

How This Writer Converted To Shiaism?

The writer's father, late Shamsul Ulamah Sayyid Wahiduddin Khan Bahadur was a well known leader and besides being an intellectual had acquaintance with religious precepts of all faiths and respected all religions and he himself knew about the world and hereafter, because he knew Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Latin, English, Sanskrit and Hebrew languages and always referred to the religious books in these languages.

In brief, he knew all about Islam as well as the religions of Greece, Rome, Hindu, Buddha, Magians, Jews and Christian etc. He knew the Taurat and Injeel by heart as one knows the Quran by heart. If not perfect, he had sufficient knowledge.

He was pre-eminent regarding religion in the beginning and the writer witnessed him performing the fundamental rituals of Shiite faith in his last days, but after his death, his funeral was performed according to Hanafiya School, because his children and family believed in Hanafiya religion, except me. His father and grandfather, Sayyid Imdadali Khan Bahadur also believed in the same religion but as a matter of fact, the late grandfather believed in Shiite religion, but according to the faith of his son, Akbar Nawab Munshi Sayyid Najmuddin, he did not call himself a Shia. Najmuddin also believed in the Shiite religion, but being a narrator of traditions, he did not like to be associated only with Shiite religion.

Besides, from Sayyid Imdadali Khan Bahadur, the writer's great grandfather upto Imam Ali Murtadha' (a.s.), all followed the Shiite faith and none were Sunni. Though his father was a learned man, he left no stone unturned in his training and education. He appointed teachers to teach his son Arabic and morals and also appointed calligraphist and appointed an army officer to teach him how to use a gun and also appointed a tutor to teach him English for a long time.

Here I want to mention about a teacher who was appointed to teach me Arabic. Most of these teachers frequently left their service and new tutors came to take their place. All these teachers were of Hanafite religion and the last tutor who was appointed for me for Arabic language was Sayyid Muhammad Gul Jalalabadi. His religion was Hanafite, due to communal restriction.

The writer was seventeen years old at that time and in matters of religious faith, he was well informed.

The religious faith was firm in his mind by the source of education that Allah is one and Prophet Muhammad (S) is His Messenger, and then Abu Bakr, then Umar, then Uthman and then His Eminence, Ali (a.s.), then Muawiyah, then Yazeed, and then six Caliphs of Bani Umayyah, and then all remaining Imams including Imam Mahdi (a.j.). The most prominent woman is 'A'ysha and after her, Lady Fatima (s.a.).

After this instruction and after clearing the Intermediate exams, the writer came from Bhagalpur to Patna and was admitted in Patna College and separated from Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Gul Nurullah. There he started taking religious lesson from Maulavi Abdul Karim. He was also of Hanafite religion, but he was not convinced of Yazeed's Caliphate and followed the Sunni religion but did accord importance to Yazeed after Muawiyah. Anyhow, his belief did not affect me, because I believed Yazeed as a rightful person, according to the instructions of Maulavi Sayyid Gul Muhammad.

When the writer was nineteen, he got a chance to witness a religious disturbance. The writer's uncle, Nawab Munshi Sayyid Najmuddin, also lived on the other side of the same house. As mentioned above, his uncle was of Sufi religion and many times Sufi people gathered in his house making nice mystic jokes everyday. But one day by chance they mentioned Muawiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan. Since the uncle did not have any devotion to Muawiyah, he delivered a speech, from which no dignity of Muawiyah could be derived.

This was unbearable to the Sufi, who was one of our neighbors. He became extremely irritated and said that if you refuse the excellence of Muawiyah you have forgone the Sunni faith. What is the difference between deniers of excellence and a Shia? Other Sufi gentlemen present there also supported him. But the writer's uncle remained adamant in his opinion and due to this the Sufi group broke up. Not only this, their friendship declined and both parties began to debate in writing about the excellence of Muawiyah or lack of it.

At last Shah Ali Habib of Pahelwari Sharif got information about it and he opposed Sayyid Munshi Najmuddin. First he tried to make him understand but in vain. Nawab Munshi remained same as he was before. Then Shah Ali wrote a powerful book entitled Uswatul Hasana in praise of Ahlul Sunnat faith and all the beliefs were explained according to their faith, which clarified that no Sunni can refuse to believe in the excellence of Muawiyah.

On the contrary, a Sunni can also not decline that Yazeed, the son of Muawiyah, was not a rightful Caliph. The writer is not concerned with the merits or demerits of this disturbance, but the fact is that he learnt many new things which were opposed to his previous faith. This matter fully convinced him that according to the writing of Pir Dastagir, it is impossible for Ahlul Sunnat to avoid Muawiyah.

Rather, according to Ghazzali they are also bound by their faith to accept Yazeed, the son of Muawiyah as a legal and official Caliph, like his father. But when information increased about Yazeed and Muawiyah, both seemed extremely evil; on the other hand, Muawiyah looked worse than Yazeed. No

doubt, this disturbance weakened my Sunni belief. When I got free time from college, I read books regarding this controversy and was also thinking about this matter all the time.

My previous teacher, Sayyid Muhammad Gul did not even allow me to read any book of history or biography; and when I asked any question regarding faith, he said that such a question was misleading. But now the writer had access to all kinds of books. Such effect was not only restricted to the writer, it affected Maulavi Abdul Karim also, a famous scholar of Ahlul Sunnat. He announced his disbelief in Muawiyah and gradually became entirely opposed to the Amir of Sham (Muawiyah). I gradually I had no concern with Muawiyah and in my view, he seemed to be worse than his son.

Sometime after this disturbance, the writer had to travel to Chhaprah¹. His uncle, Maulavi Sayyid Farzandali was a very respected advocate of Chhaprah, who had obtained the certificate of High Court of Calcutta, but he practiced law in the courts of Chhaprah. His prestige was such that all people of that district respected him, besides the Europeans and Hindustani officials.

As a matter of fact, none equaled him among the writer's peers, as far as human qualities were concerned. He deserved more than he was ever honored. He had a very good memory and was a good respondent. Allah had granted him great intelligence and he had no equal in wisdom and understanding. He was outwardly as elegant as he was internally perfect.

Along with these naturally acquired attributes, he was a learned man having studied the books of Zawahid and Sadr Awafiq and acquired knowledge of Hanafite faith from Maulana Wajidali Benarsi. He was the younger brother of the venerable Maulana Muhammad Ismail. Hakim Muhammad Ali alias Hakim Munna was the son of late jurist. Even today he is well known among the people of Chhaprah and other villages.

Thus, Maulavi Sayyid Farzandali had mastery over Arabic language and in addition to that he had no equal as far as the knowledge of English was concerned.

The writer spent every evening during his stay in Chhaprah with his late Uncle to gain knowledge and every moment of his company was edifying for the writer. The writer heard each statement of that gentleman with attention and tried to benefit from it. Everyday, there were useful talks, but one day in the company of some of his friends, he said: "Although many books are written to refute Shia objections, the fact is that none of them are reasonable answers to Shia objections."

This statement created a strange effect on my mind. If it had not been a statement of Maulavi Sayyid Farzandali, it would not have created this effect on my mind, since I knew that the Maulavi had mastery on all religions and he was not interested in foolish talks. This statement of my uncle opened up for me a completely new field of research and I decided not to leave any stone unturned in my search for truth.

After that, he explained the matter of Fadak in great detail. Allah had granted him knowledge and eloquence. The audience listened to him attentively were and very much impressed and after mentioning

about the matter of Fadak he himself wept. This meeting further inclined the writer to verify the truth.

On the third occasion, the Maulavi stated: “When I die, recite the same supplications at my burial ceremony that Shia people recite.” This constrained me more to inquire about the truth and I started to refer to books of both the sects. The writer was occupied in this when all of sudden Maulavi Sayyid Farzandali expired. The dead is helpless over the alive. How could I get the chance to exercise the bequest of the Maulavi against the wishes of his family?

At that time, I was also unaware of the ways and manners of pronouncing the Shia creed to dead and to recite blessings for the dead. Even if I had been aware of them, what I could have done? Maulavi Abdul Karim was present to recite the funeral prayer and I had no time to say anything.

Anyway, I wrote the supplication of Naade Ali on a piece of paper and placed it under his shroud. The Maulavi expired, but this writer did not falter from the path of investigation. The fact is that if the writer had not had the company of the late Maulavi, such readiness would not be created in his mind to research the truth. In research of truth, I had to be such as is apparent from my above writings. Below, the writer shall narrate the story of his religious research.

The writer started his religious investigation with eagerness after the death of his uncle. The late Maulavi Abdul Karim did not like my association with books. He didn't want me to refer to the art of history or scholastic theology, but he could do nothing about it.

¹. A city in North-East India.

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