

Zarqua Adam

Delhi University

New Delhi, India

Revisiting Qutb – ud – Din Bakhtiyar Kaki’s “Sacred Geography” along the Silk Road through Performance, Visuality, Text

The exchange of people, cultures and ideas between India and Central Asia has been ongoing for centuries especially through the silk road where not just commodities, but cultural and civilisational viewpoints were also exchanged. Sufism was one such important cultural exchange as Sufi saints from Central Asia settled in different cities of South Asia. These travelling Sufis who came along the silk road played significant roles in establishing cultural connections between India and Central Asia through intermeshing of ideas, practices and performances. The most popular order of Sufism in India came in the 12th century through Moinuddin Chishti who travelled from Chisht to India and settled in Ajmer after moving all over central Asia and some parts of north India, including Delhi. Mu‘in – ud – Din Chishti chose Qutb – ud – Din Bakhtiyar Kaki (1173 – 1235) who was born at Ush, in Central Asia as his spiritual successor. To mature his knowledge and experience in Sufism, Khwaja Qutbuddin travelled across the silk road to various places in Afghanistan, Persia and Iraq. He later travelled to Multan and then finally settled in Delhi. He was popularly known as Kaki due to a miraculously producing *Kaak* (a form of bread popular in Central Asia), a miracle attributed to him in Delhi. This paper attempts to locate the traveling Sufi Qutb – ud – Din Bakhtiyar Kaki’s journey within the said temporal and spatial framework via the reception of Kaki in public memory through oral and visual practices in South Asia.

It also offers an textual analysis of “*Fawaid – us – Salikin*” (contains his teachings and sayings), which is considered a masterpiece on Sufism in Persian written by Hazrat Qutbuddin himself; it contain references to the cities and culture of Central Asia which are a gateway to the memoryscape of his travel across the Silk Road. Thus this paper aims to re – visit the “sacred geography” of Qutb – ud – Din Bakhtiyar Kaki in performance, visuality, text, hagiography and public memory across the Silk Road.