

Madariya Silsila in Indian Perspective

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Historiography and the source material

The sources for the study of regional history can be examined independently by themselves or with reference to certain broad themes which are of major importance in the history of that area or period. In medieval Bihar the general and important aspect of the study of sufistic ideas had drawn the attention of Mughal chroniclers¹, Revenue Surveyors², *Siyaq* (Accountancy) literature and also hagiographic literature. The hagiographic literature can be divided into three broad categories (i) *Tadhkira* or biographical notices of saints, and (ii) *Malfuzat*, or collections of discourses of saints, and (iii) *Maktubat* or letters of the saints. Among these, the *Malfuzat* constitute the bulk and are by far the most important as they constitute a vast literature representing a chronologically arranged summary of the discourses of saints relating to different topics, or the answers given by the saints to questions asked by the disciples and others present in these meetings. Studies based on such data would add new depth to our understanding of social and cultural life of the sufis dominating medieval Bihar. The collections of letters, available in the form of *Maktubat*, are addressed to disciples and relate to doctrinal matters, prayers, rituals and provide authentic information on that specific subject. Sufi literature is too vast to be discussed even in bare outline here, but only a few of the more important may be mentioned in this context. Qeyamuddin Ahmad³ in one of his works simply mentioned the evolution of one of the *Sufi silsila* of the fourteenth century centering round two Sufi saints, namely, Ahmad Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri (c1263-1381) and Abdul Quddus Gangohi. In another monumental work⁴ he collated the Arabic and Persian inscriptions of Sufi orders including the Madariya groups of sufis who dominated almost the entire Bihar since the beginning of their settlement in that region. Side by side, the importance of the Persian travelers' account⁵ cannot be ignored for an in depth study of the subject.

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Though Qeyamuddin Ahmad admitted the utility and importance of *Khanqah* (Sufi hospice) libraries as the natural repository of large mass of *Malfuzat* literature, he failed to give any insight for availability of that Sufi literature.

So far as the epigraphic and numismatic sources are concerned, one should acknowledge the importance of the work of H. K. Qureshi⁶, D. R. Patil⁷ and Q. Ahmad⁸. Even the reports prepared by Buchanan-Hamilton on Purnea⁹, Bhagalpur¹⁰, Bihar and Patna¹¹ contain information on historically important sites, monuments and inscriptions. The work of H. K. Qureshi has the advantage of being based on the earlier meticulous efforts of such great pioneers as Beglar, Block and Spooner. In the early fifties D. R. Patil prepared a descriptive account of archaeologically important sites with a list of some monuments of the medieval period too. It also has a table, recording the exact locations of place-names and an index of the inscriptions of different areas. In the early sixties Z. A. Desai¹² prepared a critical survey of architecture of the *dargahs* of medieval Bihar examining the growth of a regional style of architecture and the changing phases of the influence of the imperial and Bengal styles in Bihar. Though Radha Krishna Chowdhury made an attempt, he failed to retrieve the evolution of sufi silsila in Bihar and mainly concentrated on the cultivation of Sanskrit and Maithili learning in *Charya* songs and other folk cultures¹³. Grierson¹⁴ has shown how the *Satya Pir* as a folk deity was popular to both the communities. Q. Ahmed has admitted that it was Syed Hasan Askari who undertook the pioneering work of exploring inscriptions and he has discovered (some slabs were actually dug out by him in fields) a considerable number of inscriptions, and published their texts¹⁵. They actually failed to point out why the Madariya *silsila* developed in Bihar at the fag end of the reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq (1388) if their origin and evolution is compared with the other group of Sufis settled in Bihar. Q. Ahmad has come to the conclusion that after the death of Firuz Shah Tughlaq“...and during the height of the Sharqi’s power, the north-eastern part, particularly the area up to Bhagalpur, continued to be under the Bengal sultans, while Dariya Khan Nuhani, who established the first ruling dynasty of medieval Bihar....covers roughly the first quarter of the sixteenth century, held sway in the southern portion and the areas around Patna district¹⁶”. Under

the circumstances, it is not difficult to come to the conclusion why the Sharqi rulers and Dariya Khan Nuhani lent their support for the spread of Madariya Silsila in Bihar.

Historians have devoted much attention about the spread of Sufi doctrines in Bihar. Among those scholars the name of Syed Hasan Askari and I. H. Qureshi¹⁷ may be mentioned. Askari mostly devoted his time and energy to the spread and evolution of Chisti and Qadiriya silsila in Bihar. Askari in one of his articles¹⁸ emphasized on Mahbub Subhani, a Sufi saint of Qadiriya order, who's *Khanqah* was lying in the division of Daudnagar in Gaya. Askari consulted a few manuscripts on the basis of which he laid emphasis on the life and activities of the saint, his activities, customs and manners. This article is important for research on the evolution of the Qadiriya *silsila*. So under the perspective of proposed theme this article does not have any importance for understanding the origin and evolution of Madariya *silsila* that developed in Bihar. The importance of this article is that the Fakirs of Madari *silsila* got a predominant position in Bihar as they were given a large part of *Madad-i-Maash* grant of village Muhammadnagar by the Mughal Emperor Alamgir , the first, and the charitable contributions from the villagers. Elsewhere he also mentioned another group of sufi saints whose main centers of activities were the *dargah* of Hazrat Pir Damaria a Sufi of Chisti Silsila at Minapur¹⁹. A large tract of land and pensionary benefit were sanctioned in favor of the saint and the *Sajjadanashins* of that *dargah* by the Mughal monarchs and the Bengal Nawab like Alivardi Khan.

So far the Madari *silsila* is concerned; we have to depend on the Persian manuscripts like *Mirat-ul-Madari* and *Mirat-e-Badie-wa-Madari*²⁰. To corroborate the manuscripts version hagiographic literature like *Tazkirats*²¹ written by the *Sajjadanashin* of the *dargah* of Shah Madar are useful source material for exploring the cult and legend that developed around Shah Madar in all India perspective. To discuss the origin and evolution of that *silsila*, it is also necessary to explain the basic characteristics of sufism.

Features of Sufism

Sufism consists of puritanical abstinence from luxury and enjoyment and aims at attaining spiritual perfection with a view to final absorption in God. Sufism is nothing external to Islam; it is part and parcel of it. It is the evolution of spiritual and mystical elements inherent in the great religion. Islam has two sides – external and internal, and the two sides are interdependent. The early Sufis made no difference between the esoteric and exoteric sides of the religion. The degeneration of Sufism began when the Muslims of later time separated the two halves of the faith. The secular scholars were too much absorbed in their business to think of the spiritual aspect of the religion, and the Sufis were too much immersed in mysticism to care for the external side. Another innovation that crept into the ranks of Sufis of subsequent times was the institution of separate bodies under various chiefs. A number of mystical schools sprang up, which in course of time developed into warring camps. Sufism was dethroned by *pirism*. The *Khanqahs* or monasteries which had originally been constructed for practical training in spirituality with a view to attaining communion with the Supreme Being were reduced to temples having a number of semi-gods in the persons of *pirs* to be worshipped.

Iran was the cradle of Sufism in the beginning of the medieval period. In course of time the seeds of *Sufism* were distributed in different parts of the world, including the Indo-Pak sub-continent. We find in hagiological and historical literatures of Muslim India that with the Muslim conquest a considerable number of Sufis came to India. It is now generally accepted that these Sufis through the observance of the principles and practices of their order contributed a lot to the spread of Islam in this subcontinent. The Chisti and Suhrawardi orders, appeared in India, established their *Jamat Khanahs* and *Khanqas* respectively. In course of time their successors carried their creed in different parts of the sub-continent. The third major religious order known as the Shattari order was introduced in India by one Shah Abdulla Shattari. It is said that he had been a lineal descendant of the great Shaikh Shihabuddin Shurawardi (1145 – 1244) who was a close patron of Syed Baddiuddin *Qutab-ul-Madar*, the founder of *Madariya silsila*. It is surprising that Ibrahim

Sharqi, the ruler of Jaunpur who was a close patron of the Madariya *silsila*, was determined to drive out the Shattari Sufis from his Kingdom²².

Syed Hasan Askari himself admitted that very little is known about the part played by Sufi saints of Bihar some of whom were of outstanding personalities and had far reaching influences. The little that has been written so far is mostly about the saints of south Bihar and little or no notice has been taken of those whose field of activities lay across the Ganges in North Bihar. Many of them belong to this Shattari order of Sufis, unlike the Chisti, Qadri, Suhrawardi, Naqshbandi orders etc. While discussing about the Shattaries, Syed Hasan Askari, classified them as Seekers of truth and knower of God who were of three types:” *Akhyar, Abrar and Shuttar.*” Askari also defined the meaning of the term Shattari as “Clever, fast going, abandoning, taking sides etc.” “M. Ghaus bin Hassan Shuttari, a contemporary of Akbar and Jahangir who was born in 962 A.H. and devoted much of his book *Gulzer-I-Abrar* completed between 1014 and 1022 A .H. Apart from Shattari order, the Madari order gained an influence in the entire Bihar region²³.

Spread of Silsila in Bihar

After establishing the capital at Lakhnauti, Bakhtyar uddin Khilji made administrative arrangements, and the kingdom of Lakhnauti spread gradually on all directions as far as Rangpur in the north. The Muslim rulers of Lakhnauti also kept Bihar in the north. Besides the expansion of empire building religious movement was going on side by side. Under the circumstances Muslim religious leaders, *ulama, mashayikh* and *saadat* followed the peaceful religious and cultural pursuits. Even it was Bakhtiyar uddin Khilji built *khanqas* in different parts of the kingdom. So, a religious movement started simultaneously with the political movement. Abdul Karim²⁴ though failed to fix up the actual date of coming of the Sufis in Bengal and admitted the fact that “it is difficult to determine how and when they came to Bengal or how far they influenced the local society, but their shrines have become places of pilgrimage to the local people. But these shrines did not have any originality. For example, the *dargah* or Bayazid Bustami

situated at Chittagong did not have any historicity as there is no evidence that he even visited Chittagong of Bengal.

The spread of Madariya doctrines in Bihar was facilitated by Qazi Bin Ola Alam, a direct descendent of Abu Darda, an uncle of the prophet of Islam, who was one of the first of the Muslim missionaries in India and, he is said to have wrested Maner in Patna district in 576 A.H.. Sh. Qazin appears to have been born in the last decade of the 8th A. H. as he was authorized at an early stage of his career to preach the principles of Madaria order of Sufism by Shaikh Hesamuddin Salamati who died in 840 A. H.

The Mughal emperor Akbar the Great had a great respect for them. He treated the Fakirs and sheikhs with the greatest veneration and profited by their blessings²⁵. Even he would join in the assembly of Fakirs and Sufis, and listen to their advice. Mughal emperor Humayun visited Abdul Quddus Gongohi, a contemporary of Shah Madar for taking decision on some controversial matters²⁶.

In Bihar Madariya, Suhrawardiya, Chistiya and Qadiriya groups were found. Among them Chisti group of Sufis appeared earlier²⁷. The Chisti group of Sufis was connected with those of Jaunpur²⁸. R. R. Diwakar²⁹ holds the view that Madariya and Shattariya groups of Sufis were very much active. The representative of the Madariya order was Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin, a disciple of Syed Badiuddin Shah Madar. The Madari *silsila* developed in Bihar through the *Khanqahs*³⁰. These *Khanqahs* came to be permanent in course of time. It provided shelter for disciples, servants and travelers. These *khanqahs* amassed so much wealth and property that the *pirs* attached to the *Khanqahs* behaved like gentry. A comparative study may be made with the Sufis of Deccan where they played their role as gentry. In Bihar, Pir-Pahar was a place which was surrounded by a hill³¹. The hill is called after an old Muhammedan Saint. There are also two tombs at the foot of the hill. Kolegong was also a center of worship of the Fakirs. Bholanath Chandra recorded the existence of one *dargah* during his travel in the mid-nineteenth century. These mounds, in course of time, “acquire immortality As local folk cult’s grow³²” The Fakirs living there used yellowish stone-beads (*tasbih, subha*)

which are necessary particularly for reciting the ninety-nine names of God³³. The rosary usually consisted of one hundred beads.

Influence of Buddhism and Hinduism

Long before the Muslims scholars translated Hindu works into Arabic or Persian, and before the Muslim travelers brought news from India, the Muslim had some glimpses of India's religious conceptions through Persian literature and also through the Buddhist influence that still lingered in some of the most remote parts of Iran. Not long ago, Buddhism had flourished in Balkh, Transoxiana, Khurasan, Turkistan and Persia and to some extent also in Iraq, before the Muslim conquered them. After these countries were converted to Islam, the Buddhist priests did not at once stop their preaching. The rosary is one of the objects that Muslims inherited from the Buddhists. The Sufi doctrine of *Fana* is the *Nirvana* of the Buddhists³⁴. The whole Sufi system of spiritual *Muqamat* (stations) or *Chakras*, which the seeker after illumination realizes on his way to extinction, is Buddhist. The inhabitants of Balkh and Bukhara had displayed a strong tendency to revert to their old Buddhist habits of thought. A good number of thinkers amongst Muslims, especially in the Abbasid reign, were more or less directly influenced by Buddhism.

Among later writers may be mentioned the name of Mirza Jan Jahan Mazhar (b. 1699). Mazhar wrote about the Hindu worship of idols, "In idol worship, the process is similar to the *dhikr*, contemplative ritual, which is presented for Muslim sufis³⁵."

Islamic mysticism originated and grew in two regions of the Muslim world, ancient Khurasan and Mesopotamia. In both these regions seekers of truth and enlightenment among the Muslims came into close contact with Indian mystics. The whole of Khurasan was studded with Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples at the time of the Muslim conquest as is testified by Hiun en Tsang. Mesopotamia, Damascus and Baghdad were centers of learning where Hindu scholars and Hindu ascetics (*jogis*) held debates with Muslim scholars. Thus it was the philosophy of pantheism and the practical disciple of

yoga passed into the Sufi circles of Middle East. Sufism even before its arrival in India had absorbed the main features of *Vedanta*, the philosophy of absolute monism. The Indian *Advaita* had become the Muslim's *wahdat-al-wajud*. Even historian like Tarachand failed to mention the interaction between Medieval Hindu mystic tradition and Sufism. The attempts of both Tarachand and Rizvi towards promoting national cohesiveness through their emphasis on the synthesis of Hindu-Buddhist and Muslim ideas in the medieval period are laudable. The study of Sufism vis-à-vis Hindu mysticism needs extreme care and sensitivity rather than the mere pursuance of nationalist goals in historiography. There are, of course, striking parallels between Sufism and Hindu mysticism. Most leading Sufis of the subcontinent, in spite of their popularity among the Hindus, emphasized strict adherence to the *sharia* and thus dispelled some doubts that existed about the polarity between religious law and Sufism. Even the Kashmiri apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity visualized the danger of Islam being swamped by syncretism. Many of Rizvi's statements are not only misleading but also based on misconceptions. Rizvi betrays a poor understanding of Arabic. This has not only resulted in the misinterpretation of some key concepts but also in drawing conclusions. His interpretation of the terms *tauhid* and *muwahhid* is misconceived³⁶.

The Sufis played an important role in converting large numbers of indigenous people to Islam. But the process of proselytization has been a complex phenomenon and there is no point in over-emphasizing the contribution of the Sufis. A large number of factors – political, social, economic and religious influenced Islamization: the possible degeneration of Buddhism and a resurgence of Brahmanism. The local tribes who had probably never been fully Hinduized and professed either localized form of Buddhism or their ancestors were gradually attracted to the new faith by the tolerant and syncretism spirit of early sufism³⁷. The circumstances of their conversion, and the life the new Muslims led thereafter in the midst of the very people whose faith they had earlier rejected, were, however, not propitious for a genuine change of heart. In many cases even the preachers did not insist upon the converts that they completely sever their contracts with past heritage and allowed the latter to retain their ancestral religious ceremonies,

even to keep non-Muslim wives. M. A. Rahim³⁸ further asserted the view that the converts were from the upper class of the Hindus and Buddhists. It was an admixture of some relics of decaying Buddhism, a large number of popular beliefs and ceremonies and some existing Hindu ideas and practices. An important example of the acceptance of the Muslims by the oppressed Buddhist masses is provided by the story contained in *Niranjaner Rusma* of *Sunya Purana*. Though the exact date of its composition and the name of its author are unknown it may be taken to resound the fact that as a result of Buddhist-Hindu rivalry the former did welcome the Muslims and joined hands with them. Thus the conversion process in Bengal had a congenial factor in this socio-religious phenomenon³⁹.

Instances of Buddhists welcoming the Muslims in a situation where they were recently displaced from their eminent position are available in the subcontinent. Ibn Battutah the fourteenth-century Muslim traveller, in his account of Ceylon writes about the Buddhists that “they show respect for Muslim dervishes, lodge them in their houses amidst their wives and children”⁴⁰.

Ethnic roots of Sufism

In Hindustan the Sufis were originated from four *Pirs* and fourteen *Khanwades*. The four *Pirs* were descended from four vicegerents viz, Hassan, Hussain, Kumail Binziyad and Khwajah Hasan Basri. Khwajah Hasan Basri had two representatives viz, Habib-e-Ajami from whom the first nine obtain their spiritual fervor and the other Abdul wahid-b-Zayd from whom the last five descended. These fourteen orders are as follows: (1) Habibi, (2) Taifuri, (3) Karkhi, (4) Saqatiy, (5) Junaydi, (6) Kazrumi, (7) Tusi, (8) Firdausi, (9) Suhrawardi, (10) Zaydi, (11) Iyali, (12) Adhami, (13) Hubayri, (14) Chisti. It is said that Syed Badiuddin Shah Madar, the founder of Madari *Silsila* was the disciple of Shaikh Muhammad Taifur Bustami.

Among the Sufi orders Chisti, Suhrawardi, Naqshbandi and Qadiri are popular in India. The Chisti alone sought ecstatic inspiration in music. The Suhrawardis were generally indifferent to it and recommended instead the chanting of the *Quran*; the Qadiris were opposed to music generally, and to instrumental music in particular. The Naqshbandi attitude to music was even more hostile. Despite the religious attitude towards music ranging from wholehearted acceptance to complete rejection, the devotional assembly of Islamic mysticism called *Qawali* is popular throughout India, Pakistan and Bangladesh⁴¹. *Qawali* present mystical poetry in Persian, Hindu and Urdu in a fluid style of alternating solo and group passages, characterized by repetition and improvisation. The various drum accompaniments on the barrel-shaped *dholok* is reinforced by hand-clapping, while the small portable harmonium, usually in the hands of the lead singer. A *qawwali* song normally begins with an instrumental prelude on the harmonium; then an introductory verse is sung as a solo recitation without drums. In the introduction Qureshi describes *qawwali* as the spiritual song that transports the mystic toward union with God.

Heterodox Sufi order outside the mainstream: Madari

Parallel to the main Sufi movement and closely related to it were some manifestations of mysticism that were defiant of social convention. An early branch of Sufism was the path of “Self-blaters” (Malamatiyya) who humbled their egos by deliberately incurring society’s reproaches through objectionable behavior such behavior was only intended to outrage, and did not include actually breaking Islamic law. Yet there were others, particularly the free-wheeling *qalandars*, who resembled dropouts rather than ascetics, and who were known more for irreverence and bizarre behavior than for their observance of religious proprieties.

During the reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq Qalandars were highly patronized by the monarchs as the latter sent “a few wanderers (Qalandars) towards Iqdula fort with instructions to get arrested by the enemy”⁴². Firuz Shah Tughlaq granted thirty six lacks rupees as maintenance grant (*Madad-i-Maash*) in favor of the *ulema*, *sheikhs* and holy

persons (sufi⁴³). He also undertook the repair and renovation of the hospices and tombs of Sufi holy sheikhs and ulema. All these sacred sites (i.e. tombs and hospices of the previous sultans and saints) were provided sandalwood doors by way of restoration and embellishment. According to tradition, Firuz Shah's spiritual guide, Makhdum Jahaniyan Jahan Gasht brought from Mecca a stone bearing the Prophets footprint.

Besides Malamatiya and Qalandars, there was also another group of Sufi order viz, Madariyas who rose into prominence during the second half of fourteenth century. Their main stronghold was North India but they infiltrated in various parts of Bihar including Bengal. The present paper seeks to explore the rise and evolution of the Madariya order in those regions. The Madaris were the ardent followers of Syed Badi-uddin *Qutub-ul Madar*, the founder of this order. The earliest available account of Syed Badiuddin and his order is the *Mirat-ul-Madari*. There is a controversy about his date of birth among the Persian chroniclers. Syed Badiuddin, the founder of the *silsila* was closely connected with Bayazid Bustami who died in A. H. 261 (874-875 A.D.). His origin was traced back to Iman Hussain. Excepting the Naqshbandia Sufis, all Sufi orders traced their origin to Hajrat Ali and Hajrat Fatima. Syed Budiuddin came to India from Syria and during his travels in North India made many disciples and converted them to Islam. The Madaris were a heterodox Sufi order.

The Madariya Fakirs known as *Dewangan* were generally illiterate people. They were also called Independents or *Azad* implying that they would shave their beard, eyebrows and lashes, and took a vow of chastity⁴⁵. During the *urs* some of them played the instrument called *rahab* (a kind of violin). Their procession was called *Madar Jhanda* (heraldic symbol).

In *Encyclopedia of Islam* it has been stated that Syed Badiuddin alias Shah Madar was born in 250 A.H/864 A.D.⁴⁶. Like his descent, his date of birth is also controversial, the *Taz-kirat-ul-Muttaqin*⁴⁷ gives it 1st *Shawwal* 442 A.H. /16 Feb 1051 A.D.; whereas the *Mirat-ul-Madari* says 715/1315 A.D. which is most preferable⁴⁸. Shah Madar was

instructed in esoteric sciences by the Imam Mehdi in Najaf Ashraf⁴⁹. In U.P. Shah Madar was venerated by the Hindus and Muslims as well. Besides him, Shah Mina (died 1478 A.D) and Alauddin Sabir, the two distinguished *khalifas* were also very popular at Piran Kalier in Shaharanpur⁵⁰.

Gulzar-i-Abrar contains a detailed description about Shah Madar and his disciples. It has also discussed about the spread of *silsila* in all India perspective⁵¹. The manuscript version also portrays on Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin, Kazi Muhammad Kanturi, Kazi Shiabuddin Daulatabadi, Kadir Abdul Malik Bahraich, Sayyid Khassa, Sayyid Raji Dihlavi, Bhakhai Thani, Shyakh Alla and Shyakh Muhammad. Among those, the *dargah* of Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin situated at Hilsa in Bihar was a major stronghold of the Madari order.

Shah Madar on his journey towards India proceeded by a ship. There is a legend that the ship drowned in the water and all the passengers drowned excepting Syed Badiuddin who with the help of a wooden vessel reached in the extreme corner of the sea where he met an enlightened person who fed him and clothed him (*behesti*). Syed Badiuddin learnt from his preceptor Taifur Shami the breathing practices (*habs-i-dam*) that he was abstained from taking food by this practice. Thus Syed Badiuddin reached the stage of illumination. This illumination was reflected in his habit of taking food and physical structure. This angelic vision was reflected in his physical embodiment. It is said that he acquired the charismatic celebrity of Prophet Eunos. In this way he attained the stage of *Qutub-ul-Madar*.

The author of *Dabistan*⁵² writes that he gathered information about Shah Madar. It is learnt that “when he came to Hindustan he became a yogi. The Hindus held him in esteem and he had a great number of followers. Kazi Mahmud Kanturi, an honored disciple of Shah Madar wrote a book entitled “Mahmudi” in which he has narrated the utmost accounts of Shah Madar.

Legend tells us that Shah Madar used to practice the art of keeping in his breath (*Habs-i-dam*). At last he was supposed to be dead and his disciple carried him to his burial. But he sat up and called out that he was alive in the words *Dam Daram* and they replied “*Dam Madar*”, “Do not breath” whereupon he really died and was buried but he has since appeared from time to time in many places.

By another story it is said that the Prophet Muhammad himself gave him the power of retention of breath (*Habs-i-dam*) and hence arose his longevity, as the number of his respirations was diminished at pleasure. The third legend as regards Shah Madars invisible meeting with Prophet Muhammad runs as follows. “... When they sit together, they relate, that in the night, when the Prophet ascended through the seven stages of Heaven, he received the command of God to wander through the heavens. When he arrived at the door of Paradise, he found the entrance as narrow as the eye of a needle; the porter made him a sign to enter; the Prophet said “with this body, how shall I enter through this passage”? Jabril replied “Say: *Dam Madar*” (the breath of Madar a particular ejaculation of this sect). The Prophet said so, upon which the narrow door opened, and he entered heaven⁵³.

Habs-i-dam, the practice which Fakirs indulge in, considering it as a religious act, and also as a means of prolonging their life in the belief that every body has a given number of breaths, thus the longer the breath, the longer the life⁵⁴. Thus it cannot be denied that the Prophet Muhammad gave Shah Madar the power of *habs-i-dam* or retention of breath and hence increased his longevity as the number of his respirations was diminished at “pleasure⁵⁵”.

According to some Madaris the Prophet obtained access to heaven only by virtue of the words ‘*Dam Madar*’ or the breath of Madar, the devise of the sect to which tradition ascribed many miracles. It is understood that Syed Badiuddin acquired proficiency in Sufism and consequently rose to the position of pre-eminence among the saints. It is pertinent to mention different hierarchies subsisting in Sufi silsila as

ghaus(chief), *autad*, *akhyar*, *abdal*, *nujaba*, *nuquba*, *qutub*, *qutab-ul -aqtab* and *Qutab-ul-Madar*⁵⁶.

Sufi saints are supposed to form a corporation of certain number always subsisting. In this corporation the highest is the chief (*Ghaus*), the four pegs (*autad*), the third seven, who abound in good gifts (*akhyar*), the fourth forty lieutenants (*abdal*), the fifth seventy “the excellent” (*nujaba*), sixth there hundred leaders (*nuquba*⁵⁷). Syed Badiuddin by virtue of his religious knowledge acquired the stage of *Qutab-ul-Madar*, meaning as the pivot of saints of his time.

There is seven auliya who guard the seven continents. They are called Abdal (those who change), because they can change into any form they please. They can be present in one place, and show themselves in their casual bodies in different places. The term *ghaus* means the axis around which the world turns. He is the chief functionary of the hierarchy which controls and manages the world⁵⁸.

There is a legend that Shah Madar is said to have had an interview with Khwajah Muinuddin Chisti from whom he demanded a place to live in. Legend also goes on to say that Khwajah Muin-uddin sent to Shah Madar a cup of water full to the brim, by which he meant that there was no place available for his accommodation. Shah Madar in reply placed a rose in the cup, implying that he would be rose among the general body of Fakirs. On this the khwajah appointed as his residence the site of Makwanpur.

When Syed Badiuddin was ordered to stay in Makwanpur then he questioned Prophet Muhammad “since you have already sent khwajah Muin-uddin Chisti why you are sending me?” In reply, Prophet said that “Khwajah Muin-uddin Chisti is the emperor of Hindustan, while you are considered as *Madar-ul-Alemin*(The whole world is dependent upon you).

In fact khwajah Muin-uddin Chisti was given the title as *Sultanul-Hind*, the spiritual king of India. Before coming to India, Khawajh Muin-uddin Chisti was associated with many leading Sufis of the time, among who was remarkable Abdul Qadir Jilani. When khwajah Muin-uddin arrived in India in 1190 A.D. the *ulemas* demanded to the *Raja* of Ajmer that he should banish the Khawajah, as because his influence had began to make it felt among the lower classes of the place. The *Raja* sent the order of expulsion through Ram Deo, head of the priests of Ajmer. Legend relates that on approaching the khwajah, Ram Deo was defeated and ultimately became his disciples.

Though it is said that Shah Madar had more than one thousand *murids* or disciples, he conferred the *Khelafati* right by adopting *Khirqa*(*patched froc*) upon Syed Abu Muhammad Arghun, who was honored with the post of *Sajjadanashin*. Shah Madar adopted Sayyid Abu Muhammad Khwajah Arghun, Sayyid Abu Turab *Khwajah* Fansur and Sayyid Abul Hasan Taifur. Syed Badiuddin brought his nephews from the town of Junar in the province of Halab and settled at Makwanpur. The descendants of Abu Muhammad *Khwajah* Arghun were also noted for their learning and piety. Besides; those whom he adopted and two were brought with him, namely, Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin and his younger brother Syed Ahmad from Baghdad. Both of them were the nephews of Saint *Ghaus-ul-Azam* and he made them his *murids*. With Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin came two other brothers namely Mir Samsuddin and Mir Rukunuddin who were also nephews of *Ghaus-ul-Azam* Abdul Kader Jilani. Among the followers of Shah Madar, Qazi Mahmud, son of Qazi Hamid, whose tomb is at Kantur in Nawabgunge, Barhabanki, was a great worker of miracles, and his followers are called *Taliban*. In a sufi tradition miracle is a source of authority by attributing miraculous power to a Sufi saint who is elevated in the hierarchy of Sufi saints. Baba Kapur's name was Abdul Ghafur, also a *Khalifa* of Qazi Hamid and Qazi Mazher Kalleswar. His tomb is located at Mawar in the Kanpur district. Another *Khalifa* of this family was known as parkai-i-Atish and he was buried at Baragaon. These four, viz, Abu Muhammad Arghun, Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin known as Jaman Jyoti, Qazi Mazhar and Qazi Mahmud were the most distinguished of all the *Khalifas* in the time of Taj Mahmud. Arghuni. The descendants of

Syed Abu Torab and Syed Abul Hasan are known as *Khadim*, Shah Madar recruited some persons from Kalpi during his journey and made them disciples. Sheikh Akhi Jamshed Qidawayee of Rajgarh, a disciple of Makhdum Jahaniyan Sayyid Jalal Bukhari came to see him and thus they became friends. Even Ibrahim Sharqi, the ruler of Jaunpur and his nobles like Mir Sadar-i-Jahan received Shah Madar cordially. Quzi Shihabuddin Daulatabadi and other prominent citizens bade him a touching farewell.

Spread of Silsila: Bihar

Among those who accompanied Shah Madar and thence became his close associates and chosen disciples mention has been made specially of three namely, Shah Alladad who settled down in Gaur Bengal, Syed Ahmad Badpa who was buried near Jaunpur and Syed Jamaluddin alias Shah Jaman Madari, the saint of Hilsa, Bihar. *Khirqa* is bestowed upon them either for desire or blessings; the spiritual power inherent in a saint giving them a charisma, transferable after his death to his tomb and his descendants. It is a mark of initiation. Since the *murids* inherited this *Khirqa* from their *Murshids* or *Pirs* they thought it essential to maintain it. The *Khirqa* (Patched froc) worn by Sufis, often passed from a *Pir* to a *Khalifa* to symbolise the latter's legitimate authority. The royal crown (*taj*) used in the coronation ceremonies of kings closely paralleled the Sufis turban (*dastar*), used in rituals of succession to Sufi leadership. The descendants of Shah Madar, acting as *Sajjadanashin* are popularly known as *Khademan*. A *Sajjadanashin* is a spiritual superior at a mosque or religious endowments like *dargah*. They form one section of the Madari order, and are in charge of the *dargah* at Makwanpur sharif (hence their name, which implies trustees). The Khadims act as intermediaries between the saints and worshippers. The persons who act as caretakers were usually recruited on a hereditary basis. In addition to these caretakers, there were less respectable specialists who also worked at the Shrines. There were musicians (*qawal*) who performed concerts of mystical music. They were recruited among lower heterodox Sufis or more usually untouchable castes. The musicians mainly belonged to the untouchable castes.

The next important suborder was the *Dewangan* (in a fit of divine madness) popularly known as *Diwane*. They were also known as *Malang*. H. A. Rose defined the connotation *Diwana Malang* "... when the *Malangs* bear the praises of Hasan, Hussain and Ali with music they lose their senses and become altogether distraught their flesh and blood became solid like iron, and they can then jump into fire without being burnt. They can even put fire into their mouth and devour it or catch a fowl or chicken and eat it without killing it in the proper way. This, they call *Jabha*"⁵⁹. They believe that their salvation is absolutely dependent on their Imams' intercession for them on the day of the resurrection. A fowl was killed as an offering for every male member of the family. An iron nail was then driven into the trunk of a tree close to the Shrine.

Controversy remains about the origin of Malang. Juffur Shureef identified the Malang as the followers of Jalal-uddin Bukhari Makhdum Jahaniyan Jahangosht while *TazKirat* mentioned Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin as the founder of the *Malang Fakirs*⁶⁰. William Crooke described the term *Malang* as a "general one for unattached religious mendicants"⁶¹. *Malangs* aimed at total distinctiveness from the external world in order to enter the inner spiritual world. Hence the use of *hashis* and other narcotics was common among them, as was the wearing of a particular style of dress and type of long hair, with the use of bangles, rings and other feminine ornaments to symbolize the *Malangs* role as the bride of God.

*According to Syed Hasan Askari*⁶² *Malang* means "besides oneself or one enraptured" is the name given to a type of wandering *dervish* or ascetics who remained celibate, bareheaded and barefooted and also let their hair grow, loose and uncombed. Faizi, the poet laureate of Akbar's court has described a *Malang* in a *Masnavi* which opens with the line "Be Adab Hargiz Ma Bashi ba Malang; Hust Do Daraya-i-wahadat Ra Nihang" (which means do not be unmannerly towards a *Malang*, for he is the dragon of the water of the river of unity of deity).

The name *Dawangan* implied wandering ascetics who had given up everything in a fit of divine madness. The *Dewangan tariqa* began with Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin. Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin Jane Man Jannati was the son of Bibi Nasiba, sister of a renowned Sufi saint Abdul Qadir Jilani, *Ghaus-e-Azam*. Syed Muhammad was a *Khalifa* of Badiuddin *Qutub-ul-Madar*. He was born with the blessings of Shah Madar. He also regained his lost life by his blessings. Since he was devoted in the name of God and in the field of religion that he received the blessings from *Allah*. Thus devotion made him popular as “*Dewangan*”. *Dewangan tariqa* began with him. This division had seventy-two branches. There is a legend that once Sher Shah refused to eat a portion of mango offered by Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin. As a consequence the latter thought that the empire of Sher Shah would not last for a long time. There is another legend that while Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin was passing through a jungle he subjected all the animals under him. Sheik Sadi, the Persian poet had written so many poems about the supernatural relation between the wild animals and Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin. Syed Muhammad died in 951 A.H. He had an interview with Makhdun Jahaniyan Jahangosht, a contemporary Sufi saint of Shah Madar.

One of the distinguished *Khalifa* of Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin was Hazrat Shah Faqrudin Jamshed. Nawab Abdur Rahim *Khan-e-Khanan* had a great respect over him. He died in 970 A.H. His tomb is situated at Akbarabad in Uttar Pradesh which is adjacent to *Darwaze Madar*. According to the author of *Jama Dil Madariyat* Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin became the *Khalifa* of Shah Madar in 522 A.H.

The brother of Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin was Syed Ahmad Badpa. Syed Ahmad Badpa was a disciple of Syed Badiuddin. He settled himself at Kolhuaban in Azamgarh district. The materials about Syed Ahmad Badpa are available from *Mirat-ul-Madari* and *Bahar-e-Zakhar*. *Bahar-e-Zakhar* was written by Shaikh Tajiiddin Ashraff. *Fusule Masudia* and *Azamgarh District Gazetteer* throw some light about the life and activities of Syed Ahmad Badpa. After his birth he was handed over by Abdul Qadir Silani to Shah Madar. Syed Ahmad came to India with Syed Badiuddin through

Samarkhand. Syed Badiuddin met Abdul Qadir Jilani at Baghdad in 488 A.H. When he went to Ajmer he accompanied Badpa. The *Khademan* and *Dawangan* are considered to be the most important sections of the order since they are found in different parts of India. Their importance is noticeable also in the field of their activities for they are the Trustees and the Hermits of the order respectively.

Out of seventy-two sub-divisions of Dewangan, Dewangan Sultani, Dewangan Hossaini, Dewangan *Roshidi*, Dewangan *Jamshedi*, Dewangan *Atisi* (fire), Dewangan *Abi* (water), Dewangan *Arzi* (land), Dewangan *Magrabi* (west), Dewangan *Sumali* (north), and Dewangan *Samadi* are mentioned in the sources. Of these divisions two groups had adopted fire and water as their respective totems. The Madariya Fakirs who rose in revolt against the English East India Company in Bengal and Bihar might have been the followers of fire (Dewangan *Atisi*), for it is reported that Majnu Shah, a famous Fakir leader of eighteenth century Bengal had the curious habit of performing a fire-fighting ceremony before launching an attack.

Distinctive Characteristics

*Adabudh Dhikr*⁶³, a Persian manuscript (it was composed in 1097/1686 A.D. by Jafar Muhammad Abu Said Qalandari Qadiri Husayni, a disciple of Azizulah Sharafuddin Siddiqi Ibrahim Puri Qalanduri Qadiri) describes the peculiarities of different forms of *dhikr* of different groups of Sufis. It is divided into ten *Adabs*, nine dealing with the forms of *dhikr* which was (1) common to all affiliations (2) Peculiar only to the Qadiris, (3) Qalandaris, (4) Shattaris, (5) Chistis, (6) Firdausis (7) Suhrawardis, (8) Madaris and with other miscellaneous groups of Sufis. *Majmua*⁶⁴, another Persian manuscript explains different forms of prayers, invocations of discussions to Shah Madar particularly as regards *Khirqah*, *talqin-i-bayat*

The *Dewangan tariqa* pursue the mendicant lay of life as instructed by their *Murshids*. In fact, the *Pir-Murid* relationship initiated by Shah Madar began to multiply

among the succeeding generations of his followers. They were mainly dependent on contributions, donations and pensions given by the Mughal powers including regional Zamindars and the local people as charity.

The distinctive characteristics of the Madariya Fakirs settled in Bihar and other parts of India were that they were not permitted to lead a household life as their major concerns were outside the society. Generally, they lived in the places surrounded by hills and forests. Even in course of their religious pilgrimage in different places of India including Bengal, the hills and forests were chosen by them as their places of residence. This explains why the Fakir of Bengal had been able to challenge the company's govt for a long time. The local tradition of Makwanpur in Kanpur district has it that Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin exhibited supernatural powers while he passed through the jungle riding on a tiger. It is said that he tamed the wild animals by virtue of his supernatural powers⁶⁵.

By virtue of these supernatural powers they could perform miracle by raising the dead, barren lady became pregnant which even after his death passed on to their descendants. The legend about the regaining of life of Syed Muhammad Jamalluddin by his *murshid* Syed Badiuddin may be cited. The legendary reputation of this great *Pir* helped to establish the *Dewangan tariqa* of the Madariya *Silsila*.

The customs and rituals observed by the *Dewangan* are significant. They do not observe the *shariati* rituals. They were not engaged in daily prayers and pilgrimage to Mecca. These Fakirs were governed by some mystical laws. A major distinction between types of *Sheikh* is that between 'ba-shara' (in tune with Sharia) and 'be-shara' (not in conformity with *sharia*). The former attempted to minimize their differences with the *ulema* and decided to closer to *sharia*. In contrast the *ba-shara dervishes* were deliberately antinomian. The *qalandars* and associated orders often reflect militant characteristics. Their unorthodox outlook identified them with the *be-shara* group of Fakirs. In order to conceal their real feelings towards Islam they would speak in

allegorical and ambiguous tone. They publicly flouted different practices and drank wine. They did not settle themselves in any fixed place and use to extort contributions from the local powers and common people as charity. Even the Madaris widely scattered in Bengal also had no adherence to *Shariati* rituals⁶⁶. Their major stronghold in Bengal was Chittagong from where they would keep intercommunication with *ba-shara* group of Fakirs of Sind and Iran. This *Be-Shara* group regarded Shah Madar as ‘Zinda Pir’. This *be-shara* trend led them to lead a nomadic way of life. Asim Roy⁶⁷ has challenged the orthodox view that the *Pir* tradition represents a deviation from true Islam and is an affront to Islamic orthodoxy. Instead Roy advances the view that the syncretism tradition was as useful tool to promote the Islamisation. The author also makes the interesting observation that in Bengal the worship of *Pirs* extended far beyond the range of saints and holy men.

The *Be-shar* groups of Fakirs were also known as *Be-qaid wa Be Nawa* (without ties and material concern). They were mainly dependent on food and drink. The *khirqas* worn by them made of shreds that they collected from the streets. According to them, [Madariya Fakirs] ‘God was spirit, Muhammad His body, the Four Caliphs His two arms and feet⁶⁸’.

The *Ba-shar* (with law) group of Sufis like Chistia, Sulrawardia, Qadiriya were all strictly orthodox. They followed the *Koran* and the *Sunna* (traditions) accepted all the cardinal principles of Islam, denounced all innovations in the sphere of dogmas as *bidat* (heresy), insisted upon strict adherence to, or observance of, the obligatory duties of their faith, even attempted to reconcile religion with philosophy⁶⁹. James wise had drawn the basic features of *Be-shara* group of Sufis. “The *Be-shara* follows their own appetites and passions, eating and drinking whatever they fancy, and leading disreputable and scandalous lives. Many of them are poor demented creatures like the Abdals of Syria, who wander about nearly naked, justifying their indecency by the text of the *Koran* “the clothing of piety is better than apparel and fine garments⁷⁰”.

The *Be-shar* group of Madaris was mostly found among the uneducated sections of the Muslim community and Hindus⁷¹. These un-Islamic practices led us to doubt about the historicity of Shah Madar that he had been considered as a mythical figure. Their habit of carrying tamed animals and performing of jugglery were often criticized by the orthodox Muslims. Even the *Sajjadanashins* of the *dargah* of Shah Madar at Makwanpur did not tolerate such activities.

James wise regarded them as “great nuisance”⁷². He described the militant outlook of the Fakirs in this way, “they wander about the city with the tambourine to which symbols (*Jhanth*) are attached and drive nervous people distracted by their unreasonable noise.... A rich shopkeeper busily engaged in striking a bargain.... the Fakirs begin to beat and jangle his instrument, and to create such a disturbance that the victims are only too glad to get rid of him by paying a small sum of money.”

The Madariya Fakirs of Bihar and elsewhere carried some symbols which distinguished them from the others. The *Mahi-o-Maratib* was perhaps the most important among the insignia that the Madariya Fakirs carried along with them. They also used to carry *danka*, *nishan*, *kasta*, peacock’s feather (*morchal*) as a mark of respect to their Pir Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin Jane Man Jannate. The *Jhanda* or *nishan* carrying by the Madariya Fakirs inscribed with *Mahi* Symbol. Besides Makwanpur, the Madariya Fakirs of Baroda kept this type of *nishan* and *panjtan*. The significance and meaning of *Mahi-o-Maratib* deserves mention. *Mahi* derives its origin from the figure of a head of a fish made of silver or gold fixed on the top of a decorated long pole. *Maratib* is a similar standard decorated with white cloth. *Maratib* meant power and strength. This mounted on elephant was carried at the head of the regiment⁷³.

The Madariya Fakirs considered *Mahi-o-Maratib* as one of their holy companions and they never eat fish. The importance of carrying *Mahi-o-Maratib* has been pointed out by Maulavi Abdul wali who found it prevalent among the Fakirs of Baliyadighi, Dinajpur in North Bengal⁷⁴.

There is a legend current among the Madariya order that once Prophet Eunuus was swallowed by a large fish. But he came out of its belly and was still alive. So the Madaris are convinced that the supernatural power of a fish safeguards them from any danger or difficulty. A different version regarding the keeping of *Mahi-o-Maratib* has been given by some historians. The *Mahi-o-Maratib*, it should be noted here, was an honorific standard conferred by the Mughal Darbar upon many distinguished members of the nobility. Maharaja Ajit Singh of Deccan was placed higher in rank than all other Rajas, and that he should receive a *mansab* of seven thousand and seven thousand horse, with the fish banners. It is relevant in this context to note that the *Pirzada* attached to the *dargah* of Shah Madar at Mackwanpur expatiates upon the high status that their predecessors under the Mughals had enjoyed⁷⁵. The importance of the *mahi-o-Maratib* to the Madariya Fakirs is attested by the fact that Shah Shuja, the Mughal viceroy of Bengal, issued a Sanad in 1659 to Hasan Muria Burhana, the representative of the Madariya order, recognizing their right to carry the standard in Bengal and Bihar. Shah Shujas' Charter sanctioned the Fakirs practice of going on pilgrimage with the standard decorated with the fish symbol to various places of Bengal and Bihar.

Besides the *Mahi-o-Maratib*, the Madariya Fakirs kept *Panjtan* (five personages), iron-tongs (*chhari*) sometimes pointed, and a wooden club (*sona*), a bag of lamb skin (*himacha*), a wallet (*kashkol*, *kiste*), a knife (*chhuri*), and big kettledrum. *Panjtan* is carried by the Madariya Fakirs in memory of Prophet Muhammad, Hazrat Ali, Bibi Fatima, Imam Hossain and Iman Hasan. The *Panjtan* looks like a human palms made of either silver or brass of which the five fingers symbolically represent Prophet Muhammad and four Imams. The tradition of keeping Panijtan as one of their insignia is evident among them even today. The Madariya Fakirs' reverence for Prophet Muhammad and the four Imams is also noticeable in another way, i.e. the staffs used by them are often marked with their names. Abul Kalam Zakaria⁷⁶ in connection with his archaeological survey in Bangladesh has come upon a staff collected by Basiruddin Sarkar, a resident of the village Bhatsala in Dinajpur. The staff bears the names of Prophet Muhammad and the four *Imams* on one side. The other side of the staff is inscribed with a portrait of fish.

Zakaria observed the names of some *Pirs* in the middle portion of the staff indicating “Shah”, “uddin” and “Barhina”. On the basis of the facts he has come to the conclusion that the staff collected by Basiruddin was actually used by the Fakirs of Baliyadighi. The other insignia originated according to the Madariya Fakirs residing in Mackwanpur from Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin. This tradition is also corroborated by some hand written manuscripts found in the *Astanah* of Bulbul Shah. The use of tiger skin by the rebel Fakirs in Bengal is also evident from the official documents. The Fakirs’ traveling from one place to another was reported to have used tiger skin for sitting in a certain place. The kettledrums signified the special status which they enjoyed in society.

These kettle drums were of two-types, namely, *Dalmadal* and *Karak-Bijli*, donated by the Prince of Gwalior and Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. It is learnt from an oral discussion with Bulbul Shah (living Fakirs in 1990) that these kettle drums were mainly used during the Mughal period and early colonial rule by the Madariya Fakirs particularly during their assemblage in the *dargah* on the occasion of *urs* ceremony. Their journey through the village was marked by the beating sound of their kettle drums.

The development of *Pir-Murid* relationship became more evident from some essential belongings of Madariya Fakirs. The Fakirs generally used to wear sleeveless shirt (*Alfa*), *komarbandh* (*katibastra*), *kofni* and *langoti* to cover their lower abdomen, turban round their head, rosary (*Tasbi*), *Kantha* (*Rudraksha*), *seli* (another type of rosary) and ornaments like necklace made of pearl round their feet. The Fakirs received such personal belongings when they were initiated as disciples by their *Murshids*. Naturally, the disciple thought it essential to preserve those things over the generations as sacred. Juffur Shureef expatiates the view that these donations were actually conferred upon those religious persons who held a high position in society. The Madariya Fakirs rose to such eminence that they even exercised some honorific status from the Mughal court.

In Bihar the dress and diet of the Sufis were very simple and sparing. The clothes worn at different times consisted of *Rida* (Cloak or mantle), *Qamis* (Shirt or Cotton), *jubha* (a loose, wide sleeved outer vestment), *Qaba* (a tight fitted coat with buttons, loops and opening below the neck), *pairahan* (a loose vest or shirt), *Mirza* (an under jacket with big sleeves and open cuff), *Tahband* (strip of cloth worn round the waist and passing between the legs), *Izar* (trousers, covering the body to the middle of the leg and even below that) have also been mentioned. According to them sicken cloths were forbidden to men⁷⁷.

The Madariya Fakirs would wear black cloths; their *Pagri* (turban), *Jama*(robe), *dopattah* (shawl) and *louns* (Sie), a kind of underpants⁷⁸. The Madariya Fakirs in general wear a small piece of cloth to safeguard their lower abdomen; but during the period of festival they used black or dark garments. In fact, the Madaris in general favour black. They used black turban and the flag flown in their *astanah* was also of black colour. It is corroborated from the interviews taken from the *Malang* Fakirs of Makwanpur and elsewhere that Prophet Muhammad used black blankets and the Kaba Sharif was covered with black cloths. This explains why the Madariya Fakirs liked black flag and black horses. To quote, Garcin De Tassy, “Carrying black flags on gilt pikes, they would pass through cities, making a local noise”. The worship paid to these saints consisted of minor variations, in going in procession to the tombs on Thursdays, sometimes on Fridays, to repeat prayers and deposit offerings there; the votaries usually carried pikes indifferently called wands, lances or banners, a piece of cloth being commonly fastened to round their waist. On reaching the tomb these pikes used to waist till the pilgrims returned. The procession generally was headed by Fakirs and the offerings consisted chiefly of flowers, sweetmeats, pastry, oil and molasses etc. All classes of people participated in Mela viz., devotees, and musicians, jugglers, dancing girls, idlers and swindlers. The pike or *Jhanda* appears to have been used as a common article in this festival in many parts of India

The Madariya Fakirs observe their death rites in a manner different from the rest of the Madaris. In the case of *Khademan, Ashiqan and Taleban*, the dead body is buried. Among the Madariya Fakirs, the flowing hair called *Jata* or *Bhik* is cut off after death and both the body and hair are buried at two different places. For example, Majnu Shah, the well known rebel of the early colonial period, had two graves, one for his hair and the others for his body. The two different graves of Majnu Shah exist even today at Mackwanpur. Besides Majnu Shah, there were other Madariya Fakirs who were reported to be buried as a consequence of their death. It appears that Majnu Shah himself buried several of his men [Madariya Fakirs].

Being the ardent followers of Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin, every Madariya Fakir grows long flowing hair on their head. This habit has been commented by the foreign travelers like Bernier, Tavernier, Peter Mundy, Manrique, Thomas Bowrey, Bishop Heber and Valentia both in the Mughal and colonial period. This type of *Malang* Fakirs is also to be found in different parts of India, for example, the present author had an occasion to meet such a group of Fakirs in Mackwanpur who used to keep long hair. The discussion with them revealed how they were influenced by their predecessors in the practice of keeping long hair.

Dargah

The word *dargah* means a tomb constructed on the *mazar* of a *Pir* belonging to any Sufi order. The *dargah* also means a *mazar* of a dead person reaching the status of a *Pir* buried in a place on which a tomb is constructed. A secondary meaning of *dargah* is *rawza* means “mausoleum”. *Dargah* constitute a courtyard, a pool, a *nahbat khana* (music house) etc. *Dargah* is often located under a holy tree and also on the bank of the rivers.

Tombs have different shapes which are called *dargah*, shrine, *mazar*, *rawaza*, garden and place of pilgrimage. These words always refer to places where saints rest⁷⁹.

Generally a settlement is made around the shrine which may be quite large. There were some shrines which used to keep only three hundred inhabitants. In some cases, virtually all the members of the settlement may be descendants of the founding saint. Even the tribal living around the shrines would gather. According to Ernest Gellner “the saints and their settlements are thus arbitrators between tribes and their clans⁸⁰”. The geographical location of the shrines in the frontier areas helped for the expansion of trade. Tribesmen visiting markets could pass through the settlement of the saints deposited their arms there and were accompanied by the representative of the saint for visiting the market.

The tomb of Shah Madar at the Mackwanpur in Kanpur is raised in the middle of a large square building. The window of it is opened occasionally. The tomb is covered with golden cloth. The inside of the tomb is heavily perfumed with the essence of rose⁸¹.

There are several other courts named the *Sankar darbar* from a chain on the door, the *Pakurkhana* from a *Pakar* tree growing there, the *Dhamal-khana*, where the *Malang* are allowed to play and sing songs, and the *Nakarkhana* built by Raja Bhagmal Jat of Bithur where are kept the great kettledrum and the gigantic metal cooking pot (*degh*) which were filled at the expense of pious pilgrims on the anniversary of the saints death.

Saint or *Pir* worship has become a common feature among the Muslims of Bihar. A *pir's* tomb often becomes a place of pilgrimage. In the Patna district there are several tombs of the muslim saints where ‘*urs*’ ceremony is held⁸². Many of them came to India from western and central Asia and settled in different provinces including Bihar and Bengal. Sufism had been so much in vogue in Bengal that several new mystic orders developed on the basis of the teaching of some of the distinguished Bengali Sufis⁸³ In a letter addressed to Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi of Jaunpur, Hazrat Mir Ashraf Jahangir simnani (d. 1380 A.D.) stated the names of important Sufi orders prevalent in Bengal and Bihar among which the Madaris were prominent. Among them the tomb of Hazrat Miran Shah Jamaluddin Madari stands at Hilsa. By the 17th century Sufism was firmly rooted in the

soil of Bengal. To become a *murid* of a *murshid*, *Pir* or *Sheikh* was a common feature in the Muslim society of Bengal and Bihar.

The greatest of four disciples of Shah Madar, when he died in 1440, who gave some lesson in '*Awarif*' to Balkhi Saint Husain Muiz, was the extremely pious and ascetic personage, jaman Jati also Syed Jamaluddin (*yati*) who lies buried at Hilsa within a domed mausoleum which was built in 950/1593 by Jaman Madari of Darbhanga. Shah Kangai *Diwana* who lies buried in Bihar was also a disciple of Madariya Sufi. The Madariya Qalandars have their own peculiar practice of performing devotion. Some of them walked in fire, and wore iron on their arms.⁸⁴

Jaman jati may be corruption of *jan-i-Man Jannatist* representing perhaps the utterance of some saint, apparently the spiritual guide of Shah Jaman. Besides the local tradition about it, there is a reference to this explanation in *Taz-kirat ul Muttaqin*

Hilsa, village in the Bihar sub division on the banks of the river Kattar, 15 miles south of Fatwa, with which it is connected by a metal led road, by which runs the Fatwa Islampur light railway . According to local legends, the name of the place appears to have been derived from one Hilsa Deo, a powerful magician.

The *dargah* or shrine of Shah Madari at Hilsa is a place of pilgrimage. It is a simple, square brick building, covered by one dome, and containing seven tombs, of which the westernmost is said to be that of the saint. An inscription over the gate, the date of which corresponds to 1543 A. D., tells us that in the time of Sher Shah the tomb of Miran Saiyid Juman Madari was repaired by order of Mian Sheikh Alam Adam Shah Juman Madari, at the expense of Daria Khan Zangi, an officer of the royal bodyguard. The original building thus appears to be older than 1543 A.D., but it cannot have been much anterior, as Shah Madar, the founder of the Madari order, to which the saints mentioned in the inscription belonged, is said to have been a contemporary of Ibrahim Shah of Jaunpur, who reigned from 1400 A.D. Another inscription refers to the building

of a mosque near the *dargah* by a person called Riza. Its date corresponds to 1604 A.D., and it is of some historical interest as it refers to Jahangir, who is called Shah Salim, as the reigning king. His father Akbar was still alive at that time, but Jahangir was already in open rebellion against him, and had struck coins, with the name Salim, of which numerous specimens exist. The mosque built by Riza is no longer in existence and the present one is an insignificant modern building⁸⁵The author of the printed Persian book, *Taz-Kirat-ul-Muttaqurin* has given the plans of the main mausoleum and the other attached buildings including an Alamgiri Mosque and some of the inscriptions still found thereon. Earliest information about the *dargah* of Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin situated at Hilsa is known to us from the writings of Abdul Latif, an inhabitant of Patna in 1609 A.D.⁸⁵ In 1608 A.D. Abdul Latif (son of Abdullah Abbasi) an inhabitant of Ahmedabad arrived at Chausa, an ancient village on the bank of the Ganges and the commencement of the province of Bihar on 6th May 1608

According to him “on 10th May we reached Patna, the capital of Bihar, Patna stands on the right hand and Hajipur on the left hand, a little above Patna, on the bank of the Ganges. I have heard from trustworthy men of this country that Bihar [town] is a place of grace, where many holy men and saints repose [in their graves]. Even at the present time some good men live here, one of them being Sheikh Humayun.”

Hilsa is village, in the jurisdiction of Bihar, and containing the tomb of Shah Chaman Chisti. It has a lofty dome on which a pitcher, called *kalas* in the Hindi tongue, has been fixed, which turns in one direction at all hours. Some good men have seen the phenomenon, and I am writing what they have told me.

Next day we reached *Mashan*. The village is situated at a distance of half a Koss from the river, and is an ordinary (*sahal*) place; but it has two hillocks, one in the midst of the river and the other on the bank, facing each other, so that there are few places on earth equaling it in airiness. How can I describe the charm of its mornings and evenings and the beauty of its moon-lit nights, which exhilarate spirit and fresh in the life of man?

On the hillock by the river's edge, a pious man has built a beautiful mosque. For the last 30 years a *dervish* has been engaged in prayer here. A room has also been built for drinking water (*abdari*).” What a charming retreat, no better can be found for a *darvish!*”

Besides Hilsa, “Sagarpura is a *pura* (ward) of the city of Akbarnagar. Here are two hillocks opposite each other. Probably Pir Pahar, three miles north of Rajmahal. Another hillock, a mile west of the town and two miles south of Pir-Pahar is crowded with Jama Masjid.” Mir Murshid Ahmad, surnamed Bihari Ruhullah Waji is buried on the top of the hillock of Sagarpur..... On Friday nights there are large gatherings at this holy place. When Nawab Mutaqad Khan arrived at Sagarpur, he immediately began to construct a *Toshakhana*, containing two treasure rooms (*makhzan*) in the middle and two halls (*diwan*) – one in the south containing two rooms (*Huzra*) and the other in the north

The mausoleum, containing eight tombs, the largest and the westernmost, being that of Hazrat Miran Syed Jamaluddin Madari. Besides the main mausoleum, the remains of what once must have been a *khanqah* and a *Naubat khana* are clearly traceable. The *dargah* or the main shrine is a square brick built structure about 35 feet square on the outside with a four arched room of 24 ft square inside.

The building has got a wooden doorway supported by stone pillars. Buchanan in his journal has referred to the “Monument of Zummun Yati” which “consists of a kind of cube constructed of bricks cut smooth by the Chisel, and covered by a rude Dome”. “On the door” he says, “is an Arabic inscription which is called Sereyani, because the saint was a native of Syria. Within are buried the saint and his eight descendants and soon after the saint's death (about the year 1512 A.D.) the building was created by a merchant”⁸⁶.

Buchanan says “Besides the tomb there is a mosque and several other buildings and the areas by which they are surrounded are thickly beset with the tombs of the

faithful. The buildings are in good repair and are kept near. A detailed account of the *dargah* has been narrated by Qeyamuddin Ahamad. The translated version of the text of the inscription given in Table-1.

The inscription is fixed above the entrance of the mausoleum of Shah Jaman Madari in Hilsa, district Patna. It was first noticed by Buchanan Hamilton. He significantly, notes the similarity between this mausoleum and that of Malik Ibrahim Bayu's in Biharsharif. He writes, 'like those on the hills at Behar, it consists of a kind of cube constructed of bricks cut smooth by chisel and covered by a rude dome'.

It was also noticed at some length in the *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India*, Bengal Circle, 1902, but the writer wrongly describes Darya Khan Zangi as an officer of the bodyguard. Lastly, its text was published along with an English translation by R. D. Bannerjee...

The slab measures 2'.6" x 1' and the text consists of six and a half lines of Persian prose. It records the repair of the dome of the mausoleum of Sayyid Jaman Madari, during the lifetime of Shaikh 'Alam Adam Jaman Madari, on 29 Safar 950 (3 June 1543) in the reign of Sher Shah. It appears that the building was previously constructed by Darya Khan.

Table1
<p>1. In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. There is no God but Allah; Muhammad is His Prophet. (It is a) record of the repair of</p> <p>2. the dome¹ (of the mausoleum of) the revered Miran Sayyid Jaman Madari, may his soul achieve nearness to Allah, during the lifetime of</p> <p>3. the humble, Miyan Shaikh 'Alam Adam Shah Jaman Madari, during the reign of....</p> <p>4. the revered, Solomon-like, Sher Shah, may Allah perpetuate his</p>

kingdom and sovereignty,

5. raised by Darya Khan Zangi Hud Nuhani Khaskhail,

6. on the 29th of the month of Safar may Allah complete it with safety and success.

7. Year 950 (29 Safar 950=3 June 1543). The supervisor (is) Shams Madari.

Source Q. Ahamad, Corpus of Arabic and Persian inscription of Bihar (A.H.640-1200) Patna, 1983.

Some doubt has been raised about the identity of Darya Khan mentioned in the inscription, particularly because of the rather loose use of the word *barawarda*. If it is taken to mean that Darya Khan carried out the repair (in 1543) he would obviously be a different person from the famous Nuhani ruler of Bihar who died much earlier. S. H. Askari, and Siddiqi too, also consider the possibility that *bardwarda* refers to Sher Shah (that he was a protégé of Darya Khan and was brought up by him). However, this is rather unlikely; it is to be noted that Sher Shah is styled as the reigning emperor and it is difficult to imagine anyone mentioning him as having been 'brought up' by someone. The most likely meaning, as Siddiqi too suggests, is that the dome was originally constructed by Darya Khan and was repaired in the reign of Sher Shah.

It has also been mentioned that Alam, the grandson of the saint, was the *Sajjadah Nashin* and that the repair was done by him. It may also be noted that the supervision and renovation of the *dargah* was done by a disciple of the Madari order in Bihar.

Later on the inscription was also noticed by Cunningham and re-discovered by S. H. Askari and the late Fasihu'd-Din Balkhi in 1947. The inscription now reported to be kept in the house now reported to be kept in the house of the *mutawalli* of the local *dargah* the translated account given by the Cunningham has been mentioned in Table 2

Table: 2

The detached slab originally belonged to a mosque which must have been the mosque in the local *dargah* of Jaman Jati (no. 56). Buchanan refers to a mosque near the *dargah*, but does not mention any inscription on it; perhaps it had got detached as early as that time, 1811-2. The present mosque, attached to the *dargah*, is a small one built in recent times; but it, probably, stands on the site of the earlier one to which the inscription originally belonged. The epigraph is engraved neatly in seven lines on a tablet measuring 2'.4"x 1'.4". In the first line there is an invocation of God by His attributes, and a phrase in Arabic purporting that the builder, the composer and the writer of the text were all the same person. The last line not only works out the chronogram by inscribing the numerical value of each letter of the chronogram below the alphabet concerned, but it also gives the date in figures and words in Arabic and Persian. The historical portion of the text comprises five Persian couplets, and records that in the *dargah* of Shah Jaman a mosque was built in 1013 (1604-5) in the time of king Salim, son of Akbar, by one Rida who is described as an ardent follower of Murtada ('Ali, the fourth Caliph). The text has been read as follows :

1. O, Lord of the Kingdom! By its builder, composer and writer.
2. In the *dargah* of the saint of God, Jaman Shah, who was one of the men of God,
3. during the reign of Shah Salim, (son of) Akbar, that king who was the protector of the *shara'* of Mustafa (the Prophet Muhammad)
4. a man, who was a sincere friend of Murtada, laid the foundation of a mosque.
5. Wisdom enquired, '(Who is) this man, who is the founder? Tell (me) his name, what is the date and from where was he'?
6. A voice from the unknown called out, "O Wise man, say that the date (of the building) and the name (of the builder) both (are contained in the phrase) 'he was Rida'."

The inscription is of some historical importance. Jahangir's rebellion in the

closing years of Akbar's reign and the defection of some of the officers of the eastern province to him is well-known. The inscription provides corroborative evidence of it, so far as Bihar is concerned. It is dated **1604-5**, when Akbar was still alive but, interestingly enough, it mentions the name of Shah Salim (not Jahangir, which title was assumed later) and Akbar is mentioned only as the father of Salim. It clearly shows that the Governor of Bihar¹ had gone over to Jahangir's side or, at least, had considered it politic to do so, for Jahangir was very near, at Allahabad, and he was not an ordinary rebel but one whom it was safer to play along with. We can in no other way explain the inscription with its peculiar wording. Only a Governor who had joined hands with Jahangir, or at least connived at his rebellious activity, could have permitted such an inscription to be set up publicly.

We do not have any information about Rida, the builder of the mosque. Perhaps, he was some enthusiastic pro-Jahangir official in the province.

As stated above, the inscription was composed and written by him.

Paleographically, too, the inscription is interesting. The last line mentions the date of construction in three different ways, in numerals and in Arabic and Persian words. More important, it illustrates the working of the *abjad* system of reckoning by specifying the letters constituting the chronogram, *Rida bud*, and giving the numeral value of each letter under it. In this way even those not familiar with the working of the *abjad* system can follow it easily. Although a few other inscriptions which follow this method are known to exist in other parts of the country, no such other inscription exists in Bihar and Bengal.

Source: A. Cunningham, Archaeological Survey of India, Report, xi, Calcutta, 1881.

This inscription belongs to the period when prince Salim had rebelled against his father towards the close of the latter's reign. The mosque, however, is no longer in existence excepting its remains which are still to be noticed to the north east of the *Muqbara* of Hazrat Jamaluddin.

It may be said that Dariya Khan (entitled Masnad – i - Ali) became the virtually independent ruler of Bihar and whose son formally proclaimed the short lived Nuhani kingdom of Bihar. Dariya Khan's name occurs in the inscription found at Hilsa. In it his name has been mentioned along with that of Sher Shah in connection with the erection of a domed structure over the tomb of Saiyyid Jaman Yati⁸⁷.

Epigraphically evidence testifies to the erection of a number of buildings under each of them but one looks almost in vain for any monuments that may give a cohesive idea of any style, more particularly of the pre-sur times⁸⁸. As in Bengal, no monument worth the name of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries has survived except a few at Bihar Sharif, Monghyr and Telhara. The architectural activities of Bihar are represented chiefly in the extant monuments of the Sur and the Mughal periods.

The third phase of the architectural style begins with Sher Shah Sur's rise to power, which opened a new chapter in the saga of the Muslim architecture in Bihar. He ushered in a period of unprecedented architectural activity, and earned for Bihar an All-India status in architecture. But before taking up the monuments which are in the established Sur style, we may here mention one building viz., the *dargah* of Jaman Jati which though constructed in the early years of Sher Shah's reign, is quite different from any monument to be built immediately thereafter⁸⁹.

It has one opening in the south side enclosed within a pointed arch showing a slight stilt. Its walls also have a slope upwards but the latter is not so pronounced as in the tomb under reference. It is also quite plain and devoid on the whole of any decoration except one niche wrought in brick, on either side of its entrance, which is remarkable for its delicate design and fine workmanship, recalling to mind the terracotta decoration of the 16th century Bengal Monuments. The only other structural feature in which the Hilsa tomb differs from its prototype is the battlemented parapet above the cornice molding in brick. This tomb also occupies an important place in Bihar architecture for its evidence on the upward extent in time, and distribution in place, of the Sur style.

The latest information is from S. Majumdar Sastri who secured some Buddhist images from the site⁹⁰. According to Beglar the mosque was built on the site of a Hindu temple and it is possible that the main image of the Hindu Shrine is so buried upside down under the floor of the mosque “to be sodden daily under foot by the faithful”. Cunningham however, considered him to be a powerful zaminder who opposed the Muslims. It may, however, be added that Buchanan, who rarely fails to record such legends or stories is, significantly enough, silent on all these stories about Hilsa Deo.

In 1924 or so Majumdar Shastri and Chunilal Roy noticed images of Buddha, Tara etc at a modern saiva temple at the place. The image of Tara has three inscriptions. It appears thereafter that a Buddhist Shrine also existed at the place. Hilsa is the old name of the place which is said to have been changed to Jatinagar, after the defeat of Hilsa Deo by Muhammadan saint Jaman Shah Madari, commonly known as Jaman Jati.

There are various stories about the conflict between the Hindus and Musalmans. Some say that Hilsa Deo was buried alive in an earthen vessel. Others say that he was killed and buried outside Jaman Jati’s tomb. But all agree that when Hilsa was dying, he asked his conqueror where he should get his food, to which Jaman replied “who ever comes to Jatinagar and uses the name of Hilsa will receive food”⁹¹. By the Muhammadans, Hilsa Deo is said to have been a very powerful kafir. It is supposed that he may have been an influential zamindar, who opposed them for some time with success.

The Fakirs after the arrival at *AshurKhana* observed some rituals. They recited the *Fatiha* and some portions of *Koran*. The head of the *Ashurkhana* responded an appeal in favor of Hazrat Ali, Fatima, Hasan,

Hussain and Muhammad which was popularly known as *Ek Nara Panjtan*. The superintendent of the *Ashurkhana* used to provide pipes, tobacco, *sharbat*, cloves, cardamoms and a meal of rice boiled with pulse. They were called *Dasmasi* or Ten Month Fakirs. The proper meaning of this terminology was that a festival continued on this occasion for ten days. Where as, the Fakirs, who resided there permanently observed the fair of twelve days which was called *Barahmasi*.

Urs

They smeared their bodies with powdered sandalwood and would carry two or three handkerchiefs in their arm. They would keep armlet (*bazuband*) and wear breeches (*gurzi*) on their waist. They would also carry whip (*Korla, Kora*), a dagger (*katar*), a sword, a scorpion dagger (*bichhua*), a weapon (*mara*) made of two antelope horns, an iron javelin (*Sang*), a scourge (*qamachi*), and a switch (*Chhari*). Their ankles are bound with strips (*ghanti*) of colored cloth or they wear bell anklets (*ghungra*)⁹²... Thus equipped they would go to the *Ashurkhana* and dance a circular whirling dance (*ghumina*) to the sound of the tambourine (*daf*). They also used to chant ‘Ali, Ali, Ali, and Bhum’.

During the Muharram festival the *Malangs* would wear on the head a knot of hair or of cloth passed through an iron ring (*Chakar*) round which they twisted red thread, gold or silver lace edging (*Kinari*) and narrow lace (*gota*) The edge of a handkerchief (*guluband*) was passed under one arm and the two upper ends fastened over the opposite shoulder, while on the neck wear strings of beads or rosaries (*kantha, mala, tasbih*). A sash (*komarband*) encircles the waist; a cloth covers the loins, which on the right ankle is an ornament (*dal*) or an anklet with bells. These men wander about, visit *Ashurkhanas*, and as they walk rattle

their anklets and call out, “Hail Shah Madar, Hail to Him”. Then one repeats the verse, whatever you have, spend it in the road to Him (God).

The *Khirqaposh* Madaris who wear patched robes (*Khirqqa*) believed in Trinity in which ‘God is the Spirit, Muhammad his body and Madar his breath (dam) ⁹³’.

The fire walking ceremony of the Madariya Fakirs is known as *Dhamal Khela*. *Dhamal* means “the place of virtuous conduct” and *kudna* ‘to leap’. They kindled a large fire, send for the *tabaqati* or Fakirs of this order, and give them a present. The Fakirs would recite Fatima, sprinkled sandalwood in the fire, and then the chief of the band led the way by jumping into it with their cry “Dam Madar, Dam Madar”.

The Fakirs attendance in the *dargah* on the occasion of ‘*urs*’ with the practice of fire walking over burning coals was also observed at Hilsa even up to the second half of 20th century. The interesting account taken by Syed Hasan may be quoted

“A very old and seemingly reliable man, when approached by us gave the information that though this practice still continues many more things which he had seen with his own eyes had now become the things of the Past. Some 40 or 50 years before, every year, on the occasion of the annual ‘*urs*’ or fair which falls on 14th and 15th of Muharram, about a hundred and two of *Malang* Fakirs of the Madariya order used to flock to this place, beside many others, and there were 52 *chowks* in the village where they stayed. They were provided with food and at the time of departure each was given a ‘*Rumal*’ of one yard of cloth and 4 “*Gorakhpuri Paisa*”. On such occasions fire set to a huge collection of fuel timber within the enclosure in front of the shrine and when it was ablaze the ‘*Malang*’ used to trample upon the timber and reduced them to ashes, crying all along “Ya Ali; Ya Ali : Dam Madar; Dam Madar⁹⁴”. The technical word for this practice of running through fire on religious occasion is “*Dhammal*”. This superstitious ceremony was in vogue at

Hilsa, Makwanpur and other places. Hearing a sigh of grief he added that the *chowks* had been all converted into fields and the considerable property which had been endowed has all disappeared”.

Since religion was their primary concern it naturally played a vital role in the shaping of their organization. The Fakir’s pilgrimage starts from one *dargah* to another in connection with *urs* festivals and their attendance at fairs held on different occasions used special mention in their context.

The annual life cycle of the Madaris revolved around their attendance at *urs* and fairs. The fixed day in South Asia is usually the anniversary of the death of Saint; it is called *urs*, literally marriage festivities, for in Sufi theosophy death is the mystical union of the soul, considered as a woman, to *Allah* who is her beloved. A description of such annual festival may be summarized:

“When they celebrate the death anniversary of a Saint (*buzurg*), they come in crowds from far and near to his tomb; and reaching there on the day of the *urs*, they perform more devotions than they do for obligating rituals. To solve their worldly problems, they address their supplications to the tombs. They considered this as their essential duty as the ‘*urs*’ and fairs were mostly celebrated on the occasion of the death ceremony of the *Pir*. The word *urs* denotes the death anniversary in the sense of the Saint being united through death with the supreme spirit. Along with the *Dewangan*, the others also played a part in this important religious occasion.

The Fakirs residing in different parts of India and outside started their annual cycle of pilgrimage with the attendance at Mackwanpur in Kanpur district on 17 *Jama-Dil-Aiwal* (Nov-Dec). From Mackwanpur they moved towards North India to visit the *dargahs* widely scattered in different places. In July they went to Bihar to attend the *urs* at the *dargah* of Syed Muhammad Jamaluddin and other unidentified *dargahs* situated

near the jungles of Purnea. They then would move towards Bengal to celebrate the ‘*urs*’ and fairs at the *dargahs* situated in Malda, Dinajpur, and Bagura

In order to understand the cultural significance of the ‘*urs*’ it is necessary to discuss the meaning and significant events of the *urs* and festivals taking place in different parts of India. The *urs* is performed in a very simple manner. Here in his *mazar* females are not allowed to appear for homage. His tomb is never illuminated with candle. Black curtain was thrown or through around the Plaza. Qawali (religious songs) are not permitted on the occasion of *urs* in the shrine of Shah Madar.

On the occasion of the *urs* the Fakirs would erect a lofty pole wrapped in black or red cloth from the top of which flutters a small black pennon or the tail of a yak. The votaries usually carried pikes in differently called wands, lances or banners, a piece of cloth being commonly fastened to them. On reaching the tomb, these pikes were stuck in the ground until they returned. The procession generally would be headed by Fakirs and the offerings consisted chiefly of flowers, sweetmeats, occasionally vetches, oil and molasses etc. The annual gathering of the Madaris were followed by observing the rite of fire-walking along a path of coals in a barefooted manner following their *Pir*, who acted as a leader of the order, while walking on fire they cried “Dam Madar, Dam Madar, ‘*Medini* Shah Madar’ and ‘*Chatiyal* Madar’. The cry literally means the breath of Madar.

Their cry is believed to be a protection against injury from the hot coals, as well as a cure from the bite of a snake or the sting of a scorpion. After the performances their feet are washed and are found to have received no injury. Sometimes devotees of the saint vow a black cow at the time of the anniversary of his birthday, which is supposed to have been the 17th *Jamadi-Aiwal*. The cow is then slaughtered and the meat

distributed among fakirs. This custom is called ‘*gai lutna*’ (plundering the cows).

On the occasion of *urs* of Shah Madar the rite of fire-walking is performed by Madari Fakirs. Burning coals of fire are spread on the ground and sandalwood is sprinkled upon them. Then the fakirs, following their leader, jump quickly along the path of coals, shouting meanwhile “Dam Madar, Dam Madar”. I.e. The breath of Madar’. Their cry is believed to be a protection against injury from the hot coals. As well as a cure for the bite of a snake or the sting of a scorpion. After the performance their feet are washed and are found to have received no injury.

Settlement in the later period

The settlements of the Madaris in Bengal, Bihar and North India have drawn the attention of the contemporary British observer and the historian. Buchanan-Hamilton and R. M. Martin have recorded the existence of some groups of Madaris in the early 19th century in Bengal and Bihar. Martin has shown in 1838 that the Madaris were very numerous in Rangpore, Dinajpur⁹⁵. Since the Madaris in those regions led a married life, they belong to the *Khademan*, *Asekan* and *Taleban Silsila*. Martin also met a group of people in Dinajpur whose families were dependent on land-grants. The influence of the Madaris were so extensive that James Taylor⁹⁶, the district historian of Dacca tells us that they used to lead a prosperous life during the mid 19th century Dacca. In comparison with Bengal and Bihar, Northern India was the major concentration of the settled Madaris as it is revealed from the contemporary sources. It was Buchanan who during his survey in early 19th century noticed many Madaris in Bhagalpur and Gorokhpur among whom both Dewangan and others performed their religious rites. The habit of leading the celibate life with their customs of wearing chains and keeping long flowing hair

round their head was also noticeable during that period. Purnea in Bihar was completely dominated by the *Khademan* who were reported to have kept one thousand six hundred families.

The traditional existence of the Madaris became more crystallized with the performance of their religious ceremonies that it had become a popular culture which influenced both the Hindus and Muslims of rural areas. It was due to this reason that the Hindus also began to take part in their festivals and exchange their thought and beliefs among themselves. This cultural synthesis was also evident in the development of folk-culture and folk-songs mainly noticeable in the rural structure of Bengal. The cult of Shah Madar had become so acute in the Indian societies that there were some places in all over India named in the honor of Syed Badaiddin Qutub-ul-Madar.

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