, cut throat competition, selfishness when clash of civilizations seem imminent, the communal riots, internecine strifes, sectarian clashes, intolerance towards others point of view, the injustices by the elite and totalitarian stance in the garb of democracy making the world full of wars, strifes, battles, chaos, rogue and driving it towards irrational anarchy, Sufism offers a ray of hope. “To start with I think one of the greatest needs of the hour is dialogue between people of different faiths, something that the Sufis of Kashmir also attempted to do in their own way” (p. 134). This need for dialogue, tolerance, love for humanity and pluralism is very well depicted in the works, words and life of these humane godly persons from Lalla Aarifah to Shaikh Nooruddin Noorani who says about communal harmony

*Children of the same parents,*
When will Hindus and Muslims cut down the tree of dualism?
When will God be pleased with them and grant them his Grace?
We all came into this world as brethren
One lives in a palace, another in a hut
Still as brothers we came here all,
But now we are strangers and foes to each other
O God! When will this ever cease?

On other occasion he says

*We belong to same parents,*
*Then why this difference?*
*Let Hindus and Muslims worship God alone.*
*We came into this world like partners.*
*We should have shared our joys and sorrows together.*

One may find last chapters of the book out of place, which deal with tribute to mystic scholar, intellectual, and teacher Mohammad Ishaq Khan and a survey regarding voluntary sector in Kashmir, but Sufism emphasis on company of righteous people and very well deliberates the importance of Teacher-Student (*Pir-Murid*) relationship. The ŞÜFİS of all *Silsilahs* opt for Social Service to help the downtrodden humanity, as a result be near to one’s Creator by serving his creation and every ŞÜFİ master had a common mess where people irrespective of all biases could eat at any time. It is true for the Valley ŞÜFİS (Rishis) also but now this thing is a past glory as professionals in Voluntary Sector in the form of NGO’s and Orphanages have taken their
place and the mushroom growth of the orphans since last 22 years have made this sector indispensable and now they are undertaking this Sufistic tradition.

Discussing his relationship, acquaintance and encouragement Professor Ishaq Khan bestowed on Rafiabadi it goes as “He would discuss with me many subjects touching upon Islamic Studies, Sufism, Muslim Philosophy and such other subjects. It was a great and benevolent gesture from an established scholar of Kashmir history to a non-entity who was just a humble student and was not even working in any university or college. This I always considered as my privilege and the magnanimity of this great soul. I have seen the teachers of the university abhorring to even talk to any person who was less in rank than a professor that too not cursorily. But Khan Sahib was different in all respects” (p. 215).

Rafiabadi doesn’t dryly boast about this teacher-student relationship but I am a witness to the fact that he himself practices it very well in his own life, and I am also a product of his encouragement and enjoy with him the student-teacher relationship which is void in my formal education in my own department. Rafiabadi does not believe in writing books only but he writes men too like me he has/is writing scores of others.

By the study of this book the myth about the Şūfis as parasites, non-contributing and aloof from the worldly affairs is dispelled. The Şūfis contributed in diverse fields from Poetry to Politics, Music to Mysticism and Sociology to Spirituality.

This book is a laudable contribution from an inhabitant of Pir Vare (Valley Of Saints) towards understanding the different aspects of Islam and Sufism. It is indispensable for all who wish to know the relationship between Sufism, Islam and Kashmir, though students like me will find it expensive to purchase it from pocket money.

Mushtaq ul Haq Ahmad Sikander

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