



ProQuest Number: 10752728

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10752728

Published by ProQuest LLC (2018). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

## DESCRIPTION OF THESIS

Name of candidate HASAN ALI KHAN

Title of thesis SHIA-ISMAILI MOTIFS IN THE SUFI

ARCHITECTURE OF THE INDUS VALLEY AD 1200-1500

### TEXT

#### **Abstract**

The study of the relationship between Shiism and Sufism is one of the most unexplored areas of Islamic studies, which has traditionally been hindered by the lack of primary sources. This is especially so in the case of Ismailism in the Indo-Iranian world, where that denomination held sway in the latter medieval Islamic era.

Fortunately, in the case of the Indus Valley, certain religious ceremonies and a number of monuments common to the medieval Ismaili da'wa (mission) and the associated Suhrawardi Sufi Order, have survived. The comparison of the religious ceremonial at the shrine of the renowned Ismaili missionary Shams, with the iconography found on contemporaneous Suhrawardi monuments yields the covert connection that had existed between them. This was through an astrological framework based on the Persian New Year, and the vice regency and succession of the first Shia Imam Ali, as declared in the last sermon of the Prophet according to all Shiism. The nature and use of this framework is necessarily Ismaili in the Indus Valley. The astrological resonances of Ali's vice regency and succession to Muhammad were first intercalated by Shams with the local calendar for the benefit of his followers, and subsequently used to create a transcendental multi-faith Islamic system called the Satpanth, or True Path. The application of the Satpanth is found as astrological symbolism on the monuments of the Suhrawardi Order. In addition, an unorthodox monument archetype which is common to the buildings associated with both Ismaili missionaries and Suhrawardi Sufis endorses this connection further. A combination of extant religious ceremonial and iconography, the common monument archetype and a critical re-examination of history with local sources constitutes the methodological process which shows the covert Shia-Ismaili beliefs of the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley. In the present day, these monuments are at risk of being destroyed by the Pakistani state apparatus, which traditionally sees Suhrawardi Sufi heritage in a Sunni light. This pressure has been accentuated in the aftermath of the Afghan War when puritanical elements made inroads into the official bodies which manage these monuments and shrines.

## Declaration

I hereby solemnly declare that all the work here-in is exclusively my own, which I have put together using the guidelines and academic format prescribed by the University of London for PhD theses, adhering to all the pre-conditions and limits prescribed there-in to the best of my ability without fault,

Signed: ..... *Hasan Ali Khan* .....

Date: ..... *11-05-2009* .....

## Abstract

The relationship between Shiism and Sufism is one of the most unexplored areas of Islamic studies. Its study has traditionally been hindered by the lack of primary sources. This is especially so in the case of Ismailism in the medieval Islamic Era, which is more easily associable to Sufism. Ismaili associations with early Sufism go back to the Fatimid Era in Egypt of which the Indus Valley was a part. This is in the tenth century when dominant Ismaili and Twelver states ruled the Middle East. After the destruction of these Shia states by the incoming Sunni Turkic dynasties, Ismailism went underground in Iran and its ideas reappeared in the shape of Sufi Orders in Iraq, most prominently the Suhrawardi Order. In this period, Ismailism flourished again in the Indus Valley under missionaries sent from neighboring Iran, who freely worked on the metaphysical commonality between Indian and Iranian cultures for their proselytism. Its zenith was reached under the Ismaili missionary Shams in the thirteenth century, who after a long spate of problems in his host country, perfected a system of metaphysical interlacing called the Satpanth, or true path, setting up ceremonies which tied him to the Suhrawardi Sufi Order which preexisted here. This association led to the falling out of the court patronised order with the Imperial Authorities in Delhi. The Satpanth worked through an astrological framework based on the Persian New Year, and the vice-regency of the first Shia Imam Ali, which is the basis of the Shia faith. The astrological resonances of Ali's succession or vice-regency to Muhammad were known to Muslim scholars in the Iranian Shia-Ismaili tradition before Shams's time, but are historically first interlaced by Shams with the local calendar for the benefit of his followers. The Satpanth later found its way as astrological symbolism on the monuments of the Suhrawardi Order. In addition, an unorthodox monument archetype which accommodates Satpanth ideals is common to the buildings associated with Shams, his descendants and Suhrawardi Sufis over three centuries. Evidence suggest that Shams may have been responsible this archetype. A comparison between extant religious ceremony, iconography and the common monument archetype in the latter chapters shows the covert Shia-Ismaili beliefs of the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley. This complements the critical reexamination of historical sources for the purpose in the first half of the thesis.

## Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii

### **Introduction**

Pakistani State History, the Arab Era and the Ghaznavids	1
The Shia Century	9
The resurgence of Sunnism under the Ghaznavids	16

### **Chapter One: The Suhrawardi Order**

An Historic Overview	23
The Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley: A Religious and Political Overview	28
Shaykh Sadr al-din Arif	36
Religious and Sectarian Affiliations of Zakariya	40
Zakariya's hidden Shia leanings	45
Shah Rukn-e-Alam	46
Conclusion	54

### **Chapter Two: Shams**

Dispelling Anecdotes about Uch	56
The Hagiography of Shams: The Itinerary of Shams's Arrival to Multan	61
The River and the Arrival from Uch	72
The Shams Taziya	75
The Religious Ceremonial at the shrine of Shams	80
Chetir, Chaharshamba-yi Suri and a Vedic Nauroz	82

Sakhi Sarwar	89
Conclusion	94

### **Chapter Three: The Suhrawardi Order at Uch**

Jalal al-din Surkhposh	97
Jahaniyan Jahangasht	102
Sadr al-din Rajjan Qattal (Sayyid Raju)	106
The Jalali Dervishes	108
Shiism	112
Breakdown	114
Conclusion	118

### **Chapter Four: Conceptual Connections between Shiism, Sufism, and the Religion of the Medieval Ismailis, the Satpanth**

Introduction	121
The Concept of Wilayat in Shiism and Sufism	123
Ghadir-Khumm, Nauroz, Wilayat and Majlisi	126
Omar Khayyam, Nauroz, and the Jalali Calendar	131
Ghadir-Khumm, the Concept of Wilayat in Sufism, and Islamic Scripture	138
Application of the Jafr Dhikr formulae to <i>Nad-e-Ali</i> and <i>Ayat al-Kursi</i>	145
Ghadir-Khumm, Nauroz and Architecture: The Representation of the concept of Wilayat through astrological Symbolism; the Case of Fatimid Cairo	148
The Wilayat of Ali envisaged as a building	152
Nauroz and the Bibi Jaiwandi Monument Complex	156
Representation of Multiple Religious Identities within the Satpanth	158
The Exaltation of the Soul of God in Suhrawardi Doctrine	160
Conclusion	165

**Chapter Five: The Suhrawardi Monuments at Multan, Architecture in Dissimulation**

Entrance and Axiality in orthodox Islamic burial, The Qibla direction	169
The Shams Monument and Sakhi Sarwar	171
Baha al-din Zakariya's Monument	182
Shah Rukn-e-Alam: History of the Monument: Construction and Myths	184
The Plan	188
Unorthodox Elements: Ground Floor	193
The Interior	197
The Mihrab	199
Unorthodox Symbols on the Second Storey	209
Conclusion	214

**Chapter Six: The Da'wa and Suhrawardi Monuments at Uch**

Nasir al-din	217
Sadr al-din	223
Hasan Kabir al-din	230
The Surkhposh Khanqah and adjoining monuments	240
The Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju Khanqahs	241
The Surkhposh Khanqah	247
The Chillah Rooms and the Surkhposh Mosque	251
The Bibi Jaiwandi Pentagram Complex	257
The Bibi Jaiwandi Complex: Construction History and Myths	262
Similarity between Hidden Shia Symbolism at the Bibi Jaiwandi Complex and Rukn-e-Alam	264
Multi-faith Satpanth Symbolism on the Bibi Jaiwandi Monuments	266
The Burial Symbolism of Five Traditions	273
Conclusion: Suhrawardi Pluralism as Architecture	276
One of the Seven Uchs: Lal Mohra	277

Reassessment of the Da'wa and Latter Day contributions: the monument of Sultan Ali Akbar	282
Pir Adil	293
<b>Conclusion</b>	297
<b>Glossary</b>	308
<b>Bibliography</b>	311
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix One	323
Appendix Two	324
Appendix Three	324
Appendix Four	325

## List of Illustrations

1. The Middle East in 970-page 10.
2. The Ghaznavid Empire after absorption of the Buwayhids of Rayy on Mahmud's death in 1030-page 17.
3. The Seljuk Empire upon the death of Malik Shah in 1092-page 20.
4. The Ghorids in 1200-page 21.
5. Shrine of Umar al-Suhrawardi, Iraq-page 27.
6. Fakhr al-din Iraqi arriving in Multan with a caravan of qalandars-page 41.
7. Zakariya's letter nominating Shahbaz Qalandar to the Suhrawardi Order-page 43.
8. Diagram of the Suhrawardi Order stemming from Iraq into the subcontinent-page 44.
9. Suhrawardi Shaykhs at Multan-page 57.
10. Site of Shams's miracle in the village of Suraj Kund-page 71.
11. Shams's passage from Uch to Sitpur through the Panjnad, then onto Multan-page 73.
12. The boat taziya in the Gilani quarter-page 76.
13. The Bukhari taziya-page 77.
14. The Bukhari taziya in the streets of the old city-page 78.
15. The Bukhari taziya with Ali's image on the mast-page 79.
16. The astrological chart of event of Ghadir Khumm-page 86.
17. The route from Multan to Sakhi Sarwar-page 90.
18. Lineal plaque of Sakhi Sarwar-page 91.
19. The four different dimensions of wilayat-page 125.
20. The astrological chart of 18 Dhul Hajj, 10 Hijri/14 March 632-page 134.
21. The astrological chart of the Ghadir-Khumm related Nauroz-page 137.
22. Planetary exaltations according to Al-Beruni-page 137.
23. The Arabic abjad according to Al-Beruni-page 143.
24. The planetary day and night hours according to Al-Beruni-page 143.
25. Planetary consonants-page 144.
26. A hexagram talisman of the *Nad-e-Ali*-page 145.
27. The Rukn-e-Alam mihrab compared with the Seal of Solomon-page 152.
28. The Rukn-e-Alam mihrab frame with its *Ayat al- Kursi* detail-page 153.
29. Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram site plan compared with its old tile carrying the Mars symbol- page 156.
30. The seven talismanic symbols in the Seal of Solomon-page 156.
31. Islamic astrological chart for use in alchemy-page 157.
32. A comparison of the Bibi Jaiwandi complex icons-page 158.
33. Lal Mohra Tomb B & Tomb D-page 159.
34. Omar Khayyam's *Ruba'yi* on Nauroz-page 161.
35. The astrological chart of Easter Sunday, 9 April 34 A.D-page 163.

36. The grave of Habil with its medieval Islamic era shrine -page 170.
37. The shrine of Shams historically-page 175.
38. The shrine of Shams contemporaneously-page 176.
39. Approach to the shrine of Shams-page 177.
40. The shrine of Shams, facade entrances-page 178.
41. Sakhi Sarwar-page 180.
42. Rukn-e-Alam, site plan of complex with main southern axis-page 189.
43. Rukn-e-Alam, view from Qasim Bagh Park-page 190.
44. Rukn-e-Alam, ground floor plan and altered south entrance-page 190.
45. Rukn-e-Alam, main (realigned) eastern entrance to complex-page 191.
46. Rukn-e-Alam, entrance vestibule with its south and east openings-page 191.
47. Rukn-e-Alam, vestibule from the south facing entrance-page 193.
48. Rukn-e-Alam, vestibule interior from the eastern entrance-page 194.
49. Rukn-e-Alam, vestibule mihrab as seen from its eastern entrance-page 194.
50. Rukn-e-Alam, the main interior with the sarcophagus-page 195.
51. Rukn-e-Alam, view of sarcophagus from the main mihrab-page 195.
52. Rukn-e-Alam, the western facade with the plain outward projecting wall panel-page 196.
53. Rukn-e-Alam, interior section-page 197.
54. Rukn-e-Alam, close up of squinch panels on the west facing interior facade-page 198.
55. Rukn-e-Alam, mihrab facade with recessed niche in centre-page 199.
56. Rukn-e-Alam, main mihrab before restoration-page 201.
57. Rukn-e-Alam, the main mihrab after restoration-202.
58. Rukn-e-Alam, the inner decoration of the mihrab curvature-page 203.
59. Rukn-e-Alam, close-up of the hexagram invocations on the mihrab-page 204.
60. Details of the symbols on the Seal of Solomon-page 204.
61. Details for the symbols on the Seal of Solomon from *Shams al-Ma'arif* by Ali al-Buni-page 205.
62. A comparison between the Rukn-e-Alam mihrab the symbols for the Seal of Solomon-page 205.
63. Planets with their ruler-ship of days of the week and associated purpose-page 206.
64. Rukn-e-Alam, the recreated interior invocations-page 207.
65. Rukn-e-Alam, view of the shrine from the outer compound-page 209.
66. Rukn-e-Alam, a closer view from near the entrance-page 210.
67. Rukn-e-Alam, the south-eastern sealable entrance-page 210.
68. Rukn-e-Alam, a closer view of the tiles on the parapet-page 211.
69. Rukn-e-Alam, detail of the first floor parapet merlon tile with the kalmia-page 212.
70. Rukn-e-Alam, view of the circumambulation around the second storey-page 213.
71. Ali Akbar's lineage-page 220.
72. Hasan Kabir al-din's lineage from Shams-page 220.

73. Sadr al-din, on first approach-page 227.
74. Sadr al-din-page 227.
75. Sadr al-din, re-oriented main eastern entrance-page 228.
76. Sadr al-din facades-page 229.
77. Hasan Kabir al-din, late 19<sup>th</sup> century-page 234.
78. The Hasan Kabir al-din Ismaili graveyard-page 235.
79. Hasan Kabir al-din, re-aligned approaches-page 235.
80. Hasan Kabir al-din, eastern entrance to shrine-page 236.
81. Hasan Kabir al-din, sealed southern and northern entrances-page 237.
82. Hasan Kabir al-din, Panjatan-inspired carved seal and dome-page 238.
83. Jahangasht khanqah-page 242.
84. Jahangasht khanqah, mihrab with his snake-page 243.
85. Sayyid Raju khanqah-page 245.
86. Surkhposh khanqah entrances-page 248.
87. Surkhposh khanqah, the archetypical entrance and mihrab details-page 249.
88. Surkhposh khanqah interior-250.
89. Surkhposh mosque-page 251.
90. Surkhposh mosque interior-page 252.
91. Surkhposh khanqah and adjoining mosque as seen from the Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram-page 253.
92. Bibi Jaiwandi complex-page 255.
93. The Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram complex-page 257.
94. The Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram complex retaining walls-page 258.
95. The Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram configuration in perspective-page 260.
96. A comparison between Bibi Jaiwandi and Rukn-e-Alam-page 264.
97. Nuriya-page 266.
98. Baha al-Halim-page 267.
99. The Seal of Solomon talismanic symbols for the seven planets in jafr-page 268.
100. Bibi Jaiwandi, a pre-restoration tile with the Leo/Mars symbol-page 268.
101. A comparison of symbols the Bibi Jaiwandi complex-page 269.
102. Indian deities with their planetary rulers-page 271.
103. Lal Mohra, tomb A-page 277.
104. Lal Mohra, tomb B-page 278.
105. Lal Mohra, tomb C-page 279.
106. Lal Mohra, tomb D-page 279.
107. Lal Mohra, Tomb B & Tomb D, with entrance and mihrab details, and symbols-page 280.
108. Sultan Ali Akbar-page 285.
109. Sultan Ali Akbar, ground floor plan-page 286.

110. Sultan Ali Akbar, interior facades-page 288.
111. Sultan Ali Akbar, the lesser eastern entrance-page 288.
112. A comparison between the mihrabs of Sultan Ali Akbar and Rukn-e-Alam-page 290.
113. The monument of Ali Akbar's mother-page 291.
114. The Trishul on Sultan Ali Akbar's dome in the 19<sup>th</sup> century -page 292.
115. Pir Adil Panjatan tiles-page 294.
116. The Trishul of Shiva topping the Pir Adil dome-page 295.

## **Acknowledgements**

My foremost thanks go to my supervisor, Professor Christopher Shackle, who guided my research for four years. His patience, trust and open-mindedness saw me through my long absences of communication which occurred due to the nature of the subject on which I was working. His academic approach is that of a scholar who has perfected the ability to pass on the system of the chronological processing of accumulated knowledge so that it can become a coherent and homogenous document. Without his help and guidance in sifting and structuring the vast material and diverse sources involved in this work, it would have been very difficult to arrive at coherence.

I would also like to sincerely acknowledge the assistance of Zawahir Moir. Without her willingness to share her knowledge of the ginans and her ability to deduce circumstances and give clues from recorded history and site material, a number of facts which played a primary part in solving the jigsaw puzzle of the Ismaili da'wa in the Indus Valley would not have come to light.

The architectural section of this project draws on the thesis by the late Professor Delbert Highlands, on the axiality of the burial direction in the construction of Islamic buildings. I had the good fortune of studying under him in the final year of my BArch degree in Turkey, without which the fundamental principles of the design and use of orthodox Islamic monuments would have remained beyond my grasp. His contribution plays a major part in decoding the axiality and the use of space for the monument archetype discovered in this thesis.

My heartfelt thanks go to the local people of Uch and Multan who welcomed my research efforts. Also to Zahid Shamsi the caretaker of the Shams shrine, and to Zahid Gardezi and the Gardezi family historian in Multan whose invaluable help in the field made possible the recording of the ceremonies which yielded the doctrines behind the Satpanth. This thesis includes the first written hagiography of Pir Shams, whose personality was one of the unexplained anomalies of the religious history of the world until now. It is

mostly because of their help on the ground and their passion for a past which is necessarily their very own, that the historical gap between the Ismaili da'wa and the Suhrawardi Sufi Order has been bridged.

Hasan Ali Khan

Date

## Preface

The purpose of this preface is to briefly introduce the thesis and its sources. Sufism has long been reckoned to have connections to Shiism in academia, but without concrete proof. The aim of the thesis is to quite simply show the generally hidden connections between the Ismaili denomination of Shiism and Sufism from the time of the rise of certain Sufi orders in the Middle East in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when Shiism in the region was forced underground by a resurgent Sunnism under the Turkic dynasties of the medieval Islamic era. More specifically the thesis proves this connection in much greater detail in the Indus valley i.e. present day Pakistan, where surviving historic and archaeological evidence in this region which escaped the devastation of the Mongols provides very strong evidence for the argument. The major discovery of this thesis is the hitherto unascertained relationships that existed in the post-Ghaznavid Sultanate era in the Indus Valley between the court-favoured Sufi masters who commanded the highest religious prestige in the empire, and Ismaili missionaries associated with them, working under the immunity of their Order. It proves that the court associated Suhrawardi Sufi Order was actually Ismaili under dissimulation, and the reason for its fall from imperial favour was its hidden Ismaili credentials. The thesis period ends when Ismaili missionary activity and the Suhrawardi Sufi Order fell apart in the late fifteenth century, while also taking into account the religious trends and architecture that developed and continued as result.

The thesis is divided into two main parts, the first being historical and the latter architectural. The problem of the lack of surviving historical evidence was overcome by the use of a three-pronged methodological approach. The approach combines a critical re-analysis of history including new facts that have emerged from Ismaili and Suhrawardi primary sources, with common metaphysical tendencies between the two, along with architectural and archaeological evidence. In this it combines historical material with extant architectural evidence to prove what would be traditionally shaky ground according to sceptics of the Sufi-Shia connection. The first section addresses the problem by using a variety of primary source material, combined with a re-examination of existing publications. It involves the use of traditional court histories, but also Ismaili ginans or

mystical poetry, which allegorically relate the life and times of the Ismaili missionaries connected to the Suhrawardi Sufis of this context. In addition certain religious ceremonies discovered in the field and decoded according to Ismaili metaphysics further the argument since they appear resonant with the Suhrawardi Sufi theological mindset. A bridging chapter which shows the Shia-Ismaili metaphysics behind the discovered ceremonies as being central to the derivation of spiritual power in Sufism cements the thesis argument conceptually, and ties the first section to the architecture. The architectural section is mostly based on visual evidence collected in the field combined with published work. It sees the emergence of an unorthodox building archetype common to Ismailism and the Suhrawardi Sufi Order, which seems to have been designed for multi-faith ceremonial. This multi-faith ceremonial borne out of Ismaili metaphysics, or the Satpanth, which was a characteristic of medieval Ismailism in the Indus Valley, is seen profusely applied as iconographic decoration on Suhrawardi monuments. Any Sufi connections to the Satpanth can only be interpreted in a Shia-Ismaili light.

In the modern Muslim world, with the rise of the postcolonial secular states, an approach towards writing a comprehensive Islamic history has been the general trend where Sufism is portrayed as a co-functionary of Imperial rulership, the legacies of which the modern states claim as their own. In the Indus Valley the Pakistani state sees itself as the natural successor to the Turkic empires of the Delhi era and the Mughals, which were necessarily Sunni in nature. The state's approach to history is inherited from the court histories of these past empires, which was galvanised into modern historical trends through the pre-independence pan-Islamic movements in the Sub-continent. This approach actively tries to suppress some facts and glances over others and certain periods in history to negate Shiism in the region, and any Sufi connections to it. The reality however is markedly different.

The introductory chapter critically analyses the reasons behind this approach in Pakistani history, and what it aims to achieve through it. It recreates the era in history which is actively suppressed from previously unexamined sources, and identifies the political and religious alliances that caused the upheaval of Sunnism in the Muslim world in the tenth

century. Later it examines the reconquest by the Turkic Sunni dynasties which figure so prominently in state history, while showing how Shia-Ismaili denominations just went underground instead of dying out, resurfacing as Persian nationalism and Sufism.

Chapter One explores the beginnings of the Suhrawardi Order in Iraq and its connections to Ismailism in the aftermath of the Turkic conquest from various historical sources and recent work. The chapter centres on the expansion of the order into the semi-independent principality of Multan under Baha al-din Zakariya in the twelfth century, which had previously been an Ismaili stronghold. It uses Zakariya's prescription textbook for his khanqah to identify his hidden Shia theological leanings, and further strengthens the argument by examining the religious and political connections and disputes that Zakariya and his successors had with unorthodox elements, Ismaili missionaries and the imperial court. The court histories of certain kings who were anti-Suhrawardi and were involved in mass anti-Shia campaigns have been used for the purpose.

Chapter Two deals specifically with the famed Ismaili missionary Shams whose personality is the centrepiece of this thesis for the Indus valley. He is a most elusive figure in history and has more to his spiritual credit than any other person in the region, yet is the one about whom the least is known. The chapter deals with his arrival in the Indus Valley from Iran, and establishes his correct biography for the first time. For the purpose it critically re-examines existing work, local folklore, religious rituals remembering his spiritual feats as gathered in the field, Ismaili mystical poetry or ginans which mention his life's events and local geography which can verify such events. The process has yielded his real personality, spiritual achievements and connections to Zakariya and the Suhrawardi Order for the first time. The ingenious religious ceremonies set up by him which were an active part of his Satpanth have also been astrologically decoded at the end of the chapter. These have revealed the Shia metaphysical basis to the Satpanth.

Chapter Three deals with the Suhrawardi Order's expansion into the city of Uch under Zakariya's disciple Jalal al-din Surkhposh, who was a later émigré to the region at the

height of the Mongol invasions. As the Suhrawardi Order under Zakariya's descendants in Multan waned and died under Imperial Turkic persecution, it flourished in the isolated environment of Uch. Here Surkhposh's descendants, who had fluctuating relations with imperial rulers, consolidated themselves in an environment where Shams's Ismaili missionary grandchildren had done the same in face of anti-Shia sentiment in Multan. The chapter uses existing and newly discovered sources to show the contemporaneous activities of Suhrawardi Sufis masters to Ismaili missionaries in this small setting, who obviously went hand in hand. Other sources citing political fracture and theological tendencies have been explored to show the hidden Shiism of Surkhposh's descendants and their close relationship to Shams's descendants, who were probably also their spiritual mentors.

Chapter Four is a bridging chapter which ties the historical past of the Suhrawardi connection to Ismailism, through metaphysics, to the architecture and iconography described in the second section. This metaphysical tie became apparent through the Shia concept of the vice-regency of the first Imam Ali and the Persian New Year Nauroz, as yielded by the religious ceremonies discovered at the shrine of Shams. Medieval Ismaili metaphysics had seen a slow development from the early Fatimid era in the tenth century, when initial efforts were made to accommodate different faiths into its system of thought, into a more cohesive multi-faith belief system in the Persian Nizari and Sufi eras. This era saw the active incorporation of other religious elements, starting with Zoroastrianism, into the body of Ismailism through astrology using the earlier concepts. The culmination of this process was in the Sufi era in the Indus Valley. Here Ismaili missionaries completed this two century old process of religious experimentation with different traditions by compounding the Satpanth or True Path. Mostly lost for many centuries, this belief system strives to encompass the divine truth of all religions inside Shiism.

Chapter Five uses an established thesis on axiality in Islamic burial and its centrality to building design in orthodox Islam to critically re-examine the Ismaili and Suhrawardi monuments in Multan. The monuments of Shams, Zakariya and that of his descendants all demonstrate this unorthodox archetype which is also found resonant in the monument of an earlier Suhrawardi Sufi figuring in the religious ceremonies set up by Shams. The analysis also architecturally ties Shams to the first Suhrawardi Sufi in the Indus valley. The recurrence of the archetype seems to suggest that it may have been first adapted by Shams to his multi-faith Satpanth ceremonial considering the 84 lodges he is reported to have set-up in the region. Moreover it is near contemporaneous with the four iwan mosque type adapted by the competing anti-Shia Ghaznavid and Seljuk dynasties in the same era.

Chapter Six deals with the clarification of the confusion surrounding the life and times of Shams's descendants in Uch as these have found their way from oral traditions into scholarly literature. It then deals with their religious activities and connections to the Suhrawardi Order in the city, and their related monuments, all of which carry the archetype discovered in the thesis. The second section of the chapter deals with the buildings connected to Surkhposh and his descendants which also carry the same archetype. In this case the buildings carry detailed symbolism for the different religious traditions involved in the Ismaili Satpanth, as explored in Chapter Four. These Suhrawardi buildings in their iconography also yield the fifth Indian component for the Ismaili Satpanth, and hence tie in directly with the Satpanth doctrine of Shams's missionary descendant Sadr al-din in Uch. The final part of the chapter deals with the continuation of Satpanth ideals and the monument archetype even after the Ismaili da'wa and the Suhrawardi Sufi Order withered from the history of Uch, and touches on the impact these concepts had in latter centuries.

Chapter Seven is the conclusion which sums up the thesis and its arguments in light of the evidence examined. It contextualises its discoveries and what they mean for the interconnected history of the Ismaili da'wa, the Suhrawardi Sufi Order and for the Shia-Sufi connection generally. In the end with reference to the Satpanth it reflects on what the

inner circle of the Ismailis really believed, and their endeavours to find such commonality with other religions, as being derived from their basic Shia beliefs.

## Introduction

### Pakistani State History, the Arab Era and the Ghaznavids

One of the biggest problems facing Pakistan after its creation was to construct a clear history to sustain its existence in the collective mindset of its people, especially in the years following its creation, for the new generation of Pakistanis who were to grow up with little or no memory of Partition or a united India. Due to the religious nature of the ideology on which the Pakistani state's existence came to be based, this history had to be intentionally anchored in a history of Islam in the region marked by a clear beginning, a development stage, a budding golden age and a subsequent zenith. This was within the framework of Pakistan seeing itself as the successor state to the Mughal Empire. Yet the newborn Republic of Pakistan lacked the cultural legacy and political continuity available to its Muslim neighbours, especially Iran, which through the Safavid and Qajar Empires preceding its modern statehood successfully absorbed that country's Zoroastrian past into motifs of Shia Islam. Unlike in Iran, there had been no wholesale conversion of natives in India due to a host of mostly economic reasons, one being its large population and its ancient mercantile and agrarian culture, and another being the enormous *jazya* or religious tax that the continuity of these structures yielded to the Islamic conqueror.<sup>1</sup> Hence, as opposed to Iran, in the case of Pakistani history the successful incorporation of the religious motifs of the preceding ancient civilisation into the fold of a dominant Islam could not be managed, as the subject people still existed en masse in neighbouring India, even though some large scale conversions had taken place in history. In short, the Pakistani model of textbook history had to dwell on the superiority of imperial Islam over the native Hindu population to establish its validity.

---

<sup>1</sup> This fact is to be seen in the earliest of Muslim histories where in the early eight century the Umayyad viceroys were advised by their superiors to convert less people. In one case the governor of Iraq and Prime Minister Hajjaj bin Yusuf ordered his subordinate and nephew Muhammad bin Qasim to encourage the locals to build new temples and images of their gods, in addition to retaining their places of worship, as this would be better for the treasury, i.e. *jazya* or religious tax. See Kalichbeg 1985, pp.168 ff.

Envisaged as a secular state based on a religious ideology, Pakistan adopted and developed a 'secularised' approach to a textbook Islamic history of India, which pre-existed in nationalist Islamic circles during the latter British era. Here Pakistani historians reached into the past to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Muslim intellectuals in Northern India.<sup>2</sup> This nationalist vision of Islamic history in India had fully evolved in the minds of Indian Muslim scholars after the Mutiny of 1857, which saw the termination of the Mughal Empire at Delhi, where after they saw the need to modernise and subjectively criticise the mistakes of a thousand years of Islamic rule in India, while glorifying the past. The final outcome of this revisionist trend is the Pakistani state's approach to the historiography of Islam in the subcontinent. It uses the three-century long early Arab era (roughly 700-1000) as a warm up period to the advent of the Turkic imperial war machine of the late tenth century, which eventually heralded in the Mughal rule in the sixteenth century.

Due to reasons of nationalism the large scale survival of local religiosity in India could not be portrayed as the result of the economic and administrative policies on part of the Muslims, hence it was attributed to the tolerance of the rulers. In addition, to further articulate the glory of imperial Islam, this history had to overlook the early Arab Era and dwell more on the Imperial Turkic Era, starting in the Ghaznavid and Sultanate periods in the late tenth century onwards. This would then lead up to the Mughals as the culmination of Islamic Empire in India, and this is what was achieved.

After the lack of wholesale conversion to Islam attributed to the general tolerance of the Muslim rulers, an added explanation was needed for the harmony that existed in this multi-religious environment. There was a further need to explain this coexistence as something that was directly connected to the imperial authorities, while also providing a positive account for the slow process of conversion to Islam that did take place in this period. This was achieved through the induction of Sufism into the state's version of history, which had taken a strong root in India due to its openness to spiritual practices from other religions, especially Indian ones. In Pakistani state history, Sufism is

---

<sup>2</sup> Rosser, Yvette Claire (2003) *The Islamisation of Pakistani Social Studies Textbooks*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co., p.24.

portrayed as an extension of the imperial state apparatus. In fact, the absence of a Sufism-like phenomenon in the Arab period in the Indus Valley may well be one of the reasons for that era being largely passed over.

The historical approach adopted by the Pakistani state for school textbooks simply ascribes the advent of Arab Muslim history in India in the early eighth century the status of a watershed event. It then moves to the Ghaznavid Turkic period of the late tenth century, when the rule of law was re-established in the name of the Abbasid caliphs, with most of the Ghaznavid gains being described as checks on resurgent Hindu power, which reinvigorated Islamic rule. Clair Yvette Rosser in her monograph *Islamisation of Pakistan Social Studies Textbooks* states that in school and college curricula the state paints the figures of Muhammad bin Qasim who heralded Arab era in 712, and that of Mahmud of Ghazna who inaugurated the Turkic era, as being the spearheads of Pakistani history, and the three centuries between them are contracted to a few paragraphs.<sup>3</sup> This of course is reflective of the general trend in state history itself. She also comments on the insistence on the Pakistani state on disagreeing with western academicians and building Mahmud of Ghazna up as an Islamising figure, against the historical evidence of his lust for plunder.<sup>4</sup> Her analysis and the many references to his figure show that Mahmud of Ghazna serves in Pakistani social studies textbooks as the main medieval anchor to Islam, who rode into the sub-continent to convert the pagans of India.<sup>5</sup>

The real reason for the skimming over of the Arab period in Pakistani state history has more to do with the Shia denomination of Islam that had become dominant throughout the Muslim world in the tenth century, just before the Turkic period. Shia Islam, and in particular Ismailism, was the phenomenon to counter the spread of which Turkic tribes like the Ghaznavids were recruited en masse in the first place by the surviving Sunni states under the mantle of the Abbasid Caliphate. Of course this is never openly stated, by either Pakistani scholars of history or their western counterparts. The creation of post independence Pakistani history is has been basically written by three prominent

---

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p.14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p.15.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p.17.

historians, I.H. Qureshi, A.H. Dani and K.K. Aziz. All three are products of the Anglicised pre-Partition university set up of united India, who had to rewrite their own histories after 1947. Between them heroes were created and recreated, villains exchanged and entire historical eras deemed meaningless.<sup>6</sup> According to Avril Powell in her essay in *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia* in Pakistan ideology has made a myth of history in its portrayal of national heroes.<sup>7</sup> While Dani's work focuses on the Central Asian i.e. Turkic roots of Pakistan, Qureshi was actively patronised by the Ayub Khan and Zia ul-Haq dictatorships; the latter ruler being the major reason for the radicalisation of the country during the Afghan War. Among the three historians K.K. Aziz stands as the odd one out who has since then come out against the misuse of history by the state.<sup>8</sup>

In reality, the Islamising Ghaznavid armies of the heroic Turkic era fought the Ismailis of the Indus Valley who had been well established in the region for more than a century and had engaged in extensive missionary work which resulted in their state at Multan.<sup>9</sup> The exact start date for the Ismaili State of Multan and Sind is unknown due to lack of historical references, but it is generally acknowledged to be in the first half of the tenth century, which continued till the Ghaznavid invasions. As mentioned, these developments coincide with a larger trend towards Shiism in the Muslim world in the tenth century which will be described in the second section of this chapter. Due to their generally tolerant attitudes towards local religious traditions the Ismailis had allies in the Indus Valley who included the native Hindu and Buddhist rulers and principalities.

---

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.22-23.

<sup>7</sup> See Powell in Crook 1996, p.96.

<sup>8</sup> In his book *The Murder of History* starting in the preface he poses a major query as to why such books are being published as social studies textbooks for schools: Aziz 1994, p. ix.

<sup>9</sup> Fatimid missionaries were sent to the Indus valley in the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century even before their state was established in North Africa in 909; many such missionary names have been historically recorded. In 871 the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tamid handed the governance of Sind, Sistan and Khurasan to a certain Yaqub bin Layth al-Saffar under duress. He consequently set up the proto-Shia Saffarid dynasty (871-1003, which after 900 became a Sunni vassal) and is credited with pursuing a very successful Shia agenda, especially in Sind (this is when the missionaries were active in Sind): Hamdani 1956, p.1. For details of Yaqub bin Layth's conflict with the Abbasid Caliph and his Shiism, see Husain 1978, pp.226 *ff.* The historical details of earlier Shia connections to the Indus Valley, based on re-examined evidence as researched for this thesis, which predate back to the earliest Islamic era, are too numerous to mention here. The first Ismaili presence in Sind is the immigration of two sons of the eighth Ismaili Imam Muhammad bin Ismaili (late eighth century) who then became advocates of Ismailism there, while some primary sources also mention a visit of Muhammad bin Ismail (from Iraq) to Sind himself: Hollister 1953, p.206.

In dealing with this early period, the glancing-over historical approach held by the Pakistani state serves a twofold purpose. First, it fits in with the view of glorifying imperial Sunni Islam and of admonishing the infidel for sustaining the Pakistani state's identity which is based on a 'secularised' religious ideology. Secondly, it carefully excludes any references to Shiism from popular textbook histories in a Sunni majority state. In fact, in the standard 'Pakistan Studies' textbooks taught in high schools, the words 'Shia' or 'Ismaili' can hardly be found. In higher level histories taught at universities and in related research-level publications, some punctuated references to *Qarmatians*<sup>10</sup> or Ismailism are present, mentioned as existing briefly between the early Arab and Ghaznavid periods. Ironically, the same is the case in *The Murder of History* by K.K. Aziz, which in spite of its critical title and content on Pakistani state history does not carry a single reference to Shiism in its indexes.<sup>11</sup> In his other book *The Pakistani Historian* the sole reference to Shiism is under 'sectarianism' in the index, and under the subheading 'Social Confusion,' which describes the different religious and intellectual denominations in Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> A.H. Dani who has since his training as a historian also written on Pakistani archaeology and culture, is a well acclaimed scholar. Yet in his independent work, keeping with state tradition, Shiism is not touched upon in the historical context of Pakistani history. The few references to Shiism in such work by him are local, to the predominant Twelver and Ismaili populations in the Northern Areas in a near contemporary setting.<sup>13</sup>

In higher level textbooks published by the Pakistani state, the Ismailis of the Arab period are acknowledged to have been engaged in some missionary work in the region, but taken to task by the arriving Ghaznavid armies. In Qureshi's *A Short History of Pakistan*, a textbook written for universities under the Ayub Khan government in the 1960s, the only reference to Ismailism in the Arab era, marked by their two centuries of inroads and many decades of rule, is cited as being, 'Sind attracted Ismaili missionaries who were so successful that Sind passed under Ismaili rule. With the conquest of Multan and Lahore

---

<sup>10</sup> A word misused generically, pertinent to an extinct Ismaili sect, used for all Ismailism in medieval Islam.

<sup>11</sup> Aziz 1998, p.265.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid* 1994, p.15. Having been said, Aziz is the only scholar amongst the three state historians who has done objective independent work, and his authored a book on Agha Khan III's writings and speeches.

<sup>13</sup> See Dani 2000, pp. 63 & 71.

by Mahmud of Ghazna, Sunni missionary work began again under the aegis of the Sufis who were the main agents of Islamisation of the entire region of West Pakistan.’<sup>14</sup> What is important to note is that not only is Sufism actively connected to imperial Turkic rule here, it is also concerted as being exclusively Sunni, contrary to the findings of this thesis.

Due to the historical persecution of Shia traditions in early Islam, the ground realities of the Ismaili era in Pakistan are hardly known except from surviving Ismaili sources, some of which have been used for parts of this thesis. Since the mainstay of the state’s approach has been to deny that any kind of Shiism ever existed as a reckonable force in early Muslim India, it is seen as something which was apparently dealt and done away with quickly. The *Ithna ‘Ashari* or Twelver Shia states that did flower in the later Sultanate era, from the fourteenth century onwards in the Deccan, and in later-day Mughal India in eighteenth century Lucknow, fuelled by immigrant Shia populations from Iran, are historically better acknowledged.<sup>15</sup> In Pakistani state history even these are glanced over as not being Shia, just Muslim. Yet the dilemma with the Ismaili history of the country is that there is a complete whitewash, in essence it does not exist. Aside from the historical discrepancies this approach generates, the facts that Pakistan has the world’s largest Ismaili population,<sup>16</sup> and the world’s second largest Twelver Shia population after Iran,<sup>17</sup> and whose founder Jinnah is generally known to have been an Ismaili who converted to Twelver Shiism, pose serious problems in the way taught history is tearing the country apart. It would seem that in the search for nationhood the Pakistani State has successively excluded Shia Islam from history altogether. Moreover, due to the state’s active exclusion of Shiism from its history, a general trend has

---

<sup>14</sup> Qureshi 1967, vol. 2, p.13.

<sup>15</sup> The Twelver Shia Bahmani Dynasty in the Deccan started in 1347 with the coronation of the first king ‘Ala al-din Hasan: Hollister 1953, pp. 104 ff. The first Nawab of Twelver Lucknow, Sa’adat Ali Khan, declared self rule from the Mughal Empire in 1732: Holliser 1953, p.153.

<sup>16</sup> Insider Ismaili sources cite Pakistan as having the largest population of Ismailis in the present day according to their community statistics, which was actually based in Afghanistan before the Afghan war commenced, also consult: [http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com\\_shiite.html](http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_shiite.html)

<sup>17</sup> ‘In Pakistan, some 25 per cent of the population are Shia and belong mostly to the Ismaili and *Ithna ‘Ashariya* sects’: Gall 1998, p. 549.

developed in which the subject of Shiism in an historic Islamic context has become a taboo in Pakistan, even in independent work.

It must be asserted that this manner of writing history is not new. It is in fact very reminiscent of the way imperial Islamic history in India had been written, starting seven centuries ago,<sup>18</sup> when such works were first commissioned by Turkic Sultans who dealt with recurring Ismaili rebellions. It was later emulated in the histories of the Mughal Era, with Mughal emperors hoping to portray their rule as a continuation of the earlier Sultanate era. The view of Ismailism as it exists in the imperial histories of Muslim India is that of a negligible heretical force which only succeeded by letting natives retain their un-Islamic practices and cultural traits in exchange for allegiance and religious tithes. It was part of an active process of damage limitation on the part of the imperial authorities to downplay and under-report any references to Ismailism and to Shiism in general, and to refer to all related incidents of conflict as localised rebellions.

The fact is that the religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence that is a characteristic of the Sultanate era due to its Sufi connections, and is attributed to the seats of imperial power by Pakistani historians, was equally reminiscent of the Ismaili era that preceded it.<sup>19</sup> This was, of course, the reason that united the local Ismaili state and the Hindu Shahi rulers and princes, who fought together against the Ghaznavid onslaught. The reason for Mahmud of Ghazna's initial attack on the Hindu Shahi territories was that they were sandwiched between his kingdom and the Ismaili state of Sind and Multan, which he had

---

<sup>18</sup> Beginning under Firuz Shah Tughluq (ruled 1351-1388), in the Sultanate Era, who commissioned two works, one under his own authorship.

<sup>19</sup>This is especially so in terms of the unorthodox religiosity allowed to local Ismaili adherents and sympathisers. Very little academic work has been done on the actual ground realities of (Ismaili) Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist coexistence in south-western Asia in this period, by either Western or Islamic authors of Muslim history, due to the overriding obsession with dominant Sunni Islam and lack of sources. Such work has only been done by modern academics dealing with Buddhism, relying on non-Islamic sources. For details for this coexistence consult Alexander Berzin (1993 unpublished), *The Historical Interaction between the Buddhist and Islamic Cultures before the Mongol Empire*, Part 3, Chapter 18: 'The Spread of Islam among and by the Turkic Peoples (840-1206)', also available at [http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/unpublished\\_manuscripts/historical\\_interaction/pt3/history\\_cultures\\_18.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/unpublished_manuscripts/historical_interaction/pt3/history_cultures_18.html).

been commissioned to conquer on becoming an Abbasid vassal.<sup>20</sup> The agenda of the Ghaznavid Turks under the mandate of the Abbasid caliphate was actually inherently anti-Shia and Ismaili to the end. This is as opposed to their being anti-Hindu, which the version of history used by the Pakistani state would lead one to believe. The Ghaznavids had a similar agenda in Iran and Mahmud of Ghazna was so pragmatic, after the conquest of Hindu Shahi territories and the destruction of Ismaili Multan, as to use unconverted Hindu troops, and even a Hindu general, in Iran, then under the rule of the Shia Buhaywid dynasty. His main target remained the Twelver Shia and Ismailis.<sup>21</sup>

The starting period of this thesis is the late twelfth century. This is the century after Mahmud allegedly successfully destroyed the Ismaili state of Sind and Multan in 1008. It saw the expansion of Muslim rule from present day Pakistan into the main body of India for the first time in the form of a Turkic empire. Its creation saw a large influx of people into the empire to sustain its infrastructure, among them prominent Sufis who reached the highest favour at court, outstripping that afforded to the 'Ulama, i.e. the traditional Sunni clergy. This period also saw a resurgent Ismailism and missionaries from Iranian Khurasan who made large inroads into the country and commanded such a cult of personality and spiritual prowess that they became untouchable by the officials of the Turkic kings.

In modern academic circles, hardly any work has been done on connections between Ismailism and Sufism. One of the few exceptions is the introductory chapter by Herman Landolt called 'Attar, Sufism and Ismailism' in Lewisohn and Shackle's recent book on

---

<sup>20</sup> This state existed in the tenth-eleventh centuries between the Ghaznavid Turks in Afghanistan and the Ismaili state of Sind and Multan, sandwiched between the River Indus and the Hindu Kush mountains. Its rulers practised a multi-faith religion comprising of Hindu beliefs, mixed with Buddhism and Zoroastrian elements, and were staunchly aligned with the Ismaili state against Mahmud of Ghazna, to the extent of fulfilling all their military obligations in that treaty at very heavy cost. The Hindu Shahis supported Hinduism and Buddhism:  
[http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/advanced/kalachakra/relation\\_islam\\_hinduism/kalachakra\\_presentation\\_prophets/kc\\_pres\\_prophets\\_islam\\_full.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/advanced/kalachakra/relation_islam_hinduism/kalachakra_presentation_prophets/kc_pres_prophets_islam_full.html). The above source in its detail seems to suggest some metaphysical connection with Shia Islam. In the commentary on the use of Buddhist prophecies in this era, they refer to messianic Shia Islam, the Mahdi, hence perhaps the alliance with Ismailism was not entirely a marriage of convenience (*et al*).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p.18.

the famed 12<sup>th</sup> century Persian Sufi Master Farid al-din 'Attar. Here the author uses a new approach to discern the secret Shia leanings of 'Attar from the metaphysical tendencies of his writings by comparing them to Shia concepts of existentialism. Yet Landolt observes that 'Attar in the true spirit of dissimulation places his Sufi writings as seemingly conceptually straddling the middle ground between Twelver Shiism and Ismailism, yet actually tilting a bit towards the latter. All the while 'Attar objectively asserts this own Sunnism posing as an objective writer on the subject in a Sunni ruled environment.<sup>22</sup> This approach is similar to one strand of the methodology used for this thesis. Yet the evidence is generally too interdisciplinary in terms of surviving historical, metaphysical, and archaeological material to be viably researched within a single discipline. In the department of the Study of Religions, having a multi-disciplinary approach, which is not necessarily a-historical, there is room for a thesis methodology to counter the argument presented by the Pakistani state on Ismailism in the country.

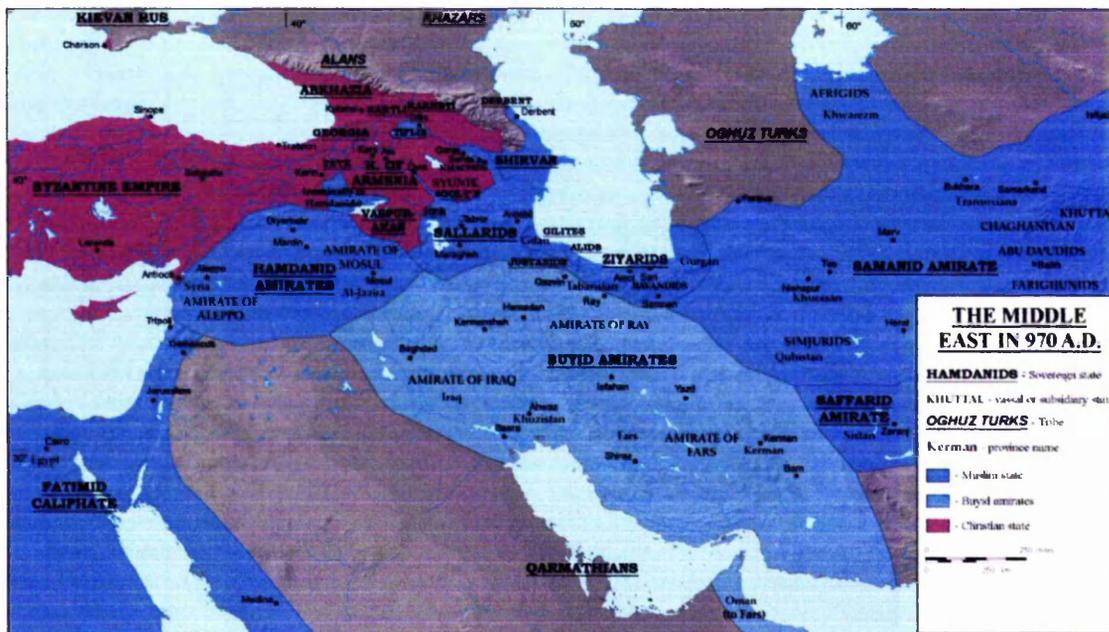
### The Shia Century

A few paragraphs are necessary to describe the general historical situation in the region in the tenth to twelfth centuries that resulted in the rule of the Ghaznavid Turks, with reference to its place in Pakistani state history and the context of this thesis. This is in light of the proper identification of their opponents, namely Ismailis and the Twelver Shia, and the relations that existed between them in India and the Middle East. Contrary to popular belief, Twelver Shiism and Ismailism were not always at loggerheads religiously, as has become the case in the recent era after the rise of clerical Twelver Shiism in Iran. This topic will be further touched upon in the next chapter. Nevertheless, there were endless squabbles and infighting between them due to ethnic, dynastic and territorial reasons. There reason was quite simply, that before the advent of the Ghaznavid era in the late tenth century, Sunni Islam had simply ceased to exist as a force in the Middle East and South-Western Asia, in what can only be called the Shia century

---

<sup>22</sup> Lewisohn and Shackle 2006, pp. 5-7.

(i.e. the tenth century). Its only mainstay was the Samanid State (819-998)<sup>23</sup> in eastern Iran and Central Asia, from where it made a comeback through the Ghaznavids, and later their temporal successors, the Seljuks in Iran, and the Ghorids in India and Afghanistan. The Ghorids herald the advent of the time period of this thesis.



1. The Middle East in 970, to the south east of the region of the Samanid Emirate would be the Hindu Shahi Kingdom and the Ismaili State of Sind and Multan

The Saffarids and their short term proto-Shia rule has already been mentioned for the embryonic role it played in the flowering of Shiism in the region.<sup>24</sup> In this century, the historically better acknowledged Ismaili denomination of Shiism which ruled Egypt and parts of the Hijaz as the Fatimid Caliphate (lasted 909-1171, with various break points),<sup>25</sup> and its squabbling Qarmati counterpart (899-1067) ruling over Arabia Felix and parts of Syria, was just one side of the story. Another facet was the Shia state of the Hamdanids in

<sup>23</sup> The Samanid State (819-998) was founded when a Persian (Tajik) noble Saman Khuda converted to Sunni Islam under the Abbasid Caliphate: Daniel 2001, p.74. Their capital was in Bukhara.

<sup>24</sup> See this chapter, fn.9 (previous) in 'Pakistani State History, the Arab Era and the Ghaznavids.' They were defeated by the Samanids in 900, and absorbed as a vassal, mellowing their Shia stance.

<sup>25</sup> For the Nizari-Musta'li split in Ismailism, and the subsequent shifting of the mission under Hasan bin Sabbah to Persia, upholding the succession rights of Nizar, the elder son of the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustansir (ruled 1036-1094 from a young age), and the continuation of the dynasty in Cairo under the younger son Musta'li after the split, see Daftary 1996, pp.4-5, 97, 181.

northern Syria (890-1004), and the Buwayhids in Iran and Iraq (934-1055). The Qarmatis had fluctuating yet mostly estranged relations with the Fatimids from whom they broke off as a movement in 899, just before the rule of the first Fatimid Caliph, yet freely negotiated agreements and treaties with the Hamdanids and the Buwayhids.<sup>26</sup> The territorial squabble between the Qarmatis and the Fatimids was accentuated by a doctrinal difference that entailed the return of the seventh Ismaili Imam (i.e. Ismail) as the Messiah for the former, as opposed to the first Fatimid Caliph, Abdullah al-Mahdi, who had claimed this mantle for himself on the establishment of his state in North Africa.<sup>27</sup> The Buwayhids had successfully incorporated the Sunni Abbasid Caliph into their state, and held him under their tutelage deriving validity from him, while summarily appointing and dismissing caliphs at Baghdad. The Ismaili State of Multan and Sind was a part of the Fatimid Empire, and its governor was designated from the Fatimid capital Cairo.

The religiosity of the Buwayhids and the Hamdanids is not fully established in academia, but an analysis of their patronage of scholars and related writings give them both clear Twelver Shia credentials. According to many modern scholars of Islam the Buwayhids were allegedly *Zaydi*,<sup>28</sup> a Shia denomination, but the doctrines of the *Imami* (term usually used for Twelvers, but also for Ismaili) Shia suited them politically.<sup>29</sup> The famous Twelver Shia theologian and narrator of traditions Shaykh al-Mufid (b. 948-1022) was patronised at the Buwayhid court in Baghdad, and wrote most of his thirty or so works under their patronage. He was a known Twelver Shia from the beginning of his life to the end. His works include the first written account in the Twelver tradition on the lives of the Twelve Imams. He wrote the book immediately after the Twelfth Imam is alleged to

---

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p.34.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid* 2007, pp.151-152.

<sup>28</sup> The Zaydi strand of Shiism is of a slightly different nature from Twelver or Ismaili belief. Their belief is that in the absence of an infallible (either Twelver or Ismaili) Imam, an imamate of a lesser Imam is permissible, with his rising against injustice, and that such an imamate will continue until the true Imam rises. For them this lesser Imam was Zayd bin Ali (the son of the fourth Twelver and Ismaili Imam, Ali ibn al-Husain), and his successors. More importantly, for theology the Zaydis use the Sunni school of Abu Hanifa and not the Ja'fari School used by Twelvers and Ismailis. Hence they are not Shia at all in jurisprudence. This approach was adopted by Zayd to give himself wider support amongst the Sunni caliphate and the populace, and consequently Zaydis have historically enjoyed more cordial relations with Sunnism, as opposed to the other two denominations: Jafri 1979, pp.343-344.

<sup>29</sup> This is the view of most western scholars, including A. K Howard, who wrote the introduction to the transliteration of al-Mufid's book: al-Mufid 1981, p.21.

have gone into complete occultation in 940, and when that community went into disarray due to this event. He is credited with bringing it together through his work and preaching, while being at the court of many Buwayhid rulers, who patronised him in this work. Two of his students are al-Sharif al-Radi (b.970) and his younger brother Murtada, who both worked under Buwayhid patronage.<sup>30</sup> The former is responsible for the first compiling of the sayings of the first Shia Imam Ali from a Twelver perspective, recalling the endtimes with the return of their Twelfth Imam from occultation, called *Nahj al-Balagha*, or Peak of Eloquence.<sup>31</sup> Mufid's other students included a certain Ja'far al-Tusi (b.995-1067), who is not to be confused with the later Nasir al-din Tusi, of both Twelver and Ismaili fame and born in 1201. Ja'far al-Tusi was also an eminent Twelver scholar, and after al-Mufid's death, associated with Murtada and was responsible for strengthening the Twelver community further under Buwayhid patronage.<sup>32</sup> One of his works is called *Kitab al-Ghayba*, or the Book of the Occultation, which clarifies the confusion and issues prevalent in the Twelver community regarding the occultation of their Imam.<sup>33</sup> After the Seljuk takeover of Baghdad in 1055, and subsequent anti-Shia reprisals, Ja'far al-Tusi retired to Najaf, where the first Shia Imam Ali is buried. There he set up the Najaf Seminary, which is the major pivot in the training of the Twelver clergy to this day. Hence the establishment of the Twelver Shia as a community can be first traced to the Buwayhid rulers.

The above facts cast serious doubts on the Buwayhids being Zaydi Shia at the time of their state in Iraq and Iran, as some modern scholars have argued. Their only tie to Zaydi Shiism is the initial conversion of Buwayhid clan members to Islam under the Zaydi Imam, Hasan bin Zayd.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore there are no historical references for their

---

<sup>30</sup> Donohue 2003, pp.332-333. Twelver sources mention the presence of an 80000 volume library in the possession of Murtada.

<sup>31</sup> Ismailis have their own compilation of such sayings.

<sup>32</sup> Donohue 2003, pp.332-333.

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.al-islam.org/occultation\\_12imam/3.htm](http://www.al-islam.org/occultation_12imam/3.htm). This is just one of a host of such books written by Twelver scholars under Buwayhid patronage in Iraq. Many of them like al-Tusi's book are only pre-occupied with proving to the Twelver Shia that their Imam's occultation was not a detrimental affair to the existence of that community. There seems to be great disarray in and a greater concerted effort to re-organise the Twelver community through patronage of their scholars under the Buwayhids.

<sup>34</sup> This conversion took place when the first Zaydi state was established in Tabaristan (northern Iran) in 864. It lasted until the death of its leader at the hands of the Samanids in 928: Kabir 1964, p.3.

patronage of Zaydi scholarship in the likeness of that given to Twelvers, or their governance in the name of a Zaydi Imam. It is probable that due to a strong Twelver presence in their camp from the beginning, they acquired some Twelver beliefs soon after their conversion, and just before the establishment of their state in 934, with the murder of Zaydi chiefs in northern Iran by the Samanids.<sup>35</sup> It is this authors' analysis that the Zaydi cover was used by the Buwayhids to only extract legitimacy from the Sunni Abbasid Caliph they held hostage under their tutelage. Since Zaydis use Hanafi Sunni jurisprudence, this would be a most suitable means to issue religious decrees and rule in the name of the hostage Abbasid Caliph, and would also calm the mindset of the Sunni masses they ruled over. The abolition of the seat of the Abbasid Caliphate entirely would have been the cause for a general uprising against the Buwayhids. In essence, from their religious patronage it would seem the Buwayhids had become Twelver Shia themselves since their Zaydi beginnings.

There are mentions of a Fatimid embassy to the Buwayhid ruler 'Adud al-Dawla (b. 936-983), who had patronised al-Mufid, to convince him of Fatimid sovereignty, necessarily implying diplomatic relations.<sup>36</sup> Donohue, writing of this embassy (of 369/980), speaks of its stay in Baghdad for three months. Thanks were sent to 'Adud al-Dawla by the Fatimid Caliph al-'Aziz on its return, for recognizing al-'Aziz's legitimacy. In the letter al-'Aziz (b.955-996) refers to himself as an Imam, yet uses the same phrase for the Buwayhid, implying a terms of equivalence between them. Disputing some earlier Muslim historians who had construed the affair of the embassy and the letter as showing that by acknowledging Fatimid suzerainty 'Adud al-Dawla had become Ismaili, Donohue asserts that this was not the case. It seems from the original sources that even though

---

<sup>35</sup> Some Zaydi traditionalists may have been accentuating a trend towards Twelver Shiism. Jassim Husain states that between the years 859-874 both Imami (i.e. Twelver) and Zaydi traditionalists were relating traditions that the Twelfth (Twelver) Imam Mohammad (b. 868) would be al-Qaim (i.e. The Mahdi). The Zaydi al-'Asfari (d. 864) and Imami Ahmad bin Khalid al-Barqi (d. 887) both related such traditions. Moreover, that these events took place just around the reported birth of the Twelfth Imam, which was a well publicised and awaited affair in that community even before his actual birth. Hence, many Imamis (Twelvers) joined forces with any Shia denomination seeing their uprising as signs for his coming. This included their participation in large numbers in the establishment of the Zaydi state of Tabaristan (above) responsible for the initial conversion of the Buwayhids to (Zaydi) Shiism: Husain 1982, p.29.

<sup>36</sup> Daftary 2007, p.176. Daftary, who is unimpressed with this connection, seems misinformed in this instance, and talks about the embassy's failure.

'Adud al-Dawla had no religious scruples recognizing the authority of the Fatimid Caliph as an Imam in Egypt, yet this does not mean he was an Ismaili himself.<sup>37</sup> On a further note the famed *Ikhwan al-Safa* or Brotherhood of Purity manuals, which are generally believed to have been written around 983-985 in Iraq, and are ascribed neo-Ismaili authorship by scholars,<sup>38</sup> would date to the rule of 'Adud al-Dawla's son Samsam (ruled 983-998). Daftary talks about a successful Ismaili missionary of Persian origin who was influential at the court of the Buwayhids in Shiraz at a later stage.<sup>39</sup> These facts show a higher level of tolerance of Ismailis and their missionary activity than was previously known, and a general Pan-Shia agenda, in spite of the usual disputes over territorial sovereignty, on the part of the Twelver Buwayhids.

As for the Hamdanids, beginning with the rise of the fourth Hamdanid Emir, Nasir al-Dawla (ruled 929-967) in Mosul, their religious conviction also becomes Twelver Shia. It showed itself in various ways, such as the attention lavished on Shia shrines, and the contributions that Nasir al-Dawla made to the Shia groups in Baghdad,<sup>40</sup> i.e. probably mainly Twelver groups under the Buwayhids. His contemporary Hamdanid Emir at Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawla (ruled 945-967) allegedly discovered the burial place of the third Imam al-Husain's son in the city to assert his claims to Shiism. In a specifically Twelver sense, there are the Shia poems of Sayf's cousin Abu Firas, who was a famous poet and was appointed governor of a town near Aleppo by Sayf. His poems extol the virtues of revered Shia personages, beginning with Ali and Fatima and ending with the Twelfth Imam in occultation.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Donohue 2003, pp.72-75.

<sup>38</sup> Daftary 1996, p.145 & 149. Samsam Dawla is said to have had 37 of the 51 volumes of the *Ikhwan* epistles in his own possession.

<sup>39</sup> This is in 1037 when al-Mu'ayyad, the chief Fatimid da'i of the Fars region, entered the service of the local Buwayhid Abu Kalijar. His influence led to large scale conversion to Ismailism amongst the locals and low rank Turkic soldiery, who were usually Sunni. This led to his expulsion from the region at the behest of the Sunni ulama of Fars: *Ibid.*, p.203.

<sup>40</sup> Bikhazi 1981, pp.43-44.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* Abu Firas al-Hamdani (b. 932-968) was the cousin of Sayf al-Dawla, who made him governor of the town of Manbej, near Aleppo. He was imprisoned by the Byzantines in one of Sayf al-Dawla's battles against them and spent six years in their jails, where he wrote his most famous Shia poems.

Yet this open display of Twelver Hamdanid Shiism is under the influence of the Fatimids. Moreover it was against the territorial designs of the Twelver Buwayhid state, showing a pragmatic tolerance and patronage for any brand of Shiism on the part of the Fatimids also, along with Buwayhid recognition of the Fatimid caliphate, as long as there was no conflict with their interests. It is alleged that Sayf al-Dawla's successor Sa'ad openly converted to Shiism under Fatimid pressure. Daftary has mentioned this event as evidence of Sa'ad's weariness of the declining power of the Buwayhids in the region, by his nominally acknowledging Fatimid sovereignty.<sup>42</sup> Yet there is no evidence for the Hamdanids ever being influenced by Ismaili thought either, the only Shiism associable to them is Twelver. In 1004 the Fatimids just took over the Hamdanids in Syria. On the other hand the Hamdanids also negotiated deals with the Qarmatis, the other Arabo-Persian Shia power in the region, so as to consolidate their suzerainty. Sayf al-Dawla showed great zeal in concluding a treaty with the Qarmatis where a certain amount of iron had to be paid to them.<sup>43</sup> Needless to say, this was done to play the larger powers of the region off against each other so to maintain the sovereignty of the small Hamdanid emirate, which was also a Byzantine vassal against the Buwayhids for a while, before Sayf switched his allegiance to the Fatimids.

Bikhazi strikes at the root cause of the Hamdanid-Buwayhid estrangement in his PhD thesis stating that it was born out of ethnicity. He states that the prospect of the (Buwayhid dominated) caliphate arising under the tutelage of a Daylamite (Persian) regime seemed likely to expose Mesopotamia to the double threat of an invasion, by a politically, culturally and ethnically alien people.<sup>44</sup> Hence, these two Twelver states were opposed to each other for reasons of ethnicity, one being Arab, and the other Persian. The Twelver Hamdanid Arab dynasty of Syria had a better liaison with the Arab Ismaili Fatimid Empire, while also paying off the Arab Qarmatis who had broken off from the Fatimids, against the Persian Buwayhids. While the Buwayhids made many treaties with the Qarmatis due to their natural Persian Gulf affinity with their neighbours, who had

---

<sup>42</sup> Daftary 2007, p.175.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid* 1996, p.34.

<sup>44</sup> Bikhazi 1981 p.456.

some ethnic Persian influence at an earlier stage.<sup>45</sup> The Qarmatis can be seen as a trump card, a heterodox ethno-religious Shia grouping with marauding tendencies, which was used by all sides to maintain a status quo in the region.

Yet in spite of this territorial and ethnic bickering amongst the different states, there seems to have been some consensus in the region for maintaining and patronising a general pan-Shia agenda and scholarship, especially among the major players, i.e. the Ismaili Fatimids and Twelver Buwayhids. The main factor may have been their realisation of absolute decimation at the hands of a reinvigorated Abbasid Caliphate. As for the scholarly class, they did not seem to ever have a problem with being patronised by either Twelver Shiism or Ismailism, or mixing the two in a spirit of cooperation, in their search for advancing scholarly gain and personal enlightenment. This is something that continued in the future under Nasir al-din Tusi at Alamut as we will see

#### The resurgence of Sunnism under the Ghaznavids

It was in the Shia century (plate 1) that the Ghaznavids rose to power from a dynastic dispute in the Samanid state, the only remaining Sunni entity in the region. They were the Turkic slave guards of the Sunni (Tajik) Samanid kings. The Samanids were engaged in extensive missionary work and were responsible for the first large scale concerted effort to convert entire Turkic clans in central Asia to Sunni Islam for the sole purpose of countering the Shia threat in the Islamic world.<sup>46</sup> Historians believe more than 200000 tents were initially converted to the Sunni cause in this way.<sup>47</sup> Although the Ghaznavids were an integral part of the Samanid court, on the periphery of Samanid influence another

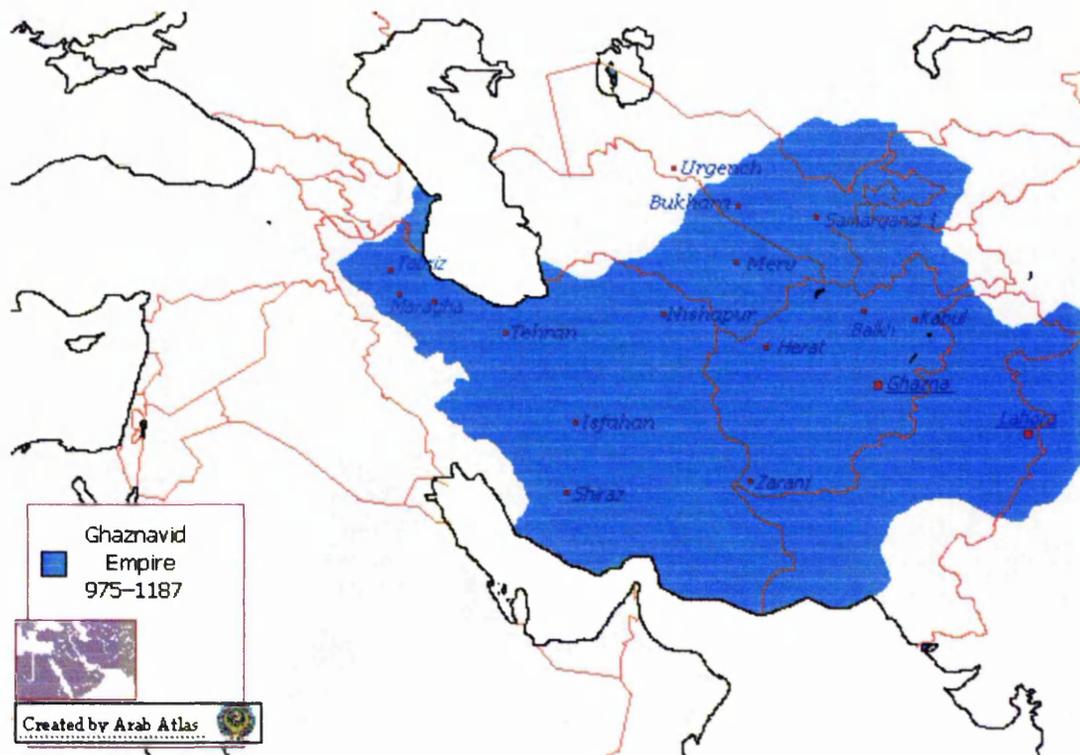
---

<sup>45</sup> In 931, the Qarmati leader Abu Tahir turned over the reins of the state in Bahrain to a young Persian in whom he had recognised the expected Mahdi (return of the Qarmati Messiah i.e. Ismail, at the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn). This Persian Mahdi abolished the Sharia and instituted ceremonies that shocked Muslims: Daftary 1994, p.21. This event can nevertheless be seen as an event in the Persianisation of the Qarmatis.

<sup>46</sup> This is aside from the fact that individual Turkic slaves were bought as children and brought up as soldiers for elite units in Islamic armies much before that. This had been a common practice which dated back to the Umayyad Caliphate in the early eight century, yet was always done on an individual and not a tribal basis, until the Samanids.

<sup>47</sup> Daniel 2001, p.74.

migrating tribe was converted to the anti-Shia cause; those were the Seljuks.<sup>48</sup> Yet it was the Ghaznavids who first took up the mantle of Sunni resurgence and became its champions.



2. The Ghaznavid Empire after the absorption of the Buwayhids of Rayy on Mahmud's death in 1030

The first Ghaznavid ruler Alptegin established his kingdom at Ghazna in 962, where he was previously a Samanid governor. He was succeeded in 975 briefly by his son, on whose death his son in law Sebuktegin ascended the throne in 977, made great territorial gains and founded the Ghaznavid Empire.<sup>49</sup> But the Ghaznavid Empire has become especially synonymous with Sebuktegin's son Mahmud, especially for its anti-Shia exploits and great territorial gains. Mahmud (ruled 998-1030) was given the title *Yamin al-Dawlah*, or preserver of the state by the Abbasid Caliph. The Abbasid Caliphate's fortunes changed because of Mahmud's wars against the Ismaili State in the Indus Valley

<sup>48</sup> In 950 they migrated to Khwarazm, near the city of Jend, next to the Aral Sea, where they converted to Islam: Wink 2004, p.9.

<sup>49</sup> Farishta 1981, vol. 1, p.15.

and Twelver Buwayhid Iran. He mercilessly destroyed the Ismaili State of Multan, and captured the Hindu Shahi kingdom allied to it in his first attack in 1005. It is said that he put so many Ismailis to the sword himself that his hand was stuck to its hilt.<sup>50</sup> The Buwayhids were divided into two emirates, one was called the Buwayhids of Rayy (near Tehran). These fell to Mahmud of Ghazna in 1027 before his death. Hence the reason Mahmud of Ghazna figures so highly in Pakistani state history becomes evident, as he is also a watershed figure in the history of larger Sunni Islam and its resurgence, not just Indian Muslim history.

Yet the Ghaznavids were fast overtaken by the Seljuks in pursuing the Sunni cause when Mahmud died in 1030, as his descendants could not govern the vast empire created by him. The Seljuks started raiding Mahmud's territories from their stronghold of Jend on the Aral Sea in his lifetime, but were repulsed back by him. After his death, under Toghrul Beg, they took over all of the Ghaznavid territories in Iran and Central Asia from his successor Mas'ud I in 1040,<sup>51</sup> and also secured the Abbasid Caliph's favour above the Ghaznavids as guardians of the faith.<sup>52</sup> The second batch of the Buwayhids in Iraq fell to Toghrul Beg's Seljuk armies under the Abbasid Caliph's commission in 1055. This freed the palace-bound Abbasid Caliph to safety from the last surviving Buwayhid ruler.<sup>53</sup> Then the Qarmatis were finally dealt a last blow in 1067 by the Seljuk army contingents from Iraq.<sup>54</sup> The Fatimids were overthrown in 1171 by Salah al-din Ayubi.

Even as Ismailism was the more dominant and dynamic brand of Shiism in the region in the face of this Sunni Turkic onslaught, the two Twelver Shia states in the Middle East,

---

<sup>50</sup> Khan 1983, p.45.

<sup>51</sup> Farishta 1981, vol. 1, p.93.

<sup>52</sup> This is the first time the Ghaznavids started looking to retire to India, and Lahore which was the capital for their Indian provinces, gained importance. After Ma'sud's loss of territory to the Seljuks, he dispatched his son Majdud and some of his best troops to consolidate control of Multan which still had a large Ismaili population even after his father's many massacres and mass expulsions. They had used the Seljuk invasions to revolt, and consequently had the *khutba* or Friday sermon read in the name of the Fatimid Caliph again: Bosworth 1977, pp.14, 30-31. Bosworth states here that Qarmati is specifically a pejorative Ghaznavid term for Ismailis.

<sup>53</sup> Until then the Buwayhid rulers had absolute control over the state and religious edict mechanisms necessary for ruling, and the Abbasid caliphs were mostly confined to their harem, from where their stamp could be easily procured: Husain 1978, p.226; Tabari, vol. 3, pp.1452-1465.

<sup>54</sup> Larsen 1984, p.65.

especially the Buwayhids and their pan-Shia agenda, had a major part to play in the religious and political legacy that led to the rise of Nizari Ismailism in Persia under Hasan bin Sabbah. Hasan was himself born to a Twelver family in the mid 1050s in Qumm near Rayy after the Ghaznavid takeover of 1027, and subsequent Seljuk conquest. He received his religious education as a Twelver, and was introduced to Ismailism in his teens in Rayy.<sup>55</sup> As we have seen this Ismaili presence was in part the result of the pan-Shia agenda and tolerance of Ismaili missionaries by the Buwayhids. It seems that after the destruction of the Buwayhids Ismailism in its covert missionary format was the only viable option left for anybody in Iran wishing to see a resurgent Shiism. It is subsequently under Hasan's Nizari Ismaili State in the 12<sup>th</sup> century that large scale missionary work in Indus valley began. Hasan bin Sabbah consolidated the castle of Alamut in 1090, which marks the beginning of the Nizari Ismaili State (1090-1256),<sup>56</sup> from an area that was a few decades prior under the proxy rule of the Buwayhids, and one of their Caspian Sea heartlands. Hasan would not have seen much difficulty in converting a population with Shia sympathies, yet very little has been researched about this connection.<sup>57</sup> It is from here that he made his mark in history through his ordering of the assassination of Sunni officials, religious personalities and enemies of Ismailism.

Hasan bin Sabbah's existence in this era, as that of his childhood friend and later nemesis of Omar Khayyam (b.1048-1122), who was responsible for a revival of Persian cultural traditions with his work under the patronage of Seljuk ruler Malik Shah (ruled 1072-1092), plays a pivotal part in the formulation of the Ismaili context of this thesis. This is a period of Persian Ismailism which Farhad Daftary and other scholars have called a revolutionary movement with nationalist trends against the Sunni Seljuks, whose rule was despised in Persia.<sup>58</sup> This is perhaps due to the Seljuk desire to appropriate Persian

---

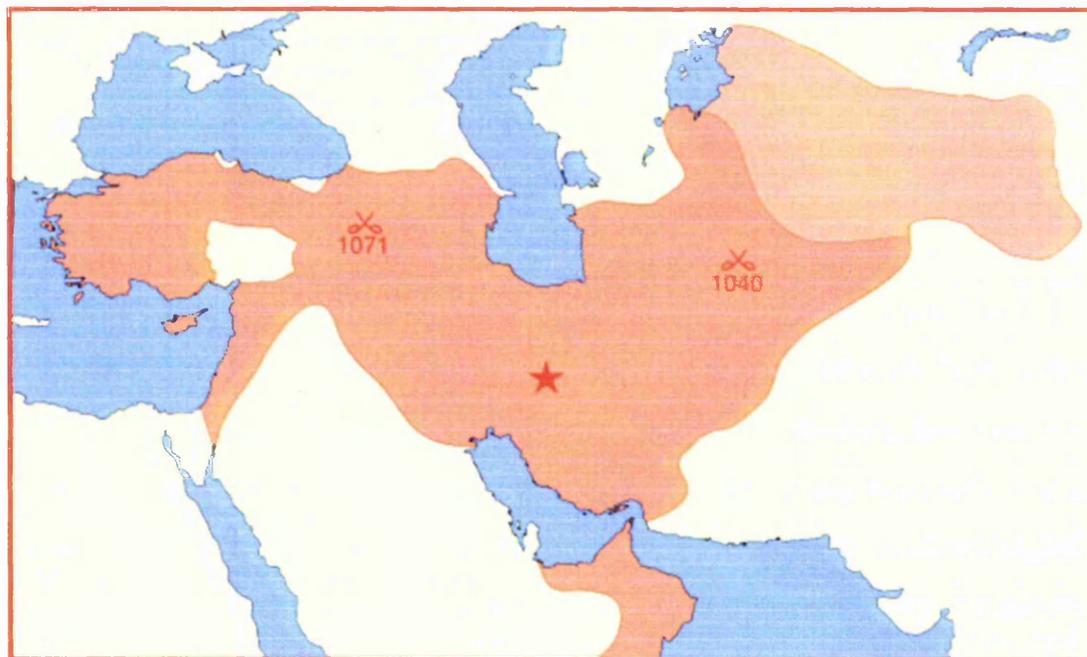
<sup>55</sup> Daftary 2007, p.311. Although the area was not under Buwayhid control on Hasan's birth, his father who was a clan chief certainly lived there when the Buwayhids ruled nearby Rayy.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid* 1996, p.5.

<sup>57</sup> According to Daftary, the castle was in the hands of a Zaydi ruler called Mahdi who had maintained his sovereignty in the post Buwayhid era. He was tricked into giving the castle to Hasan, yet did so without a fight, and Hasan paid him 3000 dinars for it: *Ibid* 2007, p.314. Yet the Buwayhids were also allegedly Zaydi according to some scholars. One must see this event within the context of their pan-Shia policy in the region and their personal religious affiliation and that of Hasan's family, which was Twelver Shia.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid* 1996, p.181.

cultural values for legitimacy (as in the case of Omar Khayyam's work), and patronise them so overtly that this became a feature of resistance amongst Persian Ismailis led by Hasan, who saw it as misappropriation by a foreigner.<sup>59</sup>



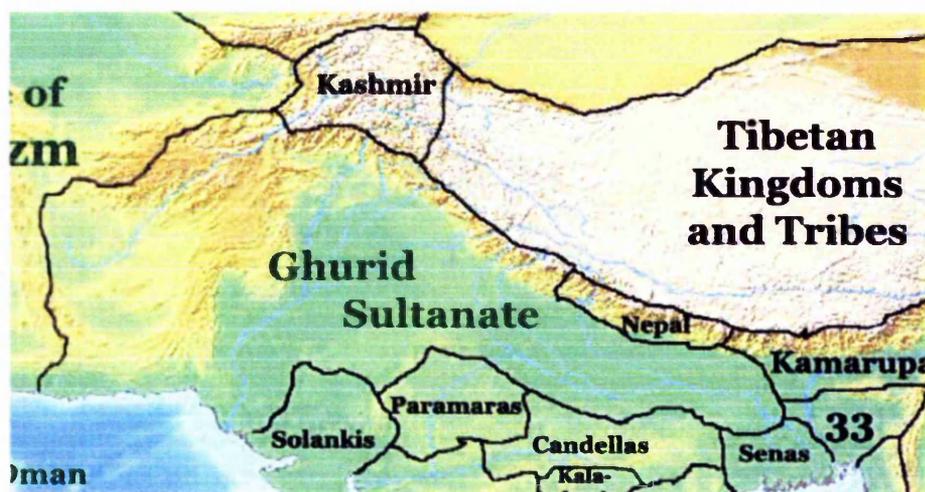
3.The Seljuk Empire upon the death of Malik Shah I in 1092

The Ghaznavids continued to rule over all their eastern territories from Ghazna, but the city was sacked by the Seljuks twice under Sultan Sanjar in 1117 and 1136, and had to pay tribute to them.<sup>60</sup> In 1151, after Sanjar's power (d. 1156) weakened the Ghaznavids were overrun by a new empire forming group called the Ghorids from central Afghanistan, who were of Tajik stock, yet relied on Turkic soldiery. They occupied Ghazna and sacked and burned it for seven days in 1151, driving the Ghaznavid ruler

<sup>59</sup> Hasan bin Sabbah's anti-Turkic sentiments, and the general dislike for Sunni Turkic rule in Iran and surrounding lands is discussed in detail in *Ibid* 2007, p.316.

<sup>60</sup> Bosworth 1977, pp.97 & 101. Sanjar was the last Seljuk Sultan (ruled 1118-1153) who tried to revive the Seljuk Empire, which had ruptured into individual empires amongst the feuding descendants of Malik Shah I after his death in 1092, yet their anti-Shia agenda had been achieved. Nur al-din Zengi, Sanjar's governor in Syria, was the benefactor of Salah al-din Ayyubi, who was responsible for the destruction of the Fatimids in 1171 in Egypt, Maalouf 1984, pp.160 ff. Only the Seljuks of Anatolia, established under Malik Shah's son Kilic Arslan survived till the Mongol invasions, from whence they recovered to finally become the Ottoman Empire. After Sanjar all the Seljuk territories in Iran and Central Asia were taken over by another ex-slave governor's (this ex-slave governor is Anushtegin, appointed by Malik Shah I to the province of Khwarazm) grandson, Qutb al-din Muhammad I, who declared the Khwarazm Empire. This event roughly coincided with the rise of the Ghorids: Bosworth in Boyle 1968, vol. 5, pp.66 & 93.

Bahram Shah (ruled 1118-1157) from it to Lahore for over a year.<sup>61</sup> He returned but only to have his son actually move the capital to Lahore in his short rule to escape the Ghorid threat.<sup>62</sup> After him, Khusrau Malik (ruled 1160-1186) was the last Ghaznavid ruler based in Lahore. Hence the last two Ghaznavids ruled permanently from Lahore, and remained as sovereigns in that city until 1186, when it too fell to the Ghorids.<sup>63</sup> Due to this act of making an Indian city their capital, albeit under duress, for a short period of time, the Ghaznavids are also credited with being the first Indian Muslim dynasty in Pakistani State history. The cruelty reported in historical sources on the part of the Ghorids, or the other infighting Tajik and Turkic Sunni denominations involved in the creation of this geo-political scenario, are merely summarised as smooth transitions from one dynasty to another in the state's version of history.



4. The Ghorids in 1200

After conquering Lahore in 1186,<sup>64</sup> the Ghorids advanced further into India, through their armies consisting of Turkic slaves under the Ghorid general Muhammad, also known as Mu'iz al-din Sam (b.1162-1206). They conquered and administered vast territories on a

<sup>61</sup> Bosworth 1977, p.115. In addition the early Ghorids also pursued an anti-Ismaili agenda by massacring the small community in Ghor and its da'i dispatched from Alamut just after their sack of Ghazna: Daftary 2007, p.356.

<sup>62</sup> Bosworth 1977, p.122.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p.130.

<sup>64</sup> The last Ghaznavid ruler Khusrau Malik surrendered to the Ghorids at Lahore and was sent back to Ghor as prisoner, and later executed: *Ibid.*, p.131.

regent-slave system similar to the one the Seljuks had operated in the previous century when expanding further into Byzantium i.e. Turkey, from Iran, and laid the foundations for an Islamic empire based in India for the first time. Mu'iz al-din Sam governed the Indian territories from Ghazna in the name of his elder brother and regent Ghiyath al-din (based in Ghor), through his slave governors.<sup>65</sup> He remained commander of the army and vice-regent till Ghiyath al-din Ghorī died in 1202, and Mu'iz ascended the throne. Mu'iz al-din had no sons, yet was very attached to his Turkic slaves. It is reported anecdotally that whenever he was reminded of the necessity of having a son to preserve his rule, he responded by saying that he had thousands of sons (i.e. slaves). On his murder in 1206 his slaves inherited the different regions of his empire where they had acted as local governors. In India this heralded the beginning of the period in Indian Muslim history called the Sultanate Era, which is the main context era for this thesis. It lasted from 1206 until 1526, until the Mughals took it over. It is important to note that Mu'iz al-din was killed by a lone Ismaili assassin while on a campaign in the Indus Valley,<sup>66</sup> who was probably acting on orders from the Ismaili headquarters at Alamut, set up under Hasan bin Sabbah in 1090.

---

<sup>65</sup> Farishta 1981, vol. 1, p.161.

<sup>66</sup> Khan 1983, p.51.

## Chapter One: The Suhrawardi Order

### An Historic Overview

After the conquest of the Buwayhids of Iraq and takeover of Baghdad by the Seljuks under Toghrul Bey in 1055,<sup>67</sup> there was general anarchy in the city, and a staunch anti-Shia agenda was pursued. There were large scale riots and the main targets were the old state's institutions and centres of Shia learning which were systematically sacked and burnt down by Seljuk troops, joined by the local Sunni population. This included the 80000 volume library built up by the Twelver scholar Murtada al-Radi under state patronage,<sup>68</sup> and the retiring of other scholars to less dangerous areas. After consolidating their conquest, one of the first tasks the Seljuks undertook was to set up institutions of higher Sunni learning to undo the scholarly damage done to that tradition in Buwayhid times. The famed Seljuk minister Nizam al-Mulk was set around this task, and the institutions which came up were promptly named *Nizamiyyas* after him.<sup>69</sup> The foundations for the struggle of the next century in Iran and the Indus Valley between an erstwhile Sufi cloak donning Nizari Ismailism and a resurgent Sunnism under pan-Turkic rule were laid in the late 1000s by the personal and ideological struggles of three vibrant personalities. While Hasan bin Sabbah reinvigorated Ismailism at Alamut, his childhood acquaintances and ideological nemeses Nizam al-Mulk and Omar Khayyam played a pivotal part in reshaping state institutions in conquered areas. Their work granted the foreign Sunni Seljuks cultural legitimacy in Arabo-Persian lands in the aftermath of the Shia century.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> See Introduction, 'The resurgence of Sunnism under the Ghaznavids.'

<sup>68</sup> See Ibid, 'The Shia Century.'

<sup>69</sup> Boyle 1991, p.71.

<sup>70</sup> Although modern Iranian scholars doubt the legendary friendship between the three due to the thirty year age difference between Nizam al-Mulk, and Hasan bin Sabbah and Omar, an earlier association is still assertable, especially between the latter two. After Toghrul's capture of Baghdad, the functional capacity of the Seljuks, and the general consolidation of Sunni rule, was almost entirely dependent on Nizam al-Mulk's organisational talents. According to Daftary he was the virtual de facto ruler of Seljuk dominions until his assassination in 1092, allegedly ordered by Hasan from Alamut, after which Seljuk unity just fell apart: Daftary 2007, pp.197 & 209.

The most famous Nizamiyya was the one set up by Nizam al-Mulk in 1065 in Baghdad under Toghrul's successor and Malik Shah's predecessor Alp Arslan (ruled 1063-1072). Yet it unlikely that in the aftermath of such a frenzied pan-Shia environment as seen under the Buwayhids, which saw the consolidation of the Twelver community, cutting edge neo-Ismaili scholarship like the Brethren of Purity, along with the free movement of Ismaili missionaries and their proselytism,<sup>71</sup> Shiism would just disappear under Seljuk persecution. In all likelihood it just went underground using the traditional practice of *taqiyya* or dissimulation for survival, and started expressing itself in newer and more discreet ways.

Although the pragmatist would describe the beginnings of Sufism as the exchange of metaphysical ideas and practices between monastic adherents of the Abrahamic religions and Zoroastrianism in eighth century Middle East, real Sufi literature and thought only surface towards the end of the eleventh century in post-Seljuk Iraq. In this it coincides with a post-Buwayhid underground pan-Shiism exercising dissimulation in the face of active persecution by the Seljuks. It is needless to assert that some of the Shiism which had disappeared after the Seljuk takeover simply took on a convenient Sufi garb in a hostile environment. Yet this is not to state in any way that this flowering of Sufism was exclusively Shia; just that in the muddled religious environment of Seljuk Iran and Iraq Sufism gave refuge to Shia thought and scholarship, which in turn expressed itself as a voice opposing the traditional views of the Sunni 'Ulama. This opposition was usually in the shape of metaphysical treatises and theological discourses.

The name Suhrawardi is carried by three celebrated Islamic mystics who lived near contemporaneously in the post Seljuk era and hailed from a city called Suhraward in Iranian Azerbaijan. The Suhrawardi Sufi Order was established by a certain Abu Najib Suhrawardi who was born in 1097 in Suhraward, west of Sultaniyya, in the province of Al-Jibal in Iran. He died in 1168, and according to traditional historians his life and times as a Sufi are said to revolve by around his association with Shaykh Ahmad al-Ghazali, the brother of the famed Abu Hamid al-Ghazali who taught at the Nizamiyya at

---

<sup>71</sup> See Introduction, 'The Shia Century.'

Baghdad.<sup>72</sup> He started his own *khanqah* or lodge on the banks of the Tigris as soon as he reached spiritual proficiency. Due to Abu Najib's association with al-Ghazali's brother any dissimulative Shiism on his part would be difficult to propose.

The name Suhrawardi is attached to two personalities a generation later, one of whom plays a central part in defining the future course of this Sufi order and its expansion into the Indus Valley. This was Abu Najib's nephew, Abu Hafs Umar al-Suhrawardi, born in January 1145 (d.1234) in Baghdad. He was taught by different Sufi masters of the time, and after a systematic study of *tasawwuf* or Sufi doctrine, was initiated into the Order by his uncle Shaykh Abu Najib.<sup>73</sup> He went on to succeed his uncle and headed the Suhrawardi Khanqah in Iraq, enjoying patronage and favour at the re-invigorated Abbasid court. His Sufi associations are more traceable in history to Abdul Qadir Gilani, who is said to have stated about him in his youth, 'Umar, you are the last of the famous ones from Iraq.'<sup>74</sup> His associations with his uncle do not imply an inherent Sunnism on his part. Abu Hafs seems to have heralded the change, by befriending the Ismaili Imam of the time, and also to have played a part in his outward conversion to Sunnism.<sup>75</sup> Al-Huda states that the lack of actual evidence on Hasan III's conversion to a (dissimulative) Sunnism due to Abu Hafs's personal involvement is conversely complemented by the metaphysical and theological reforms made by each in the corpus of their communities, i.e. the Suhrawardi Order and the Nizari Ismaili community, which thoroughly resemble each other. Furthermore, a generation later the Twelver Shia scholar cum Ismaili heresiographer Nasir al-din Tusi (b.1201-1274) who wrote the doctrine for the periods of occultation at Alamut, looked back and explained the supposed conversion of Hasan III to Sunnism as a necessary act of taqiyya or dissimulation made incumbent by the new *satr* or era of concealment which had then begun.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.13. The famous al-Ghazali was known to be an orthodox Sunni, and was appointed as the head of the Nizamiyya of Baghdad in 1091 by Nizam al-Mulk.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>74</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.344.

<sup>75</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.36. The Ismaili Imam Hasan III converted to Sunnism in 1211, and started observing orthodox Islamic practice. This decision was made so as to limit the isolation of the feuding and impoverished Ismaili community from the outside world in the latter half of the post Hasan bin Sabbah Alamut period, in that it was also an act in the spirit of dissimulation: Daftary 2007, pp.375-378.

<sup>76</sup> Daftary 2007, pp.36-37. Since medieval Ismailism actually depends on fixed astrological cycles and sub-cycles for marking changes in their religious demeanor, this was most probably the actual reason for this

In Lewisohn and Shackle's book on Farid al-din 'Attar, Hermann Landolt mentions the notion of an 'unconscious Ismailism' on the part of Abu Hafs.<sup>77</sup> In light of the general dissimulative historical situation in Iraq at this point and his own connections to Ismailism, albeit visibly reformed through Hasan III's alleged conversion to Sunnism, it is highly likely that Abu Haf's Ismailism was more conscious than anything else. This would make a great deal of sense for his Sufi Order and its activities in the Indus Valley under his disciple Zakariya, whose Ismaili connections are more traceable.

The other person bearing the Suhrawardi name was Yahya bin Habash Suhrawardi, who was responsible for the development of a multi-faith transcendental philosophy, which included elements of Zoroastrianism. His most noted biographer states his year of birth as being 1171, in the village of Zanjan around the vicinity of Suhraward.<sup>78</sup> His formal connection and initiation into the already established Suhrawardi Order in Iraq remain to be explored. He received the title *Shaykh al-Ishraq* or Master of Illumination by his followers for his treatise on spiritual illumination, which was to later become a core document for Iranian Sufi masters. He wrote several works on the metaphysics of spiritual illumination by combining Greek, Zoroastrian and Muslim thought. Some have argued that he might have been influenced by Shaivism also.

Modern scholars on Sufism would argue against any connection of Yahya and his Zoroastrianism-inspired philosophy to the Suhrawardi Sufi Order in Iraq. Yet the metaphysical connections found between the latter to Ismailism in the Indus Valley, and to its multi-faith system of the Satpanth which is hinged around Nauroz, calls for greater research into this subject. It is mostly likely that this metaphysical commonality with a Zoroastrian theme derives from Shia metaphysics based on the Persian New Year. Not much is known about Yahya's short life except that he taught initially in Anatolia at the court of a local Seljuk Sultan and then moved to Aleppo, where he was granted patronage

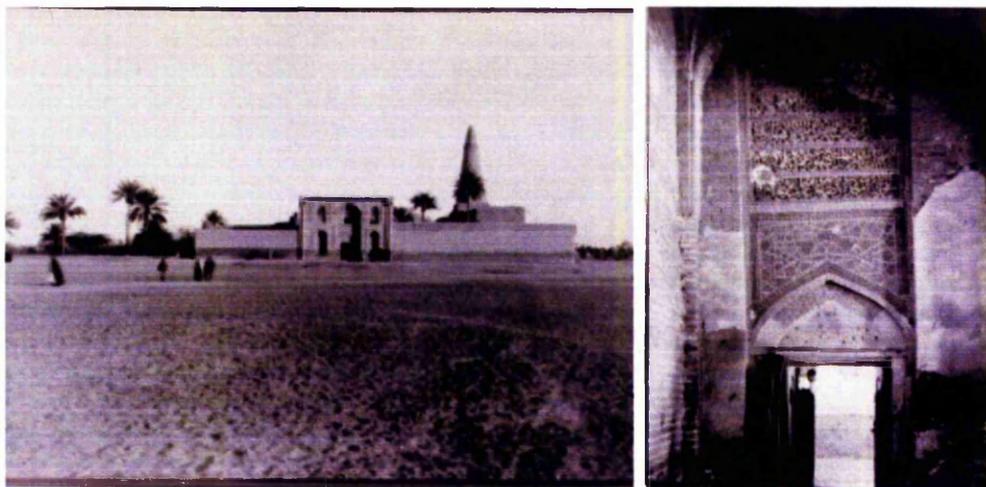
---

conversion. Daftary also talks about the 'dissimulative Sunnism' and a revival of Ismailism at Alamut later: Daftary 2007, pp.378-379.

<sup>77</sup> Lewisohn and Shackle 2006, p.11.

<sup>78</sup> Razavi 1997, p.2.

and favour by Prince Zahir, a son of Salah al-din Ayyubi. This favour was short-lived and he was executed in 1191 against Prince Zahir's wishes on the orders of his father Salah al-din, after allegations by the clergy for holding heretical ideas,<sup>79</sup> and perhaps for his Shiism. Landolt comments on Yahya's metaphysical Ismailism as being more pronounced in his *Ishraq* or Illumination doctrine than in Abu Hafs's work by connecting it directly to an Ismaili text written a few years after his execution.<sup>80</sup> Hossein Nasr says, 'The causes for (Yahya) Suhrawardi's death cannot be truly discovered until the situation of the region historically, religiously, philosophically and socially is thoroughly investigated'.<sup>81</sup> The events of Yahya's murder took place at a time in the post-Seljuk era when the Fatimids had been conquered by Salah-al-din. In such a situation the Sunni jurists were in no mood to allow a young philosopher, with suspected Shia tendencies, to corrupt Salah-al-din's son Zahir, in whose court Suhrawardi lived.<sup>82</sup> The title of *Shihab al-din* or the 'comet of religion' was given to both Abu Hafs and Yahya which adds to the confusion found around their personalities in Sufi anecdote.



5. Shrine of Umar al-Suhrawardi, Iraq

---

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Lewisohn and Shackle 2006, p.5.

<sup>81</sup> Razavi 1997, p.2.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

The main focus of this chapter is on the establishment of the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley under delegation from Abu Hafs Umar al-Suhrawardi. Here under its local proponents it took on its own dynamic and flourished separately while the order declined in Iraq after the Mongol onslaught. It would be safe to conclude that in the relaxed multi-religious environment of India the order became naturally more heterodox than it was under dissimulation in post-Seljuk Iraq, and diversified further from its original views.

#### The Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley: Religious and Political Overview

The Suhrawardi Order was established in the Indus Valley by Baha al-din Zakariya in Multan. The primary Indian Sufi commentary *Siyar al-Arifin* narrates his birth as being on 3 June 1171 at Multan. He was born to a rich Arab family, originally settled in Khwarazm (Transoxiana), which had migrated to Multan in the time of his grandfather in the Seljuk Era. Ahmad Nabi Khan, relying on two primary sources, cites his reaching early proficiency in traditional Islamic sciences, after which he went to centres of learning in the Islamic world. At the age of seventeen he reached Baghdad and became the disciple of Abu Hafs Umar al-Suhrawardi. After just seventeen days of training he was appointed as successor to the Shaykh and returned to Multan to establish a Suhrawardi khanqah there.<sup>83</sup> Upon protests by the Iraqi disciples on why an Indian had been shown such great favour so quickly, Abu Hafs replied that 'he was like dry wood waiting to catch fire when he reached me, while you are still wet twigs'.<sup>84</sup>

Upon his arrival back in Multan Zakariya established his khanqah, which soon grew into a lavish building compound and became famous for both its material wealth as well as its religious prestige. The Sufi text *Akhbar al-Akhyar* states that the saint worked from this site for more than half a century, where separate accommodation and lodging was provided for all disciples, guests and visitors.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Khan 1983, p.190: *Tarikh-e-Farishta* vol. 2, p.760; *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, p.44.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*: *Siyar al-Arifin*, pp.103-104.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190: *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, p.26.

For the purpose of outlining the general persistence of Ismailism in this context, and Zakariya's connection to it, a brief look back at the local political situation of the time is required, so as to complement the picture of contemporaneous Suhrawardi Sufi activity. The Ghorid Mu'iz al-din Sam, who had created a huge empire for his regent brother Ghiyath al-din Muhammad in northern India from the territories of the Ghaznavids, and which he inherited on the latter's death in 1202,<sup>86</sup> had his own history of vanquishing Ismailism. First his regent brother attacked and devastated the Alamut connected Ismaili fortresses in Quhistan (eastern Iran), after which Mu'iz al-din made further raids into that area himself.<sup>87</sup> Then in 1175 Mu'iz al-din is reported to have made a massacre of Ismailis in Multan and while returning to Ghazna appointed a new governor to the region based in Uch, Ali Karmakh, to further subdue Ismailism there, a task he actively pursued.<sup>88</sup> This would seem odd unless the situation in Multan, the biggest city in the region, was so dangerous for Ghorid officials that its governor was based in Uch instead, due to assassination fears from the proximity of a local Ismaili population. Mu'iz al-din Sam died of injuries from an assassination attempt at the hands of a lone Ismaili da'i in Jhelum near present day Islamabad in March 1206,<sup>89</sup> probably while on an anti-Ismaili campaign. In light of the incidents in Quhistan as well as in Multan the order for this assassination, as was the norm, must have come straight from Alamut.

According to Zakariya's biography, he must have returned to Multan around the late 1180s when Ali Karmakh was pursuing his anti-Ismaili commission as governor of Uch, from where Multan was also ruled. The power vacuum in Multan suggests that it must have been very easy for local favourites to become overlords as happened in the case of Zakariya. Historical sources do not talk about Ali Karmakh's relationship to Zakariya, only that he was based in Uch, and nothing is known about Multani politics except the incursions by Mu'iz and his governor. Following in the footsteps of his mentor Abu Hafs, Zakariya enjoyed the favour and loyalty of the local Multani elites, which judging from the political situation must also have included landed pre-Ghaznavid Ismailis exercising

---

<sup>86</sup> See Introduction, 'The resurgence of Sunnism under the Ghaznavids.'

<sup>87</sup> Daftary 2007, p.374.

<sup>88</sup> Khan 1983, p.47; Farishta, vol. 1, p.56.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p.51.

dissimulation. Zakariya rose to command a near absolute say in the decision making process in Multan. It would seem that this was due to the influence of his spiritual mentor Abu Hafis in Iraq, in addition to his own landed Multani background. When Ali Karmakh died in the early late 1190s Mu'iz al-din appointed Nasir al-din Qabacha as his replacement in Uch,<sup>90</sup> who was to later become totally enamored with Zakariya. A thorough examination of the interplay between Zakariya's king-making, his relationships with temporal rulers, and the Ismaili personality of Shams are important in ascertaining his own Ismaili connections. There are few signs to show that any members of the Suhrawardi Order associated with Zakariya ever lived in poverty, or advocated a poverty stance. This contrasts with their good relations with ascetics and dervishes, who possessed nothing except the clothes on their bodies. Their material well-being seems to have been derived from their own organisational capacity and ability to generate revenue in destitute times with war and political strife in that region, rather than from royal grants. Indeed, in the case of the Indus Valley, they seem to have been much richer than the local rulers themselves. These facts raise questions about the true nature of their funding and associated activities.

After Mu'iz's murder in 1206, his vast kingdom was divided between his trusted slaves ruling as governors in their respective principalities, each of whom became independent. Khurasan and Ghazna went to Taj al-din Ilduz, Delhi and northern India beyond the Punjab went to Qutb al-din Aybak who was succeeded by his son-in-law Iltutmish in 1211 at Delhi, after a brief one year rule by his son. Uch went to Nasir al-din Qabacha, its resident governor (initially just semi-independent under Aybak from Delhi), who had succeeded Ali Karmakh on his death.<sup>91</sup> Qabacha declared himself Sultan in 1210 with Aybak's death, and further extended his rule into Multan soon after.<sup>92</sup> This statement is

---

<sup>90</sup> Sources like Farishta talk about Ali Karmakh but give no date for his death, but the time frame of the thesis suggests it was the mid to later 1190s.

<sup>91</sup> Farishta states that Qabacha had served with Mu'iz al-din for many years under various important posts and had excellent qualities: Farishta 1981, vol. 2, p.161 ff. Yet this may be an aspect of his glorifying the Imperial Muslim past of India, the purpose for which his history was written. The incoming Qabacha would still be playing second fiddle to Mu'iz al-din's older trusted slave governors in India, hence his need for local alliances, like with Zakariya.

<sup>92</sup> Khan 1983, p.51.

derived from the primary source by Juzjani,<sup>93</sup> and would suggest that till 1210 Multan was in fact still not under direct control from Uch. After Mu'iz's anti-Ismaili campaigns, it may have enjoyed some degree of freedom with a peace treaty arrangement for paying tithes and subsidiary taxes to the Ghorid governor based in Uch, as was the usual case in those days. It would also imply a defacto decision-making mechanism and a ruler, which would be the old Multani elite and Zakariya.

Conversely, as ruler of Uch, Nasir al-din Qabacha, who was an associate and devotee of Zakariya, could not have arranged this takeover of Multan in 1210 from his base at Uch without the Suhrawardi shaykh's tacit support. When Qabacha inherited Uch on Mu'iz's death in 1206, he initially came to Multan to meet Zakariya, presumably seeking sanction for his rule by a spiritual authority, and left as his devotee.<sup>94</sup> In the post-Mu'iz al-din Indus Valley Zakariya seems to have served as the only agency of spiritual and political certitude in an era of continuous fratricide among Turkic slave governor-kings.<sup>95</sup> Obviously, Zakariya's relationship with Qabacha must be traced in retrospect to his first office as governor of Uch, from where he must have come across Zakariya's personality. This is the time period when the Ismaili da'wa made a remarkable comeback in the Uch and Multan region in the form of Shams. A very interesting political scenario exists in here, with a great upsurge in da'wa under Shams, a semi-free Multan under Zakariya and its local elite, governed on the death of the anti-Shia Ali Karmakh by an incoming Qabacha in Uch, who thanked Zakariya on his new inheritance, when an Ismaili da'i assassinates Mu'iz al-din Sam.

In terms of overt Ismaili activity in the region, Shams had never espoused any dissimulation about his Ismailism or related missionary work. His initial visit to Uch, the reported working of his miracle there in the late 1190s, and the later expansion of the

---

<sup>93</sup> The *Tabaqat-e-Nasiri* is a detailed history by a certain Usman bin Siraj al-din Juzjani, who first came to India in 1227 and became a historian at the court of Iltutmish after Mu'iz al-din's empire broke up. His father Siraj al-din was a jurist in Mu'iz's army in India, and was originally from Ghazna. He lived through the reign of four Delhi Sultans after Iltutmish and completed the history in 1260, the most detailed biography of that era.

<sup>94</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.362.

<sup>95</sup> This is in a city with an un-quelled history of Ismailism, which kept revolting against the Ghaznavids in the previous two centuries, see Introduction, 'The resurgence of Sunnism under the Ghaznavids.'

da'wa from Uch to Multan under him in the early 1200s could not have happened without the knowledge of Mu'iz al-din, Ali Karmakh and later Qabacha. In the case of Qabacha this would be either in his initial capacity as governor of Uch, or when he became its independent ruler, with such Ismaili missionary work only made possible through some official tolerance shown to Shams, which in retrospect can be traced back to Zakariya. This was a time when local governors exercised more control than the imperial authority far removed from the local context. In this case, the governor was a complying self-declared Sultan, devoted to Zakariya in the end.

During Qabacha's rule as self-proclaimed Sultan from 1210 to 1228, a few incidents available from primary sources occurred, some of which have no exact historical corroboration in terms of dates, in which Zakariya figured prominently. These incidents happened when Qabacha took over Multan from Uch; his first and last bastion which always served as his power base and was lost to him only in the end, just a month before his boat capsized in a final battle against Iltutmish on 30 May 1228.<sup>96</sup> There was a bone of contention between Iltutmish and Qabacha since the latter declared himself Sultan at Uch in 1210 after Aybak's death, seceding from the imperial government at Delhi.<sup>97</sup> There is evidence that Qabacha controlled the area as far as Lahore until 1217 (after his takeover of Multan with Zakariya as its spiritual head) when Iltutmish finally took it back from him in a battle in 1217.<sup>98</sup> An undated settlement of the dispute was arranged by Zakariya between Qabacha and Iltutmish, who greatly respected the Shaykh,<sup>99</sup> in spite of Zakariya's spiritual mantle patronising Qabacha's dominions; this settlement was most certainly associated with the Lahore issue of 1217.

Zakariya had initially written an open letter to Iltutmish, inviting him to march on Multan<sup>100</sup> itself against his devotee Qabacha, which was probably the reason for the invasion instead of Lahore by Iltutmish and the subsequent rapprochement arranged

---

<sup>96</sup> Uch was captured by Iltutmish on 5 May 1228: Khan 1983, p.53; Juzjani, vol. 1, p.419.

<sup>97</sup> The reason for this contention was Iltutmish being the son-in-law of Aybak, due to which a family feud ensued, in addition to the loss of imperial territory: Khan 1983, p.51; Juzjani, vol. 1, pp.418-419; Khawand Shah, vol. 4, p.646.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p.53; Juzjani, vol. 1, p.419.

<sup>99</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.362b.

<sup>100</sup> al-Huda 2004, p.118.

between the two rulers. The letter had been intercepted by Qabacha's agents, to which the Shaykh openly owned up, saying he had written under divine guidance and Qabacha was free to act in anyway he wanted.<sup>101</sup> Qabacha pardoned Zakariya;<sup>102</sup> such was the Shaykh's spiritual clout both with the ruler and in the region as a whole. Multan was finally captured by Iltutmish in 1227 and he appointed Zakariya as the *Shaykh al-Islam* or the highest religious authority in the empire, after the takeover from Qabacha.<sup>103</sup>

These power relations are important in this context because in this period Ismaili da'is like Shams operated freely, making this comparatively small region his power base. In light of this thesis's historical critique, this could have been possible only with Zakariya's influence with the authorities, when he served as the absolute spiritual and temporal authority in the region of Multan and Uch. He successfully played off Qabacha in Uch against Iltutmish at Delhi while commanding the respect of both, but favouring the latter in the end.

In addition to Iltutmish, Nasir al-din Qabacha was fighting to expel a foreign prince and his army from the environs of Uch. This was Jalal al-din Minkburni, the last Khwarazm Shah.<sup>104</sup> He had come to the Indus Valley with his army in 1221, after the Battle of the Indus and his defeat at the hands of Chengiz Khan.<sup>105</sup> He hoped to seek refuge at Delhi with his Sunni Turkic kinsmen, which was denied for fear of triggering a Mongol invasion into India, and he hence left in 1226.<sup>106</sup> He had entered India followed by Mongol parties, and was actually pursued by Chengiz Khan himself as far as the Indus. The same time Qabacha also had to fight off incursions of Mongols who had followed Minkburni in pursuit. To cope with this dire situation of war on many fronts, Qabacha

---

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> According to Sindhi, Zakariya wrote the letter because of Qabacha's generally cruel attitude which the former disliked. Zakariya owned up to the letter citing cruel behaviour towards the populace as the reason, for which Qabacha actually apologised, bidding farewell to the Shaykh very respectfully with gifts: Sindhi 2000, p.362.

<sup>103</sup> al-Huda 2004, p.119: *Siyar al-Arifin*, p.175.

<sup>104</sup> See Introduction, 'The resurgence of Sunnism under the Ghaznavids.' The Khwarazm Empire had taken over from the last Seljuk Sultan Sanjar in Iran and Central Asia and endured till it was destroyed by the Mongol onslaught in 1220, triggered by the killing of Chengiz Khan's ambassadors by the last Khwarezem Shah 'Ala al-din. His son Jalal al-din consequently crossed the Indus with his followers to take refuge.

<sup>105</sup> Daftary 2007, p.386.

<sup>106</sup> Khan 1983, p.52.

had continuously asked Zakariya for material and spiritual help against the foreigners in Multan,<sup>107</sup> especially the Mongols.

According to Athar Abbas Rizvi, it appears that Zakariya was very rich even before he was appointed Shaykh al-Islam to the Delhi Sultanate. On one occasion, the governor of Multan (i.e. from Uch) needed grain during a famine and was given a full storehouse by the Shaykh. A pot of silver coins, which had been found among the grain, was returned to the Shaykh by the governor, who said he had asked only for grain, not money. The Shaykh replied that he merely wished to give the governor money as well.<sup>108</sup>

Although undated in the primary source, this incident obviously occurred before Qabacha declared himself Sultan in 1210, in addition to predating Zakariya's appointment as Shaykh al-Islam, which was under Iltutmish after his conquest of Multan in 1227. The reference here is either to the governor Ali Karmakh, or to Nasir al-din Qabacha in that capacity, and most likely refers to the latter due to his closer association with Zakariya. After the annexation of Multan and Sind by Iltutmish, the relations between the Shaykh and the Sultan became cordial. In 1247, when the Mongols besieged the walled city of Multan, the Shaykh offered 100,000 dinars to the invaders and persuaded them to raise the siege, negotiating peace through a Muslim dignitary in the Mongol army.<sup>109</sup>

Statements about Zakariya's wealth are also found in other Sufi commentaries. *Siyar al-Arifin* describes the Shaykh as having his own granaries next to the extensive khanqah, amongst other institutions, and leaving 700,000 pieces of silver as inheritance for each of his seven sons.<sup>110</sup> Such incidents show Zakariya to be playing a bigger financial and institutional role than the state itself, and the Mongol affair of 1247 suggests this went on even after the absorption of the province into the Delhi Sultanate under Iltutmish. Zakariya's activities included the establishment of new khanqahs in the region and the

---

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*: *Fawa'id al-Fawad*, p.185.

<sup>108</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.192: *Tarikh Namah-e-Herat*, pp.236-237.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Khan 1983, p.190: *Siyar al-Arifin*, p.151 & 164.

construction of his own lavish shrine before his death, from his own finances.<sup>111</sup> These conditions clearly show a weak and crippled state under constant threat from external aggression and internal strife, being effectively governed by a Sufi shaykh in the person of Zakariya, who also partly managed its foreign policy. It must be reiterated that since these events took place at the break up of Mu'iz al-din's empire and soon afterwards around the peak of the Mongol onslaught in this region, when the state generally must have been very destitute. Hence, with no royal grants for Zakariya, a query needs to be raised about the source of his wealth which outstripped that of the nascent Delhi Sultanate. The only explanation can be Multan's position as the hub and market for the massive agrarian produce of this region, and its old landed and mercantile elites which managed its cash flow,<sup>112</sup> and who supported Zakariya. Amongst them there may have been many rich Ismailis under dissimulation who survived the Ghaznavid era paying *Khums* or obligatory religious tithes.<sup>113</sup> *Khums* is a tax amounting to twenty percent of a believer's income that is incumbent in the Ja'fari School of jurisprudence upon its adherents, and could be an explanation for Zakariya's personal wealth. In Sunni Islam similar religious tax, or simply *Zakat* monies, are given directly to the state nominated to rule in the name of the (Abbasid) caliph.

After living for almost one hundred years, Zakariya died on 21 December 1262 and was buried in the tomb he had built for himself.<sup>114</sup> For more than half a century he had been the most eminent Sufi of the region, enjoying special fame in Khurasan and Transoxiana, besides the Indus Valley itself. He was renowned for his piety and, above all, for his successful negotiations with the Mongols, and is credited for saving the Indus Valley from the fate of neighbouring regions at their hands. Although his tomb still exists, the

---

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, p.190.

<sup>112</sup> After Mahmud's first invasion of 1006, Ismaili Multan remained semi-independent before its destruction by him by paying a capitulation fee which some historians have reported to be a staggering twenty million dirhams, while others cite a still inflated yet realistic twenty thousand dirhams: Maclean 1989, p.139.

<sup>113</sup> *Khums* tithe presents from Multan are mentioned as being sent back to Egypt in the Fatimid Era by the visiting Arab historian al-Maqdasi who visited in 986 at the peak of the Shia century. An earlier historian Mas'udi who visited in 915 writes in 943 about Multan's wealth. He comments on the many storied houses made of sandalwood, with visible fertility, luxury and opulence, and its coinage being fashioned on Fatimid coinage: Hollister 1954, pp.340-342. The second historian's statement also gives an earlier Fatimid connection to Multan than is generally acknowledged. It is improbable that Multan's wealth would have diminished in Zakariya's time.

<sup>114</sup> Khan 1983, p.190.

khanqah does not. Ahmad Nabi Khan suggests that the khanqah must have been inside the Multan citadel, close to where the tomb itself is located, as he has found a few surviving cells north of the tomb.<sup>115</sup> This is a plausible argument, but if the description of the khanqah's scale with attached granaries is anything to go by, it would not have fallen out of use so easily, especially owing to the order's status in the city. It is suggested here that the original monument identified with the khanqah eventually became the Rukn-e-Alam tomb complex.

Zakariya's material and social status was passed on to his successors, some of whom enjoyed an even stronger position in local politics, which also caused great antagonism with the authorities. An example of the continued prominence of the family, at least in the hearts of the populace, is related in an incident in 1443, after Timur's invasion in the early fifteenth century had devastated northern India. Tired of continuing lawlessness and weak governance from the centre, the people of Multan (province) declared it autonomous again, electing a great grandson of Zakariya, called Shaykh Yusuf, as ruler. A court history states that Shaykh Yusuf had the khutba after the Friday prayer read in his own name from the pulpits at Multan, Uch and other towns in the province, and exercised his rule from the khanqah and the (Zakariya) shrine, implying that he ruled from those institutions.<sup>116</sup> The often cited primary text *Tarikh-e-Farishia* states that Shaykh Yusuf managed the affairs of state so efficiently in Multan and Uch that in a short time the area invited the attention of neighbouring rulers, one of whom attacked and annexed it, forcing the Shaykh to flee to Delhi.<sup>117</sup>

Shaykh Sadr al-din Arif

Zakariya appointed his son, Sadr al-din, as his *khalifa* or successor. He was known as *Arif* or the Gnostic, and of his six brothers he inherited the largest share of his father's

---

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p.245n.

<sup>116</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.130: *Tabaqat-e Akbari*, vol. 3, p.788-789.

<sup>117</sup> Khan 1983, p.71: *Tarikh-e-Farishia* vol. 2, p.325.

property. Rizvi, relying on Jamali,<sup>118</sup> says that he immediately gave the entire amount to the poor, believing like his father that he would be unable to spend it judiciously himself. The relations of the Suhrawardi Order with the Imperial set up, of which Multan was an integral part after Iltutmish's (ruled 1211-1236) takeover under Zakariya's mantle in 1227, seem to have taken a sour turn with the succession of Sadr al-din Arif. Whatever Zakariya's personal beliefs and disagreements with the state, his patronising attitude to state authority was balanced by the respect he commanded in all echelons of society and abroad. This must have made him many enemies in state circles at both the provincial and central level.

Not much detail is known of political antagonism and intrigues plaguing Sadr-al-din's life. He continued his father's religious policies, riding on the goodwill and popular support of the people. The usual Sufi *malfuzat* or Sufi biography for Shaykh Arif has not survived, but excerpts from it are found in other manuals, especially *Akhbar al-Akhyar*. These are also to be found in *Siyar al-Arifin*. The excerpts reflect his sentiments against state policies and show that he believed that state officials were negligent and corrupt and spent too much of the treasury's wealth on themselves and their indulgences.<sup>119</sup>

Relying on *Siyar al-Arifin*, Qamar al-Huda concludes that Sadr al-din Arif was not only opposed to traditional Suhrawardi ideas on relations with the state, wealth accumulation and its institutional management but also went against the decision of a governor of Multan named Muhammad, who happened to be the son of the emperor at Delhi. This becomes clearer in the details of a particular event where one Shaykh Qidwah, a son of Zakariya and Arif's brother, was invited to a high level palatial gathering for an eminent foreign Sufi but where Arif was not invited to be present, though he was the chief Suhrawardi shaykh and the Shaykh al-Islam of his time.<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>118</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p. 202: *Siyar al-Arifin*, pp.128-129.

<sup>119</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.122: *Ibid*, p.185.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, p.124: *Ibid*, p.188.

### *Sadr al-din Arif's Conflict with Local Authorities*

The running conflict with the governor, Prince Muhammad, the son of the emperor Balban (ruled 1266-1288), became progressively exacerbated and at some point also involved the Prince's wife. Qamar al-Huda and Rizvi both relate the incident but al-Huda's narration carries no supporting references.<sup>121</sup> Relying on *Siyar al-Arifin* and an obscure Sufi manuscript, Rizvi relates the details of the Prince divorcing his wife in a drunken rage, only to realise he wanted to remarry her but could not do so according to the Shar'ia unless she re-married and divorced another man first. He used his position to coerce Shaykh Arif, the Shaykh al-Islam, to agree to marry her and then divorce her after a short period, so that he could remarry her. The day after the marriage, Shaykh Arif refused to divorce her on the grounds that she did not want a divorce. The Prince toyed with the idea of killing the Shaykh, but was himself killed in a Mongol raid on the city.<sup>122</sup> Al-Huda states that it was the Shaykh who was killed by a lone Mongol assassin and does not mention the death of the Prince,<sup>123</sup> but without references yet again. It would be safe to conclude that Rizvi is more accurate and that, furthermore, the Shaykh may have died later under mysterious circumstances in a revenge killing by the nobility, as no sources mention the real cause or exact date of his death. Qamar al-Huda concludes that he died in 1285.<sup>124</sup>

Not much else is written about the beginnings or real reasons for the personal feud between the Prince and the Shaykh, but it seems to have been a slowly growing rift between the Order and the state. Perhaps religious undertones and political issues played a pivotal part in the dispute as the Delhi imperial set up matured and asserted itself in the absence of Zakariya's personality. This rift was widened by the fact that Sadr al-din Arif accelerated the practice of initiating heterodox *Qalandars* or wandering mystics into the Order, at a time when orthodoxy was taking a firm root in the imperial hierarchy at Delhi. Zakariya did not initiate qalandars as a rule, but it was a process he started himself,

---

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, p.123; Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.203.

<sup>122</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.203 ff. *Siyar al-Arifin*, p.135-136; *Gulshan-i Ibrahimi*, pp.410-411.

<sup>123</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.124.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, p.124 &141; *Tarikh Namah-e-Herat* 1944, pp.157-158.

contrary to what is made out about him by most scholars.

One qalandar initiate of Shaykh Arif was Amir Husaini who migrated to Herat and became very famous,<sup>125</sup> leaving behind many works of poetry and literature related to the Suhrawardi Order. Another was Salah al-din Dervish who was fourteen years old on his initiation and in his latter days was a contemporary of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq (ruled 1325-1351). He migrated to Delhi, opposed the Sultan and his stringent views on religion, and was openly contemptuous of political authority.<sup>126</sup> Dervish did this much after the death of Sadr-al-din in the time of his successor Shah Rukn-e-Alam who was also in periodic conflict with the same Sultan Muhammad of the Tughluq dynasty.

Another of Shaykh Arif's main qalandar initiates was a certain Ahmad Mash'uq (the Lover). Rizvi describes him as being an alcoholic who accompanied his father on a business trip to Multan. He became acquainted with Shaykh Arif at a local shop where Ahmad was conducting business, later being invited to the Shaykh's house. He became the Shaykh's disciple, gave up drinking and sold all his property, distributing the money to qalandars and withdrawing from the world. In the later part of his life he also gave up obligatory prayers.<sup>127</sup> Since the Suhrawardi Order was the state's official Sufi order at the time, with its shaykh being the Shaykh al-Islam, the topmost religious authority in the empire, initiation into this order would have granted immunity from the local state apparatus. This could only be overturned through imperial orders, and in essence it provided perfect protection from state persecution on religious grounds. The guise of dervishes and qalandars was also often used by Ismaili missionaries and more notably by Ismaili assassins.<sup>128</sup> These initiations would certainly have caused resentment in state circles, especially amongst the orthodox 'Ulama.

---

<sup>125</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, pp.206-208.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*: *Siyar al-Arifin*: pp.66-67.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, p. 210; *Ibid*, pp.129-31.

<sup>128</sup> Nizam al-Mulk's assassin is said to have approached him in the disguise of a dervish, which is the reason his death is usually considered as having been ordered by Hasan bin Sabbah. On a lesser note some scholars connect his death to an internal power struggle involving Malik Shah instead, see Daftary 2007, p.319.

## Religious and Sectarian Affiliations of Zakariya

In his lifetime Zakariya initiated a few individuals from dervish and qalandar backgrounds into his order, contrary to what is usually believed about him in terms of his stance on Sunni orthodoxy. The question that immediately comes to mind is why were successive Shaykhs (al-Islam), the highest religious authorities in the empire, initiating people who were known to be anti-state, regarded with suspicion and as being heretics by the state religion. In doing so they were only jeopardising their own position and inviting trouble, unless there were other reasons. Unlike his world-rejecting son Arif, and because of his status, Zakariya could not afford to be openly surrounded by qalandars all the time, even if he did sympathise with them. This is probably the reason for the smaller number of qalandars that are associated with him in comparison to his successor. This practice was further continued under his later descendants. Zakariya also initiated individuals from other less orthodox Sufi orders into his own order. This practice was also followed by his descendants, especially by Shah Rukn-e-Alam, in whose time it became the norm for such Sufis to be initiated into a number of Sufi orders at the same time.

One such qalandar was Fakhr al-din Iraqi who also became Zakariya's son-in-law. Rizvi relates that he was the main reason for Zakariya's fame abroad. He was born in Hamadhan, Iran, as Fakhr al-din Ibrahim, Iraqi being his nom de plume, where he had his own khanqah. He once had a party of qalandars staying at the khanqah, amongst whom was a boy who so infatuated Iraqi that he left his lodge, following the party back through Khurasan and then on to Multan in the guise of a qalandar himself. At Multan the party stayed at Zakariya's khanqah. When leaving Iraqi got separated from the party because of a storm and was forced to return to the Multani lodge. There the force of Zakariya's personality made Iraqi forget the boy he was pursuing, and instead he started living in the cell that Zakariya had assigned to him within the khanqah. He also married his daughter to Iraqi and before dying appointed him as his khalifa or spiritual deputy.<sup>129</sup> Subsequently Iraqi became very famous for the poetry he wrote in the twenty five years he stayed in

---

<sup>129</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol.1, p.204: *Siyar al-Arifin*, p.115.

Multan. After Zakariya's death he moved first to Egypt, then through the Levant to Anatolia where he is associated with Rumi. He died in 1289 and is buried in Damascus near Ibn Arabi's grave.<sup>130</sup> Rizvi does not cite his antagonism with the authorities after Zakariya's death (d.1262) as the reason for leaving, but states that within a year he was forced to leave Multan where he had been residing since 1239 on account of local jealousy.<sup>131</sup> An anecdote states he left Multan due to the hatred borne for him by the local ruler, i.e. the same Prince Muhammad, the son of Emperor Balban, who had a dispute with Sadr al-din Arif. Iraqi sent a copy of his new work *Lama'at* or 'Flashes,' which were inspired by his interaction with Ibn Arabi in Damascus, to Arif before his death.<sup>132</sup>



6. Fakhr al-din Iraqi arriving in Multan with a caravan of qalandars<sup>133</sup>

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p.205; *Ibid.*, pp.107-109.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205 & 306; *Ibid.*, p. 151; *Gulshan-i Ibrahimi*, p.1.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> A painting in *Majalis al-Ushshaq* (1552): Rizvi 1986, vol.1, p. 204.

The above incidents contradict Rizvi's own statements about Zakariya being very selective and unwelcoming to qalandars,<sup>134</sup> which is a view nearly always propagated about the Shaykh.<sup>135</sup> The irony is that his statements are based on primary sources, raising the question of discrepancy in the facts as quoted first. This could well be attributed to the authors of the primary commentaries and their patrons as having a vested interest in popularising the Shaykh in a certain light.<sup>136</sup> In fact, all such commentaries are later works by Sufi chroniclers from the Chishti Order, commissioned either by the king or the imperial set up of the time. It is ironic that no original malfuzat biography has survived for the early Multan Suhrawardi period for cross-reference on this issue. Yet it turns out that groups of travelling qalandars did stay at Zakariya's khanqah, which implies their boarding and lodging there, while Iraqi was an in-house qalandar disciple.<sup>137</sup> Perhaps the Shaykh merely refrained from mingling with qalandars in the presence of state functionaries and underplayed their importance publicly for reasons of dissimulation, as it was a most commonly used Ismaili disguise.

There is also the specific case of the famed ascetic Sayyid Usman Marwandi, also known as Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, who was made a shaykh of the Suhrawardi Order by Zakariya. Following the Shar'ia as propagated by the state held no interest for Shahbaz. He was a native of Khurasan, who lived in Kerbala most of his early life with his spiritual mentor. On arrival in Multan, Zakariya received him very warmly, made him his khalifa and immediately dispatched him to Sehwan in Sind to start a khanqah there, without any training. Moreover his title 'Shahbaz' or falcon was actually given to him by Zakariya, which is how he is remembered. Rizvi comments briefly on this initiation, basing it on an obscure Sufi manuscript.<sup>138</sup> None of our usual primary 'Chishti' Sufi sources mention Shahbaz at all. This could be because his legacy was very unacceptable to the state patrons of the chroniclers, although he was the primary Suhrawardi khalifa of Zakariya in the lower Indus Valley. Not much has been written of him otherwise either. This

---

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, p.191, p.193; *Siyar al-Arifin*, p. 151; *Tarikh Namah-e-Herat* 1944, p.56.

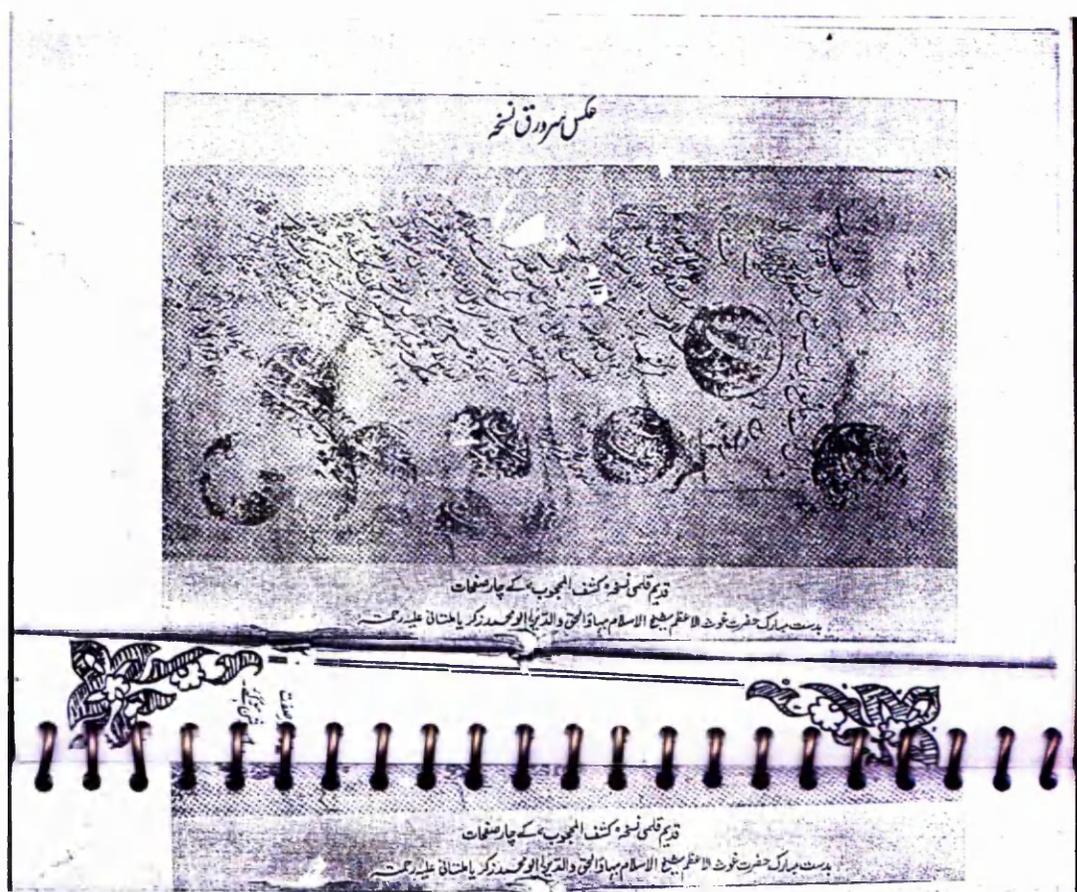
<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, pp.303-306, where Rizvi actually states that Zakariya disliked qalandars intensely and never encouraged their visits.

<sup>136</sup> These are commentaries on original Sufi biographies, usually written after the Sufi died and funded as literary works by a noble or prince, both *Siyar al-Arifin* and *Tarikh Namah-e-Herat* are such works.

<sup>137</sup> Iraqi never gave up his wandering lifestyle: Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.306.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*: *Ma'arij al-Wilayat*, f. 542b.

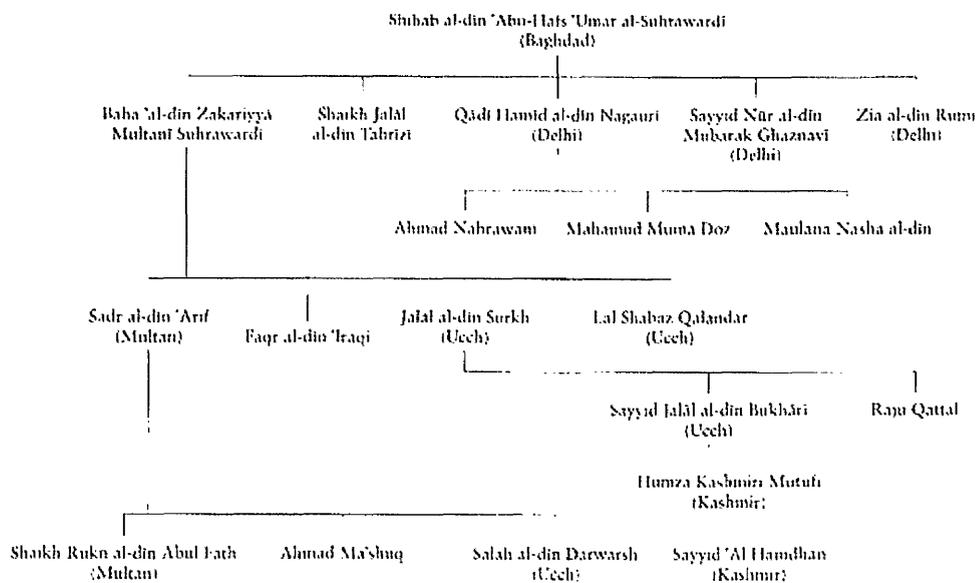
connection is of primary importance as Lal Shahbaz is universally acknowledged to be some kind of a Shia, and having invited people to the Shia faith, and for the most part is known as an Ismaili ascetic. He also promoted heterodox doctrines, penance and esoteric practices beyond the ordinary. His religious poetry and writings openly declare him to be a Shia, and there is mention of him in Ismaili sources and chronicles. What is more important is the local belief in the Indus Valley about Shahbaz Qalandar actually being the younger maternal cousin of Shams, which the Sabzwari family tree in possession of the custodian of Shams's shrine also verifies.



7. Zakariya's letter nominating Shahbaz Qalandar to the Suhrawardi Order<sup>139</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Dasti 1974, pp.8-9.

A newly discovered book which claims to contain the original letter of appointment from Zakariya to Shahbaz Qalandar (above) puts this paradox of friendship between these two outwardly conflicting religious personalities, one an orthodox Sunni shaykh and the other an Ismaili ascetic, to rest. It is written on deerskin and preserved in the state's archives, assigning the latter Suhrawardi credentials. This initiation of Shahbaz Qalandar seems to be in line with Zakariya's mentor's policy in Iraq. After all, Abu Hafis had his own 'unconscious Ismailism' according to Hermann Landolt<sup>140</sup> and as we have seen enjoyed good relations with the Nizari Ismaili Imam Hasan III. He is even credited with the latter's 'conversion' to Sunnism,<sup>141</sup> which Daftary has explained to be superficial and as an act of dissimulation.<sup>142</sup> Lal Shahbaz Qalandar set up his khanqah, presumably under the Suhrawardi Order at Sehwan in lower Sind, 300 kilometres from Multan and enjoyed a great following, whilst maintaining excellent relations with his mentor. This pattern of initiation of heterodox elements practised in the Indus Valley by the Suhrawardi shaykhs is not limited to Ismailis.



8. Diagram of the Suhrawardi Order stemming from Iraq into the subcontinent <sup>143</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Lewisohn and Shackle 2006, p.11.

<sup>141</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.132 'There are reasons to believe that Shaykh (Abu Hafis) al-Suhrawardi's cordial relations with the Nizari Ismaili community influenced the direction of a common Suhrawardi-Ismaili coalesced tradition.'

<sup>142</sup> Daftary 2007, pp.375-378.

<sup>143</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.117.

A close look at the above diagram will show that the branch of the Suhrawardi Order at Multan had connections with Shiism through many of its members. They were those who were known to be openly Shia or whose descendants announced this later in history. Sayyid Ali Hamadhani, in the chart above, connected to Jalal al-din (II) of Uch, was a Twelver and was especially successful in proselytising this faith in Kashmir.

The above discussion shows that the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley was used by adherents of the Nizari or Twelver branches of Shiism for acceptability and protection, while continuing with their covert religious activity, with the endorsement and blessings of Suhrawardi shaykhs themselves. This seems to have been done in a pan-Shia spirit similar to the Buwayhid Fatimid accommodation of the tenth century explored earlier, but in the case of the Suhrawardi Order, the major emphasis is on Ismailism, and can be traced back to Abu Hafs in Iraq. The analysis better explains the conflict that arose with the ruling authorities and clergy, who were staunchly Sunni when confronted with this suspect situation. These facts however do not have any bearing on the Delhi branch of the order, which being at the centre stage of the empire must have been very tightly regulated. However, the facts shed further light on whether the early major shaykhs at Multan had their own reasons to be practising dissimulation, with a hidden religiosity to go with it, since they seem to be the only ones who were neither qalandars nor openly Shia in any capacity.

#### Zakariya's hidden Shia leanings

Due to the loss of all malfuzat literature related to Zakariya and the loss of his tomb's original condition in the British siege of Multan in 1849, no details about hidden expressions of Shiism directly connected to him are available from surviving sources or iconography. Yet one basic prescription textbook for his khanqah occupants has survived and has been re-edited and published by the Pakistan and Iran Centre for Research on the Persian language. Although it does not deal with metaphysics, a thorough examination of the book reveals unexpected trends of writing and religious prescriptions by a Sufi master

who was an orthodox Sunni. Coupled with historical reports of accommodation of heterodox elements in his khanqah, and his association with Shams and Shahbaz Qalandar, the book gives Zakariya a very empathic attitude towards Shiism. This is especially when one is to consider the guise of the dervish used by Ismaili missionaries and assassins.

There is not one salutation to the companions of the Prophet in the entire book, which is standard prescription in Sunni Sufism, so as to award them some status along with the Family of the Prophet. All the prescribed salutations are exclusively to the Family of the Prophet in traditional Shia format, and there are certain extended versions pertaining to them that this author has not encountered before.<sup>144</sup> Moreover the *Durud Ibrahimi* or Salutation to Abraham's descendants (and then the Prophet's descendants) used by Ismailis to this day for the Aga Khan, is also mentioned a number of times.<sup>145</sup> The section for Moharram contains prayers for the night of 10 Muharram or 'Ashura, where a hundred *rakat* or units in prayer is strongly recommended by Zakariya. This is keeping in tradition with the Ja'fari School of jurisprudence used by both Ismailis and Twelvers, and is found in all Twelver prayer manuals.<sup>146</sup> In terms of practice, these obligatory and supererogatory prayers were observed by Nizari Ismailis until 1904, when their necessary observance was abolished by the third Aga Khan.

### Shah Rukn-e-Alam

Sadr-al-din Arif's son was born in Multan as Rukn al-din Abul Fath on Friday 26 November 1251,<sup>147</sup> and went on to succeed him as Shah Rukn-e-Alam. He was a favourite of his grandfather Zakariya and was raised to be the future shaykh from his childhood, much to the disapproval of his father Sadr al-din Arif. He used to don his

---

<sup>144</sup> Zakariya 1978, pp. 53 & 59.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, p 40.

<sup>146</sup> Qummi 1872, p.481.

<sup>147</sup> Khan 1983, p.215: *Tarikh-e-Farishta* vol.1, p.775. Although correct here, the dates quoted by Ahmad Nabi Khan at times do not coincide with other (primary) sources, while *Farishta* is also unreliable in terms of dates occasionally. He puts Shams's arrival date in Multan a century later than it is mentioned in Ismaili literature: Hollister 1953, p.353.

grandfather's turban symbolically from the age of four. He was brought up and educated in his youth by Zakariya, who looked after his upbringing until his own death.<sup>148</sup> Eminent Suhrawardi scholars and luminaries of his time were appointed to educate and train him, a process which took place in Zakariya's khanqah at Multan.

Ahmad Nabi Khan, relying on *Tarikh-e-Farishta*, describes his date of succession as 1309 at the age of sixty, after the death of his father Sadr al-din Arif,<sup>149</sup> which is too late and does not correspond with established facts in terms of either the imperial government or the order.<sup>150</sup> Qamar al-Huda has concluded from a primary source that Arif's death and hence the Rukn-e-Alam coronation took place in 1285.<sup>151</sup> There is no report of Rukn-e-Alam becoming the Shaykh-al-Islam on his father's death, and we already know of the antagonism that existed between Rukn-e-Alam's father and the son of the Emperor Balban (ruled 1266-1288), Prince Muhammad, the governor of Multan. Balban was succeeded by two of his descendants in quick succession between 1288 and 1290, both of whom were incompetent and had weak governments. This implies a strong Suhrawardi Order in Multan for that short period, enough for Rukn-e-Alam to consolidate his position after the troubles of his father with the authorities. In 1290 the new incoming Khalji dynasty took over from the Slave dynasty.<sup>152</sup>

Not much is known about qalandar or sectarian initiations into the order after Sadr al-din Arif's time, but due to closer relations with the Imperial authorities they were bound to have been fewer. Rukn-e-Alam is shown as having initiated a certain Shah Yusuf Ghirdez (or probably Gardezi) into the order at Multan.<sup>153</sup> If this is in a Multani context, there is a very high chance of this person being a descendant of an earlier Twelver ascetic called Shah Yusuf Gardez (b.1026-1152) whom Toynbee has mentioned in his book *Between*

---

<sup>148</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.211: *Siyar al-Arifin*, pp.141-142.

<sup>149</sup> Khan 1983, p.215: *Tarikh-e-Farishta* vol.1, p.775.

<sup>150</sup> Presumably, Khan bases this statement on the wrongly reported death date for Sadr al-din Arif by his primary source *Farishta*.

<sup>151</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.123.

<sup>152</sup> The Sultanate era period is composed of five dynasties that rose and fell after Mu'iz al-din's assassination. The first was the Slave dynasty (1206-90) of his ex-slave governors involving Zakariya's king making. This was followed by the Khalji dynasty (1290-1320), the Tughluq dynasty (1320-1413), Sayyid dynasty (1414-51), and Lodi dynasty (1451-1526).

<sup>153</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.116.

*Oxus and Jumna*.<sup>154</sup> There should be no conflict about this Yusuf Gardezi's initiation as he is also the one who succeeded Rukn-e-Alam's nephew as the last Suhrawardi shaykh in Multan after the latter's short term.<sup>155</sup> This one individual can clearly be ascribed adherence to Twelver Shiism to begin with, on the basis of his family's religion, which continues up to the present day amongst their descendants. Along with the Ismaili ascetics, he must have been the only one of the local Suhrawardi personalities who was openly Shia, as the Twelver Gardezi family of Multan is one which has never exercised dissimulation.

Rukn-e-Alam was appointed Shaykh al-Islam by Ala al-din Khalji, who ascended to the throne in 1292, and maintained this position throughout the Khalji and the later Tughluq period.<sup>156</sup> It would be safe to conclude that between the death of his father in 1285 and the coming to power of Ala al-din Khalji in 1292, Rukn-e-Alam was the chief Suhrawardi shaykh at Multan, but without imperial endorsement as Shaykh al-Islam, on account of hostility with Balban's family. There are no other shaykhs reported between Rukn-e-Alam and his father Sadr al-din Arif. It is said that he accepted the largest land grant ever given by the Sultanate to a Sufi order, and after being the Khalji Shaykh al-Islam Rukn-e-Alam subsequently used his clout to intercede with the incoming Tughluqs in 1320 to save the lives of Khalji family members.<sup>157</sup> These fluctuating relationships between Rukn-e-Alam, and the Suhrawardi shaykhs in general, with the royal family in power might reflect the personal religious inclinations of the rulers themselves.

It would be fair to assume that during this time of favour from Delhi, Rukn-e-Alam continued his predecessor's religious policies unabated. But in terms of temporal affairs he is also known to have institutionalised the khanqah more than ever before, and in accepting land grants he tied it economically and administratively to the seat of power. He subsequently visited Delhi four times in this regard. This would compromise his

---

<sup>154</sup> Toynbee 1961, p.15.

<sup>155</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.128: *Tarikh-e-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 96-98.

<sup>156</sup> Khan 1986, p.215: *Tarikh-e-Farishta* vol.1, p.775.

<sup>157</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.124: *Tarikh-e-Firuz Shahi*, p.249. This report is from a post Khalji document, and it is not specified if the grant was from the Khaljis or their Tughluq successors, but it could be one of each from both dynasties.

authority in the long run and was in contrast to the open independence exercised by his grandfather in all affairs, or the rejection and contempt for the imperial set-up by his father. He visited Ala al-din Khalji twice in Delhi in person.<sup>158</sup> He also visited Ala al-din's successor, Mubarak Shah (ruled 1316-1320), and on this third visit when Mubarak tried to persuade him to open a khanqah in Delhi to counter the influence of the renowned Chishti Shaykh Nizam al-din Auliya there, he refused.<sup>159</sup>

Shah Rukn-e-Alam enjoyed good relations with the first Tughluq Sultan Ghiyath al-din (ruled 1320-1325). Ghiyath al-din, also known as Ghazi Malik was a Khalji governor in a principality near Multan before his becoming sultan,<sup>160</sup> when Rukn-e-Alam was serving as Shaykh al-Islam for Ala al-din Khalji and Mubarak Shah. Hence it would not be wrong to assume that the two knew each other and were on cordial terms. Rukn-e-Alam is reported to have met Ghiyath al-din as sultan on his fourth visit to Delhi, when he spent a few years in that city. It is during this visit that Nizam al-din Auliya (1238-1325) died.<sup>161</sup> Rukn-e-Alam's stay must have been extended because of the death and presumably involved him more than ever with state functionaries.

#### *Rukn-e-Alam's Conflict with Local Authorities*

The death of Nizam al-din coincides with both the coronation of Ghiyath al-din's successor Muhammad in 1325 and with Rukn-e-Alam's presence in Delhi. There is no mention of what went on between the two at this point in time, but Rukn-e-Alam's good relationship with Ghiyath al-din seems to have been replaced by a problematic one with Muhammad Tughluq. There are reports of Rukn-e-Alam accepting a grand donation of a hundred villages from Muhammad Tughluq,<sup>162</sup> yet their relationship suggests that this may have been coerced on the former as a means to make him subservient to the Sultan. Muhammad Tughluq's confrontation with Rukn-e-Alam and the Suhrawardi Order in

---

<sup>158</sup> It is reported that on each of his visits the Sultan paid 20,000 *tankas* on arrival and 500,000 on his departure each time: Rizvi 1986, vol.1, p.211: *Siyar al-Arifin*, pp.141-142.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Khan 1983, p.215: *Tughluq Namah*, p.63.

<sup>161</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol.1, p.212: *Siyar al-Auliya*, pp.141-142.

<sup>162</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.125.

general was to continue in the Uch period. Some sources patronised or inspired by the Tughluq court portray their relationship as fluctuating yet cordial, but this seems to be in line with certain cosmetic Suhrawardi biographies written by Chishtis in latter times.<sup>163</sup>

Relations between the two appear to have deteriorated a great degree further after a revolt by Multan's governor Aiba Kishlu Khan took place in 1328. It is mentioned that after the Sultan had crushed the revolt, he ordered the general massacre of the inhabitants suspected to be rebel sympathisers and certain religious authorities, and flayed the *qazi* or chief judge alive. The Shaykh retreated into meditation as a protest for seven days while the inhabitants were being massacred, emerging afterwards to save further lives<sup>164</sup> and asking for a city-wide amnesty. Al-Huda states that under the Tughluqs, Multan was full of seditious groups. The nature of the revolt is not cited, but it is reported that the inhabitants (i.e. rebel sympathisers) turned to Rukn-e-Alam for help and assistance.<sup>165</sup> These quotes are however from a court history *Tarikh-e-Firuz Shahi* attributed to Muhammad's successor, and the mention of a sectarian nature to this revolt may have been suppressed. During the rebellion, the brother of the Shaykh was made to impersonate as the Sultan on his orders and was killed,<sup>166</sup> which implies some involvement of Rukn-e-Alam's family in the affair.

In light of this chapter's findings, it is possible that some of the old Ismaili presence in Multan was an active part of the rebellion. Some credence is lent to this connection through Muhammad's religious bigotry, and his death in 1351 on an expedition in nearby Sind while suppressing a similar rebellion against the local population who had joined certain escaped rebels.<sup>167</sup> This event is largely believed to have involved Ismailis but due to the lack of detailed records on Muhammad's military campaigns there is no court evidence for it. All references to Muhammad's reign and governance come from court

---

<sup>163</sup> There is mention of an incident when Muhammad marched on Multan during a rebellion, and Rukn-e-Alam is supposed to have blessed him for it. A second source says that the Sultan gave up the attack on the Shaykh's request, when neither incident happened in reality: Rizvi 1986, vol.1, p.213: *Futuh al-Salatin*, p.443.

<sup>164</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.126: *Tarikh-e-Firuz Shahi*, p.470.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p.126: *Ibid.*, p.348.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p.126: *Rihlah*, p.157.

<sup>167</sup> Holt, P. M., Ann K. S. Lambton, Bernard Lewis 1977, p.18.

histories from the reign of his successor Firuz Shah (ruled 1351-1388) who patronised such works.

Following the event of the rebellion, the Sultan made the Suhrawardi Order subservient to himself in all its affairs, a process he had started a few years before on Rukn-Alam's visit to Delhi during his coronation. The conferring of immense material wealth upon the order was an obvious effort to totally incorporate it into the state orbit, as opposed to the financial freedom it enjoyed in Zakariya's time. Muhammad Tughluq's reasons could well have something to do with the order's religious approach and the multitudes of ideas taking cover under its umbrella. It became obligatory for every visitor to obtain permission from the *wali* or governor of Multan before putting up in the Suhrawardi khanqah. The Tughluq control of the khanqah forbade any traveller to stay there unless permission was granted from the Sultan.<sup>168</sup> This shows a great suspicion on part of the Imperial authorities as regards to the visitors, especially considering the various visiting qalandars in Zakariya and Arif's time. In effect this barred anyone undesirable to the authorities from entering the khanqah premises, and virtually amounted to house arrest for the Shaykh. Rizvi states, based on primary sources, that many works were attributed to Rukn-e-Alam including a malfuzat but that none are extant; hence we cannot deduce the Suhrawardi view on this matter.

The only aspect of the khanqah immune from official control was the succession of the spiritual guide, as all other functions of the khanqah were regulated by the Sultan through the agency of the new governor.<sup>169</sup> This remaining institution was also lost when Rukn-e-Alam died. As Rukn-e-Alam had no children, Muhammad Tughluq intervened directly between the contenders to appoint his nephew Shaykh Hud as the successor, only to have him arrested and later executed on a trumped up charge of wealth appropriation and sedition, based on a complaint by the governor of Multan.<sup>170</sup>

Thus climaxed the very concerted effort by Muhammad Tughluq to acquire absolute

---

<sup>168</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.126.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p.128, & also in Rizvi 1986, vol.1, p. 214: Ibn Battuta, *Rihlah*, vol. 2, p.145.

control of the Suhrawardi Order and turn it into a state institution, with every facet of its existence under the total control of the Sultan. The location of the Indus Valley at the crossroads of Central Asia and Khurasan, and the Suhrawardi Order's association with Shiism must have combined to create an administrative nightmare for the authorities. Soon afterwards, Muhammad Tughluq started taking a much greater interest in the Chishti Order publicly, so as to show his detachment from the Suhrawardi Order. He attended over twelve annual death celebrations of the Chishti saint Mo'in al-din at Ajmer in later years.<sup>171</sup>

After Hud's execution the Suhrawardi Order was without a proper leader for a short period as no other shaykh's name is mentioned conclusively, and it remained under state supervision, until Muhammad Tughluq's successor Firuz Shah (1351-1388) appointed Yusuf Ghardez (Gardezi) as the Shaykh al-Islam of the order.<sup>172</sup> This is the same Yusuf Gardezi with the Twelver Shia connection who had been initiated by Rukn-e-Alam. This was perhaps an attempt to further undermine the order publicly, and tension is reported between Yusuf and Firuz Shah, especially due to the Chishti issue.<sup>173</sup> On a follow-up campaign against rebels in Sind who had not been fully suppressed by Muhammad Tughluq, Firuz Shah visited all the local Chishti khanqahs in Multan, but did not visit even one Suhrawardi lodge. Yusuf Ghardez was very offended and complained to the Sultan, requesting him to at least visit Zakariya's shrine and the khanqah, which the Sultan did not do.<sup>174</sup> This refusal to the Suhrawardi Shaykh al-Islam seems to be a stage managed royal snub and the final nail in the coffin of the order in Multan.

Talking about Shia rebellions in his own era, Firuz Shah Tughluq, who was instrumental in shifting the axis of favour entirely from the Suhrawardi to the Chishti Order, writes in his own book, as narrated to his scribes. '(In my reign) A sect of *Rawafiz* (Shia) tried to mislead the people, so I burnt their books and severely punished their leaders. Just a little later on, another sect of heretics endeared the citizens. I killed their leaders mercilessly,

---

<sup>171</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.127: *Futuh al-Salatin*, p. 460.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*: *Tarikh-e- Firuz Shahi*, p. 96-98.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*.

and imprisoned the survivors, and hence the people were rid once and for all from his abominable evil.<sup>175</sup> It is important to understand that the situation with seditious groups, mentioned previously for Multan, in which Rukn-e-Alam's protest was involved while the inhabitants were being massacred by Muhammad Tughluq, has obvious implications in the reign of Firuz Shah. Similarly this report in Firuz Shah's own words has some retrospective credence in terms of sectarianism in the era of Muhammad Tughuq. The sectarian nature of the environment and its connection to the Suhrawardi Order becomes clearer with this quote, as the only place in the empire in the mid-Sultanate era with old-established and large Shia populations was the region of Multan and Sind. Unfortunately there are no autobiographies available for Muhammad Tughluq, which might have yielded a greater insight in terms of finger pointing at Suhrawardi shaykhs, regarding their associations with heretics. It must be noted that the book burning issue as quoted by Firuz Shah might be connected to the loss of the malfuzats and the other works reported for the first three Suhrawardi shaykhs.

This scheme to bring to heel a well-entrenched and secretive religious organisation with strong sectarian affiliations seems to have been very carefully orchestrated by the Tughluqs over a couple of generations. Prior to that, Turkic-slave based dynasties from the first hundred years after Mu'iz al-din Sam's death were just not well entrenched and mature enough in India to challenge Zakariya and his Ismaili and Qalandar initiates. The Chishti Order at Ajmer had more mass appeal, was less secretive, and was not financially vibrant enough to challenge to state, as most of its adherents advocated living in absolute poverty. It was more orthodox in its religious approach and suited the purpose of the good king facilitating mass religiosity. The Suhrawardi Order at Multan just slid into oblivion after the episodes of Hud's execution and Yusuf's humiliation.

---

<sup>175</sup> Firuz Shah Sultan of Delhi 1954, vol.3, p. 377-378.

## Conclusion

This chapter illustrates a larger regional scenario in the region of the Middle East and South western Asia, where the Suhrawardi Order in Iraq was connected to Ismailism from its inception. It shows a general shift amongst the Shia literary and ascetic classes towards using the Sufism phenomenon in Islam for dissimulation in the areas which were previously their strongholds, or ruled directly by their different denominations in the Shia century. In the post-Ghaznavid and Seljuk era this was the only recourse available to them. Ismailism took the lead in using this cover as initially the guise of the common medieval Sufi, or the wandering dervish and qalandar afforded the easiest disguise to Ismaili missionaries and assassins from Alamut. As this situation matured, the vast amount of Sufi literature produced in that era also gave Shia metaphysical ideas a hidden voice where it could not be heard otherwise.

Daftary states that the Sufi exterior adopted by the *Nizaris* (Ismailis) would not have been possible if these two esoteric traditions in Islam did not have common ground, but this is something that has been brought to the academic world only recently and needs to be researched.<sup>176</sup> Yet it can be seen from the analysis of the last two chapters that Twelver Shiism and Ismailism were not opposed to each other in either the Shia century, or during and after the latter Ghaznavid and Seljuk era. The general agenda seems to have remained pan-Shia in the latter era in spite of any differences, in which Ismailism took the lead with its Sufi cover. It is what Daftary has called *tariqa* or literally 'order' Shiism, in reference to its propagation by certain Sufi orders, where the agenda was not the propagation of a certain Shia sect but rather the 'Shi'itization of (a dominant) Sunnism. The Sufi orders in question remained outwardly Sunni for quite sometime after their foundation following one of the Sunni schools while being especially devoted to the first Shia Imam Ali and acknowledging his higher spiritual guidance.<sup>177</sup>

---

<sup>176</sup> Daftary 2007, pp.419-420.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.426-427. This is literally the basis of the metaphysical difference between Shiism and Sunnism, whereby the superiority of Ali to the first three Sunni caliphs is established through a phenomenon termed the vice-regency (to God) of the former. See Chapter Four below for further details.

In time this Sufi-Shia relationship, initially spearheaded by Ismailism, was to be the primary cause for the resurgence of Shiism in its Twelver format under the Safavids in Iran, in the post Mongol era.<sup>178</sup> The Mongol onslaught's destruction of the post-Seljuk Sunni elites in the form of the Khwarazm Empire in Iran was another reason for this rise of the Safavids under this Sufi-Shia garb. For its part, the Suhrawardi Order under Zakariya and his descendants used the pluralistic religious environment of the Indus Valley to propagate sectarian agendas which were more ambitious than its simpler associations to a 'reformed' and dissimulative Ismailism in Iraq. Yet the region for the most part escaped the devastation of a Mongol invasion, and as the Turkic slave elites matured to become imperial dynasties in India, all Shiism was held in check, as can be seen from Muhammad Tughluq's military campaigns, and Firuz Shah's autobiography.

It must be asserted that during the Sultanate era, the Shaykh al-Islam was in a position higher than that of *Sadr al-Sudur* or the chief director of religious affairs, who was responsible for overseeing that all laws were in agreement with the Shar'ia.<sup>179</sup> This made the Suhrawardi shaykhs carrying the title the highest religious authorities in the empire. Hence when the Suhrawardi shaykh was the Shaykh al-Islam of the empire, in essence the members of the order enjoyed exemption from state persecution. At the provincial level in the Indus Valley, the Shaykh al-Islam could easily use his clout to overturn the decision of the *qazi* or chief judge, who implemented the Shar'ia locally. This is the only plausible reason why these shaykhs had a free hand at initiating Shia and Ismaili elements into the order. The text from the reign of Firuz Tughluq citing his eagerness to persecute heretical elements is an obvious reference to those who protected them also, and would naturally include the Suhrawardi shaykhs, considering their close associations with Ismaili missionaries. The inclusion of these elements in the Suhrawardi Order at Multan, which has been hitherto un-researched academically, is probably the main cause of the fluctuating relationship between the order and the state, culminating in its destruction by the Tughluq dynasty.

---

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> al-Huda 2003, p. 194*n. b*

## Chapter Two: Shams

### Dispelling Anecdotes about Uch

In modern times, Uch is famed for its patron saints, Jalal al-din Surkhposh and his descendants, who made it an enduring centre for Suhrawardi Sufism, after the order's branch in Multan literally ceased to exist. Surkhposh was one of Zakariya's later initiates, and was commissioned to set up a khanqah in Uch.<sup>180</sup> The execution of Rukn-e-Alam's successor and nephew Hud on sedition charges by Muhammad Tughluq would have naturally been accompanied by a purge of other suspected sympathisers. Yet the snub to Zakariya's tomb, the last Suhrawardi Shaykh al-Islam Yusuf Ghirdez (Gardezi) and its khanqahs in Multan by Muhammad's successor Firuz Shah on his visit is not accompanied by any known anti-Suhrawardi activities in Uch. It is presumed that even after the shifting of the axis of imperial favour entirely to the Chishti Order under Firuz Shah Uch remained untouched and sustained its Suhrawardi identity under Surkhposh's descendants due to its remoteness. This situation was readily aided by the presence of second entity whose headquarters were based in Uch. The Ismaili da'wa or religious mission in the Indus Valley had survived the Ismaili missionary Shams. He was Zakariya's contemporary and his most difficult connection to explain to date. Moreover in the post Zakariya period, due to Muhammad Tughluq's military campaigns, and Firuz Shah's self proclaimed anti-heretic massacres which must have coincided with his anti-Suhrawardi stance and taken place around Multan, the Ismaili da'wa under Shams's descendants must have naturally retreated to Uch for refuge.

To date most of Shams's biography is hagiographical, highly anecdotal, and historically inaccurate. Some scholars on Ismailism have misplaced his mission by a hundred years, and give the date of his death as 1356.<sup>181</sup> The history by Farishta gives his arrival in Kashmir as 1496, which would date him three hundred years after Zakariya. An obscure Ismaili text from Gujarat, the *Satveni-ji Vel*, states that he was actually the Ismaili Imam

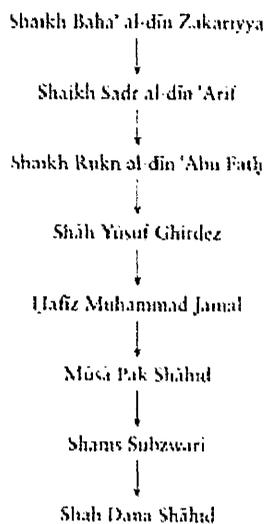
---

<sup>180</sup> See Chapter One, plate 8.

<sup>181</sup> Hollister 1953, p.335: Ivanow in *JBBRAS*, XII, 1936, p.60.

of his time (who was incidentally also called Shams al-din), the grandson of the last Imam of Alamut. It is claimed in the text that he left the imamate to his son Qasim Shah in 1310, and came to India in disguise, and hence his phenomenal spiritual powers and the personality cult he inspired.<sup>182</sup> These exaggerations and misdating in anecdote have also found their way into his connection with the Suhrawardi Sufi Order.

**Suhrawardi shaykhs in Multan  
(thirteenth to fourteenth centuries)<sup>181</sup>**



**9. Suhrawardi Shaykhs at Multan<sup>183</sup>**

The above chart from a local Suhrawardi Sufi manual from Multan displaying its shaykhs in that city, shows Shams as postdating Yusuf Ghordez, and implies the reign of Firuz Shah (1351-1388) for his lifetime. This means that it corresponds with the mistakes made by Ismaili scholars about dating his personality, which are also present in the obscure text purporting him to be the Ismaili Imam in disguise, and suggest the latter as the main reason for the errors. Yet the chart also strengthens a Suhrawardi connection to Shams in spite of the inaccuracies, as some of his descendants in Uch were known to be Suhrawardi Sufis. But there is no proof to suggest that Shams was initiated as a Suhrawardi like his younger cousin Shahbaz Qalandar, indeed his real date of birth suggests that he was Zakariya's older contemporary more than anything else.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.116; Farhat Multani (1980) *Auliya-i Multan*, Multan: Ayaz publications, p.17-91

Contrary to popular belief about Uch's famed association with Zakariya's initiate Surkhposh, and Shams being the Ismaili Imam in disguise arriving in India in 1310, a hundred years after Mu'iz al-din's assassination in 1206, the real Shams was born on 29 May 1165,<sup>184</sup> and died in 1276. He had shifted to Multan permanently in 1201 at the young age of thirty six.<sup>185</sup> He made Uch his da'wa centre a few years later, while his contemporary Zakariya (born 3 June 1171 and died 1262) had returned from Iraq to his birthplace Multan, to start the Suhrawardi Order in Multan around 1188.

According to Ismaili sources Shams's father Pir Salah al-din was the Ismaili *Hujjat* or chief da'i for Balkh (eastern Khurasan) and India (Indus Valley in modern day Pakistan). Shams had inherited the da'wa from his father in his early thirties, and moved through the region of eastern Khurasan and the Indus Valley in the late 1190s, professing Ismaili doctrines.<sup>186</sup> During these travels, he is said to have visited Uch a few times first, reportedly restoring life to a local ruler's son before settling in Multan in 1201.<sup>187</sup> For all practical purposes this would have been either one of the two local Ghorid governors of that city under Mu'iz al-din that we dealt with in the last chapter, as there were no other rulers in Uch based at the time.

It is important to note that Shams's arrival in Uch in the 1190s and his subsequent fame predate Mu'iz al-din's assassination. Resurgent Ismaili activity in the region under Zakariya's influence could have benefited Qabacha by affording him a kingdom in the form of Mu'iz al-din's convenient departure, which is what happened since he was also incidentally assassinated by an Ismaili at this point. Although there is no corroborating historical evidence uncovered for this premise yet, it could be a likely scenario as in 1175 Mu'iz al-din personally made a massacre of Ismailis in Multan, before appointing a new

---

<sup>184</sup> Khan 1983, p.204: Zawahir Moir/Noorally, 'Hazrat Pir Shams al-din Sabzwari Multani' in *Abdal al-Ismailiyya*, p. 83 ff. Also see Daftary 2007, p.385.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*: A.J. Cunara, *Nur al-Mubin*, a text on Ismaili history and religious figures compiled under the third Aga Khan, early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*. According to Zawahir Moir, Shams's first arrival at a very young age in Multan was in 1175-80, coinciding with Satgur Nur's mission in Gujarat. This would make for an interesting contrast as it precedes Zakariya's return to Multan in 1188.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*. This sequence seems to complement Zawahir Moir's narration of events at least for Shams's arrival in the region of Uch, if not in Multan itself.

governor in Uch, Ali Karmakh, to follow a similar policy.<sup>188</sup> These details have been explored in the last chapter and seem to suggest with some certainty that an unspoken and enduring triangle existing between Zakariya, Shams and Qabacha, which must have left Qabacha very shaky in the end. This is in light of the feverish level of Ismaili missionary work done by Shams in the region in this situation of interdependence. The association obviously went sour at some point, but only after Shams had completed the groundwork for the da'wa over a period of thirty years, until Qabacha lost his kingdom in 1228.

The historical and political analysis of the situation of the region as explored in the last chapter will have already demonstrated the indispensability of Zakariya's role as being the kingmaker in this region. It is highly unlikely that Shams would have operated with such freedom, on scale reported in a multitude of historical sources, without some empathy or discretion on part of the authorities. Moreover his initial work is known to be in Uch, which would be the seat of the governor, within a semi-independent Multan under Zakariya and its old elite. A very simple reason for the tolerance shown to Shams could be the financial and spiritual clout that Qabacha needed to remain Sultan in a state of continuous war, which only Zakariya and Shams could provide, rather than his own personal religious leanings. As we have seen in the last chapter Zakariya was richer than the local Multani treasury and actually bankrolled Qabacha on many occasions. His standing with the established Sufis and their khanqahs in the whole region coupled with Shams's success with the masses would make for two potentially very strong factors to keep Qabacha as Sultan, even in their less diminished capacity when they stayed their hand from working against him.

Hence this chapter, after establishing the contemporaneous spiritual activities of Pir Shams with the Suhrawardi Order, its personalities, and the related temporal powers of the time, will deal with the primary part which Shams's personality and the events of his life played in the religious environment of the region. It reconstructs his spiritual legacy and a chronologically correct hagiography using oral traditions, ceremonies recorded on the fieldtrip, Ismaili *ginans* or mystical poetry, and geography, something that has not

---

<sup>188</sup> See Chapter One, 'The Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley.'

been attempted before. The chapter later touches upon the hidden interconnectivity between the ceremonial motifs of the Ismaili celebrations started by Shams, and the iconographic symbolism found on the monuments of the Suhrawardi Order, which will be further explained conceptually in later chapters.

Some of the ceremonies celebrated around the Shams shrine are highly unorthodox. Our research suggests that they seem to point to the popularisation of the Persian New Year (Nauroz) with the Hindu calendar, in a multi-faith religious ceremonial in the 13<sup>th</sup> century which is distinctly Ismaili. These ceremonies are probably the last surviving remnants of the astrological framework of religious celebration attached to the belief system known as the *Satpanth* or True Path in medieval Ismailism. They play a central part in understanding the beliefs of the Satpanth, and have yielded the conceptual basis for the astrological decoding of the multi-faith symbolism of the Suhrawardi monuments in chapter four. Shams's Ismailism never having being in doubt, the interconnection of some of these ceremonies from his shrine to that of an earlier Suhrawardi Sufi further endorses the influence of Ismaili metaphysical doctrine on that order in the specific context of the Indus Valley. It lends further credence to Ismaili da'wa having generally worked under the cover of Suhrawardi Sufism in this region.

Some of the practices and religious icons related to Shams' personality are attached to the prevalent Twelver Shiism now followed at the Suhrawardi shrines in both Multan and Uch, yet they are generally shunned by the orthodox Shia clergy and the majority of its adherents in Pakistan. The continued presence of these Ismaili practices connected to an Ismaili icon point to the transition from Ismailism to mainstream Twelver Shiism on the collapse of the Ismaili da'wa. In Uch, these rituals are unknowingly followed by the local Twelver masses, and are built around celebrating Shams, on the basis of his supernatural feats, as a transmigrated icon of the primordial Shia personality, namely the first Shia Imam Ali. Yet they are patronised and coordinated by the Twelver Shia custodians of the Suhrawardi Bukhari shrines, and are a surviving link to the hidden connection which existed between the Ismaili da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order in the past, which has now been lost.

## The Hagiography of Shams: The Itinerary of Shams's Arrival in Multan

The early arrival of Shams in this region has been discussed above, and the comparison of historical evidence and Ismaili sources correctly establishes Uch as the place of his first settlement, which also became the initial headquarters of his Ismaili da'wa. The story of Shams's arrival in Multan, the city usually associated with his fame more than Uch, and his being finally granted a place outside the citadel walls to preach after bearing the initial hatred of the Multanis, is the subject of local folklore and prose. The events as reported anecdotally have also been quoted by many latter-day historians, but most are references to the place of his current shrine in Multan, which had become his permanent headquarters.<sup>189</sup> The details connected with Shams's arrival in local Multani folklore are extraordinary descriptions dwelling upon his supernatural feats, including crossing the Indus on a boat of paper while escaping from his enemies, calling the sun down to cook a bird, in addition to others, before his actually becoming popular in the city.<sup>190</sup>

Notwithstanding its fable-like description of Shams's supernatural powers, the folklore in Multan and Uch as recorded in this thesis is still a credible source to ascertain the chronology of events and places involved in his coming to rest at the current site of his shrine. This location which houses his monument is only half a mile down the hill from the khanqah complex of his contemporary, the kingmaker of the region and the defacto ruler of Multan, Baha al-din Zakariya. The problem caused by Shams's sudden unannounced arrival at the city gates, his fame, and consequent antagonism with Zakariya, is a well-recorded and at most times a well-exaggerated event in anecdote. Hagiographical Ismaili writers have blown it out of proportion into an ensuing spiritual contest that Zakariya lost,<sup>191</sup> while other traditional historians have reported it more

---

<sup>189</sup> Khan 1983, p.205.

<sup>190</sup> Malcom 1829, vol. 2, p.282; Curzon 1986, vol. 1, p.519. These are in likeness of other reports of his bringing to life a local ruler's dead son earlier in Uch, which had subsequently become his first headquarters.

<sup>191</sup> Kassam 1995, p.378.

mutedly as Zakariya's initial resentment of Shams, which was short lived.<sup>192</sup> The fact of Zakariya being the overlord of semi-independent Multan is however well-established in this thesis, and in general history. Hence, Shams's accommodation within the city walls and his open preaching of Ismaili doctrine half a mile from the citadel ramparts which housed Zakariya's own khanqah, could not have gone on with the latter's knowledge. In essence, considering his own sympathies to qalandars explored in the last chapter, Zakariya well knew and tolerated the heterodox doctrines Shams propagated so close to his front door. He must also have also known about the religious ceremonies that emanated from the Shams complex, especially as one of them is shown here to be connected to an earlier Suhrawardi Sufi.

The famous story of the summoning of the sun down in Multan by Shams to cook food is also the subject of Ismaili ginans, as are his movements in the region, but the reference is to a piece of meat instead. The details mentioned in Ismaili ginans are remarkably similar to some local folklore in terms of the events involved in Shams's life, but there is some confusion in the names of places and greater confusion in the chronology of reported events. Shackle and Moir have transcribed a part of the ginan, *Satvarani Vadi* or 'The Greater Account of Truth', which describes the Ismaili version of the story of Shams calling the Sun down to cook food for his young disciple.<sup>193</sup> In addition to the chronology of events, some of Shams's geographical movements as mentioned in this ginan also differ from that reported in local folklore. The confusion is further amplified by the allegorical language used in ginans, which at times use fabulous descriptions to represent temporal events in the already exaggerated accounts of Shams's life.

The ginan manuscript describes Shams's arrival story in great detail. Like our correct historical sources and local folklore, the ginan first records his arrival at Uch, stating that the ruler of the city, Baha al-din (Zakariya) observed Shams's arrival from his riverside

---

<sup>192</sup> Zakariya ordered the Multanis to withhold serving food and drink from Shams: Malcom 1829, vol. 2, p.282.

<sup>193</sup> Shackle and Moir 2000, pp.134-135.

palace on the opposite bank, and did not appreciate it.<sup>194</sup> Shams then responded by sailing a paper boat to demonstrate his spiritual prowess, and gave Zakariya a side glance (allegory) due to which two horns grew from his head in fear, entrenching his (Zakariya's) head to the ceiling of his balcony (of the citadel or khanqah?), which were then sawed off (to free him).<sup>195</sup> Then communication between the two was established through one of Zakariya's sons Shaykh Sadr, who found Shams sitting in a mosque.<sup>196</sup> He brought a message from Zakariya on there being no more place for new ascetics in Multan represented by a bowl full of milk, and was in turn rebuked for Zakariya's Sunnism by Shams who moulded three mounds of ash on the ground,<sup>197</sup> as a reference to Zakariya's orthodoxy. Then as a reply Shams placed a rose on the milk in the bowl as representing himself and sent it back with Shaykh Sadr, signifying he would supersede all the other Sufis in the city.<sup>198</sup> As shown in this thesis, around the time of Shams's first arrival i.e. in the 1190s, Uch was ruled by Mu'iz al-din's anti-Ismaili governor Ali Karmakh (d. late 1190s), with Zakariya in a semi-independent Multan.<sup>199</sup> Hence the chances of Zakariya being in Uch are even more unlikely. Yet the mention of Zakariya as the ruler in the ginan, be it of Uch in ginanic allegory, lends great credence to his power and overlordship of the region eclipsing that of the local Ghorid governor from Ismaili sources. This and the mention of the rapprochement also imply his necessary involvement in Shams's missionary work.

---

<sup>194</sup> *Satavarni Vadi* (private MS), p.132 ff. In this author's opinion this statement, and this specific ginan in general, uses allegorical references to describe Shams's movements and the events surrounding his life, which should not be interpreted strictly, since Multan lies across a river from Uch. There is no chance of Zakariya having a palace in Uch, as he was firmly placed in Multan near the citadel mound, and far away from a branch of the Chenab that previously flowed next to Multan, but not through it or near his khanqah. The reference is probably to Zakariya hearing about Shams's initial arrival in the region and not liking it.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.* This description should be interpreted allegorically again, as Shams's fame and spiritual kudos eclipsing (horns) that of Zakariya in the region more than anything else, which was subsequently re-addressed (through communication). The ginan is obviously a thematic description of events over-layered with fabulous hagiography, which can be decoded and verified through comparison with folkloric events and history.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.* This is where the confusion between Uch and Multan starts, giving the impression that boat-sailing event actually took place in Multan (as opposed to the region at large), where this would be physically impossible due to the lack of a river near Zakariya's khanqah.

<sup>197</sup> i.e. representing the three caliphs, or Sunnism.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, p.134 ff. This story of the milk bowl is often applied to Shahbaz Qalandar in anecdote, but is only pertinent to Shams in Ismaili ginans.

<sup>199</sup> Moreover, the Shaykh Sadr mentioned here cannot be Sadr al-din Arif (d.1285) who would not have been born then, or else been a very young child. Such representation should be seen as corruption of the original ginan through its reconstruction from historical facts after loss in transmission. In local folklore he is mentioned as Haji Baghdad, one of Zakariya's disciples.

According to the ginan, news of Shams's arrival then reached the city, which in the case of the reply sent back to Zakariya can only mean Multan. Yet Shams's entrance into Multan is not mentioned here, it would be correct to assume through field research that the meeting with Shaykh Sadr (or Zakariya's disciple) did not happen in Multan itself, but perhaps outside the city walls. Subsequently, the son of the ruler of 'The City' (not distinguished as Multan or Uch) died.<sup>200</sup> When all the learned and spiritual men of the city could not revive him, Shams was called in, and restored life to him.<sup>201</sup> This scared and incensed the local clergy and the orthodox 'Ulama so much that they charged Shams with breaking the Shar'ia (by bringing a dead person to life, hence interfering with God's work). They passed a *fatwa* or religious edict for him to be skinned alive as punishment, and to be deprived of food and drink. He searched for food and drink for three days which everybody denied him.<sup>202</sup>

When Shams finally managed to convince a butcher to sell him some raw meat, he cooked it by summoning down the sun. Upon this his tormentors rushed back to him acknowledging his power, asking for forgiveness and for the sun to be sent back up, or it would consume the city, to which Shams agreed.<sup>203</sup> Shackle and Moir who have transcribed a part of this ginan have commented on the plausible lack of chronology in the citation of events, and the confusion between Multan and Uch at most times as probably resulting from erroneous copying of an earlier original and loss in oral transmission.<sup>204</sup>

---

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. This reference to 'The City' is mentioned in the verse immediately after the communication with Sadr and Zakariya, and it is interpreted as being Multan also, which is not necessarily the case.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. According to field notes this event happened in Uch, and the ruler was Qabacha.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. At this point (p.134) there is great confusion in the ginan when evaluated with folkloric chronology. The ginan does not give an exact place for the flogging, and in light of the general confusion between Uch and Multan there seem to be many details of events missing. It appears that the events of the flogging and withholding of food happened simultaneously around Multan and this may be due to some verses lost in the original ginan. There is a missing part to the story in folklore which clarifies the events.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid. I am thankful to Zawahir Moir for these references.

<sup>204</sup> Zawahir Moir has commented that she has seen older manuscripts with only a brief mention of a scuffle with Zakariya, instead of the elaborate hagiographic descriptions of a spiritual contest found in latter day copies.

Yet in spite of its allegory, confusion and erroneous copying the ginan specifically mentions Uch as Shams's first point of arrival in the country. As suggested before, Shams's missionary work in Uch itself could not have gone on without official tolerance by its Ghorid governor. This would have to be Ali Karmakh's successor and later ruler, Nasir al-din Qabacha, who worked under Zakariya's spiritual mantle. It would not have been the former who is reported to be prudent in his anti-Ismaili work under Mu'iz al-din Sam, and was appointed in 1175 when Zakariya was four years old. Hence it would be right to assume that Shams's move to Uch and the subsequent upsurge in Ismaili activity under him coincides with Ali Karmakh's death. The implications of the power relations and this triangle between Shams, Zakariya, and Qabacha are further amplified by the political situation surrounding the newcomer. Unlike the older trusted slave governors of Mu'iz al-din, Qabacha would have to work much harder to earn favour, and eventually inherit a kingdom on the former's death, or be elbowed out by the old guard, as was the norm for succession amongst Turkic slave kings. Perhaps Zakariya was just initially jolted by the arrival of a personality with Shams's spiritual credentials and heterodox Ismailism in his backyard, which was under his newfound follower Qabacha's rule. Yet the eventual resolution of the matter when Shams finally established a lodge in Multan also strengthens this hidden nexus between Shams and Zakariya. This however does not account for any initial problems with Qabacha in Uch, or the events which took place before the migration to Multan.

The local folklore recorded on the fieldtrip complements the existing power relations in a more acceptable format as compared to the ginan. It has helped the decoding of the theme for *Satvarani Vadi* for this section, and gives details which clarify most of the confusion between events and places mentioned in the ginan. In addition, the chronology of events constructed from the folklore collected about Shams in Uch and Multan is a much better description of the hagiography of a person of his rank. He went through a tumultuous time at the hands of temporal authorities before attaining the spiritual highground and becoming undefeated, in the likeness of other well known religious figures in history. This is an objective analysis of piecing together the events via the different sources and through the telescopic eye of the generic process that historically accompanies the rise of

any spiritual person, yet without attaching any credence to claims of supernatural powers possessed by such persons.

Local oral traditions and related religious practices recorded in Uch to decipher Shams's movement state that Shams came first to Uch in Qabacha's reign, where he established his da'wa successfully.<sup>205</sup> This was actually in Sitpur, which was a non-Muslim principality outside Uch ruled by a local Buddhist queen called Sita Rani, who became Shams's devotee.<sup>206</sup> Shams's presence in the region was not appreciated by the orthodox authorities of the time, and Shams was eventually skinned alive for being a Shia and for his successful Shia (Ismaili) missionary work, and left to die on the desert fringe outside Uch. He was supported only by his young disciple in this time of extreme torment, a boy of thirteen who had accompanied him from Iran. The skinning was ordered by the orthodox Sunni clergy, and endorsed by Qabacha. It was based on a fatwa issued against Shams for being a heretic (Shia) propagating a false religion (Ismailism). Shams somehow survived and retreated into the desert around Uch where he was left to die, and disappeared. He reappeared in Uch after two and a half years with his skin grown back, wearing a snake and wielding remarkable spiritual powers. This was just before the time of the death of Qabacha's son, and subsequently Shams brought him back to life when nobody else could.<sup>207</sup>

---

<sup>205</sup> This complements the reportage in *Satvarani Vadi* (p.132). Somewhere in this timeframe the initial annoyance of Zakariya as mentioned in the ginan must have taken place, since Qabacha operated in Uch under Zakariya's spiritual mantle after Karmakh's death.

<sup>206</sup> In anecdote, this story is also sometimes applied to Surkhposh but has been discredited due to his later birth and arrival in Uch, see beginning of chapter three. A likeness of the story is found in *Satvarani Vadi* (p.132 ff) where the local queen becomes Shams's devotee, and the husband king becomes his enemy. In the ginan these could be allegoric references to the same event and persons as cited in the folklore, especially as it is also mentioned in the beginning of the ginan's section describing Shams's arrival in Uch.

<sup>207</sup> Also in Hollister 1953, p353; Faridi 1971, p.39. This story as cited by local and western scholars narrates 'when nobody could restore the child to life, Shams appeared and kicked him saying rise in the Name of thy Lord, and nothing happened, then he stated rise in my name Shams, and so the child came back to life.' Yet these citations do not mention the child as Qabacha's son, only as the son of an Uch noble, nor is this event described in relation to other chronological details of Shams's life. But its use by a scholar like Hollister lends great credence to the clarification of the ginan confusion through local folklore, and the site of the event being Uch instead of Multan. In her book based on Ismaili folklore Tazim Kassam cites the same event as happening in Multan, which is wrong: Kassam 1995, pp.378-378.

The act astounded everyone and earned Shams even more admirers and enemies, as he set about collecting his few surviving loyal supporters in Uch.<sup>208</sup> The orthodox elite of Uch meanwhile were trying to recover and formulate a strategy for dealing with his reappearance and the events involved with it. He was subsequently pursued by the Turkic soldiery and their local Hindu allies to be put to death again, along with his few trusted followers, so as to finish the matter once and for all. He managed to escape them, when his small band was cornered on the banks of the Panjnad river while being pursued. On his instructions his followers hurriedly fashioned together a boat-like structure from rags and paper on the river bank. Before starting to sail the boat Shams asked his followers to discard all their worldly possessions. He then blew on the makeshift sail and the boat started to float, then to sail, much to the amazement of his pursuing enemies who though they had him cornered. Then the boat started to sink midway through the Panjnad when Shams told one of his followers to discard the last piece of gold he had hid in his sleeve, upon which they sailed to the other bank of the vast river in safety.<sup>209</sup>

This event is remembered in Uch in its Moharram ceremonies and will be described in the next section. What is important to note is that unlike the ginan chronology, the above description makes very good sense in describing the generic process involved in the attainment of spiritual flight for a Saint or Prophet. It starts with Shams being just a normal Ismaili da'i with some esoteric training when he came to Uch from Khurasan to start his da'wa. He went through a near death experience through physical torture of the worst kind, and subsequently became able to perform what he did after a long retreat in the desert. These events also make sense in terms of Ismaili doctrine and spiritual hierarchy. No other Ismaili da'i in history has attracted such a cult, and the phenomenon is inexplicable unless something very extraordinary happened along the way.

---

<sup>208</sup> In the latter half of *Satvarani Vadi*, tallying with the description of events and chronology in the local folklore, there is mention of Shams's secret follower's many of whom were women, who had set up secret lodges in their houses and had secret meetings (in Uch). They are called *guptis* or hidden ones, a reference to secret Ismailis used to this day.

<sup>209</sup> In Sind this event is also ascribed to Shahbaz Qalandar, like the milk bowl story in *Satvarani Vadi*, this is ironic because Shahbaz Qalandar was Shams's maternal cousin according to the Sabzwari family tree.

The folklore recorded in Multan states that Shams came to Multan with some of his followers after the boat event while escaping from his enemies in the region. When he reached the outskirts of Multan, he camped at a site outside the city walls as a gesture of respect to the Sufis already present in Multan, i.e. Zakariya. He initiated contact with Zakariya through his boy disciple, who had accompanied him throughout his journeys in the Indus Valley. Zakariya replied through the milk bowl event probably through the auspices of his son (rather disciple) Sadr as mentioned in *Satvarani Vadi*, stating there was no room for more Sufis in the city, to which Shams sent back the rose as a reply, signifying himself. But he was turned away, refused entry into the walled city, and denied the sale of food on the orders of the Multani elite to dissuade him from staying on further. These events were mainly orchestrated at the behest of the learned men and orthodox clergy.<sup>210</sup>

Unable to buy food Shams called out to a dove to come down so that there could be food for his disciple, and then called the sun down and used its power to cook the bird. When news of the event reached the city, its elite including Zakariya came down with an entourage to beg forgiveness and invited Shams to enter and stay in the city. Hence after the sun event Shams gained entrance into the walled city of Multan, and set up his lodge at the site of his current shrine next to the citadel, which houses Zakariya's own khanqah, never to leave or be molested again. He entered Multan in 1201 and made it the permanent place of his da'wa, and built a vast network in the region as stated in his own *ginans* and poetry.<sup>211</sup> Based on Multani oral traditions this story is also quoted with the same chronology but with some variation by the standard historians.<sup>212</sup>

---

<sup>210</sup> Albeit in a differing chronology and citing a different reason, *Satvarani Vadi* also mentions this maltreatment of Shams taking place at the behest of the Sayyids and learned men of the unspecified 'City' on p.134 ff. An added reason for the inclusion of Zakariya in this picture would be that open association and empathy with Shams would blow his cover and disturb his power play in the region as its kingmaker.

<sup>211</sup> Khan 1983, p.204; Latif 1961, p.85.

<sup>212</sup> Malcom 1829, vol. 2, p.282; Curzon 1929, vol. 1, p.519. The source is the Gardezi family which has often been used by historians during the British period, and also by this author. This is the same Twelver Gardezi family connected to the Yusuf Ghirdez initiated by Rukn-e-Alam as described in Chapter One. He was the last Suhrawardi Shaykh of Multan, consult plate 8 at the start of this chapter.

Although Shams came to Uch and later Multan after Ali Karmkh's death in the time of Qabacha who was well disposed towards Zakariya, it must be remembered that Mu'iz al-din was alive and well till 1206. In spite of the covert Ismaili credentials of Zakariya substantiated in this thesis, and a semi-independent tax paying Multan governed from Uch, it would still be under Mu'iz's governor Qabacha. Shams's open missionary activity was bound to upset this balancing act in both places, especially Multan, hence the inclusion of Zakariya in Shams's maltreatment should not come as a surprise.

The events as mentioned in the ginan *Satvarani Vadi* fit in with the descriptions recorded in local folklore. The chronology is however very different with the skinning, the restoring of Qabacha's son to life and the boat story, which actually take place around Uch, confused with the withholding of food and the related sun event in Multan. If a correct itinerary of Shams's movements and his arrival to Multan is to be established, any inaccuracies which seem geographically unviable are to be omitted, which would mean the boat journey. After Shackle and Moir's comments on their transcription of the ginans, it is acceptable to deduce that the simultaneously portrayed events which seem to take place in one city only appear so due to the confusion between Multan and Uch resulting from ginanic allegory, and the references are probably in part to the region at large. The confusion is amplified due to exaggerations that may have found their way into the Shams and Zakariya dispute in latter day copies, and from loss of ginan verses.<sup>213</sup> Yet the ginan *Satvarani Vadi* still serves as an invaluable document for ascertaining the general itinerary of Shams's movements in the region.<sup>214</sup>

There is no question that Zakariya was outwardly known as an orthodox Sunni, as the ginan obviously mentions, yet his hidden Shia leanings have been explored in detail in the last chapter. The same connection has been shown for the Suhrawardi Order in general, from the time of its inception in Iraq, well into the later Multan period under

---

<sup>213</sup> There seem to be missing details in *Satvarani Vadi* (p.134) with no description of the flogging, which must have been a major event. Zawahir Moir has already commented on other ginans which only mentioned a scuffle with Zakariya.

<sup>214</sup> The *Satvarani Vadi* ginan manuscript does provide evidence for the presence of Shams in Uch before Multan (p.134), mentioning it as the place of his first arrival. This mention of the earlier arrival in Uch complements the existing power relations which existed in the region, as explored in the beginning of this chapter.

Zakariya's descendants. This would account for the resolution reached with Shams and his accommodation within Multan in a short space of time after his arrival. One can logically infer from this that during the standoff because of Shams's desire to enter Multan, Shams probably stayed outside the actual city walls as the folklore states, which must have been locked every night according to medieval tradition. Consequent exploration on the basis of local folklore yielded a site outside the ancient city walls which is supposedly the place where Shams stayed on his initial arrival outside Multan from Uch. Local anecdote asserts this is also the place where he allegedly cooked a bird for his disciple by calling the sun down, when the Multani elite had ordered the initial withholding of food from him. The discovery of this site gives the itinerary of Shams's movements on the periphery of Multan a clearer chronology before the resolution his dispute with Zakariya.

The commonality in the descriptions revolving around the ban on Shams from entering Multan and his subsequent entrance, as recorded in both the ginan and in anecdote, seems to confirm that the site discovered on the fieldtrip would be the most plausible place for occurrence of the events connected with Shams's arrival that city, and the communication with Zakariya. But it also suggests that it is not the place of his first arrival in the Indus valley, which has to be Uch or its outskirts.



10. Site of Shams's miracle in the village of Suraj Kund

The site of Shams's first stay outside Multan is located in the small village of Suraj Kund. There is no mosque now located in the village, yet the name of the village itself literally means 'sun hook' in Seraiki, and etymologically implies a connection with Shams's Sun miracle. This might have been an outlying suburb beyond the city gates of a very prosperous medieval Multan with its own mosque, as mentioned in the ginan. The small enclosure (plate 10) is venerated by the villagers and local visitors, who light oil lamps and incenses in it every Thursday night. The site is not known outside this locality and its discovery came as a surprise to even the Department of Archaeology, who are usually very well informed about such sites.

The part local folklore has played in demystifying Shams's personality and movements in this region is appreciable. The discrepancy between folkloric and ginanic chronology is also on account of the ginans being recorded later by Ismailis in Gujarat some 1000 kilometres away from Multan, whereas local folklore and religious ceremonies have survived here for over eight centuries, and so preserve a more accurate chronology and continuity. Local folklore about Shams was collected on a number of occasions from very credible sources and tested for its common traits in reportage for the construction of an

accurate chronology. In the transcription of field notes and interviews special attention was paid to the coherence of the reports in reference to the geography of the region, without which accuracy in ascertaining Shams's' movements would be difficult, in light of the already existing confusion in Ismaili ginans.<sup>215</sup>

### The River and the Arrival from Uch

The arrival of Shams in the village of Suraj Kund from Uch can be traced on a map after the above clarification in the occurrence of the related events through the comparison of ginanic and local sources. This new chronology has also revealed the route taken by him to Multan which can be verified through geography. Some non-Ismaili hagiographic sources quoted by historians and cited in this chapter ascribe Shams as having crossed the river Indus miraculously on a paper boat, while being pursued by his enemies, before reaching Multan.<sup>216</sup> However the event as mentioned in the transcription of the Ismaili ginan *Satavarani Vadi* by Shackle and Moir, does not cite the name of the river.<sup>217</sup> The local folklore recorded in Uch specifically calls this river the Panjnad.

Notwithstanding the fabulous events connected with the boat story, if one is to consider the arrival in Multan from Uch, the crossing of a river would be a geographical necessity. Thus some riverine passage irrespective of its supernatural credentials is involved in Shams's travel from Uch and precedes his arrival outside Multan. The site of Suraj Kund discovered on the fieldtrip lies just outside the old city walls, and the old moat is now a

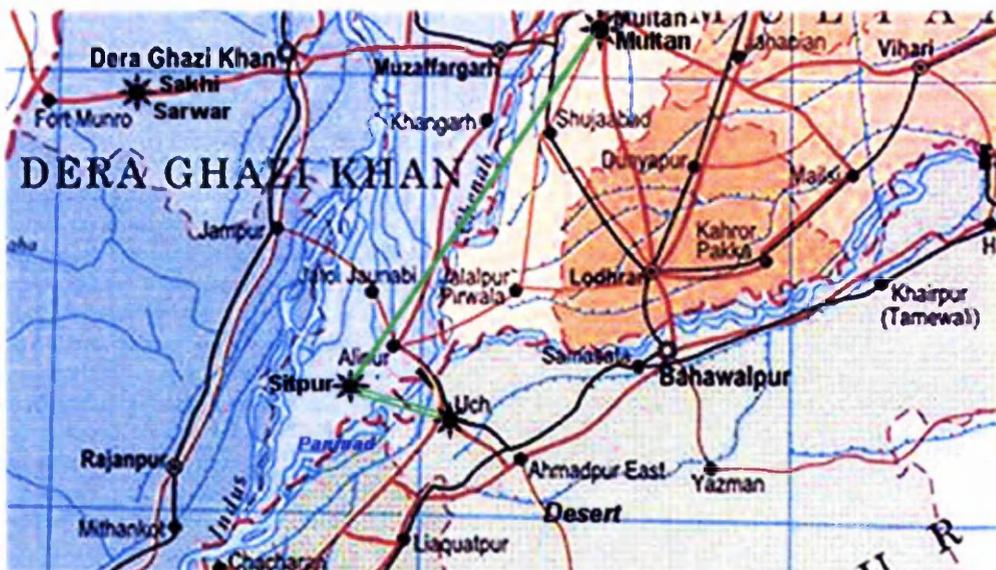
---

<sup>215</sup> Three different venues were researched for the purpose; one was a detailed interview with the family historian of the Gardezi family on 8 Moharram 1427 at their family Imambargah. The Gardezi family archives are regarded to be the most accurate manuscript records in Multan and they are also the best keepers of oral transmission in the city. This is the same source consulted by British historians in Multan when they wrote about its history, see Toynbee 1961, p.15. The custodian of Shams's shrine was not interviewed about hagiography for reasons of objectivity. Details about the boat event, the related *taziya* or replica and the historical presence of Shams in Uch and events connected thereto were recorded on 10-11 Moharram 1427 during the 'Ashura ceremonies there. This was the second visit to Uch; the first one was to record site details and plans of the Suhrawardi monuments. The interview in Multan with the Gardezi family historian led to the discovery of the site of 'Suraj Kund' connected with the Sun event (on 14 Moharram 1427), where the village elders were spoken to about the site.

<sup>216</sup> Malcom 1829, vol. 2, p.282.

<sup>217</sup> Shackle and Moir 2000, p.27.

canal which is traversed before reaching the village, but there is no river in the vicinity of this site, or anywhere near the old city walls. A look at a detailed map of the region would show the geographic route taken by Shams from Uch to Multan (below).



11. Shams's passage from Uch to Sitpur through the Panjnad, then on to Multan, the main sites associated with him are shown with the symbol of the sun

The previous image shows the route taken by Shams to Multan in green. The one river that can be traversed to Multan is the Chenab from the west, yet Uch is due south of Multan. The other is the Panjnad drainage in the south, a channel of five rivers into which the Chenab also falls just before Uch, which finally flows into the Indus a further forty five miles downstream. It easy to misinterpret the Panjnad as the Indus, especially for foreigners, due to the vast amount of water it carries, which is probably the reason that a Multani anecdote recalls the river involved in the boat event as the Indus. Physically, Uch lies just a few miles from the Panjnad, which is where the journey began according to local folklore. When one tallies the descriptions of Shams's movements recorded in Uch with the map above it makes a lot of geographic sense. If Shams first came to Sitpur from Khurasan and managed to set up a successful da'wa from there, he would be physically unmolested as Uch city proper, Qabacha's capital, would lie across the Panjnad. In fact if one is to take a closer look at the area around Sitpur, a triangular island-like formation can be seen between the Panjnad, the Chenab before it flows into it and the Indus to the

west. This area would be physically cut off from both the centres, i.e. Multan and Uch, by these vast undammed rivers of the medieval era. This is probably the region where Shams very successfully managed his initial da'wa which so aggrieved the orthodox clergy and Qabacha in Uch, and upset Zakariya's balancing act in Multan.

In this scenario the skinning event must have involved some deception, an act of betrayal, or stumbling across the Panjnad into Uch proper, of which no mention is found in recorded hagiography. Shams necessarily needed to be taken captive from across the Panjnad to be made subject to the heresy charge and the skinning.<sup>218</sup> There is no desert in the west of Uch city, within or beyond the Sitpur triangle, as it is now all agrarian land run through with rivers, with some retrospective similarity in Shams's time. The only desert nearby is in the region across the Panjnad, to the south and east of Uch, which extends into Rajasthan. Chronologically, the skinning and leaving of Shams for dead on the outskirts of a desert can only be here, from where he returned back to Uch after his spiritual flight two and a half years later, collected his few loyal followers, and sailed back across the Panjnad to the physical safety of the Sitpur triangle. This geographical analysis also explains how a significant Buddhist principality survived in the heart of the lower Punjab region in the era of post-Ghaznavid Turkic rule.

Added support to this chronology reconstructed from the local folk traditions is given by some ginans that mention Shams's early dialogues with Buddhist monks in the region, who might eventually have become his followers. This is in addition to the Buddhist Queen mentioned in *Satvarani Vadi* who became his devotee, and who was undoubtedly Sita Rani of Sitpur or 'Samaiya.' There is also the unexplored hagiography of Shams in Rajasthan which is yet to be fully researched by scholars, but the skinning and the desert events do connect with this phenomenon also. Without the folkloric reportage recorded in Uch, there is no evidence of Shams ever having reached Rajasthan, yet the modern Indian

---

<sup>218</sup> *Satvarani Vadi* contains references to some of Shams's secret lodges in an area which resembles Sitpur in its allegorical description. This in the latter half of the ginan, yet the fact that they were secret must date them to the early da'wa in Uch/Sitpur, as Shams was obviously too strong in the Multan period to have to resort to secrecy. There is mention of a city called 'Samaiya', with reference to the Buddhist queen and her followers mentioned on p.132 ff, who became Shams's devotees, which locals have identified as an older name for Sitpur.

State is rife with his mention in anecdote, with all the related stories mentioned in similar fashion as in the Indus Valley.<sup>219</sup>

The most important surviving evidence of the start of the boat journey very close to Uch, and hence through the Panjnad channel, as opposed to any other river near Multan, is its celebration through a religious icon used in Moharram ceremonies in that city. There is no such ceremonial remembrance of the boat event near Multan, or anywhere else in the region. The commemorative ceremonies for 'Ashura or the Tenth of the Islamic month of Moharram in Uch involving the boat event icon have a certain distinctness about them like the ceremonial found at Shams's shrine. They probably date back to Shams's death and must have been set up as a way of remembering him by his followers, for his torment and the victory against Qabacha and the orthodox clergy. Their continued presence also serves to explain the rest of the chronology of events deciphered from the Uch folklore, when stripped of supernatural descriptions.

#### The Shams Taziya: An Icon remembering Shams in the Shia legacy of the Suhrawardi Order in Uch

The most striking feature of the Moharram ceremonies in Uch is the use of music in litanies and self flagellation practices, and a specific taziya<sup>220</sup>, which is fashioned as a boat. Moharram ceremonies were first choreographed and managed en masse with state patronage in Fatimid Egypt as opposed to their being Twelver Shia in origin. In the sub-continent, these ceremonies are especially colourful, and most of them date back to the second Ismaili era inaugurated by Shams's da'wa.<sup>221</sup> Ismaili missionaries drew upon local iconographic traditions for the representation of their faith to native converts. Hollister records the first large scale use of the pictures of Ali in Ismaili lodges for proselytising locals in India in his book *Shia of India*, which the da'is represented as the

---

<sup>219</sup> Khan (Sila) 1997, pp.71-74.

<sup>220</sup> I.e. a replica, that which refreshes the past through commemoration; a standard Shia symbol for Moharram globally.

<sup>221</sup> For some reflections see 'Multani Marsiya,' by Shackle in *Der Islam*, vol. 55, pp. 280 ff.

tenth incarnation of Vishnu (to Vaishnavites).<sup>222</sup> This representation must have used the multi-faith astrological mechanism of the Sathpanth propagated by Pir Shams for the purpose, as local Hindu denominations were highly dependant on astrology and planetary rulership of the days of the week for their rituals and worship.

The Moharram ceremonies in question are conducted under the patronage of the local Bukhari clan, the descendants of the Suhrawardi Order in Uch. These ceremonies are an integral part of the religious life of the city. During the Moharram season, the Bukharis oversee the assembly of a life size boat taziya the structure of which is fashioned entirely out of ropes, rags and old cloth, built around a central mast which is actually an *'alam* or the replica standard of the third Shia Imam Husain. The framework is then clad and wrapped with higher quality material and decoration to complete the outer skin. The taziya is ritually started on an auspicious date before all the other preparations for Moharram get underway. A similar taziya is also organised by the Gilanis in the city, who are actually Sunni Sufis but have obviously taken on the practice after their arrival in Uch in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>223</sup>



12. The boat taziya in the Gilani quarter being assembled

---

<sup>222</sup> Hollister 1953, pp.356-357. Hollister actually states this as being done by Shams's grandson Sadr al-din, who was based in Uch.

<sup>223</sup> Sindhi 2000, pp. 85.

The Gilani quarter taziya is much simpler and smaller in comparison to the very elaborate Bukhari version. It is assembled and kept in the Gilani Imambargah,<sup>224</sup> taken out on 'Ashura, where it joins the main procession and is then dismantled. The keepers of the Bukhari shrines interviewed for the details and origins of this icon said that the original practice of the making of the taziya goes back to Jalal al-din Surkhposh himself, and that it is an integral part of the Bukhari (Suhrawardi) legacy of Uch.<sup>225</sup> Whether the taziya's beginnings can be ascribed to Surkhposh is questionable, yet there is no doubt that the practice is very old. The strict Surkhposh connection was probably concocted in a later era, after the large scale conversion to Twelver Shiism in Uch, to give the shrine keepers exclusive authority over the city's religious ceremonial and its icons as his descendants.

Surkhposh's life and times are not related to any boat events in anecdote or in recorded history. What is most likely is that Surkhposh or one of his immediate descendants started the practice of this specific taziya associated with his khanqah, which has remained in his family and its associates; but that it does not recall him or any of his hagiographic details. Untill a few generations ago smaller versions of the taziya were taken and set afloat in the Panjnad after the 'Ashura ceremonies, but due to the cost of the materials this practice has been discarded.

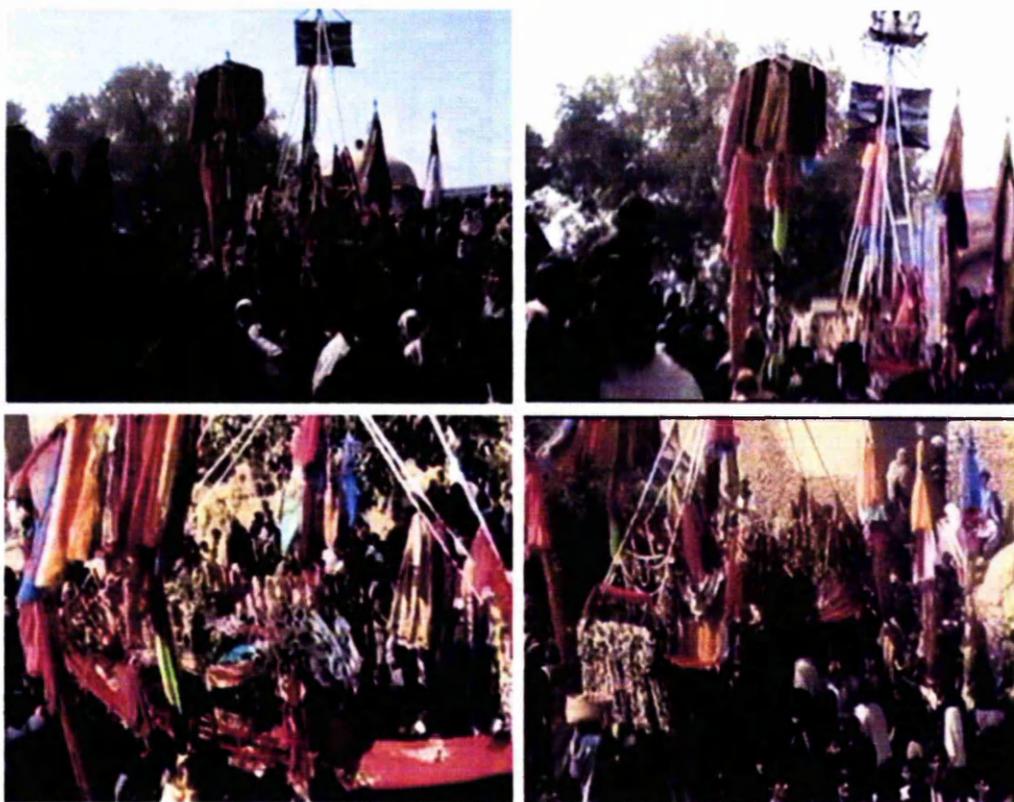


13. Left, the Bukhari taziya under construction near the Bibi Jaiwandi complex, right, the Bukhari taziya on the night of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Moharram

<sup>224</sup> Twelver equivalent of a religious centre, i.e. not just a mosque. The Gilanis of Uch are Sunni but maintain an Imambargah as a sign of respect to the Shia heritage of the city.

<sup>225</sup> The word Bukhari is always used in a Twelver context by the shrine keepers and the general public; if a Suhrawardi Sufi context it acknowledged it is as a secondary trait.

The Bukhari taziya is completed in the Bukhari quarter on the eve of 'Ashura, at a small site next to the Bibi Jaiwandi complex. After daybreak it is carried to the Surkhposh Khanqah on the ancient mound, and ritually starts the 'Ashura ceremonies.<sup>226</sup> It then leads the procession from the Surkhposh Khanqah, through the old city on its predestined route along the different monuments, and finishes the procession in the evening at the Bibi Jaiwandi complex, and is then taken to be dismantled. From the time of the start of the 'Ashura ceremonies in the morning, the taziya is never allowed to touch the ground,<sup>227</sup> and is ritually held off the ground to represent a floating motion. On occasions throughout the procession, and especially when the ceremonies reach climax, the carriers start swinging the taziya to represent a sailing motion. There are a number of people who line up to take over from tired carriers, as is the tradition with all Moharram icons.



14. The Bukhari taziya in the streets of the old city. Clockwise from top left, a) the Bukhari taziya at the Surkhposh Khanqah starting the 'Ashura ceremonies, b) leading the procession, c) in the streets of the old city, d) carried in a floating motion

<sup>226</sup> See Chapter Five, 'The Surkhposh Khanqah,' for details on these sites.

<sup>227</sup> This is true for all Moharram tazyas, but has a different connotation for a boat.

There is a painted image of Ali on the mast/'alam in the centre. The people who actually make the taziya claim that this tradition of having an image of Ali hung from the boat's mast has been there from the start. This would not come as a surprise considering the early large-scale use of these images by Ismaili dai's, specifically by Shams's grandson Sadr al-din, as commented by Hollister.



15. Left, the swinging motion to represent sailing, with Ali's image on the mast (encircled), centre and right, a close up of the Ali image

In spite of the Ali image, and other Twelver Shia eschatological reasons that can be delved into by critics and interest groups like the current Bukhari shrine keepers, to explain the representation of this taziya according to their present creed, there is no other actual taziya in the known Shia Muslim world in the form of a boat. This is especially so in this region where it can be immediately connected to the hagiography of a local Saint, and where the use of Ali's image on a large scale also has an older Ismaili connection in the form of his grandson, predating the influence of Twelver Iran. The only event that can be recalled here is the Shams boat journey lost in the mists of the forgotten Ismaili past of Uch, considering the specific Panjnad connotation, and the shaking and floating motions the taziya is subjected to. Unknown to its patrons, the fact that the practice of making this taziya goes back to the early Suhrawardi Bukharis and perhaps Surkhposh himself does not lend it a Twelver colouring. It only endorses the correctness of the arguments made in this thesis and specifically the following chapter, where a very strong hidden connection between Shams's Ismaili descendants and Surkhposh and his family in Uch has been shown. This taziya is just another reason for the acceptability of the reconstructed chronology of the events of Shams's life in this chapter. Zawahir Moir's observation

further clarified the connection of this taziya to Shams and his paper boat, through the traditional choice use of materials for the taziya making, as rags and old cloth were used for paper in old days.

### The Religious Ceremonial at the shrine of Shams

After ascertaining the chain of events that brought Shams to Multan in the last section, to the site which now houses his shrine, this section will deal with the ceremonies which have been recorded at the shrine itself. These ceremonies show a deeper metaphysical link to Suhrawardi Sufis in the region, and can help establish a greater religio-political affinity to Zakariya. They have also played a primary part in the decoding of the Satpanth. The process of religious celebration around Shams's shrine is manifold, as both local and Islamic calendars were used in Satpanth ceremony to regard auspicious dates, especially Shia-Ismaili ones. Although the practice of using the local calendar for Islamic events is widespread in Indian Sufism, where it allows the adherents to be able to plan their visits on fixed dates, in the case of Shams they take on extra meaning because of the multi-faith system of the Satpanth. The practices in question have lost their exact signification in the last two and a half centuries, due to the religious disruption that had occurred in the Sikh era; but a closer look at their interconnection to a Suhrawardi monument through a pilgrimage ceremony sheds new light on their origins. Such celebrations must have been more clearly identifiable as Suhrawardi or Ismaili previous to the Sikh era when these denominations existed in greater numbers in the region, even if some ceremonial had been assimilated into mainstream Twelver Shiism by then.

The intricate religious life of Shams's shrine is the remnant of a larger cohesive system of inter-religious celebration that would have existed in the heyday of the Ismaili da'wa. The remaining ceremonies and practices are articulate enough to show the need for further recording. The shrine of Shams serves as the primary centre for Moharram celebrations and Shia religious life in Multan, and the southern Punjab region as a whole. Twelver Shia organisations from all over the country visit the shrine regularly due to the

local belief in Shams's relationship as first cousin to Shahbaz Qalandar, whose shrine at Sehwan in Sind is the biggest centre of Shiism in Pakistan today. Shams's shrine is probably the second biggest centre of Shiism in Pakistan after Shahbaz Qalandar. Outside the traditional Islamic calendar, a great number of people come to the shrine all year round for the many intertwined commemorations of Islamic events with the local calendar. Visitors from outside Multan traditionally celebrate Moharram and other major dates according to the Islamic calendar in their respective regions and according to the local Punjabi calendar at the shrine of Shams.

The Punjabi calendar is a version of the Vikrami calendar used by the Hindu community all over the sub-continent. It was started in 56 A.D to mark the victory of a local king Vikram over Saka/Scythian invaders, and has gone many corrections over the centuries. It is the national calendar of Nepal, and is the progenitor of many regional versions all over India which differ slightly in calculations for marking the beginning of the months, but preserve the etymological names of the lunar months and a near fixed date for the New Year. The calendar is essentially a lunar calendar which uses the astrological transits of the sun within the lunar month to mark the beginning of the new month, with the addition of a fixed number of days to ensure a fixed beginning of the New Year. Its system of solar transits within the lunar cycle was incorporated by Omar Khayyam to suit the ancient Persian solar calendar (i.e. the use of solar transits within the solar months instead, necessarily the movement of the Sun through the signs of the Zodiac) for his Jalali calendar, which is generally more accurate than the Gregorian calendar. After a calendar reform in 1925, the Jalali Calendar was made the official calendar of modern Iran, and it is also followed in Afghanistan. The local inhabitants of the Indus valley invariably used the local Punjabi version of the Vikrami calendar when Shams and other Ismaili missionaries appeared on the scene from Iran, where the Jalali calendar with its Persian ceremonial motif with Shia resonances was officially followed in addition to the Islamic calendar.<sup>228</sup>

---

<sup>228</sup> The Jalali calendar was endorsed on 15 March, 1079 by Jalal al-din Malik Shah as the official calendar in his capital Isfahan, and has continued since then: 'Omar Khayyam' in *The Columbia Encyclopedia 2007* p.65. See Introduction, pp.19-20, & 'Omar Khayyam, Nauroz, and the Jalali Calendar' in Chapter Four. The astrological chart of the date shows it to be a Saturday, i.e. *Shamba*, the first day of the week in

Most of the outside visitors who follow the above practice of visitation to Shams for celebration of Islamic events with the Punjabi calendar are from the upper Punjab and Frontier areas, and have been following the pattern for centuries, from generation to generation. They are the inherited congregation of the Shams shrine so to speak, as opposed to the local one. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were members of a sect in the Frontier province who was deemed to have some connection with the Khojas of Bombay by the British government. They revered the Bhagavad Gita, worshipped no idols, and were highly devoted to Pir Shams, and used to give alms in his name, but did not call themselves Ismailis or Twelver Shia.<sup>229</sup> They were surely Shamsis, some of whom were found in the Punjab before Partition, had an undetermined and frowned upon belief structure, and were eventually absorbed into modern Ismailism, but their presence in the Frontier region is a very interesting phenomenon. No one knows if this sect still exists, or if it has converted to another Muslim denomination, but the report of 1911 bears on the actual spread of the ceremonies emanating from Shams's shrine not too long ago.

#### Chetir, Chaharshamba-yi Suri and a Vedic Nauroz

The most unique surviving ceremony at the shrine is the *Chetir* pilgrimage, where Chetir is the first month of the local calendar which begins on 14 March. There are some other ceremonies which are also found at Shahbaz Qalandar, and at the shrines of Shams's descendants and the Bukhari monuments in Uch. Yet the visitation ceremony of Chetir is centred exclusively on Shams and an earlier Suhrawardi Sufi Sakhi Sarwar. It is the most reminiscent of other multi-faith Sathpanth ceremonies that may have been lost. The shrine's lineal caretaker Zahid Shamsi described the Chetir celebrations in detail, as he is in charge of their organisation on the ground. They involve a visitation ceremony whereby traditional pilgrims come to Shams on the first Wednesday of the month of

---

Persian. That is the probably reason for the starting day, yet the Sun is exactly at 23 degrees Pisces, which is the same as the date for Ghadir Khumm, just a week before Nauroz.

<sup>229</sup> Hollister, 1953 p.355: CIR, 1911, NWFP, XIII, p.74.

Chetir. They start arriving the night before the actual Wednesday, i.e. on Tuesday night; according to Islamic tradition the night precedes the day and starts with sunset, while the day follows at sunrise, followed by a new 24 hour cycle at the following sunset. This is a centuries old visitation, and in older days according to traditional requirements the visitors would only camp in the open, make bonfires, beat drums and celebrate.

After spending the whole of Wednesday and the following night at Shams engaging in the above practices, the visitors progress to Sakhi Sarwar on Thursday morning and spend Friday night there, i.e. Thursday night. This night has a special significance in Shia Islam; it is the night for the *Ziyara* or visitation<sup>230</sup> of 'Ashura, and all Ismaili and Twelver weekly assemblies are arranged around this night. The visitors come back to pay homage to Shams on Friday, spend another night there, and go home on the Saturday. These visitors are overwhelmingly from the outside and comprise the inherited congregation of Shams mentioned before. They hail from the upper Punjab and the Frontier regions, and were probably all practising Shamsis before they became Twelver Shia (as opposed to reformed Ismaili). The ceremony is slowly being taken over by traditional Shia practices, as the exact signification of the ceremony has been lost to the participants.

This ceremony was responsible for yielding the clues to the framework that made the decoding of the astrological symbolism of the Suhrawardi monuments possible, as will be shown in later chapters. The centrality of *Nauroz* or the Persian New Year and the part it plays in the Shia mindset has been much debated in Islamic history, but it has never been investigated academically. The fact that Shams was an Ismaili da'i from Khurasan and somehow subscribed to such metaphysics due to his religious training as a missionary is arguable without physical evidence. Yet the correlation of Nauroz with Shiism being his basic template for setting-up the Satpanth in the Indus Valley could never have been discovered without recording of the details of the Chetir ceremony.

---

<sup>230</sup> For the third Shia Imam Husain.

The month of Chetir (14 March-13 April) marks the beginning of the Vikrami year but interestingly it also includes the Sun making its passage into Aries (20 /21 March) within it, i.e. Nauroz. In the transcendental metaphysics of the Persian Shia traditions, the day of Nauroz was the day the universe was created and the *Wilayat* or vice-regency of the first Imam Ali bin Abi Talib was declared as its first act after the Prophethood of Muhammad. Subsequently all the Prophets, their inheritors and executors (*Wasi*) were awarded their seals and credentials.<sup>231</sup> This is in addition to it being represented in the worldly sense at the event of Ghadir Khumm, when according to Shiism the Prophet nominated Ali as his successor in his last sermon. This temporal event is also known as the Wilayat of Ali as he was nominated as the *Wali* or vice-regent by Muhammad. The two events correspond to one another, in allegoric representations of divine events through worldly ones, and vice versa, which is a hallmark of Shia metaphysics, especially Ismailism. Hence, due to the place awarded to the vice-regency of Ali over all creation at the primordial Nauroz (when the universe was created) after the Prophethood of Muhammad, its secondary representation after Ghadir Khumm would be primordial in a da'i's mindset.

According to extant Shia hadith literature which is occasionally used in sermons today, on the day of Ghadir Khumm after the Prophet nominated Ali as his successor, Salman the Companion and some other Persians with him came to the Prophet and Ali and congratulated them. They stated that this was a day of great significance for the Persian people as it coincided with the beginning of their New Year celebrations.<sup>232</sup> Working with this limited knowledge of Shia metaphysics and traditions, the seemingly astrological underpinnings of the visitation ceremony to Shams on the first Wednesday of Chetir prompted the generation of an event chart of Ghadir Khumm for reference purposes. The calendar conversion of the Hijra (Islamic) date for Ghadir Khumm, i.e. 18 Dhul Hijja (the last month of the Muslim year) in Year 10 shows it to be 15 March 632, with the reported probability of a one day error (as cited in the result of the calendar

---

<sup>231</sup> Majlisi 1845, p.557-558 *ff*; the list of pertinent events first divine and then temporal, goes on in this text.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid*, p.559.

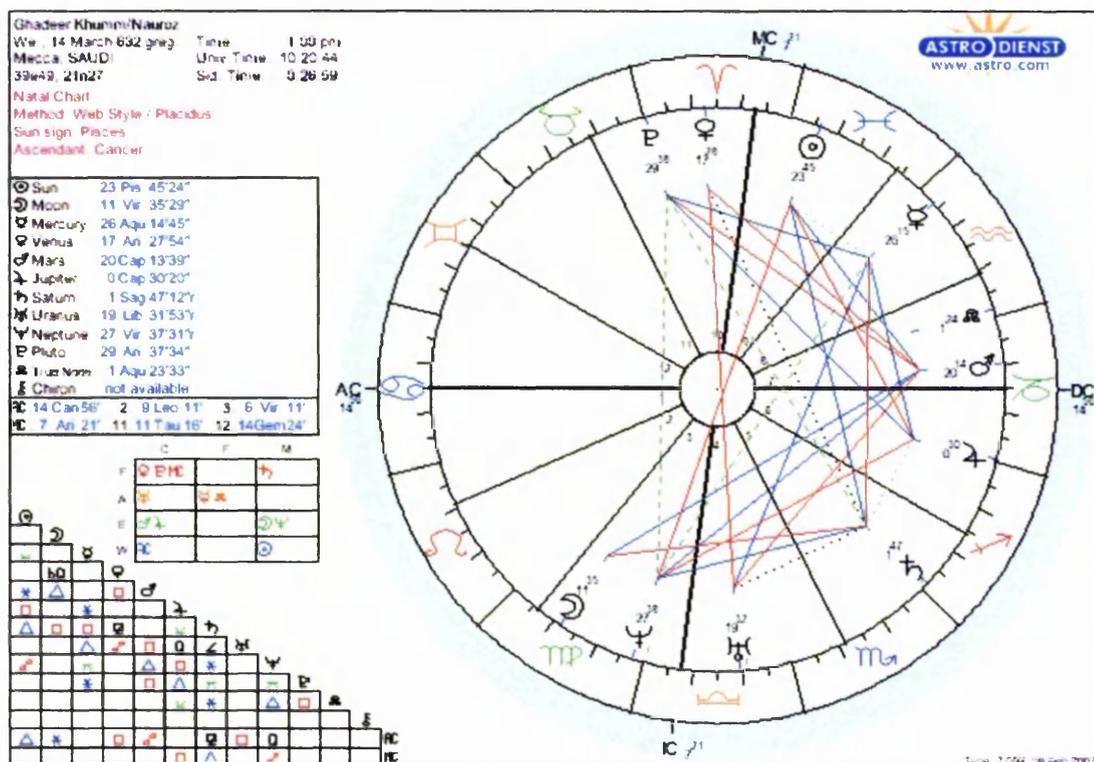
converter).<sup>233</sup> This would make it the beginning of Chetir on 14 March in the Gregorian system, after correction with the fixed lunar calendar attributed to the Ismaili Caliph Al-Hakim.

The astrological chart of the Ghadir Khumm event, reported in tradition to have taken place after the midday prayers (approximately one o'clock), on 14 March 632, shows the Sun exactly at 23 degrees Pisces on a Wednesday (plate 16). The software involved in this calculation is highly advanced and one preferred by professional astrologers.<sup>234</sup>

---

<sup>233</sup> 'You entered (Hijri): 18/10/10, the conversion result is: Sunday 15 March 632 C.E. There is a small probability of one day error': <http://www.rabiah.com/convert/convert.php3> . The calendar converter in question is one day off (cited), as it accounts for the orthodox practice of sighting the new moon to mark the month in its calculation. According to the fixed Al-Hakim calendar which always predates the moon sighting by one day (as standard error correction) the date of Ghadir Khumm would be 14 March and 15. The day of the week shown for the above calculation is Sunday, which is also erroneous, as the calendar counts backwards from the present day of the week to calculate the desired day for the conversion date. It does not take into account the many cross-calendar corrections responsible for the regularisation of a world week.

<sup>234</sup> It takes into account every correction and regularisation made in the Gregorian system, as such its day and date correlation for Wednesday cannot be wrong, unlike in the previous Hijri-Gregorian calendar converter.



16. The astrological chart of 18 Dhul Hijja 10 Hijri/ 14 March 632. The event of Ghadir Khumm with the Sun at 23 degrees Pisces on a Wednesday

The above chart shows the Ghadir event to be exactly a week before Nauroz (with 7 days spanning 7 degrees to Aries), and as such coinciding with the general events and festivities building up to the Persian New Year. In those days as now celebrations for Nauroz would start before the actual passing of the Sun into Aries on the spring equinox (20 or 21 March). In addition, this planetary disposition at Ghadir, i.e. the Sun at 23 degrees Pisces, is the same as the beginning of Omar Khayyam's Jalali Calendar.<sup>235</sup> According to Omar Khayyam in ancient times Nauroz festivities would begin before the passing of the Sun into Aries, the majority of which would be reserved for the last week.<sup>236</sup> Although the majority of the lesser rituals may have been lost, the major

<sup>235</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>236</sup> Khayyam, O, Minovi, M 1933, p. 1-5 (of manuscript), Omar Khayyam describes the festivals of Nauroz, their traditions and the deeds that should be performed to maximize spiritual benefit, including certain Islamic practices which have a Shia connotation, like the recitation of Quranic chapters when the Sun enters Aries etc. He describes the greatness of Nauroz from Iranian mythical traditions, relating certain astrological events (i.e. planetary dispositions, and the related festivals through allegory) to acts and deeds of the Iranian mythical kings on p.7-11.

ceremonies are still celebrated with equal fervour in regions under Persian cultural influence.

As the day of Ghadir is a Wednesday according to the above chart, rather the last Wednesday before Nauroz, this would have made it the day for the festival of fire or *Chaharshamba-yi Suri*. Traditionally the festival is celebrated with greater fervour than actual Nauroz for its spiritual benefit, and is very popular to this day. Hence, the chances that Salman the Persian did come to Muhammad and Ali on Ghadir to congratulate them on a blessed day for his own people are very high indeed. In addition the day is 14 March, which is the beginning of Chetir, along with being its first Wednesday. In terms of the Satpanth framework, this is the only system of interlacing that Shams could have used to give the Chetir visitation ceremony meaning in the Shia sense of the word, through the Wilayat of Ali at Ghadir; otherwise it would not make any sense, as the handiwork of the chief Ismaili da'i.

In any given astrological situation the first Wednesday of Chetir and the visit to Shams will only correspond to the last Wednesday before actual Nauroz on 20 /21 March, when the Sun enters Aries. This is irrespective of whether the first day of Chetir (14 March) like in the Ghadir chart is a Wednesday (which is very rare in itself), as the next Wednesday would be Nauroz with the Sun at 0 degrees Aries, seven days after being at 23 degrees Pisces. There are exactly seven days between 14 and 20 March (i.e. when counting the 14<sup>th</sup>, the seventh day is Nauroz), even in this most unfavourable astrological condition for the interlacing of the calendars.

This festival of Chaharshamba-yi Suri is the celebration of the light (the good) winning over the darkness (the bad); the symbolism behind the rituals is rooted back in Zoroastrianism.<sup>237</sup> According to tradition, the living are visited by the spirits of their

---

<sup>237</sup> [http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Celebrations/fire\\_festival.htm](http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Celebrations/fire_festival.htm) . In terms of planetary ruler-ship, which must have played a major part in the determination of purpose of these ceremonies considering their astrological arrangement, the Devil, Satanic influences and spirits are governed and manifested through Mercury, and are not fully free. Mercury is the ruler of Wednesday, thought and imagination, and Chaharshamba-yi Suri. Some Renaissance astrologers (Dariot/Lilly/Ramesey), and in complete agreement, have given the ruler-ship of spirits specifically to Mercury, which governs air: Lehman 1992, p. 262.

ancestors on the last Wednesday of the year, and many children wrap themselves in shrouds, symbolically re-enacting the visits. They also run through the streets banging on pots and pans with spoons and knocking on doors to ask for treats. The ritual is called *qashogh-zani* or spoon beating and symbolizes the beating out of the last unlucky Wednesday of the year. It must be remembered that this festival is traditionally considered a part of the Nauroz period.

In an ideal situation, the Chetir Wednesday at Shams would coincide with Nauroz falling on a Sunday, i.e. the day of the Sun. Here, according to the ceremony's tradition, the pilgrims would come back to Shams on the Friday after the Sakhi Sarwar visit, and would go home on a Saturday, before spending the ideal Nauroz at home on a Sunday. Incidentally, Nauroz falls on a Sunday once every seven years as the equinox and the days shift back. This implies that the ceremony may have been started on one such perfect Nauroz. The camping in the open, the burning of bonfires and drum beating on Wednesday night at the Chetir ceremony at Shams's shrine clearly shows its Chaharshamba-yi Suri connection further.

Other ceremonies which recall such trans-religious signification and lend further support to this hypothesis are the ones for the month of Jeth, which commemorates Moharram and is the second prime season for such pilgrimages. These are purely Shia in nature but follow the Punjabi calendar. The month of Jeth (from 14 May to 13 June) follows Chetir and Vaisakh (April-May) in the Vikrami calendar, and 28 Jeth is regarded in this region as having being the date of 'Ashura in 680.<sup>238</sup> Another major gathering which sees the influx of large numbers of people from outside is 27-28 of the Islamic month of Safar which follows Moharram, but as this is celebrated according to the Islamic calendar its only significance is in terms of Shiism, since it is regarded as ending the days of mourning which begin with Moharram.

---

<sup>238</sup> It is related by local tradition that there were Indians from this region among the followers of Imam Husain. Presumably these were leftover Jats from Ali's Indian followers as reported by Derryl MacLean in his book: Maclean 1989, p.126. Tradition states that some of these returned home to start these commemorations in those days according to their local calendars. The dates may have been picked up by the Ismaili da'is and assimilated into their circle of religious ceremony.

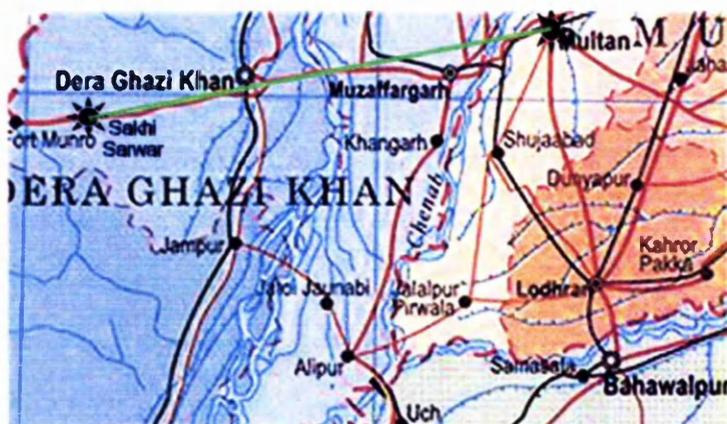
## Sakhi Sarwar

The shrine of Sakhi Sarwar is located on the main highway moving from Dera Ghazi Khan to Fort Munro, in a bleak and desolate setting, at the foot of the Sulaiman mountain range, just a few kilometres from the river Indus. Contrary to popular belief about the primacy of Zakariya, Sakhi Sarwar is the first Suhrawardi Sufi who came back to the Indus valley after his training. In addition to further tying Shams directly to Suhrawardi Sufis, the connection of the Chetir visitation ceremony emanating from Shams's shrine to Sakhi Sarwar serves as a marker for the greater influence of the Ismaili da'wa in the west of the Sitpur triangle, which was cut off from the central Punjab area by water courses as mentioned before.

If one is to look at the map of the region (plate 17) from Multan towards Sakhi Sarwar (in green), the two large rivers that have to be traversed would have ensured the freer movement of the consensus of unorthodox ideas away from the main Uch-Multan axis, as already explored. It seems very likely that towards the west in the mountains the control of the orthodox Ghorid Sunni Turkic elite and their clergy weakened. The denomination devoted to Shams in the NWFP which is previously mentioned in the 1911 census, as well as the ethnic make up of the Chetir visitors themselves give further credence to this argument and shows how strong Shams's influence was in this region. Further afield beyond Dera Ghazi Khan and the mountains from Sakhi Sarwar lies Dera Ismail Khan, where some unidentified monuments with extant multi-faith iconography have been found, and which may include one of the seven Uches that have mentioned in Ismaili ginans.<sup>239</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup> For the seven Uches see Shackle and Moir 2000, p.204. They are probably related to Shams's da'wa considering its spread and his personal cult.



17. The route from Multan to Sakhi Sarwar traverses two rivers

The connection between Sakhi Sarwar and Shams acts as a still greater anchor for the mostly lost connection that existed between the Ismaili da'wa and the Suhrawardi Sufi Order. This is especially when one is to consider Shams's entry into Multan, and the location of his lodge half a mile from the khanqah of Zakariya, the head of the Suhrawardi Order. It is not possible that Zakariya did not know about these ceremonies connected with another Suhrawardi Sufi's grave, or covertly did not endorse them or any other of Shams's movements and activities in the region as a whole.

Not much is known about Sakhi Sarwar's life, except that he was a descendant of the Sixth Shia Imam Jafar al-Sadiq. According to a recent publication in Pakistan based on new sources, his father moved with the family from Baghdad to Multan, and settled in a small village 12 miles from the city, now known as Shahkot. The family had a literary background, and it is possible that the village was granted to them as a fief or waqf. This event took place in 1126.<sup>240</sup> The other mention of Sakhi Sarwar is by Herklots in his *Islam in India*,<sup>241</sup> which is often reprinted. The author relying on local information states that Sakhi Sarwar settled in Sialkot in the year 1220, and that his shrine is at a place bearing the same name in Dera Ghazi Khan District. This 'Sialkot' cited by Herklots is most probably Shahkot, where the family initially settled. The name of the village

<sup>240</sup>:Sindhi 2000, p.355.

<sup>241</sup> Herklots 1834, p.143: Rose, vol. 1. 566 ff. Relying on the previous source, the book goes on to say 'which is a resort of Hindu and Musalman mendicants. His devotees are known as *Sultani*, *Phirai*, or *Pirahain*, and his attendants (*mujavir*) (always) sleep on the ground.'



Looking at the lineal plaque for Sakhi Sarwar (plate 18) it is most probable that the new information regarding his family's arrival in the Indus Valley is correct. The plaque shows Sakhi Sarwar to be an eleventh generation descendant of the third Shia Imam Husain. If this is multiplied by an average of 40 years per generation for the sake of argumentation, so as to roughly deduce his correct birthday, it would give 440 years from the event of Husain's death at Karbala in 680 and would give the desired date as 1120. In light of this the new work by Sindhi citing Sakhi Sarwar's family moving to Shahkot in 1126 or 520 Hijri can be assumed as correct, as does his being the first Suhrawardi in the Indus valley, preceding Zakariya. He was probably born soon after the date of the migration. There is no mention of Sakhi Sarwar among the latter Suhrawardis; he is an unknown and indistinct figure in the history of the saints of this region, both in terms of his person, and his physically inaccessible tomb, which has a very select and traditional congregation. Like most ex-Suhrawardi shrines, his shrine is now Twelver Shia, and is the biggest centre for Shia religious activity in the area of Dera Ghazi Khan.

Sakhi Sarwar's real name was Sayyid Ahmad Sultan. He received initial education from his father, after which he went back to Iraq, where he first gained spiritual guidance under Abdul Qadir Gilani (d. 1166), and then turned to Shihab al-din Suhrawardi.<sup>243</sup> After the completion of his initiation with Suhrawardi in Iraq, he spent time with the Chishti Shaykh Khwaja Maudud<sup>244</sup> in Chisht, present day Afghanistan, before returning to the Indus Valley.<sup>245</sup> The report of his time spent with Khwaja Maudud is added proof for the correctness of his family's earlier arrival. These interactions with Sufi shaykhs preceding the Zakariya and Shams era establish an important place for Sakhi Sarwar in Suhrawardi hierarchy in the Indus Valley. The Chetir/Nauroz-based ceremony connecting his shrine to Shams's for once shows some open empathy towards Suhrawardi Sufism by Shams himself.

---

<sup>243</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.355 *ff.* This title in Iraq would imply Zakariya's mentor Abu Hafs Shihab al-din Suhrawardi.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup> Died month of Rajab at the age of 97 in 533 Hijri or. March 1139: [http://www.chishti.ru/order\\_of\\_sufis.htm](http://www.chishti.ru/order_of_sufis.htm). Sindhi gives his death date as 527 Hijri or 1133, which might be slightly inaccurate for a young Sakhi Sarwar meeting him: Sindhi 2000, p.221.

Sakhi Sarwar returned to the Indus Valley to move to Lahore initially, and then settled and preached in Wazirabad on the Grand Trunk road, between Lahore and Islamabad.<sup>246</sup> It is possible that he left Lahore for Wazirabad to circumvent direct Ghaznavid authority in Lahore, which served as capital for the weakened latter-day Ghaznavids in India.<sup>247</sup> In Wazirabad thousands of people became his devotees,<sup>248</sup> presumably arousing the displeasure of the Ghaznavid authorities once again, who were based in the upper Punjab region in last stages of their rule before the Ghorid takeover. As a result, along with his close followers, he shifted yet again to a desolate place at a distance of sixty miles from Multan in the neighbourhood of Dera Ghazi Khan, which is the place of his current tomb. Multan and its surroundings (including Sind) were then not under Ghaznavid occupation, but existed as a semi-independent principality.<sup>249</sup>

Yet on his return to the Multan/Dera Ghazi Khan region from Wazirabad, Sakhi Sarwar apparently suffered at the hands of his jealous family, who were obviously in some position of power. At their behest (and possibly that of the authorities) Sakhi Sarwar was put to death in a massacre with all his close followers at the place where his tomb now stands. He was killed in 1174 or 570 Hijri at 50 years of age,<sup>250</sup> possibly on heresy charges, roughly ten years after Shams was born in Iran. Judging from the date of his death, his initiation was not under Abu Hafs Shihab al-din Suhrawardi of Baghdad who had initiated Zakariya, and who was born in 1145. This must have been his uncle Abu Najib, who was born in 1097. Abu Najib was the progenitor of the Suhrawardi Order and the first Suhrawardi shaykh.<sup>251</sup>

---

<sup>246</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.355 ff.

<sup>247</sup> For Ghaznavid Lahore see Introduction, 'The resurgence of Sunnism under the Ghaznavids.'

<sup>248</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.355 ff.

<sup>249</sup> The above is stated by some modern day Sindhi historians who base their claims on new and previously unused historical sources, and privately state that Multan was at the time under the proxy rule of a post-Ghaznavid re-invigorated Sumrah Ismaili dynasty in lower Sind with its new allies, and remained so until its incorporation into the Delhi Sultanate under Firuz Shah. They cite this as the actual reason for rebellions against Muhammad and Firuz Shah Tughluq and their campaigns. They further cite this defacto proxy situation as the main reason for all the Ismaili activity in the lower Punjab. The new sources are,

a) Tattavi, Mir Ali Sher Qani (1940) *Tufat al-Kiram*, Delhi (Persian).

b) *Tarikh-e-Masumi*, a 16<sup>th</sup> century recently re-published history of Sind in Persian.

<sup>250</sup> Sindhi 2000, p. 355.

<sup>251</sup> See Chapter One, 'An Historic Overview.'

## Conclusion

Shams's religious background as the son of the chief Ismaili Hujjat or representative and his own designation in that capacity was invariably ordained from the Nizari Ismaili headquarters at Alamut.<sup>252</sup> His subsequent arrival in the Indus valley and his initial missionary work was also in that capacity. The Ismaili connection to the Suhrawardi Order having been established, it was not necessarily under the direct control of Alamut. As we have already seen in this thesis, this was initially on a metaphysical basis, and due to its own pragmatism Ismailism would allow for many different kinds of Ismailis to exist, who would sustain their attachment to Shia-Ismaili ideals in differing ways without having to be strictly tied to Ismaili headquarters. Such a situation would also account for the dispute with Zakariya on Shams's arrival, but also for the later resolution with him and tolerance of his religious activity. Moreover, resurgent Ismaili activity in the region under Zakariya's influence and Shams's entry into Multan in 1201 was soon followed by Mu'iz al-din's assassination in 1206 by an Ismaili da'i, who must also have been carrying out orders from Alamut. As Mu'iz al-din had no sons, the new governor Qabacha would be implicated in this act as it would automatically grant him a kingdom, based on the practice of slave governors inheriting territory in the absence of a clear successor. The political situation speaks for itself in the enduring triangle between Zakariya, Shams and Qabacha.<sup>253</sup>

The Mongol conquest of Iran after the defeat of the last Khwarazm Shah Jalal al-din Minkburni by Chengiz Khan on the banks of the Indus in 1221,<sup>254</sup> his retreat to the Indus Valley and Qabacha's endeavours to expel him with Zakariya's help coincide with new geopolitics in this region.<sup>255</sup> With the disappearance of the Khwarazm Shahis in Iran Alamut was faced directly with the Mongols and its ruptured communications with the

---

<sup>252</sup> For Shams and his father's designations as da'is from Alamut see Dafatry 2007, p.385.

<sup>253</sup> See Chapter One, 'The Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley.' This is in spite of the fact that court historians like Farishta have ascribed high qualities and good servitude to Qabacha under Mu'iz al-din. Yet he was the new comer, and his arrival after Ali Karmakh heralds the startling upsurge in Ismaili activity responsible for Mui'iz al-din's assassination

<sup>254</sup> Dafatry 2007, p.386.

<sup>255</sup> See Chapter One, 'The Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley.'

Ismaili communities in the region as a result saw disarray and localisation.<sup>256</sup> This situation also sees Zakariya forming new alliances with Iltutmish in Delhi while spurning Qabacha, and finally becoming Iltutmish's Shaykh al-Islam when Qabacha died in 1228, with Multan being absorbed into the Delhi Sultanate. The facts would further imply some sort of an informal geo-political tie to Ismailism in light of the already shown connections.

After a few decades of resistance Alamut finally surrendered and was destroyed by Chengiz's grandson Hulegu in 1256,<sup>257</sup> when both Shams (d.1276) and Zakariya (d.1262) were alive. In these years of bad communication from Alamut, leading up to its destruction, far away Ismaili communities were probably given permission to continue locally and to preserve themselves in any way possible, by intermingling with the local populations. This period also sees the erection of Zakariya's lavish tomb by himself and his famed lodge which will be examined as Rukn-e-Alam's monument in Chapter Five. Moreover, it also sees the flowering of the Satpanth, or the surviving Chetir ceremony in this case. It is obvious that this ceremony was setup when Shams had settled in Multan, after his skinning and spiritual flight, and whatever he had attained as a result. Yet this must have been many years after his first entrance to the city in 1201, after he had established himself and built a better relationship with Zakariya and the local elite, The general events of the time suggest that the Chetir ceremony must have been set up as Alamut waned under the Mongols, while Qabacha did likewise under Iltutmish, i.e. in the late 1220s and later.

Sakhi Sarwar's own Suhrawardi credentials and his connection with Shams culminating with the visitation in Chetir, signifying the Ghadir Khumm event with Chaharshamba-yi Suri and the Vikrami Calendar, should put to rest any doubts about early Ismaili connections to the Suhrawardi Order in the context of the Indus Valley. More importantly it also ties Shams's personality to Zakariya directly through the Suhrawardi Order. The religious signature attached to this Indo-Iranian cross-signification of Shia-Islamic events

---

<sup>256</sup> Daftary 2007, p.388.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid*, p.395.

can only be the hallmark of the medieval Ismaili da'wa. Nothing else in its likeness is to be found in known religious history. Zakariya's complicity is the most obvious inference that can be drawn from this situation, whereby Sakhi Sarwar was probably treated as the first Suhrawardi martyr of sorts in the region. His fate best explains Zakariya's own ardent dissimulation. Coupled with Shams's own torment and near death experience with the skinning, and the hidden religious connection between the Suhrawardi Order and the da'wa, the Chetir ceremony was probably seen as a befitting testament to the common beliefs of both organisations.

Finally, after the fall of Alamut the Nizari Ismaili line disappeared into oblivion for two centuries, with a split reported between two factions of the family each claiming the imamate. Yet one of them, the Qasim Shahi line, re-emerged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century under favourable conditions with the adoption of Twelver Shiism as the state religion under the Safavids.<sup>258</sup> In the period of seclusion, the Qasim Shahi line of Imams lived in dissimulation as Sufis and dervishes in Iran, with the local community following suit.<sup>259</sup> Thus the initial connection with Sufism in the Alamut period culminated with the Ismaili Imams adopting the guise themselves for protection. In the Indus Valley this period coincides with political turmoil in Multan with Zakariya's death, the missionary activity of Shams's descendants in Uch, their open associations to the Suhrawardi Order in that city, and their Suhrawardi contemporaries there in the form of the descendants of Surkhposh.

---

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p.405.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, p.419. The current Aga Khan is descended from the Qasim Shahi line.

### Chapter Three: The Suhrawardi Order at Uch

Jalal al-din Surkhposh

After difficult times had fallen on Alamut, and after Shams's triumphant entry into Multan and his subsequent missionary work in its relative freedom, it may be assumed that the Indus Valley became home to a larger number of foreign Ismailis, as Muslim immigrants sought refuge in India from the Mongols. In fact in medieval Islamic India this era probably sees the largest influx of Islamic elites of all denominations from Central Asia, Iran and the Middle East. In one case it is reported that thousands of refugees from Iran had gathered around Jalal al-din Khwarazm Shah's army in 1221,<sup>260</sup> waiting to cross the Indus, and were all cut down by the Mongols in the ensuing battle. This one incident would show the vast numbers involved in the post-Mongol immigration to India.

Jalal al-din Surkhposh was born in 1198 in Bukhara, and as explained at the beginning of the last chapter, the widely held anecdotal description of the Sufi heritage of Uch as beginning solely with him is incorrect. He migrated to Multan in 1237, with his two brothers, due to the Mongol onslaught<sup>261</sup> on his native Central Asia, much after the foundation work for the Suhrawardi Order and the da'wa had been done by Zakariya and Shams. After his arrival in Multan, he was initiated into the Suhrawardi Order by Zakariya, who made him his *khalifa* or deputy.<sup>262</sup> He was then sent to Bhakkar in upper Sind as Zakariya's khalifa, where he settled and preached, marrying the daughter of an eminent local Sufi, Sayyid Badr al-din. At this point, due to sudden antagonism for unreported reasons from his brothers, he migrated to Uch under Zakariya's guidance to preach and practise Suhrawardi doctrines.<sup>263</sup> As mentioned earlier, Bhakkar and Uch were both ruled by Nasir al-din Qabacha until his boat capsized in a battle with the Delhi

<sup>260</sup> Boyle 1991, p.320. This is the same Jalal al-din Minkburni who Qabacha was trying to expel with Zakariya's help; only five thousand of his army survived the Battle of the Indus against Chengiz Khan, and all the refugees were slaughtered.

<sup>261</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.410.

<sup>262</sup> See plate 8. In Sufism khalifa is a spiritual successor or deputy as opposed to its temporal equivalent in Sunnism.

<sup>263</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.411.

Sultan Iltutmish on 30 May 1228, after which the government of Uch fell under the direct control of the Delhi Sultan and his appointed governor.<sup>264</sup> In essence, Surkhposh's movement between Bhakkar and Uch took place under the nose of an imperial governor's mandate, but with Zakariya as the Shaykh al-Islam. It is important to reemphasise the recorded Turco-Islamic context here and Zakariya's connections to it, because most local folklore regarding Islamic rulership and modern anecdotal published history dependent on it tend to be inaccurate. They always ascribe a non-Islamic context to the first arrival of famed Sufis in any given environment, in this case Uch, and dwell on the subsequent conversion of local non-Muslim rulers to Islam by them.<sup>265</sup>

Popular folklore attributes Surkhposh's arrival and takeover of Uch to his conversion to Islam of the native ruling Buddhist princess, Ucha Rani, from whom Uch is said to derive its name. However, according to reports, the place has been called Uch since pre-Islamic times, literally meaning the 'high place' in Sanskrit.<sup>266</sup> Although there might be some truth in a conversion to Islam in the context of the larger Uch environs, its impact and significance in terms of converting a native ruler is clearly overstated. There is a grave on the mound next to the Surkhposh khanqah which is allegedly that of Ucha Rani. The story further revolves around two princesses from the royal family of Uch, Ucha Rani and Sita Rani, who were acclaimed magicians. They ruled the two connected principalities of Uch and Sitpur,<sup>267</sup> and became Surkhposh's devotees after engaging him in spiritual contest which they lost, and eventually married him.

Yet the historical chronology we have uncovered in terms of Turco-Islamic rule in Uch under the Ghorid governor, and Ismaili da'wa activity in the region, will ascribe any such conversions to the earlier era of Shams and Zakariya. As we have seen previously, Shams's activity in Uch involved conversions of native nobles through his spiritual prowess, particularly of women, who became his secret deputies and ran the lodges he set

---

<sup>264</sup> Khan 1983, p.53: Juzjani, vol. 1, p.421.

<sup>265</sup> For the Pakistani state's view on such conversions by Sufis see Qureshi 1967, vol. 2, p.13ff.

<sup>266</sup> For Uch's Sanskrit origins see Rehman 1997, p.108.

<sup>267</sup> As we have seen in the last chapter, Sitpur is located on the opposite bank of the Panjnad near Uch. A flood ravaged monument celebrating Sita Rani as a saint remained in Sitpur until recently, when its last bastion turret collapsed two years ago.

up.<sup>268</sup> According to another ginan attributed to Shams, the women became his guptis or secret followers.<sup>269</sup> Hence, in light of statements from Shams's own ginans, the geography of his movements and the Sitpir triangle explored in the last chapter, Sita Rani ruling in Sitpur seems to be an acceptable fact. But the story of Ucha Rani ruling Uch would be highly unlikely under Ali Karmakh who would not let an Ismaili live let alone a Buddhist rule in the city, and the same would apply to Qabacha after him. Nevertheless, it is a possibility that Ucha Rani bearing her characteristic Sanskrit name has nothing to do with ruling Uch, but was a relative or associate of Sita Rani, and a part of the older Buddhist elite in the Uch environs, who had joined Shams's da'wa.

The manuscript of the ginan *Satvarani Vadi* explored in the last chapter also refers to the wife of the local king in a place called Samaiya, who became Shams's devotee against the wishes of the king, and may also have become his wife.<sup>270</sup> The place is referred to as a Buddhist enclave in the ginan, and may well have been another name for Uch, or rather one of its environs, which was a Buddhist centre before its complete Islamisation.<sup>271</sup> Uch probably had remnants of vassal Buddhist rule with Qabacha as its new governor at the time of Shams's arrival there in the late 1190s. Yet the local Buddhist population must have decreased remarkably in the time of Surkhposh in the mid 1200s, after the da'wa had been fully established, with the multitudes of refugees fleeing the Mongols on the one hand, and direct rule from Delhi after Iltutmish's occupation in 1228 on the other.<sup>272</sup> Local folklore has an unfortunate habit of ascribing the achievements of one saint to another. It is very possible that the Ucha Rani story is the same as the one reported in the ginans from Shams's time and precedes Surkhposh, only becoming attached to the latter as he became prominent in Uch.

The details of the connection between Zakariya and Shams have been highlighted in Chapters One and Two. The distance between Multan and Uch, which was the initial

---

<sup>268</sup> *Satvarani Vadi*, p.134 ff.

<sup>269</sup> The whole story, including the names of some of the women, is contained in the ginan *Man Samjhani*, courtesy Zawahir Moir who is translating it with Christopher Shackle. A comparison of the names may yield a clearer picture in the future.

<sup>270</sup> *Satvarani Vadi*, p.132 ff. The ginan is attributed to Nur Muhammad Shah, one of Shams's descendants.

<sup>271</sup> We have already identified Samaiya with Sitpur in the last chapter.

<sup>272</sup> With the appointment of Zakariya as the Shaykh al-Islam of the empire.

centre of the da'wa under Shams is not too great, one hundred or so miles, with only one main road connecting the two. This does not leave much room to ascribe Shams's sedentary missionary activity involving the local Buddhist nobility to any other area in spite of his travels. As shown, it would have been very difficult for Shams to have operated in Multan and Uch without the local government's favour. Similarly, it would have been impossible for Surkhposh not to have come across Shams's da'wa already established in Uch thirty years prior to his arrival, considering the spread of the da'wa as reported in ginanic tradition and standard histories, or to have worked without cooperating with it in light of Shams's connection to Zakariya,

The family members who had accompanied Surkhposh to Multan, including his two brothers, migrated back to Bukhara never to return, in a series of narrated events which mark a change in Surkhposh's personality,<sup>273</sup> plausibly attributable to his association with Zakariya and the Suhrawardi Order. After settling in Uch, he would often visit Multan and meet Zakariya, staying over with him for extended periods. Even after Zakariya's death, he regularly visited his sons and successors, Sadr al-din Arif and Shah Rukn-e-Alam.<sup>274</sup> He is known to have travelled extensively in the region and abroad, and was allegedly responsible for propagating Suhrawardi doctrines and setting up many khanqahs, yet he seems to be a secretive and shadowy figure without any details surviving about his personal life. No malfuzat or other texts written by him have survived. He died in 1291, leaving behind three sons, Baha al-din (named after Zakariya), Sayyid Muhammad and his third son, Ahmad Kabir,<sup>275</sup> who was his successor to the mantle of the order in Uch.<sup>276</sup>

Literally nothing other than anecdote is known about Surkhposh's life outside the above documented evidence. Unlike the case of Zakariya's prescriptive textbook for his khanqah, none of the works written by Surkhposh have survived, so not much is ascertainable with certitude about his personal religiosity. Anecdote attributes a staunch

---

<sup>273</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.411.

<sup>274</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.277.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.412.

Sunni orthodoxy to him, due to the retrospective extension of an alleged outward orthodoxy practised by his grandson, Jalal al-din II Jahangasht of Uch. The latter was a contemporary and disciple of Rukn-e-Alam, a hundred years later, who lived in the very anti-Shia reign of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq. Considering Surkhposh's association with and close attachment to Zakariya, and some iconography found on his own khanqah, it would be prudent to regard him at least in a partial Shia-Ismaili light. It is well known that he was a bona fide descendant of the tenth Twelver Shia Imam, so it may plausibly asserted that he had Shia sentiments, which were amplified further by his connection to Zakariya in light of the da'wa situation. This would also explain the antagonism with his family after he joined the Suhrawardi Order and became Zakariya's khalifa. In addition, the anecdotally reported travels of the four celebrated Sufi friends (*chahar yar*) of the region, i.e. Zakariya, Surkhposh, Shahbaz Qalandar, and Baba Farid of Pakpattan (in close proximity to Uch and Multan), show a strong Shia-Ismaili colouring between them in this context. Shahbaz Qalandar was openly an Ismaili ascetic, and Zakariya and Surkhposh with their Shia-Ismaili leanings as shown in this thesis, would leave Baba Farid as the odd one out. Shams is above and beyond this dissimulation, with his open Ismaili missionary work, yet he turns out to be Shahbaz Qalandar's maternal cousin,<sup>277</sup> which further tightens this network.

A new book *Tarikh-e-Uch*, discovered on the fieldtrip for this project, shows a further connection between Surkhposh and the Ismaili da'wa. Uch, because of its traditional geographical isolation and its rule under the princely state of Bahawalpur, which did not fall under British India, preserved until recently certain traditions and ceremonies which were lost after Partition. The book was written in 1931 about the history and saints of Uch. It mentions Surkhposh's annual *Urs* or death anniversary celebrations as taking place in the month of Chetir,<sup>278</sup> a practice which died out after the absorption of the Bahawalpur state into Pakistan. In metaphysical terms, especially considering the Nauroz symbolism discovered on the Suhrawardi monuments of Uch which is to be explained in Chapter Six, this ceremony might actually be connected to the Chetir festival at Shams

---

<sup>277</sup> According to local beliefs and the Sabzwari family tree.

<sup>278</sup> Hafiz 1931, p.99.

and Sakhi Sarwar, which has survived as Surkhposh's Urs as the da'wa broke. Although the matter needs further site research, the connection should not come as a surprise in light of the evidence already uncovered in this thesis.

Surkhposh died in 1291 and was succeeded by his son, Ahmad Kabir. Not much is known about him except that he was initiated into Suhrawardi doctrines by his father in Uch, and later by Zakariya's son (and Rukn-e-Alam's father), Sadr al-din Arif, in Multan.<sup>279</sup> Like his mentor Sadr al-din Arif, Ahmad Kabir's personality seems to tilt towards a severe asceticism. His grave is located next to that of Surkhposh inside the khanqah,<sup>280</sup> but according to both anecdote and available written history, Surkhposh was interred in two other places before being re-buried inside the khanqah. This means that Ahmad Kabir was buried in the khanqah before his father, although the exact date of his death is not known. Ahmad Kabir is famous locally for his spiritual feats, and historically a special bangle attributed to his grave was given to those haunted by evil spirits and prone to snakebite.<sup>281</sup> Until recently, when people in Uch were afflicted by such troubles or by an incurable sickness, they were tied to his grave with chains in a symbolic act until they were healed.

#### Jahaniyan Jahangasht

Surkhposh's grandson, Jahaniyan Jahangasht, was born on 9 February 1308 to Ahmad Kabir in Uch.<sup>282</sup> There is a report on Shah Rukn-e-Alam initiating Jahangasht into the order.<sup>283</sup> This is strange, for as Surkhposh's grandson, he should already have been an initiate.<sup>284</sup> This is unless his father Ahmad Kabir whose life and ascetic lifestyle coincides with that of his mentor, i.e. Zakariya's son Sadr al-din Arif in Multan, had been ex-

---

<sup>279</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.412.

<sup>280</sup> Hafiz 1931, p.141.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.* The said bangle is 'tied' to his grave for a certain number of days starting on an auspicious date, through a ritual conducted by the caretaker, after which the wearer becomes free of his affliction.

<sup>282</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.277, & also Husain (Jahangasht) 1983, p.4.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>284</sup> Since these were very difficult times for the order in their relations with the Tughluq dynasty this is possible.

communicated in the early Tughluq era.<sup>285</sup> After the death of Rukn-e-Alam, and the execution of his nephew Hud, the last proper Suhrawardi shaykh in Multan (see plate 7), on the orders of Muhammad Tughluq on trumped up charges,<sup>286</sup> Jahangasht was pressurised by Muhammad Tughluq to take up the office of Shaykh al-Islam in the former's place, a position which he was to refuse. Towards this end, he was initially appointed as the head of forty khanqahs in Siwistan (Sehwan, in Sind) as an act of grooming by imperial decree, which he accepted only for a short while.<sup>287</sup> On Shaykh Hud's execution, which happened within a short time of Rukn-e-Alam's death in 1335, Jahangasht left the administration of the Sind khanqahs, using the pretence that he had been invited to go on pilgrimage to Mecca by the Prophet in a vision. According to a new text which has reconstructed a timeline for that stage of Jahangasht's life from excerpts of a work attributed to him, his nomination as Shaykh al-Islam by Muhammad Tughluq was in 1340, when he refused it in order to go to Mecca in the same year. The same reconstruction cites the reason as Rukn-e-Alam appearing to him in a dream to state that if he did not leave immediately he would be ruined. He returned only after Muhammad Tughluq had died in 1351.<sup>288</sup> When he was leaving, he is said to have made the famous remark, 'If I were to remain at these khanqahs, I would surely have become arrogant.'<sup>289</sup>

It is not known exactly when Jahangasht briefly took over the Surkhposh khanqah in Uch from his father, Ahmad Kabir, prior to his appointment in Sind and before he went abroad, as the exact date of the latter's death is not known. In all probability, it was close to the earlier part of Muhammad Tughluq's rule, when Jahangasht was very young, as Jahangasht lived abroad travelling during most of the latter part of the reign of Muhammad Tughluq (ruled 1325-1351). These events show an amplified antagonism between the order and the Sultan in Uch, after the incidents at Multan and the concerted effort of Muhammad Tughluq to kill off the Suhrawardi Order there entirely. In Jahangasht's absence, his younger brother Sadr al-din (nicknamed Sayyid Raju),

---

<sup>285</sup> Sadr al-din Arif had a long running dispute with the son of Emperor Balban and is not in the list of imperially endorsed Suhrawardi Shaykhs at Multan, see Chapter One, 'Shaykh Sadr al-din Arif.'

<sup>286</sup> al-Huda 2003, p.128; Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p. 214; Bin Battuta *Rihlah*, vol. 3, pp.303-307.

<sup>287</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.413.

<sup>288</sup> Islam 2002, p.284.

<sup>289</sup> al-Huda 2004, p.129; Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.277.

administered the khanqah at Uch.<sup>290</sup> Sayyid Raju must have been in his late teens at that time.

Although Jahangasht returned to the country and earned some favour and rapprochement with Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388), the successor and nephew of Muhammad Tughluq, he was still in continuous conflict with the state apparatus which he successfully circumvented through the influence he wielded.<sup>291</sup> Jahangasht stayed mostly in Uch after his return and never went to Delhi except on a couple of occasions.<sup>292</sup> This is strange, considering that he had been officially endorsed as the Shaykh of the Suhrawardi Order, with imperial sanction, under Firuz Shah. When he travelled, he did so with his entourage and scribes who compiled his works and sayings in a number of books, during his visits to the imperial capital.

Jahangasht was given his grandfather Surkhposh's title of Jalal al-din as a mark of respect and came to be known as Jalal al-din II. The shared title has been the cause for a major confusion in anecdote between the two. This is especially so with regards to the Sunnism attributed to the unrecorded religious life of Surkhposh, on account of the dissimulative orthodoxy practised by the later Jalal al-din i.e. Jahaniyan Jahangasht, in the very difficult times of Muhammad Tughluq and Firuz Shah. His initial education in Uch was completed in the Surkhposh khanqah run by his father, under his teacher Qazi Zakariya, who was especially appointed for the purpose.<sup>293</sup> Due to his reputation as a scholar of exoteric and esoteric sciences, and his success with Jahangasht, the person of Qazi Zakariya came to be associated with the title of Baha al-Halim. His monument is a part of the tomb complex adjacent to the Surkhposh khanqah, and is dealt with in Chapter Six. After Baha al-Halim's death in Uch, Jahangasht was sent to the khanqah of Rukn-e-Alam in Multan. Rukn-e-Alam apparently became very attached to him and personally initiated him into the detailed belief structures of the Suhrawardi Order, appointing two special teachers to complete his training. He stayed at the khanqah in Multan for many years,

---

<sup>290</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.277.

<sup>291</sup> For details of his ensuing conflict with Firuz Shah's Prime Minister, Khan-e-Jahan Maqbul, see al-Huda 2003, p.129; Jamali *Siyar al-Arifin*, p.212.

<sup>292</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.278.

<sup>293</sup> Sindhi 2000, p. 412, & also Husain 1983, p.4.

after which he went to the Hijaz to finish his education.<sup>294</sup> These events took place in the late 1320s, as Jahangasht was to return to take control of the Surkhposh khanqah in Uch for a short while before Rukn-e-Alam's death in 1335. In this middle period, the Rukn-e-Alam connection proves central to the theme of the thesis, as he is outwardly a Sunni Suhrawardi shaykh whose monument, like Jahangasht's personality, carries hidden Shia-Ismaili symbolism.<sup>295</sup> A more detailed analysis of Jahangasht's own spiritual tendencies, some events of his political life and his religious connections will highlight these facts further.

In addition to the primary source used here, the *Malfuzat-e-Husain*, which is attributed to Jahangasht,<sup>296</sup> he authored many famous books, most of which have now been lost. Amongst them *Jami' al-'Ulum*<sup>297</sup> (Collection of Sciences) figures prominently, which still survives in unpublished format. Like most of his well-known works, this shows him to be a puritanically orthodox Sunni, vehemently opposed to Shiism.<sup>298</sup> But one must remember the very anti-Shia context of their authorship under imperial patronage, especially the *Jami' al-'Ulum*, compiled at the court in Delhi itself. One must remember that this was after the Shams and Zakariya era and subsequent antagonism with the Tughluqs, when for dissimulation purposes popular works could only be strictly Sunni. Quoting from a manuscript, Rizvi writes that in spite of his anti-Shia orthodoxy, Jahangasht marshalled Quranic evidence to prove that the Family of the Prophet included only Ali and Fatima and her sons. He asserted that the *Mubahila* (3:59) and *Tathir* (33:33) verses in the Quran reiterated that love and respect for them should be regarded as the same as that due to the Prophet, as should hate and enmity towards them, and that these sentiments became the distinctive feature of his khanqah at Uch.<sup>299</sup> These two

---

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>295</sup> In addition, both Jahangasht's father and grandfather were initiated by Rukn-e-Alam's father and grandfather respectively, showing the unbroken religious link between them in retrospect.

<sup>296</sup> A compilation of his life, times and sayings by scribes.

<sup>297</sup> His letters and discourses collected by his scribes on his extended visit to Delhi to the court of Firuz Shah, in which he tries to give a Sunni interpretation of Sufism: Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.279.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid* 1986b (Shiism), vol. 1, p.154.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.* *Khazana-e-Fawa'id-e-Jalaliyya*, British Museum MS., ff 152b-155a. The two verses, used in all Shiism, generally assert the absolute infallibility of the Prophet's Family, and for legitimising their claim to the caliphate as a divine right as opposed to that of the Sunni caliphs. In addition, the verses are used to admonish the enmity and hatred shown to the Family with respect to the caliphate dispute by the various

statements by Rizvi, based on primary sources in his two books, run contrary to each other and the latter pro-Shia stance reported from a surviving manuscript gives a very Shia-Ismaili twist to Jahangasht.

Jahangasht is also reported to have written a detailed book on obscure Shia sects in another manuscript.<sup>300</sup> This figures prominently in the context of a special sub-order of Sufis that he formed within the Suhrawardi Order at Uch, the Jalali Dervishes, who went on to emulate the extreme unorthodox belief structures of obscure Shia sects that he had written about. Such a book would not be a subject to attract a real puritan who should instinctively reject all such beliefs as a matter of faith, instead of delving into the subject in detail. Subjectively, such a book should be of no interest to a medieval Sunni orthodox readership, whether Sufi or otherwise, which would be specifically rigid on Shiism. It would automatically classify all extreme Shia sub-sects as being irredeemably heretical and wicked to the point of being deserving of slaughter. Interestingly enough, the manuscript's mention of extreme and obscure sects does not include mainstream Ismaili or orthodox Shia beliefs by implication, as both of these fall under the Ja'fari *fiqh* or school of jurisprudence.

#### Sadr al-din Rajjan Qattal (Sayyid Raju)

As mentioned, Jahangasht's younger brother administered the Surkhposh khanqah in his absence during the rule of Muhammad Tughluq. Nothing is known in detail about the life of Sadr al-din or Sayyid Raju as he is known, except that his personality was in stark contrast to that of Jahangasht. He was very withdrawn, ascetic minded, and kept to himself. Jahangasht is said to have remarked that God had chosen so that he should be concerned with the people's welfare and that Sayyid Raju should lead the life of a

---

companions of the Prophet, immediately after his death. For the Shia version on the Mubahila and Tathir verses and their interpretation as resonating Jahangasht's own exegesis, see <http://www.al-islam.org/history/history/mubahila.html> & <http://www.al-islam.org/short/arabic/tathir> .

<sup>300</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1 p.157: *Sirajiyya*, Raza Library Rampur.

recluse, constantly engrossed in prayer and meditation.<sup>301</sup> Yet in spite of their obvious difference in temperament, the two were inseparable after Jahangasht returned to Uch on Muhammad Tughluq's death, and together they propagated the Suhrawardi cause in the city. On Jahangasht's return, a separate khanqah which bore his name was also set up at some point in time. It is not clear if Sayyid Raju completely gave up control of the Surkhposh khanqah to Jahangasht or jointly administered it with him thereafter. The latter is probably the case, since during Jahangasht's prolonged absence all the foundation work for future endeavours had been laid by the young Sayyid Raju.<sup>302</sup>

Sayyid Raju's rise to prominence starts with his administration of the Surkhposh khanqah, when Jahangasht left the country to escape Muhammad Tughluq's offer of appointment as Shaykh al-Islam. This era of his life is mostly uncharted, except that he undertook the initiation and supervision of many disciples, although he must have been very young at the time. He was initiated into Suhrawardi doctrines by his father, Ahmad Kabir, but his brother Jahangasht also imparted spiritual training to him.<sup>303</sup> Due to his asceticism, he is regarded in anecdote as having more openly Shia and unorthodox leanings than his brother and is known to have been very temperamental. But the two brothers are always mentioned together in all historical references to Uch, where they rose to great eminence.<sup>304</sup> The aforementioned notions of Sunni orthodoxy used for Jahangasht are coupled with Sayyid Raju's temperament and are used by standard historians to paint Sayyid Raju in a near proto-Wahabi light.<sup>305</sup>

After Jahangasht's death in 1384, Sayyid Raju took over the Surkhposh khanqah again and administered it until his own death in Uch, where he had spent his whole life.<sup>306</sup> Soon after Jahangasht's death, there occurred an incident which involved Sayyid Raju and his unwilling patron Firuz Shah, when the former went to Delhi for the first and only

---

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid*, p.281.

<sup>302</sup> Sayyid Raju has a khanqah attributed to him which is much larger than the Jahangasht khanqah, but it probably dates from the later post-Jahangasht period.

<sup>303</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.281. Ahmad Kabir died when Sayyid Raju was very young.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid* 1986b (Shiism), vol. 1, p.199.

<sup>305</sup> This construct extends the notion of a very militant Sunni evangelism to Sayyid Raju: Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.281.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid*: *Jamali Akhbar al-Akhyar*, p.154.

time. This was for bringing back an escapee who had committed a crime and had sought refuge at the court. The escapee was a prominent Hindu imperial official from Uch, who was also a favourite of the Sultan. Firuz Shah had devised a plan to trap Sayyid Raju on his arrival,<sup>307</sup> at the behest of three imperial religious authorities in Delhi, but he was outmanoeuvred by Raju due to his prior knowledge of the scheme. Thus he returned back unharmed to Uch with the criminal.<sup>308</sup> From this event it is important to deduce both the plan of Firuz Shah to trap and scheme to charge Sayyid Raju at the behest of court personalities, and the extent of Sayyid Raju's authority in Uch as a dispenser of justice, who made no exceptions for imperial favourites. The situation seems to suggest a re-enactment of the semi-independence of the Zakariya era in Multan, and the continuing antagonism of Firuz Shah and his close imperial aides could have had a religious basis more than anything else. Obviously as expected due to his ascetic and temperamental personality Sayyid Raju was not as acceptable to the imperial authorities as his brother. After Jahangasht's death, Sayyid Raju's latter era in Uch heralded a new isolationism from the outside world.<sup>309</sup>

#### The Jalali Dervishes: Connections to the Da'wa

The two brothers were collectively responsible for setting up an ascetic sub-group within the Suhrawardi Order in Uch known as the Jalali Dervishes, which on account of his fame eventually became identified with Jahangasht. However, due to the nature of his personality and the initial decade that he had spent administering the Surkhposh khanqah when it was detached from imperial influence in Jahangasht's absence, it is beyond doubt that Sayyid Raju must have laid the initial groundwork for the formation of the Jalali

---

<sup>307</sup> Presumably for the purpose of trying him on trumped up charges.

<sup>308</sup> The incident is reported in detail in the following texts, Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.280: Jamali, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, pp.159-160; *Gulshan-e-Ibrahimi*, pp.417-418.

<sup>309</sup> His re-administration of the khanqah in 1384 corresponded with the early half of the Ismaili da'wa of Hasan Kabir al-din who took over in 1362 in Uch. The personalities of the two bear a startling resemblance in their isolationist asceticism and their openness to Indian spirituality, see Chapter Six, 'Hasan Kabir al-din.' This successful isolationist policy was assisted by the death of Firuz Shah in 1388 after whom all successive Delhi Sultans were incompetent rulers, until the attack of Tamerlane decimated the dynasty in 1398.

Dervishes. It would not be surprising if Jahangasht actually orchestrated his prolonged absence for this purpose. Many incidents in the primary text, *Mahbubiya*, quoted by Rizvi in his book *A History of Sufism in India* report three generations of Sufis in Uch, Jahangasht, his brother and their immediate descendants, in continuous conflict with Hindu yogis. They invited the yogis to participate in intellectual debates and spiritual contests until the yogis lost and submitted, joining the order and presumably bringing with them their esoteric knowledge and practices.<sup>310</sup> This approach of engaging Hindu ascetics until they were defeated in spiritual contests is far too reminiscent of early Ismaili da'wa tactics, dating back to Shams, to be mere coincidence. In addition in *Mahbubiya* Jahangasht is reported to have made a habit of giving huge gifts to qalandars and travelling dervishes (like Zakariya),<sup>311</sup> who were the Islamic equivalent of yogis. These traits would be very unorthodox for a Sunni puritan, who would not engage the infidel to such an extent.

It must be asserted that after the death of Surkhposh's successor Ahmad Kabir, during Jahangasht's travels abroad, starting as a young man in his early twenties, with Sayyid Raju running the khanqah in his late teens, there are no reports of any older learned Suhrawardi masters who could have supervised him in Uch. The last one in Multan, Shaykh Hud, had been executed. In the preceding century, there is enough evidence in this thesis to argue that Shams had been established superficially as a Suhrawardi under Zakariya for practicality and protection after his entrance into Multan.<sup>312</sup> Jahangasht's erstwhile teacher, Rukn-e-Alam, had died in early 1335 when the former was only 27 years old. In terms of esoteric mastery Jahangasht was then still very young, especially for imparting detailed guidance to his young brother during the short period he was to remain in the country thereafter, until he left in 1340. Jahangasht's famed teacher at Uch, Baha al-Halim had died even earlier before Jahangasht went to the Rukn-e-Alam khanqah in Multan in his late teens. Yet Uch remained a renowned Suhrawardi centre while

---

<sup>310</sup> This amalgamation is visible to this day for those who know of the spiritual exercises of the Jalali Dervishes, which are both Islamic and Hindu, combining traditional Shia-Ismaili *jafir* or cabbala with yogic meditation and energy techniques.

<sup>311</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.278: Yusufi, *Mahbubiya* ff. 9b-11b.

<sup>312</sup> On the basis of her knowledge of Ismaili ginans Zawahir Moir further believes that Shams was murdered. This would be in 1276 when he died, and would postdate his death after that of Zakariya's (d.1262).

Jahangasht was abroad, under a very young Sayyid Raju who started running the khanqah in his late teens. The exact date of birth for Sayyid Raju has not been discovered in any extant historical text yet, but according to folklore he was about fifteen years or so younger than Jahangasht. This is when he vanquished Shakta Hindu yogis, initiated disciples and presumably formed the basis of the Jalali Dervishes. This would have been an impossible task without spiritual support from other directions, yet there is no pir visibly available to guide Sayyid Raju in this era.

The only other spiritual presences in Uch at the time were Shams's son, Nasir al-din (d.1362) who lived the life of an ascetic; Shams's grandson, Sadr al-din (d.1416) who was responsible for the biggest impact on the da'wa in terms of organisational expansion and conversion; and finally Shams's grandson, Hasan Kabir al-din (d.1449).<sup>313</sup> All these three persons were responsible for massive conversions to Ismailism in the region and were based in Uch. Unlike Shams, Nasir al-din and Sadr al-din cannot yet be established as Suhrawardis, if only for lack of evidence, although their tombs certainly suggest the connection. Hasan Kabir al-din on the other hand is openly known to have been simultaneously a Suhrawardi Sufi and the da'i after Jahangasht II in the Sayyid Raju era.<sup>314</sup> The spiritual credentials of the youthful Jahangasht and his younger brother Sayyid Raju who was apparently unguided by a pir, could not have evolved without some connection to Nasir al-din and Sadr al-din. There are no historical reports of any conflict between them, while Hasan Kabir al-din was Raju's contemporary in Uch. This is especially important in view of the engagement with non-Muslim ascetics, which is a hallmark of the Shamsi style of proselytism.<sup>315</sup>

This previously unestablished connection between the da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order was ensured as a matter of dissimulative strategy on the part of the both of them, and by the secrecy that existed at the khanqahs due to the isolation of Uch. Even after

---

<sup>313</sup> For clarification of the chronology of Shams's descendants as da'is in Uch, due to a misrepresentation in the oral transmission of ginans, see Chapter Six, 'Nasir al-din.'

<sup>314</sup> This was also marked by the death of Firuz Shah in 1388, facilitating unhindered religious activity in Uch.

<sup>315</sup> The ginan *Man Samjhani* which Zawahir Moir is translating it with Christopher Shackle mentions Shams's metaphysical debates and engagements with Buddhist monks. Also see Chapter Two, 'The River and the Arrival from Uch.'

Jahangasht's return, no imperial officials or general outsiders would be allowed inside, so any hidden Shia ceremonies or religious activity involving Ismaili da'is would be untraceable and remain hidden to this day. A statement by Jahangasht himself from a primary source implies strict taqiya and secrecy in terms of religious affairs. Here he states that it is acceptable for Sufis to visit rulers, noblemen, and the rich to elicit the interests and good of the common folk, but a dervish should never allow such people to visit him at the khanqah, and if it could not be avoided, then the time should be spent only in preaching the significance of the shar'ia.<sup>316</sup>

Judging from their metaphysical tendencies and religious modus operandi, the Jalali dervishes are only explicable as a combined effort of the prominent personalities of the Ismaili da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order, and are only sustainable as an entity in the seemingly peer-less religious environment of Uch with the involvement of the local da'is. Historical evidence and common Suhrawardi-Ismaili religious traits seem to suggest that the group was formed, in traditional Shia-Ismaili ascetic fashion, to further the advancement of *batini* or unseen sciences through the Hindu tradition, and to provide a bastion for countering the influence of yogic orders in the Indus Valley region, which was the oldest centre for Shakta and Tantric practices in India.<sup>317</sup> The strength of the yogis, in terms of the absolute control they exercised over the subscribing local population, must have been of epic proportions, which hindered proselytism and administration, considering the frequency of reported engagements with them.

In addition, the Ismaili Imam Islam Shah (1370-1423) during the period of Jahangasht, Sayyid Raju, and the Jalali Dervishes, lived the life of a wandering dervish in Azerbaijan, and his identity was hidden from all except his inner followers. He visited his mission centres in Iran in absolute secrecy, meeting his followers in disguise, and was fond of

---

<sup>316</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.280: *Siraj al-Hadiya*, f.62a.

<sup>317</sup> A further link to inner medieval Ismaili doctrine is available from the analysis of the monuments related to the contemporaries of Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju, see Chapter Six, 'The Bibi Jaiwindi Complex,' *Shaivism, the Fifth religion of the Satpanth*.

isolation, spending months on end in the wild.<sup>318</sup> During his imamate, Hasan Kabir al-din was a Suhrawardi Sufi in Uch, but without his endorsement as imam this would have been impossible. This presumption of permission from the imam in dealing with all religious matters extends in retrospect to the da'is preceding Hasan Kabir al-din, and the part they must have played in the lives of Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju. The evidence shows a general religious connection between the two young Bukhari Suhrawardis devoid of any guidance from well-known known pirs, their Jalali Dervish followers, and their contemporary Ismaili da'is in Uch, at least one of whom was an openly established Suhrawardi Sufi himself. This is in the larger context of a renunciatory ascetic model trickling down to the Ismaili da'is from their absolute spiritual guide, the Ismaili Imam, in addition to the architectural evidence to be presented here in later chapters. In light of the Suhrawardi-Ismaili connection in the Uch period shown in this chapter, and the guise of the wandering dervish so often used as cover by Ismaili missionaries and assassins from the Alamut period and later by the Ismaili Imams themselves, the Shia credentials of the Jalali Dervishes and hence Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju should now be established

## Shiism

Hollister in his book *Shia of India* writes that no step has been taken to study the intertwined relationship between Shiism and Sufism, but their intimacy may be judged through the Jalali Order found in the Punjab which is an offshoot of the Suhrawardi. He states that the order has the status of a sect and is somehow connected to the Bektashi order in Turkey and Albania.<sup>319</sup> Talking about the Bektashis he states them to be extreme Shias, who reject the first three caliphs, and place Ali in a trinity with Allah and Muhammad. They believe in the twelve Imams and the Fourteen Infallibles (which

---

<sup>318</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history707.html> . Most citations for the ismailinet history website are regarded as being academically trustworthy, except where cited on the webpage. They are dependent on academic research by Prof. Ivanow, private papers, and on *Nur al-Mubin*, which is now a withdrawn text.

<sup>319</sup> Hollister 1953, p. 186; Rose, *Glossary*, pp. 553-556. Hollister was an Orientalist in the old tradition and his fieldwork was done in the pre-Partition era when the Jalali Dervishes were widespread in the Punjab; his observation carries a lot of weight. The order has now become very secretive and its members very few in number; they are not publicly visible nor are their doctrines and beliefs ascertainable.

include the former and Muhammad and his daughter Fatima) of the Twelver branch to be special manifestations of God.<sup>320</sup> This statement finds corroboration with Rizvi who cites some visible organisational connection between the Suhrawardi Order in Uch and the *Akhi* and *Futuwwa* dervish brotherhoods in Khurasan and Anatolia.<sup>321</sup> Rivzi attributes this similarity back to Jahangasht, but in light of the connections established in this thesis, it is probable this is the shape which the order took at a later stage to substantiate its existence. It severed itself from its own Suhrawardi past and the connected Ismaili da'wa as the latter collapsed at some point, but there are no historical reports of the initial formation of the dervishes as a separate sect, or working outside the Suhrawardi Order within which they were contained, in the time of either Jahangasht or Sayyid Raju.

The best available description of the Jalali dervishes dates from early British accounts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, from which one can roughly deduce what shape and direction the group must have essentially taken from its Suhrawardi roots. Herklots, in his *Islam in India*, states that the *Jalaliyya* take their name from Sayyid Jalal al-din Bukhari (Jahangasht) of Uch. They have a scar on their right arm, made at initiation. In their headquarters in the Punjab, they give little heed to prayer, smoke quantities of hemp, eat snakes and scorpions,<sup>322</sup> and shave their heads, leaving a scalp lock on one side. They are vagabonds with no fixed dwelling place, and are feared and despised as being a general nuisance to society.<sup>323</sup> Elsewhere, he says that they are renowned for their publicly performed spiritual feats; the band carries a hideous female doll and they engage in extreme forms of penance.<sup>324</sup>

It seems that metaphysical experimentation in Uch, which initially led to its glory and fame, became a reason for its fall from grace in the end. The process of taking in Hindu ascetics and their metaphysical beliefs must have led to a marked change in the religious attitudes of the Jalali dervishes and their practices over a course of time, with no serious

---

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid*, pp.186-187; Birge 1994, pp.145 *ff*.

<sup>321</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.281.

<sup>322</sup> Eating scorpions and snakes is a Shaivite yogic practice followed by snake trappers and yogis who believe their consumption will enhance the person's spiritual insight and ability to control spirits.

<sup>323</sup> Herklots 1834, pp.201-202: *Census Report Punjab 1891*, p. 195 *ff*; *Rose Dabistan*, p.226, amongst other citations.

<sup>324</sup> Implying witchcraft, *ibid*, p.175.

pir to supervise their activity after Sayyid Raju. Of course, the dissimulative outwardly Sunni profiles of Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju do not figure in this context of religious experimentation, but Jahangasht's book on obscure and extreme Shia sub-sects does, as that is what his order of dervishes eventually became, instead of avoiding such beliefs.<sup>325</sup>

In all probability, the combination of Shia-Ismaili doctrines,<sup>326</sup> yogic exercises and extreme Shia beliefs studied in the khanqahs just got out of hand once the local Suhrawardi pirs and Ismaili da'is with any spiritual authority had died, leaving their descendants to run amok with their uncontrolled religious experimentation. Such activity would not have been tolerated by any Ismaili imam or Suhrawardi shaykh in dissimulation. The fact that some extreme beliefs in Uch were a reason for this general antagonistic change in the personality of the Suhrawardi Order through the dervishes is well founded, as at the time the same happened with the Ismaili da'wa through the sons of Hasan Kabir al-din, who was also a Suhrawardi. After his death in 1449, his sons refused to acknowledge the Ismaili Imam in Iran or his new deputy in Uch, some claiming the imamate and its divine status for themselves.<sup>327</sup> It may be speculated that they were connected to the extreme beliefs of the Jalali dervishes penetrating into the da'wa through the Suhrawardi Order.

### Breakdown

The two most prominent personalities in latter day Uch with the Ismaili da'wa at its zenith in the Punjab, the emergence of the Jalali Dervishes and a weak imperial government in Delhi, are Hasan Kabir al-din who died in 1449 and Sayyid Raju who died

---

<sup>325</sup> The book was probably written as a warning of what to stay away from.

<sup>326</sup> Including ascetic practices dating back to Shams and Shahbaz Qalandar. The only precedent for an organisation like the Jalali Dervishes in this region, albeit at a much smaller scale and activity, was through the qalandars of the Ismaili ascetic, Shahbaz. Coincidentally, he happened to be Shams's cousin and Zakariya's initiate into the Suhrawardi Order one century earlier, and his order was openly Shia-Ismaili.

<sup>327</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history715.html>; Zawahir Moir has stated historical accounts mention a plague in Uch at the time of the dispute, and general anarchy in the Ismaili community on the death of Hasan Kabir al-din (d.1449) because of his sons' attitude.

slightly earlier in 1444,<sup>328</sup> both living to advanced ages. The situation for both the da'wa, and the Jalali Dervishes by implication, changes with their deaths. These personalities were far too big not to have coordinated and controlled whatever was bursting at the seams in a small place like Uch. After them, however, things changed so rapidly that a well-known Sunni Sufi order made very marked inroads into the city within a very short time.

This is the point when some of the descendants of Hasan Kabir al-din, once excommunicated from the da'wa for rejecting his younger brother Taj al-din, who was the new da'i appointed from Iran, started becoming Twelver Shias.<sup>329</sup> Slightly earlier, perhaps with the death of Sayyid Raju, the Jalali Dervishes<sup>330</sup> probably became believers in the Fourteen Infallibles of the Twelver Shia doctrine in the extreme sense, as reported by historians. In the case of the dervishes, this must have been a secretly held belief according to the nature of their organisation, and it is easy to see its similarity to the Bektashi Order of Turkey and Albania in these circumstances. The conversions had less to do with reasons of faith and more with vested interests, in the effort of the Dervishes to find a new platform for religious acceptability, after what they had become secretly under the guise of Twelver Shiism. This situation is complemented by the successful arrival of the Sunni Qadiri Order in the person of Abu Abdullah Mahbub Subhani in Uch for the first time, when he was welcomed with open arms by many in the local populace. He was born in 1430 in Aleppo, and died and was buried in Uch in 1517.<sup>331</sup> The date of his exact arrival in Uch is not known, but it was after the deaths of Sayyid Raju and Hasan Kabir al-din.

A final piece of evidence available on the Shiism of the Suhrawardi Order at Uch are reports that Sayyid Raju seems to have converted some Sunnis of Multan (presumably in

---

<sup>328</sup> Rizvi 1986b (Shiism), vol. 1, p.199.

<sup>329</sup> 'The Khojas of Uch were predominantly Ismaili, but are now commonly Twelver Shia, and regard the (Sufi) elders in his (Hasan Kabir al-din's) line as belonging to the Suhrawardi Order': Hafiz 1931, p.151. A new book on medieval Ismailism states that some of Hasan Kabir-al-din's eighteen sons became Sunni in the dispute surrounding his death: Virani 2007, p.125. Yet these cannot account for all of them or be allocated a space amongst those claiming the imamate for themselves, as that is strictly a Shia phenomenon

<sup>330</sup> Being the catalysts for this change in the first place.

<sup>331</sup> Sindhi 2000, pp. 84-85.

the later post-Jahangasht stage, and after Firuz Shah's death) to Shiism, and that he pioneered the movement against taqiya in the region. According to him, taqiya was responsible for the conversion of the sons and daughters of Shia parents to Sunnism.<sup>332</sup> This reference by Rizvi is from *Majalis al-Mu'minin*, the first comprehensive work on the history and doctrines of Shiism and its personalities in India through Shia eyes, as opposed to imperial Sunni works. It was written in Akbar's time by an Iranian scholar, Qazi Nurullah Shustari, who was attached to the court and is a massive work consisting of twelve volumes compiled between 1582 and 1602.<sup>333</sup> Although the author was a Twelver Shia himself, his definition of Shiism in the book includes all those who believed in the Imamate of Ali over the first three caliphs, and therefore includes all the Shia sects; although he does not state what kind of Shia Sayyid Raju was. The author was executed by flogging to death in the middle of the night on 7 September 1610, after Akbar's son Jehangir came to the throne.<sup>334</sup> It should be stressed that, in addition to conversion to Twelver Shiism at a later stage, the biggest loss of adherents to Ismailism in the Indus Valley in the earlier era was due to taqiya, most of them escaping persecution by reverting back to their different Hindu denominations, which were more tolerable to militant Sunnism.

The change in Hasan Kabir al-din's sons and the Jalali Dervishes does not mean that the Suhrawardi Order stopped existing entirely, as Uch reportedly remained a Suhrawardi centre in spite of the collapse of the da'wa and the Sunni Qadiri Sufi incursions. For some time, Jahangasht's son, Mahmud,<sup>335</sup> succeeded Sayyid Raju and headed the Suhrawardi Order in Uch. He was succeeded by his son, Sayyid Hamid Kabir,<sup>336</sup> who was followed by his grandson, Rukn al-din, named after Rukn-e-Alam.<sup>337</sup> In spite of this

---

<sup>332</sup> Rizvi 1986b (Shiism), vol. 1, p.199: *Majalis al-Mu'minin*, p. 64.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, p.351.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, p.377.

<sup>335</sup> A further link to Ismailism is through Jahangasht's granddaughter from his son Muhammad, brother to Mahmud, who was married to the controversial Ismaili da'i Imam Shah in Gujarat. The Bukharis in Gujarat come to the Ismaili shrines during the Urs celebration of Imam Shah to this day (information Zawahir Moir).

<sup>336</sup> Another grandson of Jahangasht, Burhan al-din, expanded into Gujarat and became very famous as Qutb-e-Alam. His descendants still visit the Imam Shah shrine (see previous footnote), and are also Jalali Dervishes according to Zawahir Moir.

<sup>337</sup> Rizvi 1986, vol. 1, p.282.

continuity and renewed connections to Ismailism, it is still not ascertainable if just a split had occurred, or whether the whole Suhrawardi Order was reduced to becoming Jalali Dervishes over a period of time. It is likely that the latter was the case as these changes signify a larger trend towards Twelver Shiism. The process seems to have begun almost simultaneously for the descendants of Hasan Kabir al-din and the Suhrawardi Order, which could only have happened through the dervishes and their beliefs, who were tied to both organisations. This is corroborated by the fact that all of Hasan Kabir al-din's descendants and the Suhrawardi Bukharis of Uch are Twelver Shia today. The Suhrawardi Order is perhaps the only major Sufi order in the Indus Valley which has not retained any khanqahs or institutions attached to its original identity. Ironically, most Suhrawardi centres and followers have melted into Twelver Shiism, while the Chishti, Qadiri and Naqshbandi orders still run their lodges all over the country.

Rizvi states that the organisers and adherents of the Jahangasht khanqah openly proclaimed Twelver Shiism by the early eighteenth century, asserting that he was actually a Shia who had practised taqiya for political reasons.<sup>338</sup> To this day, Jahangasht's descendants who run Uch are still Jalali Dervishes by ascetic practice and nominally Twelver Shia by their outward profession of faith. They are descended from the khanqah organisers who declared an open Shiism. In addition, they form the nexus of a larger secret organisation of Jalali Dervishes all over Pakistan, and are connected to the seven Uches (the existence of which is ironically reported in an Ismaili ginan)<sup>339</sup> found in the country. They follow extreme hidden practices and secret initiatory rites. When the coronation of a new pir takes place at Uch, as it did a few years ago in 2003, a secret congregation of the Bukhari Jalali Dervish brotherhood is held, to where they gather from all over the country to initiate the new pir in an unknown ceremony.

---

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid* 1986b (Shiism), vol.1 p.154.

<sup>339</sup> Shackle and Moir 2000, p.204.

## Conclusion

Annemarie Schimmel has briefly argued that Jalal al-din Surkhposh himself was an Ismaili da'i,<sup>340</sup> in spite of his generally alleged Sunni orthodoxy and plausibly hidden Twelver Shiism by way of his descent from the tenth Twelver Imam Ali al-Hadi al-Naqi. This could well have been the case, as other well-known Twelvers in history have been known to keep close ties with, assist, propagate and even profess Ismailism. As mentioned in previous chapters, Hasan bin Sabbah al-Himyari was born to a Twelver family and studied at a Twelver madrasa in Qum before becoming Ismaili, and setting up Alamut in 1090.<sup>341</sup> Nasir al-din Tusi (b.1201) was born to a Twelver family, wrote the exegesis for the Ismaili doctrine of occultation at Alamut while spending many years in the Ismaili enclaves to escape persecution, was alleged to be an Ismaili for a period of time,<sup>342</sup> and yet is buried in the compound of the seventh Twelver Imam, Musa al-Kazim. An older example which dates closer to the Shia Century (i.e. the tenth century) and has a greater bearing on this hitherto unexplained tie between Twelver Shiism and Ismailism is a close companion of the eleventh Twelver Imam Hasan al-Askari (d.874),<sup>343</sup> Abu al-Qasim bin Farah bin Haushab. He was the former's agent in Najaf. When the tenth Ismaili Imam Husain al-Mastur visited Ali's tomb in Najaf in 879 (266 Hirji) Haushab became attached to him. Haushab subsequently went to the Yemen as an Ismaili da'i of Husain al-Mastur to win the whole of the Yemen to the Ismaili cause.<sup>344</sup> One can fairly conclude from the combination of above events and the facts uncovered in the introductory chapter that the collaboration between Twelver Shiism and Ismailism was not just limited to temporal accommodation of each other's denominations against a Sunni opponent. It seems to have a metaphysical dimension also, signified by the

---

<sup>340</sup> Schimmel 2000, p.72.

<sup>341</sup> Hollister 1953, p.243 & pp.306-309, also Daftary 2007, p.311.

<sup>342</sup> Daftary 2007, pp.340 & 378.

<sup>343</sup> Al-Askari's short imamate lasted from 868-874 and ended when he died just a few decades before the Shia Century. He was under house arrest for the whole of that time, yet worked with a secret organisation employing undercover agents called the *wikala*. The *wikala* continued under al-Askari's son the last Twelver Imam Muhammad: Husain 1982, p.54.

<sup>344</sup> Another da'i commissioned under Husain al-Mastur who was previously a Twelver Shia and trained under Haushab, was Abdullah al-Shi'i. After his training, he was sent from the Yemen to Tunisia and the Maghreb, and had phenomenal success in converting the local Berber tribes: Hollister 1953, pp.209-210: '*Uyun al-Akhbar*, Rise of the Fatimids, p.37. His missionary work was responsible for the setting up of the Fatimid State in 909.

involvement of high level scholars, and now some of the Twelver Imams' direct followers, in spreading Ismailism. The analysis implies a much less stringent initial divide than now between the two denominations, regarding the concepts of Imamate (spiritual office) and its outward (active) and hidden (passive) manifestations.<sup>345</sup>

In the medieval Sufi context of this thesis, these multiple identities may be viewed in terms of a) an outward Sunni Sufism, which was strictly used for dissimulative purposes, and b) a simultaneous Ismaili da'wa-based belief structure, and/or Twelver Shiism, working under cover of an umbrella Shiism wherever it was not strictly Ismaili. But like in the older days its active element always seems to be Ismaili. This is necessarily a Sufi version of the pan-Shiism under the Buwayhids and Fatimids. At the highest levels of initiation, this difference would be rendered meaningless by the Shia framework for the multi-faith religion professed under the Suhrawardi Order. As will be documented in later chapters, this framework is echoed in the symbolism found in the monuments of the Suhrawardi Order at Uch. Yet the metaphysical signature attached to this entity is more Ismaili than anything else, due to its tie to the ceremonies at Shams's shrine. Indeed, this sort of Ismaili inspired multi-faith religiosity would even accommodate Baba Farid in its framework, who had no obvious Shia connections in terms of either the da'wa or the Suhrawardi Order; he was a Chishti. To complement this situation further, the general trend for Ismailis or their close da'wa associates working under the guise of a Sunni Sufism, to become Twelver Shia over the centuries as the da'wa broke down, is a transformation no better demonstrated than by the descendants of Jalal al-din Surkhposh, the Bukhari Sayyids.

In light of this situation, Jalal al-din Surkhposh's lineal descent from the tenth Twelver Imam and his hidden Twelver Shia belief would not at all hinder his becoming an Ismaili da'i, nor would his being a da'i be a subsequent reason for the abrogation of his personal

---

<sup>345</sup> Some scholars have argued that the rise of the Iranian State in the past five hundred years has shaped Twelver Shiism along the lines of a Sunni inspired orthodoxy to create a theological state based on exoteric sciences of law and jurisprudence, see Arjomand 1980, 'Conclusion.' In this, it has robbed this passive article of Shiism (i.e. the Twelver faith) of its esoteric heritage, in having to disassociate itself entirely from the active article, Ismailism, with a need to undermine the latter so as to validate its own existence as the sole spearhead of Shiism.

belief structure, if it were to remain intact. Neither of the above two would stop him from being a Suhrawardi Sufi master; such was the nature of the Unitarian religion professed at the highest level of the Suhrawardi Order. This must have been the same as the Satpanth or 'True Path' started by Shams. The discovery of the report of Surkhposh's annual death anniversary celebrations in the month of Chetir from an older pre-partition book furthers this premise and ties him to Shams's da'wa metaphysically, especially in light of Nauroz symbolism discovered on the Suhrawardi monuments of Uch. This actually might be a Chetir ceremony originally connected to Shams in the likeness of the one at Sakhi Sarwar, yet which due to political turmoil has survived the ages as Surkhposh's Urs. The same connections are equally applicable to Surkhposh's descendants in Uch and their Jalali Dervishes, who were contemporaries of Shams's descendants working in full capacity as da'is from Iran in the city. This is when the post Qasim Shahi line of Ismaili Imams who were their spiritual heads also lived as Dervishes in dissimulation. The antagonism of Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju with Muhammad and Firuz Tughluq is too reminiscent of the problems faced by Zakariya's descendants in Multan with the same two rulers, for this situation to be mere coincidence, especially considering its Ismaili connections. The only difference is that due to the isolated environment of Uch, which is off the beaten track so to speak, the Suhrawardi Order and the Ismaili da'is managed to preserve their organisations by working together. The nature of the conceptual similarity between the two organisations will become apparent in the analysis of the Suhrawardi monuments at Uch in Chapter Six.

## **Chapter 4: The Wilayat of Ali in Shiism, Sufism and the Religion of the Medieval Ismailis, the Satpanth**

### Introduction

The muddled historical relationship between Sufism and Shiism remains as unexplored in the modern age of academia, as it was unexplained in the era of medieval Islam. As we have seen in the last three chapters, the reason for this incomprehension between the two entities within Islam had more to do with dissimulation on account of historical antagonism towards Shiism. The lack of progress in understanding this relationship in modern scholarly circles has resulted due to the loss of certain spiritual concepts and related esoteric sciences common to Sufism and Shia Islam, which were traditionally only accessible to the initiated few. These still remain unexplored or properly understood within modern academia. Yet they historically provided a common metaphysical basis for the accommodation of Sufism within Shiism, and were also used in turn by the latter to establish its metaphysical superiority over Sunni Caliphal Islam.

The exegesis of these spiritual concepts common to Sufism and Shiism, and the correlation of both entities through them to the same Islamic personality and event will serve as the basis for clarifying this relationship in the context of this thesis. This correlation, at least in terms of the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley, is expressed through the astrological reckonings of the specific Islamic event of Ghadir-Khumm when the Prophet appointed Ali as his successor. The event has been found represented in dissimulation through symbols on Suhrawardi buildings. These symbols predominantly revolve around the Ghadir-Khumm connection to the Persian New Year i.e. Nauroz,<sup>346</sup> which has already been seen in the ceremonies emanating from Shams's shrine in Chapter Two. In the case of the Suhrawardi Order the astrological disposition at Ghadir also serves as a template for the accommodation of other religious ideas within its fold at a secondary level.

---

<sup>346</sup> According to the Shia traditions the Prophet nominated Ali as his absolute successor in his last sermon on 18 Dhul Hijja 10 Hijri, i.e. Wednesday 14 March 632. Nauroz is the Persian New Year/spring equinox, when the Sun enters the sign of Aries, see Chapter Two, 'Chaharshamba-yi Suri, Ghadir and a Vedic Nauroz.'

This correlation between the event of Ghadir-Khumm, when according to Shia Islam the Prophet openly announced his cousin Ali as his absolute successor in spiritual and temporal terms,<sup>347</sup> and Nauroz, the Persian New Year, have long existed as reports in Shia *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet) narrations. Yet the event was never really fully understood for its conceptual implications on the transcendentalism of Shia Muslim spirituality due to a dearth of supporting material. For similar reasons, it was never explored in terms of Sufism either, or in the specific context of this thesis, for the Ismaili da'wa connected to it in the Indus Valley. Shams's ingenious use of the Ghadir-Khumm Nauroz connection as an astrological template for representing Shia symbolism in a religious ceremony celebrated according to the local calendar by his Indian followers is unmistakably the first such example available in history. The evidence uncovered from the book *Tarikh-e-Uch* further ties the Suhrawardi Order metaphysically to Shams through the pre-Partition urs celebration of Surkhposh, which was also reportedly celebrated in a similar format.<sup>348</sup> Shams had invariably served as the progenitor for the transition of these ideas from Khurasan to the Indus Valley, and their development and adaptation to the local system.

The generic explanation of the Ghadir-Khumm Nauroz event for Sufism within a Shia context undertaken in this chapter serves a twofold purpose in the thesis. Firstly, it cements the metaphysical link between the Ismaili da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order in the context of the Indus Valley, within a clear process of concepts and events connected through astrological representation. This process of astrological representation is an academically acknowledged characteristic of the Fatimid era and later of medieval Ismailism itself, lending further credence to the argument here. The application of the Ghadir-Khumm Nauroz template in a variety of ways, either openly as first used by Shams to adapt Shia religious ceremonial to native contexts, or through discreet symbols

---

<sup>347</sup> The event of Ghadir-Khumm is celebrated in the Shia world as a festival when the Prophet said about Ali 'Whoever's master (*mawla*) I am, this Ali is also his master.' Nasr 1988, p.160. According to Shiism this event is regarded as having a divine ordinance by being in obedience to the revelation recorded in Sura 5:71, and by also being simultaneously complemented by the revelation of the last verse of the Quran on the occasion. See Hollister 1953, p.13.

<sup>348</sup> Hafiz 1931, p.99.

on architecture by the Suhrawardi Order who needed to express their Shiism in dissimulation, does not lessen the indispensability of the framework for the expression of Shia-Ismaili beliefs.

Secondly, in less specific terms, the reconstruction of the working concepts behind the process itself will demonstrate the hidden procedural connections that generally existed between Sufism and Shiism. This will show how Sufism could practically become a very convenient tool for the expression of Shiism in times of duress and dissimulation, which it invariably did in the shape of the Suhrawardi Order. The explanation lies outside the context of Sufi ideas and aesthetics that were absorbed simultaneously to the above into Sunni imperial circles throughout the Muslim world to embellish court ceremonial, or were patronised by rulers to suit their agendas.

#### The Concept of Wilayat in Shiism and Sufism

The event of Ghadir-Khumm plays a central part in the metaphysical superiority claimed by Shia Islam over the Sunni caliphal tradition. It is recognised by all Shia sub-sects as the point of departure from Sunnism, each drawing upon it to legitimise its own respective tradition, which is always through lineal descent from Ali. The nomination of Ali by the Prophet as his absolute successor in terms divine and temporal at Ghadir is called the *wilayat* or vice-regency of Ali.<sup>349</sup> The word *wilayat* is derived from the Arabic root *wila*, which means power, authority or a right of certain kind. In Shia theology, *wilayat* is the authority invested in the Prophet and then the *Ahl al-Bayt* (or *Panjatan* in Persian-Urdu), i.e. his original family including after himself, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain, as representatives of God on earth.<sup>350</sup> In the (Ja'fari) fiqh of Shiism (which

---

<sup>349</sup> Among all the Shia sects which survive or have become extinct, Nizari Ismailism and Twelver Shiism have maintained this concept of Imamate, or patriarchal lineal descent with both divine and temporal investiture as passed on from the event of Ghadir through the act of *wilayat*, more than all others. Others have lessened its status to just temporal guidance like the Yemeni Zaidis, or exalted it to extreme beliefs like the Alevi of Syria and Turkey.

<sup>350</sup> See Chapter Six 'Wilayat and its Scope' in <http://www.al-islam.org/wilayat> . The recent book *Shiism: Imamate and Wilayat* by Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi which deals explicitly with the notion of *wilayat* and its indispensability to the concept of imamate in Ja'fari Shiism is available online in its entirety in a running

incidentally includes Ismailism and Twelver Shiism), wilayat has four different dimensions of expression,<sup>351</sup> yet the primordial dimension is that of universal wilayat of the imam of the time derived from Ali. Subsequently, this holistic notion of temporal guidance and divine power being passing on to a descendant of Ali after him takes place through a process called *nass*.<sup>352</sup> This is when an infallible Imam (Ali or one of his descendants) nominates his successor publicly, and imbues him with divine secrets and credentials in private. In (Ja'fari) Shiism whenever the word imamate or imam is used it necessarily encompasses all four dimensions of wilayat.<sup>353</sup> In essence the process entails the passing on of the holistic wilayat of Ali to the new Imam, as declared by the Prophet at Ghadir-Khumm, through blood lineage to his chosen descendants.

One of the central concepts of all Sufism is that of a spiritual guide, dead or alive, who initiates a disciple and transfers secret knowledge to him, in addition to esoteric and exoteric etiquette on how to live between God and man. In Sufism a saint is called a *wali* (i.e. *waliallah* or friend of God) and sanctity itself is called *wilayah*. This is synonymous with wilayat in Persian Shiism and the root for both is the same (i.e. *wila* in Arabic). Some have even identified the two as being identical.<sup>354</sup> Moreover, the acclaimed Sufi master's initiated disciple is a khalifa or designate. A close examination of the terms in use and their etymology suggests a parody in the process of becoming a Sufi, of the event at Ghadir; where Ali was nominated to succeed the Prophet, yet the temporal right was usurped by a caliph. This is in the context of emplacing a Shia essence on certain Sufi orders as sought by this thesis. Hossein Nasr states that the Twelver scholar Murtada al-

---

format for each chapter in the above web link. The Family of the Prophet i.e. the first five, are regarded as being commonly infallible by all the Shia sects, the divergence only comes with their descendants; hence the first wilayat i.e., that of Ali at Ghadir, is likewise universally regarded.

<sup>351</sup> The first dimension of wilayat is love for the Ahl al-Bayt regarded as being stated in Sura 42:23 of the Quran. The second dimension is of Ali's spiritual guidance which is a commonly held belief of the Shia and the majority of the Sufi orders. The third is the socio-political authority of the Family, and the fourth is called the universal wilayat whereby the *wali* or holder of wilayat exercises power over all that exists. In the words of a recent clerical ruler of Iran, 'It is the vice-regency pertaining to the whole of creation.' The last two are exclusively Shia concepts: *Ibid*.

<sup>352</sup> The designation that makes one an imam on the death of his predecessor: Hollister 1953, p.415.

<sup>353</sup> See Chapter Six, 'Wilayat and its Scope' in <http://www.al-islam.org/wilayat>.

<sup>354</sup> Nasr 1991, pp.107-108.

Radi, who lived in Buwayhid Baghdad before the Seljuks, called the (early) Sufis ‘the real Shiites.’<sup>355</sup>

The initial orally transmitted traditions of all Sufi orders narrate essentially that in the early era of Islam, certain disciples within each order were taken on by Ali, who was a master of the esoteric knowledge of Scripture, its application to the natural environment, and to the forces of nature. They were initiated with a pledge to transfer this secret knowledge to deserving individuals. This fact of spiritual designation from Ali is accepted by all Sufi orders, except the Naqshbandi Order which sprang up in fourteenth century Uzbekistan in a Sunni Turkic environment. It purports to derive its spiritual lineage in a similar manner, but through the first Sunni caliph Abu Bakr, instead of Ali.<sup>356</sup> It was favoured by the Ottoman Empire and latter day Mughals in India and became a political tool for countering Shia influence in imperial circles, in that its beginnings and rise can be ascribed political and temporal reasons.

<b>THE STATUS OF AHLUL BAYT AMONG MUSLIMS</b>			
	<b>Sunnis</b>	<b>Sufis</b>	<b>Shi'as</b>
<b>Love of Ahlul Bayt</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Spiritual Guidance of the Ahlul Bayt</b>	✗	✓	✓
<b>Political Leadership of the Ahlul Bayt</b>	✗	✗	✓
<b>Universal Authority of the Ahlul Bayt</b>	✗	✗	✓

19. The four different dimensions of wilayat as adhered to by Sunnis, (Sunni) Sufis, and the Shia

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi in his book *Shiism: Imamate and Wilayat* has explored the degree to which the four dimensions of wilayat that are indispensable to Shiism are also

<sup>355</sup> For Murtada al-Radi see Introduction, ‘The Shia Century,’ & Chapter One, ‘An Historic Overview.’

<sup>356</sup> See Chapter Six, ‘Wilayat and its Scope’ in <http://www.al-islam.org/wilayat> .

common to Sufism, for the purpose of identifying how far Sunni Sufis can be identified as having Shia concepts (plate 18).<sup>357</sup> It places Sunni Sufis in the middle of the Shia and the orthodox Sunnis. Yet the adherence to the second dimension of wilayat, i.e. that of spiritual guidance makes all Sufis signatories to the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir in terms of its spiritual credentials.

In the case of Shiism exercising dissimulation as Sufism, the near universal process of spiritual descent from Ali in the latter, coupled with the initiation into secret knowledge of Scripture that it entails, sets a conceptual precedence which can be explored inside a Shia context in regards to metaphysical beliefs and sciences. This is especially pertinent to the earlier Sufi orders having connections to either Ismailism or Twelver Shiism that came out of Iran and Iraq after the Shia century (i.e. the tenth), as these were the ones used by Shia denominations for cover in times of persecution. Critics can argue from the chart in plate 18 that adherence to just the spiritual dimension of wilayat by Sufis is consistent with the general moderate Sunni belief in Ali's spiritual Imamate, but does not entail the lowering of the temporal status of the three caliphs. This would hold true only if this adherence to wilayat in any given Sufi order works without the premise of dissimulation, and more importantly without the interconnection of the Persian New Year to it. As will be seen later in this chapter, the Nauroz interconnection to wilayat in Sufism automatically enhances its status to that of universal wilayat encapsulating all four dimensions, and gives it an exclusively Shia twist, which cannot have a Sunni connotation. The prime example of one such Sufi order is the Suhrawardi Order dealt with in this thesis.

#### Ghadir-Khumm, Nauroz, Wilayat and Majlisi

In the sphere of Shia Islam, the concept of the wilayat of Ali as declared at Ghadir and its connections to Nauroz, the Persian New Year, still has reverberations in the contemporary day, as Shiism maintains the primordality of its beliefs and spiritual

---

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

designation down to the current Imam on the basis of that event. Unlike the lesser Shia sects, both the Nizari Ismaili tradition and Twelver Shiism attach equal significance to it. As mentioned earlier, the event has been frequently cited in Twelver Shia traditions, due to the survival and preservation of its hadith narrations in Iran. But this reportage is equally valid for Nizari Ismailism which was also prevalent in that country during the pan-Shiism of the tenth century, and then the Alamut era before the Mongol onslaught; although most of its own literature has been lost to the ravages of time and enmity. A fact which further endorses the validity of the reports of the Nauroz connection to the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir in Twelver Shiism, for the Nizari Ismaili tradition, is the chain of narrators for the event. All the chains of transmission for these narrations in Twelver Shiism go back to the sixth Imam, Jafar al-Sadiq, who was also an Ismaili Imam.

In Ismailism the main problem hampering further academic understanding of the Nauroz connection to wilayat was due to the loss of the body of transcendental Islam that was the medieval Nizari da'wa, which was known as the Satpanth. The decoding of the ceremonies at Shams's shrine has resolved that issue to an extent. There is also the added problem of the comprehensive loss of elite esoteric sciences that were used by both Ismailism and Shia Sufism to substantiate and prove the wilayat-Nauroz argument. In essence, in both traditions a great ceremonial importance was attached to the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir and its connection to Nauroz, yet with no contemporary conceptual understanding of the reasoning behind it.

The main Twelver text which discusses the ceremonial importance of Nauroz in detail is called *Zaad al-Ma'ad*, and it also serves as a standard manual for this tradition's prescribed religious obligations as based on its hadith narrations. It was written by the famous theologian and hadith narrator Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi (d.1678), one of the principal figures responsible for propounding the theological legitimacy of the Iranian Safavid state. He was a prolific writer and author of more than a hundred books. His book *Bihar al-Anwar* (110 volumes) serves as the template on which the modern Iranian clerical state is based. He was the Shaykh al-Islam of the Safavid Empire. Yet during the early years of his religious training, Majlisi was the student of the acclaimed Sufi

theosophist and philosopher Mulla Sadra (d.1640), who was in turn ironically heavily influenced by the illuminationist ideas and theories of the Sufi master, Yahya bin Habash Shihab al-din Suhrawardi, buried in Aleppo. This is the same Suhrawardi whose hidden Shia-Ismaili beliefs we have seen in Chapter One, the reason for his execution by Salah al-din.<sup>358</sup>

Considering his initial training under Mulla Sadra,<sup>359</sup> Majlisi's personal religious leanings were probably not nearly as theologically stringent as his works, commissioned under imperial patronage, and later used by the clergy in Qum. The book *Zaad- al Ma'ad* is one of his later works, and revolves mainly around describing the spiritual benefits of the obligatory and supererogatory religious practices and rituals of the Ja'fari fiqh, which are arranged monthly for the twelve Islamic lunar months. At the end, he has a long section dedicated to traditionally non-Islamic dates and events, with relevant practices for spiritual benefit. This section has more of a descriptive character, and explains how non-Islamic dates are reckoned within the nexus of Shiism. Majlisi also reports on the authenticity of this reckoning and any related rituals through hadith narrations in the traditional Islamic format, after verifying the chain of narrators. In this, Majlisi manages to very successfully pin Shia Islamic credentials onto pre-Islamic Iranian beliefs and festivals in a very bland theological setting, thus Iranianising popular Twelver Shiism forever. His training under Mulla Sadra who was influenced by Yahya bin Habash Suhrawardi had invariably played a major part in this success, as previously the conceptual basis for this process is actually rooted in the astrological reckoning of Ghadir with Nauroz, that we have seen used by Shams in the Indus Valley. In his theological success Majlisi also managed to give a colour of acceptability to the Ghadir and Nauroz astrological connection within the same Twelver orthodox circles which were opposed to Mulla Sadra. However all of this was done for the palate of imperial Safavid patronage which was trying to formulate and assert a distinct Iranian Twelver identity through the clergy in Qum, in a region of changing body politic, European expansionism, and aggressive neighbours in the form of the Sunni Ottoman and Mughal empires.

---

<sup>358</sup> See Chapter One, 'An Historic Overview.'

<sup>359</sup> Mulla Sadra beliefs were considered heretical and he was persecuted for them by the Twelver Shia clergy in Iran.

Hence through hadith reportage traced back to Ja'far al-Sadiq, on the wilayat of Ali as declared at Ghadir and its connection to Nauroz, Mulla Sadra's hadith narrator student managed to prepare the exoteric template for the mass acceptability of the transcendental Islam that was all Shiism in its untouched Sufi format. But in the process, he may also have heralded the decline of the active practice of the esoteric sciences used to explain this transcendence, by encapsulating its beliefs into a theological framework. The title *Zaad al-Ma'ad* can also be translated as 'Provisions for the Hereafter,' and the mention of these seemingly non-Islamic festivals and dates within a Shia theological context gives them great importance within popular eschatology.

In section seven of the above book, on pages 557-559, Majlisi deals specifically with Nauroz as a separate category, describing its lofty place within the Divine Plan. He also touches fleetingly upon the topic in other parts of the book, marking it out in small text in the copy consulted for this thesis, wherever it historically tallied with Islamic lunar calendar events, reckoning one date with the other. The section on Nauroz, in terms of its hadith narrations, is solely dependent on reports going back to the sixth Imam, Jafar al-Sadiq. In addition to the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir, the book mentions many significant religious events in world history as tallying with Nauroz on al-Sadiq's authority. In terms of Shia Islam, the relevant section also describes other significant dates and related events connected to the first Shia Imam Ali, as correlating with Nauroz. In the context of this thesis, this process of dualistic reckoning of events and their tallying to Nauroz in a primary text plays a vital part in identifying the distinct mindset of Iranian Twelver Shiism. This is equally true of the medieval Ismaili da'wa in Iran preceding it, which as we have seen from the case of the Chetir ceremonies in Chapter Two, held the same belief in the Persian New Year in an Islamic context, in regards to an auspicious date heralding the perfect time to start a new deed or event.

In the Nauroz section, on the authority of Jafar al-Sadiq, Majlisi narrates on page 559 that on the occasion at Ghadir,<sup>360</sup> when the Prophet announced Ali as his successor to his companions and Muslims generally, Salman the Persian and some other followers came to the Prophet and exclaimed that it was a day of great celebration for the Persian people, as it heralded the coming of their new year.<sup>361</sup> On this the Prophet said they should celebrate it as the greatest '*Eid* (festival) and that this was indeed the most auspicious of dates. The astrological reckoning of the event should not be forgotten in both the Arab, and in this case the Persian tradition, for the part that it played within the religious ceremonial of Nauroz, which is built around the entry of the Sun into the sign of Aries.

In astrology, the exaltation of the Sun according to all the ancient traditions is in the first house or sign of Aries, the actual exaltation being at 19 degrees Aries, or 19 days after the Sun enters that sign.<sup>362</sup> The Sun travels one degree per day (i.e. in 24 hours), thus remaining for 30-31 days in every sign (each having 30 degrees).<sup>363</sup> This is a month in the solar calendar beginning at Nauroz followed in ancient Persia which roughly makes up one of our months in length. But in essence, the moment the Sun enters Aries its exaltation begins and Nauroz starts; the exaltation mark at 19 degrees only signifies a focal point for the maximum release of the Sun's energy in this sign.<sup>364</sup> In pre-Islamic Persia many other festivals were earmarked for this whole period, for the time before the Sun actually entered Aries, and when it exalted at 19 degrees; in addition to the actual event of the Sun entering the sign (i.e. 0 degrees Aries), which heralds the astrologically auspicious spring equinox or Nauroz.

---

<sup>360</sup> The event reportedly took place in front of 125,000 Muslims on 18 Dhul Hijja 10 Hijri at the time of the afternoon prayers (roughly one o'clock) at the pool of Ghadir-Khumm, located midway between Mecca and Medina. It is also known as the Last Sermon where the Prophet.

<sup>361</sup> Majlisi 1845, p.559.

<sup>362</sup> Al-Biruni 1029, p.258. In the Islamic tradition the oldest surviving consonants for the exaltations of planets and other astrological traits of the signs are available in this book in written form.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, p.100.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, p.258. According to Al-Biruni in this book, a said planet is in exaltation from the time it enters the sign of its exaltation, and remains so until it leaves that sign. For a simpler understanding of the principle and other astrological traits of planets in signs see Appendix One.

The house of Aries is ruled by the planet Mars.<sup>365</sup> In astrological terms, Nauroz is centred on the entry and exaltation of the Sun in the sphere of influence of Mars, i.e. the event is represented by a Sun and Mars nexus in the heavens. This confluence of the Sun and Mars at Nauroz will become apparent later in the chapter, for the primary part it has played in a religious framework employed by both Ismailism and the Suhrawardi Order, especially in representing iconography on architecture.

No academic effort has been made so far to astrologically deduce the Ghadir-Khumm Nauroz interconnection as reported in Shia hadith narrations. The Gregorian conversion of the Hijri (Islamic) date for Ghadir-Khumm as reported by Majlisi, i.e. 18 Dhul Hijja in year 10, which was previously used in Chapter Two for the decoding of the ceremonies at Shams's shrine after its correction through the fixed Ismaili Al-Hakim lunar calendar, shows it to be exactly 14 March 632.<sup>366</sup> Thus the date does not signify actual Nauroz as understood in the contemporary sense, since actual Nauroz would start then as now with the passing of the Sun into (zero degrees) Aries at the spring equinox (March 20 or 21), which would be a week later than the above date.

#### Omar Khayyam, Nauroz, and the Jalali Calendar

To understand the above conversion date's ceremonial difference from actual Nauroz, one must examine the nature of Nauroz celebrations in the way they have changed historically. In the aftermath of Arab invasions and subsequent annihilation of high Persian culture, Nauroz ceremonies, while surviving indigenously, only made a real comeback after the Ghaznavid and Seljuk Turks took over Persia. Modern day Nauroz celebrations were reinvigorated for the first time at a courtly level after a long period of discontinuity through the efforts of the famous poet and astronomer Omar Khayyam on

---

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.69 & 268. The planetary rulerships of other signs are also given here, with their friendship and enmity (pp.260-261), amongst other characteristics. The planetary rulerships of the days of the week are given on p.165. There are special references to the Indian tradition and its agreement with Al-Biruni's research on most pages, which obviously played a great part in ascertaining the authenticity of a citation for him.

<sup>366</sup> Cross-reference Chapter Two, 'Chetir, Chaharshamba-yi Suri and a Vedic Nauroz,'

15 March 1079 through his Jalali Calendar, named after his patron the Seljuk monarch Jalal al-din Malik Shah.<sup>367</sup> It saw a re-introduction of high Persian cultural values and celebrations under the Seljuks after their prolonged suppression by Umayyad and Abbasid Sunni caliphal rule. But in spite of the calendar's Persian colouring, Omar Khayyam named the solar months after the twelve Arabic Zodiac signs, starting with Hamal (Aries), literally on Nauroz, when the calendar itself started being used in 1079. These names were changed in modern day Iran under the nationalistic Pahlavi dynasty in 1925 to ancient pre-Islamic Iranian names which they retain today. In Afghanistan, the Arabic Zodiac names are still retained for the calendar months in Dari, and date back to Omar Khayyam and his Jalali Calendar.<sup>368</sup>

Al-Biruni, who wrote a generation before Omar Khayyam, mentions the traditional Persian names for the months in the same format as the ones to which the Iranian Parliament reverted back in 1925, and their use as being widespread among the native Persians (Zoroastrians).<sup>369</sup> In essence, the naming of the months with Arabic Zodiac signs by Omar Khayyam, along with a streamlined start date to Nauroz, suggest a clear effort to strictly regularise all New Year celebrations and related festivities with the first day of spring in his Jalali Calendar. The process points to a limited incorporation of extant Persian religious ceremonial into the Seljuk imperial motif in the eleventh century. This was surely done in part to grant Seljuk rule greater acceptability by winning over the hearts of the native population after centuries of cultural oppression under Arab rule. The case is lent further credence in light of the resistance faced by the Seljuks in Iran, which we have seen in the introductory chapters in the form of the nationalistic Ismailism of Hasan bin Sabbah.

---

<sup>367</sup> The Jalali calendar was endorsed on the 15 of March, 1079 by Malik Shah as the official calendar of the Seljuk Empire in his capital Isfahan, and has continued since then: 'Omar Khayyam' in *The Columbia Encyclopedia* 2007, p.65. The astrological chart of the date shows it to be a Saturday, i.e. *Shamba*, the first day of the week in Persian. That is the probable reason for the starting day, yet the Sun is exactly at 23 degrees Pisces, which is the same as the date for Ghadir Khumm, just a week before Nauroz. For details see Appendix 2.

<sup>368</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jalali\\_calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jalali_calendar) .

<sup>369</sup> Al-Biruni 1029, p.167.

The use of the Arabic Zodiac names for months and the strict regularising of Nauroz festivities were also done to balance the Seljuk connection with the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad, from whom the Sunni Turkic kings derived their religious and political mandate. Previous to the Jalali Calendar, indigenous Nauroz festivities (as narrated by Omar Khayyam in his *Nauroz Namah*) would actually begin with the passing of the Sun through the middle of Pisces, i.e. 15 days (degrees) before actual Nauroz; the major festivities would be reserved for the last week before Nauroz.<sup>370</sup> The Shia-Ismaili connection to both Al-Biruni, a contemporary of the quasi Shia scholar Ibn Sina,<sup>371</sup> and Omar Khayyam, contemporaneous with Hasan bin Sabbah a generation later, should not be overlooked here. As opposed to Al-Biruni's patronage by Mahmud Ghaznavi, Ibn Sina rejected such offers of employment by Mahmud, and preferred the weaker patronage of feuding Buwayhid Twelver emirs in central Iran who were opposed to the Ghaznavids. This is possibly because of Ibn Sina's own Shia beliefs; his father was known to be Ismaili, but he is alleged to have been a Twelver himself.<sup>372</sup> The scholastic friction which existed between Al-Biruni and Ibn Sina on the one hand, and the factional enmity between Omar Khayyam and Hasan bin Sabbah on the other, are on account of their patronage by, or personal opposition to, anti-Shia Turkic kings.<sup>373</sup>

This geo-political situation, with its roots based in the Islamic sectarianism explored in detail in the early chapters, sheds some light on the limited objectives behind the Jalali Calendar, which nevertheless became an icon of Iranian cultural revival in time. However, its structure withheld open regard for the other festivals which mark up to the entry of the Sun into Aries, and were traditionally celebrated with equal importance, as these may have played a part in the Shia interpretation of Nauroz. This is not to suggest that Al-Biruni or Omar Khayyam were ignorant of, or did not agree with, the (Shia)

---

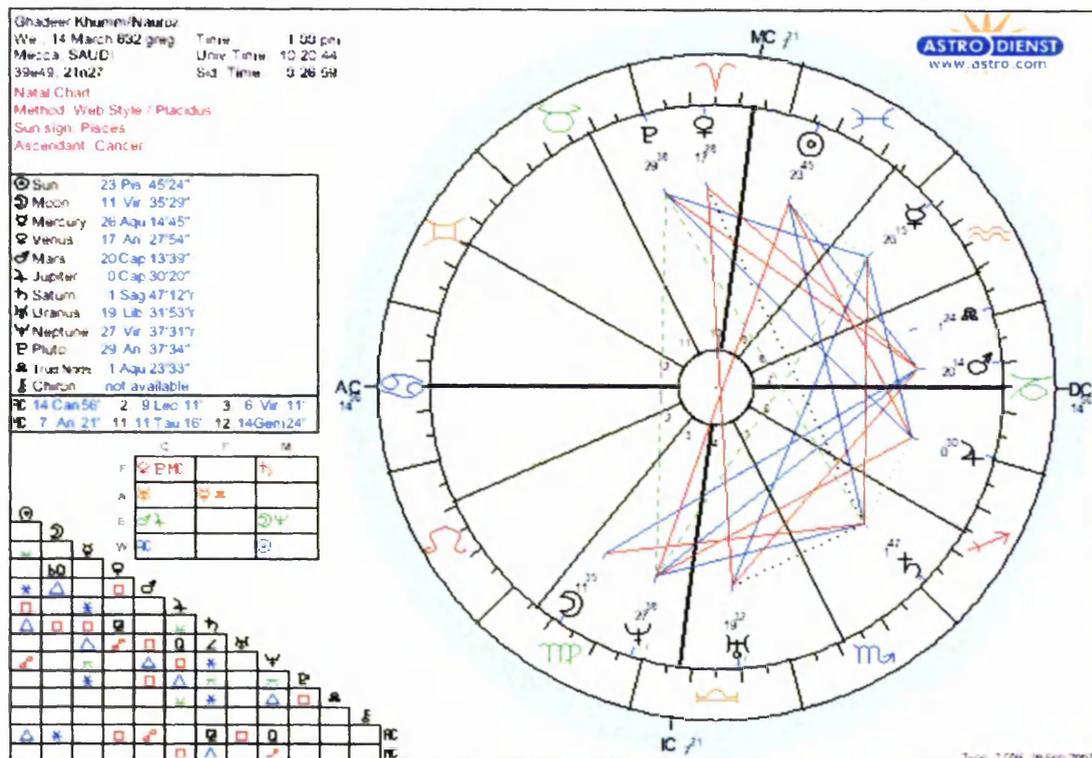
<sup>370</sup> Khayyam, O, Minovi, M 1933, p. 1-5 (of manuscript reprint), Omar Khayyam describes the festivals of Nauroz, their traditions and the deeds that should be performed to maximize spiritual benefit, including certain Islamic practices which may have a Shia connotation, like the recitation of certain Quranic verses a certain number of times when the Sun enters Aries etc. He describes the greatness of Nauroz from Iranian mythical traditions, relating certain astrological events (i.e. planetary exaltations, and the related festivals through allegory) to acts and deeds of the Iranian mythical kings on pp.7-11.

<sup>371</sup> The true nature of Ibn Sina's Shiism remains to be ascertained, in terms of its sectarian affiliations.

<sup>372</sup> Corbin 1993, p.170.

<sup>373</sup> Mahmud Ghaznavi for Al-Biruni, and Malik Shah for Omar Khayyam.

Muslim astrological reckonings of the pre-Nauroz festivals as scholars, but that they did not do so under Sunni imperial patronage. The edited version of Omar Khayyam's *Nauroz Namah* by Minovi comments on most aspects of Nauroz from the original text when describing related ceremonies. Yet a look at the index shows no entries for Chaharshamba-yi Suri, the festival of the last Wednesday before Nauroz, that research found celebrated at Shams's shrine. It is improbable that an early twentieth century editor omitted such details; what is probable is that this was done consciously due to the sectarian nature of scholarly patronage being offered at the time of writing. Shiism was rife in the region, and Omar Khayyam belonged in the Sunni camp, at least openly. For a scholar of his stature, and with his past associations to Hasan bin Sabbah, he would surely have known about the wilayat of Ali's resonances in Nauroz through Chaharshamba-yi Suri when writing the *Nauroz Namah*. If he was an objective scholar he would suppress certain connections for the sake of his own head to say the least, and naturally exclude them if he was a bigoted Sunni.



20. The astrological chart of 18 Dhul Hijja, 10 Hijri/14 March 632. The event of Ghadir-Khumm at 1:00 pm, with the Sun at 23 degrees Pisces on a Wednesday

The astrological chart of the Ghadir-Khumm event used for the ceremonies at Shams's shrine (above), as reported by Majlisi to have occurred after midday prayers at approximately one o'clock, on 14 March 632, after its correction with the Al-Hakim calendar shows the Sun exactly at 23 degrees Pisces on a Wednesday, exactly one week before Nauroz. This is exactly the same as the disposition of the Sun (i.e. 23 degrees Pisces) at the beginning of the Jalali Calendar,<sup>374</sup> which nevertheless begins on a Saturday. In light of the limited political and sectarian context of the environment, this situation adds up as clear evidence on the dispute between Omar Khayyam and Hasan bin Sabbah not being personal, as narrated in folk literature, but actually conceptual and doctrinal. Hasan bin Sabbah's nationalistic Persian Ismailism against Sunni Seljuk rule would naturally regard Omar Khayyam's effort at giving them cultural legitimacy through Nauroz in his Jalali Calendar as a usurpation of the ideals of the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir. Previous to the Jalali Calendar, the only precedence for the celebration of Nauroz in Islam would necessarily be through the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir, and would be Shia in nature. To a devout Shia like Hasan this could only be seen as the dishonest use of Shia concepts for forwarding Sunni hegemony. Both Omar Khayyam, and indeed Hasan himself with his training as a da'i in Fatimid Egypt, and his setting up the famed library and observatory of Alamut where he spent most of latter life, were too well learned in medieval Islamic scholarship not to have known about the Ghadir/wilayat connection to Nauroz. Such a scenario would show Omar Khayyam as a Seljuk puppet who suppressed the Shia conceptual base of his Nauroz centred Jalali Calendar, starting at a disposition of the Sun rooted in Ghadir, i.e. 23 degrees Pisces.

Hence the Jalali Calendar itself, along with Ghadir, astrologically coincides with the pre-Nauroz Festival of Fire or Chaharshamba-yi Suri, held on the last Wednesday before Nauroz. The details of this festival and its relationship to Nauroz became apparent in the field trip from the shrine of Shams in Multan. The Chaharshamba-yi Suri festival is the celebration of light (the Good) winning over darkness (the Evil), and the importance that is emplaced on this fight between good and evil in the Zoroastrian religion ensures a very

---

<sup>374</sup> See Appendix 2.

high place for this festival;<sup>375</sup> hence it was traditionally celebrated with even greater fervour than actual Nauroz. It seems strange for it to come out so muted in *Nauroz Namah*, unless it was consciously suppressed. This is in addition to the fact that Omar Khayyam describes certain Nauroz festivals through poetic allegory without citing their actual names,<sup>376</sup> which might have been an effort by him to state the (non-)obvious in a spirit of intellectual honesty, without losing his head in the process.

With the clarification of the Ghadir, wilayat of Ali and Nauroz nexus for the Jalali Calender, the rest of the picture is easier to envisage in the context of an astrological framework. One can see how the pre-Jalali Calendar Nauroz resonances of Ghadir in Islam, necessarily Shiism, were further developed by Ismaili missionaries and applied to the Indian subcontinent a few generations from the time of Omar Khayyam and Hasan bin Sabbah. This would be after their indirect public revival through the Jalali Calendar, which albeit in an Imperial Sunni Seljuk context, would still have given Persian religious ceremonial a massive boost under court patronage. If one looks closely at the Ghadir-Khumm event chart above, one would see that Mars, the ruler of Aries, is at 20 degrees Capricorn, which is the sign of its own exaltation. Hence, both Mars and the Sun would be in the signs of their exaltations on Nauroz that certain year,<sup>377</sup> i.e. one week after the Ghadir-Khumm event of 18 Dhul Hijja 10 Hijri, or 14 March 632. This would make our Ghadir related Nauroz a very auspicious and rare astrological event, which is possibly what Salman the Persian also referred to in his congratulations to the Prophet and Ali, as cited in the Majlisi hadith. According to tradition Salman was a Zoroastrian priest who converted to monastic Christianity before coming to Arabia, and hence would have been a master of astrology himself due to his training, considering the pre-Islamic astrological ceremonial of Zoroastrianism. In fact, Mars on Nauroz that year (632) would be nearly at

---

<sup>375</sup> In terms of astrological rulership, spirits and their influences are not fully free and are governed, manifested through, or controlled by the planet Mercury, which is the ruler of both Wednesday and Chaharshamba-yi Suri. Thus, it is the day the spirits are cast out, which is why the festival plays such an important part in Zoroastrian ceremonial, which is built around the defeat of demons by the forces of light. Al-Biruni gives the rulership for spirits as Saturn on page 242 of his book used here, which does not make any astrological sense as it is an earthly rulership. Some Renaissance astrologers in complete agreement (Dariot/Lilly/Ramesey), while disagreeing with Al-Biruni, have ascribed the more logical rulership of spirits to Mercury, which governs air: Lehman 1992, p.262.

<sup>376</sup> Khayyam. O, Minovi. M 1933, p.7-11.

<sup>377</sup> See Appendix One for details of planetary exaltations.



discourses in Shia Islam, through astrology, in relating it to the Persian New Year. Furthermore, it is easy to see how this astrological reckoning and any related discourse could be translated into actual religious doctrine through planetary exaltations. In our case, this is a Mars and Sun nexus, with Nauroz being the exaltation of the Sun in the first house Aries which is ruled by Mars; the connection is further amplified here with both the planets incidentally being in exaltation in 10 Hijra, or 632. For the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley, it is this nexus which played the part of an astrological temple for the application of iconography and religious symbolism to its architecture.

#### Ghadir-Khumm, the Concept of Wilayat in Sufism, and Islamic Scripture

As mentioned before, the concept of wilayat in Sufism, except in the Naqshbandi Order, is traditionally defined as the crossing of a certain spiritual threshold under the indirect auspices of Ali. This is achieved through ascetic practices (under an acclaimed master) as originally disseminated by Ali to his various disciples in secret, after his appointment as spiritual successor to the Prophet (at Ghadir-Khumm). The dissemination from Ali's time to the current recipient of knowledge forms a chain of spiritual transmission, which is the spiritual lineage of any one Sufi order, and serves as the pivot for the derivation of spiritual power for that order. This transmission can also include long dead personalities whose souls have formed one or more links in this chain; and this has actually been the norm rather than the exception in most well known Sufi orders. Notwithstanding that contemporary Sufism is usually known to be Sunni, the connection with Ali easily denotes how many Sufis could actually be Shia Muslims pursuing their agendas under the cover of popular Islamic asceticism in hostile environments.

The most important aspect of Shia-Ismaili Sufism, as was the case with the Suhrawardi Order, would be to ascertain the way the concept of wilayat was achieved and celebrated in their mindset under dissimulation, and taught at their khanqahs in secrecy. This would include deducing how the process radiated back to the Nauroz and Ghadir-Khumm connection to the original wilayat of Ali, which would signify a strict Shia context for the

order. Due to the secret nature of Sufi initiation, the process of attaining wilayat in Shia Sufism is mostly unknown except to a high level initiate. Yet the notion and phenomenon of wilayat itself does go back to Ghadir-Khumm without exception, and in essence to Nauroz as a natural trajectory; as there is no other precedent for it within Islamic history. For those who are even superficially aware of the process, wilayat in Sufism is acquired after a long process of asceticism, which includes dietary regulation, meditation, and most importantly *dhikr* or continuous recitation of the Names of God, Scriptural texts and supplications, as handed down through initiation.<sup>379</sup> Amongst them *dhikr* carries the greatest emphasis and is performed with secret formulae. Emphasis on continuous *dhikr* is usually the norm for all Sufi orders, yet it is never openly specified how this *dhikr* is performed. In order to deduce how the Sufi practice for attaining wilayat and the related formulae for *dhikr* are predominantly Shia, a close look at their nature and procedure would yield the details to the trained eye.

In a strict Shia context, under dissimulation or otherwise, the only recitation which openly mentions the wilayat of Ali by name is a supplication which is attributed by tradition as having been brought down by Gabriel to the Prophet, and is called *Nad-e-Ali* (the Call of Ali). It is supposed to have miraculous powers of healing and spiritual strength.<sup>380</sup> In addition to Shias of all denominations, it is also widely recited by Sufis for spiritual benefit.

In the Quran, the only verses which mention wilayat thoroughly as a concept and hence complement *Nad-e-Ali* are the last three verses of the second chapter *Al-Baqara*, and are collectively called the *Ayat al-Kursi* (2:255-257), or the Verse of the Throne (of God). Sunni Muslims only consider verse 255 of the second chapter as the *Ayat al-Kursi*, while

---

<sup>379</sup>In the event of the success of the given *dhikr* exercise, the striving Sufi's wilayat is handed down by Ali personally, from whom it emanates.

<sup>380</sup>Due to the exoteric nature of the Iranian state during its development, the compilers of its doctrines and writers of hadith, including Majlisi, excluded the mention of *Nad-e-Ali* as a supplication considered divinely revealed from prescribed text books, for reasons of appeasing the Sunni World, as *Nad-e-Ali* is not included in the Quran. The supplication is systematically excluded from *Mafatih al-Jinan* (consult bibliography), the common prescriptive textbook for Twelver Shiism after Majlisi's *Bihar al-Amwar*. This was when the new Iranian Shia state was lobbying for acceptance as a fifth school of jurisprudence within the Muslim world. Yet unofficially the supplication is still considered as being divinely revealed by most Shia Muslims.

for Twelvers and Ismailis, three verses i.e. 255-257 are considered as the complete *Ayat al-Kursi*.<sup>381</sup> The second verse i.e. 256, starts by saying, ‘*La ikraha fi al-din*,’ or ‘There is no compulsion in religion.’ By the Shia, this wording is seen as the reason for the conscious omission of the last two *Ayat al-Kursi* verses by the Sunni schools, so as to legitimise their orthodoxy by force. The mention of wilayat is in third verse i.e. 257, which begins with, ‘*Allahu Wali allidhina aminu ukhrijuhum min al-Zhulmati ila al-Nur*,’ or, ‘And Allah, (He) takes out who is His vice-regent (wali) from the Darkness into the Light.’ This third verse of the Shia version of the *Ayat al-Kursi*, i.e. (2:257) is the part of the Quran which is considered a complete generic mention of wilayat. Of course the Shia schools consider it as specifically being the Quranic reference to the wilayat of Ali, and the concept of wilayat being Shia in nature because of it, as it is absent from the Sunni version of the *Ayat al-Kursi*; while Shia Sufis regard it as the dhikr through the continuous recitation of which they may gain wilayat and become a wali. This version of *Ayat al-Kursi* is also reckoned to have the same miraculous powers as *Nad-e-Ali*. Yet, Shia Sufis also use the abridged (Sunni) version, i.e. verse 255 only, for other purposes in their dhikr formulae, while adhering to the concept of wilayat as outlined in all three verses. This is because the beginning of verse 255, ‘*Allahu la ilaha illa Hu, al-Hayyu al-Qayyumu..*,’ or ‘Allah there is no God but Him, the Living, the all Powerful..,’ is supposed to be a secret *Ism al-Adham*, or Divine Name, which was used by many Prophets (including Jesus) to raise the dead. It is connected to the Sun and its exaltation (in Aries) and hence in our context also to Nauroz.<sup>382</sup>

Within extant Islamic Scripture there is no other generic mention of wilayat in a Quranic verse than in the *Ayat al-Kursi*, or any direct mention of the wilayat of Ali by comparison, in any supplication other than the *Nad-e-Ali*.<sup>383</sup> These are the only two texts readily used as references for the explanation of the concept of wilayat within the fold of

---

<sup>381</sup> This is a commonly known difference in the interpretation and use of the *Ayat al-Kursi* verses among Shia and Sunni Muslims.

<sup>382</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>383</sup> These facts are well known to scholars who have a practitioner’s knowledge of Islamic Scripture and its use in Shiism and Sufism. Hitherto, no comprehensive book has been written on the attainment of wilayat through the wilayat of Ali, as conceived and understood through Islamic Scripture; with Sufi studies, especially in terms of the Shia context, being a very young field. Yet the concept and its understanding as explained here would not be lost upon acclaimed Western scholars of Sufism.

Shia Islam. It would not have been any different a thousand years ago in the khanqahs of Sufi orders who were Shia-Isma'ili in nature, and for other Muslims who believed in wilayat.

For the purpose of identifying how these two separate texts which refer to wilayat complement each other, and identify with Ghadir-Khumm and Nauroz, and as a result, have come to be regarded equivalently in the Shia-Sufi mindset, a slight trajectory into the process of their associated dhikr formula needs to be made. This is the conversion of Islamic Scripture to numbers and its reduction to pre-established planetary consonants. It is important to emphasise that this process of reducing Scripture through numerology to numerical sums and astrological entities or planets is an across the board procedure for the secret dhikr formulae which are so indispensable to all Sufism, and are handed down on initiation. In addition, it is probably also the hitherto academically undiscovered framework employed for writing the Isma'ili ginans, which are however composed at a much higher level of proficiency in the related science, as used for other languages. The whole process is derived from the science of *jafr* or an Islamic cabbala attributed to Ali in agreement by most Shia and Sufi Muslims.

Al-Biruni, who mentions most of the individual components of this science in an astrological context in the book *Kitab al-Tafhim*, frequently used in this chapter, is further ascribed two lost works on magic, which were in all probability focused on *jafr*. In terms of Sufi dhikr, the maximisation of the spiritual benefit of both *Nad-e-Ali* and *Ayat al-Kursi* is gained by obtaining their full gaemetric sum from the Arabic *abjad*,<sup>384</sup> and reciting them that many times within a given period of days, usually the lunar month. This is done within the hour, and in the elemental direction of the planet with which they

---

<sup>384</sup> The system has its roots in the Hebrew abjad used in cabbala where each alphabet is ascribed a number, the addition of which gives the numerological equivalent of Scripture. In the Shia tradition, Ali is attributed to having regularised the sounds of the ancient Hebrew system and its 22 letters, to fit in with the new Arabic (Yemeni) script, its 28 letters and the Quran. This invariably also constitutes the major part of the secret teaching/dhikr formulae which Ali is supposed to have passed down to his disciples according to Sufism. Even Sunni historians of Arabic generally ascribe the first writing of its grammar, its regularisation, and the adaptation of the ancient Yemeni script for its twenty eight letters to Ali. The cabbala is alleged to work better in Arabic as each of its 28 letters/sounds corresponds directly to one of the twenty eight stages of the moon in a lunar month.

tally, to obtain full effect. The gaemetric<sup>385</sup> sum is literally the addition of all the numbers in a certain text, except the Arabic prefix (Al ا ل) and the repeated double letters (marked by " \_ on top, counted as a single letter instead), which gives the desired number of recitations or dhikr. The addition of this gaemetric sum total, down to a singular digit through numerological reduction, gives its planetary consonant.<sup>386</sup> The full process is described in the article mentioned in the previous footnote. Hence the dhikr is to be associated with that planet and to be performed in the hour(s) of that planet each day, with its associated element and direction, and other paraphernalia. Aside from the article mentioned above, the process is also explained for the most part in the landmark book *Qanun-e-Islami* or Islam in India [sic]<sup>387</sup> published in 1834, which is a study of Islamic practices in Hyderabad, a princely state under the British Crown in India with a large Shia elite.

In terms of primary sources, Al-Biruni's *Kitab al-Ta'fhim/Elements of Astrology* describes the procedure of obtaining the gaemetric sum of any Arabic text through the abjad for use in astrology thoroughly enough to be able to conclude that this was standard procedure in many Islamic sciences, not just in magic or jafr,<sup>388</sup> and that his lost books on magic would indeed have been about jafr. In an interesting practice he also ascribes the actual signs of the Zodiac number consonants as done for the planets in jafr,<sup>389</sup> for use in astrology and astronomy.

---

<sup>385</sup> The word 'gaemetric' derives from *gaemetria*, which is the term in English used to describe the process of representing alphabets through numbers, i.e. (Christian) Cabbala, as first done in the Greek for the Bible.

<sup>386</sup> The process is explained in detail in this unpublished article by the late Seth Carney, Lecturer in Islamic Studies at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, and PhD candidate at SOAS; thesis submitted in 2007 but remained unexamined due to his death on 8 July 2007: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/outreach/index.cfm?navid=3306>. While describing the process accurately, the only problem with Seth Carney's article is the lack of primary source references on the procedure and its components, and wrong pre-established planetary consonants to which the recitation is to be reduced. The correct versions are available in an intact form in Al-Biruni's book, which also establishes an historic period context for the process in terms of this thesis.

<sup>387</sup> The original translation for the book is erroneous; its correct title would be *The law of Islam*.

<sup>388</sup> Al-Biruni 1029: pp.40-42. See section 116, 'Arabic letters for numerals;,' section 117 (p.41) describes the ease of writing astrological and astronomical tables through them, section 118 (p.42) gives some rules about combing letters from the abjad to represent big numbers to avoid mistakes, which is in an inverse process of the dhikr formulae.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, section 119, p.43, in 'Further Use for Letters.'

Units	ا	ب	ج	د	هـ	و	ز	ح	ط	ط	ح	ز	و	هـ	د	ج	ب	ا
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	ب	ا	ج	د	هـ	و	ز	ح	ط
Tens	ع	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ي	ر	ع	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ي	ر
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	ر	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ي	ر	ق
Hundreds	س	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع	ف	ق	ك	س	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع	ف	ق	ك
	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	ك	ل	م	ن	ي	ر	ق	ك

23. The Arabic abjad according to Al-Biruni<sup>390</sup>

In addition to the details of the abjad and its use in a dual manner for both the representation of text as numbers, and the converse for marginalising error while writing very big numbers in astrological tables, Al-Biruni describes in detail the whole process for calculating the hours of the day and night which are ruled in succession by the seven planets. This is of primary importance in any Sufi dhikr to maximise its benefit by performing it in the hour of the day which is ruled by the planet with which the dhikr is associated. The presence of this procedure in a ten-century old manuscript is very important to establish its historical context and authenticity.

Day of 16 equal hours (40 gharis) = 240° equinoct.										Night of 8 equal hours (20 gharis) = 120°														
4a.m.	6a.m.	12noon				4p.m.	8p.m.				12midnight				4a.m.									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
ق	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ي	ر	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ي	ر	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ي	ر	ق	ك
Day of 12 unequal hours. 1/12th are of day = 20°												Night of 12 unequal hours 1/12th are of night = 10°												

Diagram of equal and unequal hours with the Lords of the hours for a Sunday.

24. The hours of the day and night as ruled by the planets according to Al-Biruni<sup>391</sup>

In essence, all the details of the formula for a planetary Sufi dhikr exist in Al-Biruni's book. The only missing components are the planetary consonants, i.e. a single digit number associated to each planet to which the sum of Scripture after reduction would correspond. These are found (yet with flaws) in Seth Carney's article mentioned on the last page. The most acceptable planetary consonants available, where each of the seven major planets governing the seven days of the week are ascribed numbers through clear

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, p.41.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, p.237. The process of the calculation of the exact length of the planetary hours for each day and night is mentioned in the accompanying text.

conceptual reasoning, are found in a book published by an Indian Sufi shaykh in 1907, who headed his own Sufi order. In this book, every number from one to ten, necessarily every number after reduction to a single digit has a clear tallying planet. According to the author his sources were old manuscripts that were researched by him in the different libraries in the world. The book was translated and published in English in London.

Saturn . . . . .	8
Jupiter . . . . .	3
Mars . . . . .	9
The Sun . . . . .	4 and 1
Venus . . . . .	6
Mercury . . . . .	5
The Moon . . . . .	7 and 2

25. Planetary consonants<sup>392</sup>

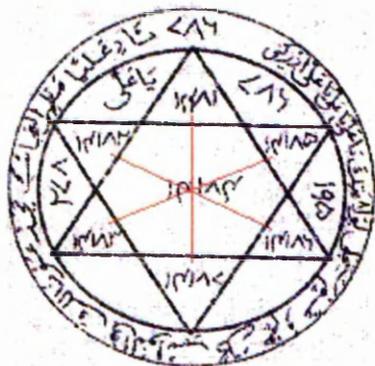
As opposed to popular contemporary Sufi manuals the credibility of which would have been suspect in this thesis,<sup>393</sup> the secret dhikr formula as pieced together through the above primary sources and research-acceptable secondary texts makes more than enough academic sense of the procedure. The rest of the framework is considerably easier to understand, as the gaemetric sum for any one name of God, verse of the Quran or supplication would be an unchanging quantity, whenever their numerical equivalents are calculated through the abjad.

<sup>392</sup> Ahmad, 1907, pp.26-27. He mentions the details and sources for these fixed planetary consonants on pp. 23-25, and the process of the numerical reduction of any number to a single digit or planet is described on p. 24. The reasoning for how and why dual numbers are ascribed to the Sun and the Moon are given on p. 2 and p.32; this is because they play a primordial part in the earth's affairs more than all other planets, as they rule the day and night respectively. A connected reason is the solar and lunar nature of the Arabic alphabet. The calculations for the planetary hours for each day (in the same format given in Al-Biruni's book) are found on p. 29.

<sup>393</sup> This is because there are no reliable surviving primary texts which describe this subject holistically. If any did exist (as reported for Al-Biruni), they have been lost or hidden away. In Sufism these would have been very limited in number due to the secret nature of Sufi initiation and the transfer of this knowledge orally for the purpose of safeguarding it.

## Application of the Dhikr Formulae to *Nad-e-Ali* and *Ayat al-Kursi*

Returning to the subject of wilayat in Sufism, an application of the above deduced jafr dhikr formula to the generic mention of this concept in the *Ayat al-Kursi* from the Quran, or to its specific reference as the wilayat of Ali, as stated in the supplication of *Nad-e-Ali*, would give a concise reference point for their metaphysical equivalence. This would clarify how the two were regarded as the same in terms of ascetic practice by Shia-Ismailis, as they are inclined to look to the hidden meanings of Scripture as a mainstay of their faith; who in our case were living under dissimulation as Suhrawardi Sufis in the Indus Valley. The explanation would also give a wider clarification for the way the historic relationship between Sufism and Shiism has been traditionally misunderstood in Western academia as a third religion between the Shia and the Sunni. With some exceptions, this has been the outright rejection of Sufism as Shiism under dissimulation. The fixed abjad sums for both the *Ayat al-Kursi* and *Nad-e-Ali* texts would be readily available from any yearly Sufi or jafr manual, or could be calculated manually.



26. A hexagram talisman of the gaemetric sum of the letters of *Nad-e-Ali* through the abjad<sup>394</sup>

The image above is a hexagram contained talismanic representation of the gaemetric sum of *Nad-e-Ali*, which states the wilayat of Ali. It is written after the dhikr for the numerical equivalent of the supplication (i.e. its abjad sum) has been completed within the lunar month, in the hours and the elemental direction of the tallying planet. To obtain the talismanic configuration of an abjad sum for a hexagram, the grand total is divided by

<sup>394</sup> 'Lauh-e- Nad-e-Ali,' by S. Nadeem Haidar Zaidi, pp.21-22 in *Imamia Jantari* (2005) Lahore: Ifikhar Book Depot.

three, and in that it has to be a sum divisible by three to fit inside a hexagram. The remainder (14,184 in this case, image above) is put in the centre of the hexagram, with numbers receding this remainder by one written on the three left flanks until the topmost tip is reached, and successively increasing it by one on the right flanks, until the last tip of the hexagram at the bottom is reached and filled. The talisman is written immediately after the last day's recitation of the dhikr, usually the last day of the lunar month, which completes the total number of recitations in the original abjad sum. A hexagram talisman can be checked for mistakes by the addition of any of the three numbers on it in a straight line in any one direction (as shown in red, above); these are always the same after addition and will yield the original abjad value.

As such in plate 26, from top to bottom  $14181+14184+14187 = 42552$ , from top left to bottom right  $14182+14184+14186=42552$ , and from top right to bottom left  $14185+14184+14183 = 42552$ . Hence the grand total in both diagonals and the top down direction, i.e. 42552, is the abjad sum for *Nad-e-Ali*. It can be reduced down according to the dhikr formula to establish its ruling planet, which would be  $4+2+5+5+2 = 6+12 = 6+3 = 9$ . This shows that the *Nad-e-Ali* supplication corresponds with Mars according to the consonants given in plate 25 (above), and is to be performed according to the time and elemental preconditions for that planet. Mars was in exaltation in the astrological chart of Ghadir-Khumm and its related Nauroz (plates 20 & 21), while the Sun was in the sign ruled by Mars, i.e. Aries. This Mars Sun nexus would be a very figurative icon in the *Batini*<sup>395</sup> mindset for any astrological framework used by them to represent Ghadir-Khumm and the wilayat of Ali with the Persian New Year.

A comparison of the above with the planetary ruler for *Ayat al-Kursi*, deduced with the same dhikr formula, can easily determine whether or not it also configures within this Mars and Sun framework, and if it can be used for the same purpose as the *Nad-e-Ali* when exercising dissimulation. The abjad value total of *Ayat al-Kursi* can be calculated manually, or be referenced from an existing text. The gaemetric sum of the counted

---

<sup>395</sup> *Batini* was a common term used for Ismailis in medieval Islam which means those inclined to reading hidden meanings in Scripture.

letters of the Shia-Ismaili version of Ayat al-Kursi i.e. verses 255-257, of the second Chapter *al-Baqara*, through the abjad is 14067.<sup>396</sup> When added down through numerological reduction this would give  $1+4+0+6+7 = 5+13 = 5+4 = 9$ , which would also make it a Mars dhikr, according to the planetary consonants given in plate 25. The reduced single digit number from the abjad sum of any Scriptural text obtained in this manner necessarily defines the ruling planet of that text, and one needs to envisage this in the same manner plants and metals are ascribed planetary rulership in medical astrology and in alchemy.

In essence, when considered in the context of wilayat in the *Batini* mindset, the *Ayat al-Kursi* verses with their Mars rulership allegorically correspond to the actual event of the declaration of the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir-Khumm, where Mars was in exaltation. This is in addition to *Ayat al-Kursi* equating with the *Nad-e-Ali* supplication both conceptually and through its planetary rulership anyway, since both are Mars dhikrs. Therefore, within the astrological framework discovered in this thesis, used by both Twelver Shiism and Ismailism to regard Ghadir-Khumm and Nauroz equivalently; the both the Scriptural texts employed by Shias and Sufis to represent wilayat eventually go back to the wilayat of Ali.

In light of the above, it is easy to see how the *Ayat al-Kursi* verses were actually used under dissimulation for a Shia representation of wilayat, with the jafr based dhikr framework employed for their recitation and inscription. This framework, when coupled with the common iconographic and architectural evidence uncovered for the Ismaili da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley, serves as a very strong argument for the Ismaili credentials of the latter. The wilayat of Ali and its related astrological framework, whether applied to Quranic verses for its representation in the guise of a Sufi dhikr, or to iconography and architecture, remains the mainstay of this brand of Shia Sufism. In addition to being the primary base for the arrangement of Ismaili religious ceremonies celebrating Chaharshamba-yi Suri and hence Ghadir with the local calendar

---

<sup>396</sup> 'Lauh-e- Ayat al-Kursi,' S. Mumtaz Hussain Bukhari, pp. 17-18 in *Imamia Jantari* ( 2005) Lahore: Iftikhar Book Depot.

at the shrine of Shams, the recurrence of the wilayat of Ali astrological framework can be seen throughout the Suhrawardi Sufi monuments of this thesis.

Under the presumption of dissimulation, this framework could take many different forms of expression, as seen in the case of the Sufi dhikr. But its prescription in an anti-Shia environment would always be in a hidden format, especially in commonly used documents at the Suhrawardi khanqahs. Interestingly, the progenitor and main figurehead of the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley, Baha al-din Zakariya, has prescribed the *Ayat al-Kursi* dhikr above all others to the followers of his khanqah, in the primary text *Al-Awrad*, written by him.<sup>397</sup> This text has already been explored for its hidden theological Shia leanings.<sup>398</sup> According to Zakariya, continuous recitation of *Ayat al-Kursi* between all prescribed prayers is the best way of attaining the highest level of spiritual proficiency,<sup>399</sup> stating that it has more benefits than any other dhikr. It would be needless to assert that he was not living in an environment (under the Ghorid governor's mandate from Uch) where he could have prescribed *Nad-e-Ali* instead, as this would have cost him his life as well as those of his khanqah disciples. The Suhrawardi expression of this knot between *Ayat al-Kursi* and the wilayat of Ali is seen further in the Rukn-e-Alam monument, which is traced back to Zakariya in this thesis, where it is represented in architecture.

#### Ghadir-Khumm and Architecture: The Representation of the Concept of the Wilayat of Ali through Astrological Symbolism: The Case of Fatimid Cairo

After the explanation of the Shia-Ismaili concept of the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir-Khumm through its planetary rulerships, and the subsequent interconnection established between this event and Scripture via the astrological framework used for accommodating it within the Persian New Year, a look at the actual monuments of this thesis will follow naturally.

---

<sup>397</sup> Zakariya does not specifically state which version is to be recited, yet this dhikr prescription by him is asserted in light of his hidden Shia leanings and established Ismaili connections to Shams in this thesis.

<sup>398</sup> See Chapter One, 'Religious and Sectarian Affiliations of Zakariya.'

<sup>399</sup> Zakariya 1262, p.88ff, 'Spiritual Proficiency' which Zakariya does not openly state to be wilayat, but *Ayat al-Kursi* should make its context very clear in light of the above discussion.

These buildings will give a much greater insight into the extended dissimulative use of this process in the mindset of the secretly Ismaili Suhrawardi Sufi Order.

In section seven of his book *Zaad al-Ma'ad*, where Majlisi deals specifically with Nauroz as a separate category, he reports on the authority of the sixth Imam, Jafar al-Sadiq, that it was the date on which the foundations of the first Ka'aba were laid,<sup>400</sup> essentially when its construction was ritually started. It is important to note the way in which the statement is understood in the allegory of the Shia tradition, not as being the one single day of Nauroz; but consolidated through the astrological framework we have experienced for the whole Nauroz nexus. Hence this would be one day in the Nauroz period/month, when the Sun is in exaltation in the first house Aries, and would correspond with one of the major Nauroz festivals. The whole period of the Sun's exaltation (i.e. Persian month *Farvadin* or in the Jalali Calendar literally 'Hamal' or Aries) was traditionally considered to have very auspicious resonances for the representation of divine events, and the undertaking or starting of something new. In addition, both the words for 'day' or 'date' were used interchangeably in old Arabic and Persian astrology, and were always references to a specific date (in this case in the Nauroz astrological season/the month Farvadin), not necessarily the one certain day of Nauroz.<sup>401</sup>

This concept of the ritual beginning of monumental construction through planetary exaltation, as reported for the Ka'aba on Nauroz by Majlisi, finds actual correspondence in recorded Ismaili history in the construction of the Fatimid city of Cairo, also known as 'the City of Mars.' The architectural historian Creswell, relying on primary sources in his book *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt A.D. 939-1711* comments on the events and preparations surrounding the laying of the foundations of the city. He relates the pre-excavation of the trenches for the ritual beginning of the construction of the city of Cairo

---

<sup>400</sup> Majlisi, 1845, pp.557-559.

<sup>401</sup> In Arabic, date is *tarikh*, day is *yaum*. The word *yaum* is always used for signifying the actual date in astrology, in addition to the day. An example would be '*Ayyam al-Sharf al-Shams*', or 'The days of the exaltation of the Sun,' which are always stated with the word for the day i.e. *yaum*, and never the word *tarikh*. The same follows in Persian.

at the auspicious moment when Mars was in actual exaltation (at 28 degrees Capricorn), for the mortar to be thrown in by the workmen and construction to begin.<sup>402</sup>

The report by Creswell carries great weight in Western academic tradition as being the first and perhaps the only one which describes the process of the creation of divine architecture in Shia Islam through planetary exaltations from primary sources. In that it sets precedence and serves as a great asset and a tool of legitimacy for the methodology employed in decoding the different buildings of this thesis. He analyses the sources objectively and also has his own Orientalist critique of the subject. He criticises the main authority who has dealt with the subject, al-Maqrizi, of being inconsistent in his report about the original name of the city, by stating that it took the name al-Qahira four years after the beginning of ritual construction, when the ruling Fatimid caliph, al-Mu'izz finally settled in the city, and that it was called al-Mansuriya before that. Seven lines later, al-Maqrizi gives the impression that the city was called al-Qahira from its inception, with reference to the astrologers who deduced the auspicious monument for the exaltation of Mars and the beginning of ritual construction.<sup>403</sup>

Creswell's analysis of this subject through a comparison of primary historical sources lends a great deal of credence to the astrology and jafr framework we have explored in this chapter till now, in terms of its application to our own monuments, especially in an Ismaili context. It has been mentioned by some scholars that the name al-Qahira derives from one of the ninety-nine Names of God in Arabic, i.e. 'al-Qahhar' (the Vanquisher), with an un-deduced metaphysical connection between the name al-Qahar and the planet Mars; and it is hence that Cairo was known as the City of Mars. If we are to use our framework to find the abjad gaemetric sum for the name al-Qahhar, and then ascertain its planetary rulership through numerological reduction, we could resolve the mystery here. This will also yield a legitimate template based on the work of a great architectural historian like Creswell, for decoding other monuments built in this way. The abjad sum for Qahhar (omitting the Arabic prefix 'al' and counting the repeating letters as singular

---

<sup>402</sup> Creswell 1978, vol. 1, p.23. This reference by Creswell is from Maqrizi, p.377, vol. 2 (MS), 19ff.

<sup>403</sup> Creswell describes another historian, Ibn Dumaq, as being very clear about the name al-Qahira being associated to astrologers and the beginning of ritual construction: Creswell 1978, vol. 1, p.23.

in the addition, these are standard jafir rules) is  $ق + ه + ا + ج$ , which is  $100+5+1+200$ . This equals 306, the reduction of which yields 9, the planetary consonant for Mars. Thus, the city does indeed take its name from al-Qahhar or for that purpose Mars, which could only logically have been ascribed to it when its planned ritual construction began at the exaltation of Mars. Hence the process does have a very clear antecedent in Ismailism, for correlating Scripture to an event or deed through planetary exaltation, or more specifically for connecting *Ayat al-Kursi* to the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir; in addition to its use for creating divine architecture.

On a more scientific note, Al-Biruni gives a more detailed insight into this process of the auspicious beginnings of events according to their ruling planets, and the related construction of buildings, in his book *Kitab al-Ta'fih/Elements of Astrology*. The book states the general purpose ascribed to each planet's nature, which can be used (as in the case of Cairo) for maximising physical strength and the purpose of construction of a monument built under its rulership. For Cairo, it would account for the purpose of the general vanquishing of enemies that the expanding Fatimid Empire sought to achieve on the basis of its Ismaili beliefs, with the exaltation of Mars, which is the war planet, in addition to being a testament to the Shia belief of the wilayat of Ali as declared at Ghadir.

After arriving at a consensus between ancient traditions, Al-Biruni ascribes planetary rulerships to different kinds of buildings, with temples generally and Zoroastrian fire temples specifically being ruled by Mars,<sup>404</sup> and indirectly mentions their ritual construction as best starting when the said planet was in exaltation. He states that the Lord of the Hour (ruling planet/exaltation) for a place or building cannot be correctly deduced unless the accurate time for the beginning of construction is known, or even a religious ceremony associated with the foundation of a city, in which case the horoscope chart will yield the ruling planet. He goes on to state, however, that the process (in terms of scientific inquiry) is not applicable to natural phenomena like rivers and streams, as no concrete evidence for the beginning of the flowing of water in them is available.<sup>405</sup>

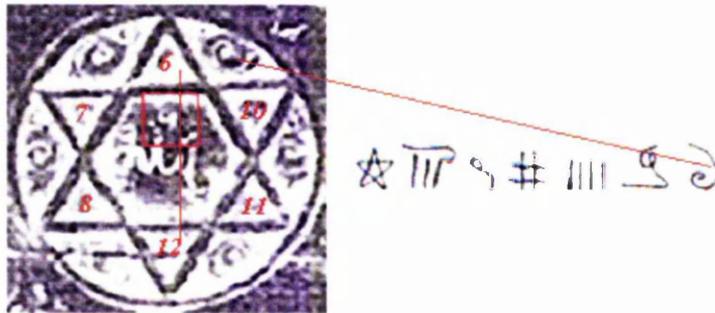
---

<sup>404</sup> Al-Biruni 1029: p.242.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*, p.239.

## The Wilayat of Ali as a building, the case of Shah Rukn-e-Alam

From the primary sources evidence examined by Creswell, as well as Al-Biruni's book, it would seem that if certain buildings were envisaged as divine events and constructed employing the exaltations of their ruling planets, the architects would leave behind signs showing the beginning of ritual construction. This could be through symbols for what the monument represented religiously, especially in a context of dissimulation. The monument which has most of its symbols intact from this thesis is that of Shah Rukn-e-Alam, which has also been shown to predate back to his predecessor Baha al-din Zakariya. In terms of signs, the *mihrab* or Mecca direction marker with its astrological symbols would be the most likely object to yield something signifying the beginning of ritual construction similar to the Cairo report, and verified as a process by Al-Biruni.



27. The Rukn-e-Alam mihrab with the recreated numbers (left), and the Seal of Solomon with its seven symbols for the seven days of the week and the seven planets, starting with the pentagram for the Sunday, on the right; the symbol for Saturn is on the far right

Due to the age of the Rukn-e-Alam building most of its iconography had worn off, but the right flanking hexagram of the mihrab had the number 9 written in the middle (above, encircled in red) in an older photograph, until it was removed during a recent restoration. If the lost numerical configuration is to be recreated from this photograph, .i.e. 9, with reference to the *Nad-e-Ali* hexagram inscription explored previously (plate 26), it would yield the configuration in the format above (plate 27, recreated numbers in red). In essence, all the numbers in any one straight line should add up to the original

inscription. Hence  $6+9+12 = 27$ , or  $7+9+11 = 27$ , or,  $8+9+10 = 27$ , all of which reduce to 9. The number suggests that the monument was constructed in the exaltation of Mars and under its rulership, in the astrological format employed for Fatimid Cairo. This Shia-Ismaili connection here is reinforced by the fact that the monument bears hidden Shia symbolism on its upper floors.<sup>406</sup>



28. The Rukn-e-Alam mihrab frame with its *Ayat al-Kursi* detail (left inset). The band runs around the whole mihrab

In addition, the mihrab has *Ayat al-Kursi* inscribed around it and had doors on it which could be locked to conceal it.<sup>407</sup> The use of *Ayat al-Kursi*, as we have already seen in this context, signifies the wilayat of Ali. In addition, there are two west-looking *Ayat al-Kursi* panels which serve as secondary *qibla* or Mecca markers, for use when the mihrab was locked up.<sup>408</sup> The use of *Ayat al-Kursi* in a Mars context in a Sufi shrine, when the ritual creation of the building may also have been begun in its exaltation, shows a clear representation of the concept of the wilayat of Ali as a monument. Combined with the

<sup>406</sup> For details of hidden Shia symbols see Chapter Five, plate 69.

<sup>407</sup> For details on the use of this unorthodox mihrab see *ibid.*, 'The Mihrab.'

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*, 'The Interior.'

hidden Shia symbolism on the monument, and the hidden Ismailism of the Suhrawardi Sufi personalities related to the building, the evidence speaks for itself.

A still closer look will yield even more details about the use of *Ayat al-Kursi* to represent the actual wilayat of Ali at Ghadir-Khumm under dissimulation in this phenomenal building, and serve as a testimony to the equivalent regard shown to *Nad-e-Ali* and *Ayat al-Kursi* by Shia Sufis for signifying the concept of wilayat. In plate 27, in the six outer houses formed between the six sides of the hexagram and its inscribing circle, we can clearly see the symbol 'ذ'. When compared with the correlating seven symbols for the planets in the Seal of Solomon in the same image, we can see Saturn corresponding to 'ذ' as the last or seventh planet.<sup>409</sup>

The planetary symbol and the ruling number from the hexagram inscription (i.e. 9 after reduction) collectively show that the inscription is a Saturn and Mars combination. Now if the number 27, which is the basic abjad sum for the inscription before reduction, is to be interpreted in a Saturn context, it would literally mean 27 degrees of Saturn, or 27 degrees Capricorn (the sign ruled by Saturn), which is the sign for the exaltation of Mars. Thus the inscription shows that the Rukn-e-Alam building was ritually started when the planet Mars was in exaltation at exactly 27 degrees Capricorn (perhaps with the ritual pre-carving of the mihrab inscriptions, and the laying of the foundations). The *Ayat al-Kursi* was definitely inscribed around the mihrab to represent its hidden Shia-Ismaili credentials through the wilayat of Ali, along with the Shia symbolism on the upper stories.

According to Al-Biruni, the exaltation of Mars is at 28 degrees of Capricorn, and the previous astrological charts which deal with Ghadir-Khumm and its Nauroz connectivity, also show the planet to be in a similar position.<sup>410</sup> The symbolism on the Rukn-e-Alam

---

<sup>409</sup> For details on the Seal of Solomon, its explanation in this context and its relation to the seven planets and associated names of God, see *ibid*, 'The Mihrab.'

<sup>410</sup> The reason the building was not started at exactly 28 degrees Capricorn was most probably to begin ritual construction on a Tuesday (which may incidentally have fallen before the 28 degree mark), the day of Mars. Such a beginning would give the event/building a double Mars rulership. The planetary rulerships of the days of the week are given on p.165 of Al-Biruni's book. An additional reason could be to make sure

mihrab clearly shows that the monument was constructed along the lines described by Creswell for Fatimid Cairo, in the exaltation of Mars, which in the event of either of these cases is only possible in the exaltation of that planet in the sign of Capricorn. In addition, the Rukn-e-Alam monument gives a clearer picture for the beginning of ritual construction through the symbols on its mihrab, something that can be researched in the future for other Ismaili monuments, including Cairo.<sup>411</sup>

The process of construction employed in the Rukn-e-Alam monument yields a few interesting permutations for the use of the Ghadir/wilayat phenomenon for the creation of buildings. The first is that the wilayat of Ali can be represented in a number of ways, either through the application of Scripture to monuments, which is solely through the Mars exaltation period, in essence through the *Ayat al-Kursi* or *Nad-e-Ali*. The second manner is the beginning of ritual construction of a monument complex exactly at Nauroz itself, as mentioned conceptually by Majlisi in his hadith report about the foundations of the Ka'aba being laid at Nauroz, when the Sun enters Aries. This technique is purely astrological, without the application of Scripture to the building as seen in the case of Cairo or Rukn-e-Alam, for giving it a magical quality. The second method is what emerges from the examination of the Uch Suhrawardi monuments below. This is in addition to the ceremonies at the shrine of Shams, which yielded the original framework employing this process; through the astrological disposition of the Sun in the first house of Aries i.e. Mars. The fixed denominator to these different representations is the basic Shia-Ismaili belief of Ali's wilayat at Ghadir in the astrological context of Mars, or of Mars and the Sun; which is also complemented by other festivals in the Nauroz period, for which the authors always left hidden signs.

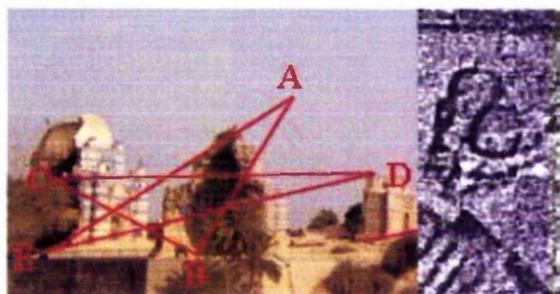
---

the exalting planet was still rising, as astrologically the exaltation strength will start to fall when the planet passes the 28 degrees mark, although it is in exaltation for the whole of the sign of Capricorn, as mentioned by Al-Biruni: Al-Biruni 1029, p.258.

<sup>411</sup> The Al-Hakim mosque in Cairo is suspected by archaeologists of having similar beginnings.

## Nauroz and the Bibi Jaiwandi Monument Complex

The Uch monuments at the Bibi Jaiwandi site are dealt with in Chapter Six, but a brief look at the planetary talismanic symbols discovered on site during the research trip will show the interpretation in architecture of the above mentioned Sun and Mars nexus representing the Ghadir and Nauroz connection very clearly.



29. Left, Bibi Jaiwandi complex site plan as the pentagram symbol for the Sun; right, old tile from the Bibi Jaiwandi monument (C) carrying the symbol for Mars



30. The seven talismanic symbols for the seven planets in the Seal of Solomon, with the pentagram as that of the Sun (left encircled) and the one for Mars (right encircled)

The symbols compared in the plates above clearly show a representation of Nauroz in the Bibi Jaiwandi monument complex, with the pentagram site plan and the talismanic symbol for Mars in plate 29 collectively signifying the exaltation of the Sun in the sphere of Mars, i.e. Aries. In the context of the secretly Ismaili Suhrawardi Order, the only metaphysical basis for such a representation of Nauroz is the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir-Khum.<sup>412</sup> This certain Sun and Mars configuration, while lacking a clear numerical inscription like in Rukn-e-Alam, still suggests that the complex was started somewhere in the Nauroz period, as was the norm for such buildings. Technically, this could be any

<sup>412</sup>The pentagram at Bibi Jaiwandi further testifies to the Panjatan in the Shia-Ismaili format, for details see Chapter Six, 'Similarity between Hidden Shia Symbolism at the Bibi Jaiwandi Complex and Rukn-e-Alam.'

auspicious moment the Sun remained in the sign of Aries, prior to its actual exaltation at 19 degrees, after which the exaltation strength starts falling.<sup>413</sup> Yet for practical purposes, in a Ghadir–Khummm and wilayat of Ali context, the symbols signify the beginning of ritual construction at the exact onset of the spring equinox, when the Sun enters Aries at 0 degrees.<sup>414</sup>

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Angels	Rḡḡā'il	Djibrā'il	Samsamā'il	Mikā'il	Sarafā'il	ʿAnīā'il	Kasfā'il
Djinn <sup>(222)</sup>	Muḡhib	Murrah	Aḡmar	Barqān	Šamhūrīš	Abiaḡ	Meimūn
Planet	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
Letters <sup>(223)</sup>	ف	ج	ش	ث	ظ	خ	ذ
Names of God <sup>(224)</sup>	فرد	جبار	شكور	ثابت	ظهير	خير	ذكي
Sex <sup>(224)</sup>	mascul. <sup>(225)</sup>	fem. <sup>(225)</sup>	mascul.	mascul. with men, fem. with women	mascul.	femin.	mascul.
Character <sup>(226)</sup>	hot and dry	cold and moist	hot and dry	varying	hot and moist	cold and dry	cold and moist
Minerals	gold	silver	iron <sup>(227)</sup>	mercury	tin	red copper <sup>(228)</sup>	plumb
Prophet <sup>(229)</sup>	Jesus	David	Solomon	Jacob	Adam	Muḡammad	Moses
Heaven <sup>(230)</sup>	4th	1st	5th	2nd	6th	3rd	7th

31. An Islamic astrological chart used for maximising planetary benefits for use in alchemy<sup>415</sup>

The chart in plate 31 systematically looks at the days of the week in terms of their ruling planets, associated names of God and Prophets, angels and metals, amongst other attributes cited. It follows the days of the week in natural progression starting on a Sunday, like the symbols on the Seal of Solomon. The first such surviving charts date from the *Ikhwan al-Safa* (Brotherhood of Purity) epistles that were touched upon in the introductory chapters, some of which dealt with disparate scientific topics like jafr and alchemy. The epistles are attributed to a secret organisation of scholars from the Shia (i.e. tenth) century in Basra, Iraq, agued by some to be Ismaili.<sup>416</sup> For us the most important planetary attribute available from the chart is that of the associated Prophets, which

<sup>413</sup> For planetary exaltations and strengths see Al-Biruni 1029, p.258.

<sup>414</sup> This would be for the natural preference of having the Sun as close as possible to its disposition in the actual Ghadir-Khummm chart, i.e. at 23 degrees Pisces, where the pre-Nauroz Chaharshamba-yi Suri festival corresponded with it.

<sup>415</sup> Savage-Smith 2004, p.171.

<sup>416</sup> For details see Ikhwan al-Safa (1957) *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa*, 4 volumes, Bayrut.

shows a certain religion associated to each planet within the mindset of medieval Ismaili thought. This correlation plays a great role in decoding the multilayered symbolism of the Uch monuments which represents different religions. All the represented religions in Uch were made to correspond to the Ghadir-Khumm and wilayat of Ali nexus through Nauroz, through the astrological framework we have examined previously, i.e. the Sun and Mars nexus. In essence, the multi-religious symbolism at Uch is what constituted the Satpanth or the True Path of medieval Ismailism, which is in turn traceable back to the ceremonies at Shams's shrine.

### Representation of Multiple Religious Identities within the Ismaili Satpanth

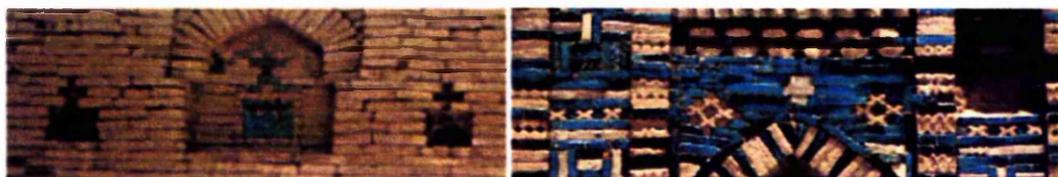
The thorough decoding of multiple religious identities as represented through symbols in Uch is reserved for Chapter Six, as are the details about the part these symbols played within the ceremonial and burial beliefs of the Satpanth. Here it will suffice to explain the procedure of this astrological representation in light of the alchemy chart in plate 31. This will also help to explain how actual religious symbols (as opposed to the pure planetary symbols from the Seal of Solomon) can signify the beginning of ritual construction, in the absence of numerical iconography.



32. A comparison of the Bibi Jaiwandi complex icons, a) Baha al-Halim Cross niche, b) Surkhposh Cross niche, c) Bibi Jaiwandi Star of David, d) Baha al-Halim Star of David

The image above shows the more easily recognisable religious symbols that are present on the three surviving monuments of the Bibi Jaiwandi complex at Uch and its adjoining khanqah. The images clearly show Latin Crosses and the Star of David hexagram, which

are to be found in repeated succession on every monument. In this complex, they are always arranged to the order of the hexagram being represented on the outside, and the Cross niches on the interior, with a depressed area for ceremonial candles, and can only signify Judaism and Christianity. If we are to tally the associated Prophets of the said religions with the alchemy chart in plate 31, we would get Mars and the Sun, i.e. Nauroz.<sup>417</sup>



33. Lal Mohra, a) interior mihrab Cross niches on Tomb B, b) entrance hexagrams on Tomb D

The field research for the thesis was able to identify seven sites called Uch in modern day Pakistan related to the Ismaili da'wa, of which some still bear surviving monuments.<sup>418</sup> Plate 33 shows the same format repeated at the site of the Lal Mohra complex associated to one of the seven Uches, with hexagrams on the exterior (entrance) and depressed ceremonial Cross niches (in this case on the mihrab) inside.<sup>419</sup> This signifies a homogenous process of ritual construction based around Nauroz for all the (surviving) Uch monuments, as represented purely through religious icons.

It is much easier to deduce the date for an historic event associated to a prophet or religion when represented with a religious icon than it is for a purely magical talismanic symbol from the Seal of Solomon, as the latter would not yield anything except the ruling planet when unaccompanied with numerical inscriptions. In essence, this second process would be in the exact likeness of the wilayat of Ali representation found at Rukn-e-Alam,

<sup>417</sup> Monday is associated with the Prophet David who is also Judaic, yet due to the temple configuration of the Bibi Jaiwandi complex, which is obviously what it has been designed as, it carries the Mars planetary association through Solomon. Al-Biruni ascribes a Mars rulership to all temples and fire temples. In essence, these monuments seem to be attempts to recreate a Temple of Solomon configuration according to the Ghadir-Khumm and Nauroz astrological framework.

<sup>418</sup>For the seven Uches see Shackle and Moir 2000, p.204. They are probably related to Shams's da'wa considering its spread and his personality cult.

<sup>419</sup> For details of the seven Uches and the associated surviving buildings, see Chapter Six, 'Suhrawardi Pluralism as Architecture.'

but simpler in its execution. Considering the great synchronicity that exists in the planning and execution of every facet of such buildings, the associated religious symbols should also yield the exact date for the beginning of ritual construction without any numerical representation for the larger Nauroz period.

#### The Exaltation of the Soul of God in Suhrawardi Doctrine, the Crucifixion on Easter Sunday in Farvadin/Nauroz in the Satpanth

If one is to try to decode the Uch monuments for their construction date through extant religious symbols, it would have to be through the crosses present on them, as it is impossible to ascertain the exact date for the hexagram tiles, which lack numerical symbolism. The Star of David hexagrams obviously signify the Temple of Solomon in this process of creation of divine architecture, as can be seen through their correlating prophet, i.e. Solomon, from the alchemy chart in plate 31. Although the construction date for the Temple of Solomon may have been hypothetically available to the Suhrawardi architects in terms of planetary exaltations,<sup>420</sup> any inscriptions dealing with it have been lost along with the inner mihrabs in Uch. Hence, the only other remaining religious icon available for our Sun and Mars nexus is the Cross, which would probably yield a deducible Nauroz period date for the complex's construction, along with the related planetary exaltation. But for this assertion to carry weight, the exact date of the Crucifixion and its place in Ismaili metaphysics and essentially the Satpanth must be established. Omar Khayyam, who had played an important role in the revival of Nauroz ceremonies through his Jalali Calendar, has inferred<sup>421</sup> to the Crucifixion in his text *Nauroz Namah*.

---

<sup>420</sup> This would be in the context of the part the Temple of Solomon plays in the Islamic vision of Divine architecture. As Al-Biruni has given the planetary rulership of Mars to all temples (p.242), and Solomon himself is related to Tuesday i.e. the day of Mars in plate 31, this would certainly be Mars's exaltation.

<sup>421</sup> The word 'inferred' is used as the belief in orthodox Islam, based on the strict reading of the Quran, is about Jesus neither being murdered nor crucified. Indeed in the case of Ismailism this would mean that the issue of the Crucifixion and it actually having taken place is more a matter of *tafsir* or interpretation, whereby Ismailism and the Shia tradition generally, are inclined to looking for hidden meanings in scripture, where the event can actually be envisaged esoterically.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,	بستون که جهان را نوحشی دستریست .
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,	هر ریدد نئی در سوی نحر احوست .
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough	بر هر شاخی منوع موسی دستریست .
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires,	در هر نفی خروش عیسی غیبت .

34. Omar Khayyam's *Ruba'yi* on Nauroz <sup>422</sup>

The text in Omar Khayyam's poem in plate 34 specifically refers to the Rising of Christ (obviously on Easter Sunday) in a Nauroz context. Since Sunday is also the day associated with Christ from the alchemy table in plate 31, a deduction of the correct date for the Crucifixion should yield the desired planetary dispositions, signifying the exact time for the beginning of ritual construction in Uch, in terms of the exalting planet, i.e. the Sun. Moreover, Omar Khayyam's poem also complements Shia hadith reports about events related to the life of Moses as corresponding to Nauroz. Majlisi states in the Nauroz section of his book on the authority of Jafar al-Sadiq that the parting of the Red Sea by Moses also happened on that day.<sup>423</sup> This collective mention of the Rising of Christ and supernatural events connected to Moses in a Nauroz context by Omar Khayyam suggest that he had full knowledge of the Shia basis to the celebration of Nauroz in Islam through the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir and other related events. Indeed this may have been the sole conceptual basis for his Jalali Calendar, and was the most plausible reason for Hasan bin Sabbah's great dislike for him and his Sunni Seljuk patrons, who would have been seen as usurping Shia-Isma'ili metaphysical concepts to legitimise their rule and cultural authority in Iran.

There has not been a lot of work done to establish the exact date of the Crucifixion. The two most commonly accepted dates are Friday, 7 April 30 A.D., and Friday, 3 April 33 A.D., but both these dates are disputed by astrologers for the citation of the wrong year. Sir Isaac Newton (d.1733) was the first to derive an exact date for the Crucifixion by

<sup>422</sup> Khayyam. O, Minovi. M. 1933, p.1. The English translation in plate 34, which seems faulty, is actually a quatrain by Fitzgerald inspired by two separate Omar Khayyam ruba'iyis on Nauroz, in that they are Fitzgerald's own innovation. Minovi who has used Fitzgerald's English quatrain to end his edition of the *Nauroz Namah* (after the index) fails to point this out, but has cited the two relevant ruba'iyis in the beginning (of the Persian). For a complete clarification see Appendix 4, p. 325.

<sup>423</sup> Majlisi 1845, p.557.

calculating when the crescent of the new moon was first visible (in the month of the Crucifixion, which was said to be 14 Nisan of the Judean calendar), in order to correlate the Judean and Julian calendars. It has been known that Newton preferred the date of Friday 23 April 34 A.D. to the previous two, but his reasons have apparently been forgotten.<sup>424</sup>

Newton's preferred year seems to be correct, as he tallied it with Scripture to ascertain it, but his suggested date of 23 April seems too far in the month (of Nisan) to complement Majlisi or Omar Khayyam's account of Nauroz, which falls in the Persian month of Farvadin (ends 20 April). This was probably the result of an unavoidable error due to faulty reports on the original date, Newton's subsequent manual calculations for the new moon crescent 1700 years in retrospect, and the correlation of the Judean and Julian calendars. A combination of Newton's preferred year of 34 A.D., with the previously reported date of Friday 7 April as the day of the Crucifixion, would give us 9 April 34 A.D. as the correct date for Easter Sunday.<sup>425</sup>

---

<sup>424</sup>Newton's Date for the Crucifixion,' by John Pratt, pp.301-304 in *Quarterly Journal of Royal Astronomical Society* (Sept. 1991), London: Blackwell Publishing Limited.

<sup>425</sup> The astrological software used in this thesis has shown the 3 April 33 A.D. Crucifixion date to be entirely faulty as it was a Sunday and not be a Friday.



As such, in terms of Islamic esoteric sciences there should be clear antecedents and planetary exaltations ascribed to every event and Prophet without fail. The proponents of the True Path would envisage this to be the plan of God himself, testifying to the Sacrifice of his Prophet (Jesus) in this case, and that the planetary exaltations were at no event accidental. Since Jesus is associated with the Sun, and the wilayat of Ali is at Nauroz with the Sun entering the sign of its exaltation, the Shia-Ismaili 'True Path' allegory for the exaltation of Jesus is the natural exaltation of the Sun in Aries at its prescribed point, i.e. 19 degrees.

Hence, in the Satpanth the Islamic belief of Christ being raised to Heaven should automatically correspond with this day of the exact exaltation of the Sun, in the larger Nauroz period in the Persian month of Farvadin. It does not matter if the date used in plate 35, carefully deduced from various reports on the Crucifixion after various combinations, is rejected by scholars of Christianity. The date correctly represents Christ's Ascension to Heaven in the doctrinal methodology of Shia-Ismaili metaphysics that we are dealing with, which we have examined to be coherent without fail. In medieval Ismaili metaphysics, which subsequently developed into the Satpanth under Pir Shams, the 'Cross of Light' is a multi-faceted ethereal event which encompasses many divine secrets in its being.<sup>428</sup> It echoed Jesus's earthly Crucifixion in the Heavens.

It must be remembered that the multilayered astrological and religious symbolism of the Satpanth is envisaged like a tapestry, where things fall into a coherent design at many levels. One icon may represent many different interrelated concepts, which in turn complements others. Thus the exaltation of Jesus at 19 degrees Aries is also associated with the number of letters in the *Bismillah* (which are 19 in Arabic), which in turn is associated with Ali.<sup>429</sup> In addition the Panjatan, or Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and

---

<sup>428</sup> For details of the Cross of Light see Corbin 1983 pp. 62 & 149. The clear presence of the Cross of Light in Ismaili meta-physics shows that, in opposition to orthodox interpretation, some connection to a crucifixion is indeed envisaged for Jesus in Shia Islam. This also sheds further light on the inference to the matter by Omar Khayyam in his *Nauroz Namah*, see plate 34, p. 161.

<sup>429</sup> For details of Bismillah and its relation to Ali see Chapter Six, 'The Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju Khanqahs.'

Husain have 19 letters between them in the Arabic, equal to Bismillah. In the context of the thesis methodology, Easter in 34 A.D., the year accepted by Newton for the Crucifixion, when enjoined with the Sunday on 9 April as derived from the other two sources, gives the exact Suhrawardi interpretation of the place of Jesus in the religion of the order, i.e. the exaltation of the Sun at 19 degrees Aries. This explains the symbolism of the Latin Crosses present at Uch and the lesser monuments in D.I. Khan, which are in turn inseparable from the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir-Khumm and Nauroz due to their Shia nature.

## Conclusion

The wilayat of Ali and its four levels as explained in the beginning of this chapter are common and indispensable to Ja'fari Shiism, Sufism and the Satpanth. In addition to being the foundation of the Shia-Ismaili concept of imamate, they also form the metaphysical basis for the derivation of spiritual authority in the latter two doctrines. Some extant Twelver Shia literature, although it has been edited over the centuries, mentions the reality of Ali's wilayat as disseminated by him to his two closest disciples, Abu Dharr Ghaffari and Salman the Persian. In this private sermon of Ali called *Ma'arifat al-Nurraniyat* or the 'Recognition of Light,' he relates his reality and that of his wilayat to his two disciples as being primordial over all creation and his equality to Muhammad, through being his esoteric other half. In addition Ali also touches on the different levels of his own wilayat in this text,<sup>430</sup> which has been explored further in the recent book *Shiism: Imamate and Wilayat* by Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi. Abu Dharr and Salman (especially the latter) in turn figure in many Sufi spiritual chains which derive spiritual legitimacy from Ali. In addition, in Ja'fari Shiism i.e. the Twelver and Ismaili branches, both personalities are considered near infallible, as the only Muslims who did not lose their faith in real Islam, i.e. the wilayat of Ali after Muhammad. In fact certain Shia hadith mention Salman the Persian as a part of the Ahl al-Bayt in addition to the

---

<sup>430</sup> For the complete sermon see <http://www.hubeali.com/khutbat/The%20Sermon%20of%20Recognition%20of%20Noor.pdf> . Most such sermons are contained in the Nahaj al-Balaghā.

Prophet's own household.<sup>431</sup> In Ismailism this is in turn also connected to the concept of resurrection built around Nauroz which is indelibly linked to the wilayat of Ali.<sup>432</sup> With the clarification on the commonality of the concept of wilayat between Ja'fari Shiism and Sufism, it would be reasonable to argue that all Sufi orders which derived their spiritual authority from Ali, i.e. from his wilayat, are inherently Shia in nature, and most may have turned another way after extended periods of dissimulation or under Sunni patronage; this would of course exclude the Naqshbandi Order and its spiritual descent from Abu Bakr. The use of this Ja'fari concept of the primordial wilayat of Ali as the basis for formulation of the Satpanth is the first thing that is visible from the evidence uncovered in the thesis, which is then applied through its Nauroz based astrological framework to accommodate other religions into its fold. In this, the Satpanth is not envisaged as the divine religion which stops being Shia-Ismaili in its transcendentalism; it is in fact the Divine Religion which is indelibly Shia-Ismaili in nature, and has primordality over all the other religions which fit into it.

Prior to this thesis the Satpanth had not been academically understood for any practicality of belief, and is generally envisaged as a hotchpotch religion concocted by Ismaili da'is from Khurasan for religious practicality in India. Previously the most comprehensive work describing Satpanth religiosity has been done by the Russian scholar on Ismailism Wladimir Ivanow in his often quoted monograph titled 'Satpanth.' In it he describes it as 'The True Path (to Salvation), the name of a sect of Islam, forming a kind of transition from ordinary Islamic doctrine of the Shi'ite type, to Hinduism.' According to him its Shia component is represented by the Nizari Khoja followers of the Aga Khan and its Hindu element by the Satpanthis, i.e. the remnants of the original belief system in present day Gujrat, who adhere more to its Hindu elements.<sup>433</sup> His Satpanth study in a near

---

<sup>431</sup> These hadith are common to both Twelver Shiism and Ismailism, and Salman's infallibility is also the theme of metaphysics of the Ikhwan al-Safa, some of which became the Satpanth under Shams. For Salman's place in this hierarchy, and the relative hadith see Corbin 1986, p.176. The hadith states (Prophet) 'Salman proceeds from me and I from Salman.'

<sup>432</sup> For the Nauroz connection to Salman and hence the wilayat of Ali, as mentioned in the Ikhwan al-Safa epistles see *Ibid.* pp.165 & 176-180.

<sup>433</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/Source/0723/07231a.html>. For these differences in the Satpanth from what we have discovered in the thesis see 'Satpanth,' by Ivanow in *Collectanea*, Vol. 1, (Leiden 1948), p.31 ff. The document is available in the above web link.

contemporary setting shows the polarity between the two segments of the Indian Ismaili population, part of which became attached to the Aga Khan line on its migration to India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This subsequently became more Muslim, while those who remained steadfast to the old traditions strayed deeper into its Indian components. From our discoveries we can clearly see that the original Satpanth set up by Shams was envisaged to be far more than Ivanow recorded in his work. Of course as the Ismaili da'wa fell apart so did the Satpanth framework and the remainder which reached the first Aga Khan on his migration to India would have seemed incoherently Hindu to him at that point, and later to Ivanow as well.

This multi-faith representation within the wilayat of Ali and Nauroz nexus seems to be a very conscious application of the metaphysical concepts of early Ismailism and especially the Ikhwan al-Safa, to religious identities in the Indo-Iranian world, so as to propound the Satpanth. Although the Ikhwan al-Safa has yet to be proved in a complete Ismaili light in academia, some metaphysical connection to Ismailism can be seen in the likeness of the Suhrawardi Order.<sup>434</sup> The only person with the spiritual kudos to have achieved this is Shams. Nauroz symbolism is also present in the feasts of the Ikhwan, who used to ritually arrange their meetings, like Shams's ceremonies or the ritual construction of the Uch buildings, specifically when the Sun entered the sign of Ram (Aries), amongst others.<sup>435</sup>

An Ikhwan al-Safa manual quote reads, 'To shun no science, scorn no book, nor cling fanatically to one single creed. For its own creed encompasses all the others and comprehends all the sciences generally. This creed is the consideration of all existing things, both sensible and intelligible, from beginning to end, whether hidden or overt, manifest or obscure. In so far as they all derive from a single principle, a single cause, a single world, and a single Soul.'<sup>436</sup>

A conscious effort was made in the early Fatimid era to regard other monotheistic religions within the fold of Islam on a conceptual basis. The Fatimids, in line with heir

---

<sup>434</sup> For the Ismaili connections to Ikhwan al-Safa see Netton (1980) pp.95 ff.

<sup>435</sup> Nasr 1964, p.34.

<sup>436</sup> *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* 1957 (reprint), Risala IV, p. 52.

cyclical view of the sacred history of mankind, made intentional attempts to accommodate major religions like Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Manichaeism in their Gnostic system of thought.<sup>437</sup> In light of our exegesis this Fatimid signification must have been inside the wilayat of Ali, yet this is something that has not been identified in modern academia. The same is the appears to be the case with the Ikhwan al-Safa, who nevertheless may have been more inclined to actual multi-faith ceremonial, as commented by Nasr. The Indus valley, through Shams's spiritual genius in the post Mongol era, sees a coherent multi-religious doctrine and ceremonial for the first time, which is aimed at rediscovering the lost primordial Divine Religion based on the wilayat of Ali. This was subsequently disseminated into the Suhrawardi Order, who in turn adapted it even further by applying it to both monument construction and burial practices. A burial archetype common to the shrines of Ismaili missionaries and the Suhrawardi Order has been discovered, which in the case of the latter takes the amalgamative wilayat based religious trends of the Satpanth to a new level.

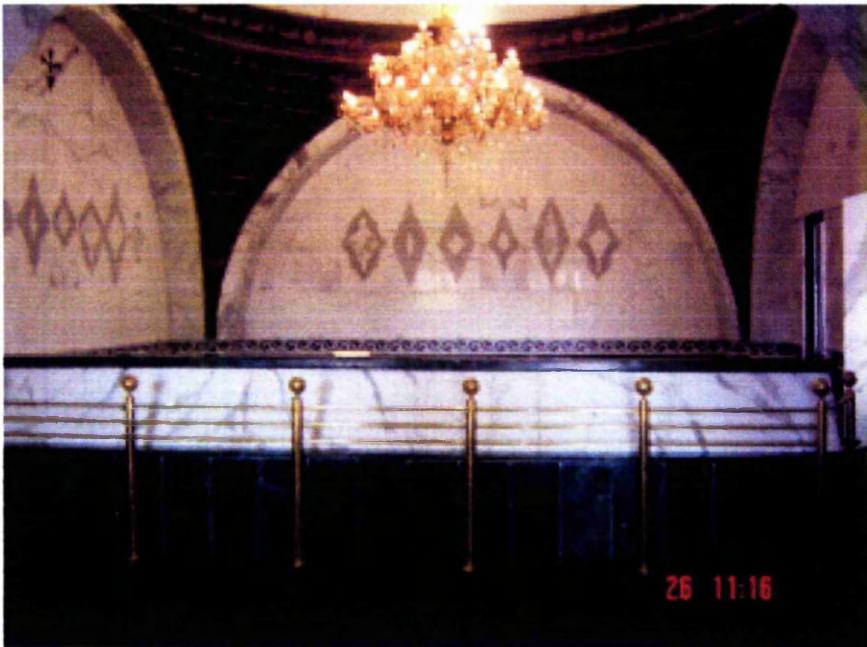
---

<sup>437</sup> Daftary 1996, p.14.

## Chapter Five: The Multan Monuments

### Entrance, axiality and the Qibla direction in Islamic burial

The common shrine archetype discovered for the Suhrawardi shrines in Pakistan and those related to Shams and his Ismaili missionary descendants is distinguished by a characteristic departure from traditional Islamic monuments for the same era. This is in terms of the axial arrangement of the plan and the various connected entrances which are highly unorthodox. But to clarify this difference from the conventional model, which in our case seems to be a conscious effort to accommodate multi-faith ceremonial which is necessarily based on the ideals of the Satpanth, a brief conjecture into established theses on orthodox Islamic burial must be made. Axiality in Islamic burial traditions is the subject of research by Delbert Highlands, who was this author's professor when he was studying architecture. Highlands's research explores and highlights the symbolic incorporation of the orthodox Sunni burial axis, which is based on the Mecca direction, into mosque design, and subsequently into the orthodox expansionist mindset. He has observed this phenomenon in buildings as, a) always facing Mecca upon entrance to a burial chamber or mosque, which represents the centrality of the Mecca direction in Islam; and b) facing in exactly the opposite direction, or away from Mecca, upon leaving the monument, which signifies the expansion of (Sunni) Islam as emanating from Mecca and the mosque itself, to eventually take over the whole world. In Salafist Saudi Arabia, and other orthodox Muslim countries, this emphasis is achieved by the Muslims entering the mosque from an entrance located on the right hand side of the Mecca direction facade, while leaving from an adjacent exit on the left in the same facade. Even if there are secondary entrances, as happens in modern mosques which accommodate tens of thousands or more people in congregation, the central emphasis is always on the Mecca direction.



36. The grave of Habil with its medieval Islamic era shrine in Damascus. The photograph is taken from the only (Mecca facing, in this case south) entrance. Upon entrance the visitor duly faces Mecca in the envisaged orthodox manner, with the grave at a tangent to the main entrance axis

To prove the hypothesis Highlands has compared this phenomenon with the opposite signification of the Jewish mindset as reflected in synagogues, where upon entrance the person always faces away from Jerusalem, which signifies the Diaspora, but while being seated he has to turn around and face Jerusalem (and the Wall). After congregation he leaves from an exit facing Jerusalem in the same facade, which thus signifies the final place of return for all Jews as represented in a building.<sup>438</sup> This thesis makes for a very interesting reading with reference to the orientation of our Suhrawardi monuments, which have multiple entrances, but whose main ones never face Mecca, i.e. west in this region, but south.

---

<sup>438</sup> The late Delbert Highlands was Professor Emeritus, Carnegie Mellon University; member of the Historians for Islamic Art; and former visiting professor at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. Highland's thesis on axuality in Islamic monument building was a composite part of his 'Islamic Architecture' course, and the ideas used in final year architectural design studios in the above university.

## The Shams Monument and Sakhi Sarwar

The use of the shrine of Shams as the first one in this chapter serves a dual purpose. In addition to its design conforming to the archetypical Suhrawardi monument, the comparative analysis with historical photographs and field observation will show the same for Sakhi Sarwar's monument, with whom Shams's Chetir ceremonies are also tied. There is only one catch in this scenario, Sakhi Sarwar was the first Suhrawardi in the Indus Valley before the Zakariya era, but Shams was not a Suhrawardi, although his descendants did become Suhrawardis openly in the Uch period. The question arises, even though Shams's own monument is reckoned to have been constructed later, or rather added to by his grandson Sadr al-din, was Shams responsible for the multi-entranced archetypical lodge/khanqah, which flowered into the Suhrawardi shrine archetype? The metaphysical evidence certainly suggests that Shams's Chetir ceremonies and mass following involving locals would necessitate a building type where different religions would come into a single space. This would be through separate entrances according to the prescribed directionality of their own faiths, so as not to disturb that of others.

The exact date of the first monument over Sakhi Sarwar's grave is not known, yet it is most plausible that if Shams did set up the Chetir ceremonies, which he most likely did, he must have also arranged for a structure, which would obviously have accommodated them at Sakhi Sarwar. Hence Sakhi Sarwar along with Shams's own shrine, albeit with its later additions, will prove in terms of architectural evidence what the Chetir ceremonies at these shrines already do metaphysically, i.e. show that the common Ismaili Suhrawardi shrine archetype only served to accommodate the multi-faith ceremonial of the Satpanth for its various considerations of ritual purity and entrance. In essence this also proves the hidden Ismaili credentials of the Suhrawardi Order through architecture, which is a very tangible medium unlike metaphysical concepts, from its earliest days. There is no other established precedent in terms of doctrine for the existence of such a building type anywhere in Islamic world, except through the Satpanth as developed from earlier Ismaili metaphysics, and as explained in the last chapter. Perhaps the use of the buildings

differed slightly in the case of the Zakariya clan, yet the basis for this idea is something that can only originate with Shams.

The same use surely must have been the case for Shams's monument itself, as his shrine historically had the biggest following among the non-Muslims masses of all the ascetics and Sufis in the Multan-Uch region. Shams's religious clout amongst all faiths is a subject of Ismaili ginans, and is also conceded by many contemporary Pakistani historians, who while adhering to the State's view on Sufism credit him with fame that spread like wildfire in the region irrespective of creed.<sup>439</sup> The view of older British sources, unwittingly endorsed by Pakistani historians, states that Pir Shams became very popular on account of his mixing with the people, and adopting their customs, religious traditions and practices.<sup>440</sup> These reports and contemplation by traditional historians on the reasons for his popularity must be understood in their capacity as people who did not understand the metaphysical framework of the Satpanth propagated by Pir Shams, which has become evident thorough this thesis.

Often cited Ismaili sources and literature mention Shams's successful establishment of 84 lodges from Kashmir to the lower Multan region, with appointment of deputies who conducted religious ceremonies and collected tithes.<sup>441</sup> One can be certain that at least some of the ceremonies performed in these lodges might have been the same as the surviving ones discovered at his shrine and at Sakhi Sarwar. This would also be an added reason for his fame amongst the non-Muslims, who would have seen a likeness of their own religious motifs in the Shia-Ismaili ceremonies. The simultaneous use of a monument by Islamic and different non-Islamic denominations can be ritually achieved in an undisturbed format through the use of the above mentioned prescribed entrances. Each denomination would both enter and leave the building from the same exit, necessarily the one that corresponds to the characteristic direction of that faith, e.g. North for Hinduism, while maintaining the overall ritual purity of space as signified through

---

<sup>439</sup> Khan 1983, p.204

<sup>440</sup> Khan 1983, p.205: Maclagon, Sir Edward, *vide, The Census Report Of India: Punjab, 1891, p. 77*

<sup>441</sup> Zawahir Noorally, *op.cit* 84 ff.; W. Ivanow, *Collections*, I; idem, *Ismaili Literature: The Rise of the Fatimids*

axis and direction for all the belief systems involved.<sup>442</sup> This use of certain entrances by certain denominations would be mainly dependant on the eschatology of their burial practices, hence corresponding with Highlands's ingenious thesis about burial symbolism figuring predominantly in monument orientation in Islam. In the case of the Suhrawardi Order these details will be explored in Chapter Six for the Uch monuments, where the buildings are in a relatively undisturbed state.

The combined historical and architectural evidence, especially Shams's setting up 84 lodges to accommodate his Satpanth followers, suggest that the only personality to whom all the pieces of the jigsaw can be tied to is Shams. This is in spite of Shams's own shrine's destruction by fire and subsequent changes in the eighteenth century. The analysis of this chapter will not only demonstrate the archetype as being common to both Ismailism and the Suhrawardi Order in the Multan period, but also give this shrine configuration and its use a greater historical precedence in what is openly an Ismaili context through Shams, considering the weight he carries as being the spearhead of Ismailism in the region. The analysis in addition lends a greater Ismaili colouring to the later shrines of his descendants, which carry the common archetypal configuration with other Suhrawardi monuments in the Uch period.

Even after reconstruction and many changes, the physical design characteristics of Shams's shrine follow the basic Suhrawardi archetype, which are described in detail for Rukn-e-Alam and for other monuments later in Chapter Six; and its remnants are also visible in Sakhi Sarwar's tomb through its surviving southern entrance axis. In the case of Shams, because of frequent redecoration and repairs any esoteric symbolism that may have been present originally is now lost. None could be found on site and the shrine's custodian could not identify any from his lifetime. The first historical reference available for the completion of a major monument over the shrine of Shams is reported to be in 1329, half a century after his death, financed by his grandson Pir Sadr al-din.<sup>443</sup> But this

---

<sup>442</sup> The continued use of the northern entrance strictly by Hindus has been observed by Zawahir Moir in the Ismaili shrines in Gujarat

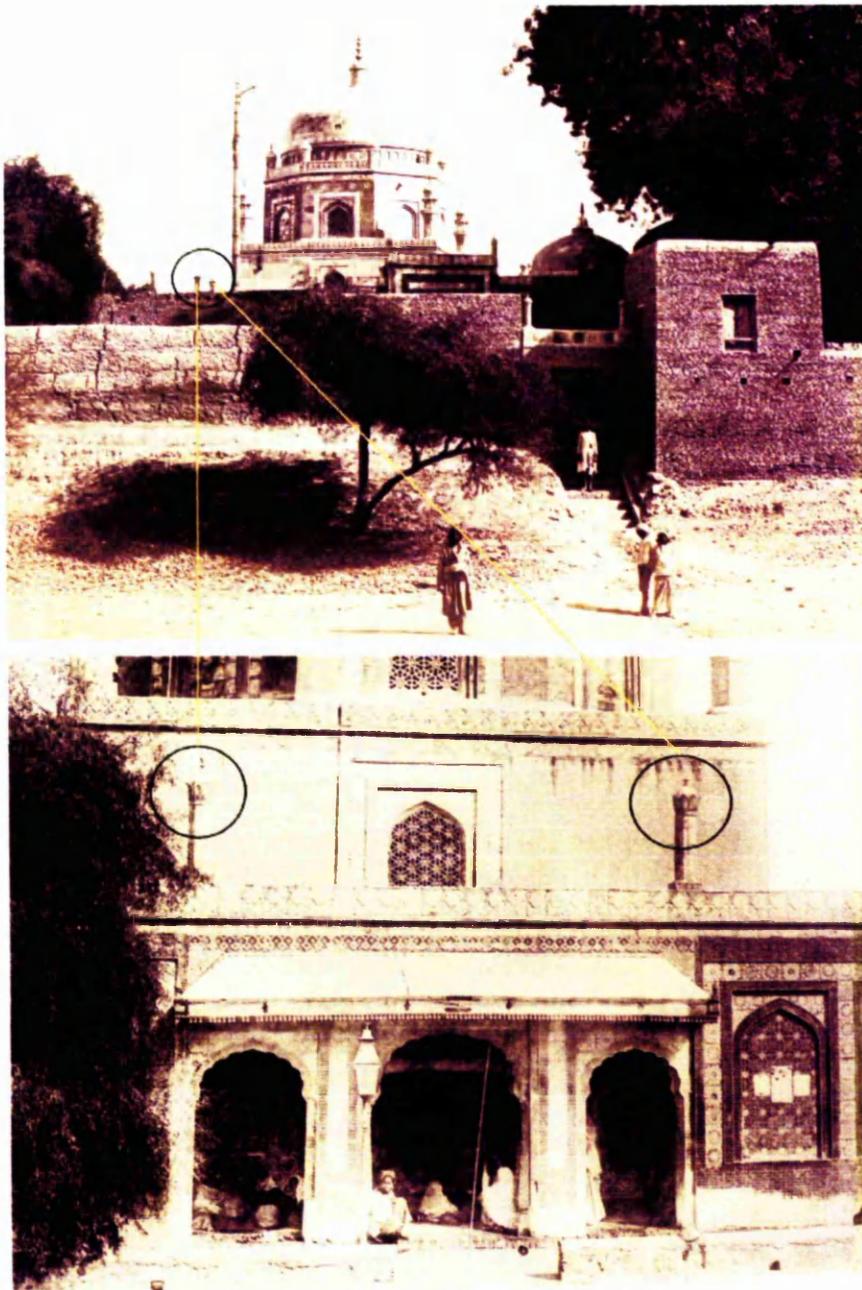
<sup>443</sup> Khan 1983, p.206: Mukham Chand *Tawarikh-e-Zila-e-Multan* p. 45 (a Persian history of Multan from the Saddozai period mid 18<sup>th</sup> century).

does not nullify the pre-existence of a less imposing edifice over the sarcophagus, which must have been present considering Shams's religious clout in the region. The monument is reported to have been rebuilt (or renovated) in 1779 after a fire, by a disciple of the shrine's custodian.<sup>444</sup> This is probably when the original decoration and any hidden symbolism was lost. The author who writes about the reconstruction in the eighteenth century lived through the fire and repair work, but his report seems to suggest that the monument was rebuilt along old lines. This was probably also the case for the first (reported) major construction attributed to Sadr al-din, which must have followed older guidelines to incorporate the pre-existing structure over Shams's grave. This structure would have been his main lodge in Multan which was the centre of the da'wa, which itself must have accumulated a considerable construction profile over the decades as he preached from it. It is almost certain that this lodge would have carried the archetypical entrances, from where they got disseminated to Zakariya half a mile up the road, and then into the Suhrawardi Order.

Due to its history of reconstruction and repair, the original pre-condition of Shams's monument had to be deduced from a comparison of onsite research with historical photographs. This was to ascertain the old archetypical entrance arrangement which had almost become invisible.

---

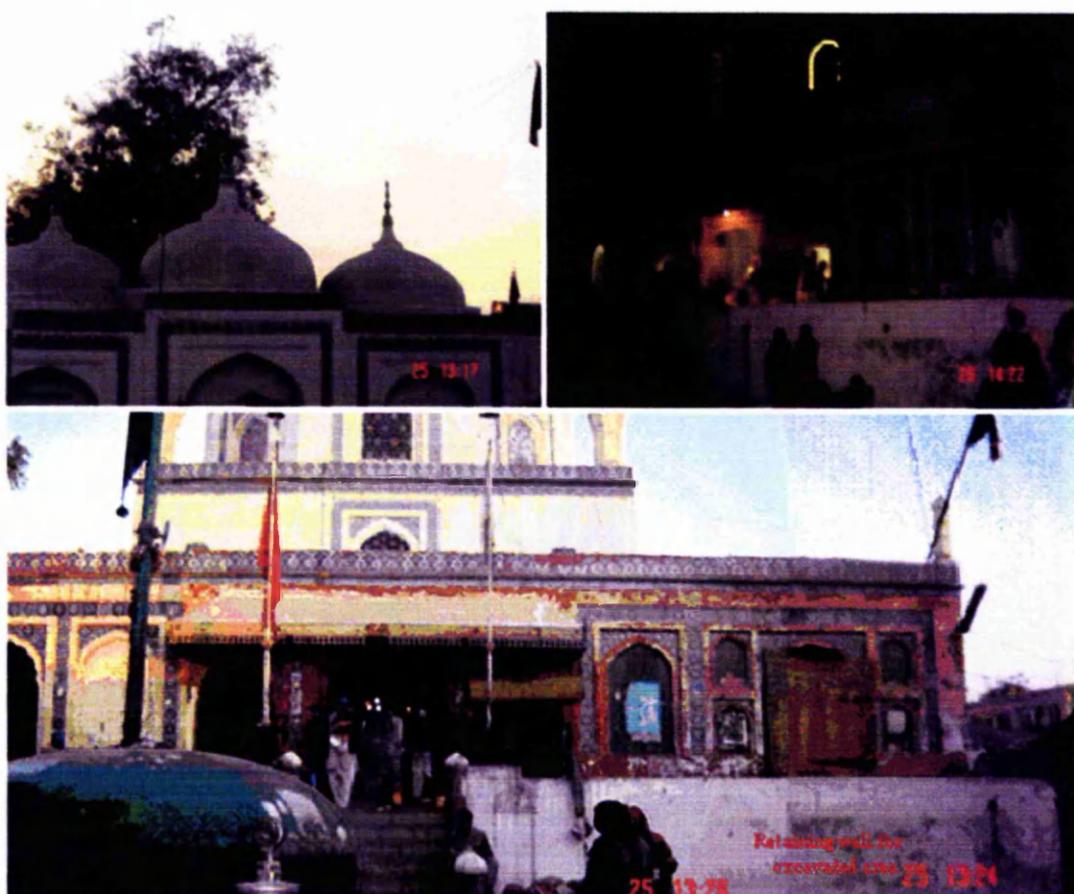
<sup>444</sup> Ibid: this disciple is Mehr Ali, who is the subject of prose and poetry in Panjabi and Saraiki.



37. The shrine of Shams historically. Top, the main complex entrance from the south, the encircled minarets are to the west, notice the dense construction along the southern entrance axis, bottom, the west facade and entrance, and that it does not seem to signify a major entrance, in light of the flat patio area in the foreground without stairs

Historical photographs from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century show that the main entrance to the Shams shrine complex was from the south (plate 37). The image shows a large walled

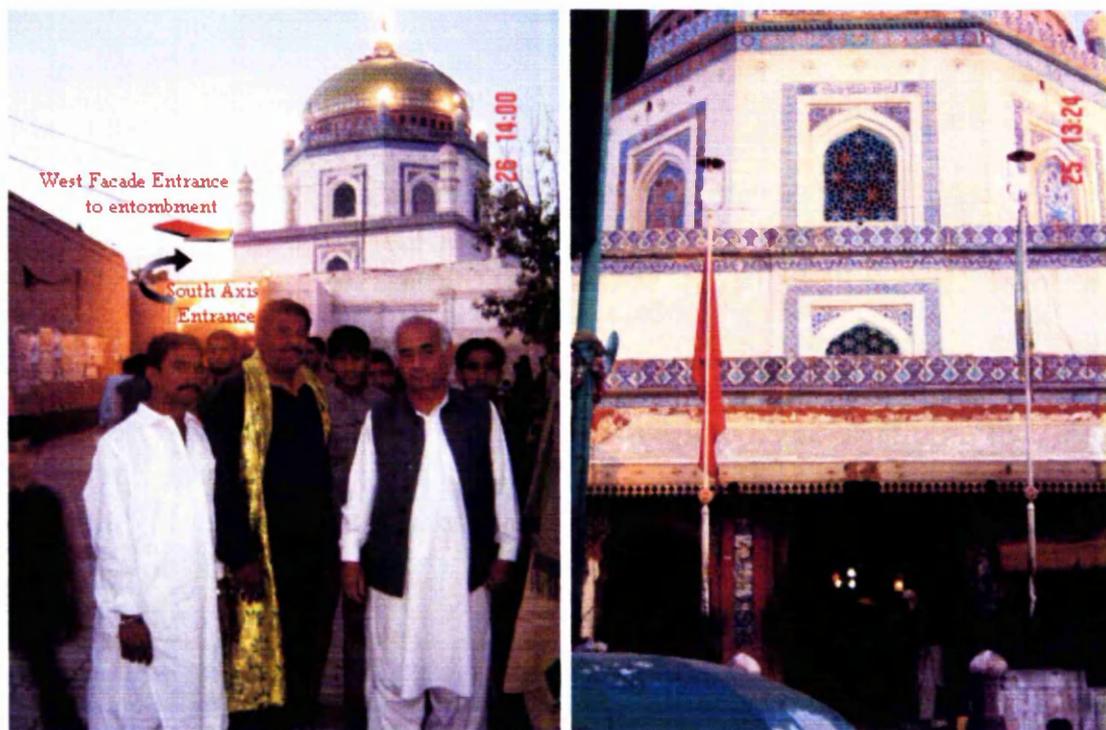
compound with a southern entrance axis; hence the main entrance to the monument itself was in all likelihood also from the south. The sub-minarets on the western (Mecca) wall, (encircled) still survive. They do not show a major entrance on the western facade from the time of the photograph, yet there is an entrance from the west (plate 37, bottom) which should traditionally mark the mihrab. This is probably the result of the fire and reconstruction in 1779, when the original mihrab was lost and a new one not deemed necessary inside an entombment, which is not a place of prayer in orthodox Islam. The fact that this western mihrab wall was not a major entry point even after the fire is testified to by the flat patio area in the foreground (plate 37, bottom).<sup>445</sup>



38. The shrine of Shams contemporaneously. Clockwise from top left, mosque built by the Auqaf at the Shams shrine, it faces west, right, excavation area on west facade where the patio used to be (plate 36), bottom, vista of west facade from the excavated courtyard now used as the common entrance area to both the shrine and the mosque

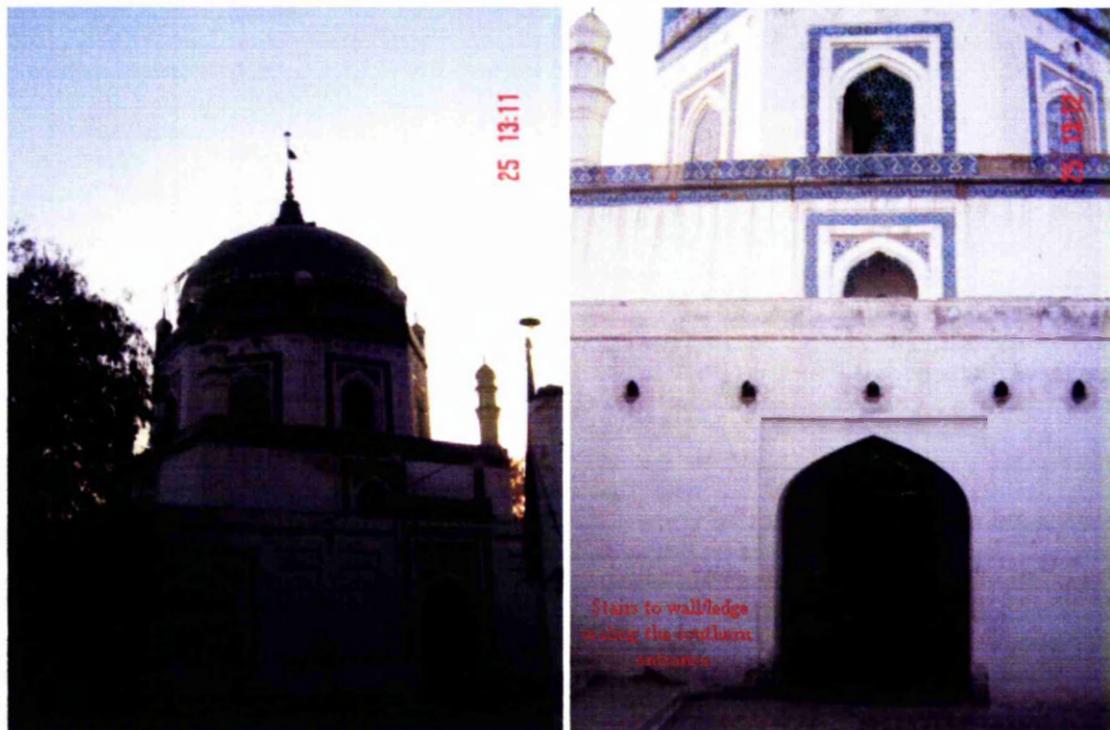
<sup>445</sup> In the Sub-continent the main entrance to a shrine is always accessed through stairs (see plate 38) which lead to a raised platform area which also forms the patio around the whole monument.

The monument has undergone major access changes since the historical photographs in plate 37 were taken. Plate 38 (top left) shows an Auqaf mosque which has been built recently, directly opposite the western facade, with a large excavated courtyard where the patio area used to be. The courtyard has probably been made to provide easier access and a waiting area to large groups of people, but also most certainly to accommodate the Auqaf mosque within the complex; the retaining wall holding back the rest of the monument shows this (plate 38, bottom). The mosque in this context would be looking towards Zakariya's shrine, and in the likeness of other Auqaf mosques it is physically detached from the main shrine. It was occupied by a Sunni Sufi Zikr session at the time of the site visit.



39. Approach to the shrine of Shams. Left, the main southern access to the complex, the main southern entrance to the monument itself is now a blank wall, the arrows show the loop that has to be made into the common courtyard area with the adjoining mosque to enter the entombment itself, right, the western and now main entrance to Shams's tomb, as seen from the Auqaf mosque ablution area across the courtyard

Due to the western entrance being used as the entrance to the shrine, one has to make a loop from the southern compound entrance, through the common excavated courtyard to enter the sarcophagus entombment from the west (see plate 39). In spite of this the main axis of approach and entry to the complex is still from the south (plate 39, left), like at Sakhi Sarwar and other traditional Suhrawardi monuments in the Multan era. The original southern entrance to the building itself should have traditionally been just behind the entrance to the complex (plate 39, left), but is now sealed by a blank wall. If one circles the monument from the inside, through the courtyard area to the rear, one reaches the east facade, steps from which lead to the blank wall which was once the southern entrance (plate 40, below).



40. The shrine of Shams, facade entrances. Left, north facade after circling the shrine from the courtyard area, now sealed, notice the setting Sun on the right, i.e. west, right, the east facade, now sealed, the stairs on the left lead to the blank wall area which was once the southern entrance

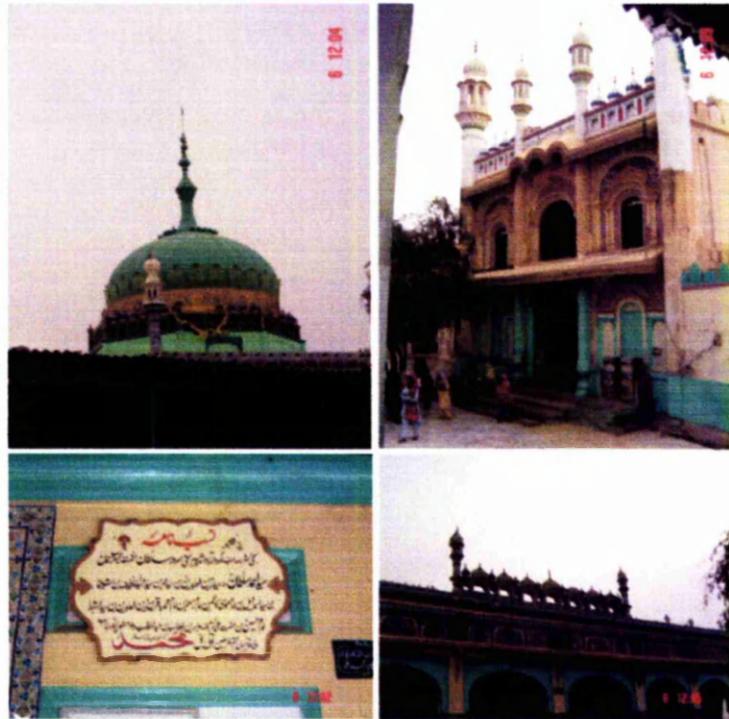
The previous plates confirm the three original entrances, the main southern axis and the re-aligned west (Mecca) facing mihrab area, now used as the entrance, for Shams's

shrine. This is what essentially constitutes what we have come to describe as the Suhrawardi shrine archetype. Ironically, these same details had been lost in the mists of time for the shrine of Shams, who was the architect of the Satpanth, but thanks to site research, historical photographs and the preservation of the major monumental axis to the complex from the south, they have been rediscovered. This process was aided by the rare presence of historical records which show reconstruction. These entrances were invariably used by the different denominations in Shams's congregation at his Multani lodge, for entry into the monument according to their own burial eschatology. In addition, they were probably also used ritually in the ceremonial observations of the various multi-faith ceremonies of the Satpanth. This would be an integral requirement of the Satpanth, and similar provisions were bound to be present in Shams's other lodges as well.

### *Sakhi Sarwar*

The Auqaf department has totally redone the Sakhi Sarwar shrine in recent years, to the extent of the original structure being unrecognizable. No one knows what it looked like originally, since it is located in such a desolate place. There is no surviving pictographic evidence of the monument from the British era, probably due to the area's notorious reputation for banditry. Yet in spite of the Auqaf activity, and any alterations that may have been carried out historically, the shrine still preserves as an original distinguishing feature its main southern approach and entrance axis, which relates it to the other monuments of this thesis. This southern entrance is present for both the complex and the monument itself (plate 41), implying lost Suhrawardi planning ideals at work. Rather in this very early monument, as Sakhi Sarwar's murder by the latter Ghaznavids just predates the Zakariya era, the chances are that the first monument over his grave must also have been set up in that era, with the endorsement of Zakariya, who was the chief Suhrawardi authority in the region. But more importantly since Sakhi Sarwar has its ceremonies tied to Shams, Shams's own hand in any related structure cannot be discounted. What comes to the fore in this architectural scenario again is the implicit Shams and Suhrawardi, i.e. Zakariya nexus. There would be no other way Shams would

be connected to Sakhi Sarwar, in either ceremony or via a related monument, unless Zakariya's tacit support was involved at some level. Nor would Zakariya not be involved in the glorification of the first Suhrawardi martyr of the Indus Valley.



41. Sakhi Sarwar (after recent Auqaf alterations), clockwise from top left, a) view of the dome from the southern approach, from outside the compound/bazaar, b) main southern entrance gate of complex with reshaped (Auqaf) turrets and tapering arch niches, as seen from inside the compound mosque (i.e. from the west), c) sarcophagus chamber with its main southern entrance, d) lineal plaque

Sakhi Sarwar is now a much embellished and gaudy looking building with its recent additions, except it has retained its original floor plan. This is very simple in comparison to the other Suhrawardi buildings and indeed Shams's shrine itself, which was covered with a new monument by his grandson Sadr ald-din, in 1329. The chamber that houses the sarcophagus is a simple rectangle (plate 41, c), with three entrances and a west facing mihrab. In essence it is what Shams's own lodge must have resembled, a simple cube

with its archetypical entrances before the Sadr al-din contributions; or as hypothesised earlier a Buddhist monastery inverted into a building.<sup>446</sup>

Most of the permanent devotees of Sakhi Sarwar, who live in a small settlement around his shrine, are Saraiki speaking Baluch tribesmen and Pashtuns from the adjacent areas. Like in the case of Shams, the visiting devotees are traditionally from the upper Punjab and the Frontier regions, and comprise the inherited congregation of Sakhi Sarwar.<sup>447</sup> But unlike Shams, very few people know of his shrine, and there is no large scale religious activity or visitation outside the festival days. The non-local devotees make it a point to ritually visit his tomb after visiting Shams in Multan, even when the Chetir festival is not being observed. This is the extent of the significance given by the pilgrims to the connection between Sakhi Sarwar and Shams through the Chetir festival. Due to its undisturbed setting, ethnography at the Sakhi Sarwar shrine, albeit when it is a safer place to go to, may well yield much greater details about the subject of the Ismaili da'wa and its connection to Suhrawardi Sufism in the past. Another phenomenal aspect of Sakhi Sarwar which ties him to the Satpanth is that the town is supposed to have been one of the places connected to the birth of Shiva according to local folklore. The town was renamed after its saint, and previous to that it was known as Nigaha or Moqam, a sacred place for Hindus. According to the Hindu mythology, Shiva was born in Moqam and spent his childhood here. This connection with Shiva is something that shows up later in the Uch period with both Shams's descendant Sadr al-din and the Suhrawardi Order, but Sakhi Sarwar and hence Shams are the first physical connections to it through this site.

---

<sup>446</sup> The Buddhist monastery referred to here is the South-west and Central Asian model and not the Indo-Tibetan one. These would be of course on Shams's route to Multan. This type of a Buddhist monastery, along with influences of Sassanid fire temples, is also reckoned to be the inspiration for another characteristic Islamic archetype in this region, i.e. the Four Ivan Mosque Plan, which became a hallmark of the Ghaznavid and Seljuk era, but is instead is solely connected to Sunnism. Here a central domed chamber had four smaller *ivans* or rooms expanding on the central space, carrying the enlarged prayer area, the Mecca entrance and the mihrab. For details on the Four Ivan Mosque Type, and its first emergence under the Ghaznavids see Netton, Bosworth & Hillenbrand (C) 2000, p.147.

<sup>447</sup> Pakistani newspapers occasionally report on the urs at Sakhi Sarwar beginning in Chetir and the local attendants being the descendants of the three closest disciples of Sakhi Sarwar, one of whom was an Afghan, while the other two belonged to southern Panjabi tribes. These attendants still preserve their family names and descent and must have been carrying out this duty for the past 900 years. For details see <http://www.dawn.com/2006/03/17/nat8.htm> .

As such, the cross-axial monument archetype found in the Suhrawardi and Ismaili shrines in Uch, and also observed later in this chapter for Shams's Suhrawardi contemporary Zakariya and his grandson Rukn-e-Alam in the early Multan period, is resonant in his own monument, and also at Sakhi Sarwar. The archetype caters to the accommodation of multi-faith adherents in a single space on one level, which must have initially been the basic requirement of Shams's lodges. But the presence of the higher level Satpanth ceremonies gives a further clue as to the design and space use for these buildings. These ironically now only survive at the shrine of Shams and are connected to his personality. An overview of the thesis material in light of these facts makes for a very interesting reading of this earlier era, with the astrologically determined religious ceremonial at Shams's own shrine matching the astrological symbolism of the later Suhrawardi monuments. Yet both the religious ceremonies and architectural symbolism carry the same metaphysical message, and accommodate multiple religious traditions into the fold of a transcendental Shia Islam through the Persian New Year. This could only be achieved through the concept of the wilayat of Ali, as explained in the last chapter. Hence, a common multi-entranced archetypal monument, either accommodating such ceremonies, or merely bearing Satpanth symbolism, would make the Ismaili shrines and Suhrawardi monuments described in this thesis the same thing.

#### Baha al-din Zakariya's Monument

Baha al-din Zakariya's shrine is located in Multan inside the old citadel walls. According to historical sources, which also mention the destruction of Shams's shrine by fire and its reconstruction, Zakariya was buried in the tomb which he had built for himself during his lifetime.<sup>448</sup> This suggests that Zakariya's khanqah did not become the site of his entombment, unlike the case with Shams and the other Suhrawardi personalities in Uch, and would ascribe a different place to his khanqah, as mentioned by Ahmad Nabi Khan. The next section, and a detailed examination of the construction myths and history of the monument which became the burial place for Zakariya's grandson and successor, Rukn-

---

<sup>448</sup> Khan 1983, p.191: Chand, *Tarikh-e-Zila-e-Multan*.

e-Alam, would lend some credence to that building being the plausible place of the khanqah. The detailed overview of Zakariya's hidden Shia leanings, his association with the personality of Shams, and related power relations that existed between them and the temporal authorities of the time have been explored in previous chapters. Zakariya's tomb has been excluded from a categorical comparison with other Suhrawardi buildings here due to the above reasons and the near total destruction of the original monument in the siege of Multan by the British in 1848 against the Sikhs, due to which most original features were lost.

In the siege, the Sikhs had mounted their heaviest cannons on the monument, since it was the highest point in the city facing the British encampment. The original building and its surrounding complex were entirely destroyed by incoming British artillery shells as a result. When Alexander Cunningham visited the mausoleum in 1853, it had been reduced to a mere wreck due to the bombardment, with little of the original structure remaining intact.<sup>449</sup> The monument was sketched by a British soldier before the battle, along with other monuments. The sketch and recent archeological exploration for restoration show that a considerable part of the structure was indeed destroyed in the siege.<sup>450</sup> No original inscription or glazing exists on the body of the tomb; however the fact that this is Zakariya's tomb which he had built for himself would date it to the early thirteenth century.

This report on the severity of the structural damage ensures that any reconstruction would have involved the loss of some archetypical features, in addition to symbolism. Due to this inventory of loss, a comparison with the other monuments of the thesis would not yield much. Yet the reconstructed monument still carries a main southern entrance, common to all the other Suhrawardi monuments of this thesis, and in contrast to the orthodox Mecca (west) facing burial axis, so ingeniously pointed out by Highlands. This suggests that the building was reconstructed along earlier lines, and probably carried

---

<sup>449</sup> Khan 1983, p.191: Cunningham 1872, vol.5, p.119.

<sup>450</sup> Khan 1983, p.192. The sketches were later published in an album by the artist called *Multan under the Siege*.

much greater iconographic commonality with other Suhrawardi monuments in its original format.

### Shah Rukn-e-Alam: History of the Monument: Construction and Myths

Zakariya's grandson Rukn-e-Alam died at the age of 86 in 1335, and was buried in the mausoleum of his grandfather according to his own will. Many years later, his coffin was transferred to the present mausoleum.<sup>451</sup> According to popular belief, his present mausoleum was constructed by Ghiyath al-din (ruled 1320-1325), i.e. the first Tughluq king for himself, during the days of his governorship of Dipalpur (a principality bordering Multan), before he became emperor.<sup>452</sup> After Ghiyath al-din's untimely death and burial in Delhi, whereby he ruled for just five years, this empty monument in Multan was reportedly given away by second successor, Firuz Tughluq (ruled 1351-1388) to the descendants of Shah Rukn-e-Alam, for the latter's re-burial in it.<sup>453</sup> However, after what has been explored in terms of the antagonistic relationship between Rukn-e-Alam and his descendants and the Tughluq dynasty in Chapter One, this story can hardly sustain the facts. It also does not account for the long reign of Muhammad Tughluq (ruled 1325-1351) who ruled between Ghiyath al-din and Firuz Shah, and who had a special dislike for Rukn-e-Alam and the Suhrawardi Order. Since Firuz Shah continued Muhammad Tughluq's policy of stamping the Suhrawardi Order entirely out of existence, the chance of his donating such a lavish monument to glorify someone whose legacy he was trying to obliterate out is unlikely.

Ghiyath al-din Tughluq was appointed the governor of Dipalpur by Sultan Ala al-din Khalji who enjoyed good relations with Rukn-e-Alam, as mentioned in Chapter One.<sup>454</sup> He remained as governor until he proceeded to Delhi to deal with a revolt there and

---

<sup>451</sup> Rizvi 1986 vol.1, p.214: Gardezi, *Tazkirah-e-Multan*, p. 32 ff,

<sup>452</sup> For Ghiyath al-din, also known as Ghazi Malik before his coronation, see Chapter One, 'Shah Rukn-e-Alam.'

<sup>453</sup> Khan 1983, p. 215, he also states this view is flawed.

<sup>454</sup> See Chapter One, 'Shah Rukn-e-Alam.'

ascended the throne in 1320.<sup>455</sup> This is also the suggested date for the completion of the Rukn-e-Alam monument, and is based on carbon dating; yet it tallies with Ghiyath al-din's long absence from the province. Obviously, in this case, his direct patronage of the monument is questionable in his absence, especially in his capacity as a local governor of a principality well outside Multan, and not of that city itself.

The date of Ghiyath al-din's appointment as the governor of Dipalpur is not known. It is quite clear that the project must have taken a long period and immense resources to complete, which he could not have had access to in the small principality. The Rukn-e-Alam monument is said to have the second biggest dome in Asia. It is improbable that after assuming power at Delhi he should have discarded the tomb at Multan altogether for an inferior edifice at Delhi where he is now buried, which he also had constructed;<sup>456</sup> or that he should have financed two such mausoleums in his lifetime. Amir Khusrau and Ibn Battuta relate that Ghazi Malik (i.e. Ghiyath al-din) constructed a Friday mosque at Multan, obviously during the short period of his rule at Delhi, but do not attribute the imposing new tomb (i.e. Rukn-e-Alam) to him.<sup>457</sup> In fact, they do not mention the tomb at all, either in its finished state or under construction. Supposedly constructed by a king as his last resting place, such a major monument should have been fleetingly mentioned at least by travelers and record keepers like Ibn Battuta.

Since the exact date or the construction process of the Rukn-e-Alam monument has not been recorded by any contemporary or later historian, and as it does not appear on the mausoleum itself, carbon dating has been the only available means for ascertaining the age of the monument. The only other mechanism that can be explored further is the beginning of ritual construction as pointed out in the last chapter, i.e. in the exaltation of Mars as decoded from the main mihrab, and perhaps with a Nauroz connection.<sup>458</sup> But since this is a lengthy procedure which involves the generation of astrological charts to see in which year of that time period the 27 degree Mars exaltation mark in Capricorn

---

<sup>455</sup> Khan 1983, p.215.

<sup>456</sup> Khan 1983, p.216; Nur Ahmad Faridi, *Qutab-e-Aqtab*, p.259. After coming to Delhi at a ripe age he had his mausoleum erected in Tughluqabad where he was eventually buried in 1325.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid*: Ibn Battuta, *Rihlah*, vol.3, p.202.

<sup>458</sup> See Chapter Four, 'The Wilayat of Ali envisaged as a building.'

coincided with a Nauroz or Farvadin period date, it will have to be conducted in the post doctoral stage. But it will be a very safe conclusion to dissociate Ghiyath al-din from the construction of the building in every sense, as indeed its astrological symbolism as seen in the last chapter would clearly put its design and execution capacity far outside his material and metaphysical abilities as governor of the Dipalpur principality. The same should be applied to the matter of the gift of the building for Rukn-e-Alam's burial, as the relationships of Muhammad Tughluq and Firuz Tughluq with Rukn-e-Alam and his successors were too estranged to allow for any celebratory monument being sponsored by the state.

Rukn-e-Alam's burial in the shrine of his grandfather is recorded in his will, and his body being moved at a later stage to the current monument can also be established. Considering the adverse circumstances surrounding Rukn-e-Alam's death, and the antagonism of the ruling dynasty, his burial in Zakariya's revered shrine afforded him protection in death. Yet this still does not explain the massive mausoleum itself, which no reliable historical authority has mentioned, unless it already existed and served another function for the Suhrawardi Order. Its design and use would seem to point in this direction, but it was certainly not a mosque, or it would have been mentioned as one.

It is probable that at least part of the multifunctional complex which subsequently became the Rukn-e-Alam monument had a pre-existing structure and use, and that this was a part of Zakariya's khanqah, of whose destruction of which there is no record. It could have been a part of the *Madrassa Bahaiya*<sup>459</sup> complex that Zakariya had built (or started), where general Suhrawardi practices and spiritual exercises were conducted. In addition, it may have also been meant as an eventual shrine for Shah Rukn-e-Alam, but the idea was put on hold until the political situation changed in favour of the order. A building of such magnitude would have been a reason for concern to the authorities. Owing to the tremendous wealth and independence enjoyed by the order in earlier times, the beginning of this monument can safely be assumed to precede Rukn-e-Alam. It could be that, keeping his family tradition in view, Rukn-e-Alam caused its development and

---

<sup>459</sup> Khan 1983, p.216: *Siyar al-Arifin*, p.233.

use as a multifunctional building.

The best argument in favour of the pre-existence of this monument to Rukn-e-Alam's time, while not being connected to any Tughluq patronage, comes from his own erstwhile disciple from Uch, i.e. Jalal al-din Surkhposh's grandson Jahaniyan Jahangasht. It must be remembered that Jahangasht had such a problem with Muhammad Tughluq that he left the country for more than a decade and only returned when the former was dead. In his malfuzat *Jami' al-'Ulum* he talks about a *hazira* built by Muhammad Tughluq for Rukn-e-Alam, which would imply a sarcophagus of sorts, as a *hazira* would be a place where some of an attendant would watch over the remains. He goes on to state that he does not visit the *hazira* where Rukn-e-Alam's grave was transferred, which he sees as being derogatory to the memory of his Shaykh, and that he would rather go and pray for him at the shrine of Zakariya instead, where he was originally buried.<sup>460</sup> This explicit statement from a primary Suhrawardi text clearly states that Muhammad Tughluq was responsible for transferring the body of Rukn-e-Alam to the current place, i.e. Zakariya's ex-madrassa, and somehow this has been misconstrued into the construction of the monument itself by one of the Tughluqs. One can imagine how this story may have become convoluted over time and the building's credentials ascribed Tughluq patronage, as is the norm for such stories in this region. Obviously the reburial must post-date the execution of Rukn-e-Alam's grandson Shaykh Hud by Muhammad Tughluq,<sup>461</sup> after which he must have taken over the madrasa monument and all its functions, making it subservient to the state. If the building was actually constructed by a Tughluq king for the Suhrawardi Shaykh under whom Jahangasht was initiated i.e. Rukn-e-Alam, he would certainly have mentioned it in his malfuzat.

---

<sup>460</sup> Islam 2002, p.285: Husain (Jahangasht) *Jami' al-'Ulum*, pp.257 & 264.

<sup>461</sup> See Chapter One, 'Shah Rukn-e-Alam.'

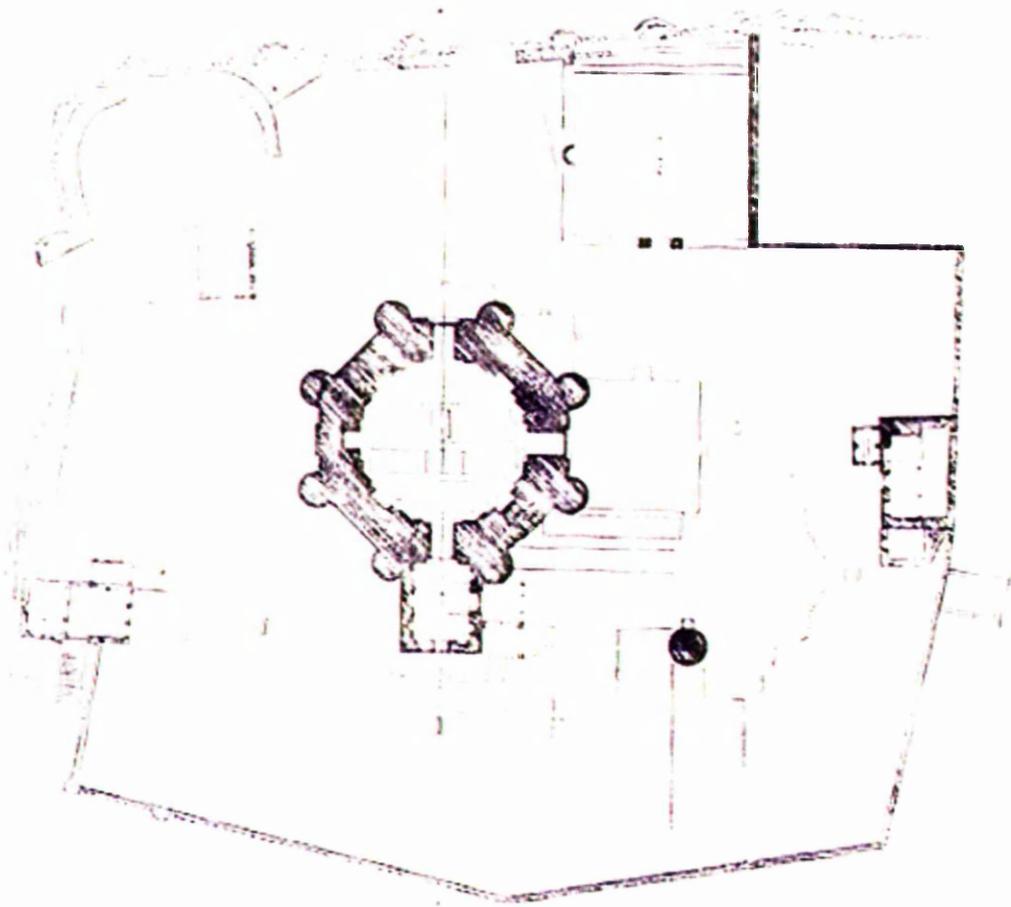
## The Plan

The Rukn-e-Alam monument complex is placed well inside the Multan citadel, which is built on a mound and is encircled by the city battlements. The citadel is ancient according to folklore and existed at the time of Alexander's invasion. The location of the shrine complex inside the citadel walls re-iterates its socio-religious importance in the city. Such a position should not have escaped the attention of travellers like Ibn Battuta who failed to record it,<sup>462</sup> unless it was recorded differently, as Zakariya's khanqah and the attached Madrasa Bahaiya.

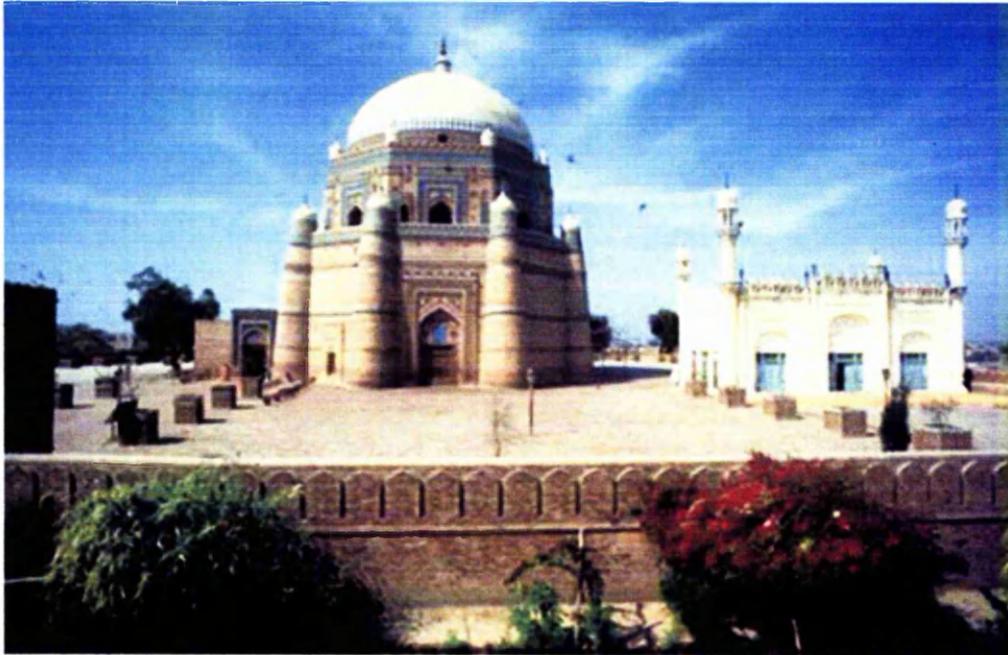
This monument was the first building explored in the research for this thesis, and its unorthodox site plan was the first to come to fore for its use of south oriented multi-axial entrance archetype, which was late found in all the monuments of this thesis. The main entrance of the monument is from the south, and before restoration in 1977, it is assumed that the main axis of approach to the complex itself from the city centre was also from the south, which in turn led up to the major southern entrance. Older photographs would show smaller chambered construction around the outer periphery, much of which had been left over from earlier centuries. These would have constituted the living quarters and attached functions for the madrasa. The remainder of these were removed in the 1977 restoration, as the major loss had occurred in the pre-partition and Sikh eras. Due to the additions over the centuries it was not ascertainable which of the surrounding buildings were a part of the original structure, due to which all such surrounding construction was removed, making the area into a paved plaza for the public.

---

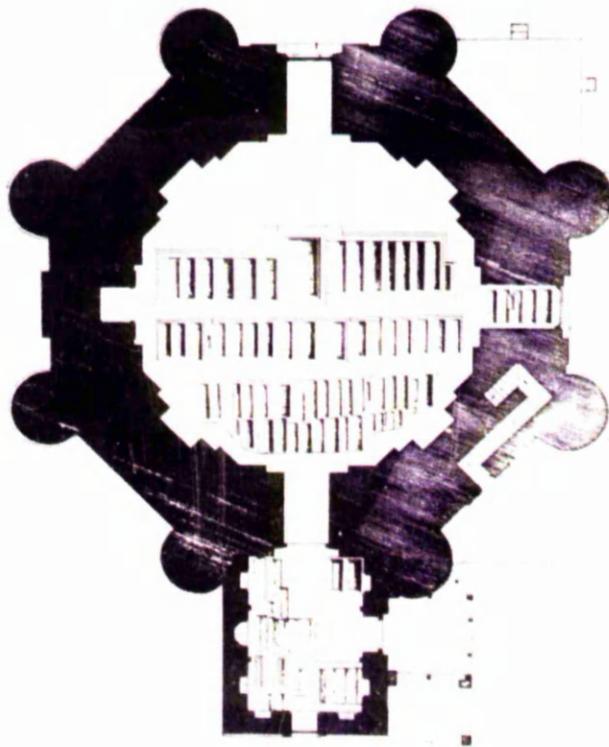
<sup>462</sup> Khan 1983, p. 215: *Siyar al-Arifin*, p. 233.



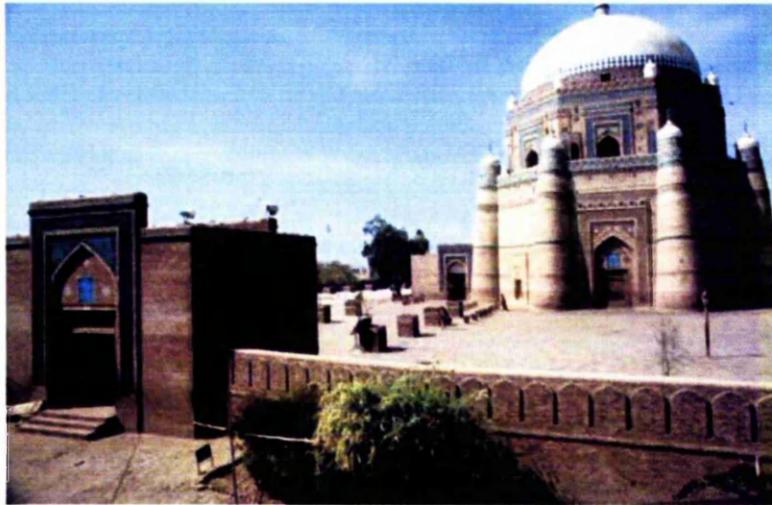
42. Rukn-e-Alam, site plan of complex with main southern axis



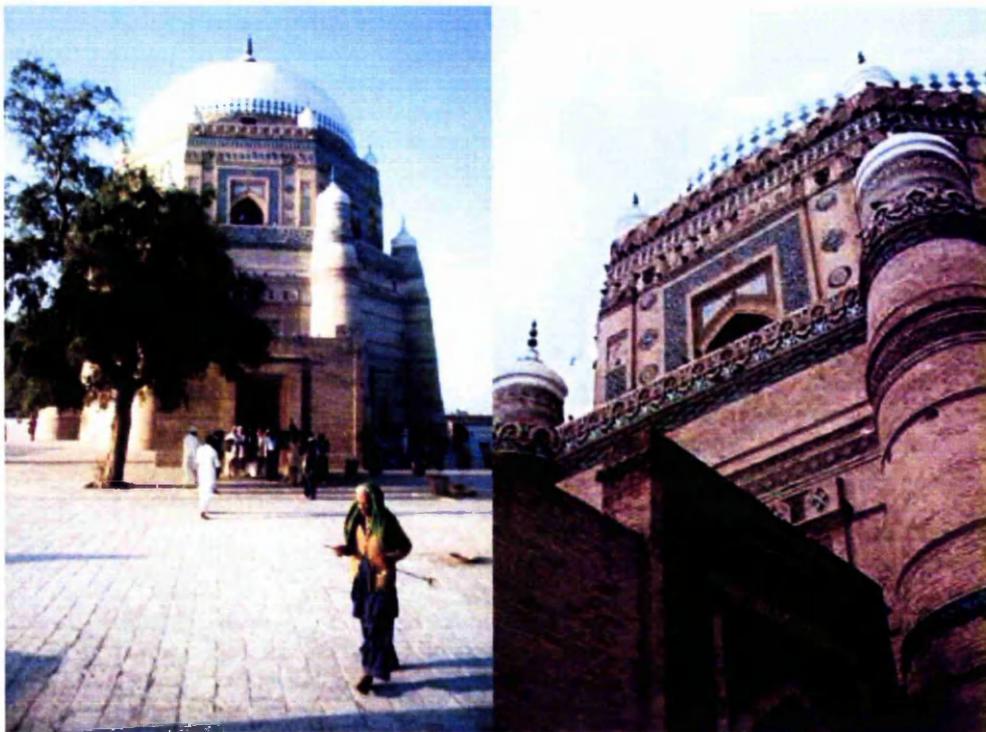
43. Rukn-e-Alam, view from Qasim Bagh Park, showing the east entrance, vestibule and Auqaf mosque



44. Rukn-e-Alam, ground floor plan and altered south entrance. Notice outside sealable staircase to upper storeys



45. Rukn-e-Alam, main (realigned) eastern entrance to complex, with entrance vestibule



46. Rukn-e-Alam, entrance vestibule with its south and east openings

The images in plates 43-46 show the three entranced south axis centred archetype found in the Rukn-e-Alam complex. As mentioned, the main building is entered is from the

south, through a large entrance vestibule, which contains extra burials and a second mihrab facing west. The vestibule has two entrances, one from the south and another from the east (plate 46). It was reconstructed during the renovation, and its eastern entrance is now aligned with the main approach to the complex from an easterly, hence Mecca facing direction, see plate 46. The axially of the monument shows that the main approach from the city should have matched the southern entrance despite historical changes, as is the case in Shams's shrine. This is also confirmed by the approach road to the citadel (and monument) from the city below, which originally takes a southern trajectory, then loops past the southern axis of the monument to the east entrance, suggesting re-alignment. Without further research it cannot be ascertained if this change in approach access and monument entrance happened in the Auqaf era immediately after partition, or during the 1977 restoration.

The traditional use of the three main entrances and the vestibule in ceremony is asserted to be in the same light as those found at Shams's shrine, considering this building would have been tied to the Madrasa Bahaiya, and used by the many dervishes and qalandars lodging at the khanqah, for which we have proof. The building archetype would suggest that there may have been ceremonies here similar to the ones found at the shrine of Shams. This also resonates in historical reports about Surkhposh's own urs in Uch which was in Chetir. It must be remembered that Surkhposh was a Suhrawardi with close connections to both Zakariya and Rukn-e-Alam, and was not an Ismaili missionary openly. The ceremonies may have been wiped out in the Tughluq era, after the suppression of Rukn-e-Alam's descendants and the taking over of the khanqah and madrasa. Yet there is no proof that different religious denominations from the masses would have used them, unlike at the shrine of Shams who was an icon of the people. Although Imperial patronage and control would have greatly restricted the following of the Zakariya clan, the common multi-faith Satpanth ceremonial would still have been followed by the upper echelons of the order's inner circle.

## Unorthodox Elements: Ground Floor

The most predominant architectural feature on the ground floor is the main southern entrance to the mausoleum. This is located in the shape of the elaborate vestibule seen above, which has entrances from both its east and south. Ahmad Nabi Khan reflects on it being a later addition to the monument,<sup>463</sup> yet its focus on the south axis would suggest its earlier origins. The *shisham* (high quality local wood) used in its interior is of the same texture and age as that used inside the main building, implying contemporaneous construction along with the main building. The use of such expensive material endorses the affluence of the order in past times. The vestibule has a flat thatched roof and is intricately framed with wood panelling, which also serves as decoration. When compared with the historical photographs from Shams's shrine which show dense building centred on the main southern axis,<sup>464</sup> it is most likely that Rukn-e-Alam would have had similar construction especially flanking the southern entrance vestibule. As mentioned previously these would have historically accommodated the Madrasa Bahaiya living quarters and other functions, which have now been cleared. Some of this removal might have been earlier, i.e. in the Tughluq era, because of the animosity to the order. This is certainly suggested by the vast open courtyard areas, which now lie empty, and were know to be full of mostly stray graves and ruins in remembered history, until the restoration in 1977.



47. Rukn-e-Alam, vestibule from the south facing entrance with second mihrab on the left

---

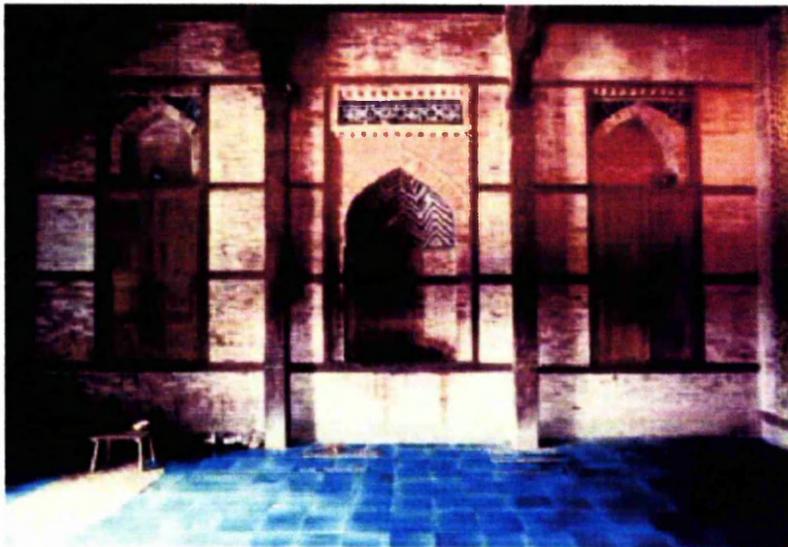
<sup>463</sup> Khan 1983, p.274.

<sup>464</sup> See plate 37.



48. Rukn-e-Alam, vestibule interior from the eastern entrance, with the mihrab on the left, and entrance to the main chamber on the right

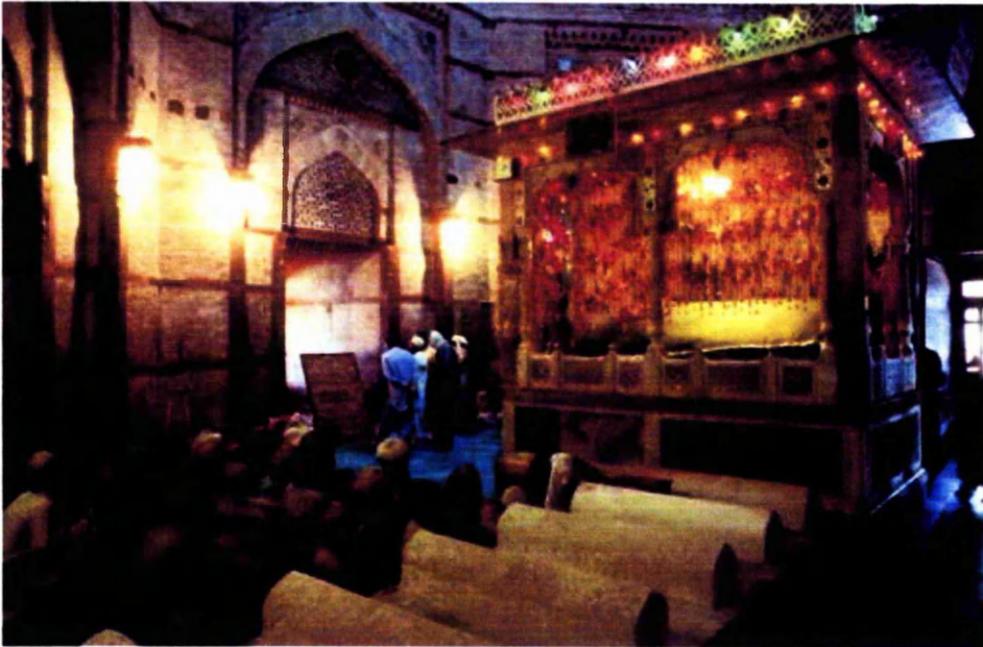
The entrance vestibule carries a small second mihrab marking the qibla, in addition to the main mihrab inside, both of which are flanked by lockable storage niches with doors. Although the monument has been restored, the configuration of the interior space in this certain case has been left largely untouched. The presence of a second mihrab in the vestibule further endorses the unconventional nature of the design, along with the provision of lockable storage, probably used for religious paraphernalia and symbols.



49. Rukn-e-Alam, vestibule mihrab as seen from its eastern entrance, with storage areas flanking it



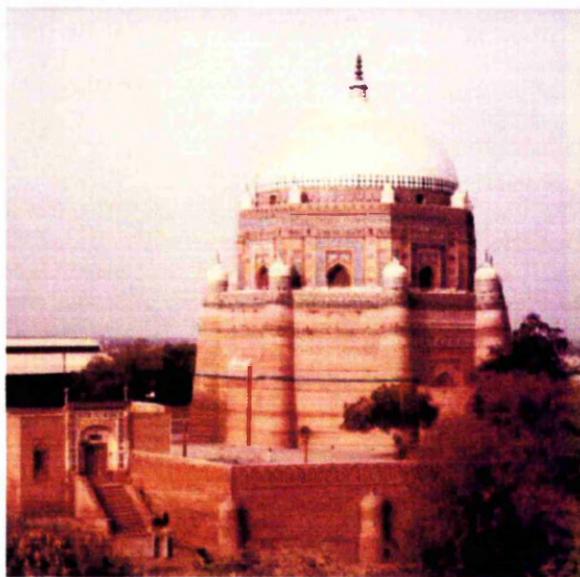
50. Rukn-e-Alam, the main interior with the sarcophagus as seen from the southern entrance vestibule looking north. The main mihrab is on the west, i.e. left. Notice the recessed niches flanking the sarcophagus which are found all along the interior, previously used for storage.



51. Rukn-e-Alam, view of sarcophagus from the main mihrab (west), with entrance vestibule on the right

The wooden sarcophagus in the previous two plates is most probably the place of the original hazira attributed to Muhammad Tughluq by Jahangasht, which entailed the transfer of Rukn-e-Alam's body to the monument. On the exterior, the western facade of

the building has a simple flat, rectangular panel marking the mihrab's place in the thickness of the wall. This is queer as the practice usually followed even in Ismaili shrines was to embellish the mihrab facade on the exterior, with the exact place of the mihrab clearly marked and decorated.

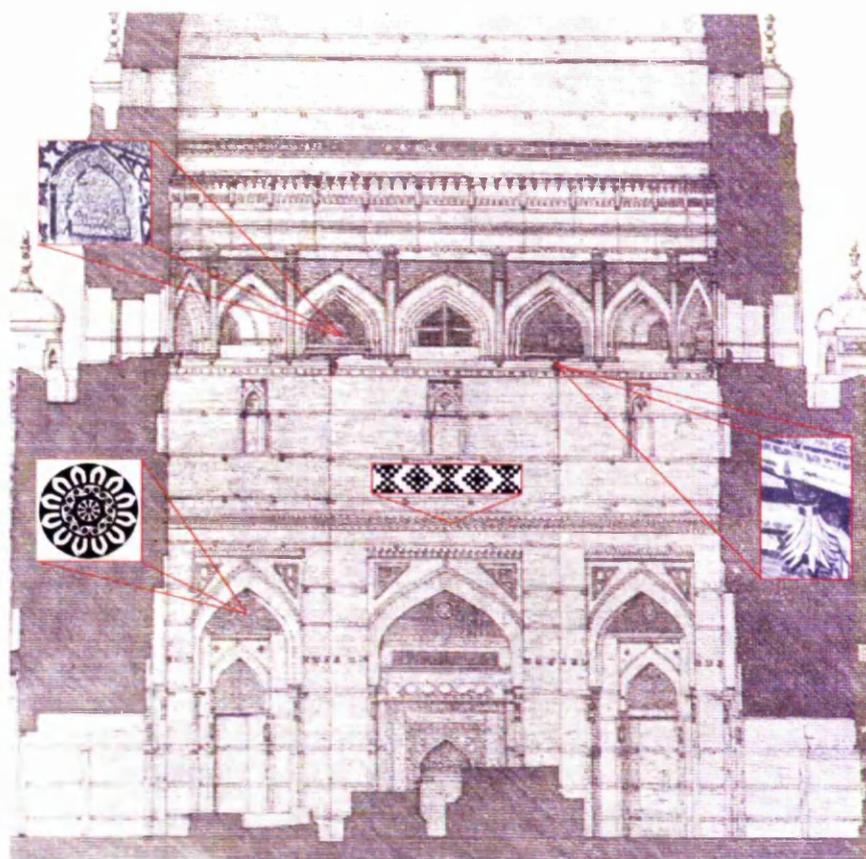


52. Rukn-e-Alam, the western facade with the plain outward projecting wall panel (left) marking the mihrab

It is unconventional that in such an importation monument, the mihrab should be so muted on the outside in its execution. In addition to their desire for emphasising the southern axis, this downplaying of the mihrab on the exterior obviously stems from a conscious effort by the architects to mute the controversy around it by minimising its exact location on the facade, since on the interior we have seen it to carry the jafr testament to the wilayat of Ali in Chapter Four. This exterior facade treatment suggests that the mihrab was meant only for a few eyes. Since the monument dates to a period of dissimulation, this would make sense in the context where dissimulation was practised while enjoying royal patronage.

## The Interior

The authority on the restoration of the monument, Ahmad Nabi Khan, comments that all the interior facades of the first storey had inner facing arched openings which were closed with shisham screens and doors, which have now been removed.<sup>465</sup> This topic has been touched upon already, as the two lockable arched niches flanking the lesser mihrab in the entrance vestibule, which shed some light on their use as storage areas for sensitive material and symbols. The main mihrab inside which carries the wilayat of Ali inscriptions, is likewise flanked by two niches which are much taller (see plate 53), and which along with the mihrab itself carried doors and were also locked up.



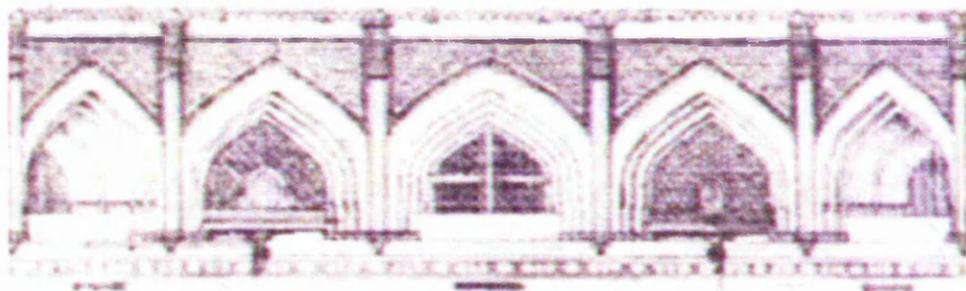
53. Rukn-e-Alam, interior section showing details of the first storey lockable mihrab and its two flanking storage niches (bottom), and the second storey Mecca facing *Ayat al-Kursi* panels (top left inset)

<sup>465</sup> Khan 1983, p.230.

The presence of doors on the main mihrab asserts the general dissimulation of the monument further, as mihrabs are places open to the public to signify the Mecca direction, not be locked up. The highly symbolic mihrab in this case would be very offensive to the orthodox if on open display; the presence of doors could conveniently tuck it away. An equally interesting phenomenon are the lockable niches around it, of which there are four in all, on all the minor axes, excluding the east-west and north-south directions which carry the three entrances and the mihrab itself. The only use for these that can be deduced from the design and its Satpanth connection is to provide storage space for the multi-faith symbols that would be used in the different ceremonies at the monument, and which were conveniently locked up on normal days.

#### *Secondary Qibla Markers in the Zone of Transition*

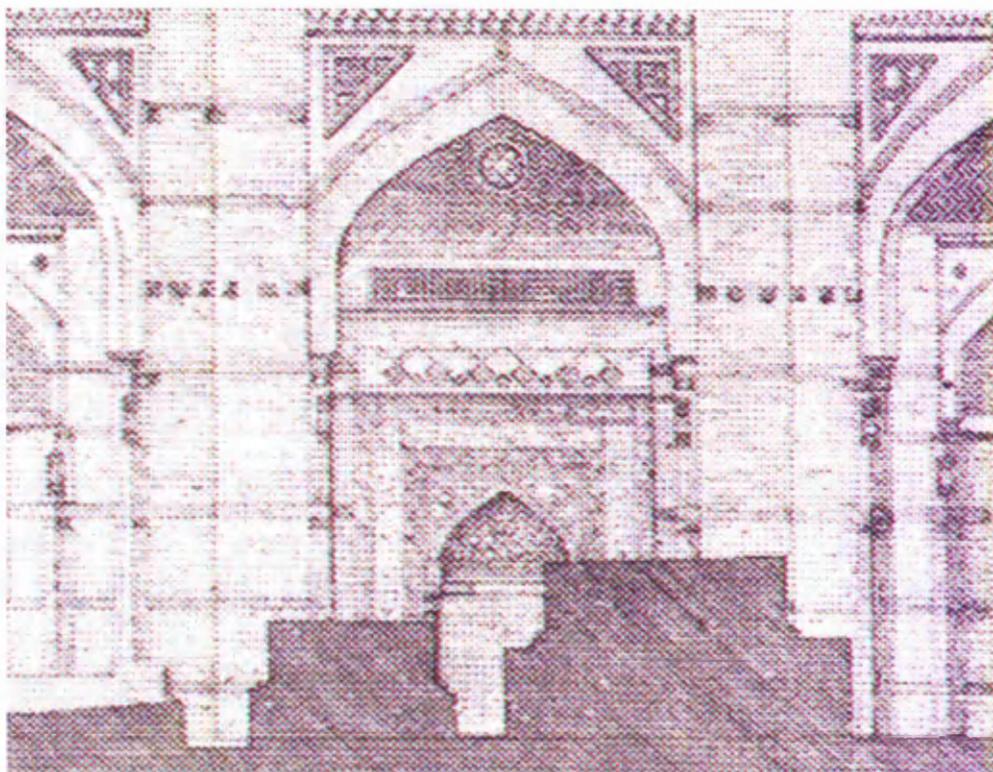
The two west-facing squinch panels on the second storey (plate 53, upper left inset, and below) are unique in this monument. Of all the squinch panels around the interior at this level these two are the only ones in which *Ayat al-Kursi* have been inscribed, which is also used to denote the wilayat of Ali in Shia Sufism, as seen in the last chapter. They must have served as secondary Mecca markers, as they are only present on the west facade of the interior. The locked face of the mihrab door might have carried the same inscription for marking Mecca.



54. Rukn-e-Alam, close up of squinch panels on the west facing interior facade of the second storey (left and right to central window), pointing towards Mecca, and carved with *Ayat al-Kursi* in brick

## The Mihrab

The presence of a mihrab inside an orthodox Sunni shrine or tomb, as the Suhrawardi Order is said to be in Pakistani history, would be anyway unnecessary, as it is not a place for prayer; let alone the one as elaborate as found here. Even for a purpose built Shia-Isma'ili shrine a simpler Mecca marker would suffice, like a simple blind niche or the *Ayat al-Kursi* panels on the second storey. The presence of this unique mihrab gives some much needed answers about the function of the building previous to Rukn-e-Alam's re-burial in it. The nature of the mihrab and the storage niches around it suggest this must have been the Madrasa Bahaiya attributed to Zakariya; which may have been added to and completed in Rukn-e-Alam's time. There is no other explanation for its configuration.



55. Rukn-e-Alam, mihrab facade with recessed niche in centre (behind the sarcophagus). The whole facade could be locked behind double doors

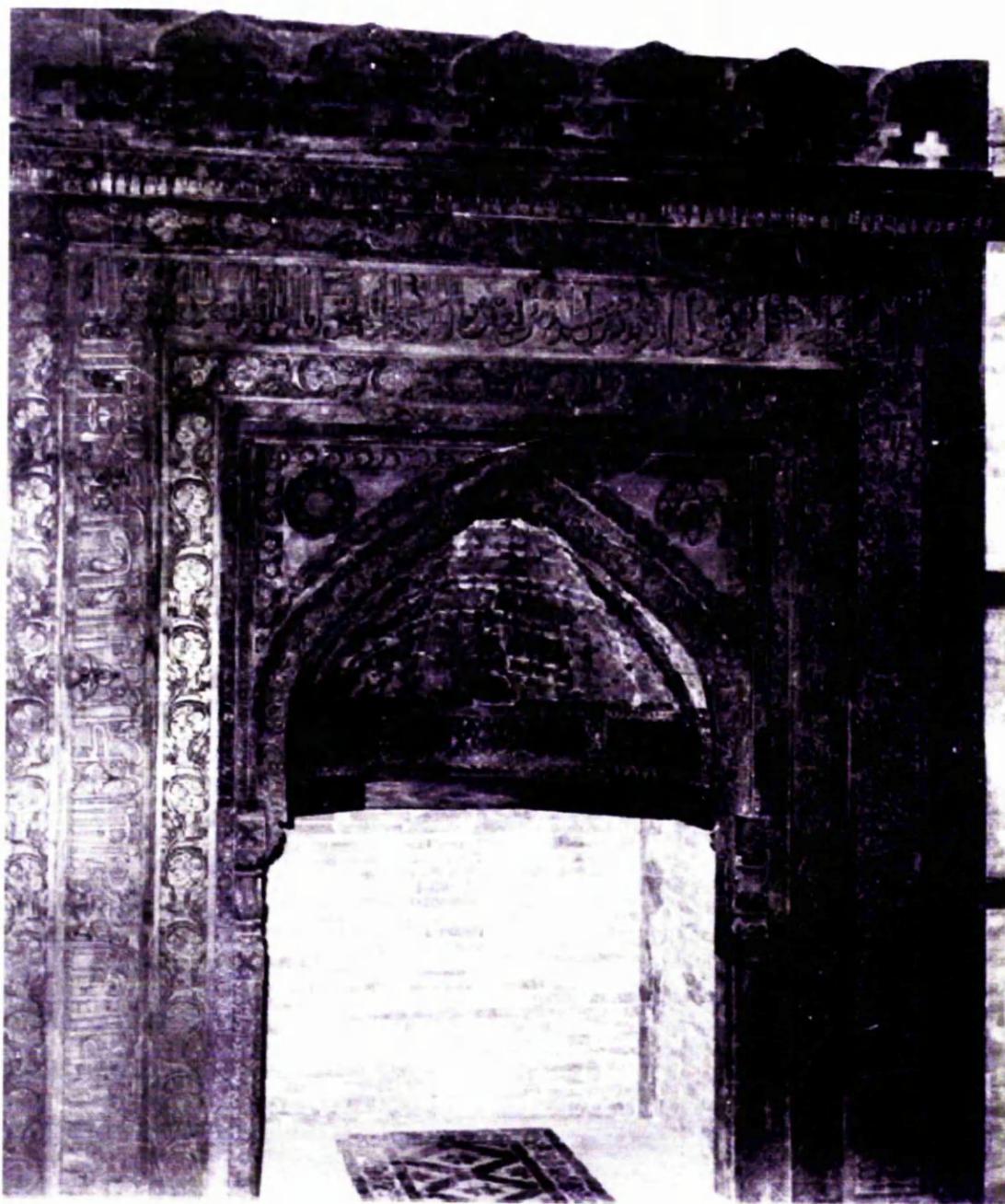
In the event of the doors being locked, all that would be visible would be the flat facade of the locked arch niche (above). The facade appearance would be very simple, with no offensive symbols on display. The details of the mihrab inscription, which show it to be the jafr expression of the ritual construction of the monument, started at an auspicious time during the exaltation of Mars, and echoing the Shia concept of the wilayat of Ali through this, has been dealt with in Chapter Four.<sup>466</sup>

The inscription of *Ayat al-Kursi* on the mihrab itself, in conjunction with its presence on the two squinch panels, strongly suggests that it must have been present on the face of the mihrab doors also, to serve as a Mecca marker when the doors were locked up. In addition the mihrab *Ayat al-Kursi* inscription also reinforces the argument of the squinch panels serving as secondary Mecca markers. The locked mihrab doors with a simple *Ayat al-Kursi* inscription on them pointing in the Mecca direction would not be offensive to any visiting state official.

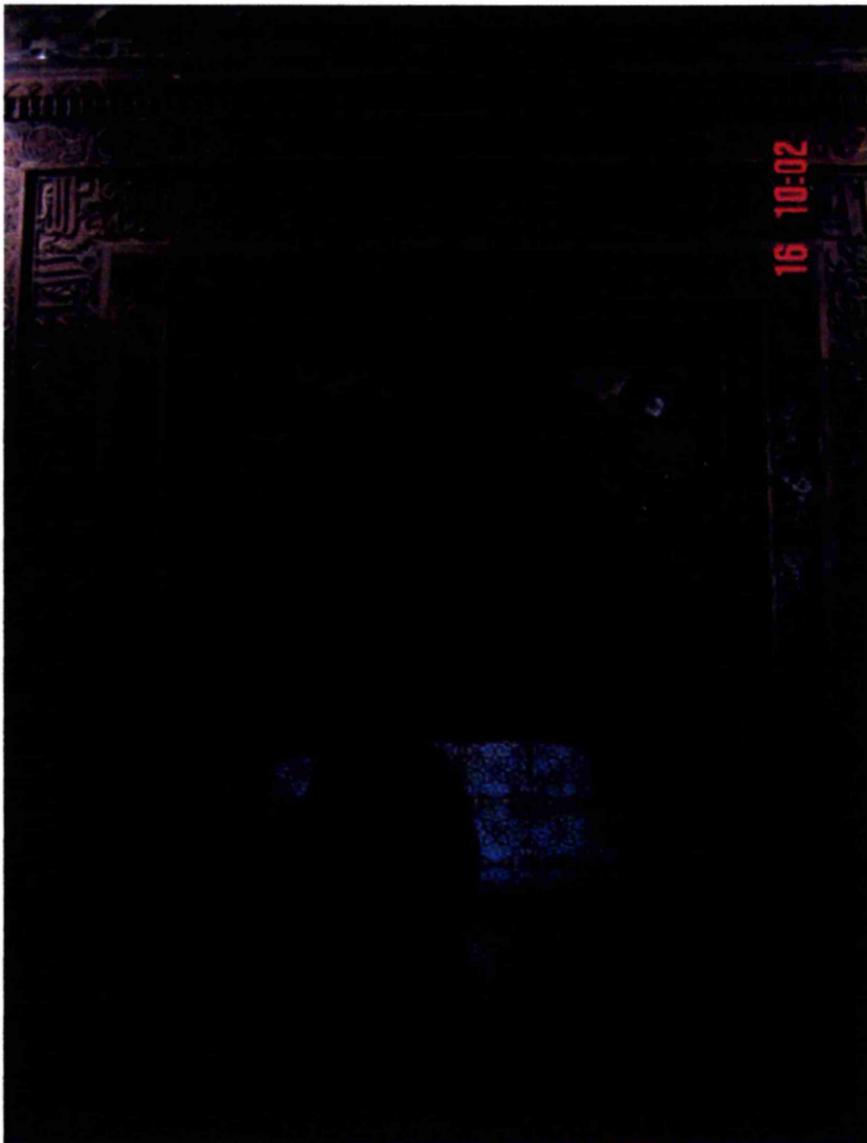
In the details of its physical size, the mihrab itself is very large. The photograph in plate 56 has been taken from a raised platform and does not relate the actual size of the mihrab in comparison to the surroundings. The mihrab is almost nine feet high, and can easily accommodate a few people inside the depth of its arched recession, which is about five feet deep.

---

<sup>466</sup> See Chapter Four, 'The Wilayat of Ali envisaged as a building.'

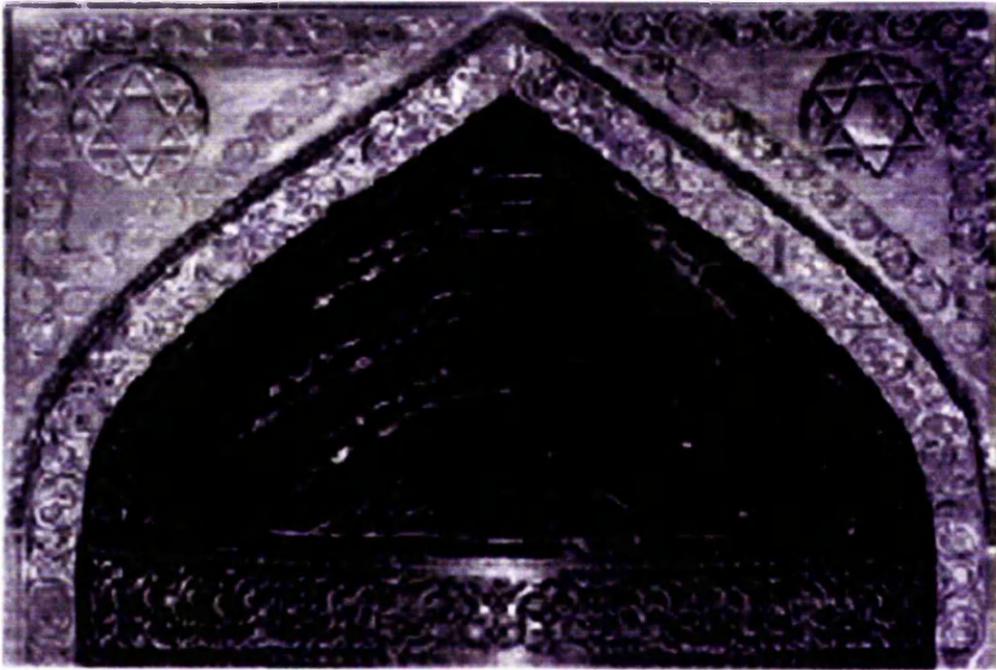


56. Rukn-e-Alam, main mihrab before restoration, with recessed mihrab niche in the centre.



57. Rukn-e-Alam, the main mihrab after restoration, with the *Ayat al-Kursi* inscription in the band around the periphery. The true height of the mihrab is visible here with people praying inside the mihrab. This in itself suggests the prior use of the mihrab as a place for initiation and Sufi retreat when the doors were shut

There is evidence that the inner curvature of the mihrab's roof carried invocative symbolism similar to the wilayat of Ali inscription on its front, on etched patterns on the inner ceiling. The mihrab also underwent restoration with the rest of the monument as its wood was decaying, and these were probably lost during the process.

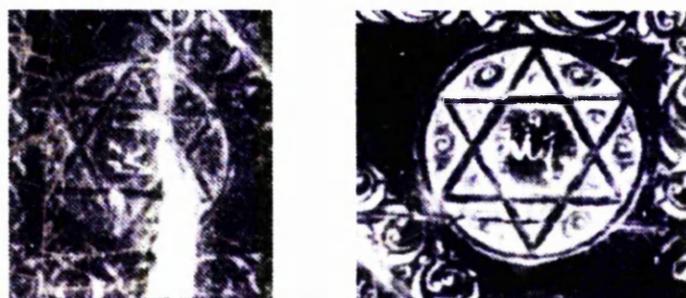


58. Rukn-e-Alam, the inner decoration of the mihrab curvature, with evidence of lost inscriptions

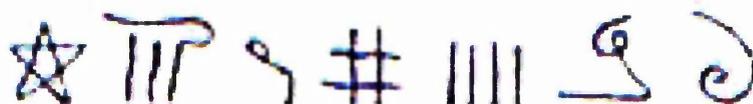
The size of the mihrab, its closing doors and the inscriptions on it suggest that it was actively used in secret rituals for initiation, and *Chillah* or Sufi retreats (plate 57). Since the shrine is in use, exploring its religiosity is a sensitive matter. All work pertaining to photography and documentation had to be done with great discretion. Recording the invocative details of the hexagrams and inscriptions on the mihrab in public would arouse speculation. The only way to proceed was to arrange with the authorities to conduct the work when the shrine is less crowded, and with permission from the Archeology Department.

In terms of the argument of this thesis, it should be noted that outside Sufism, jafr is almost exclusively a Shia-Isma'ili science. It is rejected by all Islamic orthodoxy but has found its way into Sunni Sufi practices. The beginnings of jafr and its development is attributed by Shiism and all Sufis to the earlier Shia Imams, which are common to both the Twelver and the Isma'ili traditions. Its greatest exponents being regarded as Ali, and then the sixth Imam al-Sadiq, who is also attributed its application to physical sciences and its dissemination to many disciples, including the famous Muslim Alchemist Jabir

ibn al-Hayyan. The use of jafr, combined with the dissimulative elements incorporated within the monument's design, and the historical connections of Zakariya and the Suhrawardi Order with the Ismaili da'wa, should finally conclude on the Shia-Ismaili credentials of this building, and its place as the original Madrasa Bahaiya.



59. Rukn-e-Alam, close-up of the hexagram invocations on the mihrab. The fact that there are two hexagrams signifies that they were used in ceremony. Due to their age the details had worn out on the left side, this is a pre restoration photograph



60. Details of the symbols on the Seal of Solomon<sup>467</sup>

The symbols in the Seal of Solomon (plate 60) have been used in Chapter Four to explain the ritual beginning of this monument by decoding the mihrab inscription in light of its Shia credentials through the citation of the wilayat of Ali. As mentioned there-in, in Islamic jafr beliefs these seven symbols represent the seven planets, each associated with a particular day of the week, starting with Sunday and the five-pointed star on the left of the image. Besides the day of the week, each planet has assigned to it a Name of God, a letter (of the Arabic alphabet), a sex (male or female), a natural characteristic, a colour, a perfume, a metal, a Prophet and a level in Heaven, in addition to angels and demons.<sup>468</sup>

<sup>467</sup> Savage-Smith 2005, p.170.

<sup>468</sup> Such charts are first seen in the Ikhwan al-Safa epistles, see Plate 31 in Chapter Four.

الطروف	الاسماء العربية	الاسماء الاخرى	الايام	الاراضي	الاصول الارضية	الهيات الكونية	الجنودات
و	فرد	فوطيظيل	أحد	شمس	☉	مذهب	سندرمي
د	جانز	فوطيظيل	اثنين	قمر	☾	بره	كيا
ث	شكور	فوطيظيل	ثلاثة	مريخ	♂	الأحمر	صفان أحمر
ج	ثابت	فوطيظيل	أربعة	عطارد	♁	برمان	جانوي
ب	ظهير	فوطيظيل	خميس	مشترى	♃	شبهوروش	مصطكي
ا	خبر	فوطيظيل	خمسة	زهرة	♄	زوجه	فرضل
ز	ركي	فوطيظيل	سبت	زحل	♅	صيمون	لاذن عنبري

61. Details of the attributes for the symbols on the Seal of Solomon from the primary jafr text *Shams al-Ma'arif* by Ali al-Buni (d.1225)<sup>469</sup>

The names for the seven planets linked to the days of the week, starting from Sunday are *al-Fard*, *al-Jabbar*, *al-Shakoor*, *al-Thabit*, *al-Zhaheer*, *al-Khabir* and *al-Zaki* corresponding with the Sun-Sunday, the Moon-Monday, Mars-Tuesday, Mercury-Wednesday, Jupiter-Thursday, Venus-Friday and Saturn-Saturday, as seen in plate 61.



62. A comparison between the Rukn-e-Alam mihrab invocation and the symbols for the Seal of Solomon

A second comparative analysis between the mihrab invocation and the symbols for the original seal (plate 62) shows that in the six outer houses formed between the six sides of the star itself and the circumscribing circle we can clearly see the symbol '∂'. This has already been identified in a Saturn context in Chapter Four. Due to the age of the monument many of the other symbols carved on the invocations have worn out, but the red outline in plate 62 clearly shows '∂' in the centre of the hexagram with 'Allah'

<sup>469</sup> el-Gawhary 1968, p.304: *Sharf al-Ma'arif*, 1945 reprint.

written under it. Thus this symbol on the Seal of Solomon for the planet Saturn, i.e. '۶', and the number for the planet Mars, i.e. '۹', that the inscription is reduced down to, as shown previously,<sup>470</sup> collectively show that the monument is a Mars and Saturn combination. Outside the wilayat of Ali, this also suggests that the monument, in terms of the desired planetary purpose sought to be achieved from its construction, resonates what was also the case for Fatimid Cairo, i.e. the destruction of enemies. In this case, this desired planetary purpose for the monument would be of course esoteric in nature, and would involve the ritual use of the mihrab and building for waging spiritual war. In jafr, each planet carries a primary ruler-ship over certain human affairs (plate 63), and a planetary combination usually yields the accomplishment of that purpose.

Planet	Day	Benefit/Purpose
Saturn	Saturday, 1 <sup>st</sup> / 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of the day	For the construction of house, buildings, hidden treasures, separation between enemies & their destruction, etc.
Sun	Sunday	For higher status & government matters, etc.
Moon	Monday	Living, food and love
Mars	Tuesday	For destruction and conquering of enemies, war, battles, etc.
Mercury	Wednesday	To impeach, control enemy's tongue, speech
Jupiter	Thursday	To receive education, progress & earn a living, etc.
Venus	Friday	For progress, achievement, earn a living, music, etc.

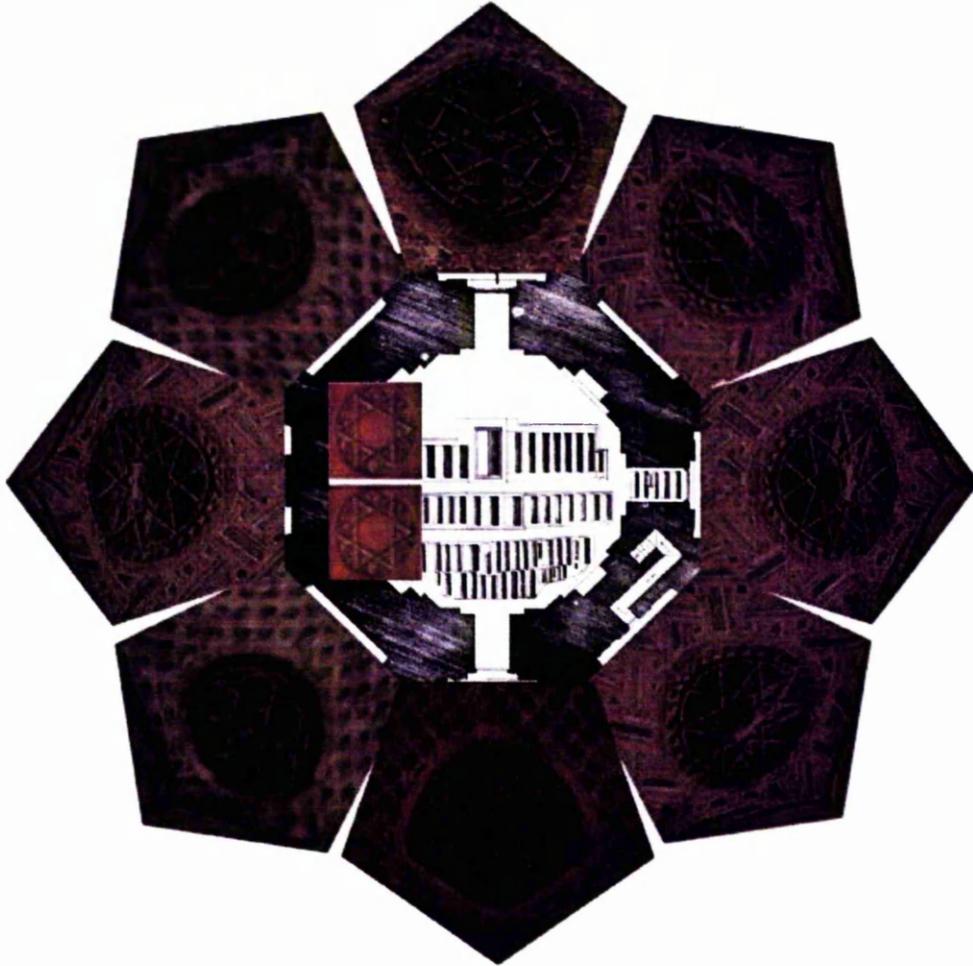
63. Planets with their ruler-ship of days of the week and associated purpose<sup>471</sup>

Hence, in terms of the examination of the mihrab's nature, each planet is ascribed an overall purpose, used for achieving a certain end. The chart above cites the purpose of the planets. A Mars and Saturn combination can only represent a situation of war and conflict, and this invocation, and the mihrab itself, must have also been used to make spiritual warfare in the use of jafr against enemies. This situation further magnifies the

<sup>470</sup> See Chapter Four, 'The Wilayat of Ali envisaged as a building.'

<sup>471</sup> Shah 1979, p.18. (Translated from Urdu)

observations of this thesis about the conflict which existed between the authorities and the Suhrawardi Order.



64. Rukn-e-Alam, the recreated interior inscriptions signifying both ceremonial and ritual use. Notice the four double pentagrams, one directly above the western mihrab (left, with two inset hexagrams), and three opposite and diagonally opposite

The image in plate 64 shows the recreated interior inscriptions around the interior periphery of the Rukn-e-Alam monument. They are either hexagram based, or double pentagrams, which also suggest that the monument may have something to do with actual Nauroz for its construction. This cannot be further deduced here because of the loss of the numbers and symbols on all the double pentagram inscriptions. The pentagram being the

symbol for the Sun in the Seal of Solomon, a double pentagram can only represent a perfect Nauroz i.e. a Nauroz on a Sunday, as suggested in the start date for the religious ceremonies at the shrine of Shams.<sup>472</sup> This also makes numerological sense as there are four double pentagram inscriptions inside Rukn-e-Alam, with four being the second number for the Sun.<sup>473</sup> Since the inscriptions on the mihrab and four storage niches were closed by doors, the remaining three as seen in plate 64, i.e. located on the cupolas of the arch niches above the three main entrances, probably also had door-like panels to cover them. All the invocations would of course be visible only to the initiated faithful and used in ceremony in their presence, and would be locked up with the mihrab during normal congregation.

In Shia-Ismaili metaphysics the double pentagram would most definitely represent the primordial Nauroz, i.e. when the universe was created, and when creation manifested into life. Majlisi has described it in his book on page 558 as the day when the first winds blew, when the first life came forth, when the sun shone for the first time, when everything began for the first time, and the day when the first testament to the wilayat of Ali began.<sup>474</sup> In Persian astrological traditions, which are also Shia-Ismaili, this was the day when the signs of the zodiac started moving clockwise around the planets, which are actually stationary in the cosmic wheel, while the inner houses moved anti-clockwise. Necessarily, this primordial Nauroz, the first day of the wilayat of Ali, is actually the day when all the planets were in their said signs and houses of exaltation, i.e. the Sun was at 19 degrees Aries, when Aries was also the first house, and the moon was likewise at 3 degrees Taurus when Taurus corresponded to the second house, and so on.<sup>475</sup> With the subsequent movement of the signs clockwise and the houses anti-clockwise, the process of life began, bringing it to our day and time. Hence, in Shia-Ismaili metaphysics the wilayat of Ali at the primordial Nauroz is not just envisaged as the first day of life, but also the assigning of the points of exaltation of all the major planets in the zodiac, which

---

<sup>472</sup> See Chapter Two, 'Chetir, Chaharshamba-yi Suri and a Vedic Nauroz.'

<sup>473</sup> See plate 25.

<sup>474</sup> Majlisi 1845, p.558.

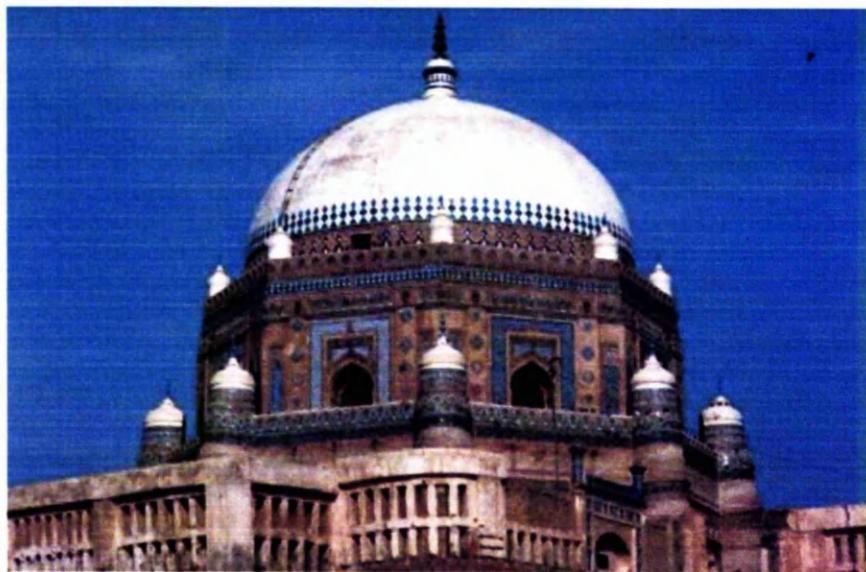
<sup>475</sup> For all the planetary exaltations see plate 22. Al-Biruni has also tallied these exaltations as being agreed upon by the Persian tradition in the notes in his book.

govern amongst their ruler-ships every facet of existence on earth. These are all said to derive their legitimacy from this primordial wilayat of Ali in his non-corporeal state.

In light of the analysis, the main Suhrawardi monument of this chapter in terms of its use of space and iconography is approachable in a whole new light. In addition to its suggested secret ceremonial use for the multi-faith ceremonies which would have accompanied the Satpanth, secret initiation and score settling with enemies through esoteric means, i.e. the state authorities, the monument also seems to encapsulate the whole Shia-Ismaili belief structure in a nutshell through its testament to the primordial wilayat of Ali. This can be easily inferred from the double pentagrams, which cannot represent anything else in this context, and should not come as a surprise as that is the basis of the Shia-Ismaili faith.

#### Unorthodox Symbols on the Second Storey

The final part of the hidden Shia religiosity of this monument can be seen through the parapet merlon tiles on the second storey (i.e. first floor) exterior. The following two images have been taken at the ground level from various distances to the monument, and clearly show the inconspicuousness of the tile details at any distance from the building.

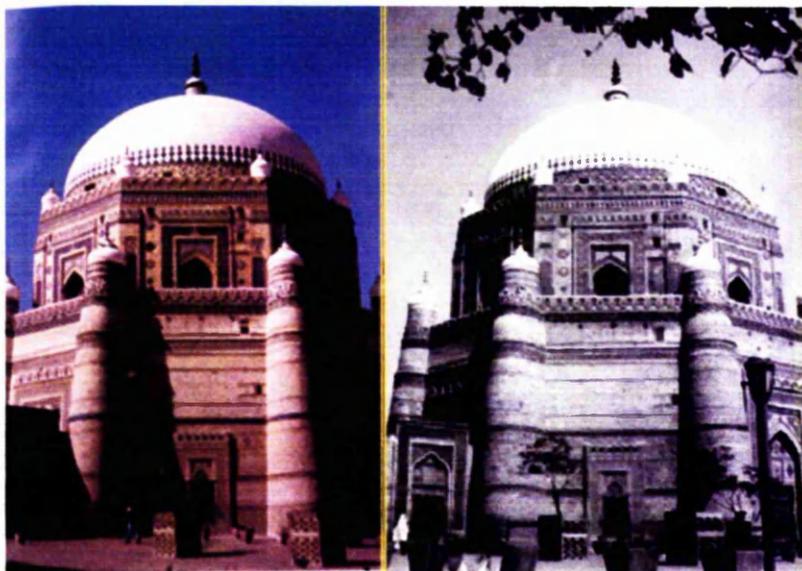


65. Rukn-e-Alam, view of the shrine from the outer compound; tiles on the second storey are hardly visible

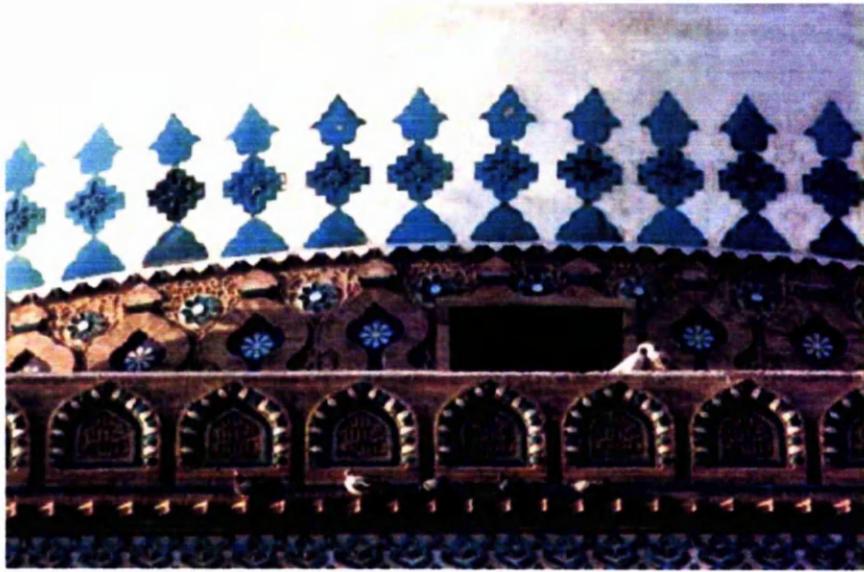


66. Rukn-e-Alam, a closer view from near the entrance. The details of the tiles are still unclear

This placement of the tiles at a height at which they would not be visible from the ground level, their location in a part of the monument accessible only from an exterior sealable entrance, and their citation of the Islamic testament of faith in an unorthodox format, will show the degree to which Shia-Isma'ili beliefs have been carefully incorporated into every design facet of this building.



67. Rukn-e-Alam, the south-eastern sealable entrance leading to the first floor balcony tiles



68. Rukn-e-Alam, a closer view of the tiles on the parapet with a telescopic lens from the ground level

Ahmad Nabi Khan, a restoration authority and architectural historian, writing about the tiles on the first floor parapet (in plate 68) says, 'The merlons have a broad border with a cable design. The inner recessed background is filled with cut brick tiles on which is carved the *kalima* or the Islamic testament of faith within a flat border. In effect, ten flat cut bricks of various sizes have been arranged so as to complete the text of the kalima within the flat border'.<sup>476</sup> However, the inscription of a certain number included as a part of the kalima completely escapes his attention.

The unorthodox kalima configuration of the tiles would strike the attention of anyone familiar with the basic Islamic testament of faith, yet are unnoticed or ignored by the above author who is a Muslim. What is important to note here is that all the merlon tiles are homogeneous and run in a band around the entire circumference of the vast monument. They are placed very candidly on the first floor parapet, but nowhere on the ground floor parapets; these 'floors' of course do not correspond to regular building sizes as the monument is very large. Hence, they are visible only from the first floor circumambulation (see plates 65-68) as even with a telescopic lens their exact details are undecipherable from the ground level.

<sup>476</sup> Khan 1983, p.228.

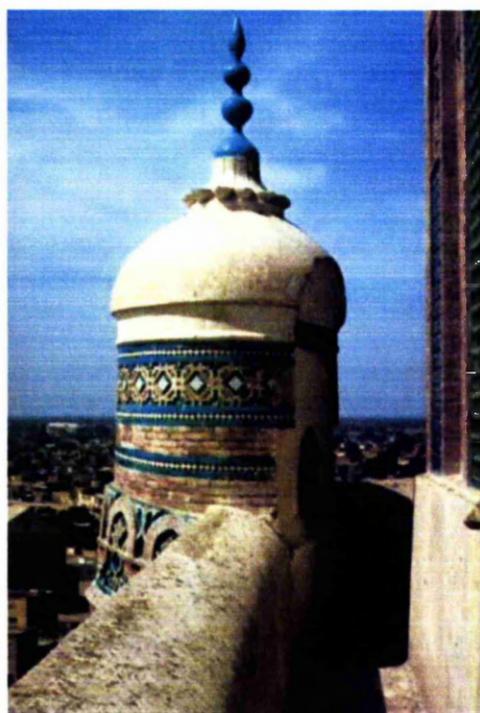


69. Rukn-e-Alam, detail of the first floor parapet merlon tile with the kalima, clearly followed by a '٥', the Shia profession of faith, known as Panjatan in Persian and Urdu, representing the household of the Prophet

The tile detail above clearly expresses an Shia profession of faith in the form of ٥, or Panjatan,<sup>477</sup> placed beside the normative profession of faith, the kalima. If the inscription of the number five was merely arbitrary, its connotation could be questioned. In plain English, since this number is specifically cited as part of the profession of faith, and there are no five caliphs of symbolic significance in Sunnism or any other Islamic sect, this can only be a statement of the monument's adherence to some brand of Shiism. Incidentally this format of use of the number five is specific to Ismailis, and is hardly ever used by Twelver Shia. Some of the traditional insignia of the Ismaili Imams have carried it, and it is present on the current logo for the Institute of Ismaili Studies. Its meaning would be clear to anyone acquainted with Islamic expressions of faith. Moreover, the overall dissimulative elements in the monument, including these tiles, show that this religiosity

<sup>477</sup> This is used to denote the first five Infallibles of Shia Islam, accepted by all sects of Shiism. They are the Prophet, his daughter Fatima, her husband Ali, and their two sons Hasan and Husain, the first, second and third Shia imams respectively.

was discreetly held by the highest authority of the Suhrawardi Order at Multan. In this certain case he would be Baha al-din Zakariya, with whom the construction of this building can be connected as his Madrasa Bahaiya, more than to Rukn-e-Alam or indeed Ghiyath al-din Tughluq.



70. Rukn-e-Alam, view of the circumambulation around the second storey, the parapet of which carries the merlon tiles, with a side buttress in the centre

The image above shows the battlemented circumambulation around the first floor. There is ample space for a group of people to stand guard or witness ceremonies inside, as there are openings into the interior. It is obvious from the sealable entrance leading to the circumambulation area with the Panjatan tiles that this was not a feature accessible to the common visitors to the building. Moreover, the space along the circumambulation suggests that there was movement at that level. This movement was presumably facilitated to keep an eye out while guarding special ceremonies. Such battlemented parapets are not the norm in shrines and tombs, and indicate a militant mindset. Together with the lockable mihrab and its components, these features certify a new ceremonial aspect to the monument which is definitely not that of a funerary monument.

It would be fair to conclude that the conflicting evidence about the construction of the monument, the failure of noted travellers like Ibn Battuta to record it as a tomb, and its existence as a structure prior to Rukn-e-Alam's re-burial in it, all point to the building being a pre-existing Suhrawardi structure in the city. It could not have been a tomb constructed for Rukn-e-Alam while he was buried in Zakariya's shrine. Because of the very estranged relations Rukn-e-Alam and the Multani Suhrawardi shaykhs after him had with the Tughluqs, it is improbable that they would have been allowed to construct or complete such a lavish monument in his name anyway, in the most prized parcel of land in the walled city, i.e. the citadel. The only other function that such a remarkable monument could bear is the Madrasa Bahaiya set up by Zakariya, which is indeed what this building was. As we will see in the next chapter, its counterpart in Uch sprang up to take its place as the Suhrawardi Order in Multan was killed off by Delhi Sultanate.

## Conclusion

This chapter relates architectural evidence to the historical facts about the early Sufi shaykhs of the Suhrawardi Order in Multan, as well as Shams, who did not engage in religious representation through hidden iconography due his open Shia religiosity and cult of personality. Yet the common unorthodox archetype which accommodates Satpanth ideals ties the two entities together. The monument archetype also seems to echo the outward structure of Central Asian Buddhist monasteries, i.e. the three entranced courtyard complex leading into the inner sanctum and then the stupa. Instead the arrangement seems to have been inverted into a monument type. Similar resonances are found in the Sunni adaptation of this Central Asian monastery type under the Ghaznavids and then the Seljuks, through the Four Ivan Mosque plan. But by no means does this suggest that in our case the building type itself has anything to do with Buddhism's impressions on Shams, as his metaphysical debates with Buddhist monks, mentioned in the ginans and other sources, usually end with his victory. Many of his disciples also included Buddhists, especially the Buddhist Queen of Sitpur as identified in Chapter

Two, i.e. Sita Rani.<sup>478</sup>

What can be accurately said about this building type is that it was developed heterogeneously as the congregation of the Satpanth grew, and took into consideration the different design criteria of the attached, i.e. the converted denominations, with everybody bringing in a bit of their own colour. But judging from the ceremonial and historical evidence of the personalities involved, the only inspiration for the completed Suhrawardi archetype can be the 84 khanqah lodges set up by Shams. This is also echoed by the fact that the Satpanth was continued under Shams's descendants, who are dealt with in the next chapter, and whose own shrines prior to their burial in them, were places of Satpanth religious ceremony, all carrying the same archetypical arrangement. The first such conscious application of the Satpanth lodge design to a funerary monument was of course at Sakhi Sarwar. It is just that in the case of the Suhrawardi Order, due to their higher status in 'Society,' i.e. the imperial circle, there was more embellishment as in the case of Zakariya and Rukn-e-Alam.

In addition to the development of the shrine archetype from his simpler Satpanth lodge, extant evidence and the spiritual clout and agency connected to Sham suggest that his shrine and the ceremonies around it have served as the sole progenitors for the application of the Satpanth astrological framework as symbolism on Suhrawardi monuments. These facts make much better sense when one considers the Suhrawardi credentials of Sakhi Sarwar and Zakariya. These ceremonies must predate Shams's death and were in all probability started by himself at the physical location which now houses his shrine, i.e. his lodge, the actual centre of his da'wa in Multan for many decades. This is the place where he settled when he was allowed to come into the walled city, and it must have housed a large complex for these activities before he was buried there. It is highly unlikely that Shams's grandson Sadr al-din, who was based in Uch and financed the current lavish monument over his grave, was responsible for the setting up of these ceremonies from far away.<sup>479</sup> The pure onsite detail and spiritual credentials necessary

---

<sup>478</sup> See Chapter Two, 'The River and the Arrival from Uch.'

<sup>479</sup> Ismailis usually credited him with perfecting the Satpanth.

for the astrological system and the proximity of a sympathetic Suhrawardi Shaykh ruling Multan through proxy would be the primary pre-requisites for such activity. This would not be possible from a distance as in the case of Sadr al-din, who was also a contemporary of the anti-Ismaili Tughluq dynasty.

Extant architectural evidence has been analysed in this chapter to ascertain the development of the shrine archetype from Sathpanth ideals, and to indicate the covert Shia connections of the Suhrawardi Order. There can be no other precedent in Islamic doctrine for the existence and use of such an archetype in this era except medieval Ismailism. In essence it also nearly parallels the development of its Sunni counterpart, i.e. the Four Ivan Mosque Type from similar beginnings under the Ghaznavids in the same region. These two architectural developments which were initiated on the opposite spectrums of Islam, i.e. Sunnism and Shiism, in a bid to assert themselves also complement all the other trends in this era for the two, starting with the Jalali Calendar and the Nizamiyya madrasas under the Seljuks, and Hasan bin Sabbah's opposition to them. The use of jafr in the Rukn-e-Alam monument adds a new dimension to the research. Jafr can be used to prove what is otherwise hidden to the normal eye. This is both in terms of hidden religiosity and functions, and for establishing how these Ismaili Sufis envisaged their environment and controlled and harmonised with it. The decoding of extant inscriptions and symbols through jafr has been indispensable in showing that the Rukn-e-Alam monument was actually the Madrasa Bahaiya. This evidence clearly points to a Shia religiosity in the early Multan Suhrawardi period, which was never openly declared in order to keep political pressures at bay. The rest of the thesis will further to prove this beyond reasonable doubt, in the hope that it will eventually bring out the truth about this order and its legacy in the Indus Valley.

## Chapter 6: The Da'wa and Suhrawardi Monuments at Uch

Nasir al-din

Unlike the Suhrawardi shaykhs of Multan and Uch, and their qalandars and the Jalali dervishes, the sectarian religious credentials of Shams's Ismaili da'i descendants in Uch are neither in question nor disputed. The chronological activity of the da'wa under them in terms of its implicit and known connections to Suhrawardi Sufis gives a very clear picture of what must actually have happened in Uch. The only problem has been the anecdotal misrepresentation of certain da'wa personalities which disturbs the chronological description of their religious activity. This has happened because the ginanic literature emanating from them was written down at a later stage from the oral tradition, and was lost in manuscript form in times of persecution. As we have seen, such difficulties at the hand of the imperial authorities were shared by both the Suhrawardi Order and Shams and his descendants who held the da'wa together.

According to ginanic tradition, Shams's son Nasir al-din (lived 1228-1362) succeeded him to the da'wa, continuing the mission in the Punjab and died in Uch.<sup>480</sup> Shams's family were still based in Khurasan, and Nasir al-din was born in Sabzwar in 1228 at the height of Shams's mission, Qabacha's death, and Zakariya's appointment as Shaykh al-Islam with Ilutmish's occupation of Multan and Uch. Shams had successfully managed to make both Uch and Multan the centre of the da'wa by then, and especially with Qabacha's death all subsequent Ismaili activity is based simultaneously around the two cities according to tradition. Nothing is known of the actual personality, activity and burial place of Nasir al-din, except that he continued the da'wa with full force at Uch.<sup>481</sup> Until this point, Ismaili tradition runs concurrent to generally recorded history, after which it becomes convoluted. It attributes a son to Nasir al-din, called Shihab al-din, who

---

<sup>480</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history706.html> . Most citations for the ismailinet history website are verified as being academically reliable, except where cited on the webpage. They are dependant on academic research by Prof. Ivanow, private papers, and *Nur al-Mubin*, which is a withdrawn text.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

was reportedly born before Nasir al-din, see next footnote for birthdates and who also outlived him, and is sometimes cited as being his contemporary and that of Shams himself, living in the guise of a Hindu ascetic. He is then cited as having seven sons, i.e. Shams's great grandsons, one of whom is Sadr al-din,<sup>482</sup> and who figures as the main known Ismaili personality after Shams heading the da'wa in Uch.

The fact of the matter, as yielded from fieldwork, is that Nasir al-din had a son and not a grandson called Sadr al-din, whose tomb is located at a place called Jethpur near Fatehpur in Bahawalpur district, on the main National Highway, running from north to south in Pakistan. A second source also reports Sadr al-din as one of Shams's grandsons and not his great grandson, and says that he had the monument erected and expanded over Shams's grave in Multan.<sup>483</sup> This fact is cited in the court history of Multan which was used in the last chapter to describe the architectural traits of Shams's monument. The author was a native of Multan who lived through the fire and the partial destruction of the Shams monument in 1773. He was probably well acquainted with the building and presumably consulted the original foundation plaque for its construction by Sadr al-din in 1329, which may have been lost after the fire, making the report more accurate than ginanic tradition in this case. The ginanic tradition postdates this document in its reconstructed format and is therefore prone to anecdotal mistakes, as seen in Chapter Two.

This extra personality of Shihab al-din, included in the usual Ismaili da'wa/pir chain, is attributable to two factors. One was the mistake made by Ivanow,<sup>484</sup> on account of wrong information given to him that was used for the reconstruction of the da'wa chronology. The other is that references used as evidence for Shams's descendants derive from only

---

<sup>482</sup> The statement reads as follows, 'He (Nasir al-din, 1228-1362) was followed by his son Shihab al-din (1212-1373), who lived in the garb of a Hindu saint, and made a large proselytism. He had seven sons, Pir Sadr al-din, Syed Rukn al-din, Syed Badr al-din, Syed Shams al-din II, Syed Nasir al-din, Syed Ghias al-din and Syed Nasir al-din Qalandar Shah': *Ibid*.

<sup>483</sup> Khan 1983, p.190: Mukham Chand, *Tawarikh-e-Zila-e-Multan*. Mukham Chand was a local Hindu noble who compiled a version of the history of Multan for the local Saddozai rulers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1749). His history has not been published, but exists in manuscript form. This would make Nasir al-din the father of the seven sons and not Shihab al-din.

<sup>484</sup> Prof. Ivanow is the renowned Ismailiologist responsible for the reconstruction of Ismaili da'wa chronology.

two sources. One source is the *Nur al-Mubin*, an Ismaili history,<sup>485</sup> and the other is the lineal plaque carved on the monument of one of Shams's descendants, Sultan Ali Akbar, in Multan. In fact *Nur al-Mubin* also relies on the Ali Akbar plaque due to Ivanow's reference to it. To the best of this author's knowledge no other source has been readily used as credible evidence for the compilation of Ismaili history regarding the Shams clan. Moreover, the book that best deals with Indian Shiism, Hollister's *Shia of India*, is surprisingly even more inaccurate about dating the Shams clan. It places the life and da'wa of Sadr al-din inaccurately by more than a century, to the fifteenth century, extending the date for the whole da'wa period forward by implication; and in retrospect misplaces Shams's own personality in time as a result of the inaccurate sources used. Hollister's book also places the Shihab al-din personality between Nasir al-din and Sadr al-din.<sup>486</sup> He cites Ivanow for this inclusion, yet adds that Ivanow had commented on the lack of clarity in the information about these personalities and the details of their lives.<sup>487</sup> Hence, as Ivanow was unsure of the details provided to him during his fieldtrips, one can assume these could be responsible for the mistake in the extra person in the da'wa chain.

Ahmad Nabi Khan, who deals in detail with the monument of Ali Akbar, in spite of his glancing over certain architectural attributes and symbolism, is reliable in terms of architectural history, decoration and the technicalities surrounding them. He describes the inscriptions on the Ali Akbar monument as being unreliable and executed by illiterate craftsmen, with most being later additions made in very bad Arabic and Persian.<sup>488</sup> For whatever reasons, they seem to be a misrepresentation of an earlier genealogy after repairs were made by devotees.<sup>489</sup> The Shams clan's genealogy according to this inscription referred to by Ivanow is,

---

<sup>485</sup> A book about Ismaili saints and Imams, which also contains a genealogy of the Shams clan. It is 180 pages long and first published in 1936.

<sup>486</sup> Hollister 1953, pp.355-358.

<sup>487</sup> Ivanow himself asserts the genealogy of the Pirs i.e. Shams's line as being highly fictitious and concocted in later times to achieve different agendas in succession to the office (of Pir): <http://www.ismaili.net/Source/0723/07231b.html> taken from 'Satpanth,' by Wladimir Ivanow, in *Collectanea*, Vol. 1, (Leiden 1948).

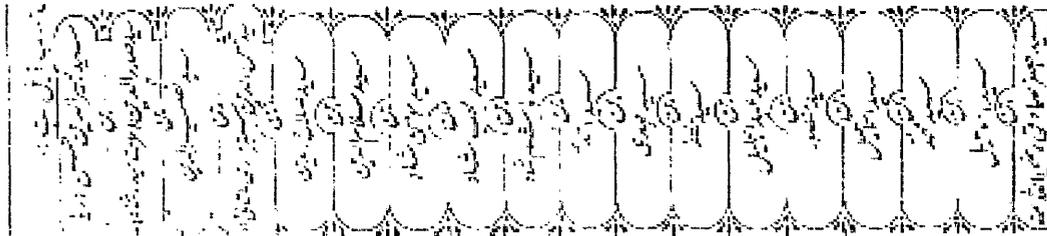
<sup>488</sup> Khan 1983, pp.238, 248-249, footnotes 69-71.

<sup>489</sup> Khan 1983, p.238. Khan states that the interior bears many latter day writings in Persian and Gujrati (Khojki), yet to be deciphered, bearing dates like 1193/1779, 1194/1780 and 1222/1807, which may refer to

پیر مہد سلطان علی اکبر بن مہد موسیٰ بن مہد اسلام الدین بن مہد کبیر الدین بن مہد صدر الدین بن  
 مہد شہاب الدین بن مہد نصیر الدین بن مہد شمس الدین بن مہد صلاح الدین بن مہد اسلام الدین  
 بن مہد مومن شاہ بن مہد خالد بن مہد مشتاق بن مہد احمد بن مہد ہاشم بن مہد محمد بن مہد ہادی  
 بن مہد غالب بن مہد عبدالجمال بن مہد منصور بن مہد مسافر بن مہد امام الدین بن مہد نور محمد بن  
 مہد اسمعیل بن مہد امام جعفر بن مہد امام محمد باقر بن مہد امام زین العابدین بن مہد مہد حسین بن مہد امام  
 شاہ مردان علی کرم اللہ وجہہ بن ابی طالب و محمد مصطفیٰ بن عبد اللہ و ابو طالب پر دوایتی عبدالمنظف  
 بن ہاشم بن عبد مناف

71. Ali Akbar's lineage, with Shihab al-din as Nasir al-din's son, as found inscribed on the monument (Khan 1983, p.247, note 69)

If Shihab al-din was indeed a real person who was responsible for large proselytism in the vicinity of Uch, where his father Nasir al-din lived and died,<sup>490</sup> and as celebrated a da'i as that would imply, a monument or sarcophagus must have been erected for him. Since the situation at Multan was very anti-Shia after Rukn-e-Alam's time, this tomb should normally be found around Uch, but there is no sign or mention of him in local folklore or otherwise. The only burial complex for the Shams clan near Uch is the monument to Sadr al-din in Jethpur, in Bahawalpur district; while just outside Uch proper is the burial place for Sadr al-din's son and successor, Hasan Kabir al-din. Such high profile burials for these two descendants and for Shams himself should imply at least some burial evidence, and mention in folklore, for Shihab al-din, but his grave and person are nowhere to be found in the folklore at Uch.



72. Hasan Kabir al-din's lineage from Shams, which excludes the person of Shihab al-din altogether: Hafiz 1931, p.152

later repairs. The foundation stone of the monument dates from 1585, the time of Akbar's reign, with a difference of two centuries between it and the above Khojki inscriptions.

<sup>490</sup>See <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history706.html> .

The previously unknown book called *Tarikh-e-Uch* discovered during the fieldtrip, which has been central in identifying the Chetir ceremony connected to Surkhposh's own urs before Partition in Chapter Three, has a different lineal chart for the Shams clan. It was published in 1931 in Bahawalpur and its author, as a local notable attached to the court of the princely Bahawalpur State, has cited in it information otherwise inaccessible. He collected the information from the descendants of Hasan Kabir al-din who were also the custodians of his shrine, with whom he had cordial relations. He mentions the names of these custodians through whom he reconstructed Shams's genealogy. Since they were relatively undisturbed in terms of their succession as shrine administrators in Uch, due to the Bahawalpur State's isolation from the Sikh kingdom and British India, the information from them is naturally more trustworthy. This information, included in the fieldtrip notes is probably much more accurate than what has been available so far.<sup>491</sup>

In the genealogical chart from the new evidence (plate 70), Shihab al-din is omitted altogether. In the chronology of events that follow, the person called Shihab al-din in the current Ismaili version of history does not exist, and after Shams it was his son Pir Nasir al-din who had seven sons, not Shihab al-din. These included his famous son, the da'i Sadr al-din, who according to Ismaili tradition had the most profound impact on the da'wa in the region, in expanding missionary activity, and giving a certain shape to the Khoja community. His mausoleum is located outside Uch, so this movement also signifies the expansion of the daw'a. He either erected or greatly added to the monument over the grave of his grandfather Shams in Multan, as reported in a cited court history of Multan from the eighteenth century. Sadr al-din had a son called Hasan Kabir al-din, who succeeded him as leader of the da'wa and is buried in Uch.

It would be reasonable to conclude on the basis of *Tawarikh-e-Zila-e-Multan* (The Histories of Multan District) which reports Sadr al-din explicitly as Shams's grandson

---

<sup>491</sup> Hafiz 1931, p.151: Mohammad Hafiz al-Rahman, *Tarikh-e-Uch*, Bahawalpur. His citation of the names of three generations of the shrine's keepers during his own lifetime also implies close association with them. He gives their names as Sayyid Turab Shah, followed by his son Sayyid Abdul Qadir Shah, followed by his descendants whom the author knew personally at the time this book was written.

and not his great grandson,<sup>492</sup> the discreditable Shams clan genealogy on the Ali Akbar monument, the lack of any burial evidence for Shihab al-din in Uch altogether, and the new da'wa/pir chronology that was obtained from the Hasan Kabir al-din shrine custodians in *Tarikh-e-Uch* omitting him from the chain, that Shihab al-din is indeed a fictitious and anecdotal character. He must have come about due to a mistake at some point in oral ginanic transmission, which was interrupted for long periods in times of persecution, being re-recorded in the current format. More than anything, the name seems to suggest that it was a title, probably for Nasir al-din, about whom nothing is known due to his ascetic lifestyle. He probably became misrepresented as a second personality in the da'wa because the dates pertaining to both Nasir al-din (1228-1362) and Shihab al-din (1212-1373) are nearly contemporaneous.<sup>493</sup> It is very important to clearly establish a descriptive chronology of the personalities and life spans of the Ismaili pirs, for the comparison of their religious roles to their contemporary Suhrawardi shaykhs, and the part this played in the spiritual life of the city of Uch.

If the date for Nasir al-din's birth is correct, it would show his da'wa activity, i.e. after Shams's death in Multan (d.1276) as coinciding with that of Zakariya's (d. 1262) ascetic minded son Sadr al-din Arif (d.1285) who had a dispute with the authorities.<sup>494</sup> Considering the connection of the da'wa to the Suhrawardi Order, and Shams's own centre in Multan, Sadr al-Arif's dispute with the emperor Balban's son in Multan could be a reason for Nasir al-din moving the da'wa to Uch. In Uch he would have been a contemporary to Surkhposh himself who died in 1291.<sup>495</sup> His description in Ismaili sources as living under the guise of a yogi also endorses this. From then, especially later on, due to Muhammad Tughluq's (ruled 1325-1351) military campaigns, and Firuz Shah's (ruled 1351-1388) self proclaimed anti-heretic massacres, which must have been around Multan, the Ismaili da'wa under Shams's descendants must have naturally retreated to Uch for refuge.

---

<sup>492</sup> Khan 1983, p.190: Mukham Chand, *Tawarikh-e-Zila-e-Multan*

<sup>493</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history706.html>

<sup>494</sup> See Chapter One, 'Shaykh Sadr al-din Arif.'

<sup>495</sup> Sindhi 2000, p.412.

Yet all this does not resolve the mystery of the burial place of Shams's son Nasir al-din, which is reported to be in Uch. The monument of Hasan Kabir al-din is also known locally as the shrine of Shams's son. There is a second grave, larger and more prominent, adjacent to Hasan Kabir al-din's own grave in his monument. This could be the grave of Nasir al-din. The monument that became Hasan Kabir al-din's mausoleum was originally his family house, with Uch being the centre of the da'wa for three generations. His father Sadr al-din was also buried in a house in Jethpur, which was not their property, but that of a devotee. Therefore, it is most probable that the possession of the house in Uch dated back to Shams himself, and that Nasir al-din was already buried (or reburied) there before Hasan Kabir al-din. This is also judging from the tradition of burial in houses, which would ensure greater security for the grave in the post Rukn-e-Alam anti-Shia environment in the region. The loss of the grave of the inheritor of the da'wa after Shams is not explicable to the rational mind, knowing of the cult of personality attached to the da'is as *Auliya* or the highest level Sufis locally. The grave of Shams's son could not have just disappeared, and his presumable burial in a family property makes sense, as Surkhposh was also eventually re-interred next to his son Ahmad Kabir in the khanqah in Uch, after two initial burials.

#### Sadr al-din

Nasir al-din's son and successor, Pir Sadr al-din, one of the best known and revered da'is in the Indian Ismaili tradition, was born in Sabzwar in Iran, probably in 1300.<sup>496</sup> Now it has been established that he was Shams's grandson and not his great-grandson. Not much else is known or has been written about Sadr al-din beyond his da'wa activities and their chronological description as available in anecdotal Ismaili history from the ginanic tradition. He is said to have been responsible for consolidating the da'wa and its organisation from the Shams era, of what became the Ismaili *Khojas* into a proper Ismaili community, and that he operated from Uch. Judging from his birth date he must have

---

<sup>496</sup>: <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history711.html> .

been at his peak, or around forty years of age, in the reigns of Muhammad Tughluq and later Firuz Shah and their Shia massacres, so his stay in Uch like that of his father Nasir al-din makes sense.

The book *Tarikh-e-Uch* is one of the few texts outside Ismaili sources which actually mentions the monument of Sadr al-din. It is called the tomb of Hasan Kabir al-din's father, at *tehsil* or sub-district Allahabad, in the former princely state of Bahawalpur.<sup>497</sup> The actual monument is now located at a distance of 60 kilometres from Uch proper, on the main National Highway, and the sub-district is now called Fatehpur (previously Allahabad), in Bahawalpur district, in the Punjab province.

The small settlement attached to the tomb is called Jethpur.<sup>498</sup> The main da'wa was still based in Uch under Sadr al-din, but towards the end of his life he spent more time in the vicinity of Jethpur. Here an eminent local, a certain Niyab bin Kamal of Bahawalpur who was Sadr al-din's follower, built a house for him.<sup>499</sup> It is related that once he was in the house of Niyab bin Kamal, he was stricken by his last illness. Niyab wept profusely when he found that his pir was about to depart from the world. Sadr al-din made a will instructing that his body should be buried in the house. When he died in 1416, he was interred in the house of Niyab bin Kamal, which was subsequently converted into a shrine in 1648 by the local people.<sup>500</sup> This report would imply a strong enough Ismaili presence in the town at this point in history to have achieved the creation of the shrine.

The religious situation, with an eminent local as a devotee, the grave of the da'i in his house and the attached town being called Jethpur, suggests the popularisation of Shia ceremonies according to the local calendar, as explained in Chapter Two. The name Jethpur or the city of Jeth points towards the religious ceremony at Shams's shrine related to the celebration of 'Ashura according to the Vikrami calendar, on 28 Jeth, which

---

<sup>497</sup> Hafiz 1931, p.151.

<sup>498</sup> Hollister 1953, p.357, also see <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history712.html> .

<sup>499</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history712.html> .

<sup>500</sup> Hollister 1953, p.357.

signifies 10 Muharram.<sup>501</sup> This is a widely observed ceremony attributed to the Ismaili da'wa, and more importantly to Shams himself. This Jethpur-'Ashura connection is endorsed further as according to Ismaili sources Sadr al-din's disciples were given ethical and moral teachings through a simple understanding of the Satpanth,<sup>502</sup> which would be based on basic Shia themes, necessarily including 'Ashura and martyrdom.

Ismaili literature reports in considerable detail that the process of Sadr al-din's religious initiation was Sufi in nature with strong Shia-Ismaili undertones.<sup>503</sup> This is not to say that previous da'wa proponents did not have the same approach, as we have established the existence of a very close connection between the Suhrawardi Order, and Shams and the da'wa in Multan, and in the region as a whole. The case of Uch takes a new turn, because Sadr al-din's son, Hasan Kabir al-din, was openly known as a practising Suhrawardi Sufi, which could only have been possible through his association with the head of the Uch Suhrawardi Order at the time, i.e. Surkhposh's grandson Jahangasht. Jahangasht was Sadr al-din's contemporary in Uch.<sup>504</sup> As previously explained in the discussion of the Jalali Dervishes, it would be unreasonable to doubt that Jahangasht and Sadr al-din collaborated closely.

Hence, Sufi teachings with a Shia-Ismaili essence, imparted by Sadr al-din as basic Satpanth to his newly reorganised Khoja community, were probably conceptually the same as those professed by Jahangasht and the Suhrawardi Order under the Jalali Dervish banner, albeit at the highest levels of initiation. It would be needless to state that these would revolve around Shia themes, i.e. the wilayat of Ali, Kerbala, etc. In terms of the Khojas, to keep things simpler for a non-ascetic trading community, Sadr al-din obviously toned down the Satpanth to the observation of Shia dates according to the local calendar, hence the Jethpur and 'Ashura connection. Of course a simpler celebration of Nauroz as the wilayat of Ali, without its metaphysical and astrological components, would be required. This simple Nauroz celebration is something that still continues in the

---

<sup>501</sup> See Chapter Two, 'Chetir, Chaharshamba-yi Suri and a Vedic Nauroz.'

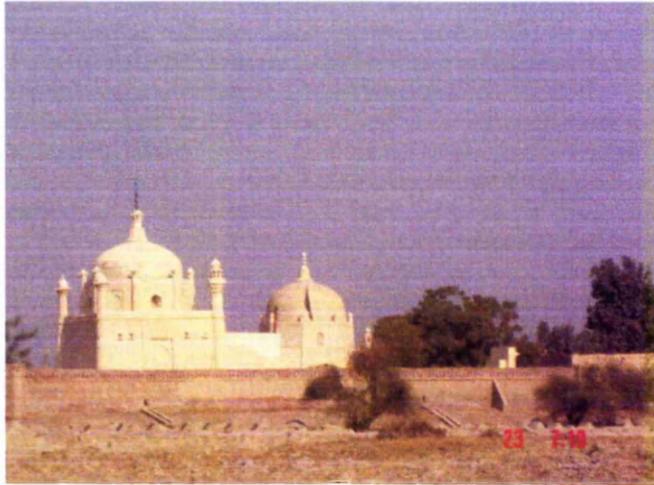
<sup>502</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history712.html>.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*

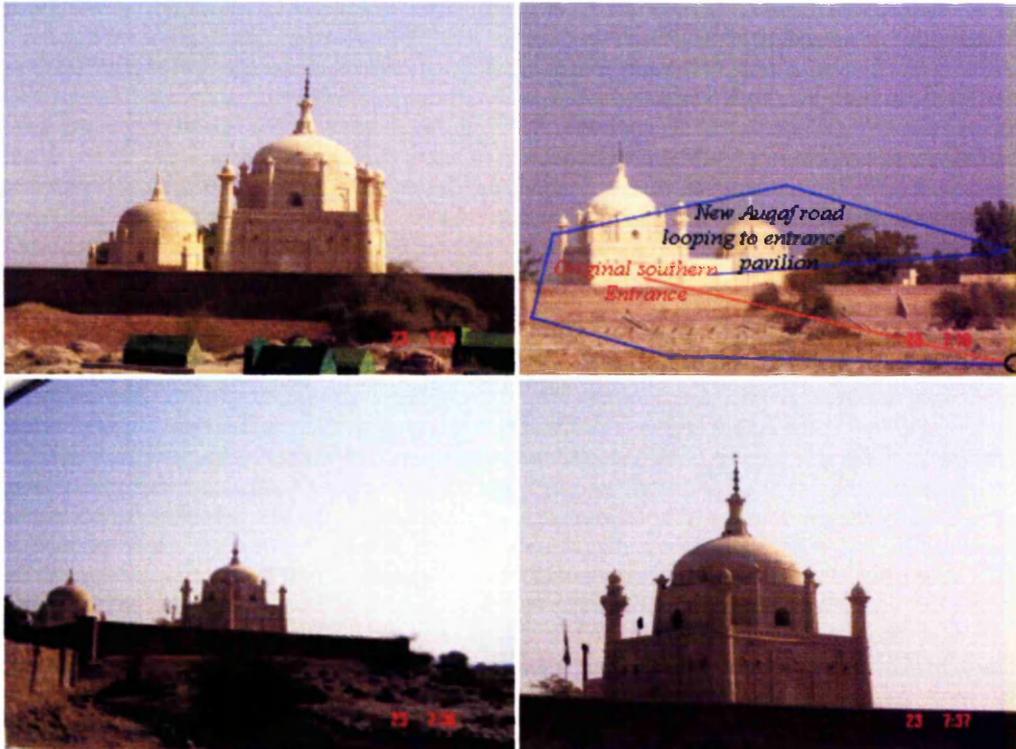
<sup>504</sup> Jahangasht (1308) was born eight years after Sadr al-din: Rizvi 1986, vol.1, p.277.

Khoja community to this day. The sheer difference of scale between Multan, a medieval metropolis, and Uch in its smaller provincial setting (although a much larger city than it is now), changes the physical proximity of the relationship between the da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order, making it much easier to string them together. Ismailis usually credit Sadr al-din as propounding the Satpanth, but it has been seen from previous chapters that it was Shams who authored this doctrine based on earlier Ismaili metaphysics. Sadr al-din was indeed responsible for its dissemination to large numbers of his reorganised Khoja community on the level of a basic ceremonial template with Shia themes, as inferred from Jethpur, as these already existed from Shams's time. Prior to this reorganisation, the Shamsis or Shams's local followers must have suffered terrible losses in the post-Shams era with the Tughluq massacres. Hence Sadr al-din can be seen as the reorganiser of Satpanth, but not the one who set it up. But he also has his own contributions to the expansion of the Satpanth belief system, which will be seen later in the chapter.

The compound in Jethpur, where the Sadr al-din shrine is located, is physically slightly removed from the main road and the town of Fatehpur. It has an access road leading to it, and has only a few shops and buildings around it. Judging from its present state, however, the monument has undergone many restorations, which seem to have been harsher than those found at other Shia-Ismaili shrines. The original decorative tiles had apparently been lost at a much earlier stage, or had just fallen off; and the remainder were removed by the Auqaf, being too expensive to restore. Although the building has lost all its tiles, and any original iconographic decoration which would reflect the multi-faith symbolism that might be expected in its undisturbed format, the important multi-axial arrangement of the three entrances is still decipherable and signifies the Suhrawardi monument archetype. The original access was from the south, as may also be deduced from the road leading to the monument, which has for the most part been re-built on the original unpaved track. In itself, this is evidence of the southern entrance being the major entrance since it is the first facade of the monument visible upon approach from the road. Therefore in terms of its monumental approach, the building verifies the Suhrawardi archetype for the Sadr al-din shrine.

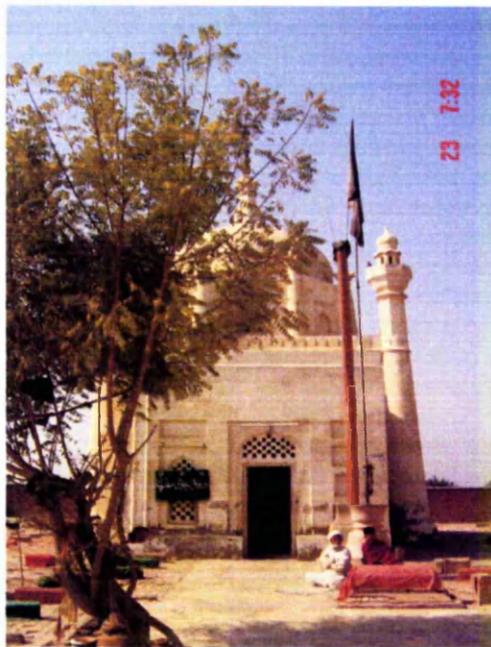


73. Sadr al-din, on first approach from the road, the first visible facade is the southern facade; the eastern pavilion added later is visible on the right



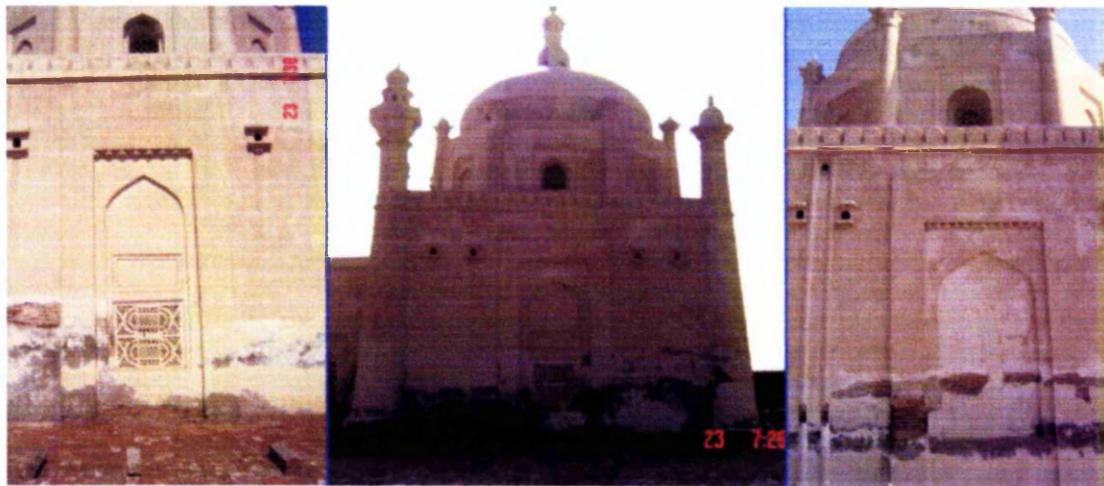
74. Sadr al-din (anti-clockwise from top right), a) the conjecture point (in blue) in the new access road from the original southern path (in orange) leading to the southern entrance, b) the western Mecca facade as seen after the loop in the road (notice graves at a tangent to Mecca), c) new access road looping further from the western to the northern facade, finally coming to rest at the eastern entrance, d) close up of western and northern facades with the new boundary wall in the foreground, and the new eastern pavilion entrance with Shia 'alam or standard at the rear

The Auqaf have recently carried out the upkeep and repair of the monument, including the approach road, but the road has probably been in this format for a few decades, as the monument has been under the Auqaf since 1961. It completely disregards the straight axial approach to the main southern entrance of the complex. Instead, it loops at a point of conjecture of 500 metres before the monument, clearly turning left (west) away from it, and by-passing the southern facade altogether (plate 74a). It then circles around the entire western (Mecca direction) facade and the complex, and back around the northern edge to come to the eastern entrance. It seems very unlikely that this was done by mistake, or was a coincidence, as the eastern entrance itself has been embellished to emphasise the new axis. The arrangement bears all the hallmarks of an Auqaf executed Sunnization, as explained through Highland's thesis in the last chapter, aimed at emphasising only the Mecca direction for entrance, which is also to be seen at other shrines. The compound wall around the complex, built of burnt brick, is very recent as compared to the monument, lending further proof that the changes are also recent.



75. Sadr al-din, re-oriented main eastern entrance, with the added pavilion in the foreground. His grave inside lies at a tangent to the entrance

The access road loops around the complex, as explained, and comes to rest right in front of the eastern entrance (plate 75). The monument has been made to fit the orthodox Sunni Islamic archetype in terms of axiology and approach, with the eastern entrance functioning and serving as the only means of access. It points straight towards the mihrab wall and Mecca (west) upon entrance to the building, with Sadr al-din's grave lying at a tangent to it, along strict orthodox Sunni lines. A pavilion has been added to the eastern entrance to further emphasise the Mecca direction (plate 75).



76. Sadr al-din facades (from left to right), a) southern entrance door sealed with carved screen, b) northern entrance sealed in a similar fashion, with new eastern pavilion periphery visible on its left, c) the western mihrab, and the Mecca facing facade in its original format-notice the difference in its apparent execution

To complete the transformation, the northern and southern facades have been sealed off, but not without leaving evidence of the original configuration (plate 76). This is endorsed by the western mihrab facade from the outside, visibly being the only original blind niche; the other two obviously having been filled up later (above). Both Sadr al-din's monument and that of his son, Hasan Kabir al-din, have been re-aligned and redecorated over a number of years by the Auqaf.<sup>505</sup>

<sup>505</sup> Due to lack of space the description of the activities of the Auqaf department and their policy to stamp out Shia-Ismaili heritage has been kept to a minimum. It formerly comprised a whole chapter of the thesis, but now may be published in the post doctoral stage.

This rediscovered three entranced archetype in the Sadr al-din monument makes for a continued ceremonial use of space and entrances through the Satpanth amongst Ismaili da'is from the time of Shams. This is important as after Shams, in terms of overt Ismailism as opposed to the Suhrawardi Order, Sadr al-din played the greatest role in the propagation of Satpanth beliefs, either at the basic level through his Khoja community, or through own his metaphysical theses. He was also involved with other religious communities, and the monument archetype in his case, which must necessarily have been the conversion of his disciple's house into a simple Shamsi lodge, accounts for the many levels of initiates and religious denominations guided by him who were devoted to his congregation, as reported by ginanic tradition.<sup>506</sup>

#### Hasan Kabir al-din

The monument of Hasan Kabir al-din, son of Sadr al-din, who has been identified by us to be the great-grandson of the Ismaili da'i Shams, is located to the east of Uch, outside the city walls and east of the Gilani quarter. One has to cross a canal located behind the Gilani quarter to reach the monument. His monument was wrongly described by Ivanow as belonging to Shams himself.<sup>507</sup> This mistake may be the additional reason for Hollister's incorrect dating of Shams, Sadr al-din and the whole Ismaili da'wa by a hundred years in relation to its original setting in his otherwise commendable work *The Shia of India*.

According to the Ismaili tradition, Hasan Kabir al din was born in Uch in 1341. The first Ismaili pir to be born in India, he died in 1449.<sup>508</sup> Local sources state that he was born in 1316 and died in 1490, living almost 180 years.<sup>509</sup> In this case, the Ismaili version or a date closer to it seems realistic, as his father Sadr al-din was born around 1300. Whatever

<sup>506</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history712.html> .

<sup>507</sup> Hollister 1953, p.355: W. Ivanow 'The sect of the Imam Shah in Gujarat' in *JBRS.*, xii (1936) 33. Ivanow attributes the monument at Uch belonging to Hasan Kabir al-din, to Shams himself. According to Ahmad Nabi Khan, the confusion arises from the misreading of a ginan which recorded Shams's place of burial as Uch instead of Multan.

<sup>508</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history713.html>

<sup>509</sup> Hafiz 1931, p.151.

his actual date of birth, like his father Sadr al-din he was a younger contemporary of Surkhposh's grandson Jahangasht (lived 1308-1384), the head of the Suhrawardi Order at Uch. His life span of 180 years must be an exaggeration. However, Hasan Kabir al-din's advanced age, as mentioned here from a second previously un-consulted local document, i.e. *Tarikh-e-Uch*, clarifies further details about the anecdotal misplacement of Shams's personality in two different periods, which has permeated from local folklore into published works like those of Ivanow and Hollister. There also seems to be great confusion about the actual age of the original Shams of Multan, and his exact place in history. He is accurately known to have died in 1276,<sup>510</sup> but is reported as living to 171 years in a later century by some Ismaili sources.<sup>511</sup> At some point, it seems that local folklore, as given to Ivanow, mixes the hagiographic personality of Shams with that of Hasan Kabir al-din.

The wrong attribution to Shams by Ivanow of the monument of Hasan Kabir al-din in Uch due to the misreading of a ginan, combined with the advanced age of Hasan Kabir al-din mixed in with Shams's local hagiography, seem to be the likely reasons for this confusion in scholarly literature. In short, the mistakes revolve around the birth and death dates of Hasan Kabir al-din being superimposed upon Shams's. This confusion had impeded the objective establishment of a religious connection between Ismaili da'is and their contemporary Sufis; as due to the number of anecdotal Noah-like personalities associated with the da'wa in any one period, no one would take such an effort seriously. With the Nasir al-din and Shibab al-din controversy resolved, and a precise time period of religious activity and monumental burial established for Shams's descendants in Uch, it is possible to discern a much clearer picture of Ismaili da'is, their religious methodology, and the metaphysical approaches they shared with the Suhrawardi Sufis.

---

<sup>510</sup> Accurately living to 111 years, and died near contemporaneously to Zakariya in 1162: Khan 1983, p.205. Zawahir Moir believes that Shams was murdered.

<sup>511</sup> According to Ismaili sources, Pir Shams passed away in 1356: <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history706.html> .

Ismaili history mentions that Hasan Kabir al-din had close associations with local Sufis,<sup>512</sup> and he is mentioned in some Ismaili references as being a Suhrawardi. Hollister has nothing to say about his life or religious associations except a few lines citing the dates of his birth and death.<sup>513</sup> It must be asserted that contrary to the popular practice of initiation into several Sufi orders in India, which had become the norm at some point in Sufi circles around Delhi, in Uch these Ismaili associations could only have been to the Suhrawardi Order, given the Shia -Ismaili credentials of the latter. Moreover, the Gilanis, the only major Sunni order in the region, had come to Uch after Hasan Kabir al-din's time.<sup>514</sup> There is no mention of any notable Chishti khanqah around Uch in this period; in essence it was from the time of Shams an undeterred stronghold of Shiism against Sunni Turkic expansion, something it still remains to this day, with all its Ismaili and Suhrawardi shrines active as Twelver monuments.

According to Hafiz al-Rahman's *Tarikh-e-Uch*, which was instrumental in resolving the Shibab al-din/Nasir al-din controversy, Hasan Kabir al-din was a Suhrawardi Sufi, and spent his life preaching its doctrines. But then the book makes a very profound statement (in the context of pre-Partition Uch in the 1930s), saying that although most Ismaili Khojas of Uch have converted to the Twelver faith, the (remaining) elders of the Ismaili faith have always been associated to the Suhrawardi Order for reasons of dissimulation.<sup>515</sup> It must be remembered that Hafiz obtained the genealogical chart that has clarified the da'wa chain, and any other information about this subject, from the custodians of Hasan Kabir al-din's shrine, whose names have been previously cited. It is also noteworthy, that the Archaeological Survey of India, whose records from the British Library yielded the details and photographs of the shrines of Shams and Zakariya, has nothing to say about the Uch monuments in any of its reports consulted, because these were in the princely State of Bahawalpur, where the British had no jurisdiction. Because of its isolated setting and an undisturbed government, this state probably retained some religious trends that were otherwise absorbed into the larger dynamic of the surrounding

---

<sup>512</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history713.html> .

<sup>513</sup> Hollister 1953, p.357.

<sup>514</sup> Abu Abdullah Ghaus Gilani, popularly known as 'Mahbub-e-Subhani' first came to Uch mid 1400s: Sindhi 2000, p.84.

<sup>515</sup> Hafiz 1931, pp.151-152.

region. That is why due credence can be attached to Hafiz's report on the Suhrawardi association with Ismailism surviving until the near contemporary era in Uch, which lay in the Bahawalpur state.<sup>516</sup> A more objective argument to that of Hafiz's would be that Hasan Kabir al-din openly belonged to the Suhrawardi Order and was also an Ismaili da'i. It seems that at some point, in the limited environment of Uch, the two entities had an open collaboration as opposed to the dissimulation of the Multan era, and its resonances continued till the pre-Partition days, after which in 1955 the Bahawalpur princely state was absorbed into Pakistan. Hafiz states that Hasan Kabir al-din's present day descendants are all Twelver Shia, known as the Shamsi Sayyids of Uch.<sup>517</sup>

The monument of Hasan Kabir al-din is reminiscent of the traditional Suhrawardi archetype, and also retains some Panjatan-inspired iconography in its original decoration motifs. Unlike at Sadr al-din, where the original path leading to the shrine gives a clue to the southern facade as having been the main entrance, the major access road at Hasan Kabir al-din now comes only from the east in strict Islamic fashion. The recent settlement around the monument impedes the discovery of other lost approaches, and gives the impression that the monument was always oriented in this orthodox manner. This is not necessarily the case; only that the eastern entrance had been propped up at some point in time preceding local settlement, with loss of physical evidence of other approaches. The monument has been under Auqaf control since 1961.

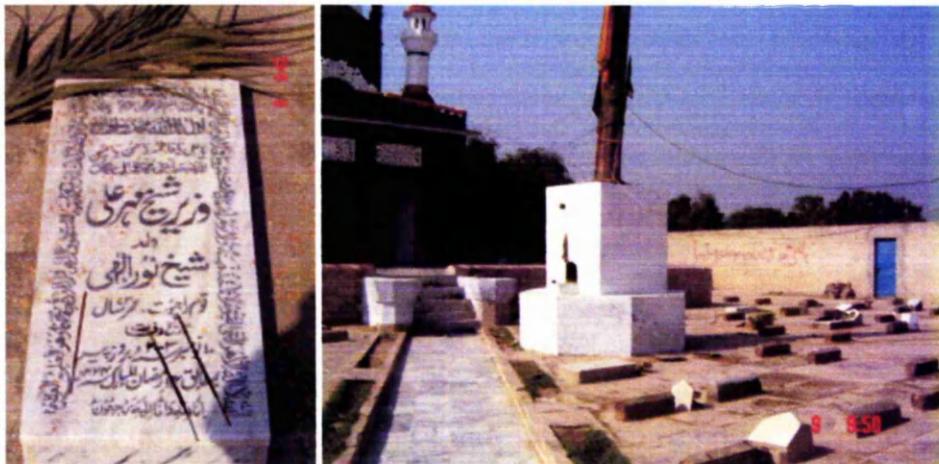
---

<sup>516</sup> The Bahawalpur State was set up in 1690.

<sup>517</sup> Hafiz 1931, pp.151-152.



stage. All the local Ismaili notables are still buried here, including the late Shaykh Mehr Ali, minister to the Punjab government.

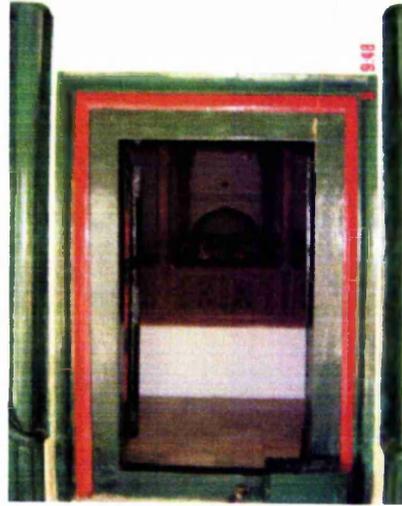


78. The Hasan Kabir al-din Ismaili graveyard. Left, grave of prominent local Ismaili, right, Ismaili graveyard inside compound wall



79. Hasan Kabir al-din, re-aligned approaches. Left, new eastern complex gate, right, shrine entrance pavilion, notice ribbed arches and turret canopies in Mughal style

The monument has recently been restored by the Auqaf Department with disastrous results. The restoration has changed the original design and decoration characteristics. A new eastern entrance gate to the monument complex has been added in late Mughal style, in addition to the building's entrance pavilion on the eastern facade emphasising the Mecca direction (see plate 79), in the likeness of the Sadr al-din monument. The whole building has further been painted green and white to give an overall orthodox Islamic effect. The original use of pointed arches in the building has been disregarded in the changes, by the introduction of ribbed Mughal arches at the entrance gate (left, plate 79). No such style is characteristic of the original era of the monument, which relied on pointed arches and related decoration. These changes, like at Sadr al-din, collectively suggest that design altering changes have certainly taken place.<sup>519</sup>

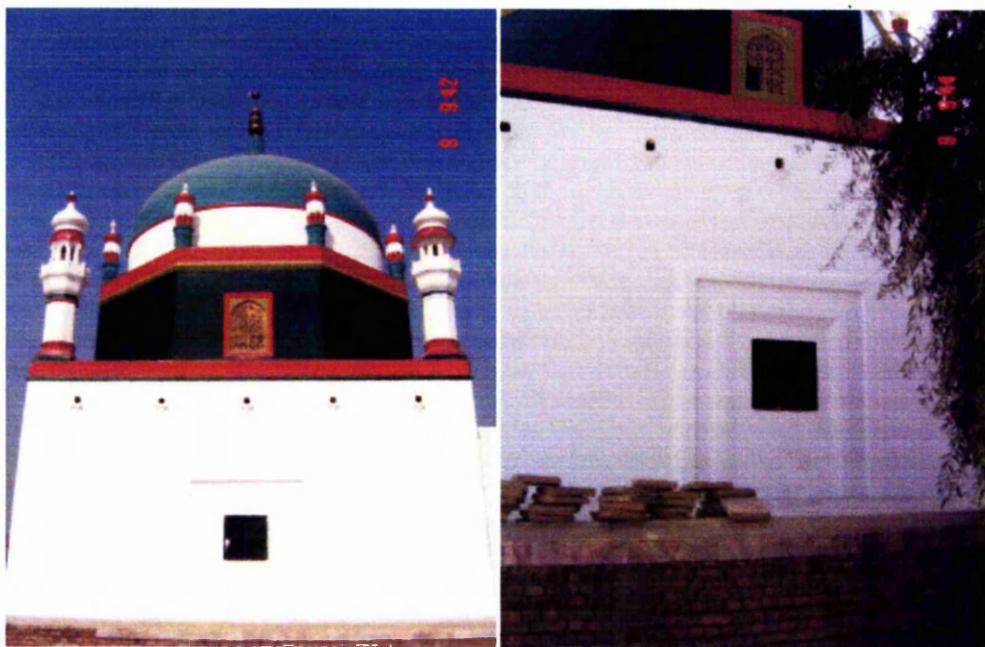


80. Hasan Kabir al-din, eastern entrance to shrine, with the grave at a tangent to it and the mihrab in the background. There is a second, larger and flatter grave in the sarcophagus, mostly hidden by the wooden screen in front of the visible one which may belong to Nasir al-din

---

<sup>519</sup> Such changes are characteristic of the Auqaf department's policy to re-align Shia shrines along orthodox Sunni design principles, as hypothesised by Delbert Highlands. The department sees the latter day Mughal archetype as the ideal type for Islamic monuments. This policy is being pursued actively, but its details fall outside the historical context of this thesis. As mentioned the work done on the subject during the fieldtrip may be published later.

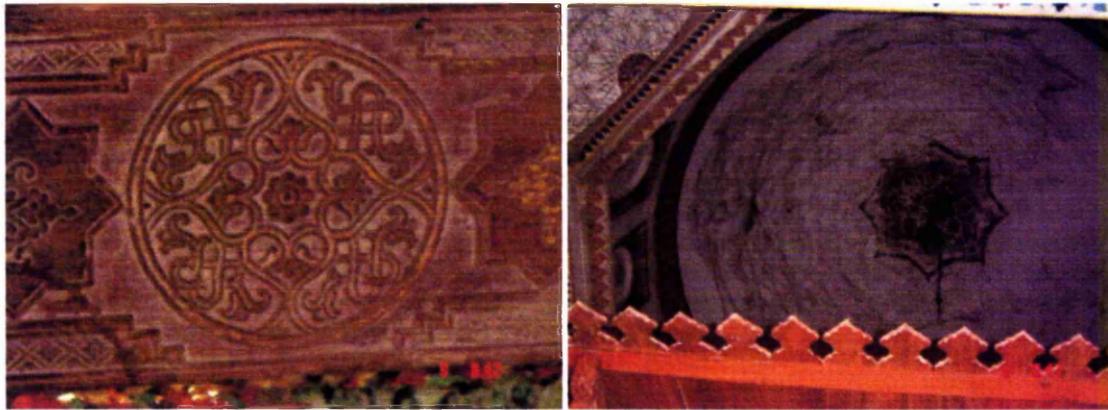
As in the Sadr al-din monument, the new eastern pavilion leads into the only remaining entrance to the building. Once inside, one immediately faces the grave at a tangent and the mihrab in the background, in strict Sunni orthodox fashion (plate 80).<sup>520</sup> The only blind facade originally, with the outward tapering mihrab niche on it in the likeness of Rukn-e-Alam, as seen in the 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph (see plate 77) and now lost, was the western facade. Restoration evidence suggests that there were entrances on all the other three facades, the major one being to the south as emphasised above, as is archetypically the case with Suhrawardi monuments. Now one faces Mecca on entrance, and the original Suhrawardi entrances on the south and the north have been shut off, leaving small windows in their place (plate 81, below).



81. Hasan Kabir al-din, left, sealed southern entrance, right, sealed northern entrance

---

<sup>520</sup> Islamic burial tradition requires that a body must be buried at a tangent to Mecca, in such a fashion that it can get up, turn right, and walk towards the Holy City at the time of resurrection.



82. Hasan Kabir al-din, left, Panjatan-inspired carved seal on a wooden course which runs around the interior of the monument, right, the interior of the dome remains untouched for now, notice the glitzy marble inlay being added below it

In spite of the major loss of heritage that has occurred at the Hasan Kabir al-din shrine, there are still some apparent signs of Shiism in decoration, beyond his Ismaili personality and its already established Suhrawardi archetype. These are not hidden or disguised as Hasan Kabir al-din was openly an Ismaili da'i. The interior of the monument bears a narrow rosewood panel that runs around the whole of the interior. It is carved with periodic seals bearing a motif that is derived from the number five (۵) in traditional Ismaili fashion (see plate 82). Surprisingly this has survived, perhaps because it has so far escaped the attention of the Auqaf, like the Panjatan tiles at Rukn-e-Alam. The remainder of the interior is in the process of renovation, with the usual glitzy and iconoclastic Auqaf handiwork in progress (see plate 82, right). The presence of the seal invokes the possibility of the existence of such iconographic decoration at Sadr al-din and perhaps at the Shams monument before their loss.

Not all the alterations at Sadr al-din and Hasan Kabir al-din are attributable to the latest renovations by the Auqaf department, as the process of Sunnization is cumulative and the slow loss of original design characteristics probably started much earlier. However, these two seem to be the only cases involving such large scale changes to the original format, which include re-orientation of both building entrance and monument access along orthodox lines. Incidentally, both the monuments belong to well-known Ismaili da'is, and

it is likely that the Auqaf made a more concerted effort in the light of this. This degree of change was also probably feasible because these are comparatively smaller monuments in a semi-rural setting, making such alterations financially viable and without any opposition from local devotees, who are mostly deprived people lacking the means to resist state apparatus.

## The Surkhposh khanqah and adjoining monuments: burial history and construction

The Surkhposh khanqah is probably the oldest monument in Uch related to the Suhrawardi Order. Some architectural historians have wrongly attributed its construction to the seventeenth century, depending on folkloric reports about Surkhposh's re-burial there at the time. This belief in the later construction date is accentuated because the current khanqah building was actually renovated, and the adjoining mosque presumably enlarged, by the the first ruler of the Bahawalpur State in 1690, in honour of Surkhposh's re-burial there. .

The Surkhposh khanqah was the cause for the initial fame of Uch in terms of the Suhrawardi Order in the pre-Jahangasht era, under both Surkhposh and his son Ahmad Kabir after him. Ahmad Kabir was subsequently buried in the khanqah,<sup>521</sup> probably in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, just before Muhammad Tughluq came to power in 1325. Thus the original khanqah structure considerably pre-dates its reconstruction in 1621 according to all reports, and is a construction from Surkhposh's time

After his death in 1291, Surkhposh was buried in two locations before he was finally interred in his own khanqah on the Uch mound. His initial burial was in a place called Chenab Rasulpur near Uch. A few years later due to flooding, his remains were transferred to a nearby location called Sonak-Bela which is 60 kilometres from Uch. Sonak-Bela retains the name Uch because of this association with Surkhposh. After a few generations in the latter Sayyid Raju era (i.e. post 1400, after Jahangasht's death in 1384) with anecdotal reports citing flooding as a reason again, Surkhposh's remains were transferred and reburied in the Rajjan Qattal or Sayyid Raju khanqah in Uch. Two centuries later, Surkhposh was finally buried next to his son Ahmad Kabir in his own khanqah,<sup>522</sup> inspiring the last reconstruction. Although all references describing the transfer of his remains in this context are to a *tabut* or coffin, it is difficult to see how any

---

<sup>521</sup> Hafiz 1931, pp.141-142. Ahmad Kabir's exact date of death is not known, but it is said that he died a few decades after his father Surkhposh.

<sup>522</sup> His remains, rather *tabut*, literally chest or coffin, were transferred in 1617 by Makhdum Naubahar, the caretaker of the Surkhposh khanqah, to the present location: Hafiz 1931, p.140.

coffin could have been salvaged from a flooding river in the Indus plains. The sheer force of a similar flood had cut in half the Bibi Jaiwandi monuments adjoining the khanqah in Uch in the early nineteenth century.

Hence, political and sectarian conflict with state authorities at the time of death can be cited as the likely reason for these multiple burials, which mostly seem to take a final twist with burial in a previously controversial monument, and correspond with the rise of favourable political situations. This unorthodox practice of re-burial was also followed in Multan for Rukn-e-Alam, who was initially interred in the mausoleum of his grandfather Zakariya on his death in 1335, probably for protection. In his case the re-burial is in an inverse situation attributed to his archenemy Muhammad Tughluq, most probably undertaken as a public show of force to demonstrate the latter's power over Suhrawardi personalities.<sup>523</sup> From a perspective of favour, the same theme is visible in the case of Surkhposh's re-burial in the Sayyid Raju khanqah, and later in his own khanqah in Uch. His first re-burial in Uch took place under his descendant Sayyid Raju, when the latter was unchallenged in the city, and the second was in the period of an earlier Bahawalpur Nawab, who held Surkhposh and his descendants in great esteem. For some reason the descendants of the Bukhari Sayyids in Uch are still buried inside wooden coffins to this day. This leads one to assume that other Suhrawardi shaykhs must have also been so interred, considering Rukn-e-Alam's re-burial, which could only have been possible in a tabut. The practice also suggests some hidden spiritual reasoning associated with the order's beliefs, in addition to political considerations for salvaging the body for re-burial, as it is unlike orthodox Muslim burial which takes place in a simple shroud.

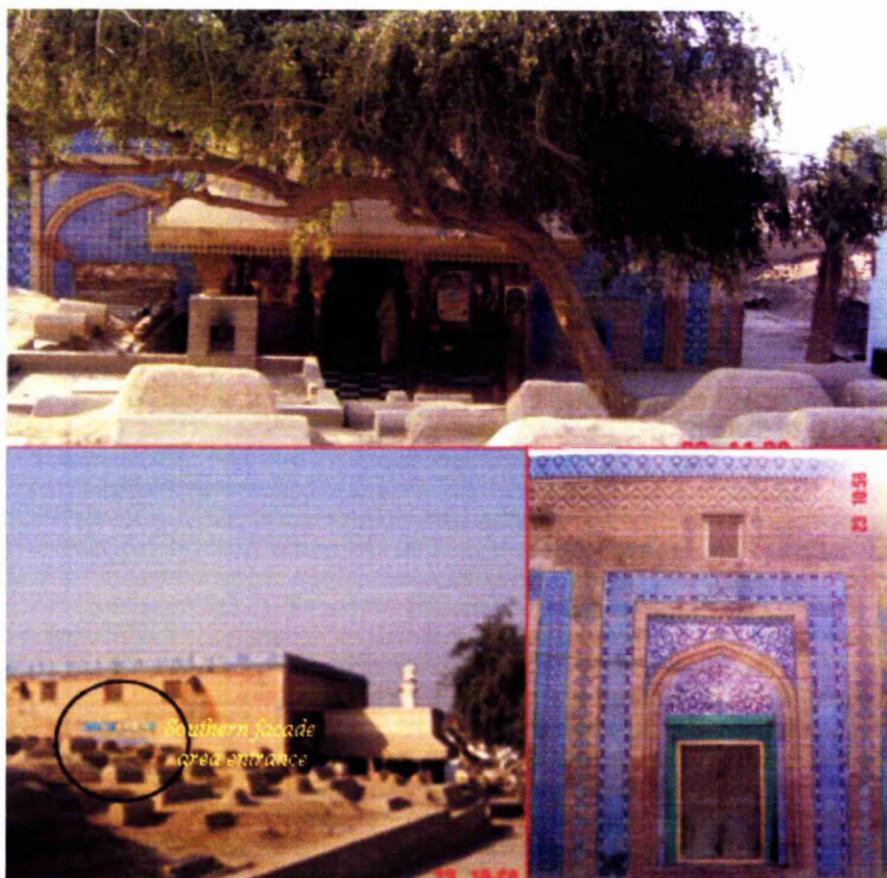
#### The Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju Khanqahs

Due to the centrality of the Surkhposh khanqah as a reference point for the adjoining Bibi Jaiwandi complex the two will be discussed together later in the chapter, and the

---

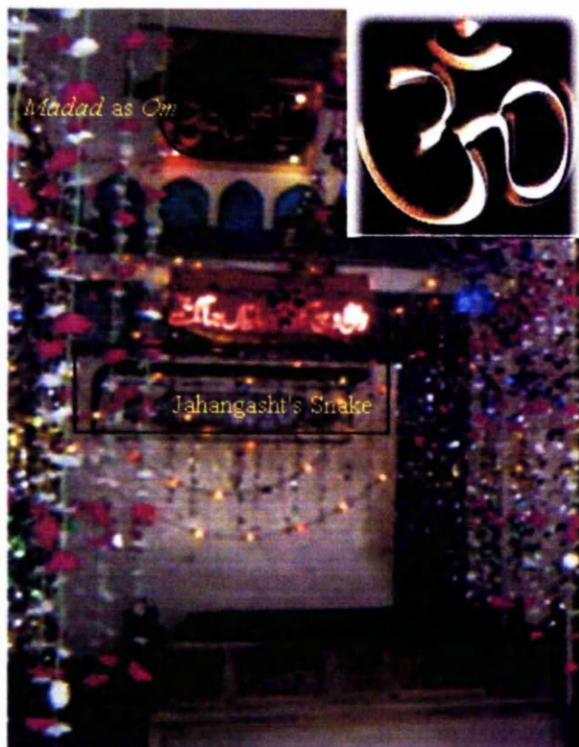
<sup>523</sup>For Rukn-e-Alam's re-burial by Muhammad Tughluq see Chapter Five, 'Shah Rukn-e-Alam: History of the Monument: Construction and Myths.'

khanqahs of Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju will be briefly described here before them. They post-date the Surkhposh (d.1291) khanqah by roughly one century, and were constructed in the period after Muhammad Tughluq (d. 1351), when Jahangasht returned to Uch and gained popularity along with his brother and the Jalali Dervishes from the two khanqahs. As discussed in Chapter Three, in Jahangasht's absence his brother had administered the Surkhposh khanqah. There are no reports of any other khanqah structures, but the presence of these two as institutions of Suhrawardi learning certainly date from the lifetime of the brothers, from whom they derive their names. In spite of their simplicity, they exemplify the Suhrawardi archetype with its entrances in their original design.



83. Jahangasht khanqah, top, eastern entrance re-aligned as main entrance, bottom left, southern entrance, encircled in black, right, northern entrance

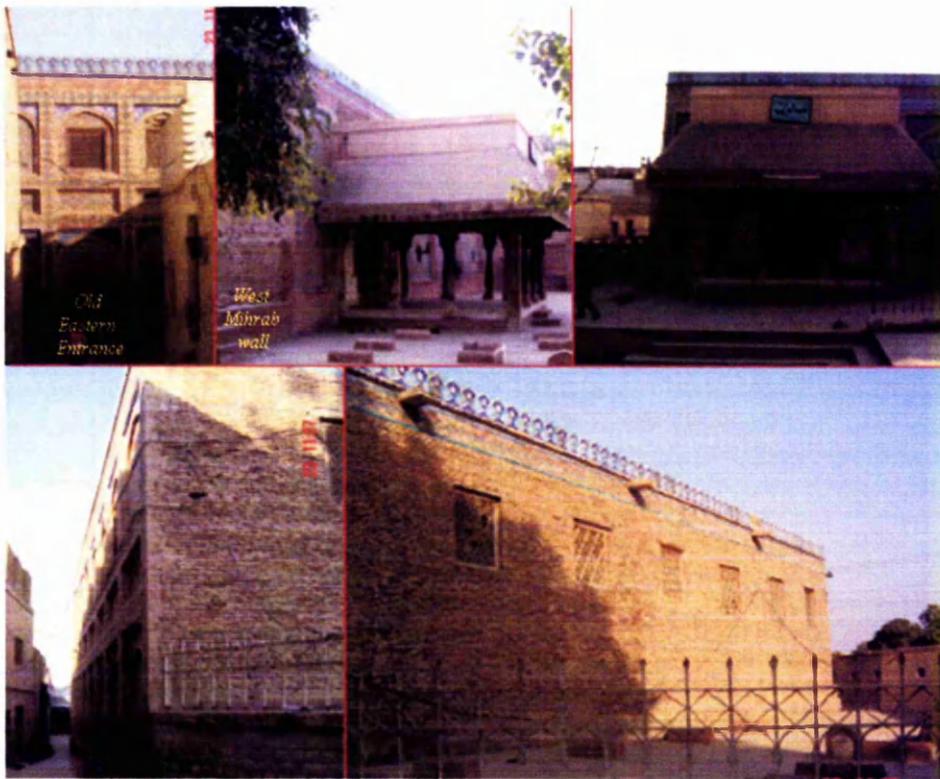
The Jahangasht khanqah is located in the north-eastern corner of Uch.<sup>524</sup> It is much smaller in size than that of his brother, suggesting its lesser importance in comparison to the Sayyid Raju khanqah, which is roughly four times its size. But it is placed at a closer proximity to the city mound, the Surkhposh khanqah and the Bibi Jaiwandi complex. All the three characteristic entrances and the west-facing mihrab of the Suhrawardi archetype are found in it. However, the monument has seen many historical renovations, yet none involve the Auqaf except for slight repairs, and it may have lost most of the original symbolism from its past much earlier on. Its main entrance has been realigned from the east according to orthodox principles but the alignment, along with the characteristic carved wooden entrance vestibule, seems to pre-date the present era and the Auqaf directive (see plate 83). The south entrance still preserves the original decorative tile work signifying its axial importance (plate 83, encircled), although it is now locked, as is the northern entrance. The eastern entrance functions as the only means of access into the building under the Auqaf.



84. Jahangasht Khanqah, mihrab with his snake marked in a rectangle, and the *Ya Ali Madad* plaque overhead, top right inset, the *Om* symbol

<sup>524</sup> Hafiz 1931, pp. 141-142.

The only surviving iconographic decoration inside is Hindu in nature, and is found on the mihrab. This is the silhouette of a snake which was allegedly used by Jahangasht to perform a miracle in Mecca (see plate 84, enclosed in rectangle), and was then brought back to Uch. The snake has been in place on the mihrab since the monument's construction. This is very Shaivite, further signifying the connection with Shaivite yogis which Jahangasht and his brother are famed for, in this formerly Shiva worshipping region. The presence of a Shaivite symbol on the mihrab is very unorthodox even by Suhrawardi standards, although Shams was also reputed to wear a snake icon in folklore. In the multiple religious symbolisms of Uch, the Shaivite tradition would be the most difficult tradition to accommodate within the multi-faith Islamic belief system that was the Satpanth. All other symbols pertain either to the three Abrahamic religions or to Zoroastrianism with its close relationship to Shia Islam. The use of such a prominent Shaivite symbol on the mihrab inside a khanqah or teaching institution opens up a host of possibilities for interpretation in the future, with respect to the effects the Suhrawardi Order and the da'wa had on the spiritual ideals of this region.



85. Sayyid Raju khanqah, (clockwise) from top left, a) eastern facade approach with blank wall and presumed area of old eastern entrance, b) southern entrance from the west (notice graves at a tangent), c) main southern entrance, d) northern entrance as a blank wall with adjoining graves at a tangent; notice the new brickwork, the un-faded darker area in the centre was probably an entrance, e) the corner of the northern and eastern facades; notice the very recent masonry from the last renovation and lack of circulation space for a re-alignment of the major entrance from the east (compare with top left)

The Sayyid Raju khanqah has undergone many repairs over the centuries, and one notable renovation in recent history under the Auqaf, as it had nearly collapsed due to its dilapidated state. The book *Tarikh-e-Uch* comments on its substandard repairs at the time of writing,<sup>525</sup> and states its location as being in the northern part of the Bukhari quarter of Uch, in the neighbourhood then known as Diwan Sahiban. The building is situated near the major circulation artery leading east out of the old city since ancient times (the Bukhari quarter is on the mound), towards the shrine of Hasan Kabir al-din. The last renovation and perhaps also earlier repairs, have stripped the building's appearance of its original Suhrawardi entrance characteristics. However, the renovated monument still

<sup>525</sup> Hafiz 1931, p.142.

recalls the traditional Suhrawardi archetype with three entrances, as the major axis and entrance for Sayyid Raju is still on the south (plate 85, b & c), with an articulated west-facing mihrab wall. The southern entrance has probably remained intact due to the obvious lack of adequate circulation space surrounding the eastern facade (see plate 85, a & d), thereby making it difficult to realign it as the main entrance in traditional orthodox fashion. This is due to the densely built-up residential area around, which could not be demolished for the purpose; consequently the eastern entrance has been entirely shut off and replaced by a blank wall, as has the northern entrance.

All iconic symbolism that may have been present in the original building has been lost, but the monument itself is massive, about four times the size of the Jahangasht khanqah. Its size suggests that it must have played a major part in the Jalali Dervish phenomenon. Hence, it may have carried profound multi-faith symbolism in its original format, judging from the surviving contemporaneous symbolism present in the neighbouring Jahangasht khanqah.<sup>526</sup> One must remember that the tabut of Surkhposh was interred in this khanqah for two centuries, starting in the latter Sayyid Raju and Jalali Dervish period, and this may have played some part in the eschatology of the belief structure of the Jalali Dervishes. At the time it was written in the early twentieth century, the book *Tarikh-e-Uch* mentions the continued use of the monument for spiritual purposes by locals for Sufi retreats,<sup>527</sup> in spite of its dilapidated state. Even now it has a strange ambience, with the interior full of ravens. Such religious use is no longer the norm under the Auqaf, but its practice in the era before the Partition and the galvanisation of political Islam, reflects monumental use which probably continued undisturbed in this city, from the time of the Jalali Dervishes themselves.

The most striking feature of the Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju khanqahs is that they were purpose built as khanqahs, i.e. simple teaching lodges. Along with the Surkhposh

---

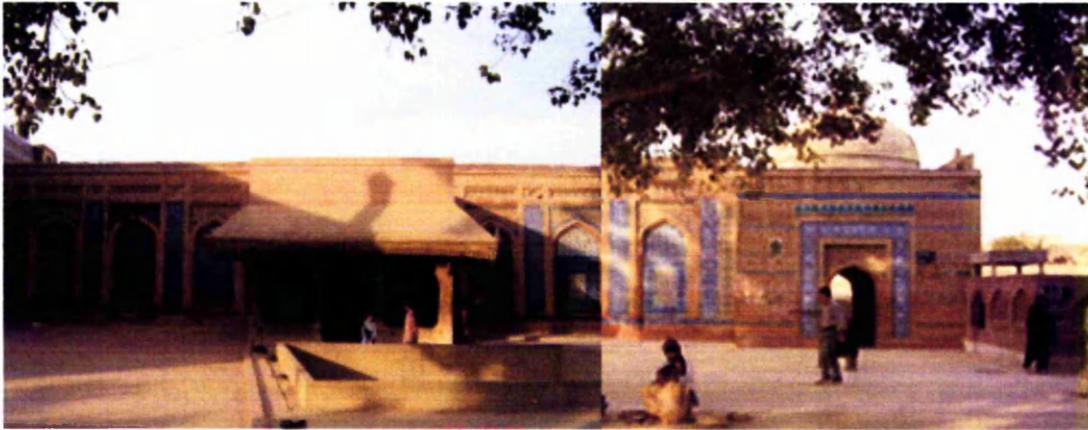
<sup>526</sup> There are very large Panjatan i.e. 'د' shapes present on some of the interior walls of the Sayyid Raju khanqah which could not be photographed because of on going Moharram ceremonies, but they are present on film.

<sup>527</sup>Hafiz 1931, p.142. The author mentions the monument being used for spiritual exercises, the reference is to abjad zakat /tithes paid as the initiatory ceremony into jafr.

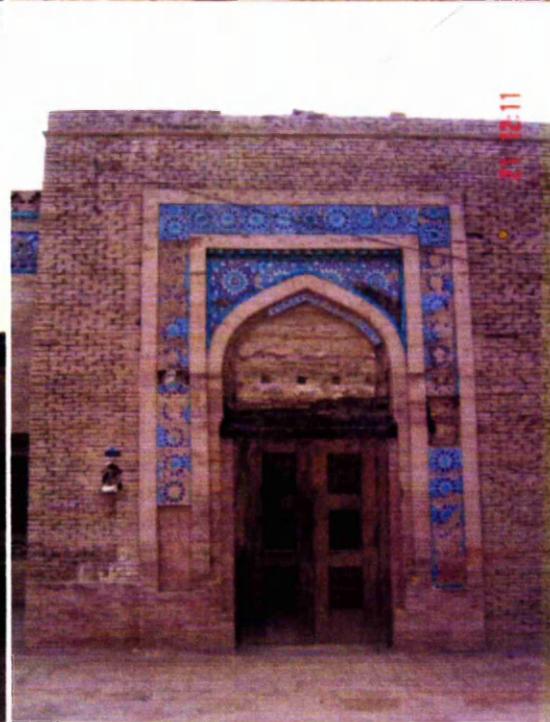
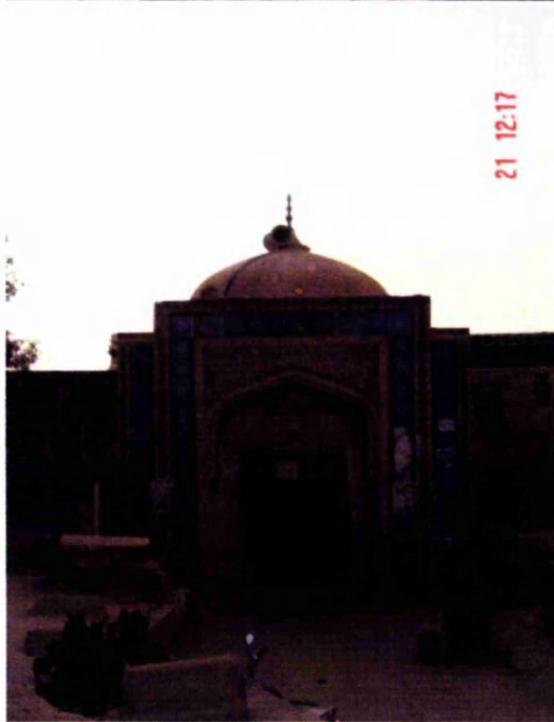
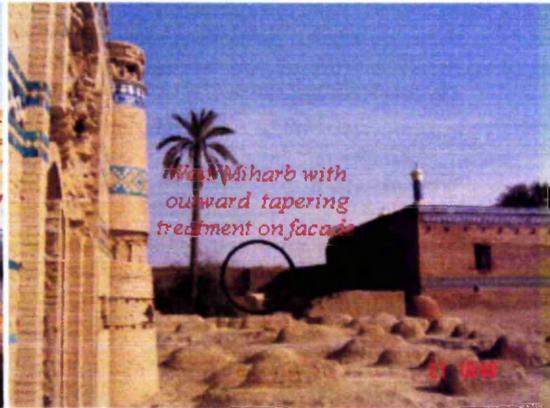
khanqah that will follow, these are the only three surviving monuments which are in the shape of a simple rectangle with three entrances, a southern major axis and the west facing mihrab. This in essence must also have been the design for Shams's own lodges, which were entirely purpose built for teaching and initiation like the above monuments.

#### The Surkhposh khanqah

The Surkhposh khanqah is located on the Uch mound, at the highest point in the city, and the site of former temples of antiquity that must have been located here. In this it replicates the Rukn-e-Alam monument with its central position on the Multan mound, which was the site of the former Balaram or ancient Sun Temple, lying between it and the Zakariya shrine adjoining it. The Surkhposh khanqah still explicitly retains the characteristic Suhrawardi archetype, bearing three entrances, and a west-facing mihrab with both the main access to the complex and the main entrance to the monument being from the south. In addition, it serves as the central reference point for the creation of the sacred geometry used in the site plan for the adjoining Bibi Jaiwandi complex, with some of the buildings directly deriving their central axes from it, and with it their centre points or grave markers for coffins.



86. Surkhposh khanqah entrances. Clockwise from top left, a) main southern entrance and facade from staircase leading up to mound, b) northern entrance facing Bibi Jaiwandi complex, c) eastern facade and entrance from below the mound



87. Surkhposh khanqah, the archetypical entrance and mihrab details, clockwise from top left, a) main southern entrance vestibule, b) protruding khanqah mihrab as seen from corner of the Nuriya monument in the adjoining Bibi Jaiwandi complex, c) northern entrance adjacent to the Bibi Jaiwandi complex, d) eastern entrance on the mound



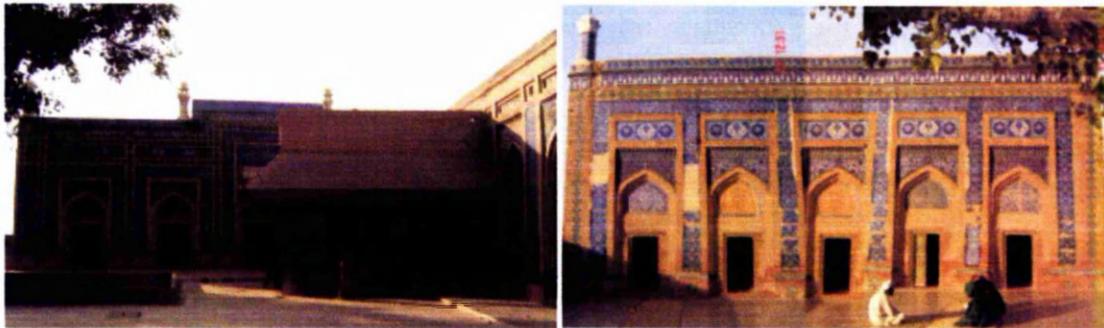
88. Surkhposh khanqah interior, clockwise from top left, a) west-facing mihrab, b) a view of the interior of the building upon entrance from the southern facade, with Surkhposh's sarcophagus on left and the northern entrance (encircled) and north-facing cross niches highlighted in red, c) a devotee next to a grave and cross, and d) crosses serving as grave headstones

In terms of religious iconography, the only surviving features of the Surkhposh khanqah are its north-facing Latin cross niches on the interior. These cross niches appear to serve as markers for the graves, laying at a tangent to the Mecca direction, i.e. they face north, where the head of the body is found in Islamic burial in this region. Their importance as religious symbols is further accentuated by their being built in the style reminiscent of medieval candle niches traditionally found on graves in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Each niche bears a depressed cavity for holding oil lamps and candles, which is then lit on commemorative occasions, and also for the fulfilment of wishes when pledges are made

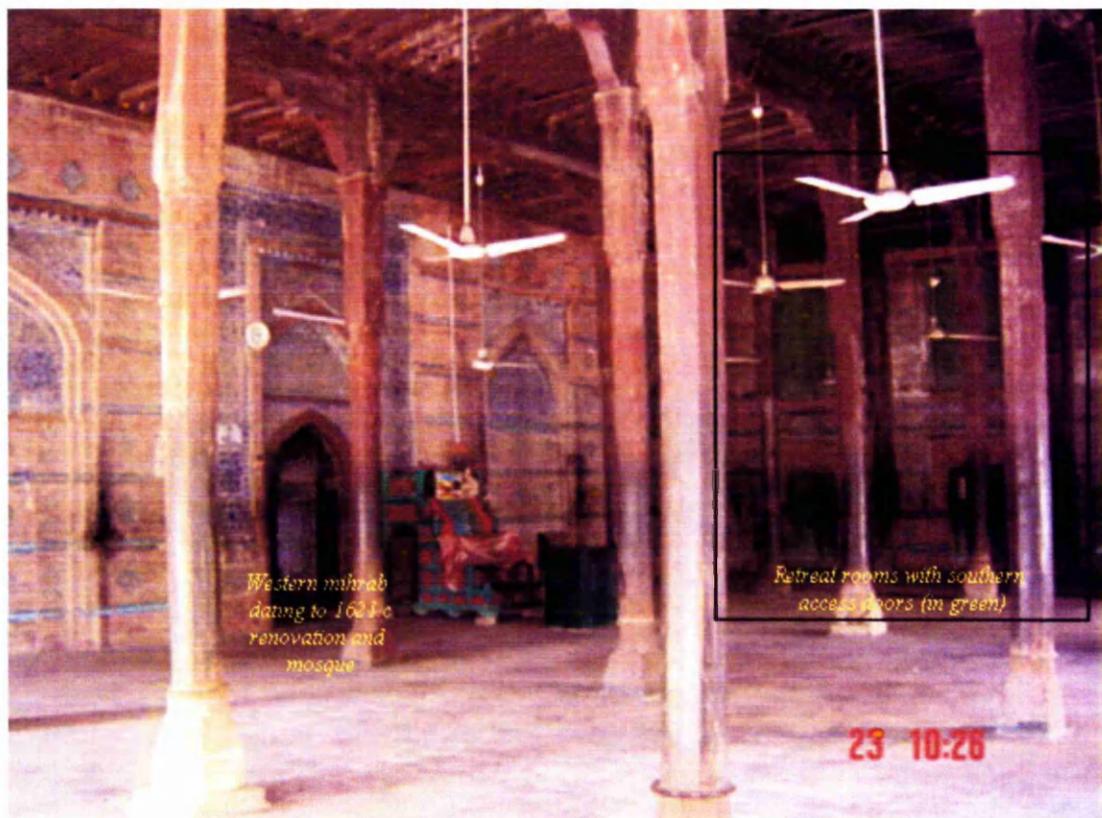
at shrines. In addition, these ceremonial cross niches spill into the adjoining Bibi Jaiwandi complex, echoing similar symbolism in a simultaneous burial and eschatological format on the Baha al-Halim monument, who was Jahangasht's teacher. There is no other surviving symbolism on the Surkhposh khanqah itself except for the crosses. The west-facing mihrab is low and deep, and does not bear any inscriptions or symbols like those at Rukn-e-Alam. However, this may not be the original mihrab, considering the many renovations and reconstructions.

#### Chillah Rooms and Surkhposh Mosque

The mosque of the Surkhposh khanqah adjoins it and is physically connected to its mihrab wall. Judging from its style and the age of the decorative tiles, it seems to be a much later monument (plate 89). This is also suggested by the state of the brick masonry, and for all practical purposes one can clearly deduce that the structure is a later addition. It probably dates back to the reconstruction of the monument in 1621 when Surkhposh was reburied in the khanqah, due to which the whole khanqah has been given a latter-day construction date.



89. Surkhposh mosque, left a) eastern facade and entrance behind wooden khanqah entrance vestibule, and b) southern facade



90. Surkhposh mosque interior with western mihrab and north-facing chillah rooms with southern entrances

The mosque plan shows that there are small cubicles on the interior northern facade at two levels, eight in all, with south-facing entrances (in green) accessed from the inside (see plates 90 & 91). They have panelled doors which are now locked, and these were *chillah* or Sufi retreat rooms. Their presence in this part of the mosque which physically adjoins the khanqah, and their proximity to the mihrab wall of the khanqah which served as a place of spiritual learning, suggests that they pre-date the mosque construction in 1621. The chillah rooms must have been present in some form before the khanqah reconstruction, merely becoming incorporated into the new mosque structure. It is not clear what form of roofing existed over the rooms before the mosque, only that it must have existed along with some surrounding construction including living quarters. In this these functions must have been a composite part of the original khanqah. The presence of these chillah rooms can be seen as integral to a khanqah structure, as one of the basic tenants of Sufism is to engage in long retreats and penances in a solitary confines. Their presence here suggests such rooms as basic requirements in all of the khanqahs and

madrasas of our thesis, most importantly around the Rukn-e-Alam southern axis as already suggested in Chapter Five, which may have been cleared at an earlier stage. The densely built up compound area around Shams's shrine, as visible from the historical photograph in plate 37, may also have carried similar retreat areas.



91. Surkhposh khanqah and adjoining mosque (the building on the right) as seen from the Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram, with its western mihrab (encircled) and the north-facing chillah room facade

Plate 91 shows the western mihrab wall of the khanqah (left) and the adjoining northern wall of the mosque which bears the chillah rooms. The obvious difference in the age of the brick masonry between the parts of the mosque bearing the chillah rooms (rectangle encircled) and those carrying its mihrab (plate 91, right) is clearly visible, confirming their pre-existence as an earlier separate construction to the mosque, into which they became incorporated.

This is the only discovery of surviving chillah rooms for any of the Suhrawardi monuments described in this thesis, and for any monument connected to the Suhrawardi Order in general. The orientation of the chillah rooms to the north, and their entrances from the south complements the major southern entrance axis of the Suhrawardi monument archetype. This orientation seems to suggest that the southern entrance was specifically reserved for high level initiates and for special ceremonies. It is the general direction used for meditation in Hindu and Sufi meditation techniques, with the mendicant facing north and empowering himself with spiritual forces flowing from the north to the south of the planet.<sup>528</sup> The orientation carries a special significance in the context of the Jalali Dervishes, both in terms of their initiation and for the yogis who fought and at times joined them. It may be that the yogis were invited to many of these ceremonies, some of which might have been contests. This configuration also clarifies the classical use for the other two entrances found in the Suhrawardi archetype, with the east for the traditionally Islamic ceremonies and practices, facing Mecca on entrance. The northern entrance was used for Hindu devotees,<sup>529</sup> and those belonging to other related faiths (i.e. Buddhists), since Vedic burials take place on the north-south axis, with the head facing towards the north.

---

<sup>528</sup> In the Islamic jafr the Mecca direction supersedes the four elemental directions i.e. east, west, north and south corresponding to fire, air, water and earth respectively, while the same principle is applied to Jerusalem in Jewish cabbala; hereby all elemental directions can be ascribed to the two cities. As such the western mihrab in Rukn-e-Alam could serve as a retreat area for any Sufi dhikr corresponding to any of elements, as can any other mihrab in a khanqah.. But this is the first time that a specific chillah room orientated to the north has been found, which involves fundamentally non-Abrahamic spiritual exercises from the Indian tradition. This concept is based on the harnessing of magnetic and spiritual forces flowing south from the North Pole. This is the same concept used by Shaivite Yogis to levitate in the air, i.e. on a magnetic field; and is also used in Hindu and Buddhist astral magic.

<sup>529</sup> Zawahir Moir has often observed the use of the northern entrance at Ismaili shrines by Hindus in Gujarat. More specifically she has noted such use as a matter of ritual, as administrated by the caretakers at the dargah of Imam Shah.

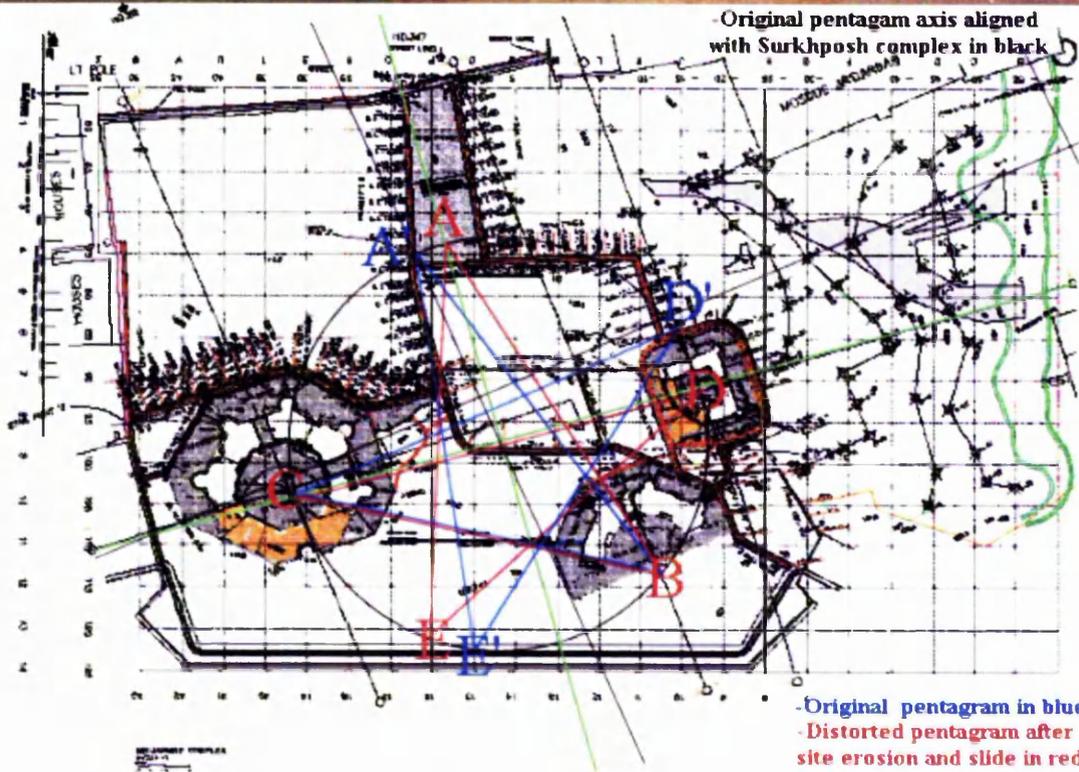


92. Bibi Jaiwandi complex, clockwise from top left, a) roof corner of chillah room facade of mosque aligned with centres of Nuriya and Baha al-Halim, b) chillah room axis coinciding with the centre of the now lost Baha al-Halim hujra (the slight tilt away from the centre is due to site depreciation), c) hujra from the corner of the chillah room facade before its collapse in 1994, d) chillah room facade corner of mosque projected (in red) over the Baha al-Halim hujra (encircled) to Nuriya

The north-western corner of the chillah room facade (corner of marked rectangle area in plate 91) on the mosque serves as the axial point for the derivation of the centres of the neighbouring Baha al-Halim and Nuriya monuments in the adjoining Bibi Jaiwandi complex (see plate 92a). In addition, the centre of the now lost Baha al-Halim *hujra* (separate covered meditation quarter) located between the mosque and the complex, which itself served as a personal retreat area for the connected person, is also derived from the corner of the chillah rooms (plate 92b). Since all these adjoining monuments to the Surkhposh khanqah pre-date the construction of the mosque by a few centuries, the

presence of the chillah rooms as an integral part of the original khanqah design should not be disputed, nor should their probable presence in other Suhrawardi khanqahs, where they have been lost. All the monuments in the Bibi Jaiwandi complex carry the Suhrawardi archetype with a major southern axis, and have their main entrances from the south like the khanqah itself and the chillah room area (plate, 92c). This shows that the khanqah, along with the original chillah room structures served as the central axial point for the creation of the unique site plan adjoining the complex, a process which must have spanned a few generations. These facts emphasise the use of the southern entrances and the classical use of the other two directions as proposed here, as the major access to the Uch mound and all the monuments thereon would be from the monumental southern staircase. This staircase still leads up a hundred flights of stairs to the courtyard outside the Surkhposh khanqah and its southern entrance (see plate 86a for courtyard), with the Bibi Jaiwandi monuments located behind it.

# The Bibi Jaiwandi Pentagram Complex



93. The Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram complex. Top, left, Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram, right, Surkhposh mosque northern corner, with the axial alignment of chillah area with the Bibi Jaiwandi site (in red). The arrow on the right of the plate shows the exact place of the monumental southern access staircase.

Bottom, pentagram site plan, the original plan aligned with the khanqah structure is in blue; and in red one can see the current deformed plan due to the 1817 floods and site depreciation.

Legend: A) lost monument, B) Baha al-Halim, C) Bibi Jaiwandi, D) Nuriya, and E) lost monument

The images in plate 93 show the Bibi Jaiwandi complex with its pentagram site plan configuration and axial alignment in proximity to the Surkhposh khanqah on the mound, the entrance stairway to the complex is from the south (see arrow and text in plate 93), turning off the main access road. The configuration can be seen here exactly as it was discovered on site in the winter of 2005-2006, superimposed on an existing site plan. The original base working drawing belongs to the ongoing restoration project, showing the slide of the land to the rear, and the continuous sinking of the monuments due to severe soil erosion. The floods of 1817 which cut the three surviving monuments in half also destroyed monuments A and E entirely. The retaining walls cutting through the centre and right sides of the plan (in brown, plate 93) demonstrate the slide, and have been erected to stop the buildings from literally sliding off the mound, and into each other in the case of Nuriya (Point D) and Baha al-Halim (Point B). Plate 94 gives a better idea of the retaining walls countering the rear slide of the monuments, and the situation complements the misshapen pentagram in red in plate 93, which was discovered on site. The pentagram was originally exactly aligned to the chillah room corner of the khanqah, as shown in blue in plate 93, from where the Nuriya and Baha al-Halim monuments derived their axial centres (for axial centres see plate 92).



94. The Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram complex. Left) retaining wall around mound to stop the site from sinking, right) retaining walls to stop Nuriya (left background) from sliding back into Baha al-Halim (right), as seen from Bibi Jaiwandi

The ferocity of the floods of 1817 and the toll they took are visible from the way the monuments have been cut in less than half by the water and a major portion of the pre-historic mound behind them has also been washed away. This mound dates back to the pre-historic Indus Valley era, and was probably the site of the Buddhist stupa mentioned around the time of Alexander's conquest. The mound continued backwards to where the fields can be seen (plate 94, left), and in all probability the monuments collectively formed the Madrasa Bahaiya of Uch the famous school of esoteric learning known to have existed in medieval Uch under Surkhposh's descendants.<sup>530</sup> The name of course comes from the original Suhrawardi Madrasa Bahaiya in Multan, attributed to Zakariya, which we now know to house Rukn-e-Alam's grave.

#### *Site Measurements for Pentagram Complex*

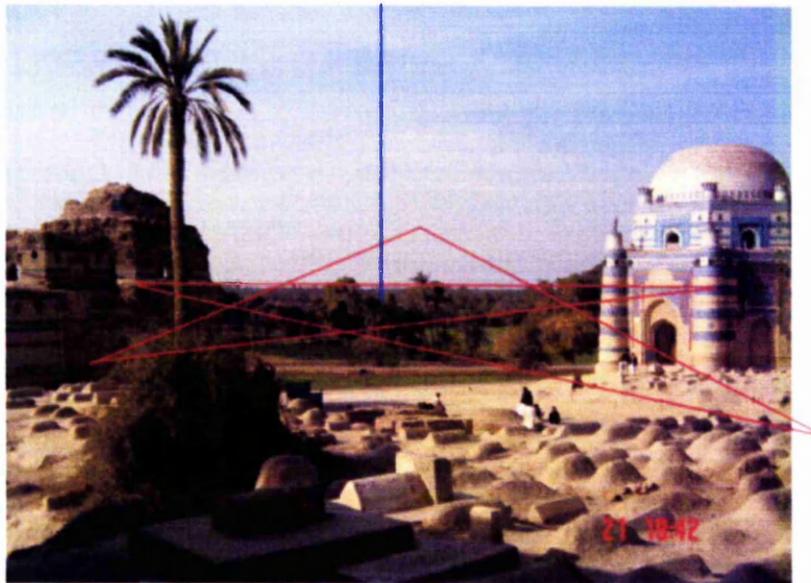
The pentagram drawing in blue in plate 93 (bottom) shows the complex as it must have existed before general deterioration, and a backward slide in the site. It has been created after readings taken on site confirmed the existence of the pentagram in the slightly misshapen configuration that can be seen in red in the same image. As such, Point D at the right flanking edge of the original pentagram in blue (see plate 93, bottom) should actually be the centre point of the monument and the grave of Nuriya; instead that building has sunk and slid back to point D on the red pentagram. The Nuriya monument has deteriorated the most of the three remaining monuments on the mound, and its correction at point D (in blue from red, see plate 93, bottom) gives the exact placement of the pentagram in its original format. The centred distance between Nuriya (Point D) and the Bibi Jaiwandi grave centre (Point C) on the left was measured to precisely 170 feet, which is roughly the diameter of the circle circumscribing the pentagram complex. Half its measurement or 85 feet would give the radius of the inscribing circle. In actuality, even after severe site erosion and the backward slide of complex, the circle almost passes

---

<sup>530</sup> Anecdote refers to an Egyptian Sufi manual from the fourteenth century which mentions this madrasa, stating on the authority of two Egyptian Sufi visitors who were students at Uch, that no parallel place of learning had been seen in the Muslim world since the time of Medina; the reference was to the sixth Shia Imam Jafar as-Sadiq's centre of learning. The Egyptian Sufi source has not yet been identified.

through the centre point of each monument and the centre of every grave located therein. This would include the two lost monuments at Points A and E (see plate 93).

Evidence for the existence of the lost lower monument at Point E has been confirmed by the head of the restoration project, Yasmin Cheema, who mentioned finding its debris at the rear of the complex during excavations for restoration. She originally suggested that it may have been a mosque; but on further inquiry has also confirmed finding the remains of a wooden coffin and bones within the vicinity of the complex's rear. In light of this, the monument must have been a shrine, as proposed here. Further evidence on the second lost monument at Point A of the pentagram, facing east, awaits an archaeological dig which will follow the completion of this thesis.



95. The Bibi Jaiwandi pentagram configuration in perspective with centre point in blue, as would be visible from the corner of the Jalal al-din Surkhposh mosque housing the chillah room area

The epicentre of this complex is the central pentagon inside the pentagram and its inscribing circle. The radial distance between the centre point (vertical blue line, see plate 95) of this pentagon formed inside the pentagram and inscribing circle, and all grave centres, was found to measure roughly 85 feet. The distance between the grave centres (Point C) of the Bibi Jaiwandi monument to the centre (Point E) of the lost monument at the rear has been measured at 88-90 feet. Taking into account the deformation after site depreciation, this distance of roughly 85 feet between any two adjacent corners of our site plan configuration, which is always the same as the radius, further confirms the existence of the pentagram. This is because geometrically the distance between any two adjacent points of a pentagram will equal the radius of the circle inscribing it.

A similar 85 feet was measured as the distance between the grave centres of Bibi Jaiwandi (Point C), and that of the lost monument at Point A at the top, facing east. In essence, this must have also been the case between those of Baha al-Halim (Point B) and Nuriya (Point D), before soil erosion and site depreciation caused Nuriya to slide backwards. The current distance between them was roughly 75 feet as measured on site. It was very difficult to measure the exact radial distance between the central point of the pentagram and the Baha al-Halim grave centre (Point B), because in addition to the site incline it included the inconsistently thick ten feet wide wall of the Baha al-Halim monument, which has been partly reinforced to stop further deterioration. However, it stood at 83 feet according to site measurements, or almost 85 feet.

The above readings measured on site during the field trip fully complement the contemporary existence of a slightly deformed pentagram inscribed by a circle at the Bibi Jaiwandi monuments, after taking into account large-scale soil erosion, floods, and general monument shift that has occurred. This has been duly marked on the site plan in red. It includes the loss of half of the ancient mound at the site, the backward slide of the monuments, especially of Nuriya, and the sinking of site topography by many feet. Yet the circle inscribing the pentagram still somehow passes through the grave centres of the five saints at Uch Bukhari, and is aligned with the khanqah chillah area. The site was probably terraced and considerably straighter and flatter in its original setting than it is

now. With this itinerary of loss, it is a miracle that the monumental configuration has been discovered at all, and the chances of its existence in any format other than that proposed here are minimal.

#### The Bibi Jaiwandi Complex: Construction History and Myths

All the personalities to whom the surviving pentagram shrines belong date from the post-Surkhposh era. Monuments A and E have been lost with no mention of any connected personalities found in history or anecdote. Monument B belongs to Jahangasht's teacher Baha al-Qazi, also known as Baha al-Halim.<sup>531</sup> His burial monument is reported to have been finished in 1370, but as we have seen he died in Jahangasht's youth in the 1320s, which means that he was probably reburied in the monument on its completion. The presence of his adjoining hujra retreat, his reputation as a renowned teacher, and his very name must have given academic acclaim to the complex even before it became a shrine area. The facts seem to suggest that the complex was planned on the model of Zakariya's famed Madrasa Bahaiya, with academic personalities involved in it.

Monument C is said to be the shrine of Bibi Jaiwandi. She is believed to have been the ascetic minded great-granddaughter of Jahangasht. Reports centre on her being buried in the monument in 1494, so this date is ascribed to the building itself. However, reflecting back on the confusion in anecdote between the personalities of the original Jalal al-din Surkhposh, and his grandson Jahangasht who bore his title, i.e. Jalal al-din (II),<sup>532</sup> it is more probable that she was Surkhposh's great-granddaughter. This would also give her near contemporaneous burial (as reported around 1494) to the Jalali Dervish period ending with Sayyid Raju (d.1444), a more valid lineal connection to Surkhposh..

Tomb D belongs to Nuriya, who is acclaimed to have been a notable of Uch, an architect who migrated to the city from Iranian Khurasan, presumably after Jahangasht's return to

---

<sup>531</sup> Sindhi 2000, p. 412; Husain 1983, p.vii.

<sup>532</sup> See Chapter Three, 'Jahaniyan Jahangasht.'

the city in 1351. He is said to have supervised the expansion of the building complex and his own future tomb, in which he was buried in 1430.<sup>533</sup>

It is difficult to see how any of these buildings were envisaged as individual monuments, considering the pentagram site plan which must have been conceived as a single astrological event, in terms of the beginning of ritual construction. It is also hard to imagine any of these buildings as shrines originally, considering the diverse nature of the personalities of the people buried in them, one of whom was an architect and not a Sufi master. The buildings may have followed separate construction speeds and completion dates, but the plan had to be imagined, started and executed as a single entity on an astrologically auspicious moment, so as to lend it the divine temple configuration that it obviously emulates in its arrangement.

What happened subsequently in terms of burial was in keeping with the tradition of the area. As already seen in Rukn-e-Alam and Surkhposh, the burial of esteemed people connected to certain buildings just took place within their confines as a natural consequence after their deaths. In all certainty, the complex was originally envisaged as a place of high initiation, created through the process of jafir, giving it in the eyes of its Suhrawardi patrons the required spiritual credentials needed to create highly initiated disciples; and perhaps, at a later stage, the Jalali Dervishes. The scale of the complex (including the Surkhposh khanqah) suggests that it must have been conceived and executed over three to four generations, perhaps dating from Surkhposh to the Sayyid Raju era. This is also suggested by the physical and axial connections of the Surkhposh khanqah to the complex itself. The complex must have collectively formed the Madrasa Bahaiya in Uch. There can be no other explanation.

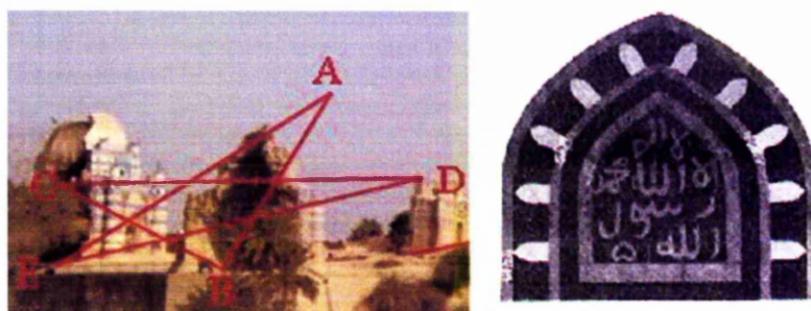
In this format, the Surkhposh khanqah and pentagram complex also complements the famous Madrasa Bahaiya of Multan, which we have shown to be the Rukn-e-Alam shrine. The striking similarity in terms of the multilayered symbolism and the beginning

---

<sup>533</sup> <http://uchsharif.com/content/blogcategory/18/37/>

of ritual construction at the two sites shows a close connection in terms of design and execution between Uch and Multan. The Surkhposh khanqah complex configuration serves as added evidence for the Rukn-e-Alam shrine being the original Madrasa Bahaiya in Multan, as both are sprawling compounds located on the ancient temple mounds in ancient cities. Due to its many surviving multifunctional buildings, the details of the Uch khanqah complex provide valuable insights into the configuration of Rukn-e-Alam before the loss of its surrounding monuments, and how it must have used by high level Suhrawardi initiates in Multan.

#### Similarity between Hidden Shia Symbolism at the Bibi Jaiwandi Complex and Rukn-e-Alam



96. A comparison between Bibi Jaiwandi and Rukn-e-Alam. Left, Pentagram representation of A) Muhammad, B) Ali, C) Fatima, D) Hasan, E) Husain, right, Rukn-e-Alam second storey tiles with Panjtan testament in similar dissimulative fashion

The tale of the two Madrasa Bahaiyas takes a new turn when the pentagram arrangement at the Uch mound complex is examined more closely. If one were to assume that the now lost tombs A and E in Bibi Jaiwandi were originally envisaged to be male figures, i.e. originally as mock sarcophaguses in light of current burial, and follow the natural path of the pentagram which is created top down (from A), its contents would yield the following arrangement of genders for the monuments: A) male, B) male, C) female, D) male, and E) male (see plate 96). In terms of the Shia-Ismaili context of this thesis, this can only represent the Panajtan in the traditional Shia arrangement of Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain, cited in a very dissimulative format. This also provides for the Shia

part of the equation of these monuments being constructed at Nauroz.<sup>534</sup> The signature attached to this testament in such an implicit manner is very reminiscent of the upper storey tiles at Rukn-e-Alam, which carry the same Panjatan testament,<sup>535</sup> but were only visible to the very few inner initiates allowed into the upper storeys.

This representation of the Panjatan and hence the wilayat of Ali at Uch should not come as any surprise, as it is the basis of the Satpanth, and the metaphysical commonality between the Ismaili da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order. Although Uch was a predominantly Shia Sufi city, the care and effort taken in this certain representation is undoubtedly the product of a dissimulative mindset. This also suggests that the complex was meant as a celebratory temple, but first at the Shia-Ismaili level, displaying the primordality of the Family of the Prophet and the wilayat of Ali over other religions, and only moving to the secondary religiosity in the Satpanth later. It was designed for use as a place of esoteric learning and initiation, and it merely came to accommodate the actual burials after a certain period in time, but in the gender format of the Panjatan. This discovery and decoding of the Bibi Jaiwandi site plan, coupled with the hidden Shiism of the Rukn-e-Alam monument, goes a very long way in showing the hidden Shia-Ismaili credentials of the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley.

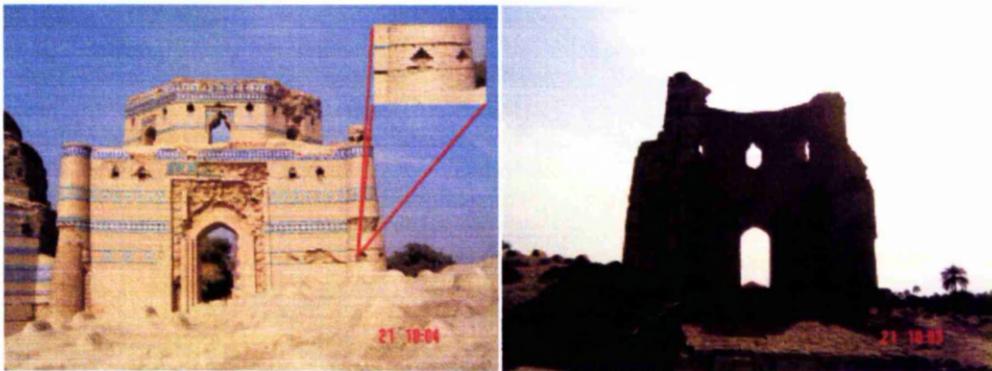
---

<sup>534</sup> For the Nauroz construction of this complex see Chapter Four, 'Nauroz and the Bibi Jaiwandi Monument Complex.'

<sup>535</sup> See Chapter Five, plate 69.

## Multi-faith Satpanth Symbolism on the Bibi Jaiwandi Monuments

The Bibi Jaiwandi monuments carry all the symbols of the religious traditions involved in the Satpanth, after the citation of their fundamental Shia testament at the basic level of the pentagram. A row of crosses marks the axis from the chillah room area of the Surkhposh khanqah, the interior of which contains its own niches of Latin crosses, to Baha al-Halim. This gives a very Christian feel to the complex. Nuriya at Point D, between the two, is the most dilapidated shrine, and not much symbolism can be discerned on its interior or exterior, except for some surviving crosses (plate 97) which carry on further to Baha al-Halim behind it at point B.



97. Nuriya, left, southern facade with some remaining details of crosses (inset) and, right, northern facade as seen from pentagram centre

If any depressed cross niches on the interior reminiscent of the ones on the Surkhposh khanqah were present in Nuriya, they have been lost. But the Baha al-Halim monument which is the oldest on the mound and belongs to Jahangasht's renowned teacher, still carries similar Latin crosses. These must have served both as grave markers and as niches for lighting oil lamps and candles like in the Surkhposh khanqah. The figure of Baha al-Halim as an acclaimed teacher and his monument's Christian symbolism, combined with the remaining crosses on Nuriya and those in the Surkhposh khanqah, seem to suggest that Christian beliefs may have played an important part in the spirituality preached at the

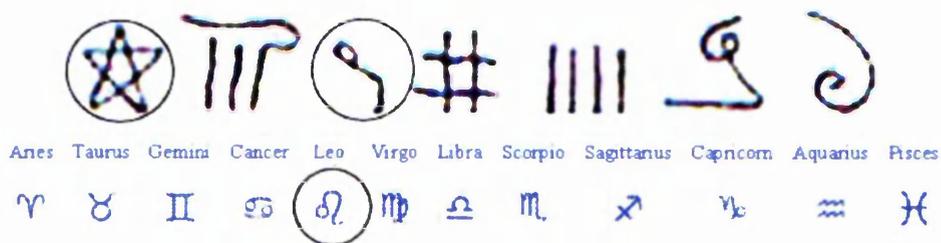
Uch Madrasa Bahaiya. This fact becomes accentuated with the burial of Suhrawardi notables inside wooden coffins after being wrapped in Islamic burial shrouds.



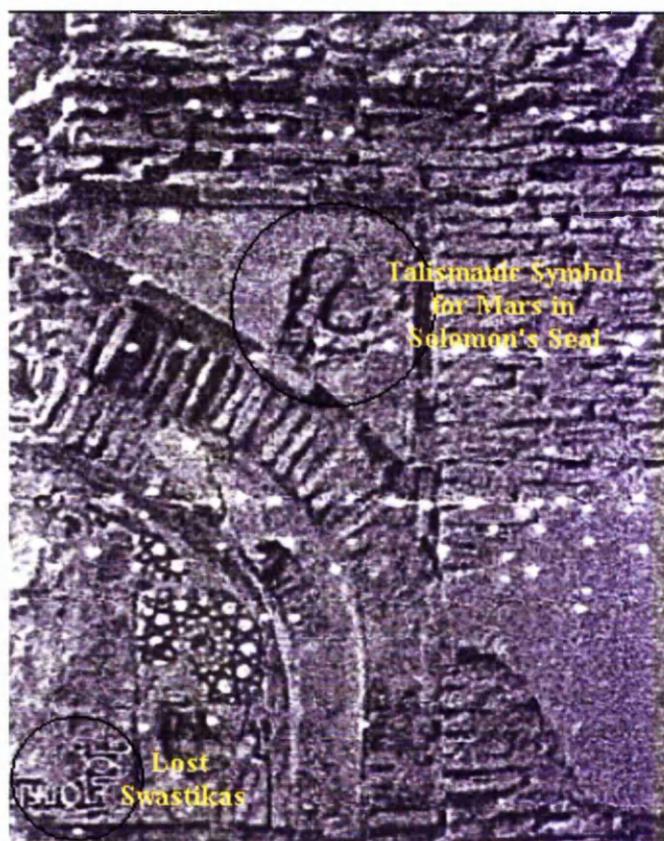
98. Baha al-Halim, left, remaining eastern facade as seen from inside the pentagram, and right, interior of northern facade, notice the Latin crosses (inset) in a format similar to one on the Surkhposh interior

The Baha al-Halim shrine at Point B also carries some Jewish symbolism, which is echoed in Bibi Jaiwandi at Point C. These Christian and Jewish symbols, when combined with the pentagram itself as representing the Panjatan, i.e. Shia Islam, would account for the representation of all the three Abrahamic religions here. In addition, the pentagram is also the talismanic symbol for the Sun from the Seal of Solomon (see plate 99). This also signifies Nauroz and the wilayat of Ali in Shia Islam, in addition to with its already established connections to Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism, as seen in Chapter Four.<sup>536</sup> Besides its own Jewish symbols, the Bibi Jaiwandi monument also carries the sign of Leo, ruled by the Sun, on a pre-restoration tile, which in turn is the talismanic sign for Mars (bottom, plate 99).

<sup>536</sup> See Chapter Four, 'Representation of Multiple Religious Identities within the Satpanth.'

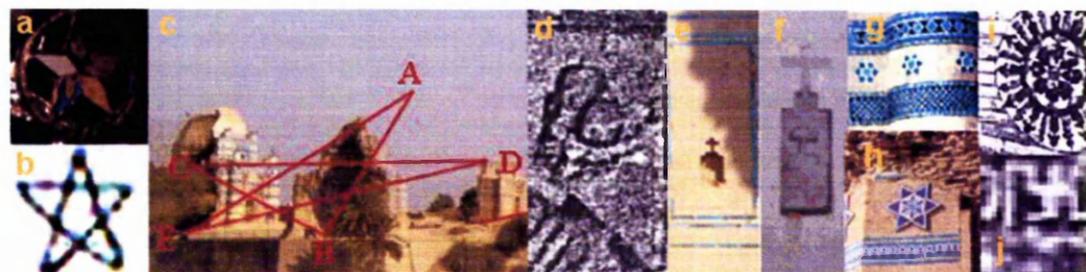


99. Top row, the Seal of Solomon talismanic symbols for the seven planets in jafr, with the pentagram as that of the Sun (left encircled) and the Leo sign as the one for Mars (right encircled), bottom row, sign for Leo (encircled)



100. Bibi Jaiwandi, a pre-restoration tile with the Leo/Mars symbol and the swastikas (encircled)

The Bibi Jaiwandi monument at point C also carries Hindu symbols with both the swastika (plate 100) and the dharmacakra present as decoration. Both these symbols were representative of the Sun in India.<sup>537</sup> The Dharmacakra wheel on Bibi Jaiwandi (plate 101i, below) has exactly 24 spokes, representing the 24 solar cycles according to Vedic astrological principles.<sup>538</sup> The presence of this Indian solar symbolism suggests the accommodation of a Sun-based Indian religious denomination within the religious principles of the order at Uch, in addition to the four religions pointed out above. Nothing is known about the symbols on the lost monuments at Point A and Point E, but they must have doubtlessly conformed to a similar Sun, i.e. Nauroz format.



101. A comparison of symbols the Bibi Jaiwandi complex, a) Druze symbol/pentagram of Al-Hakim, b) talismanic symbol for the Sun, c) Bibi Jaiwandi complex pentagram representing the Panjatan, Nauroz and the wilayat of Ali, d) Bibi Jaiwandi tile with Leo/Mars talismanic symbol, e) Baha al-Halim cross niche, f) Surkhposh cross niche, g) Bibi Jaiwandi Star of David, h) Baha al-Halim Star of David, i) Bibi Jaiwandi dharmacakra, j) Bibi Jaiwandi swastikas

The composite image in plate 101 above looks at the various religious symbols found at the Bibi Jaiwandi complex in a chronological format. This is in light of the Fatimid era seal of Al-Hakim (plate 101a), which is used by the Druze in their initiatory rites; it represents five divine religions for them, besides embodying other spiritual principles. If one is to presume that the Nizari da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order advanced within a metaphysical framework left over from the Fatimid era to construct the Satpanth, which we have already shown as having been done by Shams in the conclusion to Chapter Four, and further consider the characteristic astrological ruler-ships ascribed to the religious symbols present in plate 101, we will see that all of them fit inside the Nauroz

<sup>537</sup> The swastika symbol in India represents the Sun in its journey through the heavens: Sharma 1990, p.73.

<sup>538</sup> Sinha 1983, p.163.

framework, i.e. one can clearly see our specific Sun and Mars duality at work. Besides the obvious Shia-Ismaili Panjatan correlation to Zoroastrianism, the cross and Jesus himself are connected to the Sun as a planetary trait (hence Sunday), and the Star of David and Solomon are connected with Mars, and so on.

As mentioned, in Shia Islam this configuration can only signify the accommodation of the said religious traditions astrologically within the Nauroz and wilayat nexus of the First Imam Ali, when the Sun exalts in Aries (Mars). The primordality of this as the basis of the Shia faith cannot be diminished, considering the Ismailism of the associated personalities.

#### *Shaivism, the Fifth religion of the Satpanth*

The proper examination of all the above within the Nauroz-based Satpanth still does not clarify the mystery of the Indian Sun denomination connected to it. This region was famous for its Sun temple in Multan, and the maga-Brahmins who followed a composite Zoroastrian-Vedic ritual, before the Islamic conquest. Nobody has yet been able to decipher the exact nature of this religion in pre-Islamic times, but it slowly had ceased to exist after the Islamic conquest, in the time of the da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order. The interaction of the Suhrawardi Sufis and Ismaili da'is was with the Shiva worshipping yogis, their challengers and erstwhile allies, who after being vanquished joined the order.

A medieval Arabic text on Indian astral magic, *Ghayat Al-Hakim*,<sup>539</sup> throws new light on this subject in the sphere of Shaivism. It actually gives the names of the Hindu deities who rule over certain planets, similar to the association of certain Prophets with planets

---

<sup>539</sup> The book was originally written in Arabic and was reportedly used by the Abbasid caliph, al-Mahdi. It was translated into Latin in 1256 for the Castilian king, Alfonso the Wise: David Pingree, 'Indian Planetary Images and the Tradition of Astral Magic,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 52 (1989), p.5 ff.

in Islam.<sup>540</sup> Shiva is a solar deity and is associated with the God of Fire and the Sun, and hence 'Sunday.'<sup>541</sup> This can also be seen in the next plate,

PLANETS	RULING DEITY	OVER RULER	STONES
Surya - The Sun	AGNI, God of Fire	SHIVA	Red Ruby
Soma - The Moon	APAS, Water Goddess	PARVATI	Moonstone and Natural
Mangal - The Mars	BHUMI, Earth Goddess	SKANDA	Red Coral
Budha - The Mercury	VISHNU, The Preserver	VISHNU	Emerald
Brihaspati - The Jupiter	INDRA, King of Gods	BRAHMA	Yellow Sapphire and Yel
Sukra - The Venus	INDRANI, Queen of Gods	INDRA	Diamond
Shani - The Saturn	YAMA, God of Death	PRAJAPATI	Blue Sapphire and Black
Rahu - The Dragon's Head	DURGA, Goddess of Power	SARPA	Honey Colored Hessonit
Ketu - The Dragon's Tail	CHITRAGUPTA, God of Karma	BRAHMA	Cat's Eye

102. Indian deities with their planetary rulers

Hence, *Ghayat Al-Hakim*, a primary source which complements the above chart in plate 100 for Shiva being a solar deity, clarifies both the accommodation and the spiritual engagement of Shaivite yogis in the Satpanth, as its fifth religious denomination fitting inside the Nauroz and wilayat of Ali framework. It also sheds some much needed light on the extinct proto-Zoroastrian maga-Brahmin religion that was centred around the Multan Sun Temple, in retrospect, for the first time. Furthermore, the Shaivite snake on the Jahangasht khanqah mihrab (see plate 84) and other Shiavite symbols from the Suhrawardi Order find their due place within a clear Suhrawardi Satpanthi format, as do post-Shams additions to the Satpanth by his descendants from the Indian tradition, which can be inferred from the chart in plate 102.<sup>542</sup> After the clarification of Shaivism within

<sup>540</sup> See plate 31 for Islamic prophets connected to the seven planets.

<sup>541</sup> 'The Asvalayanas also give a set of pratyahidmatas or co-presiding deities: Rudra (Siva) for the Sun; Gauri, Siva's wife, for the Moon; Skanda for Mars;...and so on:' *Ibid.*

<sup>542</sup> As the chart in plate 100 shows, Vishnu is associated with Wednesday and Mercury; this sheds added light on the conversion process of the post-Shams era da'wa, when Ali was represented as the tenth incarnation of Vishnu by Sadr al-din to Hindus, see Hollister 1953, p.357. The process carries due weight in the context as a valid and well-argued method of astrologically determined multi-faith representation, keeping in mind that Mercury is the planetary ruler of the first Chetir Wednesday and its related Chaharshamba-yi Suri celebrations started by Shams himself.

the Satpanth, the post-Ismaili da'wa implications for other religious movements in India who inherited the Satpanth methodology in later centuries appear to be very strong.

The recessed Latin crosses would be of lesser significance in the Suhrawardi context if they were present only at the Bibi Jaiwandi monuments or at Surkhposh in Uch. But their presence at another site, in the Lal Mohra complex in Dera Ismail Khan, which is reckoned to be Uch Balot (i.e. one of the seven Uchs), signifies that they are not an isolated decoration exercise derived from the Satpanth on the part of the Suhrawardi builders at Uch. It would be safe to assess that after the loss of all the main southern facades at Uch,<sup>543</sup> as well as the west-facing mihrab facades, their original configuration and symbolism would have been as elaborate as at the monuments in Uch Balot which will be examined later.

---

<sup>543</sup> With the exception of Bibi Jaiwandi and Nuriya, which have been partly recreated and reinforced with concrete to support the crumbling monuments. The tiles have also been recreated in the case of Bibi Jaiwandi.

## The Burial Symbolism of Five Traditions

After the identification of the five religious denominations which comprised the level of the Satpanth followed by the Suhrawardi Order, the following analysis of the symbolism and orientation present at the remains of the monuments at Uch seems to suggest the collective use of the burial techniques of these five religious traditions.

All the buildings in Uch are laid out on an exact north-south axis. All references to the mapping of the monuments by the Centre for Research and Conservation have been made on this presumption. Although no corresponding comparison between the Mecca angles on the lost western facades of the Bibi Jaiwandi complex and the exact direction of Mecca from this location has yet been made, the readings have obviously been based on some technical assumptions. The mihrab wall is always referred to as the west-facing facade, i.e. an exact west-facing facade in terms of architectural standards. If there was a slight incline to another angle to the west to match the actual qibla, it would have been mentioned.

Multan and Uch are located on 30 degrees north latitude, roughly the same as Jerusalem (31), while Mecca is at 21 degrees. The qibla markers should be technically facing 10 degrees south-west, but all references made to the qibla walls, as mentioned above, are west-facing and not qibla-facing. Theoretically, it is acceptable in Islam if prayer direction and markings are within 45 degrees of Mecca. However, Islamic astrolabe sciences dating back to the eighth century give a very precise direction for Mecca, which would have been readily available to the architects of this complex, as they were the cream of the Shia-Islamic spiritual elite of their day. This exact Mecca orientation should also have been the norm considering the astrological detail present in the construction of these buildings. With further research pending, it would be important to confirm whether the lost mihrabs in question were actually facing exactly west, and not slightly south-west as they would have been.

If it were confirmed that the monuments face an exact north-south, east-west axis, this would open the door to a host of incontestable readings on the pluralism of the Satpanth at work in the Suhrawardi Order's funerary architecture. This would be to maximize the spiritual benefit from a saint's grave, or indeed from a symbolic burial complex drawing on a number of religious traditions. Even if the Mecca readings are not confirmed to be such, i.e. the buildings face Mecca, the presumption of this hypothesis would still be very viable in light of the basic Islamic doctrine of any monument falling within 45 degrees of a designated holy direction as being acceptable for prayer. This is keeping in mind the hidden truths generally sought in Scripture which formed the basis of medieval Ismaili thought, in an effort to embellish it exoterically, in this case on architecture.

As mentioned earlier, in the Hindu burial ceremonial of the Shaivite tradition, a body is placed in the exact north-south direction on the funeral pyre, with the head facing south, so that the soul once released after burial rites does not interfere with the magnetic waves travelling from the North Pole to the south, which would best facilitate its rise to heaven. The concept is also the basis of all advanced yogic meditations which revolve around empowering the soul. But in the case of acclaimed yogis the direction is reversed within the same reasoning, i.e. the head faces north and they are also buried in the earth, as it is believed that their purer remains would not corrupt the earth. The most likely explanation for the north-south orientation here in terms of burial is that the Suhrawardi saints and Ismaili da'is were buried in a north (head) to south *samadhi* (Hindu burial into the earth) like fashion, i.e. the highest award given to Hindu ascetics.

In terms of Islam, this exact north-south alignment of the monuments would mean that bodies placed exactly north to south in the Hindu manner at burial could be resurrected to get up and walk west towards Mecca, in accordance with the basic precondition of Islamic resurrection. In terms of the 45 degrees principle, this would hold true for both Jerusalem and Mecca considering the latitude, irrespective of how the actual Mecca direction readings come out. There seems to be no other perceivable reason for such a burial axis here, complemented by the northern and southern entrances, except to consciously make Vedic burial a lesser co-functionary of Islamic burial techniques. In

light of the religious concepts at work here, the same reasoning would hold true for the accommodation of Jewish burial practices, as the west directly faces Jerusalem.

The north-south direction, with the cross niches serving as headstones in the Surkhposh khanqah, further endorses the already strong Zoroastrian and Christian symbolism that is so apparent on these monuments. The pentagram starting at Point A and duly pointing east has no esoteric value in terms of Islamic burial, unless it signifies the direction for Zoroastrian burial, in addition to Christianity (east for both). Since human bodies are believed to be made of earth in Islam, the direction for which is south in Islamic jafr, any such strictly Islamic signification excluding the above two religions, should have started with the pentagram facing south. The easterly direction is that of the fire element in jafr, which only signifies Zoroastrian ideals and implies its direction for burial, in addition to Christian burial symbolism.<sup>544</sup> There can be no other explanation for this configuration, as in the above stated format the five pertinent burial techniques of the five religions within the Satpanth are unequivocally testified to. Therefore, it should be fairly acceptable to conclude, with the north-south axis signifying Hindu burial, the west marking Mecca and Jerusalem for Islam and Judaism, and the east for Zoroastrianism and Christianity, that all the five religions are well accounted for in terms of Suhrawardi Satpanth burial eschatology. This should be the expected result from any religious doctrine, let alone this one, which according to its own beliefs of course dwells more on the hereafter than anything else.

---

<sup>544</sup> An inquiry in this regard was presented to Ardeshir Cowasjee, a figurehead of the Zoroastrian community in Karachi, who in turn posed the question to the Chief Zoroastrian priest in Pakistan. Cowasjee got back to say that the Zoroastrians would support whatever I wrote, implying that due to their secretive nature they would not say exactly how, but the assessment for the eastern burial direction is correct.

## Conclusion: Suhrawardi Pluralism as Architecture

An important aspect of this detailed multi-faith discovery of Satpanth ideals at Uch, in addition to building configurations, is that there were originally seven places called Uch in the Indus Valley, which are now related to the Suhrawardi Order and the Jalali Dervishes. Yet in history, most of the references available for them are from Ismaili sources. A surviving Ismaili tradition on the existence of seven Uchs is mentioned in the ginans.<sup>545</sup> This report in a ginan only goes to endorse the deep-rooted connection between the Suhrawardi Order and the da'wa that has already been established in this thesis through metaphysical concepts and architectural and iconographic evidence. Needless to state the basis for this connection can only be the Shiism, or to be more specific in this case the Ismailism of the two entities. This too is beyond any doubt with the way the wilayat of Ali plays out in the Nauroz framework expressed by both the organisations.

In Pakistan, traditions state that the seven Uchs are as follows: 1) Uch Bukhari proper, formerly the centre of Shams da'wa, 2) Uch Bela, where Jalal al-din Surkhposh was previously buried, at Sonak Bela, 3) Uch in Baluchistan, now known for the Uch gas power station, 4) a site called Uch in the Salt Range where a secretive sub-klan of Bukharis is still known to exist, with its own nexus of shrines, 5) Uch near Muzaffarabad in Kashmir where a burial site with a shrine for Jalal al-din Surkhposh is present, 6) Uch in the Swat Valley where Buddha is said to have converted himself into a huge serpent to feed his starving devotees, and perhaps most importantly, 7) Uch in Dera Ismail Khan, at a place called Uch Balot, where the Lal Mohra tomb complex is located. The number 'seven' takes on added significance here, in terms of both Uch and Ismailism.

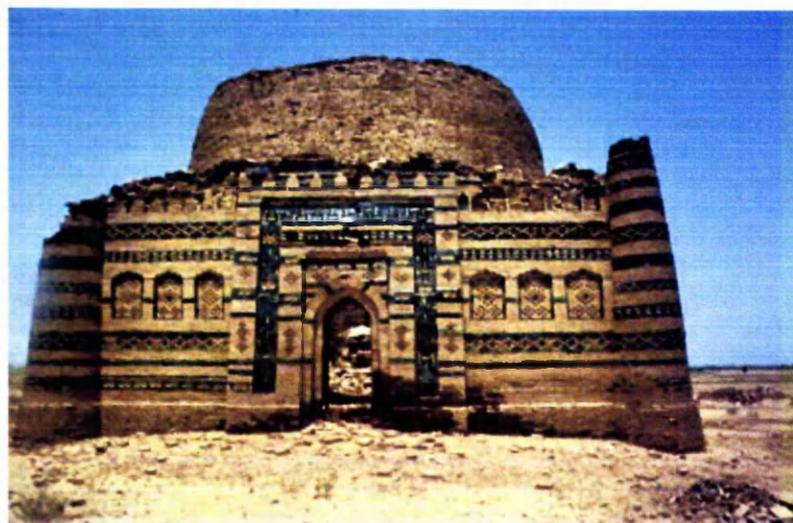
The tombs in Dera Ismail Khan appear to exhibit a geometric site plan, but in a format different from that at Bibi Jaiwandi. Pending further research, the prospects of the site yielding more archaeological evidence in this regard are high.

---

<sup>545</sup> For the seven Uchs see Shackle and Moir 2000, p.214.

## One of the Seven Uchs: Lal Mohra

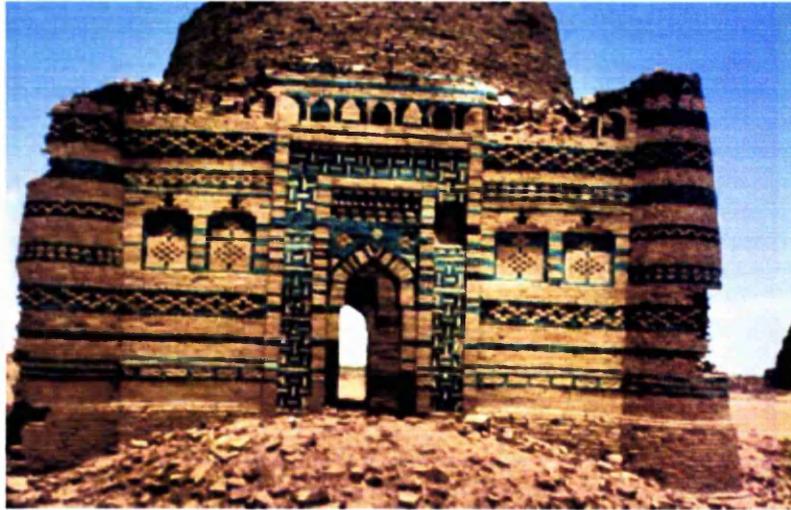
The Lal Mohra or Uch Balot monuments are located in the North-West Frontier Province, in the district of Dera Ismail Khan, outside the town in an arid plain beyond the agrarian village communities.<sup>546</sup> The surviving monuments are four in number, with two in one cluster, and the two other monuments set at a distance from one another. The cluster and the two individual monuments are placed diagonally apart, signifying three different points in a larger site plan. They are built at a distance of half a mile between them, but are easily visible from one another. The nature of the site and the construction techniques used echo those of the Uch mound, and the design suggests that there were more clusters or monuments forming a site arrangement similar to that in Uch, as further research will probably show. The tombs are unmarked, with no anecdotal or historical reference available as to who is interred in them. That is if they do indeed contain any actual tombs, as they might just turn out to be a symbolic configuration like the Uch monuments themselves perhaps were before burial took place in them.



103. Lal Mohra, tomb A, main southern entrance looking north

---

<sup>546</sup> The complex is located 24 miles from the villages of Puroa and Muhra in a place called Andira. This is a vast graveyard filled with tombs from various time-periods both historic and contemporary.



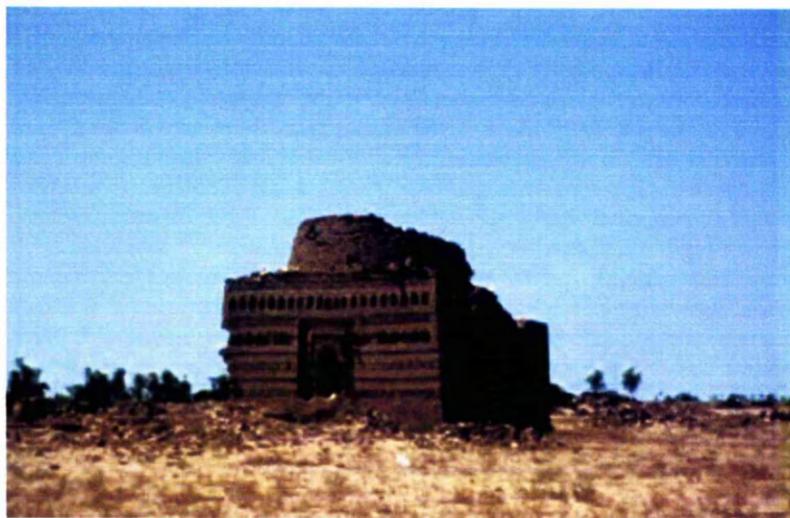
104. Lal Mohra, tomb B, northern entrance facade looking south, with Tomb A visible behind opening

The monuments are in a decaying state but are structurally fully extant, and the symbolism, reminiscent of Uch, is better visible here. They are reckoned to pre-date the Uch monuments by Pakistani architectural historians, who classify them and their age according to their generic style type, i.e. late Ghaznavid to early Sultanate Era, and give their construction date as the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>547</sup> This would make their construction period contemporary to the Shams era. In addition we have reports of a Shamsi community surviving in the Frontier until not too long before Partition.<sup>548</sup> Even if the Lal Mohra monuments turn out not to be directly connected to Shams, their connection to his Satpanth, which was in essence followed by the Suhrawardi Order, cannot be falsified, as the iconography here is very similar to that in Uch, and the buildings carry an overriding Christian and Jewish symbolism. Due to lack of time they could be fully explored, but the Indian component to Uch, i.e. Shaivism cannot be very evidently seen here (at least for now). This must be because they are earlier buildings, when the authors had probably not yet delved into Indian religiosity in detail; that is the hallmark of the Jahangasht and Sadr al-din era.

<sup>547</sup> [http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site\\_id=59](http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=59) . A historic monument style type is not bound by has dynastic dates in architecture.

<sup>548</sup> For these Shamsis who were neither Twlefer nor traditional Ismaili, but revered the Bhagavad Gita and worshipped no idols see Hollister, 1953 p.355: CIR, 1911, NWFP, XIII, p.74.

The majority of the Latin crosses at the Dera Ismail Khan monuments specifically point in the north-south direction, reminiscent of the cross grave markers in the Surkhposh khanqah. They are especially prominent on the main southern facade exteriors, probably to signify the burial axes. In proportion to each monument's size they are significantly larger and more numerous than those visible at Uch. This may seem so partly due to the loss of sizable parts of the Uch monuments, especially the loss of the southern facades. Therefore, the full effects of the symbols in Bibi Jaiwandi that cannot be envisaged on the exterior or the interior are better apparent at Lal Mohra.

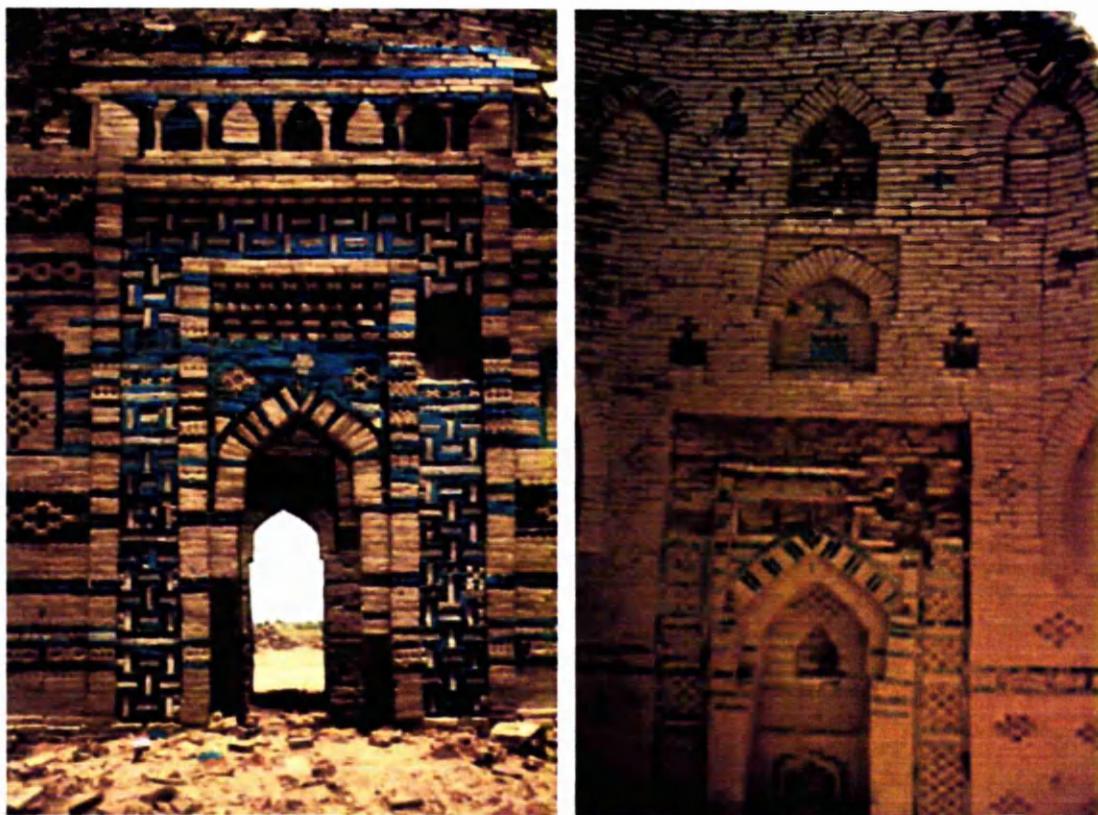


105. Lal Mohra, tomb C, main southern entrance facade and lesser eastern facade on right



106. Lal Mohra, tomb D, main southern entrance facade

The plan type at Lal Mohra is reminiscent of the Suhrawardi monuments at Uch, with a major southern entrance, and lesser entrances on the east and northern facades. The western facades house the qibla wall and mihrab markers, and are solid with no perforations in them. In addition to being prominent in the northern direction as gravestones on both the interior and exterior, the crosses at Lal Mohra also serve as conspicuous markers on the Mecca direction itself. The recessed Latin crosses are placed in the interior on the main mihrab, and in addition on lesser mihrab niches as well (see plate 107, right), finished in glazed turquoise tile. The presence of these crosses in the Mecca-Jerusalem direction on the burial mihrab itself should dispel any doubts that might have arisen about their proposed use in Uch, as this is the direction of resurrection in Islam and Judaism.



107. Lal Mohra, left, Tomb B, main southern entrance with hexagrams; right, Tomb D, interior mihrab with Latin crosses in glaze

In Satpanth ceremony, these crosses must have been ceremonial as well as decorative considering the recessed area provided, which as mentioned previously is used in this region for lighting candles and oil lamps on special dates and for the fulfilment of desires. The above analysis confirms the existence in Lal Mohra of the unique design archetype used by the Ismaili da'wa and the Suhrawardi Sufi Order, which in this case predates Uch. It shows the burial practices and symbols from some of the representative religions of the Satpanth in use, as we have seen at Uch, but the monuments in question are not connected to the Suhrawardi Order and it maybe that they are purely Ismaili in origin. Further, the monuments at Uch Balot carry the hexagram configuration on the main entrance (see Tomb B, plate 107, left), which corresponds to the use of the same in Uch. It is safe to conclude that the frequent burial symbolism in our archetype at Uch is not unique, and that precedents had existed previously in both the Ismaili da'wa, and the order itself.

It must be noted that Lal Mohra and Uch, i.e. Bibi Jaiwandi seem to carry a slightly different function, as compared to our Suhrawardi khanqahs. We can see this from both the Surkhposh khanqah with its chillah room area, and Rukn-e-Alam in Multan, both of which have burials in them along with some burial symbolism, yet they seem not have been originally meant as places for graves, more for ritual use and initiation. In Lal Mohra and Bibi Jaiwandi, we can actually see a concerted effort to highlight burial traditions, with the presence of religious symbolism and axes which dwell on the maximisation of the benefits of the afterlife. But here too, in my opinion the site plan configurations imply that the monument areas were not meant for actual burial. They were mock sarcophaguses, and as we have seen in Bibi Jaiwandi are centred on the Panjatan as the manifestations of the divine. The configurations sought to tap into the energy of the heavens through the eschatology of the belief system, and eventually became the burial place of the personalities connect to their creation. In the case of Bibi Jaiwandi this had a cumulative effect from the Surkhposh era whereby the khanqah was added to through the pentagram complex over many generations, and they collectively formed the Madrasa Bahaiya under Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju; but that plan is so complex that it must have been envisaged from the earlier Suhrawardi era.

## Reassessment of the Da'wa and Latter Day contributions: the monument of Sultan Ali Akbar

This section on the famed Suhrawardi Sufi, Ismaili da'i and the great-great-grandson of Shams will deal mainly with his monument. The opening sections of this chapter, on Shams's son Nasir al-din and his descendants briefly dealt with the lineage plaque on Ali Akbar's monument regarding its authenticity. His name as a missionary seems to be missing from the chronological history of the da'is appointed in India.<sup>549</sup> During the religious controversy after the deaths of Hasan Kabir al-din and Sayyid Raju in Uch, when the former's descendants rejected the Ismaili Imamate in Iran and refused to acknowledge the new *hujjat* or representative, the da'wa had fallen into disarray. A similar situation with the Jalali Dervishes was seen after Sayyid Raju had died. Unrestrained religious experimentation had driven the Suhrawardi Order to the fringe of extreme beliefs as seen in Chapter Three.<sup>550</sup>

Sayyid Taj al-din, the da'i after Hasan Kabir al-din was at born at Uch.<sup>551</sup> He was the main *hujjat* for India, superseding the descendants of Hasan Kabir al-din. He made Lahore his da'wa centre because Uch had become a disputed area, used as a base by his opponents, some of whom were the descendants of Hasan Kabir al-din. Because of the disrespect shown by the community towards him, no further da'is were appointed in Uch from Iran, and in India as whole for some time.<sup>552</sup> Subsequently Imam Shah, the younger son of Hasan Kabir al-din, born in Uch in 1430 and died in 1520, succeeded Taj al-din in some lesser capacity much later in Gujarat.<sup>553</sup> In Ismaili traditions, the office of representation through a *vakil* or titular head, dealt with the more basic functions of the

---

<sup>549</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/hjstory07/history732.html>.

<sup>550</sup> See Chapter Three, 'Breakdown.'

<sup>551</sup> Born in 796/1394 in Uch, he got his early education from his elder brothers. He was about 33 years old when designated as the next *Hujjat*, or *Pir* for the subcontinent: <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/hjstory07/history715.html>.

<sup>552</sup> 'The tradition relates that a few community members (in Uch) suspected and accused *Pir Taj al-din* of embezzling a gift from the Imam. They encircled *Pir Tajuddin* with a flood of questions, rigorous arguments and insulted him. He died soon after, possibly by heart attack in 1467. *Mustansir Billah* (the Ismaili Imam of the time) appears to have heard the news after a year, which caused his displeasure, and suspended [sic] to depute any other *pir* in India': <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history715.html>.

<sup>553</sup> <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history716.html>.

community in India, in the absence of a clear da'wa. This office was initially held by a certain Nur al-din Ali, in the period of confusion following the death of Pir Taj al-din.<sup>554</sup>

The above facts account for the absence of a clear da'i in the Indus Valley which makes it difficult to identify what happened to the main initiates or the members of the inner circles, the *Akhas-i Khas* of the da'is, and what the real state of the da'wa and its followers was, in this apparently long period. Obviously, professing a high level of initiation into the Satpanth and esoteric sciences related to it, it is very likely that they continued their work to the best of their capacity. Considering the expanse of the da'wa, not everybody could have gone against the orders of the Ismaili Imam.

The plaque on the foundation stone of Ali Akbar's monument is dated 1585,<sup>555</sup> which he is said to have constructed himself. This makes his life coincide with the period which saw the absence of a clear hujjat in India. This does not fully explain who Ali Akbar was, but he could certainly not have been an Imam Shahi in Multan, which was never their stronghold. He may have been a devoted Ismaili Suhrawardi who wanted to revive the ideals of the past. Nevertheless, important details are attached to his monument and its characteristics, which seem to have reasserted the Suhrawardi archetype at this later stage, with strong evidence of ensuing Satpanth ideals, even as the da'wa had outwardly lapsed, and official ties with Iran were broken. This is especially the case if one considers this shrine together with the slightly earlier dated Pir Adil monument.

Although Ismaili traditions are sometimes surrounded in mystery, one thing is sure, that every major da'i (except Shams's son Nasir al-din) has a shrine or burial attributed to him. This is even true of Taj al-din, and of Imam Shah himself.<sup>556</sup> In Ali Akbar's monument and his Ismailism, one can be sure that some unofficial connection must have existed between him and the centre in Iran. Ali Akbar's monument is too large, lavish and well-executed to be connected to any other entity except the da'wa, with perhaps

---

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.

<sup>555</sup> Khan 1983, p.238.

<sup>556</sup> Pir Tajuddin was buried near Tando Bagho, where a shrine had been erected in 1484 : <http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history07/history715.html> .

some connections to and patronage by the Mughal Emperor Akbar's tolerant royal court. In addition, his mother's shrine next to his was also constructed by him. He is known locally as a very rich Ismaili da'i and as a Suhrawardi mystic and pir<sup>557</sup>.

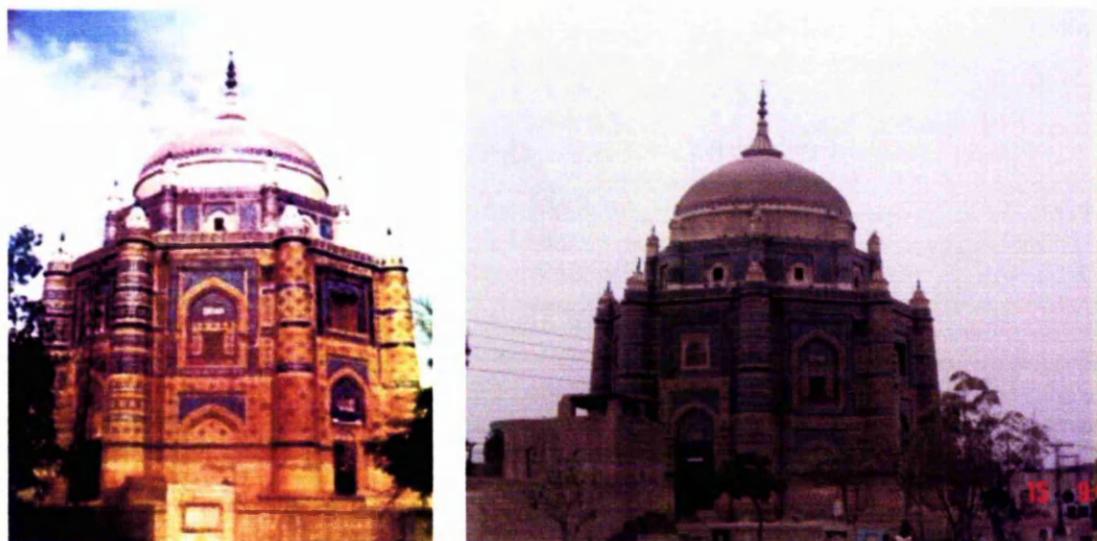
The quarter of Suraj Miani, outside the city of Multan which houses the Ali Akbar monument is now Twelver Shia. It is dominated by the shrine of Ali Akbar, and that of his mother in the adjacent graveyard. In terms of the architectural and historical conditions surrounding the buildings described in this thesis, the monument of Ali Akbar stands out. It exhibits the Suhrawardi archetype at this much later stage and as the last major monument of the era covered by the thesis provides final evidence on the issue of direction and axially in burial orientation for all the concerned monuments. For some reason, in the era after the Sikh wars, the shrine has not been repossessed by anyone who falsely or rightly claims any inheritance to the monument on the basis of lineal descent or sectarian identity. No organised management of religious activity is centred on the building, nor do services and the collection of tithes take place. All these activities are based instead in the adjacent Shia mosque, which was probably established by Ali Akbar himself. In Suraj Miani, our Suhrawardi monument lies totally unoccupied and undisturbed, and has been so for a long period of time. This is the first such monument I came across in the fieldtrip, and its state necessarily means that its surviving original entrances and related attributes are unmolested, and would give the conclusive evidence on the issue of the archetype and its use for this thesis.

The monument is not under the direct control of the Auqaf although technically it automatically falls under it due to the absence of a hereditary pir or caretaker. It has not been changed in any major way under the Auqaf either, except for repairs of tiles and structural reinforcements in the 1970s. The local people have apparently resisted, sometimes violently, any attempt to take over or administer the monument. Even this author had to face some hostility, presumably because his vehicle bore an official number plate. There are no flurries of Auqaf boards or signs. The monument is in dire need of upkeep, with no lighting inside or outside, except a few solitary bulbs connected by the

---

<sup>557</sup> Khan 1983, p.236: Mukham Chand, *Tawarikh-e-Zila-e-Multan*.

local people. The people living in the surrounding neighbourhood take care of the monument, venerate the pir as their patron saint, light candles and undertake small repairs themselves.

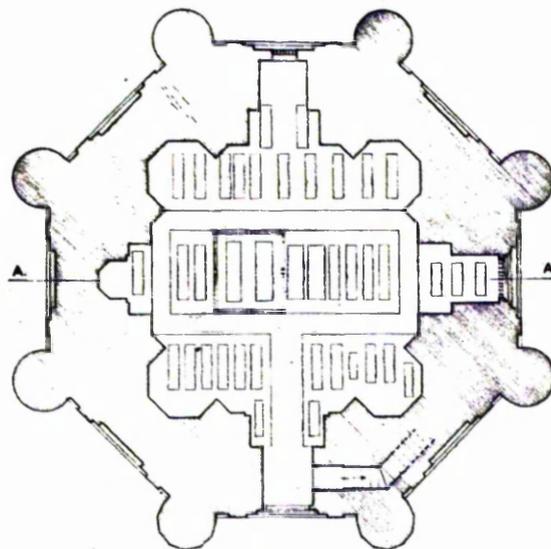


108. Sultan Ali Akbar at Suraj Miani. Left, in the 1970s, right, the monument in early 2006, the main entrance is on the south (green), and the lesser mihrab-facing eastern entrance on the right

The monument of Ali Akbar is actually a smoking gun for the Suhrawardi archetype. It provides strong evidence for multi-faith ceremonial and multiple burial traditions, and a continuation of the monument archetype related to the Suhrawardi Order, recalling all the distinctive features of the earlier Zakariya era buildings in their entirety.

Like the Multan Suhrawardis of the Zakariya era, Ali Akbar was influential and rich enough to be able to employ unusually large amounts of money for the construction of the two monuments, and was close enough to the imperial rulers to warrant the construction. He was however, unlike the Zakariya and his Multani descendants, openly an Ismaili da'i, and a Suhrawardi pir at the same time. The presence of the tolerant Mughal emperor Akbar in Delhi might have played its part in his open profession of faith.

Ahmad Nabi Khan writing about the monument says that it was the first time every feature related to Rukn-e-Alam was found re-invoked in another monument, and the first time that the name of an architect has been found inscribed in this type of funerary building.<sup>558</sup> This implies a level of royal patronage in light of the inspiration for the building being derived from the monument of Rukn-e-Alam. He states that the names of the architects in the inscriptions are Ibrahim and Rajab, sons of Musa of Lahore, and that unusual attention was given and the best talent utilised for construction of the monument. This is in contrast to the badly executed inscriptions he mentions from the later period, which include faulty repairs and Ali Akbar's lineage plaque, responsible for so much misinformation in the Ismaili da'wa (see plate 71). He also cites parallels in the execution of decoration between Ali Akbar and the buildings at Fatehpur Sikri (not a similarity in the decorative styles themselves) as being early Mughal.<sup>559</sup> These facts would point to the existence of good relations with the imperial court and the tolerant ruler of the time.



109. Sultan Ali Akbar, ground floor plan showing western mihrab (left), main entrance on south, and minor northern and eastern entrances

Like the traditional Suhrawardi archetype in this kind of monument, there are entrances from all three sides, the major one being from the south; except for the western facade

<sup>558</sup> Khan 1983, pp.237-8.

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.*

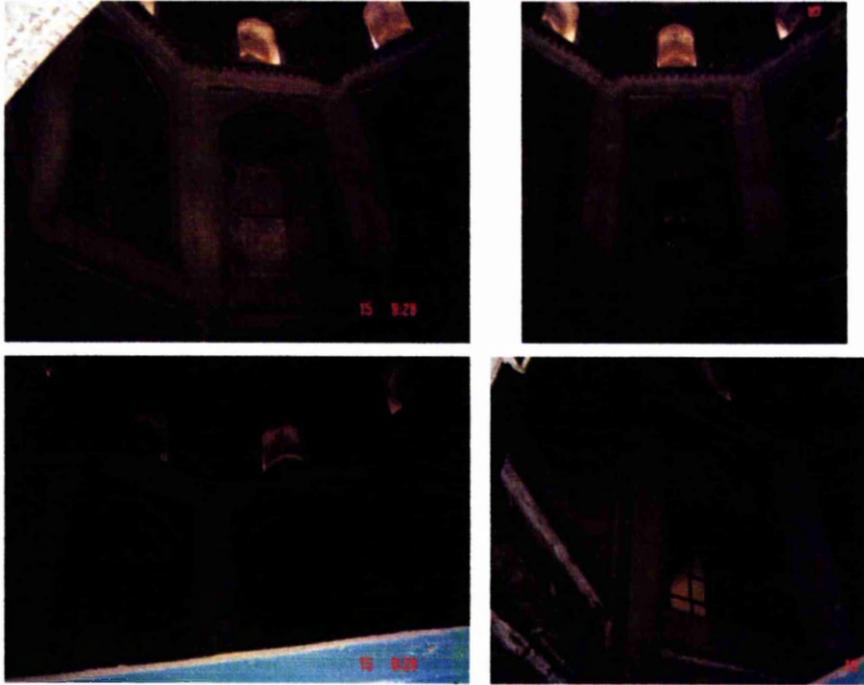
which houses the mihrab (see plate 109). Due to the absence of the Auqaf, these have not been sealed or changed for access, but are merely locked up and only the major southern entrance is currently used. A striking feature here which seems to have evolved from the inward looking openings on the second storey circumambulation balcony of the Rukn-e-Alam monument (see plate 70) is the addition of a covered running passage at the second storey in Ali Akbar. This covered passage has four alcoves with full length doors and windows looking on the inside, which could be opened and closed over all the three major entrances and the mihrab. Their design points to a secretive element in the monument, like in Rukn-e-Alam, in spite of the public Ismailism of Ali Akbar. These alcoves must have been used by the higher-ups in the Satpanth hierarchy to view certain ceremonies held on the inside. The covered passage is necessarily like a private viewing area, similar to the one proposed at Rukn-e-Alam (see plate 70); only in Rukn-e-Alam this was a balcony open to the sky. One must remember that this area was a very old centre for the Vedic Sun Cult, with Suraj Miani or 'Port of the Sun' playing a central part in the proto-Zoroastrian maga-Brahmin religion of the Sun God at Multan. This religion was of course Shaivite in nature as we have seen previously, and connected to a Solar rulership (see plate 102), which would fit well inside the fundamentally Shia Nauroz and wilayat of Ali framework of the Satpanth. In Ali Akbar's time, the area was his spiritual territory and was populated by his followers who maintain a distinct identity to this day, unlike at Shams's shrine which has been changed by modern day demographics. The monument and its ambience seem to suggest that that they were Shamsis within the Satpanth of the day.

The presence of these alcoves and their proposed specific use by the initiated inner Ismaili circle should not be doubted, as its existence as a body of initiates which formed the backbone of the da'wa is a centuries old reality.<sup>560</sup> The reason for the lesser emphasis on such use in the Rukn-e-Alam context was due to the high level of dissimulation professed by the saints of the early era, specifically the Zakariya clan; as Ali Akbar's personal Ismaili leanings are not in any doubt, the evidence here speaks for itself. Since

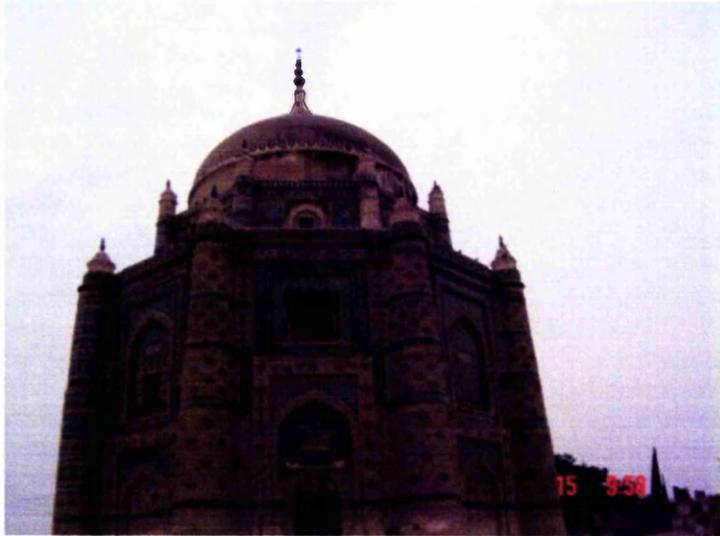
---

<sup>560</sup> The *Akhas-i Khas* or super-elite were those initiated Nizari Ismaili circles who perceived the Imam in his true spiritual reality; Daftary 2007, p.366.

both this building and the mausoleum of Ali Akbar's mother were completed during his own lifetime,<sup>561</sup> there should be no question about its use as a Nizari Ismaili religious centre, which in that day could only mean the Satpanth, and its multi-faith ceremonies.



110. Sultan Ali Akbar, interior facades. Clockwise from top left, a) alcove above main southern entrance, b) above the mihrab niche, c) above the northern entrance, and d) above the eastern entrance



111. Sultan Ali Akbar, the lesser eastern (mihrab facing) entrance, with an alcove on the second storey as seen from the outside

<sup>561</sup> Khan 1983, p.238: Edmund W. Smith, *The Moghul Architecture of Fatehpur Sikri*.

The alcoves are visible from the outside as perforations on the second storey, showing that they also opened towards the outside. Since the monument is not functional and is locked, there were no Auqaf personnel to facilitate access to the upper stories to examine the alcoves or the tiles of the uppermost parapets. Hence no details are available about the presence of Shia iconography in them. The tiles on the parapet immediately above the alcoves have a plain 'Allah' inscribed on them as opposed to any Shia testament, and are visible from below. This makes sense as the religion of the saint was not in question and was professed openly in the time of an enlightened and tolerant ruler in Delhi.

The mihrab of the monument is life-size, in the likeness of the Rukn-e-Alam monument, and can fit a large number of people inside. It is actually a few feet taller and wider than the one at Rukn-e-Alam. It displays moulding in the plaster for the accommodation of a wooden frame with doors, which has now been removed (see plate 112, below). This may have carried jafr symbolism in the likeness of Rukn-e-Alam. Since the monument is not in use, it has been a prey to vandalism over a long period of time.

The only difference in Ali Akbar is that unlike in the Rukn-e-Alam monument, the mihrab interior has been finished in carved stucco plaster, as opposed to wood and tile. This is also true of the decoration on the inner niches and the overall interior. This is what is meant by Ahmad Nabi Khan when he refers to decorative parallels between Ali Akbar and the early Mughal court style; it is the change in material, execution, and craftsmanship as opposed to the change in style itself.<sup>562</sup> The Mughals were the first to introduce large-scale stucco carving finishes in India, and its use at this early stage further shows the deployment of imperial craftsmen; before this stone carving and tiles were the norm.

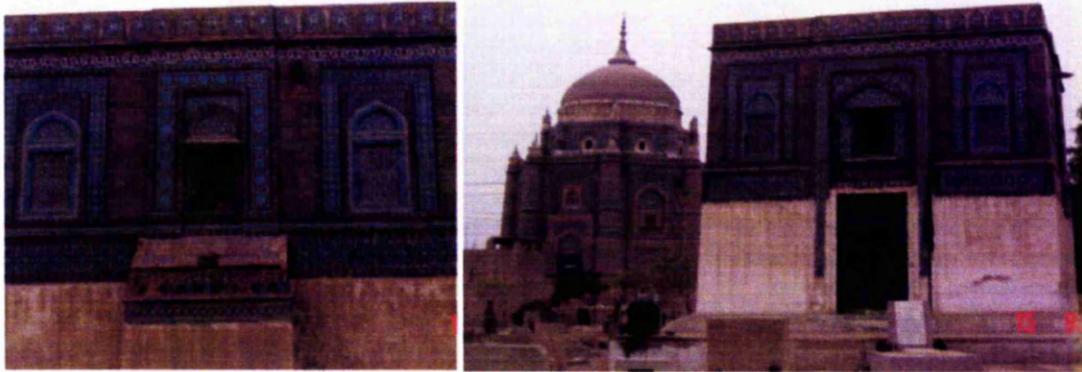
---

<sup>562</sup> The decorative style itself is still keeps with the older Suhrawardi tradition; and unlike in Mughal or contemporary imperial Islamic architecture, there is no decoration in terms of stucco calligraphy or landscapes.



112. A comparison between, left, Sultan Ali Akbar's life-size mihrab without the wooden frame/door, and right, the Rukn-e-Alam mihrab with its original frame

A very distinctive feature of all these Suhrawardi monuments, which span three centuries, is the use of icons and religious symbols as decoration, which in itself is a basic reminder of the hidden truths in religion that have been professed by them. A final piece of evidence on multi-faith burial process is present in the adjoining monument of Ali Akbar's mother which was finished in his lifetime. This tomb for the saint's mother has been constructed as a pure cube. The only entrance to the cube is from the south, with windows on the other three directions. There is a straight western-facing mihrab niche, visible on the outer western facade as a protrusion, as in Rukn-e-Alam (see plate 113, left).



113. The monument of Ali Akbar's mother. Left, the straight west-pointing mihrab niche, right, the solitary southern entrance with the monument of Ali Akbar behind. Notice the adjacent grave (right foreground, next to green entrance, tapering at an incline to the southern direction with a white plaque). It points in the actual direction to Mecca, i.e. tilting 10 degrees to the north-south axis.

The sole emphasis on the southerly direction here would put to rest the issue of multiple burial traditions being employed as a manifestation of the Satpanth, as the comparative photograph in plate 113 clearly shows, and as previously seen in the Bibi Jaiwandi complex. This fact is further verified by an adjacent grave to the monument of Ali Akbar's mother (see plate 113, right) which actually tilts away from the burial direction in these monuments. In this case, for once somebody thought of actually checking the actual direction of Mecca, instead of taking the word of the saint or his monument. It was not possible to check the direction during the field trip, but the evidence is pictographic and speaks for itself, unless the compass used for the solitary grave was incorrect. The monument for Ali Akbar's mother could not be examined because it was locked. It is opened on Thursday evenings for religious rituals and is visited only by women; therefore its interior attributes and iconography remain unexplored.



114. The Trishul on Sultan Ali Akbar's dome in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The evidence for Shaivism being the fifth religion in the Satpanth, as already seen from the monuments in Uch, gets a final certification from the shrine of Ali Akbar. A historical photograph of this monument from the Archaeological Survey of India shows a Shaivite Trishul topping his monument. The photograph was taken in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (plate 114), and the symbol has now been removed. The archetypical design of Ali Akbar's monument, and his combined Ismaili and Suhrawardi religious credentials clearly show that Shaivism is indeed the final piece in the jigsaw puzzle of the Satpanth, and that the entity was common to both the da'wa and the Suhrawardi Order from the start. In fact, this was well the reason the proponents of this doctrine came to India, to seek esoteric knowledge, as for them it signified the first divinely revealed Shia Islamic component to the Satpanth.

When Shams's descendant Sadr al-din expanded into Indian religiosity through the Satpanth framework, he astrologically correlated Shiva with Adam, which means the

latter would fit inside the transcendental Shia Islam of the Satpanth as its first proponent.<sup>563</sup> This also substantiates a hadith by Muhammad on Adam living in India and being the recipient of the first Divine Religion there. All of this must be examined in the backdrop of the Primordial wilayat of Ali at the original Nauroz, i.e. the first day the universe breathed life, which is the basis of the Shia-Ismaili Satpanth. An excerpt from the above hadith's *tafsir* or exegesis in the reprinted version of Jahangasht's malfuzat *Siraj al-Hadiya* states, 'The Prophet has said that the ancients first came to India,' for which Jahangasht clarifies that not only did Adam first descend in India (as is commonly quoted in Islam), but that all the ancient *hikmat* or wisdom of Adam is encompassed in India.<sup>564</sup> The statement shows that both these contemporaneous personalities, i.e. Sadr al-din and Jahangasht regarded some secret knowledge as having existed in India. After the discovery of Shaivism as the fifth religion in the Satpanth, and Sadr al-din's identification of Shiva with Adam, the rest of the framework is clear for both the Suhrawardi Order and the da'wa through the Trishul on the Ali Akbar monument. Since Shaivism and hence the Trishul has a Sun ruler-ship, the ritual construction of this monument during the Nauroz period can also be asserted, and its connection to the Satpanth can thereby be further elaborated.

#### The Monument of Pir Adil

Pir Adil is a latter day Sufi saint from the early sixteenth century whose monument is located near Dera Ghazi Khan, not very far from the shrine of Sakhi Sarwar. All we know about him from the lineal plaque on his shrine is that he was a descendant of the seventh Twelver Shia Imam, Musa al-Kazim. Judging from the architectural attributes and the surviving symbolism on his monument, it is obvious that he was a Suhrawardi in the old tradition. This monument is included here to show how far and wide Satpanth doctrines had spread from Shams's time, and the effect they had on the spiritual mindset of this region. Pir Adil was the spiritual mentor of the local ruler Ghazi Khan whose own

---

<sup>563</sup> Hollister 1953, p.357.

<sup>564</sup> Husain 1983, p.23.

monument is located in Dera Ghazi Khan City, and is dated 1494. Both these monuments were constructed from the funds of Ghazi Khan, who was a contemporary of the first Mughal emperor Babur, during the latter's first incursion into India. He was however far from Babur's circle of influence.

Pakistani historians believe Pir Adil was a Chishti saint,<sup>565</sup> but this is implausible as the region of Dera Ghazi Khan has no specific tradition of the Chishti Order in that era; nor do the monument archetype and its decoration reflect anything Chishti about his person. In fact, the building stands as a clear testament to the Suhrawardi archetype. There is no mention of him in the recently published books on Sufi orders in Pakistan. However, his descent from a Twelver Shia Imam and his monument being currently Twelver Shia emphasise his sectarian religious leanings. These at that time, coupled with the attributes of his monument could only be Suhrawardi, as no other Sufi order in the Indus valley has strong Shia connections.



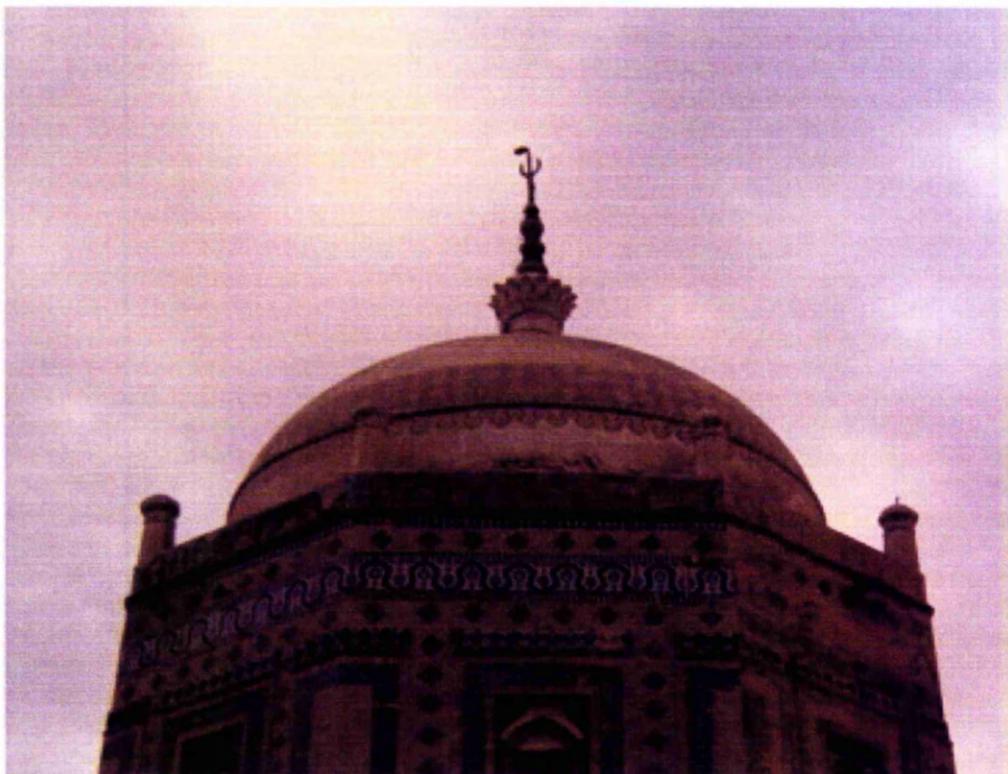
115. Pir Adil Panjatan (♠) tiles on the first storey parapets

The symbolism in the Pir Adil shrine lends credence to the continuing Satpanth ideals of the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley as they existed in the sixteenth century, since it

---

<sup>565</sup> 'Pir Adil is a revered ninth (hijri) century Chishti saint, known as the spiritual father of Ghazi Khan. His tomb, nine miles from Dera Ghazi Khan near the Indus Highway, continues to be an important place of pilgrimage, but is reported to be in poor condition': (<http://archnet.org/library>)

pre-dates the Ali Akbar monument by nearly a century. It carries the three characteristic entrances of the Suhrawardi archetype, the related burial orientation, as well as the Shia-Ismaili Panjatan testament as the number five (۵) on the first storey parapet of tiles (see plate 115, above), nearly three centuries after their use in Rukn-e-Alam in Multan. In addition it is topped by a Shaivite Trishul (see plate 116).



116. The Trishul of Shiva which faces west i.e. Mecca, topping the Pir Adil dome, and the now lost Panjatan tiles on the second storey parapets

The Trishul faces west towards Mecca, and the photograph in plate 116 was taken from the prayer courtyard which has been recently added behind the eastern entrance; this would be visible from the fading rays of the late afternoon winter sun behind the monument, which sets in the west. The Trishul shows the same burial symbolism and axially principles at work here as in Uch and Lal Mohra. The tiles with the Panjatan (۵) on them are located on both the first and second storey parapets of the monument, in contrast to just the upper parapets in the Rukn-e-Alam shrine, where they were visible only to the chosen few who could make it up that high. This implies a more tolerant and

relaxed environment in this small time principality ruled by a friendly patron, with no reason for observing dissimulation. The main entrance is from the south, with lesser eastern and northern entrances. The mausoleum bears all the distinctive features of our Suhrawardi archetype.

The monument of Pir Adil's son is located opposite his shrine. He is said to have been put to death for committing a heinous crime, when he regarded himself above the law encouraged by his father's position. The Pir endorsed the death sentence for the crime and was therefore named Pir Adil, 'the just.' As would be expected, the son's monument does not display any Suhrawardi credentials. It is in fact built as a traditional Islamic tomb, with the sole entrance on the eastern facade facing Mecca i.e. west. This is the only direction one faces upon entrance; and the building conforms to Highlands's thesis on the centrality of the Mecca burial axis in orthodox Islamic buildings, as shown earlier in the Habil monument in Syria (see plate 36). The son's monument is indeed meant for a normal Muslim, and the near contemporaneous construction of Pir Adil and his son's building imply that Satpanth burial arrangements were not applied to normal Muslims.

## Conclusion

The re-examined historical evidence in the introductory chapters of this thesis shows the facts behind the scenes in the medieval Muslim world from a Shia perspective. This rise of different Shia groups through their collaboration in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, which resulted in the virtual extinction of orthodox Sunni rule from north-western India to North Africa, with the exception of Afghanistan and Central Asia, can only be called the Shia Century. This collaboration was based on the spiritual ideals of Shiism and its claim of the succession of their first Imam Ali over the Sunni caliphs after Muhammad. All the Shia groups irrespective of their divisions on the latter Imams were united on Ali's succession or the wilayat of Ali, and on the five original members of the Prophet's Household as being superior to the personalities of Sunnism, and this was the tie which brought them together. Among them, the Ismailis and the Twelver Shia collaborated the most to carve up the Middle East amongst themselves through the Fatimid and Buwayhid dynasties.

The destruction of the above dynasties by the incoming Ghaznavid and Seljuk Sunni dynasties in Iran and the Middle East in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century does not explain the near absolute disappearance of Shiism in its Ismaili or Twelver format, after being dominant over the Muslim world for more than a century; except that it was replaced with the old Shia principle of taqiyya or dissimulation. Interestingly, this demise of Shiism sees the near contemporaneous rise of Sufism in the staunchly anti-Shia Sunni Turkic environment which replaced it. This was immediately after the downfall of the Shia dynasties in question, and the rise of Sufism happened simultaneously with the resurgence of Ismailism in its militant Iranianised Nizari branch, led by Hasan bin Sabbah, which often used the Sufi guise as cover. Moreover, the Sufi orders, amongst them the Suhrawardi Order especially, sprouted forth from the same region which was previously the centre of Twelver and Ismaili scholarship, i.e. Iraq. Through the vast literature produced by them in a short time, many of the metaphysical discourses developed in the Shia Century resurfaced, albeit under the cover of a very carefully managed dissimulative authorship. In addition, all the Sufi orders of the day venerated Ali and the Household of the Prophet through a metaphysical commonality with Shiism,

and regarded the spiritual component of his wilayat as being indispensable for achieving spiritual proficiency. Through this and other metaphysical commonalities and theological approaches, certain Sufi orders, especially the Suhrawardi order, became tied with the Persian Nizari Ismaili da'wa at Alamut. The Ismailis for the part made a conscious effort to look more orthodox outwardly by nominally accepting the practice of Shar'ia, and hence a marriage of sorts was made in Iraq, which would further develop in the Indus Valley. It must be remembered that although the Suhrawardi Sufi Order was based in Iraq, its personalities hailed from the region of Iranian Azerbaijan, and considering the nationalistic element in Hasan bin Sabbah's anti-Sunni Turkic doctrine at Alamut, it would not be wrong to infer some hidden pseudo-nationalistic Iranian connection in the relationship.

In India's greater religious freedom, this collaboration went further than in Iraq, as this was the only country which was not devastated by the Mongol invasions. The Mongol threat on its borders literally forced local Turkic elites, which were wiped out with much else in the Middle East, to tolerate the Ismaili Suhrawardi alliance. This was under the protection of Suhrawardi heavyweights whose support had to be gained to administer the Indus Valley, i.e. Zakariya and the old Multani Ismaili elite which had survived the Ghaznavid onslaught through taqiyya. The old landed Ismaili elite, which was a rich trading community administering the agricultural produce of the region, with their connection to Zakariya, is the only plausible explanation for Multan's independence and self-rule from the local Turkic governors.

This is the era that Pakistani state history portrays as the golden age of Sufism, but tries to ascribe to it Sunni credentials with imperial connections. This version of history wants to actively suppress the Shia-Ismaili connections to the Sufi era, in order to facilitate a vision of the country as the successor state to the medieval Turkic and Mughal empires in India, which were necessarily Sunni. Hence, all the major personalities of the Suhrawardi Order are painted in a stark Sunni Sufi light. This cannot however be achieved for the Ismaili personalities connected to them, who were openly Shia. The basic plot for this early Suhrawardi and Ismaili collaboration in the Indus Valley centres upon two

personalities, the Suhrawardi Baha al-din Zakariya and Shams al-din Muhammad, the missionary extraordinaire of the Ismaili da'wa, who emigrated to the Indus valley from Iran after taking over as the chief *hujjat* from his father.

It has become apparent through the chronological reanalysis of history in this thesis, how the initial short-lived antagonism between its spiritual heavyweights Shams and Zakariya, exaggerated in hagiography and state history, may have been the result of personal rivalry more than anything else. Its basis was not religious or metaphysical. Its quick resolution and the accommodation of Shams inside the Multan city walls can only support this assessment, since sectarian disputes based on religious and metaphysical differences usually lead to violent long term non-resolution in Islam.

Shams's story has never been told, yet he is the centre of countless fables and miraculous deeds in both folklore and in literature. He is the 'missing link' to the spiritual history of this entire region, his personality so large that anybody who becomes associated with it finds it difficult to detach. The same can be said about the religious activity associated to him, which changed the nature of the spiritual mindset of this region forever. He is the only personality in this region, who was not a Prophet, but has a religion and a huge congregation to his name, and which nearly survived up to the present day. His name is perhaps the one mentioned with the greatest esteem among those of the Sufis and Islamic saints of north western India by the non-Muslim denominations, in whose hagiography he activity figures as the prime personality. He started a multi-faith belief system called the Satpanth, which became attributed to his descendants instead; yet until now nobody to this day has been able to decipher what it was.

Ironically the thesis establishes the hidden Shia-Ismaili leanings of Zakariya, first through that of his mentor Abu Hafs al-Suhrawardi in Iraq, and then through his own religious connections, yet he is believed to be the mainstay of Sunni Sufism in this region by the Pakistani state. Zakariya was the strongest temporal personality in the region, and his hidden Shia sympathies were concealed in an obvious show of strength in the Sunni Turkic context, of which he was the king-maker. Zakariya's surviving textbook *al-Awrad*

suggests that he had strong Shia leanings in matters of prayer and jurisprudence. The land of his ancestors, Khwarazm, was the centre for Ismaili propaganda in generations earlier to his own, and the famous quasi-Ismaili philosopher, Ibn Sina, belonged to that city. In addition, the migration of Zakariya's family to Multan in the time of his grandfather took place well before the Mongol onslaught,<sup>566</sup> when the Ismaili da'wa was active in Khwarzem. It is possible that he was exposed to some level of Shia propaganda and doctrine in his childhood. Further, the Suhrawardi Sufi Order had at least one of its original name bearers executed for being an Ismaili in Aleppo. Although no direct correlation has been established in modern academia between this person and the Suhrawardi Shaykhs of Iraq who trained Zakariya, they were certainly aware of one another. The concept of the wilayat of Ali common to most Sufism, and the etymologically related names derived from the city of Suhraward calls for a future historical inquest into the connections between the various people who bear the name Suhrawardi, or are connected to this order and its hidden Shia leanings. In Pakistan, a country which has the world's largest Ismaili and second largest Twelver population, a greater concerted effort should be made globally to preserve the monuments studied here, as well as the ceremonies associated with them which go back to a much more enlightened era in both Shia-Ismailism and in Islam generally. The importance of Zakariya as a figurehead in the Pakistani state's view of history, and for the larger Islamic World in the Middle East and South Asia region, should not be overlooked. One of Zakariya's disciples and his son in law Fakhr al-din Iraqi is buried in Syria and is a famous figure in the Levant region, especially due to his association with Rumi and Ibn 'Arabi.

The arrival of Shams marks a second stage in the developments after Zakariya's own background and his return to Multan from Iraq. It is certain that the ceremonies emanating from Shams's shrine were the conceptual progenitors for the future astrological symbolism found on the Suhrawardi monuments of the thesis. This argument is strengthened by the fact that some of these ceremonies are also practised at the shrine of Shams's maternal cousin, the Ismaili ascetic Shahbaz Qalandar, in Sehwan. Shahbaz

---

<sup>566</sup> Farishta (1998 reprint), vol. 2, p.759.

Qalandar was initiated as a Suhrawardi Sufi by Zakariya in 1260 upon his late arrival in the country, two years before the latter's death.

After the Zakariya and Shams era, and the subsiding of the Mongol onslaught, the successive Turkic dynasties which consolidated themselves at Delhi made active efforts to curb the activities of both the Suhrawardi Order and the Ismaili da'wa. After the death of Shams and Zakariya in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, their descendants fell out with the ruling authorities. In the case of the Suhrawardi Order this culminated with the Tughluq dynasty's execution of its last shaykh after the death of Rukn-e-Alam. In light of the anti-heretic i.e. anti-Shia policy of the Tughluqs, which could only have been around the Multan region, the antagonism of the Tughluqs to the order must have been sectarian in nature. But the initial metaphysical collaboration that had taken root based on Shams's Ismaili Satpanth grew. In Uch, due to its undisturbed surrounding, the Suhrawardi Order continued under Zakariya's disciple Surkhposh. The descendants of Shams and Surkhposh collaborated in Uch to expand on Satpanth ideals, leading to the creation of the architecture that they left behind, which has been examined in the second half of the thesis. The slide of the Suhrawardi Order to Uch, a small city, right into arms of the Ismaili da'wa based there under Shams's descendants is further proof of the above.

The syncretism between the Suhrawardi Order and the Ismaili da'wa reached a new zenith in Uch where the two entities became one, with the latter day da'is being Suhrawardi Sufis openly, and vice versa. In religious ceremony, this transition is certified to by the iconic boat taziya celebrating Shams's miracle at the Suhrawardi shrines of the city in Muharram, which are actually commemorated by Surkhposh's descendants; while Surkhposh's own Urs is also in Chetir. The personality of Shams looms ever so large over the general religious landscape of this context.

The basis of Shia-Ismaili faith is the wilayat of the first Imam Ali, which has many components and levels of profession, some temporal others non-corporeal. The astrological correlation of the event of Ghadir-Khumm and the wilayat of Ali to the Chaharshamba-yi Suri festival before Nauroz, through the Chetir ceremonies discovered

at Shams's shrine, is a landmark in the decoding of the transcendental Islam that is the hallmark of both Ismailism and Iranian Shiism as a whole. It puts to rest the wrangling within modern Islamic discourse and western academia on this association being concocted by the Safavids to give themselves cultural legitimacy by fabricating hadith and Iranianising Shiism. It turns out to be a historical fact and its wide scale use having a clear precedence in Ismailism. It is clear that the Satpanth is based on earlier Shia-Ismaili metaphysics compounded in the Shia century under the Fatimids and the Ikwan al-Safa, but its skeleton is the wilayat of Ali. Hence, the Satpanth's wilayat basis makes it an exclusively Shia entity which includes other religions in its framework at a secondary level, and the not the other way around. The wilayat of Ali is also the original metaphysical basis for the celebration Nauroz in Islam, as compounded for the Seljuks by Omar Khayyam later, much to the displeasure of Hasan bin Sabbah.

The conceptual application of the wilayat of Ali to monuments, as deduced for the shrine of Rukn-e-Alam in Chapter Four, sets a clear first generation Shia-Ismaili context for this building's construction. It also enhances the role of the wilayat of Ali in Suhrawardi Sufism, giving it a greater Shia twist, in light of the Panjatan tiles on its upper stories. This methodology itself, based on the exaltation of Mars in Capricorn as found at the event of Ghadir-Khumm, has been observed in an Ismaili context earlier with Creswell's report on Fatimid Cairo, which gives Rukn-e-Alam an added Ismaili connection. The monument has been shown to actually predate to Zakariya's time; and the presence of the double pentagrams also shows some connection to actual Nauroz in its construction. In fact, it was the site for his famed Madrasa Bahaiya, which was later replicated in Uch under Surkhposh and his descendants. With both buildings displaying a ritual beginning of construction and completion in traditional Shia-Ismaili fashion, the chances of Zakariya having hidden Shia beliefs from the start is almost certain. This scenario creates a chronological continuity in the religious history of the Suhrawardi Order in Uch, when Surkhposh regularly visited Rukn-e-Alam in Multan after the death of Zakariya, to whom he was very attached. Surkhposh's Shiism is much more accepted by scholars as an historical fact.

Yet it is one thing to be highly initiated and proficient in Islamic esoteric sciences and use them to represent the wilayat of Ali through scripture on a building, to signify a dissimulative Shiism, as is the case with the Rukn-e-Alam monument. This can be called the pre-Satpanth stage of the Suhrawardi Order in the Indus Valley, which was nevertheless Shia-Ismaili. It is quite another, to use the same sciences, the beginning of ritual construction, and diverse religious iconography to represent a multi-faith belief system which is necessarily based on the wilayat of Ali. As opposed to Rukn-e-Alam, which in of itself can be explained through a simpler Shia-Ismaili Sufism, with resonances in Fatimid Cairo, the buildings in Uch at the Bibi Jaiwandi complex can only be explained through the Satpanth.

Hence, the earlier Suhrawardi monuments, especially Rukn-e-Alam, represent an earlier attempt to create a divine temple configuration using the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir as its conceptual framework, by drawing upon its astrological exaltations to mark its religiosity. There can be no Sunni interpretation of this event. The wilayat of Ali, as expressed through Scripture and the Nauroz nexus, can only be Shia in nature, and it means an automatic delegation of all spiritual and temporal matters to Ali after the Prophet, be it in ceremony or monument. It is needless to point out the collaboration with Shams, and exposure to the level of Satpanth beliefs would have been limited in this period. In the second generation of the monument type, we see the application of the Satpanth multi-faith ideals as iconography through religious symbols on Suhrawardi monuments, complemented by the fact that Shams and Surkhposh's descendants were contemporaries in Uch. The two strands merely come together in their zenith in the multi-faith astrological symbolism in the Uch monuments. But, it is Shams and his descendants in Uch who are to be credited with the metaphysical framework of the Satpanth and its expansion, which was then applied to the Suhrawardi Order buildings of Surkhposh's descendants, and not the other way around.

The theses on notions of power, as represented in traditional Islamic architecture, are well established in Western academia, with reference to their emphasis on a monumental entrance facing Mecca, outlining its centrality for orthodoxy. Contrary to the orthodox

building type, the archetypical south-centred three-entranced monument as found in this thesis from the earliest times, lends credence to its use by non-Sunni denominations.

The architectural chapters of this thesis aim to retrace and objectify this lost archetypical monument as being common to both Ismaili da'is and Suhrawardi Sufis. The monument archetype in turn signifies the hidden Shia-Ismaili credentials of the latter, by its accommodation of Satpanth ceremony and ritual. Although the decoration and execution of the monuments may vary at times, two important features establish the Ismaili and Suhrawardi Sufi connection in terms of architectural evidence. These are iconographic decoration on the tiles or as symbols which have usually been lost, and the ritual construction of the monuments around Nauroz, which is often very difficult to decipher except where evidence has survived like at Rukn-e-Alam or Bibi Jaiwandi.

The most salient feature is that which is ingrained in the monumental design itself. This is the multi-axial access and entrance arrangement which survives as long as the building does. Renovation and reconstruction always leaves behind evidence through which one may decipher the original features of the west-facing mihrab, and the characteristic entrances in the other three directions, with the major emphasis on the south. For the Suhrawardi Order, the archetype is present in Zakariya and Rukn-e-Alam in Multan, and is found in all the Suhrawardi monuments at Uch. In terms of Ismailism, it is most notably present in the shrine of Shams, the progenitor of the da'wa, who was perhaps responsible for the initial adaptation of the archetype itself for his 84 Satpanth lodges. It is also resonant in Sakhi Sarwar's shrine which shares the Chetir ceremonies with Shams, in addition to his being the first Suhrawardi in the Indus Valley. The Surkhposh, Jahangasht and Sayyid Raju khanqahs in Uch carry the archetype in a simple rectangular format, from which one can infer the original design for Shams's lodges. The monument type has now been rediscovered for Sadr al-din and his son Hasan Kabir al-din, who was openly a Suhrawardi Sufi; while certain other unidentified tombs from the remainder of the seven Uchs, which predate this era, also carry it. In addition, the archetype is a salient feature in latter Suhrawardi monuments from the sixteenth century, including that of Shams's descendant Sultan Ali Akbar, who was an Ismaili da'i and a Suhrawardi Sufi

simultaneously. The rationale for this design seems to be, at the lower levels of initiation into the Satpanth, to provide separate entrances for various considerations of ritual purity at all times, to the many religious sub-denominations which formed the devotees of the da'wa, as explained earlier. But the archetype was also for use on special occasions and in ceremonies with different spiritual requirements like the Chetir celebrations; and for simultaneous use in congregation by different faiths and by people at different levels of initiation.<sup>567</sup> The commonality of the monument over a period of three centuries to only Ismaili personalities or Suhrawardi Sufis, after the establishment of detailed metaphysical connections between them based on the wilayat of Ali and Nauroz, and its absence from traditional Sunni buildings, goes to show that it can only have the beginnings and use as suggested in this thesis. For that it should be treated as a separate building archetype, like the Four Ivan Mosque, which was fostered likewise from the central Asian Buddhist monastery and the Zoroastrian Fire Temple by the competing Sunni Turkic tradition contemporaneously in the same region.

What really gives an insight into the Satpanth beginnings and use of this monument type is the surviving multi-faith symbolism of the Satpanth on it from the Uch era, as a testament to these beliefs. Here the astrological symbolism and the burial symbolism not only gives clues to the detailed framework of the Satpanth, but also yields the beginning of ritual construction for these monuments through their planetary ruler-ship and exaltations; and in it clarifies a great mystery in the creation of divine temples in older times. Yet the only clear precedent for this kind of symbolism on architecture can be found in the ceremonial motif of the celebrations at the shrine of Shams. Here the Perso-Islamic concept of the wilayat of Ali at Ghadir on Nauroz is carefully interlaced with the local Hindu calendar for the first time. The conceptual beginnings of the ceremonies at Shams's shrine can be found in an embryonic format in Fatimid efforts to incorporate other religions into their faith, and in the Ikhwan-e-Safa volumes, in terms of their religious doctrines and feasts which were configured astrologically. Similarly, the conceptual precedent for the application of the wilayat of Ali to a monument through Scripture and

---

<sup>567</sup> According to Zawahir Moir's research. Ismaili shrines still reserve the northern entrance for use by Hindus in Gujarat, which is the traditional axis for purity and funeral pyre burning in that religion.

the exaltation of Mars, as discovered in Rukn-e-Alam, is found in Fatimid Cairo. Essentially, all the pieces in the jigsaw puzzle can be traced back to some kind of Shia-Ismaili metaphysical belief structure or ceremony. But it must be asserted that the key personality in all of this, who must have been responsible for the initial adaptation of the inverted Buddhist monastery into what became the three-entranced south-centred archetype with a west-facing mihrab was Shams. This is considering that he set up 84 khanqah lodges, which must have followed a certain axiology in their design for the accommodation of his multi-faith belief system. There can be no other likely explanation for its development in this region. In addition, one must understand the assertion for the archetype carrying some sort of limited early Satpanth connection for the Suhrawardi Order itself, in terms of ceremony, due to its presence at Sakhi Sarwar, Zakariya and Rukn-e-Alam. A direct connection of the Chetir ceremonies to Zakariya, through Shams, is surviving evidence of Surkhposh's urs being in Chetir as well. Surkhposh was Zakariya's direct khalifa in Uch, as opposed to the latter's more implicit Suhrawardi connection to Sakhi Sarwar.

The most important fact that comes to the fore in the early architectural context of this thesis, is the almost Herculean logistical task involved in the construction of such lavish monuments, in an era known for its wars, famines and Mongol invasions which had ripped the rest of the Muslim world to shreds. The exception was the region studied here, where Zakariya has even been credited for paying off the Mongols on one occasion to prevent the invasion of Multan. Zakariya's vast wealth cannot be explained except through the collection of *khums* or religious tithes which have to be paid in a Shia-Ismaili arrangement as a Sunni shaykh cannot collect Zakat monies. According to Sunni jurisprudence, all Zakat monies must be deposited into the state treasury. Perhaps this money came from the old Ismaili elite of Multan, who were rich enough to have provided the vast sums, as there no other fiscal group present in this region who could have managed the same.

The identification of the plausible use of the burial traditions of the five religions in the Satpanth at the Bibi Jaiwandi monuments gives a remarkable insight into the use of its

multi-faith burial eschatology for the maximisation of spiritual benefit for the deceased. In addition, the analysis also further certifies the monument type as being geared for use in Satpanth ceremony. The most likely explanation for the south orientation is that the saints were buried in a north (head) to south *samadhi* (Hindu burial into the earth) like fashion, i.e. the highest award given to Hindu ascetics. This is in addition to the opposite i.e. the south (head of body) to north direction used for lighting the funeral pyre, and the direction faced in all Vedic meditation techniques. There is also further proof of this in the chillah rooms at the Surkhposh khanqah in Uch, which are entered from the south and face north. This is to accommodate the fashion of their adopted homeland, India, so as to pay homage to it, which was considered a place of ancient wisdom. The discovery of Shaivism as the fifth religion of the Satpanth confirms this, along with Pir Sadr al-din's and Jahangasht's writings on the subject. The presence of the southern oriented three entranced archetype and the Trishul together in Ali Akbar's monument is further proof of India's place in the Satpanth, but which is necessarily Shia-Islamic in nature based on a hadith of the Prophet. However, the use of royal craftsmen for it, in the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, opens a great potential for research into any role that this Ismaili da'i and the doctrines of the Satpanth had played in Emperor Akbar's visions of a *Din-e-Ilahi*, or divine religion. Collective evidence here shows that the Suhrawardi Order were indeed Ismaili from the beginning, but their move out of dissimulation and more open associations with the mainstream da'wa only grew with time. That is till everything fell apart, and all of the concerned became Twelver Shia for religious convenience.

## Glossary

**'Ashura**, The tenth day of the month of Muharram, which sees the massacre of the Prophet's Family

**Auqaf**, Ministry of Endowments of the Pakistani state responsible for the upkeep of shrines in the country

**Batini**, Those who seek hidden meanings in Scripture; an often derogatory medieval Muslim reference to Ismailis

**Chillah**, Forty day of spiritual retreat in Sufism, modelled upon Moses's forty days on Mount Sinai

**Da'i**, Missionary, or the one who invites

**Da'wa**, Mission, or literally invitation (to), necessarily Ismaili missionary work

**Dhikr**, Continuous recitation of the Names of God and Scriptures to maximise spiritual benefit, a Sufi concept

**Ginan**, Persian, mystical Ismaili poetry

**Hadith**, A report of the saying or doings of the Prophet, counted as indisputable when reported by his Family and their companions for the Shia denominations; and just by his (Sunni) companions for the Sunnis

**Ismaili**, Shia group following Ismail, elder son of sixth Imam Ja'far as opposed to this younger brother Musa, the line follows to the Aga Khan

**Imam**, An infallible spiritual guide for the Shia with divine investiture, as opposed to a simple prayer leader for Sunnis

**Imami**, Those who follow a clear line of Imams (usually Twelver, but equally used for Ismailis)

**Ithna 'Ashari**, Twelver Shia, their Twelfth Imam beginning his major Occultation in 940 AD, to return and establish divine rule before apocalypse, and bring forth the resurrection

**Ja'fari**, Shia school of metaphysics and jurisprudence, followed by both Ismailis and Twelvers, started by the Sixth Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq

**Jafr**, Islamic equivalent to the cabbala, according to the more accurate traditions 'The Science of the Stars'

**Khalifa**, A temporal successor to the Prophet (as opposed to a Shia Imam) for the Sunnis, a spiritual successor of a shaykh for the Sufis

**Khojas**, Ismaili converts from Indian trading class converted by Shams's descendent Sadr al-din, and given a concrete shape within the Ismaili community

**Mahdi**, Generically the Messiah, awaited Shia personality common to both Ismailism and Twelver Shiism

**Mihrab**, The prayer niche in mosques facing Mecca in Islam; a place attributed to the Prophet's daughter Fatima according to many traditions

**Nass**, Spiritual designation through which a Shia Imam takes over (in secret) from his predecessor, entails passing on of divine credentials and investiture

**Panjatan**, The five Infallibles in all Shia Islam, Muhammad, Ali, Hasan, Husain, Fatima, credited in Shia metaphysics with being the first outward manifestations of God, and the first entities in creation outside of their corporeal states, starting with Muhammad. Their light transcends into the Imam of the time, Ismaili or Twelver, from whence they derive their spiritual mandate. In Sufism, the higher Sufis or *Qutb* i.e. the Pole (to God) of the day derives their authority in a similar way from the same source, through the wilayat of Ali

**Qibla**, The Mecca direction, in which the Mihrab is made

**Shaykh**, A wise old man or head of a clan or tribe generally; an accomplished Sufi master in a position to initiate others into secret knowledge

**Shaykh al-Islam**, Chief religious authority in an Islamic state

**Shia**, Used in a generic way here for all the Shia sects

**Shia-Ismaili**, Aspects of Shiism which are common to all Imami branches, necessarily to Ismaili and Twelvers, but in this thesis especially to Ismailism

**Taziya**, A refresher of the past, replicas of tombs and passion plays mourning the Prophet's family on 'Ashura

**'Ulama**, The collective term used for the learned men of Islam, generally used for orthodox Sunni scholars

**Wali**, Modern colloquial Arabic use for friend; yet etymologically Vice-regent, a Sufi master

**Wilayat**, Vice-regency (to God)

**Zaydi**, Followers of the Fourth Imam Zain al-'Abidin's son Zayd from a Sindhi woman

**Notes:**

-All foreign words are cited in italics for first use only, and later always in Times Roman.

-All dates are A.D. unless otherwise specified, except in fieldwork notes where the Higri use precedes the Gregorian if cited together.

-'Ibid,' is used for published work, while 'ibid,' is used for all non-published work, including manuscripts, and also for cross-references to the thesis material itself.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Afif, Shams Siraj (1891) *Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi*, Calcutta
- Al-Husaini, Makhdumzada Abdullah (1380) *Siraj al-Hadiya*, India Office: D.P. MS
- Amir, Khusrau (1933) *Tughluq Namaḥ*, Aurangabad
- Attar, Farid al-din (1907) *Tazkirat al-Auliya*, 2 volumes, edited by R.A. Nicholson, London: Luzac and Brill
- Beruni, Muhammad ibn Ahmad (1029, 1934) *Kitab al-tafhim li-awa'il sina'at al-tanjim/The Book of Instruction in the Elements of the Art of Astrology*, reproduced from the British Museum MS. Or. 8349, London: Luzac
- Bukhari, Jahangasht Jahaniyan (1377 A.H.) *Al-Durur al-Mamun*, translated from *Malfuzat-e-Makhdum*, Multan: Sayyid Alikrik
- Bukhari, Jalal al-din Jahangasht (n.d.) *Khazana-e-Fawa'id-e-Jalaliyya*, British Museum MS.
- Bukhari, Jalal al-din Jahangasht (n.d.) *Safarnama-e-Makhdum-e-Jahaniyan*, India Office Library: D.P. 1107
- Buni, Ahmad ibn Ali (d.1225, 1945) *Shams al-Ma'arif al-Kubra wa-Lata'if al-'Awarif*, Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi
- Buni, Ahmad ibn Ali (d.1225, 1951) *Manba' Usul al-Hikma*, Cairo
- Dehlawi, Abdul-Haq (Muhaddis) (1914) *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, Delhi
- Farishta, Qasim (1867) *Tarikh-e-Farishta*, Lucknow
- Farishta, Mohammad Qasim (1998 reprint of original), *Tarikh-e-Farishta*, 2 volumes, Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali and Sons
- Firoz Shah ibn Rajab, Sultan of Delhi (1954) *Futuhāt-e-Firoz Shahi*, Delhi
- Gardezi, Yusuf (n.d.) *Tazkira-e-Multan*, Lahore: Punjab Public Library

- Harawi, Saif ibn Mahmud (1944) *Tarikh Namah-e-Herat*, Calcutta
- Ikhwan al-Safa (1957) *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'*, 4 volumes, Bayrut
- Iraqi, Fakhr-al-din (1973) *Risala Lamaat wa Risala Asthabat*, edited and translated by Javed Nurbaksh, Tehran: Khaniqah Nimatullahi Publications
- Ivanow (ed.) (n.d.) *Manaqib-e-Makhdum-e-Jahaniyan*, India Office Library: D.P. 1210
- Jahangasht, Jahaniyan (14<sup>th</sup> Century, 1983) *Malfuzat-e-Hussain*, New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research
- Jamali, Hamid ibn Fazlullah (1893) *Siyar al-Arifeen*, Delhi
- Khayyam, Omar, Minovi, M. (late 11<sup>th</sup> Century, 1933) *Nauroz Namah*, Tehran: Kaveh Publications
- Khurd, Amir (1885) *Siyar al-Auliya*, Delhi
- Kulayni, Muhammad ibn Yaquub, (941, 1978) *al-Usul (al-Kafi)*, Tehran, Karachi: Khurasan Islamic Research Centre
- Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Taqi (1845) *Zaad al-Ma'ad*, Lucknow: Handwritten manuscript
- Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Taqi (1983) *Bihar al-Anwar*, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Wafa'
- Mukham Chand Munshi (1780) *Tawarikh-e-Zila-e-Multan/A Persian History for the Saddozai Administration*, Multan: Punjab Public Library
- Nurullah, Shustari (1882) *Majalis al-Momineen*, Tehran
- Qalandar Hamid (1959) *Khair al-Majlis*, Aligarh
- Qummi, Abbas, (1975) *Mafatih al-Jinan*, Karachi: Imamia Kutub Khana
- Quraishi, Abu Abdullah (1379 A.H.) *Khulasat al-Alfaz*, Delhi: Ivanow (ed.)
- Shah, Syed Amir Hasan (Urdu reprint 1979) *The Power of Numbers and Astrology: The Art to Harmonize Life and Fate, The Tawiz and Its Power*, Sargodha
- Sizji, Amir Hasan (1933) *Fawaid al-Fuad*, Hyderabad

Sizji, Amir Hasan (1992) *Fawaid al-Fuad: Morals for the Heart/Conversations of Shaykh Nizam al-din Awliya*, translated and annotated by Bruce B. Lawrence, introduction by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, New York: Paulist Press

Zakariya, Baha al-din (1242, 1978) *Al-Awrad*, Islamabad: The Pakistan and Iran Centre for Research

### Original Ginans and Reprints

Laljibhai Devraj (1913) *The Garbis of Pir Shams*, Bombay: Mukhi Devraj Laljibhai

*Satvarani Vadi*, handwritten ginan manuscript in possession of Zawahir Moir

### General Bibliography

Al-Huda, Qamar (2003) *Striving for Divine Union*, London: Curzon

Ahmad, S. H. (1907) *The Mysteries of Sound and Number*, London

Al-Kufi, Ali (12<sup>th</sup> century, 1985) *Chachnama: An Ancient History of Sind*, translated from the Persian by Mirza Kalichbeg Fredunbeg, Lahore: Vanguard Books

Arjomand, Said Amir (1980) *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Awan, Ghulam Abbas (1990) *Aftab-e-Jafr*, Lahore: Iftikhar Book Depot

Awan, Ghulam Abbas (1990) *Fiyudh al-Jafr*, Lahore: Iftikhar Book Depot

Aziz, K. K., (1998) *The Murder of History: A critique of history textbooks used in Pakistan*, Delhi: Renaissance Publishing House

Aziz, K. K., (1994) *The Pakistani Historian*, Delhi: Renaissance Publishing House

Bede, John Jehangir (1979) *The Arabs in Sind*, Ann Arbor (USA): University Microfilms

Bennett Jones, O. (2003) *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, New Haven: Yale University Press

- Bikhazi, Ramzi Jibran, *The Hamdanid dynasty of Mesopotamia and north Syria, 254-404/868-1014*, Thesis (Ph.D.) University of Michigan, 1981
- Birge, John Kingsley (1994) *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, London: Luzac Oriental
- Bosworth, Clifford Edmund (1977) *The later Ghaznavids: Splendour and Decay: The dynasty in Afghanistan and northern India, 1040-1186*, Edinburgh University Press
- Bosworth, Clifford Edmund (2001) *The History of the Seljuq Turks from the Jāmi al-Tawārīkh*, London: Routledge
- Boyle, J. A. (1991) *The Cambridge history of Iran, Saljuq & Mongol periods*, volume 5, Cambridge: CUP.
- Burnett, Charles (1996) *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds*, Aldershot: Ashgate
- Clark, Peter (1998) *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction to an Ancient Faith*, Sussex: Sussex Academic Press
- Cole, Juan, R.I. Berkeley (1987) *Roots of North Indian Shiism in Iran and Iraq*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Corbin, Henry (1983) *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, London: Shambhala and Boulder
- Corbin, Henry (1993) *History of Islamic Philosophy, translated by Liadain Sherrard, Philip Sherrard*. London: Kegan Paul International in association with Islamic Publications for The Institute of Ismaili Studies
- Creswell, K. A. C. and Gautier-van Berchem, M. (1979) *Early Muslim Architecture*, New York: Hacker Art Books
- Crook Nigel (1996) *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia: Essays on Education, Religion, History, and Politics*, Oxford University Press
- Curzon of Kedleston, G. N. C. and King, P. (1986) *Curzon's Persia*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson
- Dabashi, Hamid (1998) *Shiism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, Albany: SUNY Press
- Daftary Farhad (1994) *The Assassin Legends: Myths of the Isma'ilis*, London: IB Tauris

Daftary, Farhad (1996) *Mediaeval Ismaili History and Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Daftary, Farhad (2005) *Isma'ilis in Medieval Muslim Societies: Collected Studies*, London: I. B. Tauris

Daftary, Farhad (2007) *The Isma'ilis: Their history and doctrines*, New York: Cambridge University Press

Dani, Ahmad Hasan (2000) *History of Northern Areas of Pakistan: Upto 2000 A.D.*, Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications

Daniel, Elton L. (2001) *The History of Iran*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press

Dasti 'Ubaydullh (1974) *Sawanikh-e-Shahbaz*, Hyderabad: Department of Research, Auqaf Department, Sind

Donohue, John J. (2003) *The Buwayhid dynasty in Iraq 334H./945 to 403H./101*, Leiden; Boston: Brill

Dunn, Ross. E. (1989) *Ibn Battuta*, Berkeley: University of California Press

Edwards, Holly Francis (1994) *The Genesis of Islamic Architecture in the Indus Valley*, New York University: Unpublished doctoral thesis

El-Gawhary, Mohammed, M. (1968) *Die Gottesnamen im Magischen Gebrauch in den Al-Buni Zugeschriebenen Werken*, University of Bonn: Unpublished PhD thesis

Faridi, Nur Ahmad Khan (1971) *Tarikh-e-Multan*, Multan: Qasar al-Adab

Firishtah, Muhammad Qasim ibn Hindu Shah (1981 Reprint) *History of the rise of the Mahomedan power in India till the year A.D. 1612*, 4 volumes, New Delhi: Oriental Books

Gall Timothy, Timothy L. (ed). (1998) *Worldmark Encyclopaedia of Culture & Daily Life: Vol. 3 - Asia & Oceania*, Cleveland, Ohio: Eastward Publications Development

Ganapathi Iyer, P.R. (1905) *The Law relating to Hindu and Muhammadan Religious Endowments, with commentaries on the Religious Endowments Act (Act 20 of 1863) and Bengal and Madras Regulations (19 of 1810 and 7 of 1817)* Madras: Graves and Cookson

Hafiz al-Rahman, Mohammad (1931) *Tarikh-e-Uch*, Bahawalpur

Hamdani, Abbas H. (1956) *The Beginnings of the Isma'ili Da'wa in Northern India*, Cairo: Dar al Ma'ref.

Herklots, G. A. (1832) *Islam in India*, London: Parbury, Allen & Co.

Heron-Allen, Edward (1899) *Edward Fitzgerald's Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam*, London: Bernard Quaritch

Hollister, John Norman (1953) *The Shia of India*, London: Luzac and Co.

Holt, P. M., Ann K. S. Lambton, Bernard Lewis (1977) *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 2a, Cambridge: CUP

Hussain, Jassim M. (1982) *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam: an historical background*, London: The Muhammadi Trust

*Imamia Jantari* (2003-6) Lahore: Ifikhar Book Depot

Islam, R. (2002) *Sufism in South Asia: Impact on Fourteenth Century Muslim Society*, Karachi: Oxford University Press

Jafri, S. Husain M. (1979) *Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, London: Longman

Juzjani, Uthman ibn Siraj al-Din (1881) *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri: A general history of the Muhammadan dynasties of Asia, including Hindustan*, two volumes, London: Gilbert & Rivington

Kabir, Mafizullah (1964) *The Buwayhid dynasty of Baghdad (334/946-447/1055)*, Calcutta: Iran Society

Kalam, Mohammad Din (1969) *Suhrawardi Auliya*, Lahore: Maktab Tarikh

Kalichbeg, Mirza ((1985) *Chachnamah*, Lahore: Vanguard Books

Kassam, T. R. (1995) *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Satpanth Ismaili Muslim Saint Pir Shams*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Khan, Ahmed Nabi (1983) *Multan: History and Architecture*, Islamabad: Institute of Islamic History and Civilisation

Khan, Dominique-Sila (1997) *Conversions and Shifting Identities: Ramdev Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan*, New Delhi: Manohar

Khan, Dominique-Sila (2004) *Crossing the Threshold: Understanding Religious Identities in South Asia*, London: I.B. Tauris

Koninklijke, Brill (1999) 'The Safavids' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: Leiden University

Kozłowski, Gregory C. (1985) *Muslim Endowments and Society in British India*, New York: Cambridge University Press

Larsen, Curtis E. (1984) *Life and Land Use on the Bahrain Islands: The Geoarchaeology of an Ancient Society*, University of Chicago Press

Latif, Sayyid Muhammad (1961) *The Early History of Multan*, Lahore: Sayyid Muhammad Minhaj al-din, reprinted from the Calcutta Review of April 1891 and August 1891

Lehman, Lee (1992) *The Book of Ruler-ships, Keywords from Classical Astrology*, Pennsylvania: Whitford Press

Lewisohn Leonard, Christopher Shackle (2006) *Attar and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight*, London: I.B. Tauris

Maalouf, Amin (1984) *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, London: Al Saqi.

Macleane, Derryl (1989) *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, New York: E.J. Brill

Malcolm, J. (1829) *The History of Persia*, London: Murray

Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad (d.1022, 1981) *Kitab al-Irshad: The Book of Guidance into the lives of the Twelve Imams*, London: Muhammadi Trust

Mumtaz, Hussain (1978) *Sind: Arab Period*, Hyderabad: Sindhi Adabi Board

Naqvi, Shahid (2002) *Azadari: The Culture of Mourning*, Lahore: Izhar and Sons

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (1964) *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for its Study by the Ikhwan al-Safa, Al-Biruni and Ibn Sina*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (1976) *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardi, ibn 'Arabi*, Delmar, NY: Caravan Books

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (1991) *Sufi Essays*, Albany: State University of New York Press

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (1996) *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 2 volumes, London: Routledge

Ne'imi, Iqbal Hussain (1997) *Tazkira-e-Auliya-e-Sind*, Karachi: I'Imi Publishing House

Netton, Ian Richard (2002) *Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the thought of the Brethren of Purity*, London: Routledge

Netton Ian (1999) *The Hunter of the East: Arabic and Semitic Studies*, Leiden: Brill

Netton (Ian Richard), Bosworth (Clifford Edmund), Hillenbrand (Carole) (2000) *The Sultan's Turret: Studies in Persian and Turkish Culture*, Leiden: Brill

Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad (1957) *The Suhrawardi Silsila and its Influence on Medieval Indian Politics*, Delhi

Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad (1961) *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in Medieval Muslim India in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century*, Delhi

Nizami, Muhammad Raza Mustafa Chisti (1389 A.H.) *Hikayat-e-Chishtiyya*, Lahore: Kutub Khana Anwar-e-Chisht

Nur Ahmad Faridi (n.d.) *Hazrat Baha al-din Zakariya*, Multan

Nur Ahmad Faridi (n.d.) *Hazrat Sadr al-din Arif*, Multan

Nur Ahmad Faridi (n.d.) *Hazrat Qutb al-Aqtab Rukn-e-Alam*, Multan

Omar, K. E. FitzGerald (1904) *The Calendar of Omar Khayyam, Excerpts from the Quatrains of the Poet of Nishapur*, Boston: L.C. Page

Qureshi, I. H. (1967) *A Short History of Pakistan*, vol. 1 & 2, Karachi: University of Karachi

Rehman Abdul (1997) *Historic Towns of Punjab: Ancient and Medieval Period*, Lahore: Ferozsons

Razavi, Mehdi Amin (1977) *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination*, Surrey: Curzon Press

Rizvi, Athar Abbass (1986) *A History of Sufism in India*, 2 volumes, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers

Rizvi, Athar Abbass (1986b) *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Ithna 'Asharis in India*, 2 volumes, Canberra: Ma'rifat Publishing House

Rizvi, Sayyid Muhammad (1999) *Shiism: Imamate and Wilayat*, Ontario: Al-Ma'arif Books

- Rizvi, Sayyid Samad Husain (1978) *Amir Khusraw's Invention of Astrological Poetry*, Karachi
- Robinson, Francis (2000) *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Rosser, Yvette Claire (2003) *The Islamisation of Pakistani Social Studies Textbooks*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co.
- Savage-Smith, Emilie (2004) *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, Aldershot: Ashgate
- Schimmel, Annemarie (1980) *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, Leiden: Brill
- Schimmel, Annemarie (2003) *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Lahore: Sang-e-Meel (reprint)
- Shackle, C. and Moir, Z. (2000) *Ismaili Hymns from South Asia: An Introduction to the Ginans*, Richmond: Curzon
- Sharma, Savita (1990) *Early Indian Symbols: Numismatic Evidence*, Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan
- Sindhi, Abdul Majid (2000) *Sufi Movements in Pakistan*, Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications
- Sinha, Binod (1983) *Chandra Hinduism and Symbol Worship*, Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan
- Smith, Edmund W. (1898) *The Moghul Architecture of Fathpur-Sikri*, Allahabad: Superintendent Government Press
- Suhrawardi, Sayyid Abu Fez Qalandar Ali (n.d.) *Anwar-e-Suhrawardiyya* Lahore: Markazi Majlis Suhrawardiyya
- Suhrawardi, Sayyid Abu Fez Qalandar Ali (n.d.) *Tazkirat-e-Suhrawardiyya* Lahore: Markazi Majlis Suhrawardiyya
- Suhrawardi, Yahya ibn Habash Bayrak, Tosun (1998 reprint from MS) *Hayakil al-Nur The Shape of Light*, Louisville: Fons Vitae
- Toynbee, Arnold Joseph (1961) *Between Oxus and Jumna*, London: Oxford University Press
- Virani, Shafique N. (2007) *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Wink, Andre (2004) *Al-Hind the Making of the Indo Islamic World*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers

### Articles and Research Papers

'Brotherhood versus Imamate: Ikhwan al-Safa' and the Isma'ilis,' by Netton in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, vol. 2, (1980), pp. 253-262

*Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore): 14.1.1960

'Hazrat Pir Shams al-din Sabzwari Multani,' by Noorally in *Abdal al-Ismailiyya*, pp. 83 ff

'Newton's Date for the Crucifixion,' by Pratt in *Quarterly Journal of Royal Astronomical Society*, vol. 32, (Sept. 1991), pp. 301-304

'Satpanth,' by Ivanow in *Collectanea*, vol. 1, Leiden, (1948), pp.1-54

'Shams Tabriz of Multan,' by Abdallah (ed.) in *Professor Muhammad Shafi Presentation Volume*, Lahore, (1955), pp. 109-180

'The Multani Marsiya,' by Christopher Shackle in *Der Islam*, vol. 55, (1978), pp.280-311

'The Nurbakhshis of Baltistan,' by Rieck in *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, vol. 35, issue 2, (November 1995), pp. 155-188

'The Politics of Sufism: Redefining the Saints of Pakistan,' by (Ewing) Pratt in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2, (February 1983), pp. 251-268

'The Sect of the Imam Shah in Gujarat,' by Ivanow in *JBBRAS*, XII, (1936), pp. 19-70

'Waqf in Pakistan: Change in Traditional Institutions,' by Malik in *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, bd. 30, no. 1/4, (1990), pp. 63-97

### Architectural Projects

Department of *Auqaf* (1977) *Shah Rukn-e-Alam Restoration*, Islamabad: Government of Pakistan

National Construction and Consultants Group (1997) *Reconstruction of the Shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar*, Karachi

### **Website Sources and Online Books**

[http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com\\_shiite.html](http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_shiite.html)

<http://www.al-islam.org>

<http://www.al-islam.org/short/arabic/tathir/>

<http://www.al-islam.org/history/history/mubahila.html>

[http://www.al-islam.org/occultation\\_12imam/3.htm](http://www.al-islam.org/occultation_12imam/3.htm)

[www.archnet.org](http://www.archnet.org)

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/unpublished\\_manuscripts/historical\\_interaction/pt3/history\\_cultures\\_18.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/unpublished_manuscripts/historical_interaction/pt3/history_cultures_18.html)

[http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Celebrations/fire\\_festival.htm](http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Celebrations/fire_festival.htm)

[http://www.chishti.ru/order\\_of\\_sufis.htm](http://www.chishti.ru/order_of_sufis.htm)

<http://www.dawn.com/2006/03/17/nat8.htm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jalali\\_calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jalali_calendar)

[www.iis.ac.uk](http://www.iis.ac.uk)

<http://www.hubeali.com/khutbat/The%20Sermon%20of%20Recognition%20of%20Noor.pdf>

<http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history>

<http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articles/v10f6/v10f608.html>

<http://www.rabiah.com/convert/convert.php3>

### **Interviews and Fieldwork**

-Interview with Professor Hussain Jafri at his residence in Karachi on 28 December 2005 between 6.30-8.30 pm.

-Interview with the Chief Administrator (Provincial) Auqaf in Multan Mr. Faqir Mohammad at his office next to the Zakariya shrine on 16 January 2006, between 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm; followed by a short running interview and detailed photography session at Rukn-e-Alam until dusk, with the Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) Archaeology in Multan, Mr. Malik Ghulam Mohammad

-Interview with the caretaker of the Shams shrine, Mr. Zahid Shamsi at Makhdum House adjoining the shrine on 25 and 26 January 2006, followed by a detailed photography session of the shrine and surrounding former waqf property

-Interview with Mr. Zahid Gardezi, the family historian of the Gardezis on 8 Moharram 1427, at the Gardezi Imambargah in the Gardezi Quarter of Multan. The interview in Multan with the Gardezi family historian led to the discovery of the site of 'Suraj Kund' connected with Shams's Sun event (on 14 Moharram 1427), where the village elders were spoken to about the site.

-Interview on 10-11 Moharram 1427 with Bukhari elders, the makers of the Boat Taziya, and locals on folklore of the city of Uch with detailed photography and videotaping of the Muharram ceremonies

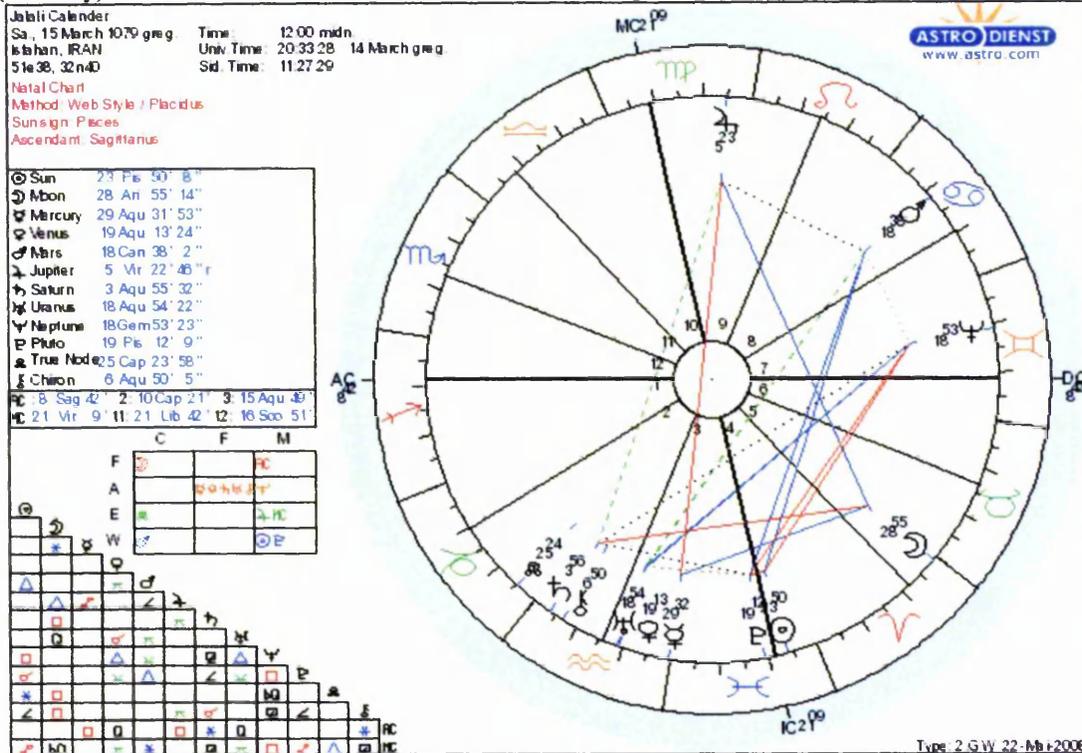
## Appendices

**Appendix 1:** The Zodiacal Sign to House correlation, with related planetary ruler-ships (Lord), Exaltations and detriments according to Amir Khusraw.<sup>568</sup>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>12. PISCES</u></p> <p>SUN — FRIEND MOON — NEUTRAL MARS — FRIEND MERCURY — DEBILITY JUPITER — LORD VENUS — EXALT. SATURN — NEUTRAL</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>1. ARIES</u></p> <p>SUN — EXALT. MOON — NEUTRAL MARS — LORD MERCURY — NEUTRAL JUPITER — FRIEND VENUS — NEUTRAL SATURN — DEBILITY</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>2. TAURUS</u></p> <p>SUN — ENMITY MOON — EXALT. MARS — NEUTRAL MERCURY — FRIEND JUPITER — ENMITY VENUS — LORD SATURN — FRIEND</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>3. GEMINI</u></p> <p>SUN — NEUTRAL MOON — FRIEND MARS — ENMITY MERCURY — LORD JUPITER — ENMITY VENUS — FRIEND SATURN — FRIEND</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>11. AQUARIUS</u></p> <p>SUN — ENMITY MOON — NEUTRAL MARS — NEUTRAL MERCURY — NEUTRAL JUPITER — NEUTRAL VENUS — FRIEND SATURN — LORD</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>RELATION BETWEEN THE PLANETS &amp; SIGNS OF ZODIAC</u></p> <p>SUN IS SOMETIME MALEFIC. AND SOMETIME BENEFIC. MOON IS BENEFIC. MARS IS A GREATER MALEFIC. MERCURY IS A BENEFIC. JUPITER IS THE GREATEST BENEFIC. VENUS IS A GREATER BENEFIC. SATURN IS THE GREATEST MALEFIC. RAS IS A BENEFIC. ZANAB IS A MALEFIC. <u>GOOD EFFECTS</u></p> <p>GOOD EFFECTS ARE OBTAINED FULL IN EXALTATION SIGN, 3/4th IN OWN SIGN, HALF IN FRIENDLY SIGN, 1/4th IN INIMICAL SIGN, AND NIL IN DEBILITATION SIGN. <u>BAD EFFECTS</u></p> <p>BAD EFFECTS ARE OBTAINED FULL IN DEBILITATION SIGN, 3/4th IN INIMICAL SIGN, HALF IN FRIENDLY SIGN, 1/4th IN OWN SIGN, &amp; NIL IN EXALTATION SIGN.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><u>4. CANCER</u></p> <p>SUN — FRIEND MOON — LORD MARS — DEBILITY MERCURY — ENMITY JUPITER — EXALT. VENUS — ENMITY SATURN — ENMITY</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>10. CAPRICORN</u></p> <p>SUN — ENMITY MOON — NEUTRAL MARS — EXALT. MERCURY — NEUTRAL JUPITER — DEBILITY VENUS — FRIEND SATURN — LORD</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>5. LEO</u></p> <p>SUN — LORD MOON — FRIEND MARS — FRIEND MERCURY — FRIEND JUPITER — FRIEND VENUS — ENMITY SATURN — ENMITY</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><u>6. VIRGO</u></p> <p>SUN — NEUTRAL MOON — FRIEND MARS — ENMITY MERCURY — EXALT. &amp; LORD JUPITER — ENMITY VENUS — DEBILITY SATURN — FRIEND</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>9. SAGITTARIUS</u></p> <p>SUN — FRIEND MOON — NEUTRAL MARS — FRIEND MERCURY — NEUTRAL JUPITER — LORD VENUS — NEUTRAL SATURN — NEUTRAL</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>8. SCORPIO</u></p> <p>SUN — FRIEND MOON — DEBILITY MARS — LORD MERCURY — NEUTRAL JUPITER — FRIEND VENUS — NEUTRAL SATURN — ENMITY</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>7. LIBRA</u></p> <p>SUN — DEBILITY MOON — NEUTRAL MARS — NEUTRAL MERCURY — FRIEND JUPITER — ENMITY VENUS — LORD SATURN — EXALT.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>6. VIRGO</u></p> <p>SUN — NEUTRAL MOON — FRIEND MARS — ENMITY MERCURY — EXALT. &amp; LORD JUPITER — ENMITY VENUS — DEBILITY SATURN — FRIEND</p>

<sup>568</sup> Rizvi 1987, p. Apx-f

**Appendix 2:** Astrological chart of the beginning of Omar Khayyam's Jalali Calendar on *Shamba* (Saturday) 15 of March 1079 at Isfahan, with the Sun at 23 degrees Pisces



**Appendix 3:** The correlation of the Seven Planets with the Four Islamic Archangels through Divine Names. <sup>569</sup>The first is the Sun which governs Life, and is related to Gabriel through the Divine Name *al-Hayyu al-Qayyumu* found in the beginning of the first verse of the *Ayat al-Kursi* (2:255-257).

آیات قرآنی	اسماء	عزرائیل	جبرائیل	میکائیل	اسرافیل	طسم	تبارک	یوم
نَضْرُوبِ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٍ كَرِيمٍ	يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ	ابرهیم	ابو عبد اللہ	رودفائیل	جبرائیل	طسم سعیط کمال کرم اللہ	عزرائیل	اتوار
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ حَافِظًا مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ	يَا زَكِيَّ يَا زَكِيَّ	مروان	ابو الوہاب	شدمائیل	میکائیل	الذکری الذکری طسم	جبرائیل	پير
مَا لِلَّهِ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ	يَا قَابِلُ يَا قُدُّوسُ	الاحمر	ابو حمزہ	مسائیل	اسرافیل	سلسلہ اللہ سلسلہ سلسلہ	جبرائیل	منگل
وَاللَّهُ غَابِطٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ	يَا عَلِيُّ يَا عَظِيمُ	برکان	ابو عیوب	نورائیل	جبرائیل	سلسلہ سلسلہ سلسلہ	جبرائیل	بدھ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ	يَا كَبِيْرُ يَا مُتَقَانُ	مہرور	ابو سعید	مرثائیل	میکائیل	سلسلہ سلسلہ سلسلہ	جبرائیل	جمعرات
وَاجْتَلَى لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا نَصِيْرًا	يَا كَلِيْلُ يَا نَصِيْرُ	زبدبائیل	ابو حسن	میکائیل	جبرائیل	سلسلہ سلسلہ سلسلہ	جبرائیل	جمعہ
اللَّهُمَّ فَرِّجْ عَنِّي كُلَّ مَكْرُوْبٍ	يَا فَتَّاحُ يَا زَوَّارُ	کیون سیف اسحاق	ابو ذر	سکائیل	عزرائیل	طسم طسم سلسلہ	عزرائیل	ہفت روزہ

<sup>569</sup> 'The Seven Names', By Agha Hasnain Ahmad in *Imamia Jantari*, 2006, p.65, Lahore: Iftikhar Book Depot.

**Appendix 4:** Clarification of Fitzgerald's quatrain as being inspired by and not being an actual translation of Omar Khayyam's Ruba'iy in Plate 34.

IV.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,  
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,  
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the  
Bough  
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

Plate a: Fitzgerald's innovative English Quatrain as see in plate 34: Heron-Allen 1899, p.10

IV.

This quatrain is translated from two ruba'iyat in the Ouseley MS.

اکنون که جهانرا بغوشی دست درمست O 13. ab  
هر زنده دلی را سوی صحرا هومیسست  
بر هر شاخی طلوع مومی دستیسست  
در هر نفسی غروش عیسی نشیسست

Now that there is a possibility of happiness for the world,  
Every living heart<sup>1</sup> has yearnings towards the desert,  
Upon every bough is the appearance of Moses' hand,  
In every breeze is the exhalation of Jesus' breath.<sup>2</sup>

Ref.: P. 194, O. 13—W. 116.

وقتست که از صبا جهان آرآید O 80. why  
وز چشم مصاب چشمها بکشاید haha  
مومی دستان ز شاخ کف بنمایند  
عیسی نفسان ز خاک بیرون آید

Now is the time when by the spring breezes<sup>3</sup> the world  
is adorned,

And in ~~hope of~~ rain it ~~opens its~~ eyes,<sup>1</sup> Shastri  
The hands of Moses appear like ~~froth~~ upon the bough,  
And the breath of Jesus comes forth from the earth.

Ref.: O. 80, L. 272, B. 268, C. 204, S.P. 186, P. 157—W. 201, N. 186,  
V. 276.

Plate b: The original two Omar Khayyam Ruba'yis on Nauroz, followed by their accurate translation in English.

The above plates fully demonstrate what has happened in the reproduction of Fitzgerald's quatrain in Minovi's edition of the *Nauroz Namah* (see bibliography). In reality, Fitzgerald's own quatrain in plate a (and his translations in general-criticised in academia for being misleading) was inspired from the two ruba'yis in plate b, most plausibly to thematically complement the artwork which accompanied his original *Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam*.



*The Shrine of Shams*

منازلِ بلا سلاسلِ گرنوردی  
ازاں دُور است منزلِ سُهروردی

In your travels you'll encounter the stations of endless misfortune,  
not too far is the comfort station of Suhrawardī