

## **From Chief Editor's Desk**

India and Iran enjoy cordial bilateral relations historically, literally and artistically but the contribution of mystic thoughts of Iran and its impact on India during pre and post Islamic era has been the most influential element in the development of these relations.

With the arrival of Islam in India, a wide range of political, social and cultural exchanges developed with the emergence of great mystical figures like Hujvere and Khwaja Moinuddin Chisty. The spread of the sufistic ideas of famous and great Iranian literary personalities such as Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, Firdousi, Abu Rahyan Al Beruini, Hafiz and Sa'adi had a tremendous impact on the mystical and literary fields of these two countries.

Indo-Iranian Sufism is the soul of Persian and Urdu poetry. Sufis have played an important role in bridging the distance between different traditions and communities and sufism has emerged as a primary vehicle for intellectual advancement of Culture in societies.

Mysticism and Sufis have created the strong base of coordination and affection between the two nations throughout history utilizing the spiritual potentialities concealed in Indo-Iranian cultures. Mystic and Sufi migrants of Iran and the impact of Indian ideology resulted in the formation of Islamic Mysticism.

Today world is passing through a very delicate phase and is witnessing a cultural identity crisis. Unfortunately modern life is devoid of spirituality. So, it is essential that education should focus on spirituality and morality. A study of great men's works and thoughts are sufficient to enlighten the soul of all readers who are mostly duty bound to spread their fragrance in the lives of modern men.

The former President of India late Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma has mentioned on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1993 that "Today peace, understanding, friendship and cooperation as well as people and communities within the nations comprise a vital need of human kind. The message of oneness and services rendered by sufi saints and thinkers obviously have great contemporary relevance."

Spirituality is an open system, it is not limited by space and time. Since it is a journey to the hidden reality, it takes man everywhere: the inner and the outer and makes no distinction between the sacred and secular, the high and the low, the learned and the illiterate, the being and non being, the form and the formless and so on.

Religion without spirituality especially in its social dimension, tends to be a system of oppression and exploitation. Spirituality is the soul and religion is the body with different shapes, color and practices. In India and Iran, mysticism and spirituality have always gone together.

Sufis believe that true worship is not in the performance of rituals but true worship is in the service of humanity. Saa'di says:

“Ibadat bajuz Khidmat-e-Khalq neest  
Ba tasbih-o-Sajadah-o-dalq neest”

Without service of humanity, prayer means nothing  
It is not counting beads, sitting on the mat or wearing tatters.

Sufism from its inception attracted the attention of the masses as well as the intellectuals and men of letters alike. It was under the impact of Sufism that the Iranian and Indian poets and writers as well as the religious reformers discarded all kinds of fanaticism.

The former President of Indian Council of Cultural Relations late Mr. Vasant Sathe said in the International Conference on Sufism in 1993 that “Sufism involves mans relationship with man as well as mans relationship with Almighty. Those who believe in Wahdat-ul-Wujud also believe that the only real existence is Almighty who is their for Wajib-ul-Wujud. All other beings are shadows of the creations.”

Sufism leads to inner purification, self consciousness realization of truth, religious tolerance, unity in diversity, love for all without distinction of caste and creed. Sufism has made a remarkable mark on socio- cultural cum religious history of the world in general and of India in particular.

India has contributed the largest number of manuscripts, commentaries and printed editions of Mathnavi. No other literature on mysticism is so loved and studied as Mathanavi-e-Manavi, the work of Jalaluddin Rumi which inspires love and purify the soul.

The elements of love and spiritualism in Rumi's work made him popular in the world of mysticism and as a result most of his poetic compositions have been translated into many languages.

The mystical philosophy of love and universal brotherhood as emphasized by Rumi can serve humanity in modern times as a beacon of light and through mutual understanding can initiate well being among various nations of the world.

Undoubtedly, Sufism gave a great impetus to the Bhakti movement and have influenced the language used by the Bhakti leaders of Northern India. Bhakti and Sufism both are spiritual movements. Both played a significant role in diminishing the hatred and difference between man and man.

The divine love is the essence of all religions. It is termed as Prem and Bhakti in Hinduism and Ishqi- Ilahi or divine love in Sufism.

We take the privilege of presenting the second volume of the english quarterly Journal Cultural Dialogue on Spirituality and Mysticism with our humble efforts and helping hands of scholars who have contributed their scholarly articles.

The academic initiative of Prof. S.R. Bhatt, Chairman of Indian Philosophy Congress and Prof. Arif Ayyubi, International Students Advisor, University of Lucknow is really appreciable.

**Dr. Mohammad Ali Rabbani**