

## **The War That Wasn't: *The Sufi and the Sultan***

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*The War that Wasn't The Sufi and the Sultan* is a methodical investigation in order to discover the historical facts. The subject of this book is quite exclusive and unexplored so far. The relationship of Sufi with Sultan and its impact on sultanate has always been very important in Subcontinent in almost all periods. Fatima considers this relationship “a complex-one with space for distance, cooperation and incompatibility”, as she opines on many places in the book.

Book deals with a broad canvass where various orders of Sufis and reigns of Sultans of different periods have been introduced, and different shades of their relationship have been shown with the help of different texts in Persian along with its English translation and further explanation.

The text of the book contains robust vocabulary in a rhythmic writing style.

Bibliography and references of the book show the hard work of the author for digging out the historical facts, different stages of Sufi Sultan relationship and their impact on Sultanate with the help of historical books, journals and encyclopedias.

The chapters have been organized excellently in sequential manner so that study of the book seems to be so easy and clear in spite of the difficulty of the subject. The philosophy and practices of Sufis, development in India, dynamics of their power, relationship of compatibility and cooperation have been discussed in a detailed and thorough manner.

The various aspects of Sufi Sultan relationship from socio-political perspectives have been researched through biographies, letters and commentaries.

The important piece of research is *The dynamics of Sufi power*, since it is the unbelievable spiritual power of Sufis which makes the writer to compare them with sultan who is the sovereign head of

Sultanate and has unlimited powers. Power has been the basis of this relationship, otherwise they both have no comparison. The various aspects of Sufi power includes renunciation and faith, knowledge, miracles, popular appeal have been discussed in detail along with the study of Khanqah as a power centre of Sufis with multidimensional role. Sufi and Sultan had been two power blocks of the sultanate. The author attempts to seek concept of power and role of personality with the help of psychological and behavioral perspectives.

The power of Sultan was worldly rests on huge resources like wealth, forces and arms. On the other hand, Sufi possessed spiritual power, popularity and respect amongst people, strong faith in Allah and many more of the same nature. Sufi and Sultan both were supposed to be the leaders of their respective realms (worldly and spiritual) responsible for the betterment of people.

Sultans of different periods would consider Sufis' increased popularity, influence and mass support as a threat for their kingdom and attempt of sharing their power. On the other hand, Sufis never challenged the powers of Sultan or showed any interest in power and always worked for the humanity. Sultans only concentrated on obtaining and maintaining political power and benefits rather than prioritizing people and their needs.

Conclusion contains a comprehensive comparative analysis of Sufi and Sultan relationship along with the explanation of concept of Ideal Islamic sultanate. Sufis possessed higher position in the minds and hearts of the people than Sultan. Sufis always morally and spiritually supported Sultans.

They would help people and took efforts to reduce tensions and rivalries for creating a harmonious space.

Sufis fulfilled the mental and emotional needs of Muslims, but they were equally popular amongst Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. They aided in creating a mature society and taught people to live in harmony with each other regardless of their faith and creed. These efforts made government's work easy since government's tasks become better in piece societal conditions. Power of Sufis complemented the state power rather than creating hurdles for them. Sufis supported Sultan and the sultanate from its inception, in the time of crisis and from internal and external dangers.

But the extent of Sufis cooperation, incompatibility, and distance

depended on orders, times and Sufis themselves.

In end author concludes about the nature of this relationship in the words: "The survival, consolidation, and expansion of the Sultanate could not be the same without the existence and growth of Sufism, which continuously supported it through its tacit, implicit, ways and means. However, the contrary could be true. Without the existence and expansion of the Sultanate, Sufism could still have thrived in the Subcontinent as it imbibed in itself dynamic and flexible characteristics."(2009:208)

This book is helpful for knowledge seekers of various disciplines like History, Muslim history, Philosophy, and political science.

It provides reliable and sufficient information about knowledge of advent of various orders in Subcontinent, early Sufism in India and its different stages, philosophy and practices of Sufism, development of Sufism in India, impact of Sufism on society of Subcontinent, concept of an Islamic state, relationship of Sufi and Sultan, impact of society influenced by the Sufis on the state reigned by Sultan.

## **Reviewer**

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