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Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri : An Eminent Suhrawardi Sufi From Nagaur

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Abstract:

Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri was one of the great Sufis (Mashaikh) of Hindustan. His name was Muhammad bin Ata but was well known as Hamiduddin. His father's name was Hazrat Ataullah Mahmud. During the reign of Sultan Muizuddin Sam i.e. Shahabuddin Ghuri he came to Delhi from Bukhara and died there. After his father's death Hamiduddin was made the Qazi of Nagaur. He lived there for three years but was fed up of worldly affairs and he decided to isolate himself from worldly life and travel in pursuit of knowledge. He was a great scholar and had vast knowledge of Shari'at, Tariqat, Ulum-i-Zahiri and Ulum-i-Batini. He authored many books which were widely read by the Sufis of all Silsilahs. He shared cordial relations with Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj Shakar, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and was a great companion of Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi so much so that after his death he was buried beside Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi. This paper attempts to project the eminence of Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri as an influential and inspirational Suhrawardi Sufi from Nagaur.

1. Introduction

Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri was one of the great Sufis (*Mashaikh*) of Hindustan. His name was Muhammad bin Ata but was well known as Hamiduddin. His father's name was Hazrat Ataullah Mahmud. During the reign of Sultan Muizuddin Sam i.e. Shahabuddin Ghuri he came to Delhi from Bukhara and died there.¹ After his father's death Hamiduddin was made the *Qazi* of Nagaur. He lived there for three years but was fed up of worldly affairs and he decided to isolate himself from worldly life and travel in pursuit of knowledge.

Thus he went to Baghdad Sharif and became a *murid* of Shaikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi and served him for one year during which he spent his time in prayer and worship. At the same time he developed deep cordial relations with Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi which survived till his death. Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi traveled extensively to attain blessings and acquire knowledge, while doing so he met many sufi saints and he writes that Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri was his companion during these travels. Seeking his mentors permission the Qazi went to *Madina Maunawwara*, stayed near the tomb of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for a period of 1 year 2 months and 7 days, from there he reached *Mecca Sharif*, stayed there for three years where he acquired all kinds of blessings and knowledge and finally reached Delhi during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish and stayed with Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi and after his death was buried beside him.²

2. Knowledge and Learning

Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri was the *Khalifa* of Shaikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi. He knew the external sciences (*Ulum-u-Zahiri*) and internal sciences (*Ulum-i-Batini*) very well. Dara Shikoh in his *Safinat-ul-Auliya* describes the virtues of Qazi Hamiduddin in the following words:

(In *Tajrid* and *Tafarqah* he was a distinguished personality of his age was amongst the popular *mashaikhs* of India, was well versed in *Ulum-i-Zahiri* (external sciences) *Ulum-i-Batini* (internal sciences), was an expert of spiritual miracles and held a prestigious and great position amongst the *sufis*.)³

Shakikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith writes:

(He has vast knowledge of *Ulum-i-Shariat* (Islamic Law) and *Tariqat* (spiritual path) and *Haqiqat* facts)⁴

Amongst his contemporaries he enjoyed a very high and respectable position due to his erudition and learning. The *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar* testifies this fact in the following words:

(There are numerous works authored by Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri)⁵

¹ Jamali (Fazlullah), *Siyar-ul-Arifin* Delhi, Rizvi Press, 1311 A.H, pp 147-48

² Ibid, pp 147-49

³ Dara Sukoh, *Safinat-ul-Auliya*, Nawal Kishore, Knapur, 1900, p. 160

⁴ Dehlavi, Shaikh Abudl Haq, Muhaddith, *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, Delhi, Matba-i-Mujtabai, 1332 A.H., p. 367.

⁵ Ibid, p. 36.

He wrote extensively but few of his several works have survived. His most famous compilation is the *Tawale-ush-Shumus*, compiled in two volumes⁶ in which he has explained and discussed the 99 names of *Allah* in detail and also the significance of *hu* (*Allahu*). In the *Lataif-i-Ashrafi* this book has been described in the following words:

(The *Tawale-ush-Shumus* is an ocean of facts *haqaiq* and the details related to facts (*Haqaiq*) are found in this and it is equivalent to *Awarif-ul-Ma'arif*, such books are not to be found nowadays and it holds great authentic value in *Sufi* circles)⁷

Maulana Abdul Haqq Muhaddith writes about this book:

(Wherever cosmic waves are flowing and there is army of *Tariqat* (spiritual path), where there is sincerity and warmth, and resemblance and similarity of existence of such conditions is found there this book holds an authentic position.)⁸

He had complete knowledge of *Shariah* (Law of Islam) and *Tariqat* (Spiritual Path)⁹. He authored the '*Lawaih*'¹⁰ and many other treatises.

3. Misconception About Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri

Although Qazi Hamiduddin was a disciple of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi and belonged to the Suhrawardi silsilah but due to his close friendship and cordial relations with Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi he is mistaken to be a Chishti. In *Lataif-i-Ashrafi* it is mentioned that he was made a Khalifa of Hazrat Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi. In *Siyar-ul-Aftab* it is mentioned that Hamiduddin Nagauri was a *murshid* (teacher) of Khwaja Qutbuddin who acquired knowledge of *Ulum-i-Zahiri* (external sciences from him but the Qazi did to the high regard that he held for Khwaja Qutbuddin he never displayed or expressed this fact in front of the world."¹¹

4. Interest in 'Sama':

One of the most popular mystic practices which became a controversial topic during the thirteenth century was the institution of *Sama* (audition parties). Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri and Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi were extremely fond of '*Sama*' and were active participants of the same gatherings, especially Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri was deeply inclined and interested in *Sama* and it is said that it was he who made music popular in the mystical circles of Delhi.¹²

Once in the house of a *darvesh* close to Sultan Iltutmish's palace an audition party (*Sama*) was held and both Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi and Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri participated in it. During that period amongst the famous *Ulama* was Maulana Ruknuddin Samarqandi who hated the *Sama* parties, accompanied with some people went to the *darvesh's* house to stop the '*sama*' party. When Qazi Hamiduddin came to know of this he asked the *darvesh* to hide so that his permission to enter the house could not be sought and if without permission someone forcibly entered it would be considered a breach of *Sharia* laws, the *darvesh* acted accordingly. At the entrance Maulana Ruknuddin sought permission to enter the house but on receipt of no reply he went back.¹³

Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish held immense reverence for Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri due to his learning and piety. The Sultan always met him with lot of cordiality and respect.¹⁴ Two eminent externalist scholars, Qazi Sa'd and Qazi 'Imad, considered this institution to be illegal. In spite of knowing the deep respect that Iltutmish held for the saint they protested and approached the Sultan to stop this practice in the capital. The Sultan summoned a '*mahzar*' to discuss the legal aspect of the problem and invited Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri to participate in it and explain his view point. When the Qazi arrived at the court the Sultan stood up to receive him, kissed his hand and made him sit beside himself. On being asked on the legality of *Sama*, Qazi Hamiduddin replied that it was permitted for men with cosmic emotion i.e. the mystics but was prohibited for the externalists. The Qazi then reminded the Sultan of the audition party held in Baghdad in which he zealously served the saints and was assigned the kingdom of Hindustan as a reward by the saints. He said "one day forty Sufis held a same gathering in Baghdad. You and I were both present there, you were a mere boy then and you kept cutting the burnt wick of the candle without being asked to do so. That night the mystics assigned to you the kingdom of Hindustan"¹⁵ Iltutmish was moved, became emotional on recollecting the incident and fell at the feet of Qazi Hamiduddin, seeing his emotional state the *Qazi* asked his musician Mahmud to recite some verses. The Sultan then accompanied Qazi Hamiduddin to this *Khanqah* where dinner was arranged and '*Sama*' was held.¹⁶ Isami has narrated this episode and it is difficult to establish its authenticity. Probably this could be based on legends which Isami found floating down the stream of time more than one hundred years after the death of the Sultan. However it is certain that there were frequent protests by the orthodox *Ulama* against the mystical institutions of '*Sama*' but they could not put any restriction on it. Infact one of the most important *Qazis* of the empire during the 13th century, Maulana Minhaj-us-Siraj, author of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* supported this mystical institution. It was he who gave legal sanction to the institution of *Sama* in India.¹⁷

⁶ *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, Op.cit, p.150

⁷ Yamani, Nizam-ud-din, *Lataif-i-Ashrafi*, Delhi, Nusrat-ul-Mataba, 1295 A.H; p. 368.

⁸ *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, Op.cit, p. 37.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 37.

¹⁰ Sijzi, Amir Hasan, *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, Lucknow, Nawal Kishore, 1312 A.H. p. 128.

¹¹ Abdur Rahman, Syed Sabahuddin, *Bazm-i-Sufiya, Azamgarh*, Dar-ul-Musannifin, 1971, p. 110.

¹² *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, Op.cit., p. 241, *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, Op.cit., p. 36.

¹³ *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, Op.cit., p. 239.

¹⁴ Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, ed. Usha, A.S., Madras, University of Madras, 1948, p. 119.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 117.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 119.

¹⁷ *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, Op.cit. p. 239.

5. Relations with Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj Shakar

Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj Shakar was made a *Khalifah* of Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi.¹⁸ and Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri was present at the time of 'bayt' (initiation) He once wrote the following quatrain (*rubai*) to Baba Far

(Where is the intellect that can comprehend your perfection.

Where is the inner illumination that can reach your majesty.

I accept that you (are ready to) lift the curtain from your beautiful face.

But where is the eye that can behold thee).

Shaikh Farid-ud-din was very fond of mystic songs, one day he asked Badr-ud-din Ishaq to bring his bag (*Kharitah*) of letters and recite this letter of Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri. Accordingly Badruddin began to read the letter. Hardly had he read the introductory lines that the Shaikhs heart overflowed with emotions and he found in the Qazi's letter the inspiration of a mystic song.¹⁹

In the malfuzat of Shaikh Farid-ud-din ganj Shakar i.e. *Rahat-ul-Qutub* there is mention of two books of Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri i.e. *Tawarikh* and *Rahat-ul-Arwah*²⁰

It seems that the scribe had wrongly spelt the word *Tawarikh* instead of *Lawaih*. Shaikh Farid was deeply interested in the works of Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri, a close friend and companion of his master, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi. The Qazis' works formed a very difficult reading but Shaikh Farid had fully grasped these works and could very effectively explain them before his disciples. He taught *Lawaih* authored by Qazi Hamiduddin to Shams Dabir.²¹ Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj Shakar held high regard for Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri.

6. Relations with Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya

Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya developed respect for Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri in Badaon. Many people of Badaon held great regard for him. Khwaja Shahay MuiTAB had become his disciple and the saint had bestowed on him his *Khirqah* (a cloak, symbolizing spiritual succession) another saint of Badaun, Aziz Bashir event to Delhi in order to get the *Khirqah* from Maulana Nasah-ud-din, son of Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri. But he did not oblige him as Aziz Bashir was found guilty of making exaggerated statements.²² Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya used to sit and pray in the vacant place between the graves of Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi and Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri. He felt great spiritual exhilaration in praying there.²³

Revenge and malice had no place in the life of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. He followed the policy of forget and forgive in case of evil doers. He hated sin but the sinner. He refers to divine caution to Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi and Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri that if evil people were neglected by them, who else would look after them?²⁴

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was deeply inspired by Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri and respected him for his good virtues and learning. Once after going through the works of the *Qazi* he said to his students "Everything of what you have yet to study is also here in. And further I confess that what I have studied and what I have not studied I find all of that in these pages.²⁵ Viewing this statement of Shaikh Nizamuddin it can be surmised that Qazi Hamiduddin was a scholar of high stature and his knowledge was par excellence.

7. Conclusion

Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri was a mountain of knowledge, an ocean of cosmic knowledge, commander of a never ending path and he was next to Abu Sufyan Sauri.²⁶ He was one of the most popular *Suhrwardi Mashaikhs* of the Indian subcontinent. He started his career as a *Qazi* of Nagaur but later in search of spiritual knowledge he travelled extensively and finally settled in Delhi during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish. He was a great scholar and had vast knowledge of *Shari'at*, *Tariqat*, *Ulum-i-Zahiri* and *Ulum-i-Batini*. He authored many books which were widely read by the *Sufis* of all *Silsilahs*. He shared cordial relations with Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj Shakar, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and was a great companion of Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi so much so that after his death he was buried beside Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Ushi.

¹⁸ Mir Khurd, *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, Delhi, Matba-i-Muhibb-i-Hind, 1302 A.H., 1885 A.D., p. 61.

¹⁹ *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, Op.cit, p. 150.

²⁰ *Rahat-ul-Qutub*, Op.cit. pp. 29,30,35.

²¹ *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*, Op.cit., p. 128.

²² *Ibid*, p. 174.

²³ *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, Op.cit., p. 57.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁵ *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*, Op.cit, p. 241.

²⁶ *Akhbar-u'l-Akhyar*, Op.cit, p. 367

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