

Date – 09/03/19

Duration - 24:12 minutes

Venue – Kunjenasheen, Ground Floor

Interviewee – Shah Abul Anwar Kunjenasheen, Sajjada Mutwali

Interviewer – Sanah Devika Rao

Subject – Kunjenasheen Residence, Sufism and Contemporary Context

Language – Urdu, Hindi and English

Documentation Tools – Interview, Audio Recording, Observation and Photography

[Beginning of recorded material]

Background noise [fan whirring]

Sanah: [00:03] What is your name?

Abul Anwar: [00:04] Shah Abul Anwar Kunjenasheen, Sajjada Mutwali

Sanah: [00:30] Who was Chanda Shah to you?

Abul Anwar: [00:32] He was my pardada's bhatije (nephew)...This masjid, this Kaman, this house, has all been made in one year, 1294 Hijri, it's been 130 years. During the Nizam period, Krishan Prasad was the prime minister of the Nizam state in Hyderabad, so Chanda Shah, **[foreign]** "bade buzurg thein, unke murid thein". He used to come visit the Murshad from Hyderabad. **[foreign]** "Mushrad ki khubiyat aisi thi ki raat temaan ibadat, riyazat, palle se bethte thein, Arabi, namaz, unka yay mamool tha ki Islam ke arkaan ke chalne ke elava, zikraskaar karte thein, jo das kilometre majra nadi mein, paani mein therke, raat tamaam zikr karte thein. Isha ke namaz Jaate thein pedal, phir fajr ke namaz ke liye maujoor yaha pe. Toh log kya bolte hai, Sufi un logo ko, yani duniya se hatke, unko duniyadaari nahi unko, yane duniya ki koi fikr nahi rehti thi unko, Sufi usku bolte hai, muqtafi parhezgar, Islam ke arkaan ke chalne ki paabandi, teen pehdal hajj kare uno. Medina Mecca gaye the, pedal gaye the voh. Hamare pardada ke bhatije hote voh. Hyderabad mein unka ek Dargah hai **[phonetic]** Bisal Banda hai, airforce defence area hai, over there is his mother shrine.

Sanah: [03:14] The people who just came, you gave them a Ta'wiz, today do people still come?

Abul Anwar: [03:29] **[foreign]** "Voh qayamat tak aatte rahenge" (they will come forever). Auliya Allah, those who have seen **[phonetic]** Prophet Muhammad, they were called **[foreign]** Sahabi, woh **[phonetic]** Prophet Muhammad jaisa amal kare, Sahaba bhi vaise dekhkar amal karte the. On Islam, Imams used to come to them, after them Tabi'un, Tab 'al-Tabi'in, **[foreign]** ab Auliya ka mukhab aisa hai ki khiyamat tak aatte rahenge, jo

muqtafi parhezgar hai, Allah tala unka darja karega, like in school and college, even I was a government teacher, I was a headmaster, retirement has happened, my service was for 26 years...

Sanah: [04:35] I wanted to know, in this house the stories?

Abul Anwar: [04:44] My forefather Shahuddin Kunjenasheen, his Dargah is in the Air Force, unki aulad mein se hai yein. He came from Baghdad; he came on his way meeting Bande Nawaz Rehatulla Allaihi in Gulbarga, on the way there was a stone **[phonetic]** bhel hai, on the way there was a village...so he said, he had chaubis muridan who did Khidmat with him, so he said I have my stuff, I want to go to Bidar, so they said send me two men to take all this stuff with me. They said no we won't give any men. So, he kept his bag on the stone, with a wooden stick he hit it hard, with the Auliya Allah, unke karamat (miracle), the bag started moving. Now they said look he is going away with his bags, no we will give you men also. That bhel is on the way to Gulbarga, so with all the men Shah Zainuddin Kunjenasheen came.

[06:19] Kunjenasheen meaning is "kone mein bethkar ibadat karna", sitting in one corner and doing ibadat.

[06:25] Now, there was a scarcity of water, at that time it was the reign of Ahmad Shah Wali Bahamani, his son was Allahuddin Bahamani, in that time "harkare" were all over, you call them Portman, the Badshah's portmans (harkare) had bells (ghungru) on their feet, they used to come running. So, for the search for water they went, at that time there was ghani jhaadi (dense bush), almost three-thousand mango trees. There was a huge ghada (well) inside, very dry, how many times did the Badshah men go, but they didn't find anything in the thirst of water. Then they came again, **[foreign]** murani chehra tha, buzurg thein who, auliya karam darja tha unka, vazoo kar rahe thein, so he saw and asked why have you come here. They said we are thirsty for water, please give us some. The water gushed into the ghada, there was water. He said when I drink water, the buzurg would understand what is in your heart. The earlier buzurgdin, they would understand the heart, how is the man, what is he and what isn't he. After you drink water, don't tell anyone, but what the men did was have water and went to the Darbar and told the Badshah. Jahapana, I have been roaming around looking for water, but I saw that water is gushing in the ghada and "buzurg paani vazoo kar rahe hai". What did he say, **[foreign]** "paani peena kisi ko maloom nahi karna, karamat unki, buzurg ki. The Badshah went walking on foot, he left all his soldiers alone to see. He went and said, Hazrat, the public is worried, people are worried about water, **[foreign]** "aap dua ki jiye paani ke vaste, jaha aani padega", no it's not like that, **[foreign]** "ham samne samne rehte, paani hamare peeche peeche aana", so it happened like that. Badshah went ahead and the water is coming from above, behind him. Till now there has been no water scarcity in Bidar. Majra river has dried up, everything has but we are still getting water. **[foreign]** "Allah ki khudrat hai, sabkuch daine wala, rozi dene wala udhar hai". The Badshah made that Gumbad, their reign only lasted while their spiritual leaders were alive, when they used to leave their reign would get over.

[10:21] **[foreign]** "khiyamat tak aatte rahenge, Buzurgan- e- Deen", bahaut se Wakht hai buzurgwan-e-deen ke, jo apni karamat zahir karte gaye, tum dekhe iman daliye, toh khiyamat tak iman latein rehenge, hamara Islam aisa hai ki sab mazabho sai pakh, yaani Islam aisa hai

hamaara. Toh Islam ko dekhke, raviyein ko dekhke, unki zindagi, unke avhasab, unke taur tareeke, kis tareeke sai rehte hai, dekhkar iman lathe the. Now how the English are doing research, you are doing research, they used to do a lot of research, they used to see, read books, used to read the Quran sharif, so they used to believe (iman). Toh hamara mazab aisa hai, ki sab mazabo sai pakh, hamaara mazab...

Sanah: [11:28] There was a river you spoke about? What was its name?

Abul Anwar: [11:48] Airforce **[phonetic]** Kujhban area.

Sanah: [11:58] Like you said "Taur-Tareeke" (daily practices), a family lives with certain values, so these values can you tell me about?

Abul Anwar: [12:16] They used to see, like how you have come, they never spoke. How we are reading namaz, what way are they reading it, how a woman is wearing a Burkha. So, in our Islam, we don't have the authority to see another woman, if we look once we are forgiven but if we look twice it's a crime. So, what they used to do, they used to follow the "tareekhas / way of living" of Prophet Muhammad / prescribed by him. They were *muqtafi parhezgar*, they used to pray at night, read Nawafil but now my father's iman was four, jisme Hannifa Rehmatullah Ailyi hai, he knew four lakh hadiz, four lakh hadiz. One hadiz of Prophet Muhammad will be how he used to drink water, he used to sit and drink water. Where did this Hadiz come from, who did it come from, it has been passed down generations. How did he drink water? In three sips, used to sit and drink, while he would drink he would say bismillah while drinking. Every time a buzurg would come home, they used to say Salam, so these were Prophet Muhammad's ways, you call it Asalam Walekum. So, this is our way of life, [foreign] "yein zindagi ki adab ka tareeke hai yein". So, he used to read a part of the Quran Sharif and come, after reading this **[foreign]** "hamari rozi ki barakat hoti thi".

[14:24] Buzurga-e-deen, "haath nahi phelana", Multani Pasha Dargah, Abul Faiz Dargah, never asked for anything, never had anyone else's food, **[foreign]** "apni mehnat ki kamai ka khate thein", only used to have from their hard-earned work, we used to do hard work and eat. The famous Badshah Aurangzeb, his habit was to weave hats and sell them in the bazaar. But he never sold it, he used to weave it, send it in the hands of a Gulam. Based on how much those hats would sell, there would be food (anaaj) cooked in the house otherwise it wasn't.

Sanah: [15:23] Do you think today, the people who live around Dargahs or around Khanqhas, these "taur tareeke" (ways of living) still?

Abul Anwar: [15:39] **[foreign]** Ab nahi, Quran ke pabandh nahi, apas mein aphra-tafri karna, Pehle mohobat bhai charaghi thi, apas mein ittefaq (unity), ittehad tha, jaise hamare paas hikayat Ibrahim (prophets' uncle) Rehsalam peghambar ke hazoor, hamare nabhi karim ke allah salam se Pehle, Hemant Nawaz the, toh hamesha Ibrahim rehsalam ki aadat thi, khana pakakar darwaze ke saath bethte thein, jab koi mehman aaya, toh usku daal dalkar khilate thein. Mehman ki bahaut mehmannaawazi karte the.

Sanah: [16:18] Even today, the idea of Khidmat?

Abul Anwar: [16:22] Wo nahi hai, who ab kaam hai bahaut.

Sanah: [16:25] But what I saw in Bidar is that people have more value of that, than anywhere else, because the history of the city is such with the onset of Sufism, that is what I feel.

Abul Anwar: [16:47] What is it that we have more here, **[foreign]** buzrganiddin Auliya Karam ke shobat mein rehte hai, ab auliya kalam ke shobat nahi hai, unke bawra mein jaate hai, vaha beththe hai, yaani kuch padthe hai, kalam valam kuch padthe hai, phir ajab se nikal jaate hai vaha se, ye hamare paas ek tareeke hai yein, Sufiya kalam ka ek tareeka. Aksar zyadatar jab buzrganiddin ke dargah mein, bauhaut Dargah hai.

Sanah: [17:22] Are these the Dargahs that have always been there?

Abul Anwar: [17:29] **[foreign]** Uno (they) aram pharparahe hai andar (they are just relaxing inside), intekhaam ho gaya unka. Duniya se pardah ho gaye, toh unka ab har saal function hota hai, ab koi bhi, ab yein Multani Pasha hai, Hindu, Muslim, everyone goes, jaakar jashan karte hai hindu, muslim's go in and read something or teach. They sit with a form of "adab", this is what we have, "adab / etiquette". Bado ka adab (respect for elders), jaise hamare paas Islam mein hai, ke bade ayein to choto ko adab karna, sab mil julke rehna, mohobat karna, ye hamara Islam Mahzab yahi sikhaata hai. Daut karna, jhagadna, ladna, yein nahi sikhaata, yein hamaara Islam nahi sikhaata yein.

Sanah: [18:24] Today, Bidar is developing, like a master plan is coming in the city. I study Public Space Design, how people live, what are their hopes, needs in for a space they live. If we want to understand people in Bidar, so will we understand them from these "taur-tareeke".

Background noise [child crying]

Abul Anwar: [18:58] **[foreign]** Ab kam ho gaya hai, Pehle bahaut zyada thein. Ab jaanchna padta hai, bauhaut kam karte hai. Ab Sufiya band kamaro mein padthe hai, milna bole toh bauhaut mushkil hai yeing zamane mein, nahi milte. Aur unki duao ka trupal hai, ke kaun ji rahe hai, unke aazir kya hai, roze par roze rehte hai, riyazat ke riyazat karte hai, ibadat par majboor rehte hai, zikraskaar hamaisha. Pehle ke log kya karte thein, kam baat karte thein, kam sote thein, kam khate thein. Aaj ka insaan Zyada Baat kar raha hai, zyada so raha hai, yahi hai. Aur zyada baat karne mein kya hai, hamara padna karna nahi hota, zyada khaye toh nasha pad jaati hai ham padh na paye. Khane mein kya hai, thoda peth mein rakhkar khana, peth ko khali rakhna, padne ki taraf dhyan rakhna. Agar ham zyada kha liye, toh Nisha ho jaati hai, ham sone mein yu ho jaate hai. Toh Pehle ke Sufi log kya karte thein, zyada baat hi nahi karte the, namaz pade, aake kamre mein beth jaate thein, ek nawaala khaye, baat Sufi aise guzre hai ki ek nawaala kane ke baad, dosri nawaala poori quran khatam karte thein yein. Phir doori nawaala daine ke baad, phir dusri baad Quran. Bahar sein ah gaya, allah ke naam se deyo, who utakhar de diya. Ab unhe phaka ho gaya, phir unhone mehnat kara, phir gaya, phir ah gaya unhe, aise hi unki umar guzri. Ab nahi vaise Sufiya, ab Duniyadaari par hai, ab duniyadaari par jo Sufi hai, vo kisi kaam ka nahi.

Sanah: [21:10] This house is only left in their memory.

Abul Anwar: [21:14] Yes!

Sanah: [21:18] Meaning, these Khanqhas are only left to understand what used to happen. This is why, what my project is about, it is researching on how it used to be before, how it is now and to know about Bidar and its people, this is very important thing to know, that these practices existed. How these syncretic cultures came about and how these thoughts developed.

Abul Anwar: [22:00] That came from there. Wherever the Prophet went, where Hindus were there, bad things were happening a lot, where they weren't believing in the existence of one god [foreign], khuda ko ek nahi maan rahe thein, so he kept sending people, you go there, you go there. They used to sit and do Ibadat, [foreign] Din ki Tableegh (Dawah/preaching of Islam) karte thein, din (judgement, custom and religion) ki tabliq ko aakar sunte thein, if it was in their heart, they were imam rakhvale thein.

Sanah: [22:40] So, this ground floor of the house, has it always remained like this or have some things changed?

Abul Anwar: [22:49] When upstairs the Wali/Buzurg was there, they used to live upstairs, now that he is gone, [foreign] pardha chale gaye, toh ab taqseem (distribution) ho gayi, ab yein foundation karkar rehe hai. Aisa hai, ham apni zaroorat ke vaste, bethne ke vaste, vo kamra aaram ke vaste, andar jo Tehran hai khana vaana ke vaste, zaroorat ki cheese, banakar hi reh gaye ab [laughing]

Sanah: [23:26] With your permission, can I see all this?

Abul Anwar: [23:29] Yes of course, come....

[23:32] This room, this is ours. See, see! There is a Gumbad painting here of Prophet Muhammad, his hair is lying upstairs. What happens every year, they do a function, they make everyone do Ziyarat, meaning tells them. It is made of Bidri. Did they tell you upstairs?

Sanah: [23:59] Yes!

Abul Anwar: [24:01] Did you go see it in the room?

Sanah: [24:05] No, I haven't been. With your permission, may I take a photograph of the room?

Abul Anwar: [24:08] No, we don't have any photos. It is a crime to have photos in Islam...

[End of recorded material]