
Mysticism is a way towards peace and tolerance: an analysis

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Abstract

God has created the creature with mysteries and phenomenal order in the midst of complete code of life. Amazingly, the teacher (messenger of God Hazrat Adam A.S) was created first; thereafter learners and offspring's were created for learning, preaching the lesson of love to mankind, and forbearing. There is no single person on earth – who could claim in a way that God has not made arrangement of his/her guidance because messengers of Allah have been preaching since the inception of this world. Holy Quran also testifies peace love and tolerance for entire creation. The peace, mercy on poor and needy, compassion is the basic lesson that was taught by last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him). These preaching enhance practicality among the human being. Islam is Arabic word meaning “peace” and the teachings of Islam promote brotherhood and love to mankind. Similarly philosophy of Sufi saints also purifies the heart and soul. It suggests humble life style that is first step towards ladder of love and tolerance. Present research article finds facts and figures related to terrorism and rigidity as unavoidable challenge in present times. The philosophy and practices of Sufi saints are explored as message of peace, love and brotherhood for mankind. The concepts related to mysticism have been discovered that are helpful for people to learn and practice for good behaviors.

Keywords: Mysticism, peace, tolerance, rigidity, interfaith harmony

Introduction

Every religion do teach the good lesson to people in general but Islam in particular teaches to respect other religions, maintain peaceful behaviors, feed hungry people, donate clothes and shelters those who are in dire need, and promote equality among the rich and poor. In Islam there is no difference of skin color whether white and black. This current picture of intolerance is negatively portrayal of Islam but this doesn't exist in real teachings and practices in true philosophy. True message of Islam has been spread by the Sufi philosophy and practices. They live very simple life and didn't create trouble for those who penetrated them because the approach of mysticism is a strong devotion towards peace, tolerance and brotherhood. The misinterpretation of religious teachings has been fueling the flame of extremism and terrorism over the world. This misinterpretation has created hatred and violence, and terrorist activities. In Pakistan the “Madrassas” are used as prominent entities on increasing this issue. Pakistan has been facing high risk of terrorism mostly from Afghanistan border and within the country there are many unavoidable evidences of such entities which target the innocent population on shrines, Mosques, Imambragahs, and public places as well. In Pakistan the sectarian terrorism is widely reported in many suicide attacks. After the event of 9/11 Pakistan Government and military started changes in policies while

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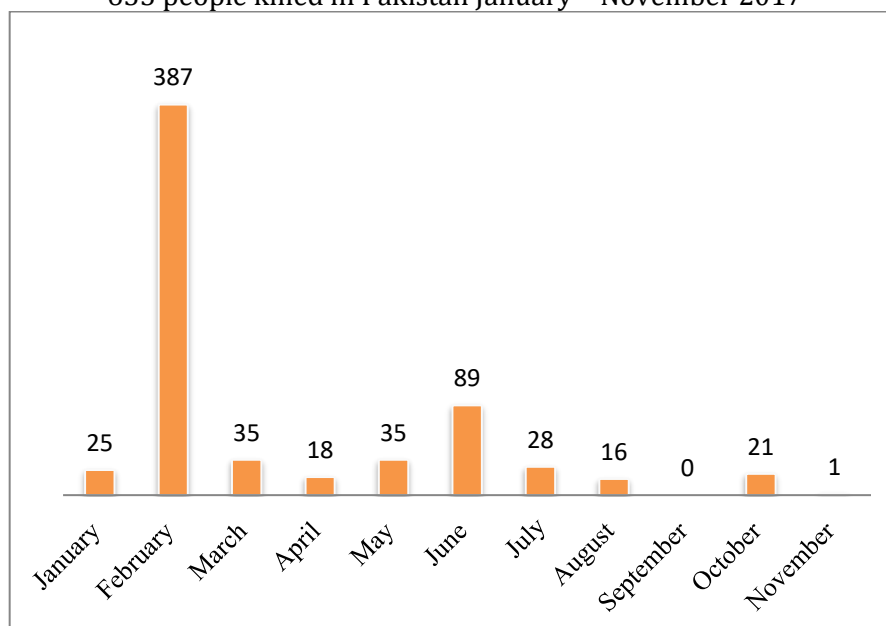
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handling with religious groups like Taliban and others. Pakistan has been victim of terrorism and most sever attacks are reported within the country. Although Pakistan was the ally of countries on jointly “war on terror” was executed. Regionally Pakistan is friendly with Iran, China while it has some sour relationship with Afghanistan and India. In current year 655 people are killed including media persons, political, high official figures due to suicide attacks in Pakistan.

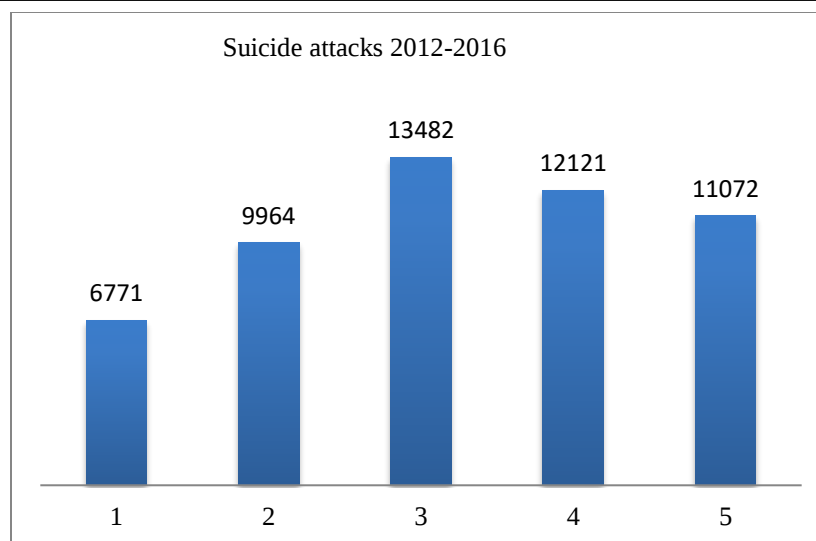
Diagram 1:1
655 people killed in Pakistan January – November 2017



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist_incidents_in_Pakistan_in_2017

The roots of terrorism are spread over the world but most sever attacks have been reported from Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, and Afghanistan. Also, there have been frequent attacks in Iraq where many innocent children and women were killed. Their important locations are insecure recently a suicide attack is held on a power plant where 07 people were killed at the spot (Dawn, 2nd September, 2017). It was very easy to visit the sacred places, Mosques, Temples, shrines of Sufi saints and public places like tourist spots. Even travelling in buses, and sitting on restaurants have been more complicated and complex – the suicide attacks have been reported in various locations over the world. It was unimaginable few years ago but in current decade every country faces the challenge of terrorism. 53,410 innocent people are killed within last five years. Detail of killed people year wise is given as blow:

Diagram 1:2
Suicide attacks held worldwide within last five years



Source: www.statistics.com-terrorist-attacks-worldwide

While addressing this complex phenomenon, the education of peace and tolerance is best solution for people having any religion. The tolerance and peace philosophy is a real mysticism and it is a safer path towards union to God and towards entire attainment of peaceful insight. The term Sufism has origins in Ancient Greek but in modern times the concepts of mysticism grew in every nook and corner of the world. It has been major source of offering a broad range of ideology not in confrontation with religious teachings but practically following the teaching of Quran with an extraordinary practices, and positive mind states of the living generations. It values humanity teaches broader perspectives and an absolute union with the creator of this cosmos (Allah) the only superpower. The example of Sahaba Kahf is enlightened. Quran interprets the people whose belief was in one God. They were driven from the homes, and their journey was ended up in a cave. Quran says in Surah-e-Kahf

﴿٧﴾ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

Undoubtedly, we adorned the earth whatever is on it, so we may test them as to which of them is best in works

In process of union with God and Divine one understands the mystical experience. The mystical experience broadly offers the good moral values, visionary mind set and dynamism in superior quality of personality. It is a process of intuitive insight and enlightenment process within the human sphere while discerning the hidden truth, resolving problems, offering relief from mental distress and anxieties. This is genuine cognitive experience of our brain that offers mystical insight to overcome worries and promote bonding and cooperative relations with human and hatred from rigidity and narrow mindedness phenomenon. The practical application of mysticism offers neurological experience and reduces anxiety. The feelings of strangeness and familiarity are worthwhile practices Sufi poets' firmly believe in Union with God and which true religion and Shariat.

Sufi poet demonstrated peace manners – their philosophy and teachings offer us the lesson of good ties with neighbors, this is the way by which good characters build. Sufi poets and Saints say “do not eat until, your neighborhood is hungry”. They say this world is a testing time where you have to face the troubles and hardships and the best result is waiting on a dooming day.

Literature Review

The concept of mysticism induces multiple options to avoid intolerance and rigidity. The spirituality has been a great subject for generations to follow the humbleness and maintain peaceful manners. There are many vivid examples of poetry which create tolerance and harmony. H.T. Sorely, a greater researcher of his times, says in his book that in Sindh, Pakistan, a mystic poet (Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai) was a spiritual poet because he composed poetry that became peaceful songs for countryside. His poetry was inspired by the noblest message of Islamic teaching in its spiritualized and mystic form. His poems have become a kind of national heritage (H.T. Sorely, 1984:163). The mysticism in form of poetic message is very fascinating that influences people beyond religions, creeds and social differences. The influence of Sufism on the people of South Asia (Muslim and non-Muslim) has been tremendous in every period. The non-Muslims also pay homage to the shrines of Muslim saints and most of them are followers of Muslim Sufi saints. Hindu-Muslim unity and brotherhood through Sufism is a marvelous phenomenon in Sindh, Pakistan and in many other countries as well. The Sufistic vedantic and Bhakti teachings of Sindhi saints in the form of poetry is recited and sung by both Muslims and Hindu communities (Prof. Dr. Ghulam Ali Allana, May 2010:204). Sufi saints while spreading the message of love and devotion, particularly describe this universe as like a palace with millions of doors and billions of windows. Whenever we look, we find Allah before us. We find His manifestation in each one of His creatures. Following mysteries are explained: (a) Allah is Omnipresent, (b) He manifests Himself through His creatures though their physical forms are diverse, (c) The unity leads to multiplicity and diversity (Soneti Bhutto, 2007:30). Mysticism lies in various norms and practices of Sufi shrines which are a pattern of behavior or appearing because of their ancient nature. There are many folkways like greetings, making of peaceful groups, standing in a queue and participating in regular practices taught by the Sufi saints. Religion is an important agent of socialization as well as social control. Many of the cultural norms and values are influenced, shaped and derived from religion (Amal Sajjad & Jawad Tarique: 36-37). The world-known scholars are agreeing that Sufism from its commencement claims oneness out of dualities. Science in view of confirmation of unified theory at the end of 20th century admitted oneness out of dualities. Science is now the art of searching for unity within the diversity. All sciences are the search for unity in hidden likeness and apparent distinction (Muhammad Kamal Rashid, December 2015:66). The Muslim communities in Iran, Iraq and different other countries are progressive and determine future perspectives. They also believe in the great Muslim development and growth on the ladder of advancement. Essentially the concept of growth promoted by Tazkiyah is very similar to the pattern of growth we find in an eco-system. For example, a tree, confirms well to the dictates of Tazkiyah. It demands the preservation of moral and environmental integrity, cultural strength and the practices of such vital concepts: Majles, Ejma, Prayers are noble practices of unity and good relations (Ziauddin Sardar,

1985:274). Muslims firmly believe that it is a love which has been reflected in the numberless blessings (Salwaat) expressed everyday by millions of faithful Muslims over the name of him who was only slave to whom it was revealed. It is reflected in the poems setting forth, in terms of the profoundest devotion, the praise of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) which precedes every poetical composition in the Islamic countries. It is a veneration which sees in the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) the kind of intercessor at the day judgment. The perfect man who unites in himself the macro and micro-cosmos as in dawn night and day united, goal of God's creation (Professor Annemarie Schimmel, 1986:79). In the panorama of leadership stories women have very courageous and bold on promoting synchronization. In the socio-cultural context of South Asia the roles of women have been equally prominent among men. Also, history denotes that women were allowed to do the business and they were quite good at it. We have the best example of Hazrat Khadija (Salam-ul-Aleha) the first wife of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him). She has noble role in financial and social contribution in Islam after getting marriage with Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him). At present there is half of the women population who equally contribute in peace and economic building activities and in overall development (Fatima Gill, 2012-13:27)

Research Methodology

In qualitative research design the survey method was chosen for the present research. A survey was conducted for the data collection process. A research questionnaire (research tool) was developed with open-ended sub-questions. Respondents were contacted over phone and in many cases questionnaire was sent through email. Each respondent was requested to read the research note (a description about questions where to respond according to her/his own choice and wish). Each participant was asked to respond for each question and the cultural sensitive's' were taken carefully. It was requested that anyone can deny or do not respond on various questions. There was no any obligation to answer each question according the choice of researcher. It was clearly mentioned in each questionnaire that responds can make reference of poetries where they feel as appropriate. After collecting the data it was reviewed, responses were transferred in computer in a readable format. After organizing the data worthless responses were discarded and accurate data was analyzed for results. In addition, the content analysis technique was integrated. The verses and poems written by different Sufi poets were selected as primary source for the research. Selectively different poetic volumes were chosen in Urdu language with English translation of each poem.

Data Analysis and Discussion

In this survey research the great deal of qualitative data i.e. words, pictures, transcripts, artifacts, documents and narratives. The data was systematically organized, integrated and examined for concert results. There were many descriptive responses, verses from the poetries of Hazrat Moulana Rumi, Hazrat Sultan Bahu, and Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. Selectively a few verses (poems) were referenced with interpretation regarding the mysticism as best option for promoting peace and tolerance:

Poetry of Hazrat Moulana Jalal-u-Din Rumi (Konya, Turkey)

(1)

*I am not from the east or the west, I am not Christian or Jew or Muslim ^{Rumi}
I am not Hindu, Buddhist, I do not belong to any established religion or any cultural system
I am neither the body nor the soul, for I belong to Divine soul of my Lord, my Beloved.*

(2)

*There is life force within your soul, seek that life.
There is again in the maintain of your body, seek that mine.
O Traveller, if you are in search of that, don't look outside,
Look inside yourself and seek that.*

Interpretation

The above lines from the poetry of Moulana Rumi highlights that mysticism has no geographic boundaries. It is magical voice of human heart and soul that directly connects human being without discrimination of caste and creed. It vividly describes that religion is only way to lead life but if religion splits people in groups and categories; then poet prefers to become part of a global culture. Truly, all human colors shine where heart beat only for survival not for any difference. Every soul on earth searches for another soul and all souls together go for love and peace. Mysticism can make this world as heaven for mankind over the world.

The verses highlight that search life within your soul. If you have been wondering far and wide but you have not reached at the destination – then search peace and love within the creation. Allah has blessed every minute thing with multiple bounties and diversities. Allah lives in the heart of those who serve for the humanity.

Poetry Hazrat Sultan Bahu (Punjab, Pakistan)

(3)

حافظ پڑھ پڑھ کر نیکبر ملا کر ن وڈ پائی ہو
ساون مانہ دے بدلاں واگوں چھرن کتا باں چائی ہو
جیسے دیکھن چنگا چو کھاڑھن کلام سوائی ہو
دوہیں جہانیں مٹھے ناہو کھادی ویچ کمائی ہو

*The hafiz is proud of his learning,
The priest thrives on self-promotions.
Like monsoon clouds they're continuously on the move
Which books under their arms, selling their honour?
Wherever they found a promising household,
They read the scripture in loud, fervent strains for a lucrative commission.
O'Bahu! They have put God's name on sale Just to make a living.
In this world they live spiritually bankrupt;
Stripped of all honour, they go to the one beyond.*

Interpretation

The lines describe people outwardly proud on their self-promotion; they build castles and palaces for luxuries and comforts. These manmade things do not offer comforts and spiritual esthetic but these causes for restlessness and discomfort. Mysticism teaches the lesson of simplicity, humbleness, and human love. The path of union, path spirituality is real success. Anyone of us has been chosen to serve the human being is successful and he/she will be bestowed from Allah and his bounties will shower on him/her during this life and on the judgment day as well.

Poetry Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (Sindh, Pakistan)

(4)

سڻون پڙه ساجاه جون، ڪنڙ ڦڙي ڇڏ
وانءُ ٿئي جي سڏ، جني سانگن ساه جو

*Peruse lines of awareness; give up scholastic books,
Answer to their calls, who care not for their lives.*

Interpretation

The poetic lines describe that learn and read the selected poems of positive behaviors – build noble character and do not disappointment because Allah lives in the heart of everyman and woman. Connect with those people who look for sacrificing their lives for the welfare of mankind. There are many examples of sacrifices in the history and each offers us the insight of best human philosophies and practices. The mysticism is also a kind of good sacrifice this is which we need to learn and practically apply on our daily lives.

(5)

پڙهيو تا پڙهن، ڪڙهن ڪين ڦلوب ۾
پاڻان ڏوهه ڇڙهن، ڄڻ ورق وارين وٿرا.

*Pages they peruse; but do not comprehend,
More pages they turn; the more do they sin.*

Interpretation

The above lines from the poetry of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai highlight the real lesson of reading and understanding. It is described that few people only memorize the true message of God. They do not understand the real words as result their actions and deeds do not reflect from their words and this mismatched phenomenon is a failure to their destination. This is a sin and which is forbidden in the teachings of Shariat.

Conclusion

In present generations look for peace and harmony because rigidity and terrorism has caused major destruction over the world. Suicide attacks held through self-activated weapon which is very rarely detected and stopped. This has become worldwide problem where people follow the philosophy of destroying the world. Unfortunately this has been apparently labeled with the name of Islam though rigidity is an issue which is found in every religion of the world. The philosophy and practices of mysticism has been eye-opening experience in all religions. This is the track where tolerance and harmony is generated for peaceful manners. Mysticism offers us the good character and lesson to respect every religion beyond the boundaries.

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