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Exploring Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi's Role in Spreading Islam and Spiritual Advancement in Bahawalpur Region

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Abstract: *Hazrat Khwaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi, a Sufi saint from Tehsil Chishtian, played a significant role in spreading Islamic teachings in the Bahawalpur region. He got his early education from Mahar Sharif, a small village near Chishtian. For higher education, he went to Dera Ghazi Khan, Lahore, Delhi, and Pakpattan. He pledged allegiance to his mentor, Shah Fakhruddin, in Pakpattan. On his return to Mahar Sharif, he took steps to spread Islam in the area. As a result, thousands of people benefited from his teachings. His caliphs and disciples started promoting religious education in their native areas. It is worth mentioning here that as a saint, Khwaja Sahib became famous and earned a high place in Punjab. Even Amir Bahawal Khan Abbasi II of Bahawalpur State was highly affiliated with him, and he was inspired by his teachings. Even the local people of South Punjab, especially the Bahawalpur region, have been blessed with his teachings and spiritual guidance. Nowadays, there is a madrasa, library, and a mosque adjacent to the Khanqah of Khawaja Noor Muhammad, where a number of students are acquiring religious knowledge. His Khanqah is a source of spiritual blessings and guidance for his devotees and the general public.*

Key Words: Bahawalpur State, Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi, Sufism, Amir Bahawal Khan Abbasi II, Shrine, Chishtia Order

Introduction

Historically speaking, Bahawalpur remains a hub of Sufism, mysticism, and wisdom. Long before the advent of Islam, people came to this area for knowledge. Numerous monuments in the Bahawalpur district, which are elegant and expert, tell the tale of ancient times. The historic centers of knowledge were Patan Minara in Rahimyar Khan District, Sui Vihar in Bahawalpur District, and Jain Mandir in Fort Marut in Bahawalnagar District. Gautama Buddha's teachings were also spread in Bahawalpur, where he founded educational institutions and lit the candles of enlightenment. The Bahawalpur district's Sui Vihar has remnants of a Buddhist monastery. The construction of this monastery took place eleven years after Maharaja Kanishka's accession to the Kushan throne in 78 AD. In Bahawalnagar, remnants of an old fort named Fort Marut exist. Which Mehrot, the Chittor King, created. In the past, people had to travel great distances to learn. The blessings of Islam also illuminated this region as its light burst forth in all its glory upon the province of Sindh. The well-known town of Uch in the same region saw the construction of the first mosque, Masjid Hajat, following Bhanbhor's. It still stands today next to the Hazrat Makhdoom Jahanian Jahan Gasht tomb (Shahab, 1976).

Historical evidence indicates the presence of Sufis in the Bahawalpur region following the emergence of Islam. The teachings of Islam illuminated this region as a direct result of the Sufis' diligent efforts. In the 4th century AH, the esteemed Sufi elder Safi-u-Din Ghazron, associated with the Ghazroniya Order, founded a monastery in Uch Sharif. The Ghazroniya chain's Uch monastery marks the establishment of the first Sufi monastery in the Indian subcontinent. Hence, the emergence of Sufism in the subcontinent can

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be traced back to the region of Bahawalpur. In addition to numerous Sufi orders, the Naqshbandiya and Husainiya Bukhariya orders also thrived in this region (Shahab, 1976). Additionally, there are burial sites dedicated to esteemed Sufi elders within the Chishtian Tehsil of Bahawalnagar East District in Bahawalpur State. Hazrat Shaikh Taj-u-Din Taj Sarwar, the grandson of Hazrat Masood Fareed-u-Din Gang Shahr, established residence in this region during the 7th century A.H. In this locality, he initiated Islam's propagation and the Chishtia order's dissemination. People began to recognize this region as "Kirya Taj Sarwar." As a result of Hazrat Shaikh Taj Sarwar's influential preaching, a significant number of people adopted the Islamic faith. Notably, Joeas, Lakhweras, and Kharls were among those who converted. Hindu Rajputs, who disapproved of Shaikh Taj Sarwar's religious teachings, primarily populated the region surrounding Kirya Taj Sarwar. Consequently, Karyajaj tragically martyred him and laid him to rest, leading to the area becoming known as "Basti Taj Sarwar." Syed Chiragh-u-Din Shah Hirrati, the nephew of Hazrat Moeen-u-Din Chishti, shares a close association with Hazrat Shaikh Taj Sarwar. It is worth noting that their respective shrines are located near each other (Darvesh, 1987).

Following the death of Shaikh Taj Sarwar, the publication of the Chishtia order was halted for a prolonged period of time. Hence, Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi, a revered Sufi saint, established the Chishtia order in the Basti Maharan region. Through his diligent efforts, the order experienced significant growth and spread across Punjab province. His affiliation with the Sufi order led to the recognition of the region, where he began his preaching as Chishtian Sharif, associated with the Chishtia order (Darvesh, 1987).

Objective of the Study

This study aims to analyze the character of Sufi saint Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi, who belongs to the Chishtia order and has made a broad contribution to the spread of Islam in the region of Bahawalpur as well as entire Punjab.

Method

Significance and Scope

This study is significant because it highlights the life cycle of Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi, who made efforts to impart religious education among Muslims and played a crucial role in the publication of the teachings of Islam and the promotion of the Chishtia order. The scope of the study is limited to reviewing the personality and teachings of Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi because after gaining spiritual knowledge, his Caliphs went to their respective areas to spread Islamic teachings. Nowadays, there is a Madrassa, a Mosque, and a library present in the Khawaja Noor Muhammad's Shrine, where many students acquire spiritual and Quranic education, including Hadith and Jurisprudence knowledge. The study also attempts to highlight the affiliation of Bahawalpur's nobility with Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources, in the form of books, interviews, and articles, are used in this article. Data is collected from different books and journal articles. In addition, interviews of individuals who remain affiliated with the Shrine and Madrassa are conducted. This study is written from a descriptive and historical perspective. The inquiry mode of research is applied with a special focus on the qualitative form of research.

Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi: Family Background and Early Education

Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi was born in 1730 AD in Basti Chotalla. Subsequently, his family relocated to Basti Maharan, presently known as Mahar Sharif. Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad was initially given the name "Bahibal" by his parents, but his teacher, Fakhar-u-Din, changed it to "Noor Muhammad." Afterward, his teacher, Fakhar-u-Din, bestowed upon him the esteemed title of "Qibla Alam," which he now widely recognizes as "Khawaja Qibla Alam." Nevertheless, it is widely acknowledged by narrators and historians that your lineage can be traced back to Nowshirwan Adil. However, there is a



minor discrepancy between the names Nowshirwan Adil and Hazrat Adam (A.S.). There exists a documented genealogy tracing the lineage from Bahbal to Nowshirwan, which has been acknowledged by historians such as Bahibal (Noor Muhammad) bin Hindal (Panwar Kharl from the Nation) bin Tatar bin Fateh Muhammad bin Mahmood bin Murah bin Aziz bin Data bin Chahar bin Salar bin Ohr bin Kolra bin Jag Sen bin Kaj Sen bin Sirik bin Deo Rai bin Guddan Shaheed. All individuals mentioned, including Salar Sen and Gudan Shaheed, held noble status concurrently. Gudan, in particular, exemplified exceptional leadership qualities as he demonstrated unwavering support for the underprivileged. Additionally, he displayed remarkable loyalty and humility, making him a commendable young individual. The city of Halwana, now known as Bikaner, served as their residence. According to the account of Gudan Shaheed's martyrdom, a group of armed individuals who were not adherents of the faith engaged in the act of looting innocent people's belongings. A group of Army officers, including Gudan, pursued the individuals. A confrontation ensued between the two factions, resulting in the unfortunate demise of Gudan during the siege. The arrival of Khawaja Noor Muhammad, the saint of time, into the family of Shaheed Gudan can be regarded as a divine blessing bestowed upon them by God.

Khawaja Noor Muhammad began his primary education at the age of four at the Madrasa in Mahar Sharif under the guidance of Hafiz Masood Mahar. In the meantime, Sheikh Ahmed, a revered figure at the time, encountered "Noor Muhammad" and made a prophetic prediction about Noor Muhammad's future as a saint. After completing the memorization of the Holy Qur'an in Mahar Sharif, Khawaja Noor Muhammad embarked on a journey to pursue further education (Maharvi, 2009). Therefore, Khawaja Noor Muhammad eventually arrived at Moza Bhadera, approximately five or six kilometers from Mahar Sharif. There, he engaged in the study of several books of *Dars-i-Nizami*. Upon completing his education at Moza Bhadera, he continued his educational pursuits and sought further religious instruction from Shaikh Ahmad Khokhar in Bilbilana, near Pakpatan (Chishti, 1992). Additionally, Khawaja Noor Muhammad undertook a journey to Dera Ghazi Khan in pursuit of education (Maharvi, 2009). Following his stay in Dera Ghazi Khan, he traveled to Lahore with Mian Mahkoom-al-Din Sahib-al-Seer and began his studies under the guidance of a renowned scholar. Following his time in Lahore, he pursued further education. He traveled to Delhi and began his education at Ghazi-al-Din's Madrassa (Togervi, 2014).

Chain of Allegiance and Return to Mahar Sharif

Khawaja Noor Muhammad completed his education under the guidance of Maulana Fakhruddin and received spiritual blessings. As he approached the end of his education, Maulana Fakhruddin's remarkable benevolence deeply moved him. Consequently, Khawaja Noor Muhammad made the conscious decision to reside alongside Molana Fakharuddin. When Hazrat Maulana Fakhruddin departed to visit Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Khawaja Noor Muhammad decided to pledge allegiance to Maulana Fakhruddin formally. Consequently, He pledged allegiance in the hand of Maulana Fakhruddin on Rabi-ul-Thani 1165 AH, corresponding to February 1752 AD (specifically on the Urs of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya) (Sulaimani, 1987). He was the individual who had the esteemed privilege of being the first to receive the honor of pledging allegiance to Shah Fakhar-u-Din (Shahab, 1976).

In the same year, he arrived at Pakpatan Sharif accompanied by Molana Sahib. After visiting Pakpatan Sharif, he received significant attention from his teacher, leading to his formal initiation and approval by Hazrat Molana Sahib. It was confirmed that he had completed his academic and spiritual education. Now, a new phase has commenced, wherein he is expected to dedicate himself to serving the divine and spreading the knowledge and resources entrusted to him among those deserving. During the annual Urs of Hazrat Baba Farid-al-Din Gang Shagr, many individuals expressed their commitment to Hazrat Fakhruddin. However, during this event, Molana Fakhr-u-Din instructed specific individuals to pledge their allegiance to "Noor Muhammad." Subsequently, Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi initiated the chain of loyalty under the guidance and permission of his mentor. Upon his return to Delhi from Pakpatan, Molana Fakhar-u-Din entrusted him with the caliphate after conducting a comprehensive evaluation of his devotion to Allah and his Messenger. He then instructed him to return to Mahar Sharif and extend invitations to the populace, guiding them toward righteousness (Asghar, 2015).

Before departing for Mahar Sharif, Hazrat Molana provided Noor Muhammad with some valuable advice in the following words.

- If the news of my death reaches you, do not return to Delhi.
- Do not wear Indian Clothing in that area.
- If someone harms you or hurts you, forgive him with goodness and Kindness.
- When you settle permanently in that area, the descendants of Hazrat Gang-i-Shakr, the scholars, and the poor will return to you to show respect to them and honor them.
- A statesman will be at your pleasure to take care of him and his country (Chishti, [1992](#)).

The preaching of Islam in Mahar Sharif

After returning to Mahar Sharif, Khawaja Noor Muhammad began his preaching activities in this region under the guidance of his mentor. Consequently, many individuals pledged allegiance to him and embraced the Islamic faith. It is noteworthy that Khawaja Noor Muhammad dedicated himself to imparting knowledge and training. Additionally, it was his regular practice to attend Pakpattan every Friday evening.

After staying in Mahar Sharif, Khawaja Noor Muhammad tried to get the blessing to attend the shrine of Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Masood Ganj Shakar for fifteen years. Which is in Pakpattan, forty kos (60) miles or 100 kilometers from Mahar Sharif. He used to leave Mahar Sharif on Tuesdays and attend Pakpattan Sharif on Thursdays, and after Friday prayers, he would start his return journey and reach Mahar Sharif on Sunday evening. He used to stay home on Monday and leave again on Tuesday. Heat, cold, sickness, weakness, nothing ever disturbed their routine. The total distance traveled in fifteen years of attendance is approximately 93,600 miles (150,635 km).

Consequently, as Khawaja Noor Muhammad's health started to decline, he would regularly embark on a Friday journey to the Taj Sarwar Chishti shrine, approximately five miles away from Mahar Sharif (Chishti, [1991](#)). Hazrat Khwaja Sahib founded his khanqah during the 18th century amidst significant challenges for the Muslim community. The Mughal Empire was in decline, facing threats from both the Marathas and Sikhs, who had risen against Muslim rule in India, as well as the encroaching British presence in British India, whose disregard for Islamic values led to a rise in impropriety and a detachment from religious beliefs, which permeated all aspects of society. This climate also led to the emergence of new orders within the faith. The Indian subcontinent was experiencing significant challenges in the realms of religion, spirituality, economy, politics, and society. Consequently, there needed to be a stronger connection between the principles of Islam and the practice of the religion. During that period, the Muslim community urgently needed a prominent spiritual leader (Maharvi, [2009](#)).

In Mahar Sharif, Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad initiated a series of advice and guidance sessions. Simultaneously, he coordinated the Quran instruction at Masjid Hafiz Masood Mahar. He appointed Qari Azizullah and Qari Sibghatullah as teachers; both individuals had taken an oath of allegiance to Khawaj Sahib and were considered among his esteemed caliphs. Due to the presence of these two esteemed Qari Sahibs, this mosque became widely recognized as Masjid Qari Sahib. Meanwhile, Khawaja Noor Muhammad constructed a Mardan Khana adjacent to the Masjid in the eastern part, where he imparted guidance, behavior, and knowledge lessons. Additionally, he built two chambers on the premises, which served as accommodations for dervishes, devotees, and visitors. He frequently prayed throughout the day, returning home only for a brief rest at night (Asghar, [2015](#)).

He initiated a profound religious and spiritual transformation in the humble setting of a small village with a mud house and a mud mosque, and its impact is unparalleled. This revolution profoundly changed the lives of countless people, numbering in the thousands and millions. The nobility, the intellectuals, the wealthy, and the ordinary people began to experience the benefits. Those who had the privilege of witnessing its devotion and loyalty were deeply impressed. Those who made pledges in your hand gained a deep mastery of faith. Khawaja Noor Muhammad diligently fulfilled the sacred responsibility of imparting knowledge, creating positive change, and delivering sermons as per the guidance of his mentor. As a result, many notable figures emerged quickly from this Khanqah (Maharvi). These men later spread Islam and the teachings of the Chishtia Order to different regions of India, especially in the towns, villages, and cities of North India. The teachings of the Chishtia Order continue to enlighten millions of people's lives, reaping significant spiritual benefits (Chishti, [1992](#)).



Khawaja Noor Muhammad displayed a strong inclination towards the reformation and training of his disciples. He previously demonstrated a commitment to individualized attention for each disciple based on their capacities and abilities. This approach bears a striking resemblance to a medical practitioner who tailors medication and treatment to the emotional state and illness characteristics of the patient. Similarly, Khawaja Noor Muhammad tried to eliminate the base and self-centered tendencies from all students' hearts (Maharvi, 2009). He would encourage his followers to adhere to the *Sharia* principles and hold a deep reverence for the principles of *Sharia* within his heart (Nizami, 1980). Subsequently, his demise occurred on the 3rd of August, 1791 (Kharal, 2019).

Chishtia Order and Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi

Usually, when a particular order or order of spiritual practice gains renown, it becomes associated with the name of its most esteemed Shaykh or the originator of its lineage. Examples include the Qadiriya order, named after the esteemed Shaykh Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani, and the Nizamiya order, associated with the revered Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya. The Chishtia order gained prominence in the subcontinent due to the geographical location where its religious leaders preached and propagated the Islamic faith. The term refers to a specific urban or rural area in the Khorasan region where religious leaders initiated the spiritual and reformation training process for the local population. The initial documentation of Hazrat Abu Ishaq's name as Chishti earns him the appellation of Chishti. Abu Ishaq approached their mentor, Hazrat Mamshad Ali Dinuri, who asked, "May I inquire about your name?" He responded, "Sheikh Ghulam Abu Ishaq Chishti." Mumshad Ali Dinuri expressed with profound affection and empathy, "You hold the esteemed title of Khawaja of Chisht, and it is with your benevolent blessings that Islam shall flourish in Chisht.' After his mentor granted Hazrat Abu Ishaq Chishti the caliphate and permission, the people of Chisht and surrounding regions started referring to him as Khwaja Chisht, thereby establishing his identity as Chishti. Alternatively, one could state that the locality of Chisht became renowned under his esteemed name (Kharal, 2019).

The spread and promotion of Islam in the Indian Subcontinent commenced with the efforts of the Sufis, among whom Hazrat Khawaja Moin-u-Din was the foremost saint of the Chishtia Order in the region. Subsequently, the branches of the Chishtia chain commenced a robust expansion throughout India, with religious leaders associated with this chain venturing into other areas of the subcontinent to initiate the propagation of Islam (Iqbal, 2016). The most prominent and famous saints of the Chishtia Order are as under.

Table 1

Personalities	Death	Buried Place
Hazrat Khawaja Abu Ishaq Shami Chishti	329 AH	Akka Sharif
Hazrat Khawaja Abu Ahmad Abdaal Ibn Farsnafa Chishti	355 AH	Chisht Sharif
Hazrat Khawaja Abu Ahmad bin Ahmad Chishti	411 AH	Chisht Sharif
Hazrat Khawaja Nasir-al-Din Abu Yousaf Chishti	459 AH	Chisht Sharif
Hazrat Khawaja Qutb-al-Din Mudood Chishti	527 AH	Chisht Sharif
Hazrat Khawaja Makhdoom Haji Shareef Zindni	612 AH	Zandna Sharif
Hazrat Khawaja Usman Harawani	612 AH	Makkah Moazma
Hazrat Khawaja Moeen-al-Din Hassan Chishti Ajmeeri	633 AH	Ajmer Sharif
Hazrat Khawaja Qutb-al-Din Bakhtiar Oushi Kaka	634 AH	Delhi
Hazrat Khawaja Fareed-al-Din Masood Gang-e-Shakr	664 AH	Pakpatan Sharif
Hazrat Khawaja Nizam-al-Din Chishti Dehalvi	725 AH	Delhi
Hazrat Khawaja Naseer-al-Din Mahmood Chiragh Dehalvi	757 AH	Delhi
Hazrat Khawaja Shaikh Kamal-al-Din Alama	756 AH	Delhi
Hazrat Khawaja Shaikh Siraj-al-Din Chishti	817 AH	Daccan
Hazrat Khawaja Shaikh Ilm-al-Din Chishti	829 AH	Daccan
Hazrat Khawaja Shaikh Mahmood Rajan Chishti	900 AH	Daccan
Hazrat Khawaja Shaikh Jamal-u-Din Jamen Chishti	940 AH	Ahmadabad (Daccan)
Hazrat Khawaja Shaikh Hassan Muhammad Chishti	982 AH	Ahmadabad (Daccan)

Personalities	Death	Buried Place
Hazrat Khawaja Shaikh Muhammad bin Hassan Chishti	1040 AH	Ahmadabad (Daccan)
Hazrat Khawaja Shaikh Yahya Madni Chishti	1101 AH	Madina Tayaba
Hazrat Khawaja Shaikh Kaleem Ullah Jahan Abadi	1142 AH	Delhi
Hazrat Khawaja Nizam-al-Din Aurang Abadi	1142 AH	Aurangabad
Hazrat Khawaja Fakhar-al-Din Dehalvi	1199 AH	Delhi
Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi	1205 AH	Chishtian Sharif

As a result of the dissemination of Islamic teachings by esteemed members of the Chishtia order across various regions, a significant number of individuals embraced Islam and embarked upon the righteous path. One notable characteristic of the Chishtia is that scholars within this order propagated the teachings of Islam not only within the subcontinent but also in the Arabian Peninsula (Chishti, 1992).

When Khawaj Noor Muhammad began propagating Islam and disseminated his teachings from Basti Maharan, a significant congregation began to assemble. This resulted in a profound religious transformation within the state of Bahawalpur (Nizami, 1980). Khwaja Sahib is the first individual in the Chishtia chain to continue its publication in the region following the passing of Hazrat Baba Taj Sarwar Chishti. Subsequently, the elders of this chain redirected their focus towards other areas of India. In this particular region, the Suhrawardiya and Qadriya sects had the chance to prosper. However, the spiritual eminence of the Chishtia elders once again prevailed. Hazrat Khwaja Noor Maharvi revived the 400-year-old tradition, which had a significant impact on the entire Punjab as well as Bhawalpur (Shahab, 1976).

Teachings and Thoughts of Khawaja Noor Muhammad

Teachings and thoughts are actually a collection of Sufi sayings. As a result, Sufis trained and instructed their followers and devotees in congregational houses and monasteries, and they led a life of regular worship and austerity. The religious elders would dedicate a portion of their time to this work, during which their devotees would convene in groups to discuss various scientific, religious, and spiritual issues with their mentors, thereby expanding their knowledge (Rasool, 2021). As a result, a saint's teachings and thoughts are precisely a mixture of his spiritual and social life. Similarly, Khawaja Noor Muhammad's teachings and thoughts were also the result of being a perfect Sufi saint (Rehman & Rehman, 1990).

- All actions are rooted in faith, and the intercession of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H) is sought to strengthen and uphold that faith. The specific timing of an individual's passing, whether on a Friday evening or during the holy month of Ramadan, holds no significance.
- He said that man is a perfect soul. His death is like the death of all humanity to be done.
- The body of Awliya Allah holds the command of the soul. Where their soul is, their body will be. When their soul flies, so does their body. Because spirituality dominates their body, their soul belongs to their graves; compatibility is only proportional.
- The primary purpose of *Fuqra* is to engage in positive communication and offer prayers for the well-being of all individuals. The primary concerns are insufficient food intake, inadequate sleep, and limited verbal communication.
- The sheikh disassociates himself from individuals who serve as sources of advice and valuable contributions to others, enabling a broader audience to benefit from their wisdom and guidance. Furthermore, individuals who demonstrate continued merit in their training are not dismissed, as their development and education are prioritized.
- If an individual brings joy to Allah's creation, Allah Almighty expresses his satisfaction by stating that they have brought happiness to him.
- One day, someone asked Hazrat Qibla Alam if there is any medicine for mental illness; he said that there is a lot of medicine if someone does it, but all people call themselves sick with their tongues, but we do not see anyone who seeks treatment, even though the doctor is there. The person said, "O Hazrat, I know myself to be sick, but there is no cure." He said that it is a privilege to consider oneself a patient and that treatment will be available someday. But who does not know himself as a patient? It isn't easy to treat.



- He said that when the favors of Allah began to come upon an older person, this older person wanted to go into seclusion to progress in the blessing, but what happened was that only because of this seclusion were his actions cut off. On this occasion, someone asked what caused the incident and the lack of blessing. He said that the descent of blessings and favors is eternal, but this sage thought of progress due to seclusion and introduced his plan. The result was that he lost his place.
- The teacher encourages the student to remember and engage in critical thinking. However, when evaluating their performance, the teacher fails to acknowledge the student's efforts, even after spending considerable time together (Fakree, 1987).

From the teachings of Khawaja Noor Muhammad, it can be clearly understood that his teachings are under the rules of *Shariya*, in which both religious and worldly matters are highlighted equally, which is opposite to monasticism (Rehman & Rehman, 1990).

Khalifas of Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi (A.R)

Several Caliphs of Khawaja Noor Muhammad have played a significant role in the promotion of knowledge and religion. There are many caliphs whose names are not recorded in historical texts. However, of those mentioned:

1. Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad Narowala (Haji Pur Sharif)
2. Hazrat Khawaja Qazi Aqil Muhammad Kureja Farooqi (Kot Mithan Sharif)
3. Hazrat Khawaja Hafiz Muhammad Jamal Multani (Multan)
4. Hazrat Khawaja Muhammad Sulaiman Taunswi (Taunsa Sharif)
5. Hazrat Qari Aziz Ullah
6. Hazrat Qari Sibghat Ullah
7. Hazrat Mian Muhammad Fazil Naiko Kara (Shah Adam)
8. Hazrat Khawaja Ghulam Hassan Bhatti (Buried at Khawaja Noor Muhammad's Shrine)
9. Hazrat Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Kiree Wala (Buried at Khawaja Noor Muhammad's Shrine)
10. Hazrat Hafiz Nasir-u-Din
11. Hazrat Molvi Muhammad Masood (Jhangi/ Bahawalpur)
12. Hazrat Noor-al-Haq Chishti (Shehar Fareed)
13. Hazrat Mian Ghulam Muhammad Laleka (Bahawalnaghar)
14. Hazrat Hafiz Ilyas
15. Hazrat Muhammad Ghaus (Chishtian)
16. Hazrat Hafiz Phul Joya (Buried at Khawaja Noor Muhammad's Shrine)
17. Hazrat Muhammad Bux Chishti (Chishtian)
18. Hazrat Isalat Khan
19. Hazrat Nawab Ghazi-u-Din (Khairpur Tamewali)
20. Hazrat Lutfullah (Khairpur)
21. Hazrat Molvi Noor Muhammad (Bahawalpur)
22. Molvi Muhammad Hussain (Bahawalpur)
23. Hazrat Mian Akbar Lakhi (India)
24. Hazrat Hafiz Ghulam Nabi
25. Hazrat Molvi Muhammad Akram (Dera Ghazi Khan)
26. Hazrat Molvi Muhammad Ajeeb (Garhi Ikhtiar Khan)
27. Hazrat Makhdoom Shaikh Mahmood
28. Hazrat Makhdoom Hamid Nau Bahar 4th (Uch Sharif)
29. Hazrat Makhdoom Abdul Wahab (Uch Sharif)
30. Hazrat Makhdoom Abdul Kareem (Uch Sharif)
31. Hazrat Makhdoom Muhib Jahania
32. Hazrat Qazi Noor Muhammad Qureja (Kot Mithan)
33. Hazrat Mian Muhammad (India)
34. Molvi Taj Mahmood (Garhi Ikhtiar Khan)
35. Hazrat Shaikh Jamal Chishti (Pakpatan Sharif)
36. Hazrat Khawaja Hafiz Azmat Ullah Togervi (Togera Sharif/Bahawalnaghar)

37. Hazrat Sahibzada Noor-ul-Smad Shaheed (Buried at Khawaja Noor Muhammad's Shrine)
38. Hazrat Meeran Shah
39. Hazrat Syed Saleh Muhammad
40. Hazrat Deen Muhammad Shah
41. Hazrat mian Ahmad Gondal
42. Hazrat Nizam Baksh
43. Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz Hindustani
44. Hazrat Molvi Zia-al-Din Maharvi (Buried at Khawaja Noor Muhammad's Shrine)
45. Hazrat Khalifa Abdullah
46. Hazrat molvi Abdul Rehman Sindhi
47. Hazrat Qazi Ahmad Ali

These individuals were recipients of the teachings from Khawaja Noor Muhammad and subsequently began disseminating them among the devotees, thereby contributing to the propagation of the Chishtia lineage's teachings. Their efforts extended beyond Punjab, encompassing Sindh and certain regions of India. The dissemination of his teachings resulted in a significant increase in awareness of Islamic teachings among many individuals (Togervi, [2014](#)).

Shrine of Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi

Basti Taj Sarwar, also known as "Chishtian Sharif," is home to the shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi. This locale emerged as a beacon of enlightenment for those seeking to tread the virtuous path following the establishment of the shrine. The disciple and Caliph of Hazrat Khwaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi, Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Sulaiman Taunsvi, acquired a land measuring two bighas (1 acre) in the vicinity of the tomb of the revered Murshid. Subsequently, he initiated the construction of the shrine. Several other disciples and caliphs were involved in this endeavor. Following the death of Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad, Qazi Muhammad Aqil assumed responsibility for constructing the shrine's dome. Additionally, Hafiz Muhammad Jamal Multani played a crucial role in erecting the Majlis Khana and the outer walls. This development occurred approximately eight years after Khawaja Noor Muhammad's demise. Quranic verses adorn the walls of the tomb of Hazrat Khwaja Sahib and his three sons. Khwaja Hafiz Muhammad Musa Taunswi was responsible for crafting the amulets of the shrines using marble, while other individuals from Khanqah Taunswi skillfully adorned the inner border with colored bricks. Gold letters elegantly inscribe the genealogy within the dome's circumference. The shrine features a well outside its outer gate, equipped with a tube well for water provision. Hazrat Shah Allah Bakhsh Tunsvi constructed the well.

It is worth noting that while the other wells in Chishtian Sharif are known to have saline water, this particular well stands out as it provides fresh, non-saline water. Qazi Muhammad Aqil excavated a well adjacent to the shrine. This well's water was renowned for its pleasant taste. However, the well's obsolescence led to its subsequent dismantling. The shrine's outer door is a notable representation of the Multani bronze industry. Upon entering through this door, one encounters a spacious courtyard thoughtfully designed with rows for the convenience of individuals participating in prayer during Urs. Additionally, pilgrims have the option to rest in the courtyard overnight. Accommodations for pilgrims are located on the right side of the courtyard, which was constructed by the esteemed descendants of Hazrat Khwaja Sahib. Located in one corner is a langar house (Kitchen) that operates day and night, providing continuous langar services. On the northern side of the tomb is a modest porch, currently constructed with marble. This area serves as a gathering space for women, who commonly convene here to recite Fatiha. On the southern side of the shrine, one can find the sacred tombs of the three sons of Khwaja Noor-ul-Samad Shaheed in a revered chamber (Mohsin, [2019](#)).

The Nobility of Bahawalpur State and Affiliation with Khawaja Noor Muhammad

It is worth noting that the establishment of Bahawalpur State was initiated by Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi I, who served as its first Amir from 1723 to 1746. Notably, the state's foundation can be traced back to 1727, when Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi I resided in Allahabad. Meanwhile, Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi was born in 1730. Hence, the establishment of Bahawalpur State coincides with the



year of Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi's birth (Darvesh, [1987](#)). In addition, the Amirs of Bahawalpur State were highly affiliated with Khawaja Noor Muhammad and established good relations with him. It is noteworthy that Amir Bahawal Khan Abbasi II (1772–1809) demonstrated his commitment to Khawaja Noor Muhammad by pledging his allegiance and becoming his devoted disciple. Furthermore, Nawab Sahib bestowed agricultural land in the form of Jagir (Darvesh, [1987](#)).

On the western side of the shrine's courtyard, there is an exquisite Jamia Masjid. The Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan II (1809–1866), the esteemed ruler of Bahawalpur, built this Masjid inside the shrine; arches and minaret of the doors of the shrine were built under the patronage of Amir Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi III (1826–1852). Additionally, the shrine's door frame, a valuable piece, was donated by Amir Sahib and adorned with silver plating at a cost of 11,000 rupees. On the western side of the shrine, there is a generously proportioned Sarai (known as Sadiq Sarai) that was constructed by Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV (1866–1899) at the cost of 26000 rupees to accommodate travelers and pilgrims. The devotion of the rulers of Bahawalpur State to Khwaja Sahib is clear evidence that the ruling family was deeply influenced by Sufism, and the Nawabs were also greatly influenced by Khwaja Sahib's personality (*Bahawalpur States Gazetteers*, [1908](#)). However, just as the Chishtia order spread and developed in other regions of the Indian subcontinent, it flourished in the land of Bahawalpur as well. The Chishtia order's significance lies in the attachment of the saints of the other orders to it. The elders of this Sufi order lit Sufism and spirituality candles, which had a profound spiritual impact on the Bahawalpur region (Shahab, [1976](#)). Khawaja Noor Muhammad's disciples and Khaliphs established religious schools and Khanqahs in various areas of the Bahawalpur region, such as Ahmedpur, Taunsa Sharif, Jalalpur, and Chachran, where they also provided food and accommodation facilities for the students. In the early days, two thousand students were studying in Hazrat Salman Tunsvi's Madrasa (Saeed & Naeem, [2021](#)).

Islamia Arabia “Fakhr-ul-Madaris” (Madrassa) and Library

The Arabic theological School (Madrassa) at the shrine was established during its early days. The entirety of Hazrat Khawaja Noor Muhammad's life was dedicated to the pursuit of education and training. Consequently, in pursuit of his sacred mission, the establishment of the Madrassa was initiated initially. However, after encountering certain adverse circumstances, the Madrassa was subsequently forced to cease its operations. Upon assuming the role of Sajjada Nashin, Hazrat Mian Noor Jahanian Sahib initiated contemplation regarding the potential re-establishment of this Madrassa. In 1981, His longstanding aspiration was realized in his academic pursuits with the establishment of the primary religious Madrassa, and with an enthusiastic focus, the Madrassa underwent gradual development. Significant advancements were achieved within a span of a few years. At this religious institution, the curriculum focuses on *Nazra* and the memorization of the Holy Quran (*Hifz-e-Quran*). At present, more than 200 students are enrolled in Madrasa, with a majority hailing from different regions. It is worth noting that a significant portion of these students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It is important to highlight that the madrassa does not collect any form of donations. Only a limited number of individuals take the initiative to assist them. The Madrasah provides comprehensive support and services to meet the diverse needs of all students (Togervi, March 7, [2023](#)). Adjacent to the Madrasa, there is a visually appealing and well-appointed library that houses an extensive collection of religious literature. This collection encompasses a wide range of subjects, including Hadith, Jurisprudence, grammar, linguistics, and history. These books serve as valuable resources for both the students of the Madrasa and the visiting scholars who are granted access to them (Tanveer, March 11, [2023](#)).

Conclusion

The Bahawalpur region has been a rich source of knowledge, customs, and spirituality for a considerable period of time. Various religions and schools of thought have thrived in this area. Sufism in the subcontinent also emerged from this region, with various Sufi groups thriving in this area at different times, such as Naqshbandia and Husainia. The Chishtia Sufi order originated in Chisht, a town in Afghanistan, and thrived in the Bahawalpur region during the 7th century A.H. It was established by Taj-u-Din Taj Sarwar, who was the grandson of Fareed-u-Din Gang Shakr. Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi began the propagation of Islam and the Chishtia order in the 18th century A.D., following a 400-year gap after the death of Taj Sarwar. Khawaja Noor Muhammad commenced his educational voyage in Mahar

Sharif (Chishtian) and concluded it in Delhi under the guidance of his master, Shah Fakhar-u-Din Dehalvi. In addition, he obtained spiritual affiliation and pledged his commitment by placing his hand on theirs.

Upon his return to Mahar Sharif, Khawaja Noor Muhammad commenced the propagation of Islam and the Chishtia order. Countless individuals attained profound spiritual wisdom and embraced the righteous path. Nevertheless, as a result of your instructive and persuasive efforts, a morally decayed society underwent a transformation, leading to a significant influx of individuals from non-Muslim backgrounds embracing the Islamic faith. During Khawaja Noor Muhammad's preaching era, he began spreading Islam and promoting the Chishtia system. This occurred at a time when the British were expanding their influence in the Subcontinent and taking control of many regions previously ruled by Muslims. As a result, Muslim culture was immobilized politically, socially, and religiously. Khawaja Noor Muhammad's teachings provided spiritual guidance to Muslim society, enabling it to become self-reliant and establish a spiritual community in the Bahawalpur region. The caliphs of Khawaja Noor Muhammad initiated the propagation of Islam and the Chishtia order in many regions of Punjab, attracting a significant number of spiritual individuals to join their cause.

Khawaja Noor Muhammad's teachings deeply influenced the nobility of Bahawalpur State, who embraced him as a spiritual guide. As a result, Amir Bahawal Khan Abbasi II (1772–1809) swears loyalty to Khawaja Noor Muhammad and also gained spiritual enlightenment. Following the death of Khawaja Noor Muhammad, the aristocracy of Bahawalpur had a role in financing the construction of the shrine. During various time periods, the Nawabs covered the cost of the shrine's restoration. Khawaja Noor Muhammad's 18th-century spiritual odyssey has benefited the local inhabitants, and the pursuit of spirituality continues to this day. Significant cohorts of students have completed their studies at the madrasah located next to the shrine, where they received instruction in Quranic education, hadith, and jurisprudence. Furthermore, a significant number of students are actively pursuing religious and spiritual education.

Findings

- The spiritual and proactive movement of Sufism in the Subcontinent originated from the Bahawalpur region. Many individuals gain spiritual and religious understanding from Sufi saints, leading people in this region to have a strong connection with them.
- The Chishtia order experienced a period of growth and prosperity because of the efforts and teachings of Khawaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi, which followed a lengthy period of Mughal decline. A multitude of persons were greatly charmed by Khawaja Noor Muhammad's charisma and vowed their loyalty to him. However, Joyas and Lakhweras embraced the religion of Islam via the endeavors of Khawaja Noor Muhammad.
- Khawaja Noor Muhammad offered a spiritual and theological platform to the Muslim community during a period when the British were expanding their control in the subcontinent, and the Muslim community was losing its spiritual and religious identity.
- Undoubtedly, the teachings of Khawaja Noor Muhammad had a significant impact on the aristocracy of Bahawalpur State. The Nawabs formed spiritual connections with Khawaja Noor Muhammad and his Khanqah.

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