

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the puritanical impact of *Ahl-i-Hadith* revivalist movement on the transition of the Sufi ethos of the Punjab during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. One can define Shrine-centered Islamic tradition as a defining feature of the Sufi ethos in the Punjab during the medieval period (11th-18th centuries). The Sufi ethos constitutes equality, social justice, *Suleh Kul*, *Wahdat-ul-Wajud* ideology, and accommodationist vision. All these factors of the Sufi tradition of the Punjab created pluralistic outlook among the masses. This tradition left indelible imprints on the local culture, particularly imparting values like tolerance, humanism, and social equality. The growth of Shrine-centered Islam in the Punjab was a reaction against the social stratification solidified by the caste system which became more rigid with the passage of time. The origin of this tradition dates back to Vedantic tradition, however, its contours were further sharpened when Ibn Arabi's (1165-1240) *Wajudi* ideas permeated in the philosophical discourse of sufis in the subcontinent. In Punjab, Baba Farid Ganj Shakar (1175-1265) emerged as the main exponent of this philosophy.

The reform movement of *Ahl-i-Hadith* ultimately questioned this strong Sufi tradition since later half of the nineteenth century. The study deals with the subsequent religious transition of a reasonable segment of the Punjabi Muslims. It concentrates on the particular aspects of *Ahl-i-Hadith* Movement i.e.; emphasis on scriptural Islam, direct recourse to Quran and *Hadith*, opposition to the prevailing four schools of Islamic Jurisprudence, rejection of all sufi forms of Islam (*muharram*, *urs*, *qawwāli*, *gyārahwin* of Abdul Qadir Jilani, pilgrimage to the graves of the Prophets and saints, *majlis-i-milād* (birth anniversary of Holy Prophet), *simāh-i-maota* (listening of the dead) and observance of various ceremonies associated with death rites, i.e. *Qul sharif*, *Satavan* (seventh day ceremony after death) and *Chaliswan* (ceremony on the fortieth day after death). Rejection of contemplation and attempts to expunge Sufism remained the hallmark of this movement as they emphasized on this-worldly responsibilities of the Muslims rather than out-worldly asceticism (denial of this world and bodily contemplation) of the Sufis.

They through the establishment of their own religious seminaries in the cities and towns of the Punjab and engaging in *munāzara* tradition with non-Muslims (Arya Samajis, Christian missionaries,) and Muslim sects (Shias, Barelvis, Deobandis, and Ahmadis) were able to draw a certain segment of the Muslim population towards them.

Moreover, this study seeks to establish a connection between the contestation of puritanical *Ahl-i-Hadith* Movement with the colonial modernity; such as the western type of education and Missionary Agency, translation of scriptures into local languages and technology of printing. This agency of modernity helped in solidifying the literal interpretation of the *Quran* and *Hadith* that was the main feature of the *Ahl-i-Hadith* Movement. By emphasizing this aspect, I do not suggest that this contestation led *Ahl-i-Hadith* Movement to re-conciliate with modernity rather it highlights how this Movement made use of various tools of modernity for the dissemination of its puritanical teachings. The *Ahl-i-Hadith* Movement tried it best to adopt those features of the Colonial modernity that helped them in the dissemination of their ideas far and wide of the country. This movement was primarily sprouted from Delhi and spread throughout India and hence in the Punjab. The scholars of this movement stood for the cause of Islam declared the Sufi practices as innovations and created a reasonable following. This thesis attempts to formulate a new and comprehensive analysis of the *Ahl-i-Hadith* movement.