



E-ISSN: 2706-9117  
P-ISSN: 2706-9109  
[www.historyjournal.net](http://www.historyjournal.net)  
IJH 2020; 2(2): 213-214  
Received: 24-05-2020  
Accepted: 26-06-2020

**Heena Goswami**  
Department of History,  
University of Delhi, Delhi,  
India

## Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan: A Symbol of Cultural and Communal Harmony

**Heena Goswami**

### Abstract

The article focuses on the character of Mirza Jan-i-Janan and highlights his contribution in promoting the culture of communal harmony and peaceful coexistence. Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan (1113-1195AH) was a prominent bilingual poet of Persian and Urdu of the 18th C. Sufism teaches society to avoid oppressive, barbaric, and unjustified prejudice and to live with equality and humanity. A leading eighteenth-century mystic in India was Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan. He was known as a pioneer of harmony, peace, humankind, and universal brotherhood.

**Keywords:** Sufism, mysticism, communal harmony, co-existence.

### Introduction

Our world today is a world full of turbulence, restlessness, and insecurity and most of the disorders and disharmonies are rooted in the lack of real understanding of each other. Poor politicians and power-hungry politicians fuel this situation that leads to insoluble complexities. And the noble efforts of people who are preoccupied with the improvement of the present situation remain ineffective. It is time for everyone to bear up to improve the situation and get rid of the existing ugly communal tension. Therefore, following in the footsteps of great people like Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan can help. In today's world, where everything revolves around materialism, and violence, terrorism, and intimidation and due to the vested interest of a diminutive number of people, and those who are brainwashed, common people continue to live in fear. It is necessary that the precepts of the greats like Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan be taught and spread to the masses to promote a culture of communal harmony and peaceful coexistence. Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan (1113-1195AH) was a prominent bilingual poet of Persian and Urdu of the 18th C. Sufism teaches society to avoid oppressive, barbaric, and unjustified prejudice and to live with equality and humanity. A leading eighteenth-century mystic in India was Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan. He was known as a pioneer of harmony, peace, humankind, and universal brotherhood.

These days, the problem of terrorism around the world, which has touched people from all ages, young and old, is a clear example of the misunderstanding and misrepresentation and misinterpretation of the basic tenets of the religion and has depicted an incorrect image of Islam. The un-Islamic and inhumane actions of the terrorists in the name of Islam must be made clear to the world, and this is possible only when the ideas of the Sufis and the mystics are restored to create social harmony. Sufis are the ones who believe in fraternity, equality, humanity, and peaceful coexistence.

Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan's views on universal brotherhood and humanitarianism deserve to be mentioned here. He was perfect in terms of the high stratum of thought as well as intellectualism. He believed that God is absolute, and He is there in every particle of the cosmos, and that the temple and the mosque are two guest houses, but the owner of both the houses is one.

As he says:

We are all servants of love, but some people  
Have built the Kaaba, and sheikh, the idol, and the Brahman <sup>[1]</sup>

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Heena Goswami**  
Department of History,  
University of Delhi, Delhi,  
India

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<sup>1</sup> Diwan-e Mirza Mazhar, pp. 56

He also said that:

The moon, the earth, and the sky, are mirror of the picture  
It can be found that there is self-decoration of Him behind  
the curtain <sup>[2]</sup>.

The multiplicity of these figures are only His manifestations  
There is no other painter in two worlds other than Him <sup>[3]</sup>.

His poetry is filled with such messages where he  
emphasizes the need to eliminate religious fanaticism and  
discrimination against followers of other beliefs. For him,  
people may call the Almighty with different names, but He  
is the one who has different nomenclatures in every religion  
in the world.

In *Kalimat-I Tayyibat*, a collection of his letters, in response  
to a question from one of his disciples about the Hindu  
religion, Mirza Mazhar writes that from the beginning of the  
creation of mankind, God revealed Veda to guide the world  
by an angel named Brahma. Vedas consist of four books,  
pertaining to rulings and prohibitions, and contain  
information about the past and the future. And the principles  
of their beliefs are based on this book, which is called  
*Dharma Shastra*. All Hindu sects believe in the oneness of  
God and consider the world as mortal and a creature and  
believe in the Day of Judgment and Reward. Regarding  
their worship of idols, Mirza Jan Janan has stated that some  
of the angels who, by the command of Almighty God, rule  
in this world, or some of the perfect ones of God, whose  
souls have some powers in this world after death, or people  
like Hazrat Khizr are alive and immortal. Hindus make their  
idols and mediate thinking of them, and thus after a while  
they have a relationship with the original personality of the  
face, and according to him, their relationship with idols is  
like the relationship of Sufis to their *Pirs*. The only  
difference is that the Sufis do not make idols of *Murshid*,  
and he also stated that their prostration to idols is a  
prostration of greeting and reverence, not a prostration of  
worship. And no one is considered a partner of the  
Almighty, and belief in reincarnation does not amount to  
disbelief.

Jan-I Janan inspired his argument from this verse and  
proved that God says: *wain min ommatin illa khala feeha  
natheerun*, (and there never was a community, without a  
warner having lived among them (in the past), *Walikulli  
ommatin rasoolun* (And for every community [of this  
world] there is a messenger). He says that according to the  
above verse, messengers were sent to different countries  
(regions) of India, whose lives' stories are recorded in the  
Veda, and we come to the conclusion that they had an  
organized and complete religion, so after the mission of  
Prophet Mohammad Peace be upon him, like the religions  
of Jews and Christians their religion became obsolete. He  
prefers silence about them. Because he believed that it is  
wrong to judge infidelity and fidelity of a person without a  
definite reason. Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan argues that the all  
the prominent religious personalities of every religion are  
respectable and were sent by almighty to guide the people  
from time to time <sup>[4]</sup>.

Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan, despite having a firm belief in  
his own religion, also respected other religions and faiths.  
There were many Hindus among his disciples. Among them,  
we can mention Basawan Lal Bidar and Kishan Chand

Majrooh <sup>[5]</sup>. And the house where Mirza was martyred was  
built and donated by a Hindu Kewal Ram to Mirza Mazhar  
<sup>[6]</sup>. All this shows his connection to the followers of the  
other religions especially Hinduism. Such atmosphere of  
communal harmony and universal brotherhood was there in  
the time of Mirza Mazhar.

It is pertinent to mention here that these matters related to  
Mirza Jan Janan, which are found in his writings and deeds,  
were expressed before him, in the thirteenth century AD by  
Amir Khusrau Dehlavi. As he says:

I am infidel of love, I do not need to be a Muslim  
Every vein of mine has turned into thread I do not need  
Zunnar

And beside him, all the Sufis and mystics in India have held  
such views, advising, and emphasizing universal  
brotherhood and humanism. We also witnessed such things  
in the books of Dara Shukoh and quatrains of Sheikh  
Sarmad.

It is need of the hour that teachings and messages of Sufis  
and mystics be retold to the people and be instilled into their  
minds. There is a need for inclusion of such noble messages  
into the curriculum of primary education in India. The  
existence of people like him in a large country with  
religious and linguistic differences such as India is a great  
honor and national treasure to be preserved and followed by  
the people. In this turbulent world, his teachings and  
remarks will be a beacon for a peaceful and harmonious  
present and future of India and even the world.

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<sup>2</sup> *Diwan-e Mirza Mazhar*, pp. 30

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19

<sup>4</sup> *Kalimat-I Tayyibat*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>5</sup> *Mirza Mazhar Jan-I Janan Aur Unka Kalam*, pp. 80.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114.