

Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti (1141–1236): A Historical Study of His Life and Contributions

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63163/jpehss.v3i3.931>

Abstract

This paper focuses on the life and historical narrative, spiritual message, and socio-religious impact of Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti (1141–1236), highlighting his role in shaping Sufi thought and practice in the Indian Subcontinent through the Chishtia Order. Adopting a qualitative historical approach, this study examines how Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti's teachings, missionary activities, and ethical worldview influenced the masses, particularly during spiritual gatherings, khānqāh-centered practices, and public interactions with diverse communities. His emphasis on love, tolerance, service to humanity, and peaceful coexistence created a lasting spiritual environment that appealed equally to Hindu and Muslim populations. The paper underscores how his inclusive Sufi methodology contributed to the diffusion of Islamic values without coercion, fostering social harmony and moral reform in a pluralistic society. As the founder of the Chishtia Order in the Subcontinent, Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti laid the intellectual and spiritual foundations upon which later Chishti Sufis, including Amir Khusrau, built their cultural and literary expressions. The central question addressed in this research is, how did the life, work, and spiritual legacy of Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti shape the Chishtia tradition and emerge as a defining force in the religious and cultural history of medieval India?

Key Words: Khwaja Muin-ud-Din, Lineage, Chisht, Sufi Islam, Medieval India, Spiritual Legacy, Subcontinent.

Introduction

Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti (1141–1236)ⁱ stands as one of the most influential spiritual figures in the religious and cultural history of the Indian Subcontinent, revered as the founder and principal architect of the Chishtia Sufi Order in South Asiaⁱⁱ. His arrival in India coincided with a complex historical milieu characterized by political uncertainty, social hierarchies, and religious diversity. Within this environment, Khwaja Muin-ud-Din articulated a spiritual vision rooted in compassion, humility, renunciation, and unconditional love for humanity. Rather than engaging with political authority or state power, he established his khānqāh at Ajmer as a sanctuary of moral instruction, social service, and spiritual refinement, accessible to all irrespective of creed, class, or

ethnicity.ⁱⁱⁱ The Chishti approach, as embodied by Khwaja Muin-ud-Din, emphasized inward purification, ethical conduct, and devotion to God through service to His creation. This inclusive and human-centered ethos enabled the gradual diffusion of Islamic values in the Subcontinent through peaceful persuasion and personal example. His teachings resonated deeply with both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, fostering an atmosphere of coexistence and spiritual receptivity. In historical terms, his influence extended far beyond his own lifetime, shaping the intellectual and devotional contours of South Asian Islam. The spiritual legacy of Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti found continuity through his eminent successors—Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, Baba Farid, and Nizam-ud-Din Auliya—who further enriched the Chishti tradition.^{iv} This paper seeks to examine his life, teachings, and enduring legacy within a historical framework, highlighting his transformative role in molding the spiritual consciousness, cultural harmony, and ethical sensibilities of medieval Indian society.

Review of Literature

The Book *Mu'in ud-din Chishti: Selected Poems*, translated and introduced by Paul Smith, stands as an important work in the historical and mystical study of one of South Asia's most revered Sufi masters, Mu'in ud-Din Chishti (1141-1230), popularly known as Gharīb Nawāz. The text brings to English readers a rich selection of Chishti's ghazals and spiritual poetry with fidelity to both form and meaning, preserving the lyrical depth of the original. Smith's introduction situates the reader in the life, times, and poetic genius of Chishti, illuminating how his mystical verse became intertwined with the devotional ethos of the Chishti Order. Historically, this volume is significant for framing Chishti not merely as a Sufi saint but as a literary figure whose writings reflect the spiritual dynamics of 12th-13th century India. Smith contextualizes the emergence of the Chishti Order, its emphasis on love, tolerance, and spiritual longing, and the role of poetry and dervish culture in spreading Sufi ideals. In the literature on Sufism, Paul Smith's work fills an important gap: it combines scholarly introduction with accessible translation, making the lived spirituality and historical influence of Chishti tangible for modern readers. While some reviews emphasize Smith's skill in bringing Persian mystical poetry into English, this book's greatest strength lies in how it bridges historical narrative with the inner life of Sufi devotion, offering a valuable resource for historians, students, and seekers alike.^v

The Shrine and Cult of Mu'in al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer by Simon Digby stands as a seminal scholarly exploration of one of South Asia's most important Sufi figures and the sacred site that grew around him. Digby situates the life and legacy of Khwaja Mu'in al-Dīn Chishtī within the complex political and cultural world of medieval India, showing how his spiritual authority extended beyond mysticism into the realms of social influence and communal identity. Drawing on historical records and critical analysis, Digby disentangles the living saint of history from later legendary accretions, thereby clarifying how narratives of miracles and saintly deeds emerged and were shaped across centuries. Historically, the work examines the formation of a pilgrimage cult that transformed the tomb (dargah) at Ajmer into a major destination for devotees of diverse backgrounds. It traces how *ziyārat* (pilgrimage) and devotional practices helped consolidate Mu'in al-Dīn's reputation as *Gharīb Nawāz* (the Helper of the Poor), solidifying his place in the devotional geography of South Asia. By critically engaging with both Persian hagiographies and later devotional texts, Digby highlights the dialectic between myth and documented history, showing how veneration and historical memory co-produced the saint's enduring influence. The book's strength lies in its interweaving of rigorous historical methodology with sensitivity to Sufi spirituality. Digby demonstrates that the shrine's evolution reflects not just institutional developments but the Sufi ethos of love, humility, and service that defined Chishtī teachings. This dual focus—historical and mystical—makes the study indispensable for scholars of Sufism, South

Asian religious history, and anyone seeking to understand how sacred authority is constructed and maintained in lived religious traditions.^{vi}

Khawajgān-e-Chisht by Allama Alam Faqri is a concise yet meaningful work that introduces readers to the foundational figures of the Chishtia Sufi Order in South Asia. The book focuses on five eminent saints—Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti (Ajmeri), Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Baba Farid Ganj Shakar, Hazrat Ali Ahmad Sabir Kalyari, and Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya—whose spiritual efforts shaped the moral, social, and religious landscape of the Indian subcontinent. Allama Alam Faqri adopts a devotional-historical style, presenting the lives of these saints with clarity and reverence. The narrative highlights their spiritual training, ethical conduct, missionary activities, and enduring influence on society. A central strength of the book is its emphasis on the Chishti ideals of love, tolerance, humility, service to humanity, and detachment from worldly power. Through brief biographical sketches, the author illustrates how each saint carried forward the Chishti legacy in his own time while remaining firmly rooted in Islamic teachings. The language of the book is simple and accessible, making it suitable for general readers, students, and devotees alike. While the work does not engage in critical historiographical debate or extensive referencing, it succeeds in conveying the spiritual essence of the Chishtia Order. Miraculous events and moral anecdotes are included in a traditional tazkira style, reflecting the author's intent to inspire spiritual reflection rather than academic critique. Overall, *Khawajgān-e-Chisht* is a valuable introductory text for understanding the spiritual genealogy and collective mission of the Chishti saints. It contributes positively to Sufi literature by preserving and popularizing the legacy of these five towering figures of South Asian Islam.^{vii}

The Meditations of Khawaja Muinuddin Hasan Chishti, translated and collected by Dr. Zahurul Hassan Sharib, offers a spiritually rich and accessible insight into the heart of the Chishti Sufi tradition. This 124-page volume presents selected meditative reflections and teachings of Hazrat Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti, affectionately known as *Gharib Nawaz*—the benefactor of the poor and friend of the marginalized. The book does not follow a linear biography but rather invites the reader into concise, reflective passages that convey the saint's core spiritual wisdom. One of the book's main strengths lies in its emphasis on humanism and inner transformation. Chishti's meditations focus on universal themes such as compassion, surrender to the Divine, and the cultivation of inner peace, distinguishing his message from rigid doctrinal discourse. His concern for the poor, the downtrodden, and those suffering from social or personal hardship resonates powerfully through the pages, reminding readers that true mysticism is inseparable from social empathy. Sharib's translation makes these teachings accessible to contemporary readers, preserving both the simplicity and profundity of Chishti's thought. Although compact, the collection serves as a practical manual for spiritual seekers, encouraging contemplation and experiential reflection rather than abstract speculation. The meditations are organized in a way that gently guides the reader through stages of illumination, purification, and manifestation, reflecting the spiritual journey of the Sufi path. Overall, *The Meditations* is a valuable resource for anyone interested in Islamic mysticism, Sufi philosophy, or the timeless quest for inner harmony. Its enduring message of love, service, and self-surrender continues to inspire readers across cultural and religious boundaries.^{viii}

The Life & Poems of Khawaja Muin al-Din Chishti translated and introduced by Paul Smith is a thoughtful and engaging introduction to the spiritual life and lyric poetry of Khawaja Muin al-Din Chishti, the renowned Sufi saint and founder of the Chishti Order in the Indian subcontinent. Smith's work belongs to his *Introduction to Sufi Poets* series and presents a selection of Chishti's ghazals in well-crafted English translations that aim to retain both poetic form and spiritual depth. Alongside the poems, Smith offers an informative introduction that places Chishti's life and mystical worldview in historical and spiritual context, helping readers appreciate not only the

poetry but also the saint's enduring legacy in South Asian Sufism. One of the key strengths of the book is its accessibility. Smith's translations are lucid and lyrical, making Chishti's metaphysical reflections on divine love, surrender, and inner awakening approachable to modern readers without sacrificing their mystical nuance. The introductory sections further enhance understanding by outlining the spiritual ethos of the Chishti tradition, the historical milieu of twelfth- and thirteenth-century India, and the poet's emphasis on compassion, humility, and devotion. Though relatively brief, *The Life & Poems of Khawaja Muin al-Din Chishti* succeeds as both a literary and spiritual bridge, bringing the voice of a medieval Sufi master into contemporary English. It is particularly valuable for readers new to Sufi literature, providing both an informative overview and an invitation into deeper contemplation of the themes that animate Chishti's mystical verse.^{ix}

Research Methodology

This study adopts an analytical and interpretive research methodology to examine the life, historical significance, doctrinal foundations, and thematic aspects of the Chishtia Sufi tradition as established by Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti (1141–1236). The analytical approach is employed to critically evaluate historical narratives, biographical sources, and spiritual teachings related to the formative phase of the Chishti Order, with particular emphasis on its peaceful and humanistic expression of Sufi Islam in the medieval Subcontinent. The research contextualizes the emergence of the Chishti worldview within its broader socio-religious environment and assesses its role in fostering ethical reform and interfaith harmony. Both primary and secondary sources form the basis of this study. Primary materials include Chishti *malfūzāt*, hagiographical and autobiographical writings, and early poetic expressions of Chishti saints. Qualitative interviews with historians and scholars of Sufism supplement textual analysis and enhance thematic interpretation. Secondary sources are utilized to substantiate arguments and situate the research within existing historiography. The study's strength lies in its integrative thematic analysis, offering a historically grounded evaluation of the Chishti Order's spiritual and cultural impact in the Subcontinent.

Early Life and Family Background

Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti of Persia belonged to a noble Syed family.^x He was Syed from both paternal and maternal lineages. His father traced his ancestry to Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Fatima through their grandson Hazrat Imam Zainul Abedin, the son of Hazrat Imam Hussain. Although Hazrat Imam Zainul Abedin remained in Madinah until his last breath, some of his descendants later settled in the regions of Khurāsān and Sīstān (Sijistān). The Arabs commonly referred to Sīstān as Sijistān. The name of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti's father was Khwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan, who resided in Sanjar. He was among the learned, affluent, and respected figures of his time. *Siyar-ul-Arifin* describes him as a man of exceptional piety, reverence, and moral reform in the region of Khurāsān. Similarly, *Munis-ul-Arwah* portrays him as a spiritual devotee endowed with sovereignty and inner secrecy, distinguished by asceticism and piety, a follower of the path of righteousness, and a model for the virtuous. The same source emphasizes that Khwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan was deeply adorned with purity and devotion. Furthermore, *Makhzan-e-Chishti* records that he was a venerable elder and a man of considerable wealth. The mother of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti was Umm al-War'ah Mahnur,^{xi} who also belonged to the Syed family of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). According to *Waqaya-e-Shah Moeenuddin*, she was known as Bibi Mahnur and was renowned for her piety and virtuous conduct. She traced her lineage to Hazrat Imam Hasan and was widely respected for her religious devotion. Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti was born on 14 Rajab 537 AH. Dara Shikoh Qadri, in his book *Safinat-ul-Auliya*, states that he was born in the town of Sijistān and was raised in Khurāsān. Likewise, *Makhzan-e-Chishti*

elucidates that he was born in Sanjar, which was also known as Sīstān, and that the place of his upbringing belonged to the same region.

Childhood

As his parents were deeply religious and the domestic environment was imbued with faith and devotion, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti developed a strong inclination toward religion from an early age. He adopted virtuous habits during childhood and learned obedience and respect for his parents within the home. As soon as he acquired basic literacy, he memorized essential prayers and began performing them regularly. Truthfulness also became a defining trait of his character from a very young age. During his childhood, Khurāsān existed as a kingdom. Within this kingdom was a province known as Sīstān, also referred to as Sīvsitān and Sijistān. In this province was a town called Sanjar. At the time of his birth, his parents resided in Sanjar; therefore, he came to be associated with the appellation *Sanjari*. However, in later historical chronicles, the name and significance of this town are not prominently mentioned. Some researchers refer to him as *Sanjari* rather than *Chishti* and present historical evidence to support this view. In the *Ā'in-e-Akbarī*, his homeland is identified as Sīstān;^{xii} on this basis, he is associated with the title *Sanjari*. Similarly, in *Futūh al-Salātīn*, the renowned historian Isami describes Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Sanjari as a saintly figure who provided protection and support to the religion.

According to *Rauzat al-Aqtāb*, he was born in Sijz, a town in the region of Sijistān, which is also known as Sīstān. Similarly, *Tazkira Tuhfa-ul-Karām* records that the original homeland of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti was Sīstān (also called Sijistān).^{xiii} The inhabitants of this region were known as Sanjari or Sangri. This area was also associated with the lineage and residence of the Messenger's descendants. The famous cities of Khurāsān included Herat, Merv, and Nishapur. In the present era, parts of Khurāsān lie within Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkmenistan. During the childhood of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti, Khurāsān was under the rule of the Seljuk dynasty. In this period, Turkish invasions of the Sijistān region caused widespread unrest, disorder, and instability. At that time, Nishapur was the capital of the Khurāsān region and a major center of knowledge and literature. For this reason, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti moved there to pursue his education and began his early religious studies in Nishapur. It is narrated that his father, Khwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan, used to travel to Baghdad from time to time for work. On one such journey, he passed away in Baghdad and was buried near one of its gates. Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti had two brothers and one sister. He was fifteen years old at the time of his mother's death. After the death of his father, Khwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan, his mother distributed the inheritance among the heirs. Finally, in 550 AH, his mother also passed away.^{xiv} Hazrat Khwaja Sahib was left with a vineyard and a mill. After his father's death, he took responsibility for the vineyard, personally tending the garden, protecting the trees, and watering them when necessary. He adopted gardening as his means of livelihood, meeting his expenses from its income. Whatever surplus remained, he gave away in the path of God.^{xv}

Paternal Genealogy

Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, in *Dalil-ul-'Arifin*, stated that it should be clearly understood that Khwaja Ajmeri belonged to the distinguished family of the Awliya-e-Chisht and that his lineage was authentically Syed. His pure genealogy was traced to Hazrat Ali (RA) through twelve intermediaries. This lineage is recorded in *Aqbas-ul-Anwar* as follows:

Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti, son of Syed Ghiyasuddin;^{xvi}

Syed Kamaluddin;

Syed Ahmad Hasan;

Syed Najmuddin Tahir;

Syed Abdul Aziz;
 Syed Ibrahim;
 Syed Muhammad Mahdi;
 Imam Hasan al-Askari;
 Imam Muhammad al-Taqi;
 Imam Musa al-Raza;
 Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq;
 Imam Muhammad al-Baqir;
 Imam Zainul-Abidin;
 Imam Hussain(RA);
 Hazrat Ali (RA).^{xvii}

Maternal Lineage

His maternal lineage is recorded in *Mir'at-ul-Ansab*, which states that his ancestry from his mother's side traces back to Hazrat Imam Hassan (RA). Traditions narrated by his mother regarding his birth relate that when Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti was conceived, Allah Almighty opened the doors of divine blessings and grace upon their household. The home became a source of both spiritual and worldly prosperity. Her spiritual rank was elevated, sorrow was removed, and the household transformed into a cradle of blessings in every respect.

Meeting with Hazrat Ibrahim Kunduzi

One day, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti was engaged in watering the trees and plants of his garden, as was his routine, when a renowned spiritual figure of the time, Hazrat Ibrahim Kunduzi, happened to pass by and entered the garden. He was a man deeply immersed in divine love. Upon seeing him, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti immediately ceased his work and turned toward him. With great reverence and courtesy, he invited him to sit beneath the shade of a tree. It was the season of grapes at that time. Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti brought a bunch of grapes and respectfully presented them to him, then sat humbly before him. Hazrat Ibrahim Kunduzi was deeply impressed by his noble conduct and refined manners.^{xviii} Through his inner spiritual insight, he recognized that the young Khwaja was a sincere seeker on the path of truth. Thereupon, he took a small piece of *kuli* from his pocket, chewed it, and offered it to Hazrat Khwaja, asking him to eat it. As soon as Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti consumed the *kuli*, the fire of true divine love was ignited in his heart, and he became illuminated by spiritual light. His heart turned away from worldly attachments and began yearning for Allah. He realized that worldly possessions and material wealth were insignificant and resolved to abandon them in pursuit of divine knowledge. Under the spiritual influence (*tawajjuh*) of the majdhub, his inner state underwent a profound transformation. His attachment to the world diminished, his perspective changed completely, and he sold his garden and mill. Thereafter, he set out in search of knowledge and spiritual realization.

Acquisition of Religious Knowledge (*Tahsil al-'Ilm wa al-Din*)

At that time, the prominent cities of Samarkand and Bukhara in the region of Turkestan were flourishing centers of knowledge and literature.^{xix} Scholars and Sufis taught in khanqahs and madrasas, making these cities renowned cradles of learning. Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti therefore turned toward Samarkand and Bukhara to acquire formal religious education. After a long journey, he reached Samarkand, where he enrolled in a religious madrasa and began the study of the Holy Qur'an. There, he served and studied under a distinguished scholar, Maulana Sharafuddin and memorized the Qur'an. With the guidance and attention of his teacher, he also began studying elementary religious texts. After some time, he proceeded to Bukhara, where

Maulana Sheikh Husamuddin Bukhari was widely renowned as an eminent scholar. Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti entered his circle, attended his classes, and devoted himself to advanced studies. Within a few years, he completed the study of Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), and the rational and transmitted sciences (*'ulum al-'aqliyya wa al-naqliyya*). In recognition of his scholarly excellence, Hazrat Maulana Sheikh Husamuddin Bukhari, bestowed upon him the turban of distinction. It is reported that Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti remained in Bukhara for approximately five years in pursuit of knowledge.

Allegiance and Caliphate (Search for Perfect Spiritual Guide)

After acquiring outward and formal religious knowledge, the love of Allah was ignited in the heart of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti. However, he realized that the true gnosis (*ma'rifat*) of Allah the Almighty could not be attained through external knowledge alone. This awareness led him to the conclusion that pledging allegiance (*bay'ah*) to a perfect Murshid was essential. Upon completing his education in Bukhara, he set out in search of a spiritual guide. At that time, near Nishapur, there was a town known as Harun (also called Harun). Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni resided there, and his spiritual eminence was widely known.^{xx} People flocked to him in large numbers to receive spiritual guidance, blessings, and divine grace. Owing to his radiant personality, a fountain of spiritual illumination had emerged, and his presence was marked by the manifestation of divine blessings. When Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti heard of Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni's spiritual perfections, he traveled to Harun to meet him. As soon as he entered his presence, his heart bore witness that it was from this door that the grace of Allah would unfold for him. Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni was indeed a towering spiritual authority and held a distinguished position among the great leaders of the Chishtiyya order. When he saw Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti for the first time, he perceived through his inner spiritual insight that this young seeker was destined for spiritual leadership and that one day he would shine like the sun in the firmament of sainthood. Consequently, he accepted Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti into his spiritual circle and began his training. Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni frequently traveled to Baghdad. During one such visit, he formally initiated Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti into discipleship in Baghdad.^{xxi}

The Incident of Taking the Oath of Allegiance

In *Malfuzat Anis-ul-Arwah*, the incident of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti's oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*) to Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni is narrated in detail. It is recorded that the humble servant, Muin-ud-Din Sanjari, was presented before Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni in the mosque of Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi (RA) in the city of Baghdad.^{xxii} On that occasion, several esteemed Shaykhs were also present. When the seeker bowed his head and sat respectfully, Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni recited the blessed Kalima and then stood up, holding a pair of scissors in his hand. He symbolically dedicated the disciple to Allah Almighty and placed the Chishti cap upon his head, thereby formally admitting him into the spiritual order. By special spiritual instruction, he commanded him to engage in continuous worship, spending the night and day in devotion within the mosque. It is further narrated that Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti remained in worship for a full day and night in accordance with the command of his Murshid and recited the prescribed supplications a thousand times, thus marking the beginning of his spiritual journey under disciplined guidance.^{xxiii}

The Reason for the Title Chishti

The Chisht is the name of a town that historically lay within the boundaries of Khurāsān. In the present era, Chisht is located in between the Herat and Ghazni region of Afghanistan, at a short distance from the city of Herat. This town holds great significance in the spiritual history of the

Chishtia order. It is narrated that a great saint, Hazrat Abu Ishaq Shami, traveled to Baghdad to pledge allegiance to Hazrat Khwaja Mumshad Ali Dinwari. After accepting his oath of allegiance, Hazrat Khwaja Mumshad Ali Dinwari asked him his name. With humility and reverence, he replied, “This humble servant is known as Abu Ishaq Shami.” Upon hearing this, Hazrat Khwaja Mumshad Ali Dinwari declared:

“From today onward, you shall be known as Abu Ishaq Chishti, and all those who belong to your spiritual lineage until the Day of Judgment shall be called *Chishti*.”

In obedience to the command of his Murshid, Hazrat Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami proceeded to Chisht, where he devoted himself to spiritual guidance and reform. Other eminent saints of his lineage—Hazrat Khwaja Ahmad Chishti, Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Chishti, Hazrat Khwaja Abu Yusuf Chishti, and Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Maudood Chishti—also settled in Chisht and continued their mission of guidance until their final days. All these revered saints passed away in Chisht and were buried there. They are recognized as the illustrious spiritual ancestors of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti. For this reason, Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz became widely known by the title Chishti.

Service of the Murshid

After accepting the oath of allegiance, Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni addressed Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti and said, “Muin-ud-Din, now remain with us.” Bowing his head in humility, he replied, “With my life and my sight.” From that moment onward, he devoted himself entirely to the service of his Murshid. He spent his days and nights in devoted service, showing no sign of reluctance or fatigue. At times, he would fast continuously for an entire week, and on the eighth day, he would break his fast with only five *mishqals* of water. His worldly possessions were minimal; he wore only a single garment, and when it became worn, he would simply mend it. Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz developed such deep love and devotion for Hazrat Sheikh Usman Haruni that he remained with him like a shadow. Wherever the Murshid traveled, Hazrat Khwaja would carry his bedding, a bowl, a water vessel, and other necessities on his shoulders. He remained ever vigilant, attentive to every step and need of his Murshid.^{xxiv}

The Divine Order to Come to India

While Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti was in Madina, it is narrated that during a state of spiritual absorption, he heard a divine voice. The voice said:

“O Muin-ud-Din, you are the helper and protector of our religion. We have appointed you as the governor of India. Go to Ajmer and settle there, for the darkness of disbelief has spread in that land. Your presence will dispel the darkness of disbelief and spread the light of Islam.”^{xxv}

Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti felt immense joy and honor upon hearing this divine command. While pondering over the location of Ajmer in India, he fell asleep and was blessed with a spiritual vision of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). In this vision, the Prophet took him on a spiritual tour from East to West and also showed him the mountain of Ajmer, preparing him for his future mission.

Arrival and Stay in Lahore

When Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti began his journey to India, he was accompanied by a group of his close companions, including:

- Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Minya
- Hazrat Sheikh Muhammad Yadgar Sabzwari
- Hazrat Khwaja Fakhruddin Gardezi
- Other devoted disciples and companions

After a long and arduous journey, Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz arrived in Lahore, where he stayed for some time. During this period, he began establishing his spiritual mission and preparing for his eventual settlement in Ajmer.

Death and Burial

It is narrated that during the night, the dervishes sitting outside Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti 's chamber heard unusual sounds, as if someone's feet were stamping loudly on the ground. These sounds continued until the last watch of the night, during Tahajjud, after which they suddenly stopped. At the time of Fajr prayer, the servants knocked on the chamber door but received no response. When the door was eventually opened, it was discovered that Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti had passed away. Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti passed away on 6 Rajab 633 AH (1236 CE).^{xxvi} At that time, India was under the rule of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish. The demise of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti was a heartbreaking tragedy for his disciples, caliphs, devotees, and the people of Ajmer. News of his passing spread rapidly, and people from Ajmer and surrounding areas came in large numbers, mourning deeply. His blessed body was shrouded and prepared for burial, after which the funeral prayer was offered. A huge crowd attended the funeral, which was led by his eldest son, Fakhruddin. He was buried in the same chamber where he had passed away. Over time, his shrine in Ajmer became a prominent center of worship and pilgrimage, and later a beautiful holy mausoleum was constructed over his grave.^{xxvii}

Caliphs of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti

Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti rendered extensive services in the propagation of Islam in India. Through his missionary efforts, numerous non-Muslims embraced Islam. He also elevated many of his disciples to the rank of Caliph, enabling them to teach new Muslims the fundamentals of the religion and guide others on the path of spiritual development. Consequently, the number of his caliphs and devoted followers was innumerable.^{xxviii} Among them, Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki^{xxix} was one of his greatest caliphs and successors, entrusted with the blessings and spiritual authority of the Chishti Order. Apart from him, the following are the notable caliphs of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti :

1. Hazrat Sheikh Hameed-ud-din Nagori^{xxx}
2. Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad Qahar
3. Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Gaffar
4. Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad Kabli
5. Hazrat Sheikh Qadar Saeed
6. Hazrat Sheikh Maroof Shahab
7. Hazrat Sheikh Ghulam Badi Turk
8. Hazrat Sheikh Furqan Ahmad Turk
9. Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad Khan Ghilzai
10. Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad Khan Durani
11. Hazrat Sheikh Sultan Shah
12. Hazrat Sheikh Abdul-al-Asghar
13. Hazrat Sheikh Abu Nashrah Qarshi
14. Hazrat Sheikh Yaqub Khan
15. Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad Shah
16. Hazrat Sheikh Abdullah Shah^{xxxi}

These caliphs played a pivotal role in spreading the Chishti teachings, guiding followers in spiritual, moral, and religious matters, and continuing the legacy of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti throughout India and beyond.

Academic Works

Allah Almighty bestowed upon Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti perfect wilāyat (spiritual authority) and, along with it, enriched him with divine knowledge and grace. He was a perfect faqir, *Muʿīn al-Ḥaqq*, the essence of the *ʿarifīn*, and the Sultan of the Shaykhs. Allah granted him a distinguished position as a source of knowledge and wisdom. His writings demonstrate that he possessed deep mastery of the science of Tasawwuf, and his works stand as clear evidence of his refined intellectual and scholarly disposition. What follows is a brief introduction to the major works attributed to Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti

Anīs al-Arwāḥ

Anīs al-Arwāḥ is a renowned work of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti and comprises the recorded sayings and spiritual discourses of his Murshid, Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni. The original text was composed in Persian and has since been translated into Urdu in multiple versions. Hazrat Khwaja remained in the companionship of his spiritual guide for many years, accompanying him on extensive journeys. Eventually, during their stay in Baghdad, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti undertook the occupation of a scribe for a period of time. He himself narrates that upon returning to Baghdad during their travels, Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni informed him of his intention to remain in seclusion (*khalwat*) for the remembrance of Allah. During this period, he instructed Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti to visit him daily at noon, stating that he would teach him the principles of faqr so that he might practice them and attain closeness to Allah. He further instructed him to record these teachings so they would be preserved. Accordingly, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti carefully documented the spiritual instructions of his mentor and compiled them under the title *Anīs al-Arwāḥ*.^{xxxii}

This work serves as a guiding light for seekers on the spiritual path, offering practical and doctrinal insight into the teachings of the Chishtiyya order. Through its study, readers gain a clear understanding of Chishti principles, spiritual discipline, and ethical conduct. In *Tadhkirat al-Awliya*, Hazrat Makhdoom Jalaluddin describes *Anīs al-Arwāḥ* as a refined and profound scholarly contribution of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti. Similarly, Muhammad Nagori, in *ʿArifīn*, states that Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti was a consummate scholar and spiritual authority, possessing several works, among which *Anīs al-Arwāḥ* and *Dīwān-e-Sharīf* are particularly praiseworthy. Sheikh Abdul Wahid Grami further affirms that Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti attained exceptional perfection in knowledge and that his writings occupy a distinguished place in the intellectual history of Sufism.

Content Analysis of *Anīs al-Arwāḥ*

The work *Al-Arwāḥ* by Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti is highly regarded in Khurāsān and includes a wide range of spiritual, ethical, and practical topics. The subjects discussed in this collection are as follows:

1. About Faith
 - The story of Adam’s supplications
 - The story of the destruction of cities
 - The story of women’s obedience and freeing of slaves
 - The story of the rules of charity

- The story of alcohol prohibition
- The story of causing harm or trouble to believers
- 2. About Swearing
- 3. About Work and Earning
- 4. About Suffering
- 5. About Killing Animals
- 6. About Greeting Others
- 7. Expiation for Prayer
- 8. The Virtue of Surah Fatiha and Surah Ikhlas
- 9. About Paradise and the People of Paradise
- 10. The Virtue of the Mosque
- 11. On Accumulating Worldly Wealth
- 12. On Sneezing Etiquette
- 13. On the Call to Prayer (Adhan)
- 14. About Believers
- 15. On the Needs of a Muslim Brother
- 16. About the Day of Judgment (Qiyamah)
- 17. On Remembering Death (Dhikr al-Mawt)
- 18. On Sending a Lamp to the Mosque
- 19. About Dervishes
- 20. About the Five Daily Prayers
- 21. On Oppressive Princes and Worldly Scholars Being the Losers
- 22. About Repentance and Ethical Conduct

Anīs al-Arwāḥ is thus a comprehensive and beautiful collection that covers a wide range of subjects, including Shariah (Islamic law), Tariqa (Sufi path), Iman (faith), and Tasawwuf (Sufism). The text provides practical guidance for spiritual seekers while emphasizing moral, social, and devotional duties.

Risāla Afaq wa Anfās

Risāla Afaq wa Anfās^{xxxiii} is a treatise attributed to Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti and is also known by other titles, such as *Risāla Adab Dam Zadan* and *Risāla Afaq wa Anfās Dar Sahal Dar Kasb Plais*. This work is composed in Persian and carries a pen name. The treatise is divided into one introduction (Dyan) and two chapters. In the second chapter, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti pays tribute to his spiritual mentor, Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni, describing him as a guide and spiritual luminary whose influence shaped his own path. The treatise begins by exploring the veins of human existence, linking physical, spiritual, and intellectual aspects. By integrating mathematical reasoning, the struggles of the Sufis, and empirical observation, he demonstrates how human actions influence both bodily and spiritual well-being. Interestingly, the treatise also incorporates terms from the Hindi language in its explanation, reflecting the syncretic and accessible nature of Hazrat Khwaja's writing. This introduction indicates that the treatise is based on conversations between Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti and another person, which were later compiled in written form.

Ganj al-Asrār

Ganj al-Asrār^{xxxiv} is another important work by Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti, reportedly written on the advice of his Murshid, Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni, for the education and spiritual training of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish. Composed in Persian during his period of intense spiritual practice (*Qiyam al-Faqīh*), this book serves as a comprehensive manual for acquiring religious and mystical knowledge. The work integrates Qur'anic teachings, Hadith, and the sayings of eminent religious leaders, making it a treasure of Sufi guidance—hence its name *Ganj al-Asrār* (“Treasure of Secrets”). The text is organized into twenty-five sections, which collectively guide the reader on understanding Shariah, its outward practices, and inward spiritual realities. Through these sections, Hazrat Khwaja elucidates both practical ethics and esoteric Sufi knowledge, providing a holistic framework for spiritual development.

Spiritual and Scholarly Themes in *Ganj al-Asrār*

Ganj al-Asrār encompasses a wide array of topics central to Sufism, Islamic knowledge, and spiritual development. The key subjects addressed in the work include:

- Purity of Shariah knowledge, spiritual path (*Tariqa*), truth (*Haqq*), and intellectual knowledge.
- Reformation of the inner self (*Tazkiyah*) and steadfastness in the pursuit of truth.
- Principles of monotheism (*Tawhid*) and prophethood, with a detailed exposition of Qur'anic teachings and obedience to the Messenger (PBUH).
- Explanation of types of disbelief (*kufir*) and errors in religious practice.
- Mysticism and its integration with religion, spiritual insight, and knowledge.
- The role of the Murshid (spiritual guide) in teaching, guiding, and perfecting the disciple (*Kamil* and *Akrani*).
- Necessity of spiritual guidance, cultivating the heart, righteous deeds, and worship.
- Insights from classical Sufi authorities, including references to Ali, Imam Shafi'i, and other pious masters.
- Historical and spiritual accounts, including the teachings of Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni, his arrival in Delhi, and the spread of the Chishti order.
- Discussions on spiritual states, mystical experiences, and the fifteen places of spiritual status.
- Exposition of the fourteen sciences of creation and destruction, emphasizing the inner and outer aspects of knowledge.

Ganj al-Asrār is thus regarded as a treasure of original Sufi manners and teachings, filled with spiritual secrets, symbols, and practical guidance for seekers of the path. A manuscript copy of this work is preserved at Sherani University, Punjab, Lahore, under the title *Malfuzat Ganj al-Asrār*, authored by Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti. The Urdu translation of this book has been published under the name *Makhzan-ul-Anwar*.

Letters of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti

Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti also authored a collection of letters, addressed to his respected Caliph, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, providing guidance from both a training and mystical perspective. The total number of these letters is eight.

- In the first letter, he elaborates on the five pillars of Islam: the declaration of faith (*Shahada*), prayer (*Salah*), fasting (*Sawm*), almsgiving (*Zakat*), and pilgrimage (*Hajj*).
- The remaining letters contain spiritual advice, guidance, and ethical instruction for the disciple.^{xxxv}

Throughout the letters, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti expresses great affection for his disciple, often addressing him as “brother” and using the term “Aziz Man” after greetings, while employing humble words to refer to himself. Although the letters were primarily addressed to his Caliph, they serve as a source of guidance for all seekers and followers on the path of truth. Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti draws upon:

- Qur’anic verses
- Hadiths
- Poetry
- Incidents from the lives of the Prophet’s companions
- Teachings and instructions of Khwaja Syed Usman Harwni

Through these letters, he unveils divine truths, spiritual knowledge, and practical guidance for discipleship. These letters have been preserved and recorded for posterity.

Risāla Tasawwuf Manzūm

This treatise, available in Persian manuscript form, reflects the lofty thoughts and poetic style of Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz. It presents the principles of Tasawwuf (Sufism) in a structured and poetic manner, serving both as a guide and a mirror of his spiritual insight.^{xxxvi}

Risāla al-Wujūdiyya

Another important work by Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti, *Risāla al-Wujūdiyya*, is preserved in written form. A copy of this treatise is available in the Punjab University Library. This work delves into the existential and metaphysical dimensions of Sufism, emphasizing the divine presence in creation and the path of realization.^{xxxvii}

Risāla al-Kashf al-Asrār (Mi‘rāj al-Anwār)

Composed during Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti’s stay in India, this Persian treatise was intended for the training of disciples, seekers, and students. It discusses:

- The hidden or esoteric teachings of Sufism.

- The four spiritual levels: *Nasut*, *Malakut*, *Jabarut*, and *Hut*.
- The practices and spiritual stations of the Chishtiyya, Haidri, and Naqshbandi orders.
- The exalted status of saints such as Maqam Mahmud, Anwar Jalal, Nur Jamal, and Muhammad Ahmad.
- Cosmological concepts, including the creation of beings from the four elements.^{xxxviii}

This treatise encapsulates the core teachings of Sufism, integrating spiritual guidance with metaphysical insight.

Hadith al-Ma'arif

This rare work of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti collects essential sayings and teachings, focusing on spiritual knowledge and ethical conduct.^{xxxix}

Dīwān-e-Muin

Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti was also an accomplished poet. His poetic collection, *Dīwān-e-Muin*,^{xi} showcases his mastery in various genres, including qasida, ghazal, and riyāz. According to *Seer-al-Sāleen* by Shujauddin, Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz was a noble and accomplished poet, blending spiritual insight with literary excellence. The *Dīwān* originally contained seven to eight thousand poems, though much has been lost over time. Remaining works include:

- 121 ghazals
- Approximately 11 and a half qasidas

The surviving poems demonstrate a high level of spiritual depth, literary skill, and reflection of Sufi Irfan (gnosis).

Thematic Analysis of Selected Poetic Verses

Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti passed away on 6 Rajab 633 AH (1236 CE). The date of his demise has been poetically described in Persian verses as follows:

Persian Verse:

خواجه	والا	معین	الدین	کہ	از	انوار	او ^{xli}
گشت	روشن	در	دو	عالم	ماہتاب	ملک	ہند
محوشد	در	نور	حق	چون	مہ	چرخ	نشین
				آن	شد ندا از چرخ چارم	آفتاب ملک بند	

Urdu Translation:

خواجه	والا	معین	الدین	کے	انوار	سے
ہند	سرزمین	میں	جہاں	میں	روشنی	گئی
وہ	حق	میں	ہو	جیسے	چرخ	مہتاب
				چاروں جہان کے	آفتاب نے	اس کی طرف ندا کی

English Translation:

“From the divine radiance of Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti,
The lands of India and the two worlds became illuminated.

He was absorbed in the Light of Truth, like the moon that sits in the sky,
And the suns of the four corners of the world called out in acknowledgment”^{xiii}.

These verses celebrate his spiritual radiance and the illumination he brought to the land of India and the world through his teachings and devotion.

Thematic Analysis

The Persian quatrain *خواجہ والا معین الدین کہ از انوار او / گشت روشن در دو عالم ماہتاب ملک بند / محو شد در / محو شد در* attributed to Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti conveys a rich spiritual and historical narrative that underscores his eminent status in both the metaphysical and temporal realms. The first line, *خواجہ والا معین الدین کہ از انوار او*, emphasizes the saint as a luminous figure, whose spiritual radiance (*anwar*) illuminates hearts and minds. Historically, this highlights Khwaja Muin-ud-Din’s role in bringing enlightenment to the Indian Subcontinent through the Chishti Sufi Order, positioning him as a spiritual beacon during a period of social and religious pluralism. The second line, *گشت روشن در دو عالم ماہتاب ملک بند*, metaphorically presents him as the moonlight illuminating both the spiritual and material worlds of India, suggesting that his influence transcended personal devotion and extended into societal reform, moral guidance, and intercultural harmony. The third line, *محو شد در نور حق چون آن مه چرخ نشین*, reflects the Sufi concept of annihilation (*fana*) in divine light, portraying Khwaja Muin-ud-Din as absorbed in God’s presence like the radiant moon, symbolizing complete spiritual union and detachment from worldly ego. The final line, *شد ندا از چرخ چارم آفتاب ملک بند*, elevates him metaphorically as the sun of kingship, whose divine illumination reaches the highest cosmic spheres, signifying recognition of his spiritual authority beyond temporal boundaries. Thematically, the quatrain integrates concepts of divine radiance, spiritual enlightenment, ethical leadership, and mystical absorption, portraying Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti as a transformative figure whose teachings and presence shaped both the spiritual and social fabric of medieval India, leaving a legacy of guidance, piety, and universal appeal.

Visit to the Shrine of Hazrat Syed Ali Bin Usman Hajveri:

During his spiritual journey, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti visited the shrine of Hazrat Ali Hajveri (Data Ganj Bakhsh) in Lahore. Near the shrine, there was a chillah (spiritual retreat) associated with Hazrat Hajveri. Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti’s own chillah still exists today in the form of a chamber located directly in front of the shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh. Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh holds a high status among the saints of the Indian subcontinent. While at the end of this chillah, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti experienced a spiritual vision of Hazrat Syed Ali Hajveri, and in a state of absorption, the following couplet emerged from his heart:

Persian Verse:

گنج بخش فیض عالم مظہر نور خدا
ناقصاں را پیر کامل، کاملان را راہنما

Translation:

گنج بخش، عالم میں فیض دینے والا، خدا کے نور کا مظہر
ناقص لوگوں کے لیے پیر کامل، کامل لوگوں کے لیے رہنما

Translation:

“Ganj Bakhsh, the bestower of blessings upon the world, the manifestation of God’s light, A perfect spiritual guide for the imperfect, and a guide for the perfected”.^{xliii}

This couplet reflects the spiritual greatness and divine blessings of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh. The title “Ganj Bakhsh” conferred by Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti became so renowned that it remains widely used and respected to this day. After receiving the privilege of visiting the blessed shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti continued his journey towards his destined place of spiritual settlement in Ajmer.

Thematic Analysis

The Persian couplet *گنج بخش فیض عالم مظہر نور خدا / ناقصاں را پیر کامل، کاملاں را راہنما* attributed to Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti encapsulates the saint’s profound spiritual philosophy and his pivotal role in the socio-religious history of the medieval Indian Subcontinent. The epithet “گنج بخش” (Ganj Bakhsh – Bestower of Treasures) signifies the saint’s role not as a provider of material wealth but as a channel of divine grace (*faiz*), spiritual knowledge, and moral refinement. Historically, this reflects how Khwaja Muin-ud-Din’s *khānqāh* at Ajmer functioned as a center for spiritual guidance, ethical instruction, and humanitarian service, attracting devotees from diverse religious and social backgrounds. The phrase “مظہر نور خدا” (*mazhar-e-nūr-e-Khudā* – manifestation of God’s light) conveys the Sufi understanding of the saint as a medium through which divine qualities are reflected in the world. Within the Chishti framework, this illumination is achieved through piety, ascetic discipline, devotion, and selfless service, granting the saint moral and spiritual authority that extended beyond temporal or political power. The second line, “ناقصاں را پیر کامل، کاملاں را راہنما”, introduces a pedagogical duality: Khwaja Muin-ud-Din serves as “پیر کامل” (perfect guide) for spiritually immature or imperfect individuals and as “راہنما” (leader or guide) for those who have attained higher levels of spiritual development. This duality emphasizes the inclusivity and adaptability of Chishti guidance, allowing the Order to cater to both novices seeking ethical reform and advanced seekers pursuing spiritual perfection. Collectively, the couplet portrays Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti as a transformative figure whose life and teachings fostered spiritual growth, social cohesion, and ethical upliftment. Historically, his role as *گنج بخش* and *مظہر نور خدا* reinforced the Chishti Order’s enduring influence and its contribution to the moral and spiritual fabric of the Subcontinent, establishing a legacy of peaceful coexistence and spiritual guidance that transcended generations.

Persian Verse:

اے تو سلطان وار ملک وجود
ہم عالم الفیل تو مقصود

Urdu Translation:

اے تو جو وجود کی سلطنت کے بادشاہ کی مانند ہے،
ساری کائنات تیرے ارادے کا مقصد ہے۔^{xliv}

English Translation:

“O You, who is like the sovereign ruler of all existence,
the entire universe is the object of Your will”.^{xlv}

Thematic Analysis

The Persian couplet attributed to Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti encapsulates a profound metaphysical and spiritual vision central to his Sufi philosophy. The first line, (O You, the sovereign-like ruler of existence), emphasizes the supremacy and singular authority of the Divine in all creation. Historically, this reflects the Chishti Sufi understanding of God as the ultimate sovereign whose presence permeates the universe, highlighting the transcendence and omnipotence of the Creator. In the medieval Indian Subcontinent, such theological expressions helped contextualize Sufi authority not in political or temporal terms but through spiritual and moral supremacy, which allowed saints like Khwaja Muin-ud-Din to exert profound influence across diverse communities. The second line, (The entire universe is the object of Your will), underscores the comprehensive and purposeful nature of divine creation. Here, the saint portrays the cosmos as being inherently directed and sustained by God, reflecting the Sufi emphasis on the unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujud*) and divine intentionality. This conceptualization reinforced the Chishti message that human actions, ethical conduct, and spiritual devotion are meaningful only within the framework of divine order. Thematically, the couplet portrays Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti's vision of God as both sovereign and omnipresent, guiding moral and spiritual life. By expressing the cosmic and ethical dimensions of divine authority, the verse reinforces the historical role of the Chishti saints as mediators between God and society, promoting spiritual awareness, social harmony, and ethical conduct. The couplet thus exemplifies the integration of metaphysical insight with practical guidance, which was central to the enduring influence of the Chishti Sufi tradition in South Asia.

Persian Verse:

می فرستد معین درود بتو^{xlvi}
حق تعالیٰ زمن شود، خوشنود

Urdu Translation:

معین (حضرت خواجہ معین الدین چشتی) تجھے درود بھیجتا ہے،
اللہ تعالیٰ اس سے خوش ہو جاتا ہے۔^{xlvi}

English Translation:

“Moin (Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti) sends blessings upon you, and God becomes pleased with this act”.

Thematic Analysis

The Persian couplet attributed to Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti embodies a profound spiritual and devotional ethos central to the Chishti Sufi tradition. The first line, (Moin sends blessings upon you), reflects the practice of invoking divine grace through the sending of salutations (*darood*) upon the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) or spiritually significant figures. Historically, this act of blessing was not merely ritualistic but functioned as a conduit for spiritual connection, ethical cultivation, and moral purification, illustrating the Chishti emphasis on personal devotion as a means to align human will with divine intent. The second line, (God becomes pleased with this act), underscores the theological principle that sincere devotional acts elicit divine pleasure, reinforcing the Sufi belief in the reciprocal relationship between human piety and spiritual reward. This dual focus—human action and divine response—illustrates the Chishti pedagogical approach, which encourages followers to engage in ethically and spiritually meaningful practices, emphasizing sincerity and humility. Thematically, the couplet highlights the transformative power of devotion

and the centrality of blessings in Sufi praxis. By portraying Khwaja Muin-ud-Din as a mediator of divine favor, the verse reinforces his historical role as a spiritual guide whose teachings and practices cultivated moral consciousness, fostered communal harmony, and facilitated the internalization of Islamic ethical and spiritual ideals. In essence, the couplet exemplifies how devotion, guided by a saintly figure, serves as a means for spiritual elevation and divine satisfaction within the Chishti Sufi framework.

Persian Verse:

شاه است حسین، بادشاه است حسین^{xlviii}
 دین است حسین، دین پناه است حسین
 سر داد نہ داد، دست در دست یزید
 حقہ کہ بنائے لا الہ است حسین

Urdu Translation:

حسین بادشاہ ہیں، حقیقی بادشاہ حسین ہیں
 دین حسین ہے، اور دین کی پناہ بھی حسین ہے
 انہوں نے اپنا سر قربان کیا لیکن یزید کے ہاتھ میں نہ دیا
 کیونکہ اللہ کی رضا کے لیے لا الہ کی پہچان حسین ہے

English Translation:

Husain is the king, truly the sovereign is Husain
 Religion is Husain, and the refuge of religion is also Husain
 He gave his life but did not place it in the hand of Yazid
 For the sake of God, the declaration of "There is no god but Allah" was upheld by Husain (R.A).^{xlix}

Thematic Analysis

The Persian verse / دین است حسین / دین است حسین، دین پناہ است حسین / سر داد نہ داد دست در / شاه است حسین reflects the profound spiritual, moral, and historical significance of Hazrat Imam Husayn's sacrifice in the context of Islamic and Sufi thought. The opening lines, elevate Husayn as the embodiment of both spiritual and temporal authority, portraying him as the ultimate arbiter of truth and moral order. Here, the couplet transcends literal kingship to emphasize divine legitimacy and the sanctity of ethical leadership, resonating with Sufi interpretations that valorize moral and spiritual authority over worldly power. The lines / سر داد نہ داد دست در دست یزید / highlight Husayn's steadfast refusal to submit to tyranny, exemplifying the principles of justice, integrity, and resistance against oppression. Historically, this reflects the ideological and ethical dimensions of Karbala, where Husayn's martyrdom became a symbol of unwavering commitment to truth and divine law. Finally, / حقہ کہ بنائے لا الہ است حسین / underscores the theological and devotional significance of Husayn's sacrifice: upholding the declaration of "La ilaha illallah" symbolizes the triumph of divine will over worldly expediency. Thematically, the verse interweaves spiritual authority, ethical resilience, and devotion, portraying Husayn as both a historical figure and an enduring moral exemplar. Within the Sufi and Chishti framework, such verses serve as a reminder of the inseparable link between ethical conduct, spiritual commitment, and divine pleasure, reinforcing the didactic and transformative role of saintly and prophetic figures in Islamic history.

Conclusion

Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti (1141–1236) stands as a towering figure in the religious, spiritual, and cultural history of the Indian Subcontinent. His life and teachings embody the essence of the Chishti Sufi tradition, which seamlessly integrates devotion to God, ethical conduct, and humanitarian service. Historically, Khwaja Muin-ud-Din's arrival in India coincided with a period of social complexity, political flux, and religious plurality, making his message of love, tolerance, and moral reform particularly significant. Through the establishment of his khānqāh at Ajmer, he created a center that was simultaneously spiritual, social, and educational—a space where individuals from diverse communities could seek guidance, receive moral and ethical instruction, and engage in communal service. This inclusive approach enabled the Chishti Order to cultivate an environment of interfaith harmony and social cohesion, contributing to the ethical and spiritual enrichment of the society at large.

Thematic and hagiographical sources, including his malfūzāt, quatrains, and poetic expressions, illuminate the depth of Khwaja Muin-ud-Din's spiritual vision. He is celebrated as گنج بخش (Ganj Bakhsh – Bestower of Treasures), emphasizing his role as a conduit of divine grace (*faiz*) that enriched the moral and spiritual fabric of society. The title مظہر نور خدا (Mazhar-e-Nūr-e-Khudā – Manifestation of God's Light) reflects the metaphysical dimension of his sainthood, portraying him as a figure whose presence brought illumination to both the spiritual and material realms. The duality of his guidance, expressed as پیر کامل for the spiritually imperfect and راہنما for the spiritually advanced, highlights the adaptability and inclusivity of his approach, allowing individuals at various stages of ethical and spiritual development to benefit from his mentorship. This pedagogical versatility was central to the Chishti Order's enduring appeal, enabling it to address both personal spiritual development and broader societal transformation.

In historical terms, Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti's influence extended beyond his immediate disciples to the wider Subcontinent. His teachings inspired successive generations of Chishti saints, including Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, Baba Farid, and Nizam-ud-Din Auliya, who further institutionalized his vision of ethical and spiritual reform. His emphasis on peaceful propagation of faith, ethical service, and devotion over coercion ensured that the Chishti Order remained a morally authoritative and socially relevant force. Moreover, the integration of his teachings into cultural expressions such as poetry, music, and Qawwali contributed to the dissemination of spiritual values in accessible and aesthetically compelling forms, reinforcing his societal impact. In nutshell, the couplets and quatrains attributed to him, such as خواجه والا معین الدین کہ از انوار او / گشت روشن در دو عالم ماہتاب ملک بند, exemplify the interplay of spiritual enlightenment and social influence, portraying him as a luminous presence whose teachings guided both the heart and mind. Similarly, other devotional verses emphasize his role as a mediator of divine pleasure and blessings, illustrating how personal devotion and ethical action were intertwined in the Chishti worldview. Ultimately, Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti's historical significance lies in his ability to harmonize spiritual authority with social relevance. His life demonstrates how devotion, ethical conduct, and service to humanity can collectively foster moral and spiritual transformation in society. By creating a legacy that transcended his lifetime, he established a model of Sufi praxis that continues to inspire ethical reflection, spiritual growth, and communal harmony. His enduring influence underscores the transformative power of Sufi guidance and cements his place as a central figure in the spiritual and cultural history of the Indian Subcontinent, offering timeless lessons on the integration of faith, morality, and social responsibility.

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