

HUMAN VALUES IN THE SUFI AND RISHI TRADITIONS OF KASHMIR: INSIGHTS FROM *TARIKH, TAZKIRA, AND POETRY*

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Abstract

Documented anecdotes of the Sufis and Rishis in Kashmir reveal an intricate connection between history and ethics. The actions and teachings of the saints reflect core human values defining medieval Kashmiri society. This study examines *Tarikh*, *Tazkira*, and poetic texts to uncover how anecdotes and narratives served as conduits for the transcendent moral framework espoused by the Sufi and Rishi saints of the region. It is argued that these texts go beyond mere historical records; they act as a powerful moral guide intended to inspire and shape society by encouraging the emulation of values including compassion, justice, harmony, empathy, respect, and integrity. Methodologically, this is a qualitative study focusing on primary and secondary sources. Literary theories and historical methods are employed to interpret the sources and draw convincing conclusions. The moral framework articulated by saints encompasses universal human values that transcend the boundaries of religion, region, and historical context, offering relevant and applicable principles across diverse societies and eras. The study underscores the contemporary relevance of human values and highlights the significance of promoting these values in society today, especially across various levels of the educational system.

Keywords: *Tarikh*, *Tazkira*, Sufi, Rishi, *Shruk*, *Vakh*, Harmony, and Inclusivity.

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Introduction

The Kashmiri landscape started to change from the very beginning of the Neolithic and chalcolithic period of Kashmiri history. This era marks the rise of well-organized village farming societies characterized by advanced food cultivation, animal husbandry, tool refinement, and pottery creation. In the subsequent Chalcolithic period, humans began engaging in trade, fueled by their newfound expertise in metallurgy. This required sourcing raw materials and exchanging or selling surplus produce and crafted goods. As a result, the independent and secluded nature of Neolithic villages diminished, paving the way for the migration of people and the exchange of ideas. Kashmir has been known for its vibrant culture of interactions with the outer world since ancient times. (Bamzai, 2007, p. 93-107)

Politically Kashmir grew as an imperial power under the Karkota dynasty. Lalitaditya's military achievements have justifiably been highlighted in the narratives of his rule, elevating him to a legendary status among later generations of Kashmiris. However, his remarkable contributions to architecture, deep admiration for knowledge, intellectuals, and public welfare, and his exceptional qualities as a compassionate ruler are attributes that, beyond his conquests, rightfully place him among the most illustrious rulers of Kashmir (Bamzai, 2007, p. 142). Extending patronage to learned men was one of the essential features of ancient and medieval polity. The contribution these men made in different subjects is well known to us especially in writing *tarikh* and *tazkira* texts and producing poetic works.

There was, in Kashmir, a strong tradition of writing historical and biographical accounts from the 7th and 8th century CE. Kashmir is celebrated for its diverse cultural legacy, which includes ancient Sanskrit literature, Persian chronicles, and traditional Kashmiri folklore. Zutshi's scholarly investigation convincingly illustrates that the historical narrative initiated by Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini* did not mark the conclusion of historical composition within Kashmir. Instead, the text persisted through time, disseminating in various multilingual translations. Over the centuries, Kashmir's diverse linguistic tradition of historical composition has served as a conduit for expressing diverse conceptualizations, notably portraying Kashmir as a sacred realm—an earthly paradise. This tradition is characterized by the creation, dissemination, and reception of these conceptualizations through a spectrum of narrative forms,

including *tazkiras*, *tarikhs*, anecdotal accounts, poetry, and theatrical productions (Zutshi, 2014, pp. 1-6).

Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangni*, mentions several historians as his predecessors but none of their works have come down to us (Lawrence, 1996, p. 179). This chronicle was continued by Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajabhattya, and Suka up to 1596 CE. Conversely, the founding of the Sultanate in Kashmir in 1320 CE ushered in an influx of intellectuals and scholars from Turkistan and Persia into the valley. They brought with them the Persian and Central Asian traditions of Historiography. Thus, many chronicles were written during the medieval period in Kashmir (Khan, 1983, p. 97). Some of these historical texts about which references are available in existing manuscripts have been lost. Modern-day scholars of Kashmir in particular and historians of South Asia in general used these documents to understand the nature of Kashmiri society and its various facets. Kashmir had come into contact with Persia in the earliest period of its history and throughout most of its historical times, Persia and Kashmir were not strangers to each other. However, it was not until the foundation of the Sultanate that Kashmiri's ties with the centers of Persian culture became close (Khan, 1983, p. 161).

Significance of Addressing Human Values

The diversity of the Indian landscape demands social cohesion and tolerance from its citizens above all duties. The democratic setup of India facilitates the representation of the masses to express their interests. Social, political, and religious participation and inclusivity of the masses lead to the progress of the nation. The Indian government has launched several initiatives aimed at fostering social harmony and inclusivity, with programs focused on social integration, economic empowerment, equal opportunities for marginalized groups, and cultural understanding. *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat*, *Skill India Mission*, *Sabka Saath, SabkaVikas*, *SabkaVishwas*, and *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana*, and the *National Integration Council (NIC)* to address issues of communalism, regionalism, and casteism. NIC brings together political leaders, experts, and government officials to formulate strategies for national integration and peace. Emphasizing human values in India's political framework, socio-cultural, and especially educational is essential due to the country's diverse, complex social dynamics and multicultural environment. The integration of values such as tolerance, empathy, integrity,

respect, and compassion is crucial for fostering social harmony, sustainable development, and national unity. Kapur emphasizes the importance of nurturing empathy and respect to achieve peaceful coexistence in diverse societies like India (Kapur, 2018, p. 12). Integrating human values into the educational curriculum fosters students' holistic development, preparing them to be empathetic, socially responsible citizens who contribute positively to society (Rao & Swaminathan, 2014, p. 124-138). Value-based governance not only strengthens democratic processes but also builds public trust, which is critical for sustainable development (Sengupta, 2017, p. 23-41).

Tarikh and Tazkira tradition

Zutshi argues that the key difference between *tarikh* and *tazkira* lies in their purpose: *tazkiras* framed their narratives as accounts of the past but were primarily aimed at cultivating an Islamic spiritual outlook rather than establishing a historical tradition. In contrast, *tarikhs*, while influenced by the religious context shaped by *tazkiras*, focused on constructing a record of the past and contributing to the development of historical writing as a discipline (Zutshi, 2014, p. 19). The overlap between various genres underscores the challenges inherent in these classifications, particularly the inclination to regard *tarikhs* as credible records while dismissing *tazkiras* as fictional works serving exclusively religious purposes. In his analysis of the Chishti hagiographical tradition, Carl Ernst cautioned against this rigid dichotomy, suggesting instead that the two forms share a more interdependent and mutually enriching relationship (Ernst, 1992, p. 88). He additionally observed that one of the core themes in *tazkiras* is the growing convergence of religious and political aims within these writings. (Ernst, 1992, p. 85). Green asserts that the Sufi hagiographies produced in eighteenth-century Aurangabad were closely tied to royal textual traditions (*tarikhs*) and deeply influenced by the socio-political milieu in which they were written (Green, 2004, p. 216). He further contends that Sufi *tazkiras* were more than just political or geographically grounded texts; they also reflected a unique historical awareness by preserving and honoring a "remembered past." (Green, 2012, p. 16). This implies that, within the narrative framework of Kashmir, the authors of both types of texts seemed to blur the lines between memory and history, rendering such distinctions irrelevant both conceptually and practically. Evaluating these works through such separations would disrupt their intrinsic narrative integrity (Zutshi, 2014, p. 41).

Texts and Contexts

The *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, recognized as the earliest extant Persian chronicle of Kashmir, completed by Sayyid Ali in 1579, is frequently regarded by contemporary scholars as a *tarikh* or historical chronicle, a classification reflected in its title. This work was translated into English in 2009 by Dr. Zubida Jan, a research associate at the Centre of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir. The chronicle presents a brief history of Kashmir, structured into two distinct sections: the first detailing the region's political history, and the second focusing on the lives and contributions of Kashmir's spiritual leaders (Ali, 2009, p. 6). The narrative presents each ruler's reign by focusing on their interactions with Central Asian Sufi saints. It highlights Sultan Shihabuddin (r. 1354–73) for his favorable support of the Sayyids, such as marrying his daughters to them and granting lands for their upkeep. However, the text suggests that the perfect bond between the Sayyids and the rulers of Kashmir was only truly achieved during the reign of Sultan Qutubuddin (r. 1373–89). Qutubuddin accorded Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani the respect he deserved (Zutshi, 2014, pp. 1–6). The text portrays Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin not for his cultural patronage, as later Persian histories would emphasize, but as an exemplary ruler endowed with near-mystical intuition and as a transformative force in the landscape of Kashmir. Sayyid Ali portrays the time after Zain-ul-Abidin's death as a period of political decline and chaos, linked to the lack of capable spiritual leaders to guide the actions of the Sultan's heirs. In the latter part of the work, the focus shifts away from political events, providing a sacred narrative about the lives, travels, and burial sites of Shaikh Nooruddin Rishi and his followers (Ali, 2009, p. 8). This enhanced retelling of *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* highlights its dual focus on spiritual authority and political power, emphasizing the integral role of Sufi figures in legitimizing and guiding Kashmiri rulers.

The *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, composed by Haider Malik Chadurah between 1620 and 1621 CE, was written during his time as the governor of Kashmir under Emperor Jahangir's rule. Haider Malik, hailing from the Chadurah (or Raina) clan - one of Kashmir's four leading noble families, alongside the Magareys, Dars, and Chaks - played a crucial role in shaping the region's political affairs during the late 15th and 16th centuries. As one of the earliest and few native Kashmiri governors to be appointed by the Mughal emperors throughout their rule over Kashmir, Malik's governorship stands out as a rare instance of indigenous leadership in an era dominated

by imperial oversight. This text was expertly translated into English by Dr. Raja Bano, an Associate Professor in Central Asian Studies at the University of Kashmir, providing a scholarly interpretation of the historical narrative. Malik meticulously records his name, family lineage, and the historical connections his family shared with previous rulers of Kashmir, intertwining his genealogy with the political evolution of the region. Interestingly, while embedding his family's legacy within Kashmir's broader historical narrative, Malik situates this account within the expansive framework of Islamic history, rather than confining it to the scope of Mughal imperial history (Zutshi, 2014, p. 108). This approach reflects his intent to position his family's influence within a larger religious and historical context. The *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* focused extensively on the exploration of origins and genealogies, including familial, literary, and spiritual lineages.

The *Baharistan-i Shahi* (The Garden of the Kings' Spring), a chronicle written anonymously, was initiated in 1586 and finished in 1614 CE, adhering to a more traditional approach to historiography. This chronicle was skillfully translated into English by Kashinath Pandit in 2013, offering a valuable interpretation of the historical narrative. It serves as a traditional political record, interwoven with poetry, and traces Kashmir's political trajectory from its earliest times. The work dedicates significant attention to the Baihaqi Sayyids, highlighting their influential role in Kashmir's history. While primarily focused on political developments, the text also offers glimpses into various societal dimensions, such as the region's feudal structure, factional alignments, communal tensions, and the frequent internal conflicts that shaped the sociopolitical landscape (*Baharistan-i-Shahi*, Anonymous, 2016, p. 9). In its concluding sections, the chronicle provides substantial insight into the relationships between the Chak sultans of Kashmir and the Mughal imperial court, shedding light on the political dynamics and interactions between the local ruling dynasty and the expansive Mughal Empire. This work offers a multifaceted view of Kashmir's historical narrative, blending political events with reflections on broader social and intergroup dynamics.

Poetry as a Source of Human Spirit: *Shruk* and *Vakh*

Sheikh Noor-ud-Din is a significant figure in Kashmiri history, recognized as a Sufi saint, poet, philosopher, and preacher whose profound impact on the region's literary and cultural heritage is profound. His influence and legacy have garnered widespread

respect among Kashmiris, earning him titles like Shaikh-ul-Aalam, Alamdar-e-Kashmir, Nund Rishi, Taj-ul-Awliya, and Sahjanand among Kashmiri Pandits. In the medieval period, the Bhakti and Sufi movements emerged across India, promoting societal reform. Concurrently, Sheikh-ul-Aalam established the Rishi movement in Kashmir to address and reform social issues. He used his poetry to communicate his teachings, embedding his wisdom within his *shruks* - poetic verses that sparkle with beauty and depth. The eloquence and tone of Sheikh-ul-Aalam's verses hold significant transformative power, enhancing their resonance and meaning within Kashmiri culture. His poetic expressions have bridged cultural and linguistic gaps, leaving an enduring mark on Kashmir's language, literature, and cultural identity. As observed by the respected Kashmiri historian Dr. Ishaq Khan, "I must admit that no translator can capture the depth and vastness of the language employed by Shaikh-ul-Aalam, where a single symbol carries such profound meaning." (Meraj, 2019, p. 34)." Each of Sheikh-ul-Aalam's verses reflects social, cultural, moral, and often environmental themes, woven with profound relevance to the context of Kashmir.

Lal Ded, a revolutionary Hindu mystic saint of the 14th century, profoundly inspired Nund Rishi. She courageously opposed the oppressive structures of her time, using the Kashmiri language as her medium to promote unity and compassion through her verses, known as *Lal-Vakh*. Her influence was so profound that Nund Rishi once remarked, "She is the divine manifestation for us" (Temple, 2005, p. 7). Ishaq Khan elaborates on Nur-ud Din's spiritual connection to Lal Ded. Nur-ud Din elevates her status to that of an avatar. Shaikh Nur-ud Din Rishi calls her his Guru and sends her glowing tributes (Khan, 1994, pp. 75–77).

<i>The Lalla of Padmanpore</i>	<i>Who had drunk to her fill the nectar</i>
<i>She was an Avatar of Ours</i>	<i>O God, grant me the same spiritual power.</i>

Temple, well versed in Kashmir Shaivism, was greatly inspired by the beauty and profundity of the *vakh* and found them the best articulation of the native philosophy (Temple, 2005, p. viii). She expressed her thoughts, experiences, and spiritual attainment through four-liners known as *Vakh*.¹ Each *vakh* is essentially a short poem structured around a single image. This form is recognized as one of the earliest genres of Kashmiri poetry, highlighting the cultural significance of her work. The historical information transmitted by the poetry of Lal Ded and Shaikh Nur-ud Din is rooted in the concerns of their society. It will be seen that the folks' response to

their poetry contains not only emotion or feeling but also thought permeated with historical incidents, memories, and associations.

Vibrant Sufi-Rishi Tradition

The representation of the Sufi-Rishi tradition in Kashmir constitutes the major theme of these texts and poetic works. In his *Tarik-I Kashmir*, Sayyid Ali devoted the second part to the description of the lives of the Sufi saints with great emphasis on the geographical location of their residences or Shrines (Ali, 2009). In his *Tarikh-I Kashmir*, Khawaja Azam Dyadmari pointed out that earlier historical works, authored by court historians, were selective in their recording of events. These texts primarily emphasized the political history of Kashmir, often overlooking its spiritual aspects. Moreover, Dyadmari noted that since many events had occurred after these earlier accounts were written, he felt it was important to write a new section that not only updated the previous histories but also included discussions of Sufi mystics, religious figures, and poets—groups that had been neglected in earlier narratives (Dyadmari, 2001, p. 5). Hassan in his well-known work also titled *Tarikh-I Kashmir* provides a detailed account of Sufi saints of Kashmir. The third volume of his text records anecdotes reflecting diverse themes emphasizing human values associated with the Sufi and Rishis of Kashmir (Khuihami, 2014).

The interplay of Texts, Sufi Teachings, and Human Values

Shaikh Nur-ud-Din himself spoke against the potential danger to communal harmony. Rafiqi observes that in his teachings, the Shaikh urges people to embrace a life of peace and unity, passionately advocating for tolerance, compassion, mutual respect, and love across all segments of society. (Rafiqi, 2003, p. 187). The depth of his genuine intent is evident in the following verse:

Ice snow and glaciers, All three are water; Two children of the same parent, The Muslims, and the Hindus.

Why this gulf of hatred between the two; Be pleased with thy servants of My Lord (Gauhar, 2009, p. 210).

*We came to this world like partners, We should have shared our joys,
And sorrows together* (Rafiqi, 2003, p.188).

*Why this hatred, oh My Lord, between the two children from the same parents?
How shall the Lord be pleased? Both with Hindus and Mussalmans?* (Gauhar, 2009, p. 145).

Lalla says,

Siva abides in all that is, everywhere; Then do not discriminate between a Hindu and a Mussalman.

If thou a wise, know thyself; That is true knowledge of the Lord

I renounced fraud, untruth, and deceit; I taught my mind to see the One in all my fellow men

How [can] I then discriminate between man and man; And not accept the food offered to me by brother man (Eaton, 2006, pp. 348–351).

The account of Sandmat Nagar serves as a poignant reflection on moral degradation, which is depicted as the primary cause of the city's eventual submergence and destruction. During the reign of King Sudarshan, rampant debauchery, falsehood, and wickedness pervaded the society, characterized by pervasive corruption and oppressive rule. Amidst this moral decay, there lived a potter renowned for his exceptional piety and moral integrity. He earnestly preached to both the ruler and the populace, urging them to forsake their sinful ways and embrace a virtuous life. One day, he proclaimed that having discerned through divine intuition that his sermons had fallen on deaf ears and that the people persisted in their wrongdoing, the land was destined to be submerged as a consequence of their actions. Indeed, this prophecy came to fruition, and the potter received a further revelation that he and his family must flee to higher ground, a location that would later be known as KralSangri (Chadura, 2015, p. 106). This account illustrates the interplay between morality and divine justice, emphasizing the consequences of collective ethical failure. The potter's role as a moral beacon in a corrupt society highlights the significance of individual integrity in the face of widespread depravity. His warnings serve as a reminder that societal decline can result from a failure to heed moral guidance, ultimately leading to catastrophic outcomes. This anecdote reflects the corruption, oppression of the ruler and the moral decay of the people leads to the submergence of their city. Truth forms the core of every religion and serves as the basis for all ethical and human principles. Once, while Baba Payam-ud-Din was passing through a village, he overheard some women discussing his son's infamous behavior. Upon hearing this, Baba prayed that, if their words were true, his son should pass away. His prayer was swiftly answered, and his son died (Rafiqi, 2003, p. 216). Shaikh Nur-ud-Din has always condemned falsehood:

Like the leaves of a tree You tremble while speaking the truth, But you will enjoy the fiction in the falsehood.

You have ignored your Lord and followed Satan; Alas! Thy fate, thou art really undone (Gauhar, 2009, p. 207).

Lalla says,

Whether at home or in the wilderness, you live; Be thou true to thy own being. Rein in the mind, and you live true; No ashes you need to daub they hue! (Bhat, 2017, p. 128).

Mnakrashfazyriakímylyí Yímvasshalū tngívanyríynū kynh (Bedar, 2016, p. 124).

Clearance of heart (*Mnakrashfa*) and truth are important qualities in getting close to reality. It is the purification of the human heart that brings you near the truth otherwise it is of no benefit to cry out loud. She emphasized that self-introspection and purification are more important than making the outer physical appearance good.

The author of the *Tarikh-i Sayyed Ali* recounts the transformative journey of Baba Bamuddin Reshi, originally a yogi, who under the spiritual guidance of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, embraced Sufism and became one of the Sheikh's trusted disciples (*khalifa*). Initially, Bamuddin adhered to ascetic practices, consuming black ashes as part of his yogic rituals. However, influenced by the teachings of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, he gradually abandoned these practices, first relinquishing the ashes and then adopting softer, white stones found outside his cave as sustenance. Eventually, he shifted to a diet of green vegetables (*uppalhak*), (Ali, 2009, p. 92) embodying a simple lifestyle in alignment with the Sufi ideals of spiritual discipline and detachment from material excess. Just as Baba Bam-ud-din's spiritual journey involved abandoning harsh practices for a simpler, more harmonious way of life, Sufi teachings, especially within the Rishi tradition, often advocated for the dignity of labor and the importance of simplicity in everyday life. Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, a pivotal figure in Kashmir's spiritual landscape, is known for emphasizing the importance of honest work and care for the environment. Humility or simplicity is the essence of the Sufi teachings preached by Shaikh with great emphasis:

Faqr (Humility) is a defense against His wrath; The only asset of all the Prophets, Superior in Value and essence to both worlds; It is the intoxicating fragrance of His worlds,

Faqr injures the senses and feelings never to well up again; It cuts deeper into the veins and heels of the injured ego (Gauhar, 2009, p...).

Lalla preaches,

He needs not grass, flowers, sesame, lamp, and water; He who takes to heart the word of guru.

Meditates on shambuu, on his own, ever; His alone is the worship true (Bhat, 2017, p. 119).

The actions of Salah Maji, a disciple of Sheik Ismail, as described, embody key principles of moral and ethical leadership often emphasized in Islamic traditions, including the Sufi-Rishi teachings of Kashmir. Salah Maji's provision of clothing and food to laborers and the community aligns with the principle of *ihسان* (excellence in generosity), a core moral teaching in both Islamic and Sufi traditions. By ensuring that the laborers were well-fed and clothed, she demonstrated concern for their well-being, thus embodying the ethical duty of caring for others, particularly the vulnerable (Ali, 2009, p. 72). This mirrors the Rishi tradition of care and compassion for society's marginalized. These acts of charity weren't just about material distribution but also about creating social bonds and promoting unity, which is a key moral objective in Sufi teachings. Malik Jogi Raina, who took on the leadership of the Rishis at Chrar under the directive of Baba Nasir-ud-Din, earned his living through farming. He inspired his followers to avoid reliance on others for their livelihood and, more significantly, urged them to cultivate land to sustain themselves while also supporting the poor and those in need (Khuihami, 2003, p. 170). The Shaikh's denunciation of avarice, desire, wrath, and envy.

Without the aid of a sailor, I did sail my ship; By the suppression of greed, jealousy, arrogance,

Lust, pride, and anger; Then I realized what I am.

Arrogance shall destroy thy asset; Its flames shall consume thy meditation.

Jealousy, greed, lust, and arrogance; All these are attributes of the flames of hell, Mohammad has come with salvation for you; Art thou desirous of salvation, purchase humility from Him (Gauhar, 2009, p. 210-11).

Lalla says,

Kill the killers-lust, anger, greed; Else they will kill thee with arrow sure.

A right thinking mind, them do fee; For, they are very stout indeed! (Bhat, 2017, p. 141).

Baba Reqi Reshi, a disciple of Baba Shukr-ud-Din, once entrusted his servant with a task and, to shield him from the biting winter cold lent him his patched garment for the journey. While traveling by boat, an unexpected swarm of fish leaped into the vessel. Despite the servant's efforts to repel them, the fish continued accumulating

(Ali, 2009, p.104). This account illustrates the theme of generosity and unexpected abundance. Baba Reqi Reshi's act of kindness in providing his servant with his garment reflects a deep sense of compassion and responsibility for those in his care. Shaikh writes about the life of people living in the Kandi (hilly) areas, especially women folk. However, these verses also reflect the prevalence of a deep sense of generosity among the masses.

The poor women of the Kandi area Neither have headgear nor woolen pheran to wear,

Despite entertaining the guests with generosity, their diet consists of barely flour and inferior wild fruit (Gauhar, 2009, p. 218).

One night, thieves stole the belongings of a rishi and then approached Baba Daria-ud-Din's home to steal from him as well. However, upon reaching his door, they suddenly lost their eyesight and were left with nothing but suffering. Realizing their wrongdoing, they sought Baba Daria-ud-Din's forgiveness, and their sight was restored (Ali, 2009, p. 111). This story highlights the moral and spiritual power attributed to saints like Baba Daria-ud-Din, reinforcing the idea that divine justice protects the righteous and punishes wrongdoing. The thieves' loss of sight serves as a metaphor for spiritual blindness, and their repentance and forgiveness demonstrate the transformative power of seeking absolution. It underscores the saint's role in guiding individuals toward moral redemption and upholding ethical behavior in society.

One day, a group of thieves entrusted their stolen goods to the servant of Baba Haji Rishi. When the rightful owner and the police pursued the thieves, the culprits feigned piety to assert their innocence. Consequently, the police confiscated the goods and arrested the Haji Baba. As they transported him, a herd of cows, horses, and sheep grazing nearby suddenly charged at the policemen, attacking them with their horns and hooves. This unexpected intervention led the police to recognize Baba Nunda Rishi's innocence and piety, prompting them to submit to him (Ali, 2009, p. 65). This account serves as a profound commentary on the themes of justice, innocence, and divine intervention. The thieves' attempt to disguise their guilt as piety underscores the moral complexities of human behavior, while the animals' protective instinct for Baba Nunda Rishi illustrates a belief in the inherent goodness of spiritual figures. The incident highlights the idea that true piety is often acknowledged by the natural world, suggesting a deep connection between spiritual purity and justice. The policemen's recognition

of Baba's innocence reflects a broader societal understanding that genuine devotion can inspire respect and reverence, bridging the gap between the spiritual and material realms. Shaikh through his poetry conveys that all ills and sins emanate from social injustice.

Tempted to usurp the rights of the people, Load themselves with a huge burden of sins,

Thou will be put to flames of hell, your foul smell shall spread around (Gauhar, 2009, p. 398).

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin recognized the exceptional intellect and noble character of Mir Sayyid Nasir, entrusting him with the administration of justice in the region. To facilitate his duties, the Sultan granted him a residence located between Bagh-i-Mir Veys and Nowshehr. Mir Sayyid Nasir's wisdom and insight were highly esteemed by scholars and the learned, earning him a reputation for judiciousness and moral clarity (*Baharistan-i-Shahi*, Anonymous, 2016, p. 47). This appointment reflects the Sultan's commitment to upholding justice and morality through capable and virtuous leadership. By selecting a figure renowned for both his intellectual acumen and ethical integrity, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin ensured that the legal system was guided by principles of fairness and moral responsibility.

Conclusion

This study concludes with the reflections of Shaikh Nur-ud-Din, who is attributed with the statement, "I neither harbor prejudice against anyone nor seek to surpass others." Similarly, Hardi Rishi is noted to have asserted, "We are not bigots, and the Rishis do not inflict pain." These statements underscore the Rishi tradition's emphasis on fostering forbearance, promoting harmonious relations among individuals, and rejecting intolerance and vindictiveness.

The Sufi and Rishi traditions of Kashmir represent the intensive confluence of ethics, spirituality, and cultural ethos that have profoundly shaped the region's social context. Through an exploration of *Tarikh*, *Tazkira*, and poetry, the present study illuminates the human values propagated by these traditions—values such as compassion, humility, selflessness, social justice, and ecological sensitivity. Rooted in the teachings of figures like Shaikh-ul-Alam and Lal Ded, the Rishi movement emphasized an egalitarian and simple worldview, fostering interfaith harmony and addressing the spiritual and moral needs of both the elite and the common

people. The textual tradition serves as a rich reservoir of ethical guidance, encapsulating the moral teachings and lived experiences of the Sufi-Rishi saints. The harmonious relationship they advocated between humans and nature resonates deeply in an era marked by ecological crises. This study spotlighted the profound relevance of the human values embodied in the practices and teachings of the Sufi saints of Kashmir. Their emphasis on interfaith dialogue, universal compassion, and communal harmony resonates deeply in today's polarized world. In the context of modern global challenges, the Sufi values of coexistence and empathy offer transformative solutions. This exploration also underscores the critical need to incorporate such values into contemporary dialogues on sustainable development and peace-building. In the contemporary world, characterized by interconnectedness and profound challenges, values such as peace, justice, tolerance, compassion, and harmony stand as essential pillars for fostering human growth and sustainable progress. The devastating impact of conflicts and wars throughout history and their persistence in various forms today underscores the urgent need to prioritize these values as a counterbalance to division and violence. In conclusion, the Sufi and Rishi traditions of Kashmir not only nurtured spiritual enlightenment but also provided a framework for ethical living that transcends religious and temporal boundaries. By revisiting these traditions through historical texts and poetry, we gain valuable insights into an inclusive vision of society—one that continues to inspire pathways for coexistence, peace, and sustainable living in the modern world.

Note

1. Temple explains that the term “*Vaakh*” is derived from the Sanskrit word “*vakya*,” which means “sentence.”

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