

**ISMAILI PIRS, VAKILS & SAYEDS**  
**OF**  
**SOUTH ASIAN REGIONS**

**By**

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## **Preface**

The motive, which induced me to compile this volume is to present reliable history of the Ismaili Pirs, Vakils and Sayeds of the South Asian Region. We find a romantic and edifying fiction in the modern works. Quite a cycle of legends has been grown and woven around the traditional materials. The accessible written and oral materials have been studied, analyzed and judged. This tract however does not claim to be a comprehensive treatise, but it affords a glance at the history of the Ismaili mission through the windows of accessible primary, secondary and modern sources. The present volume does not pretend being an original study in a field hitherto unexplored, but it simply aims at bringing together in accessible form materials which will be of service to the students to reconstruct an order, keeping in view that the out-molded thought couched in old myths can no longer a little sense in this age.

I wish to express my gratitude to **Mr. Zayn al-Abidin Pyar Ali**, who assisted me from time to time in my study whatever was required.

Last, but by no means least, it would be ungracious of me not to recognize my debt to **Kamadia Salim Dharas** of Albuquerque, U.S.A., for his invaluable assistance, both morally and financially in moments of crisis. It will be a part and parcel of my life to remember the outstanding cooperation of the Dharas family – indeed a driving force of my study in Ismailism.

If but single reader is thus persuaded and benefitted by this individual labour, I should be amply rewarded. Of its many errors like in plan and execution, I am fully conscious, no doubt, my attention will soon be called.

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## PIR SATGUR NUR

The mission in Gujrat goes back to the period of Jaylam bin Shayban (d.376/986), who had established a Fatimid rule in Multan in 349/960, and extended his influence as far as Gujrat, whose informations are scant. In 461/1068, Ahmad bin Mukarram, the second ruler of the Sulayhid dynasty in Yamen, wrote a letter to Imam al-Mustansir (d.487/1095) in Cairo, when there were certain missionary activities in Gujrat. He reported in his letter that the envoys of the *dai* of India had brought him a letter, asking that permission be granted to them to pass through verbal propaganda to the use of force. It indicates that there were preparations for a rising on the western coast of India, presumably in Gujrat, ruled by the then Hindu Chalukya dynasty and establish there a Fatimid enclave. It however appears that there had been no such operation in Gujrat.

In 332/943, Mulraja I (960-995), Chalukya prince of Kalyani founded an independent dynasty, known as Chalukya of Anahilapataka or the Solanki dynasty. He is famous for building the great temple of Rudramahalya at Sidhpur. He was succeeded by his son, Chamundaraja and he in turn was succeeded by his son Vallbaraja, who died after a short reign of six months. His son Durlabharaja (1009-1021) ruled for 12 years and was succeeded by his nephew Bhima I, who is well known in the annals of Gujrat. It was Mehmud of Ghazna who plundered the temple of Somnath in 416/1026 during the reign of Bhima I. Mehmud killed the people at large number who happened to come in his passages and destroyed their fortifications and smashed idols in pieces. The temple of Somnath was built upon 56 pillars of teakwood coated with lead. The principal idol itself was in a chamber. According to Ibn Athir (1st vol., p. 97), "Mehmud seized it, part of it he burnt, and part of it he carried away with him to Ghazna, where he made it a step at the entrance of the grand mosque." Gold and jewels worth 2 million dinars, and the stone phallic emblem of the god were transported to Ghazna, and the number of the slain exceeded fifty thousand. During the fierce operations of Mehmud, Bhima I had fled from his kingdom and sought refuge in Kutchh. After the departure of Mehmud, Bhima I recovered his country and rebuilt the temple of Somnath. He died in 1063 and was succeeded by his third son Karna I, who had subdued the Kolis and Bhils in his dominions. His successor was Jaysinha, surnamed Sidhraja, who ascended in 1094 as the 7th ruler of the Solanki dynasty. He was one of the most remarkable kings of Gujrat, who inflicted a crushing defeat on the ruler of Malwa and annexed it to his dominions, and assumed the title of "King of Avanti". He was a just, kind and sagacious ruler and extended his patronage to learned men. It is said that Pir Satgur Nur, a famous Ismaili *dai* had arrived in Gujrat during his period. Hemacandra Suri (1088-1172) was a contemporary Jain sage and a prolific writer, who had acquired a great reputation for learning and was much patronaged by Jaysinha Sidhraja and his successor. Unfortunately, he did not mention missionary activity of Pir Satgur in his "**Arhanniti**". The most important account mostly gleaned from the *ginans* and the traditional materials, tracing the advent of Pir Satgur in the reign of Jaysinha Sidhraja (1094-1143). Pir Satgur is said to have come to India from Setar Depa via the city of Bhildi and proceeded to Patan in Gujrat.

Pir Nuruddin or Nur Shah, who assumed the title, *Satgur* (true master) or *Satgur Nur* (light of the true master), had made a large proselytism at Patan in Gujrat among the low castes of Kharwa, Kanbi and Kori. He cultivated the seeds of proselytism entirely with peaceful penetration, and there is no instance where force was employed. He seems to have gained success by adapting himself to the local cultural conditions and by leading a simple and pious life. The new converts were preached Islam through Nizari Ismailism in the name of Satpanth (true path). Hence, he planted the seeds of the Satpanth Ismailism in India, which was a quietistic, meditative and mystically oriented in the embryonic stage.

The historicity of Pir Satgur is blanketed mistily with tales and miracles in florid and bombastic style absolutely bereft of historical value. Some failed to locate his historicity, even disregarded his historical character. The best known is Dr. Azim Nanji, who portrays Pir Satgur not an historical person, but a symbol, which reflects an archetypal *dai* in the Ismaili figure. Such an extreme stance is neither reasonable nor acceptable. It may be argued that the discussion on the anachronistic accounts, the commonality in the structure of sequence of activities of the *dais*, and the symbolic force of the narratives on which mainly lies Dr. Azim Nanji's conclusion may well be more or less applied to the activity of other Ismaili *dais* and Pirs as well.

Pir Satgur is however said to have betrothed to the daughter of king Surchand, the chief of Navsari near Surat, and nothing else is known for historical purpose. We may safely conclude that the prime objective of his preaching was the conversion of Hindu rather than the attraction of Muslims to the Ismaili fold. The narratives of later sources provide some divergent account of the period of mission he represented in Gujrat. The weakness of the later sources, indicating however, a remote possibility, not a strong one that he was sent by Imam Mustansir (d. 487/1095) from Cairo. Some placed his period much later during the time of Imam Hasan Ala Zikrihi's Salam (d. 561/1166) from Alamut. According to the *ginans* (hymns), he came from Daylam, an epithet of Iran. It is however, much nearer to reasonable possibility that he had arrived in Gujrat when *dai* Abdul Malik bin Attash (d. after 494/1101), was active in Ismaili mission in central and western regions of Iran, with a headquarters at Ispahan. The tombstone of the shrine of Pir Satgur, the oldest monument of the Khoja Ismailis in India, located at Navsari, near Surat, places his death on 487/1095. It is also possible to draw an inference on this juncture that Pir Shams (d. 757/1356) arrived in Uchh Sharif almost in 727/1328, and he writes in his one *ginan* (no. 64:2) that he reached there about 240 years after the death of Pir Satgur, and therefore, it is almost in conformity with the date inscribed on the tombstone. According to "**Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency**" (vol. IX, Part II, Bombay, 1899, p.38), "His success as a proselytizer and his wealth exciting the envy of his followers, he was killed by Chach one of his two leading disciples while he was absorbed in *samadhi* or contemplation. The name Nur Satagur (teacher of pure light), which he took in addition to his own name Nuruddin or Nurshah and the practice of the Hindu abstraction or *samadhi* show the process by which the first Ismailia preachers succeeded in converting Hindus."

It is worth stressing on this juncture that the Sanskrit (*sanskṛta*, i.e. prepared, refined or cultivated), a classical literary language of India, came into existence probably with the outset of the Christian era. It is a scholarly language with a

status similar to that of Latin in medieval Europe. It is an old Indo-Aryan tongue from which the Prakrit evolved during 11th century. The Prakrit is the mother of Marathi, Hindi and Gujrati languages. In its early stage, the Gujrati was known as an *apbrunsh* (corrupted) dialect during 12th century, representing an original imprint of the Prakrit. After having different transformations, the present Gujrati evolved with its full swing during the 14th century. Keeping all this in mind, it is safe to conclude that the language of Gujrati was yet in the cradle in a crude form during the period of Pir Satgur. It is therefore deserves notice that the extant Gujrati *ginans* attributed to Pir Satgur are the later compositions, reflecting modernity in its style.

Pir Satgur is said to have emphasized the new adherents on the practice of tithe, or religious dues; the observation of religious ethics and attendance in religious assembly. He did not introduce new rites, and as a result, no peculiar religious lodge was erected. The practice of *zikh* was however remained into practice as the milestone of the Satpanth. The new converts thus became known as the *Khojas* for the first time.

### **Origin of the word *Khoja***

The new converts became known as *khoja* - a title firstly came to be originated during the time of Pir Satgur. Sayed Imam Shah (d. 926/1520) describes in his “**Moman Chetamani**” (no. 198-199) that, “Pir Satgur Nur had converted them, and consigned a path to be protected. He made them *Khojas* after conversion, and gave the essence of the path. The Satpanth faith regulated since then with a practice of tithe.” Thus, it is not difficult to determine with exactitude that the term *khoja* came to be known from the time of Pir Satgur.

The word *khoja* is supposed to have derived from *koh-cha* means “small mountain”, and later on, it was changed to *kauja* or *kohja*. This derivation is almost irrelevant, rather not convincing. Most of the modern scholars however hazard an opinion that it is a corrupt form of *khwaja* (lord or master), which also seems incorrect. It must be borne in mind that Sayed Imam Shah used both words, *khoja* in “**Moman Chetamanni**” (stanza 199) and *khwaja* (stanza 122) in different context, where the question of the corruption itself becomes annulled, and therefore, the modern theory suggesting its root from *khwaja* seems almost doubtful. It should also be known that the Ismaili Pirs in India had never borrowed foreign terminologies during the early stage of conversion. The above assumption seems to have grown in Sind, where the Persian terminologies were in vogue in the Sindhi language. In Sind, the word *khoja* is also pronounced with the corresponding word *khwaja*, and it has probably led the scholars to attest its derivation from *khwaja*.

The early extant records indicate that the term *khoja* stands in its original form without being corrupted. An inscription, for instance, is discovered at Patan, Gujrat by Col. Tod, vide his “**Travels in Western India**” (p. 506), belonging to the year 662/1264. This inscription is found in the temple of Harsata, which was originally a mosque in the time of Arjundeva (1262-1274), the second king of Vaghela line of the Solanki dynasty of Anhilvad. It reads that a ship-owner, called Khoja Abu Ibrahim had donated a piece of land, an oil-mill and two shops; and

from its income, a mosque had been built. Khoja Abu Ibrahim was an Indian and living in Hormuz in Persian Gulf. From this antique record, it is difficult to surmise that the above inscribed term *khoja* should have been *khwaja* prior to the period of 662/1264. While examining further earliest records, it is known that Kiya Buzrug Ummid (d. 532/1138), the second ruler of Alamut had dispatched his envoy, called Khoja Muhammad Nassihi Shahrastani to the Seljuq court, where he had been murdered in 523/1129. The later records suggest that Sayed Mashaikh (d. 1108/1697) compiled about 16 books in 1092/1680, in which he has also used the term *khoja* like Sayed Imam Shah. Virji Premji Parpiya had translated one of the Persian manuscript of his forefather, called Khoja Ibaloo (d. 1208/1794), entitled “**Khoja Iblani Vansh'nu Vratant**” (Bombay, 1917), who begins the account of his forebear, called Khoja Bhaloo (d. 1016/1607) during the time of Pir Dadu (d. 1005/1595). It also contains frequent usage of the term *khoja*. Captain Alexandar Hamlet reports in 1140/1728 that the wealth of a certain merchant, called Khoja Muhammad Hirji of Bombay was more than that of East India Company. The balance of argument tends to sound that the *khoja* is an unswerving word since its origin without being adulterated even in later period.

The *khoja* is a Hindi word, its verb being *khoj*, means to search. According to “**Encyclopaedia Asiatica**” (Delhi, 1982, 5th vol., p. 564), the Hindi word *khoja* means information or search. The Persian Prof. Kassim Sumar Thariani of Elphinstone College of Bombay, also ruled out its origin from *khwaja*, and writes that, *Khoja* is a word derived from Hindi word *khoj* means to dig out, or search in such a sense that it turns to mean, one who is engrossed in search of truth in religion.” (cf. “**Khoja Gnanti'nu Gorav**” by V.N. Hooda, Bombay, 1927, p. 118)

The local low castes were simply converted in the time of Pir Satgur without being loaded with rituals, and after their admission they were consigned the Sufic practice of *zikh*, for which they were mastered in their former cults; and were instructed to “get absorbed” (*kho'ja!*) in deep contemplation. This phrase purporting *kho'ja* (get absorbed) gradually became a significant phrase among the absorptive initiates; rather it became a distinctive title, or identification among local people. In sum, the new converts first embraced Ismaili faith, and then became *khoja* (the absorptive ones), which also sounds the notion of “**Moman Chetamanni**” (stanza 198-199) of Sayed Imam Shah.

### **Myth of Nur Turk**

It is important to mention Nur Turk, a famous Sufi Saint in India, who is wrongly identified as Pir Satgur Nur. In view of the sources at our disposal, it has been verified that both Nur Turk and Pir Satgur Nur were different persons propagating Islamic message in different directions in India. The account of Nur Turk and his so called revolt against the Delhi Sultanate was cultivated by Minhaj Siraj (d. 685/1286), who writes in his “**Tabaqat-i Nasiri**” (tr. Major H.G. Raverty, Calcutta, 1881, 1<sup>st</sup> vol., pp.646-7) that, “Among the events which happened in the beginning of Razia Sultana’s (634-637/1236-1240) reign, the one was that the Qarmitah and Mulahida heretics of India, incited by a person, a sort of learn man, named Nuruddin, a Turk, whom they used to style Nur Turk, collected together at Delhi, from different parts of the territory of India, such as

Gujrat, Sind and the parts of Ganga. They fixed Friday, the 6<sup>th</sup> Rajab, 634/March 5, 1237 for the rising against Delhi, numbered about one thousand. They divided themselves into two parties. One party entered through drapers' market entered into the gateway of Muizzi seminary, presuming that it was the congregational mosque. From both directions, they began to slaughter the Muslims. They killed a large number of people, and quite a big number died in stampede. As soon as the soldiers came to know the riot, their leaders, some well armed and horsemen entered into the mosque and put them to sword. The Muslims from the roof of the mosque pelted them with brick bats and stones.”

This is a curious tale of Minhaj Siraj attributing the revolt of Nur Turk (d.692/1293) in Delhi against the kingdom of Razia Sultana. The following points in this context deserve careful consideration:

- a) The above story contains mere one thousand persons mustered, intending to capture the throne of Delhi, which seems almost insufficient for the incursion. Even if this were granted, then it must be directed towards the palace or fort, not at the mosque.
- b) It is difficult to believe that half of the persons, who are shown the residents of Delhi, could not distinguish between the congregational mosque and the Muizzi seminary.
- c) The story does not sufficiently establish the motives for Nur Turk's coup. He was not so naïve as to believe that the act of killing some members of *ulema* class and the members of congregation, would overthrow the power of Razia Sultana. His reputation as a pious would have very easily escalated him to higher echelons of government, had he truly desired to seize the power.
- d) It is said that Razia Sultana held deep regard for Nur Turk, and once she is reported to have sent a large quantity of gold as a gift to him, but Nur Turk refused to accept it. He hit the gift with his stick in hand and said, “What is this? Take it away.” It ensues from this account that Nur Turk disliked wealth or power; therefore, the alleged revolt against the Delhi Sultanate is far from the truth.
- e) The whole story contains the expression of the terms, *Qarmitah* and *Mulahida*. It is difficult to ascertain that Nur Turk had led them jointly.
- f) The weakness of the story can be gauged from the fact that it is not borne out by any other evidence. Granted that the *ulema* were attacked in the mosque, it would have inflamed a hottest agitation of the Muslims at least in Delhi, which also cannot be confirmed from any trace.
- g) The story does not establish conclusively that Nur Turk was an Ismaili leader or had led the Ismailis to hatch a plot against the kingdom of Delhi.
- h) Minhaj Siraj belonged to the *ulema* class and it was a common practice of the zealots to call *Mulahida* or *Qarmitah* to the non-Sunni Muslims while condemning them. It is evident from the story that he had a personal enmity with Nur Turk, whom he tried to slander, accusing him of leading the



heretics to engineer revolt against the Delhi Sultanate.

Sheikh Nizamuddin Awilya (d. 725/1325) very feelingly asserts that Nur Turk was purer than the rain water and Minhaj Siraj maliciously cooked the charges against him; vide “**Fawaidu’l Fu’ad**” (p. 199). A saint belonging to the Ismaili faith could not have been reverentially mentioned by scholars like Sheikh Amir Khurd and Sheikh Abdul Haq Muhadis as “Maulana Nur Turk.” Sheikh Abdul Haq had never included Nur Turk in his calendar of the subcontinent saints if he had been associated with Ismailism. If Nur Turk had been an Ismaili saint, Sheikh Fariduddin Ganj Shakar (d. 663/1265) would never have gone to attend his sermons.

All this evidently sounds that Nur Turk was famous for his learning and piety in the eyes of the Muslim scholars, not in the sense that he was an Ismaili. It is therefore probable that the renowned Muslim scholars had never admired Nur Turk had they known his leaning towards Ismailism.

A man of austere and simple ways as he was, Nur Turk did not like the habits of the *ulema* whom he found wallowing in the dirty waters of politics. He condemned them roundly for their greed of gold and glory. He opposed the *ulema* of Shafite and Hanafite, calling them *Murji* and *Nasibi*. Minhaj Siraj was chagrined on this criticism, which applied to him as much as to other *ulema* and retaliated by painting him in lurid colours. He contrived a curious story that Nur Turk led the heretics and attacked the mosque, so as to arouse the Muslims against him, which sounds explicitly in the story. Hasan Sijzi, the disciple of Sheikh Nizamuddin Awilya writes in “**Fawaidu’l Fu’ad**” (comp. 718/1318) that, “*Ulema* of Delhi had made hostile statements against Nur Turk’s faith. He used to assail the *ulema* and condemn them as *Nasibi* and *Murji*. He was hostile to the *ulema* of the town because they were sunk in materialism and their enmity was responsible for their false allegations against Nur Turk.”

It has been learnt that the Sunni *ulema* always became the target of the Sufis, because of their worldly attractions. Instead of improving themselves, they used to arouse the Muslims by calling them the infidels, or *Mulahida* - a common abusive term applied in their rulings. Most of the Sufi Sheikh in India had been branded as *Mulahida* by the *ulema*, which does not mean that they were the Ismailis. *Mulahida* or *Qarmitah* were the abusive terms for the persons who acted contrary to Islam and not specific for the Ismailis. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami writes in “**Salatin-i Delhi’ki Mazahabi Rujatat**” (Delhi, 1958, p. 138) that, “I am inclined to believe that Maulana Minhaj Siraj has fabricated an allegation on Maulana Nur Turk being a *Mulahida*. Maulana Nur Turk used to criticize the conduct and behavior of the *ulema* publicly of his period. Thus, the *ulema* charged him as *Mulahida* in reprisal, so that he could not escalate his reputation among the Muslim.”

Minhaj Siraj is the only person to make Nur Turk as the head of the *Mulahida* and *Qarmitah*, impelling the modern scholars to cultivate an idea that he was an Ismaili, because the Ismailis were also branded with such pejorative misnomers. There is not a single contemporary source attributing Nur Turk being an Ismaili, therefore, his so called association with the Ismailis is highly doubtful.

Khan Bahadur Fazalullah Lutfulah stands first to identify Nur Turk with that of Pir Satgur Nur, vide his “**Gujrat Population**” (**Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency**, Bombay, 1899, vol., IX, part II, p. 38). It was his incorrect assumption without verifying the historical information. The Indian Ismaili Pirs and Sayeds did never feel called upon to act as the crusaders. Dr. Mujtaba Ali writes in “**Origin of the Khojas and their Religious Life Today**” (Bonn, 1936, p. 40) that, “It is also to be noted that the Ismaili missionaries never tried to obtain success by force; their method as described already was of peaceful penetration through observance of pious life. The present writer, therefore, finds no reliable argument by which Nur Turk and Nur Satgur could be considered as the same person.”

The alleged riot in Delhi is placed on 634/1237, which is the period of Imam Alauddin Muhammad (618-653/1221-1255). We have already mentioned that the death of Pir Satgur Nur took place most probably on 487/1095, making a long difference in the periods.

In sum, whatever the aim of Minhaj Siraj must be hidden in the story in applying the terms Mulaahids and Qarmitah for the followers of Nur Turk, it does not mean that he specifically applied for the Ismailis. Nur Turk was a Sufi saint with a large following in Sind, Gujrat and at the banks of Ganges. He was deadly against the *ulema* and fell a victim of the jealousy of Minhaj Siraj. In order to discredit him before the Muslims, he invented a story and put into circulation by labeling him the leader of the heretics. In short, Nur Turk was a pious Sufi saint. He was neither an Ismaili nor his concern with the Ismailism, and he and Pir Satgur Nur were different persons in different period.

### **PIR SHAMS AL-DIN SEBZEWARI**

Pir Shams was born most probably at Sebzewar, a town in Khorasan, lying 64 miles west of Nishapur. His father Sayed Salauddin had been deputed in Baltistan by Imam Kassim Shah (d. 771/1370), who most probably came into the contact of an Ismaili *dai*, Taj Mughal in Badakhshan. Kamaluddin Mujahri of Sebzewar writes in “**Malfuz-i Kamalia**” that Pir Sayed Muinuddin Hasan of Sebzewar of Ajmer had a meeting with Sayed Salauddin in Sebzewar in 560/1165. It is recounted that Pir Shams had gone to Badakhshan with his father at the age of 19 years, and thence he proceeded to Tibet and returned back to Sebzewar.

It is said that after the death of Sayed Salauddin, Imam Kassim Shah had commissioned Pir Shams as the *hujjat* of Hind and Sind at Daylam for the Indian mission, and he also refers to the Imam that: “Adore sincerely the true guiding light manifested in the person of Kassim Shah, the Lord of the time.” (vide “**Garbi**”, 5:17). Known as Hind by medieval Muslim geographers at the time, this area stretched from the highlands of Baluchistan to the Bay of Bengal and from Kashmir to Sri Lanka. The landmass is now divided into the nations of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The activities of the Ismaili mission were mainly concentrated in the northwestern area of the sub-continent including the provinces of Sind, Punjab, Rajasthan, Kutchh and Kathiawar.

The earliest description of Pir Shams is found in the treatise of the biographies of Sufis, entitled “**Nafahat al-Uns**” (comp. 883/1478) by Nuruddin Abdur Rahman Jami (817-898/1414-1492), the last classic poet of Iran. Nurullah bin Sharif Shushtari (d. 1019/1610) in his “**Majalis al-Mominin**” (comp. 1013/1604) traces Pir’s ancestry back to the Ismaili root. Some details are also found in “**Tarikh-i Firishta**” (comp. 1015/1606). The great Sufi saint Bulleh Shah (1680-1758) also referred to Pir Shams in his Sufic poetry.

It is indeterminable point in the modern sources, when Pir Shams was born? The extant materials however do not allow to draw a safe conclusion. His death in 757/1356 however is indisputable, based on the plaque at his mausoleum in Multan. The most confusing and unsolved point is to locate his date of birth. Most of the historians concur that Pir Shams had lived to an advanced age beyond 115 years. The old manuscript preserved in Pirana claims that his age was 350 years. Sayed Bawa Ahmad Ali Khaki writes in his “**Dar-i Khuld-i Bari**” (Ahmadabad, 1905, p. 123) on the basis of an old manuscript that the span of Pir Sham's life was 171 years. If the date of his demise in 757/1356 may be considered genuine, it means that his birth would have been taken place around 580/1175 during the period of Imam Ala Muhammad (561-607/1166-1210). The genealogy of Pir Shams given in the “**Shajara**” being preserved in the shrine at Multan indicates his birth in 560/1165, which also seems reliable. (1)

(1) In India, there are many instances of the persons having long life span in that period. The western scholars however should not surprise to know Pir Shams having lived to an advanced age of 171 years. The examples of long span of human life are also recorded in the annals of Europe. For instance, Catherine, the countess of Desmond, who died in 1604 at the age of 140 years. Thomas Parr died in 1635 at the age of 152 years. Henry Jenkins died in 1670 at the age of 169 years. Another documentation is that of Jacobsen Drakenberg (1626- 1772), whose age was 145 year and 325 days. Prof. E. Metchnikoff, an eminent biologist also admits 185 years age of St. Mungo of Glasgow. For further details, vide “**The New Encyclopaedia Britannica**” (1990, 15th ed., 20th vol., p.428) and “**Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics**” (1959, 4th ed., 1st vol., p. 182). The readers may refer “**Akhbar al-Akhayar**” (comp. 998/1590), in which the life spans of Shaykh Shahi Mu’tab (d.658/1260), Sayed Shamsuddin Zahir (d.741/1341), Alaluddin Qoraishi (d.730/1330), Makdum Jiv Qadri (d.1000/1593), etc. have been mentioned above 150 years.

We will however touch here the contemporary activity of Pir Shams. He arrived from Daylam to Badakhshan, where he is said to have brought many followers of Momin Shahi sect into the Ismaili fold. He visited Gilgit and proceeded to Tibet and as far as the ranges of the Himalayas. He came back to Ghazna, where he deputed the local converted prince to Badakhshan on mission work.

### **The Garbis of Pir Shams**

Pir Shams also converted a bulk of the Hindus during their Dasera festival after singing 28 *garbis* (songs) in a temple for ten consecutive nights. According to the *ginans*, Pir Shams had sung the *garbis* in a village, called Analvad. W. Ivanow places its location in Gujrat, called Anilvad, not far from Ahmadabad. In fact, it is Annhilvad and not Anilvad, situated about 66 miles to the north of Ahmadabad. It is also recounted that the village was Anwalvad, named after a Jat clan, Anwal in Multan, whose glaring festival of Dasera was famous in Punjab. The *garbis* were composed in Gujrati style, reflecting the culture of Gujrat, and therefore, the location of the village in Multan seems almost doubtful.

The *garbis* consist of a sequence of 28 folk songs ranging from 18 to 22 verses each. The word *garbi* has several meanings. In Gujrat, the *garbi* is a popular folk dance akin to another dance form called the *rasa*, in which dancers move around in a circle singing and keeping rhythm by clapping their hands and feet. Originally, the word *garbi* referred to an earthen pot with holes on the sides which was used by Hindus as a receptacle for lamps celebrating their deity's luminous presence. Women often danced with the pots on their heads. The songs sung on such occasions were also called *garbis*. The *garbis* attributed to Pir Shams form a narrative about conversion. Woven into the narrative are long sections of instructions and exhortations so that only eight poems actually describe any dramatic actions. Briefly, the story of the *garbis* narrates that Pir Shams came to a town called Analvad in Gujrat to find the villagers celebrating the festival of notra in a temple. This was most probably the festival of Navaratri, which literally refers to the "nine nights" of worship and devotion to the Hindu goddess Durga or Mata Bhavani. The scene was a veritable spectacle of festivities, with five hundred Hindus dancing and 36 *pandits* chanting the Vedas. Pir Shams watched them worshipping and adoring their idols and was angered by the image worship. As a strategy to stop it, he decided to join in the dance and sing his own *garbis*. Night after night, he returned to sing and danced, all the while admonishing the Hindu worshippers for paying homage to idols made of mere stone. Instead, he preached to them the principles of the true path. Finally, one night a *brahmin* called Sankar left the temple in disgust. The rest of the crowd, however, remained to listen to the Pir because it had realized the secret, namely, that Pir Shams was a saint. The first ones to realize the truth were the remaining 35 *brahmin pandits*. Their hearts transformed, they abandoned their religious scriptures and there was a rejoicing as they beat their seven drums. The villagers, meanwhile, were stunned by this spectacle.

Pir Shams continued singing his songs of wisdom, and soon enough, word spread and the princes of the land arrived and joined in the dancing. News of the spectacle reached the king who, with his ministers, came to hear the much talked-about Pir Shams. Impressed with the latter's miraculous conversion of the

*brahmins*, the king, too, prostrated himself at the Pir's feet. In this manner, then, the priests, king, queen, townsfolk and various religious ascetics, such as the *jogis*, *sanyasis* and *vairagis* all prostrated and abandoned their gods and scriptures. A heap of strings piled up as the *brahmins* break off and discarded their sacred threads (*janoi*). The dancers threw away their *garbi* lamps into the sea. Pir Shams then made them drink holy water to purify them of past sins. He appointed leader (*mukhi*) to oversee this new religious community.

Pir Shams also visited Kashmir in 715/1316 and converted the Chak and Changad tribes. According to “**Tarikh-i Firishta**” (2:643), “The Chaks originally a race of sun-worshippers, who called themselves Baushanias (the people of light). During the reign of Fateh Shah of Kashmir, these Chaks were converted to the Ismaili faith by a missionary from Irak. This was Shamsuddin, the second Ismaili missionary to India who according to the Khoja hymns (*ginans*) was able to work miracles. Much of the success of Shamsuddin in converting the Chak sun-worshippers was due to the happy accident that the missionary's name was “Sun of the Faith” (Shamsuddin).”

### **Mission in Punjab**

The influx of Muslim immigrants into India increased greatly as a result of the Mongol incursions on the Islamic world. We hear of large colonies of these Muslim migrants in different quarters. With the settlement of the Muslims in India, conciliation and concord between the various culture-groups was not only a moral and intellectual demand, but an urgent social necessity. The Muslim conquerors had established their political supremacy, but they could not continue to rule while the majority of their subjects differed from them in race, language, religion and culture. The *ulema* class rarely appreciated the change in the moods of time and seldom tried to reconstruct their religious tendencies according to the needs of the hour. The Muslim mystics, however, rose to the occasion and released syncretic forces which liquidated social, ideological and linguistic barriers between the various culture-groups of India. The mystics adopted an attitude of sympathy and understanding between all cults and creeds. This broad outlook helped in breaking that spirit of mistrust and isolation which honeycombed relations between the various culture-groups of India and paved way for reapproachment at all levels. The mystics looked upon all religions as different roads leading to the same destination and never approved of any discrimination or distinction in human society which was one organism for them. The use of large number of Indian words, phrases, idioms and similes in the contemporary literature indicates the extent to which social contacts had developed. Prof. Gibb writes in “**An Interpretation of Islamic History**” (cf. “**Journal of World History**”, 1st vol., no. 1, p. 59) that, “From the 13th century, Sufism increasingly attracted the creative social and intellectual energies within the community, to become the bearer or instrument of a social and cultural revolution.” Perhaps in no other country were the effects of this social and cultural revolution so marked and so far reaching as in India.

The early Indo-Muslim mystics believed in a pacific and non-violent approach towards all problems of human society. Forces, they said, created more problems than it solved. They tried to impress, both by precepts and examples, upon the

minds of their followers the fact that a true mystic should always strive for creating love and affection in the hearts of men. “Placate your enemies,” was the advice, which Shaykh Farid gave to his disciples. “Do not give me a knife,” he once told a visitor, “Give me a needle. The knife is an instrument for cutting and the needle for sewing together.” Ziauddin Barani thus very significantly remarks in his “**Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi**” (p. 344) that as the result of the teachings of these mystics, “vices among men had been reduced.” Hence, the eagerness of the Muslim mystics to establish closer relations with the Hindus, had facilitated a fertile ground for the Ismaili *dais* to propagate their faith in India.

Pir Shams proceeded to Multan in 725/1326 for the first time. Zakaria Qazwini writes in his “**Asar al-Bilad wa Akhbar al-Ibad**” (comp. 661/1263) that, “Multan is a large, fortified and impregnable city, with a temple which is to the Hindus a place of worship and pilgrimage as Mecca for the Muslims. The inhabitants are the Muslims and Hindus, but the government is in the hands of the former. The chief mosque is described as being near the temple.”

In Multan, many miracles of Pir Shams are reported, but these are not potential for historical value. It is therefore difficult to penetrate through the mist of legends, which formed even during the lifetime of Pir Shams and thickened rapidly after his death. The most popular miracle was the bringing down of the sun on earth, which earned him an epithet of *taparez* (burning) in Punjab. The word *taparez* is so coherence with that of Tabriz that the former began to be pronounced as Tabriz, contriving a wrong theory to merge these two into one. Since Pir Shams and Shams-i Tabriz were proximate to each other in time, it is probable that Pir Shams, also known as Shams Taprez had been confounded with that of Shams-i Tabriz. It has been heretofore discussed that Shams-i Tabriz, the master of Jalaluddin Rumi was died in Koniya on 645/1247, engendering to the rise of a false tradition of Koniya to Multan, i.e., Shams-i Tabriz had gone to Multan. In sum, the nut of Koniya and the bolt of Multan had been patched to contrive a new tradition indicating these two figures same and one, which is absolutely untrue.

Among the Sufis, there existed four principal orders in India, viz. Chisti, Qadari, Suharwardi and Naqashbandi. The period of Pir Shams was thus noted for the several skilled exponents of Sufi thought, therefore, he launched his brisk and pervasive mission during the eve of the growing Sufi circles in Punjab. In the villages of Punjab, he mostly converted the Aror or Rohra, a leading caste in south-western part of the Punjab, i.e., the lower reaches of the five rivers and below their junction, extending through Bahawalpur into Sind. They were mostly cultivators, and their large portion on the lower Chinab were purely agricultures, while in the western Punjab, they were mostly tailors, weavers of mats and baskets, makers of vessels of brass and copper and goldsmiths. Pir Shams appointed *musafir* (one who travels) in different regions to collect the religious dues, and also built prayer-halls (*khana*) and appointed their *mukhis* (derived from *mukhia* means “foremost”). He also introduced certain rituals, and his followers mostly in Punjab and Kashmir recognized themselves as the Shamsi and Gupti (secret ones).

It however seems that Pir Shams visited lower Sind, and travelled through the river line belt of the Indus, and reached Uchh Sharif most probably in 727/1328,

which was his mission centre. He deputed many *dais* in China, Tibet, Badakhshan, Kashmir and Gujrat. His mission was mobile, and is said to have gone as far as Nepal, known among the Indian Buddhists as Chinab-Nagari, designating the northern India as a part of China.

### **Mission in Rajasthan**

Pir Shams also visited Rajasthan, and according to his one *ginan* (no. 70), he embarked from Uchh with his two disciples, Vimras and Surbhan. He alighted at Gudi Vilod, near Gujrat, and thence proceeded to a forest, and preached a bulk of the untouchables. He identified himself as Satgur Shams and the Light of Pir Satgur to give coherence to his mission, where the name of Pir Satgur was almost familiar. He then arrived in a barren land and reached in the middle of Malwa, where he initiated the servile caste and the Abheras and Bhils. Pir Shams also converted the Hindu Bhambi, and spread his mission as far as Ganges. The oral tradition tells us that a certain Ransi Tanvar was a descendant of Anangpal, the last Tanvar ruler of Delhi. He had taken to robbery. Once in the village of Dudu, near Jaipur, he chanced upon Pir Shams, when he is said to have looted, because of which the Pir is said to have cursed him with leprosy. Ransi is said to have been cured by drinking holy water given to him by a Meghwal lady, the disciple of Pir Shams. On being miraculously cured, he became the disciple of Pir Shams. His son, Ajmal (or Ajay Singh), the father of Ramdeo, continued to revere Pir Shams. Another tradition however suggests that Ramdeo was the son of a Meghwal cowherd Savar Rikh, while according to Bhanwar Megwanshi, Ajmal was the Nizari Ismaili dai and Ramdeo was taken by him as his disciple and a son. Megwanshi also rejects the tradition of Ramdeo being the disciple of Nath Yogi Balinath of Pokran.

It appears that Pir Shams had first visited Deccan on his way to Rajasthan. Sayed Imam Shah (d. 926/1520) was the second to visit there, which he narrated in his *ginan* no. 62. He writes that he arrived in Songadh in Deccan, then in the village of Lachhodi, where he found the concourse of the followers (62: 1, 3). He also writes that Pir Shams had come here in past for the mission and now he came for it. The people were glorifying Pir Shams (62: 5-7). Sayed Imam Shah lived with them for six months and was warmly hospitalized (62: 8). The people gathered at large including Mukhi Shri Sang Sheith (62: 9). He then proceeded towards Malwa in Rajasthan and stayed in the village of Ujjan (63: 1-2), an ancient city of Malwa region in central India, on the eastern bank of the Kashipra River Hindi. Sayed Imam Shah then also visited Jaisinghpura (in the village of Ujjan), where he made conversion (64:3). The already existed the *jamat* of the Imam, known as the caste of Chhipa, the dyers (64:4), where a certain Wazir Chhipa was the Mukhi. He imparted them on the religion (64:5).

After visiting Junjala, Jaitgarh and Karel, Pir Shams proceeded to Bichun and Sakhun in Jaipur-Ajmer region. After having initiated Khiwan and Ransi, he went back to Multan. The Nyariya (perhaps Nizaria) of Rajasthan still claim that they originated from Multan and regard Pir Shams as their master (*guru*). In the 15th century, the Sirvi caste of the Jaitaran, Bilara, Pali region, had accepted the teachings of a female saint, known as Jiji Devi, who was also a disciple of Pir Shams. The Prahlad panthi in Jodhpur, Nagaur and Bikaner as well as the

Jasnathi in Bishnoi have a devotional literature, showing the Ismaili traits and seal (*chhap*) of Pir Shams and Pir Sadr al-Din etc. In Rajasthan, Pir Shams was in particular called Samik Rishi or Samas Rishi.

The Ismaili *dawa* in Rajasthan is almost shrouded in mystery. The French scholar, Dr. Dominique Sila Khan of Jaipur, however, worked on the Ismaili *dawa* in Rajasthan, and gathered very useful historical clues. It is hoped that her labour shall procure worthy informations. Interested scholars may refer her book, **“Conversions and Shifting Identities” – Ramdev Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan**, (Delhi, 1997). Also vide her write-up, entitled, **“Ramdeo Pir and the Kamadiya Panth”** (cf. **“Folk, Faith and Feudalism”** ed. by N.K. Singhi, Jaipur, 1995, pp. 295-327), and **“L'Origine Ismaelienne du culte Hindou de Ramdeo Pir”** (cf. **“Revue de L'Histoire des Religions”**, Paris, 1993, ccx-1, pp. 27-47). Ramdeo Pir is widely revered folk hero in western India and Sind in Pakistan. Being influenced with the teachings of Ismaili Pirs, he preached in Gujrat the doctrines of Satpanth (true path), but due to a setback in the mission, the followers of Ramdeo retraced their steps towards the fold of their former creed, or cultivated a different cult in India. For details, refer **“Ramdeo Pir: A Forgotten Ismaili Saint” (Sind Review**, Hyderabad, vol. 32, April, 1995, pp. 24-29) by Mumtaz Ali Tajddin S. Ali.

Pir Shams is acclaimed as a great preacher and composed many *ginans* in different Indian dialects. It is also possible that his local disciples had received the first hand marrow of his teachings in few places, and transformed them creatively into the *ginanic* form. These are the rich reservoir of religious teachings and great treasure house of Sufi thought, giving a very comprehensive idea of the prodigality of Sufi symbolism. He used with supreme skill the languages of the country folk and employed them to interpret ideas of natural beauty and religious philosophy. In fact, Pir Shams was a man steeped in an understanding of the mystical teaching of Islam. He had a faculty of expressing the truth in the local languages with appropriate turn of phrase and picturesque metaphor.

It infers from his *ginans* that Pir Shams introduced the Dua in Sairaiiki for the Ismailis in Punjab to be recited thrice a day. It seems that his Dua recited till the new Sindhi Dua introduced in the period of Pir Sadr al-Din. The Ismailis in Jamu and Kashmir however continued the Sairaiiki Dua for a long period.

Pir Shams passed away in 757/1356 and was buried at Multan. His mausoleum is located about half a mile to the east of the fort site, on the high bank of the old bed of the Ravi river. His shrine was built by his grandson and was rebuilt by one of the Ismailis in 1718. The tomb is square, 300 feet in height surmounted by a hemispherical dome. It is decorated with ornamental glazed tiles.

Pir Shams was married to Bibi Hafiza Jamal, the daughter of his uncle, Sayed Jalaluddin. She bore him two sons: Sayed Nasiruddin and Sayed Ahmad Zinda Pir.

### **Pir Shams - first Punjabi poet**

Sufism played pivotal vehicle in the development of the Punjabi poetry. It was



greatly nursed in different towns and villages. The earliest Punjabi poets as recorded in the literature were Farid Shakar Ganj (1175-1265), Ibrahim Farid Sani (1450-1575), Madho Lal Hussain (1539-1594), Sultan Bahu (1631-1691), Bulleh Shah (1680-1758), Ali Haider (1690-1785), Fard Fakir (1720-1790), Hashim Shah (1753-1823), etc.

Pir Shams (1175-1356) had launched his proselysing mission in Punjab, where he composed many *ginans* in Punjabi dialect. His poetical works (*ginans*) were confined to his followers, who were very secretive and did not allow outsiders to avail them. Sayed Imam Shah (1430-1520) writes in his “**Moman Chetamani**” (verse 381) that, “Pir Shams imparted and it caused conversion in Uchh. He maintained the true path secret, whose philosophy was assigned only to the believers.” Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah (1470-1536) also writes in “**Satveni’ji Vel**” (94:19-22) that, “When Pir Shams went to Punjab, he preached the believers on the whole. He composed there many (Punjabi) *ginans*, and showed the spirit of reality.” It is seen that his verses are composed in simple Punjabi, slightly overlaid with Arabic and Persian words, excelling in expression of thought with clear flow. In its simplicity and effectiveness, his poetical work is superior to other Punjabi poets of later period.

The Punjabi work of Pir Shams began to float late in the Punjabi literature. In its absence, the scholars could not reasonably reckon the earliest Punjabi poet. In the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the Ismaili literature began to come out, Pir Shams got his status as an earliest poet in the literature. Dr. Ahmed Nabi Khan writes in “**Multan : History and Architecture**” (Islamabad, 1983, p. 205) that, “Shah Shams Sabzwari was a prolific writer and wrote both prose and poetry in many local language and dialects including Purbi, Hindi, Gujrati, Sindhi, Saraiki, Punjabi etc. The subject of his writings has mostly been religious which was used by him as an effective vehicle for preaching the dogma. Sometimes, these writings also throw light on historical as well as social aspects of the society in which he lived.” On the other hand, Abdur Ghafur Quraishi writes on the authority of “**Tarikh-i Adabiyat Musalmanan’i Pakistan wa Hind**” in his “**Punjabi Adab’dhi Kahani**” (p. 193) that, “The tradition to preach in local languages and to impart in verses was originated by the Ismaili missionaries in 11<sup>th</sup> century.”

It is seen in the Punjabi literature that the scholars who have gone through some fragments of the Punjabi *ginans* have evaluated once again the Punjabi literature and reckoned Pir Shams and Farid Shakar Ganj as the earliest poets. Sibte Hasan writes in “**Pakistan’me Tehzib’ka Irtiqa**” (Karachi, 1983, p. 316) that, “The first poets of the Punjabi language of high repute, for whom we can assuredly admit were Shah Shams Tabriz and Shaikh Fariduddin Shakar Ganj, who flourished during 12<sup>th</sup> century.”

Pir Shams is thus counted as an earliest Punjabi poet after a long series of research. Sibte Hasan, an eminent scholar quoted following three Punjabi verses out of eleven from one *ginan* of Pir Shams (op. cit., pp. 192-3), and one another scholar of Saraiki, Sarfraz Hussain Qazi also referred the same verses in his “**Mithan Farid**” (Lahore, 1957, pp. 37-8), which are as under:

1. ***Eh Sabhaga, Eis duniya'dhe vich kiya gin a'av'e,  
Kiya gin vaesi na'l.***

O' Sabhaga, what did you bring in this world, and what will be taken back with you?"

2. ***Eh Sabhaga, Nago tu'n a'ayo nago tu'n vaesi,  
Kutchh na nibhasi na'l.***

O' Sabhaga, you came naked and shall depart naked. Nothing will last with you.

3. ***Eh Sabhaga, Pair pasar piya vich chok'e  
Kol na av'e dhar'dhe.***

O' Sabhaga, When you will be laid (after death) in front (of your house) with stretched feet, none will come near you out of fear.

Judging from the above verses composed in Punjabi language, Sibte Hasan seems to write conclusively that, "If these verses certainly belong to Shah Shams Sabzwari, then these are perhaps the oldest verses of the Punjabi language" (op. cit., p. 193). It infers from the verdict of Sibte Hasan that Pir Shams was the first Punjabi poet.

Besides, we also illustrate as follows one another Punjabi *ginnan* of Pir Shams:

1. ***Ek tirath vendhda Pir Shams gazi sadhanna,  
Tusa navo navo navanna, vira navanna.***

Pir Shams addressed to (a caravan) proceeding for the pilgrimage (*tirath*), "You (go and) bathe, bathe and bathe. O' courageous ones! Bathe (in the *tirath*).

2. ***Na'te dhot'e se jiya jin'e gur'dha farmaya kiya,  
Aur nahi navanna, nahi navanna.***

(But remember that) those who follow the words of the Pir while washing and bathing, they will need no bathing elsewhere.

3. ***Raho ra'h chalo tusa Pir puchhi ra'h chalo,  
Ujad pag nahi pavanna, na pavanna.***

Walk on the path. You ask the Pir and then walk on the (true) path. Do not let your feet stray upon barren land, you will procure nothing.

4. ***Pir Shams arwah parbodhanna,  
Manhathi ruha'ne samjavanna, eh samjavanna.***

Pir Shams exhorts to the souls, rather convinces the obstinate souls.

5. ***Aisa dar med'e Saheb raj'edha sadhda,  
Suidh'e dhaf'e vich hasti mavanna, vira mavanna.***

Within the confine of a needle's hole as if an elephant makes its accommodation, so (subtle) is the (eternal) abode of my Lord.

6. ***Pir Shams gazi boliya,  
Phal sach'e yar'e moman'e pavanna, vira pavanna.***

Pir Shams says, true friends and believers shall reap the fruits.

### **PIR NASIR AL-DIN**

He was the elder son of Pir Shams, and his mother was Bibi Hafiza Jamal bint Sayed Jalaluddin. He is said to have born on 625/1228. He was well rooted in the studies of the Holy Koran and Hadiths having sound knowledge of Vedic literature. The tradition has it that he visited Azerbaijan after the death of his father, where he was designated as the next Pir by Imam Kassim Shah (d. 771/1370). The main centre of his mission was Uchh. He married to his uncle's daughter, Mutla Anwar bint Sayed Hussain, who gave birth of two sons, Sayed Kamaluddin Sebzewari, who settled in Thatta with his five sons; and Pir Saheb al-Din. Pir Nasir al-Din died in 764/1362 at the age of 139 years.

### **PIR SAHEB AL-DIN**

He was born at Sebzewar in 650/1212. He became the next Pir soon after the death of his father. He mostly remained in the mantle of the darwish and made a large proselytism. It infers from the *ginans* that he made many changes in the practice of the marriages in the *jamat* and imparted that the angels welcomed the marriages being performed in the *jamat*. He emphasized in the offering of the *dasond*. He had seven sons, viz. Pir Sadr al-Din, Sayed Ruknuddin, Sayed Badruddin, Sayed Shamsuddin II, Sayed Ghiasuddin and Sayed Nasiruddin. He died in 775/1373. His shrine exists near Abottabad.

### **PIR SADR AL-DIN**

Pir Sadr al-Din, one of the best known and revered *hujjats* in Indian traditions, was born in Sebzewar probably in 700/1300. His name was Muhammad, the son of Pir Saheb al-Din bin Pir Nasiruddin bin Pir Shams Sebzewari. His early education followed customary lines at home. He was a man steeped in a thorough understanding of the mystical teaching and the Islamic science of *tawil*. He also visited Mecca several times on pilgrimage, and seems to have acquired a good command in Arabic. Pir Sadr al-Din is said to have visited India in 734/1335, and joined the mission of Pir Shams. He studied various religious traditions and tendencies of different cults, social customs of the inhabitants and mastered the local languages, and finally immersed in the Indian tradition.

Brief mention must be made of the political cataclysm of Sind, which was the centre of the Ismaili mission down to the 18th century. After the end of the Sumra rule in Sind around 762/1361, the field was open for the Sammahs, who took possession of Sind and raised their chief, called Unar to the throne with the title of Jam. He died most probably in 768/1367 and was succeeded by his nephew, Jam Tamachi. He was followed by Jam Khairuddin, then Jam Babinah.

Soon afterwards, Firuz Khan Tughlaq (1320-1388) invaded Sind after subjugation of Gujrat and some other parts of India. He defeated Jam Babinah, thus Sind fell into the hands of Firuz Khan. The Sammah rule ended in Sind in 926/1519, when Shah Beg Arghun (d. 928/1521) defeated Jam Firuz, the last ruler of the Sammah in 926/1519 and established Arghun dynasty in Sind.

The Arghun dynasty lasted till 961/1554, when their second ruler passed away during the war of succession. It was followed by a new dynasty of Central Asian origin; they were the Trakhans, whose monuments are still visible in Makli Hill. A certain Mirza Essa Trakhan (d. 974/1566) being the first ruler, took the reign in 961/1554. In 1000/1592, the Mughal emperor Akbar's friend, Abdur Rahim defeated Mirza Jani Beg Trakhan and annexed Sind to the Mughal empire. The trade from Afghanistan and Central Asia to the subcontinent was mainly in the hands of Hindu merchants in Shikarpur. This town was founded by Daudpotra in 1025/1616, a family who had assumed power in a large area of upper Sind. The Daudpotras were then defeated by another clan, the Kalhora. The first man to be known from this family was Adam Kalhora, who was executed in Multan in 965/1558. In the meantime, the British East India Company began to establish trade with Sind between 1045/1636 and 1073/1662. In 1112/1701, Yar Muhammad Khan Kalhora seized Shikarpur and the Mughal emperor Aurengzeb also granted the family large areas in Sind. He was succeeded by Nur Muhammad in 1131/1719, whose territory extended from Multan to Thatta. In the interim, the invasion of the Afsharid ruler, Nadir Shah in 1152/1739 proved as severe blow to the Kalhoras as it was to the Mughals. Nur Muhammad had to give up Shikarpur and Sibi and the Afsharids of Iran kept the whole western bank of the Indus.

About fifteen years later, Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded Sind in 1167/1754, but, although Nur Muhammad was driven out from Jaisalmer, his son Muhammad Murad Yar Khan gained the kingdom. His brother Ghulam Shah founded Hyderabad in place of the old Nerankot in 1181/1768. The Kalhora period was important for the development of Sindhi literature, though its economic condition rapidly deteriorated towards the last quarter of the 18th century. The minister of the last Kalhora prince, Mir Bijar was killed in 1196/1781 after having defeated the invading Afghans near Shikarpur. Mir Bijar belonged to the Baluch clan of the Talpurs who were the disciples of the Kalhora, but after his death, fight between the two groups ensued and in 1197/1783, the Talpur Mir Fateh Ali defeated the last Kalhora, Abdun Nabi. The rule of the Talpur Mirs was divided among the branches of the family, therefore, the Talpurs were seated in Hyderabad, Mirpur and Khairpur. The Talpurs were plain blunt shepherds, who mostly relied on the power of their Baluchi clans to maintain order. The battle of Miami in 1259/1843 with the British India finally got an end of the rule of the Talpur Mirs in Sind.

The scrutiny of traditions suggests that Pir Sadr al-Din started his proselytizing mission between 757/1356 and 798/1396. Judging from bits and shreds of the accessible traditions, it is known that he selected twelve gifted surrogates from different tribes to assist him in his mission. He seems to have travelled from Uchh to the lower part of Sind as far as the regions adjoining the Indian ocean, and around the locality of present Karachi. The tradition has it that he hired a camel in that locality to travel into the interior Sind, and converted the owner of camel at first. Pir Sadr al-Din seems to have launched his brisk mission in district Thatta, and converted a bulk of the Lohana and Bhatia castes. From lower Sind, he proceeded to the middle, and also visited Kutchh with a group of *dais*. His mission also penetrated in Gujrat and the regions between northern India and Deccan. He also tried to bring the lower castes into the Ismaili fold, who revered Ramdeo, wherein he cloaked his identity, assuming the name of Nizar - a familiar term among the followers of Ramdeo. It must be known that he composed few *ginans* bearing the

name Nizar for the followers of Ramdeo. His mission also influenced other parts of Gujrat and Kathiawar.

Pir Sadr al-Din visited Iran in 798/1396 to report Imam Islam Shah (d. 827/1423) the outcome of his endeavours. He was designated as the *hujjat* of Sind and Hind, or the pir according to the Indian tradition. With fresh mandate, he returned to India and established prayer-halls (*khana*) and appointed *mukhi* (derived from *mukhia* means “foremost”), the headman at Sind. Each community was administered by its headman (*mukhi*), who was an executive head and his office was no longer hereditary as he was periodically selected. His powers and duties were explicitly defined in the *ginans*. In small villages the executive powers were vested in the *mukhi*, and it was only on important matters that he could summon meeting of the elders.

Pir Sadr al-Din also visited Punjab and Kashmir to build prayer-halls for the followers of Pir Shams, and also built a mausoleum of Pir Shams in Multan. His next visit to Patan, Gujrat was noted for giving a new life to the early unknown Khojas converted by Pir Satgur, whose condition since the time of giving up the Hinduism was yet unchanged. He breathed a new life into the dead class of these Khojas and brought them within the fold of new emerging Khoja community. It must be known that the new converts during the period of Pir Satgur were yet crude in their knowledge of Islam and Ismailism. No Ismaili dai is reported to have continued the mission after him during pre-Muslim era in Gujrat. The setback was due to the split of the Nizaris and the Must'aliens in Egypt, resulting the Indian mission ignored for more than two centuries. Pir Sadr al-Din was the next dai to have launched his fresh mission in Gujrat when two to three generations of the original converts of Pir Satgur had passed away, and the third generation was almost more Hindus and less Muslims. They were getting the inspiration of the Satpanth from the old legends and miracles. Pir Sadr al-Din visited the different villages in Gujrat and also initiated them afresh with his own method and gave them a new lease of life and included them in the new emerging Khoja community.

Pir Sadr al-Din returned to Sind after a long journey. His principal area of activity certainly radiated from his base at Uchh, where he supervised the mission works.

### **Method of Pir Sadr al-Din's mission**

Muhammad Umar writes in “**Islam in Northern India**” (Aligarh, 1993, p. 371) that, “Perhaps one factor which greatly contributed to the popularity of Islam among the Hindus was that the Muslim mystics did not ask the newly converted Hindu to renounce their former customs and rituals. They presumed that the converts themselves would renounce the un-Islamic practices in due course. As such we find references about the Hindus, who had embraced Islam but still practicing the traditional beliefs and customs even after conversion.” Likewise, it ensues from the kernel of the *ginans* and traditions that the landmark of Pir Sadr al-Din's mission was the gradual conversion into at least three processes. The method he employed was based on a special missionary framework.

In the embryonic stage, the disciples were given the ethical and moral teachings with a simple understanding of the Satpanth (true path). Local symbolic terms in native dialects were employed in the sermons and *ginans*, such as *alakh nirinjan* (Ineffable God), *guru bharma* (Muhammad), *nar naklank* (Ali), *nar* (Imam), *guru* (Pir), *harijan* (devotee), *gat* (assembly), *gat ganga* (prayer-hall), *gatpat* (holy water), *ja'p* (invocation) etc. The vocabulary, similes and technical terms were confined to the prevalent social customs. Special *ginans* were composed with supreme skill in the languages of the country folk, providing the disciples the flavour of the traditional *bhajan* (song), wherein Pir Sadr al-Din identified himself with the appellations of Gur Sahodeva and Gur Harichandra. These poetical hymns were tinged with mythological ideas, social customs and folklores. Since Arabic was foreign for the new converts, thus the teaching of the Holy Koran was beyond their comprehension in early stage, therefore, to comprehend the Islamic teaching, Pir Sadr al-Din composed the *ginans* incorporated with these teachings. Hence these *ginans* were paraphrased purely into Indian languages, a procedure that proved extremely beneficial on several counts. The emphasis was placed on making the transition from Hinduism to Islam as easy and as smooth as possible. He did not insist on the adoption of traditional form of Muslim rituals, which, in any case, were in language foreign to the converts, therefore no hard and fast rule had been imposed upon them. It may however be pointed out that the new converts possessed crude notions of meditation, but their practice in gnostic was restricted within a narrow compass. He imparted them gradually the practice of *zikr* (remembrance) into a positive Sufic style, called *ja'p*, and watched every moment of the disciples' spiritual growth. The disciples were also afforded liberty to retain their traditions, social customs and culture. Ali Ahmad Brohi writes in “**History on Tombstones**” (Hyderabad, 1987, p. 132) that, “The main attraction that the Ismaili faith had was the freedom to continue ancient local beliefs and customs without causing any break with the old social order.”

In the second stage, the disciples were entrusted the solemn word (*guru mantra*, or *sat shabada*) to mutter it in solitude at midnight. Pir Sadr al-Din sorted out and imparted the common analogical elements from Islam and Hinduism. He found analogies in their philosophical ideas, and placed the greatest value upon the inner aspects, and put aside the external formalism. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi writes in “**History of Sufism in India**” (New Delhi, 1978, 1st vol., p. 109) that, “The Ismaili missionaries were enthusiastic, who unhesitatingly modified their esoteric system to suit their converts.” Hence, this stage offered the disciples to pick up the refined teachings linked in Islamic essence with no hard Arabic shell under the theory of Das Avatara. The disciples were imparted that the tenth incarnation of Vishnu was manifested at *salmal deep* (Arabia) as *naklank* (Ali), who was then in the dress of Shri Salam Shah (Imam Islam Shah), residing at *Irak Khand* (Iran). In this way, Pir Sadr al-Din reformulated, within the Hindu framework the Shiite doctrine of the Imamate as the Divine Epiphany. The doctrine of the Imamate thus was integrated into the mission within the framework of Vaishnavite ideas, who were a dominant stream of Hinduism in northern India. In sum, the new converts saw in Satpanth a completion of their old faith, and through this orientation, they also found Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali coherence in their own tradition.

True indeed it is, that Pir Shams was first to propound the theory of Das Avatara,

which was more concise, but Pir Sadr al-Din initiated it elaboratively in his small treatise, entitled “**Das Avatara**”. It is to be noted that Sayed Imam Shah had also produced an amplified version on it.

Few other *ginans* were also composed in the second stage, differing little with the composition of preceding stage. Henceforward, the loan words and vocabulary drawn from the languages of Arabic and Persian were permeated in the *ginans*, wherein Pir Sadr al-Din identified himself as Pir Sahodeva, Pir Harichandra, or Pir Sadr al-Din.

After being mastered, the disciples were given pure Sufic teachings with certain rituals in the third stage simply on Shiite pattern. Emphasis was continued to be given in getting absorbed in meditation, which ultimately bore them the titular appellation of *khoja* (get absorbed) in the same manner as we have discussed in the period of Pir Satgur. It however seems that the trading class of Lohana in Sind was the first to have emerged as the Khojas publicly due to their dealings with outside circles. As a result, the people from all walks of life, had rendered its meaning as merchant or nobleman which was fairly irrelevant rendering in essence. This title however became a replacement for the original Hindu Lohana title *thakur* or *thakkar*, meaning lord, master.

The new converts ultimately emerged as the Khojas were now capable to receive devotedly whatever they had been initiated. Pir Sadr al-Din indeed islamized the faith of the people mildly and never hampered in their culture, and the Hindus in masses absorbed the best of Islamic thought more Indian than foreign in character. Pir Sadr al-Din then began to censure the new converts for their Hindu rites, condemning under logical expressions, such as caste distinction, idol-worship, ritual bathing, the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, and the traditions of asceticism and abstraction from the world, whose few examples are given below from the published book of his *ginans*:

**“You will never attain salvation in worshipping pebbles and stones.” (142:2)**

**“You have designed the idol with lime after burning the pebbles and stones. How can it be called Lord Krishna?” (142:3)**

**“You go to Kashi to take bath in the Ganges. What is this waterpilgrimage? If liberation is availed in bathing, then the fish in it can attain salvation. The fish in the Ganges remains in it, being stunk all the times.” (183:4-6)**

**“O'careless ones! why you adore stone? Why do you designate it as your deity, which does not bend or speak by itself.” (203:2)**

**“The Vedas are being listened bereft of purpose. How the sins be obliterated through its listening?” (167:8)**

**“The pandit says, ‘I do not eat meat.’ O'pandit! let me know, wherefrom the curds and milk are procured?” (123:5)**

**“The Yogi adores Gorakh-Nath, while the Brahmin to Shiva and the Ascetic worships Paras-Nath. These three ones have gone astray in this world.” (96:3)**

Hence, he consciously safeguarded his followers' Islamic root and identity. Eventually, the boundaries between the Muslims and Hindus were well defined in the *ginans*. He formed a symbolical bridge between Islam and Hinduism analogically - a landmark characteristic of his mission.

Summing up the peculiar missionary method of Pir Sadr al-Din, Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi writes in **“The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent”** (Karachi, 1977, pp. 41-2) that, “There are several instances on record where an Ismaili missionary posed as a Brahmin or a Hindu priest and instead of flatly contradicting the doctrine of the faith, he sought to subvert, he confessed its basic assumptions and introduced some of Ismaili beliefs in a disguised form and thus slowly and gradually paved the way for total conversion. Lack of total adherence has never worried the Ismailis, because they are fully confident that the convert will ultimately accept the faith fully. This kind of conversion is achieved in a peculiar manner. At the outset, the appeal is not on the basis of dogma or beliefs, but an attempt is made to convince the potential convert of the spiritual greatness of some persons. In the early days, the missionary himself was a man of exemplary character. Very often Ali was depicted as an incarnation of Vishnu among the Vaishnavites. In short, after some personal loyalty had been created, the disciple was taken through various stages into full-fledged belief in the teaching of Ismaili Islam.” Ivanow writes in his **“Collectanea”** (Leiden, 1948, p. 21) that, “Either by intuition, or sound and clever reasoning, the Nizari Ismaili missionaries devised...methods depending on two principles. One was their bold tactics in separating the meaning and spirit of Islam from its hard Arabic shell. The other was their concentration of efforts on a few definite castes.”

It is however, much nearer to reasonable possibility to assert that the mass conversion took place in the proselytizing mission of Pir Sadr al-Din in Sind, Kutchh, Gujrat and Kathiawar. He seems to have discarded the old rituals introduced in the former missions, and gave them palpable shapes. “In this way,” says Ansar Zahid Khan in his **“History and Culture of Sind”** (Karachi, 1980, p.275), “Sadr al-Din was responsible for providing the final touches to the Nizari Ismaili sect.” He also commissioned *vakils* (deputies) in different places to collect religious dues to be deposited at the main treasury in Uchh. He also started three times prayers in a day in Indian language tintured with Koranic verses. He is reputed to have articulated a Communal Bond among the Khoja Ismailis. Earlier, the isolated followers could hardly know their co-religionists, residing in other places due to the lack of coordination. This communal bond is also sounded at present as a living force in the Ismaili world.

Pir Sadr al-Din summoned big assemblies of the Khoja Ismailis many times in Sind and Kathiawar, inviting the local and neighboring followers to participate, to bind them together under a community bond, since their linkage fulfilled not merely a fraternal, but also a communal function. On such occasions, special *ginans* were composed, which had been couched in different dialects. Writing on the mission of Pir Sadr al-Din, Ali Ahmad Brohi says in **“History of**



**Tombstones**” (Hyderabad, 1987, pp. 133-4) that, “Anyone who embraced Ismaili *dawa* was free to practice his traditional cult and even retain his previous names, caste, identity with the additional declaration of faith in Imam and veneration for Pirs and descendants of Ali. By the adoption of such liberal attitude a great many powerful tribes, such as Langah, Soomras and Lohanas, were attracted to the Ismaili Satpanth.”

Pir Sadr al-Din passed his later period of life in Jetpur in the vicinity of Uchh, a town in Bahawalpur State, situated on the south bank of the Satlaj river. It was also called Uchha, Osa, Askalinda, Deogarh or Chachpur, and the Arabs named it Basmad. The tradition relates that Raja Chach had built a tank near Uchh, known as Rani Tank, and ordered a town to be built at the spot, and named it Chach, which later corrupted as Uchh. It was an old seat of Muslim learning. Its graveyards and the tombs of saints silently reflect an story that the place must have been very famous during the Muslim regime. It seems that Uchh provided great respite and peace to the Muslim saints. Pir Sadr al-Din also made it his headquarters, and lastly lived in the nearby village called, Sadarhu, and this may be more likely cause that he became to be revered locally as Sadr Shah. He also built his small residence at Jetpur for his family. During his residency at Uchh, he had created a close relation with the local eminent persons, notably a certain Niyab bin Kamal of Bahawalpur, who eventually became his follower. It is related that once he was in the house of Niyab bin Kamal, where he was stricken by his last illness. Niyab wept profusely when he found that his Pir was about to depart from the world. Pir Sadr al-Din made a will to bury his body in his house. Thus, Pir Sadr al-Din died in 819/1416 and was interred in the house of Niyab bin Kamal, which had been converted to a shrine in 1058/1648 by the local people. He had five sons, viz. Sayed Zahir al-Din, Sayed Salauddin, Pir Taj al-Din, Sayed Jamaluddin and Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din.

Pir Sadr al-Din was a great Ismaili preacher, philosopher and dialectician. He indeed towers like an Everest, with no Alps around. He was also well steeped in the knowledge of astronomy, astrology and physiology. He also mastered in Indian pharmacy, and used to treat the local people. He also assisted the poor in Uchh and ministered to the sick and travellers, thus he won great applause.

### **Pir Sadr al-Din - first Sindhi Poet**

Sindhi is an Indo-Aryan language. It is an ancient language enriched with 70% Sanskrit words. The fact that Sindhi is mostly written in the Arabic script, gives some people an impression that it is a Persio-Arabic tongue. Professor E. Trumpp in his monumental “**Sindhi Alphabet and Grammar**” (1812) writes, “Sindhi is a pure Sanskritical language, more free from foreign elements than any of the North Indian vernaculars.” G. Shirt of Hyderabad, one of the first Sindhi scholars, considered that the language is probably, so far as its grammatical construction is concerned, the purest daughter of Sanskrit. It has small sprinkling of Dravidian words and has in later times received large accessions to its vocabulary from Arabic and Persian.

During the Samma (1010-1351) who took over after Soomra, who ruled Sindh after the Arabs, and afterwards in the days of Arghuns, Tarkhans, Mughal

governors (1521-1700), Sind produced many scholars and poets of Sindhi, Arabic and Persian languages, such as Qazi Qadan (1466-1577) of Sehwan, who introduced philosophy and mysticism into Sindhi poetry. He was followed by Shah Karim of Bhulri (1536-1622), Shah Lutfullah Qadri, Shah Inayat Sufi Nasarpoori, Mir Masoom Shah, Makhdoom Nooh of Hala, Lakho Lutafullah, Mahamati Pirannath, Shah Abdul Latif, Sachal Sarmast (1739-1826), Sami Chain Rai, Bedil (d. 1721), etc. Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (1688-1751) perfected Sindhi poetry both in form and in content and is reckoned as the peerless master of Sindhi verses.

Pir Sadr al-Din (1300-1416) was a great poet, saint and Sufi of his time. He also composed his verses (*ginans*) in Lari and Kutchhi dialects of Sindhi and earned the rank of the first Sindhi poet. Annemarie Schimmel writes in **“Pearls from the Indus”** (Hyderabad, 1986, p. 14) that, “It is possible that the mystically tinged songs (*ginans*) and religious instructions used by the Ismaili missionaries constitute the oldest extant example of Sindhi literature.” The author further adds, “It seems that the oldest extant documents of Sindhi religious literatures are found in some Ismaili texts of the 14<sup>th</sup> century written in Khojki script” (Ibid., p.55). Sarah F.D. Ansari writes in **“Sufi Saints and State Power”** (Cambridge, 1992, p. 17) that, “The *ginans* or mystical writings of the Ismailis display considerable parallelism of thought with Sufism as well as with the Hindu Bhakti tradition, sharing markedly similar themes and motifs.”

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai composed his Sindhi poems on the Sufic pattern. There are certain features of his poems, which makes it desirable to consider the possible influence of the *ginans* of Pir Sadr al-Din upon him. His ancestors in the fourth generation before him was the famous mystic, Sayed Abdul Karim, who is also known to have been influenced the Sufic teachings of the Ismaili Pir. The sayings of Sayed Abdul Karim had a great impact on the mind of Shah Abdul Latif, who himself fed on the poetry of his great forbear and many verses of his poems are included in his poems under equal reflection.

The **Risalo** of Shah Abdul Latif contains Sindhi poetry, divided into 30 *surs* (melodies). One of his *sur* is known as *Sur Kapaeti*. The word *kapaeti* is derived from *kapa* means cotton, and *Kapaeti* means Spinner. Spinning of cotton for making yarn and weaving for making home-made cloth have been one of the oldest cottage industries in Sind. Shah Abdul Latif had used symbols from this industry. Much earlier than this, Pir Sadr al-Din had sung about *Kapaeti*. It may be safe to assume that his following Sindhi *ginnan* used to be sung originally in *Sur Kapaeti*.

1. **Eji Uthi Allah na ghuren banda, tu sut'e saji ra't,  
Naka jori jivji bana naka samar sa'th,  
Shah'jo manyado tinikh'e jek'e subhuad'e jagan,  
Subhuad'e na gagiya tenkh'e hurun na indhiyun hath,  
Se ha'e ha'e kanda hath hanninda, jian hari vinyai vat.**

O'Slave! You wake up as God does not like your whole night in sleeping. Neither you care for soul, nor prepare provision to take along (for hereafter). One earns Lord's pleasure, who rises in dawn. The hurries (heavenly blessings) will not give their hands to those who do not rise in dawn. Such (careless) will repent, smearing his hands just as a (careless) farmer missed the sowing season.

2. **Eji Bana tojo takiyo yara, kandhan'me kud,  
Pasi rata gulda yar, ma vinyaj mud.**

O'Slave! Your pillow (body) is lying on thorns (material desires). Looking red flowers (worldly attractions), do not lose your object (of coming in the world).

3. **Eji Bana tojo takiyo yara, kandhan'me kiyo,  
Jad'e sichanu sur kai yar, tad'e samariyo.**

O'Slave! Your body is trapped in material desires. (One day) when the pinch of its pain raised, then you realized the object (of coming in the world)

4. **Eji Kapaeti katiu'n yara, jad'e suta lok,  
Ten'ni pahinj'e kat'e vidho, gichia gadho thok.**

The spinning woman has spun (the cotton) when people slept. She alone spun her cotton thoroughly.

5. **Eji Jedo'ni tedo agiyo yara, hundh katiyai,  
Po'e subhani sartiy'e vich mili markiai.**

When she finished her spinning work thick and thin, then she smiled with pride among her friends in the morning.

6. **Eji Kotha mandap madiyu'n ghar ghoda ne bhandar,  
Ke na nia pans'e yar, jiv chalant'e va'r.**

None shall take away with him his palaces, tents, buildings, houses, horses and treasure while departing from this world.

7. **Eji Bhan'e Pir Sadardin, ahi'n suno moman vir,  
Alakh trutho tinkh'e, jinni sunyato shah pir.**

Pir Sadr al-Din imparts: Listen, oh believers! God shall be pleased with those who recognized the Imam and Pir.

There is one another important *ginan* composed in old Sindhi as follow:

1. **Eji Bhaiyar bhanga ma tado, yara ma boliyo arap ma'peri,  
Hin shah'je paiyar'thi, yar tad vachhut'e laj.**

O' brother! Do not divide yourselves into groups. O'dear! Do not talk about others (without thinking), otherwise you will be as deprived of the Lord's nearness as a boat separated from the shore of the sea.

**Sun vanjarda ho yar, hi man haredo tho jel'e,  
Hia man haredo tho jul'e, yara chakh'e kadvi val,  
Ta'n toj'e jiv'jo jokho na thie, yara toj'e jiv'jo jokho na thie,  
Hin jiv sandh'e kaj kan kiriya va't soheli, moman bhai hua ho yar ho'e.**

O' trader friend! This wicked self is occupied with its own mischief. O' friend! Taste the bitter plant (herbal medicine), so that your soul may not have to face any danger. O'friend! To keep your soul free of danger, do some deeds for its sake, then the path will be easier for you. Believers are like that.

2. **Eji Kach'e map'e maidada yar, kud'e tol'e din,  
Hia tinihi vakhardi yar, budi sasain.**

O'brother! Those who weigh less by using sub-standard weights will have to bear loss of the collapse of their own small shop.

**3. Eji Pak'e map'e maidada yar, pur'e tol'e din,  
Hia tini vakhardi yar, sahi salamat nin.**

O'brother! Those who weigh full by using standard weight for weighing are the ones whose shops remain intact.

**4. Eji Tu'n vanjaro vira lai yar, a'achha vanaj karij,  
Tuni kenkh'e ma dhutiy'e yar, pan'e dhutajj.**

O' friend! You have come to do business for a short time. Do fair dealings. Do not deceive anyone though you yourself may be deceived.

**5. Eji Tu'n vanjaro medni yar, kotha to adaiy'e,  
Sahi sambhdo sathdo yar, sath na sambhariy'e.**

O'friend! You are a trader in this world and you are constructing buildings. O'friend! the group of friends is waiting for you, why are you not preparing yourself to go with them?

**6. Eji Kedyu'n adaiye'n gadh madiyu'n yar, keda paiy'e chitr,  
Dehi dharind'e dhulm'e, matha latuni dind'e mitr.**

O'friend! What type of forts and palaces you are building and what type of embellishments and engravings you are making upon them? Your body will be buried in the dust and your relatives will level it with their feet.

**7. Eji Tang'e math'e turho yar, tan'e to na badho,  
Jadeni laheriy'e loliyo yar, tad'e tho sambhari'e.**

O'friend! You used a raft even in the shallow water but did not tie it firmly. You came to realize this only when you were swayed by the waves.

**8. Eji Bedini dhoi tadt'e yar, achi sad kand'e,  
Ghar bhariyo toj'e bhandu'e yar, sehi'na haland'e sath.**

O'friend! The boat is ready on the shore and will call out to you. Though your whole house will be crowded with relatives, yet they will not accompany you.

**9. Eji Din gudhie na chad'e yar, to'e na pach'e ma's,  
Jo tun malak manyi'e, gurnar bhet'e toji a'as.**

O'friend! Until the essence of religion touches you from inside, your body will not be baked. If you will obey your Lord, then he will fulfill your wishes.

**10. Eji No va'ta niarhi yar, dou'n tu'n sar'e dij,  
Tuni toj'e iman'se yar, sahi salamat dij.**

O'friend! Deduct nine portions and present the tenth portion with true faith and in a proper manner.

**11. Eji Rudoni gadh amarapuri yar, baiyar bhanga bher,  
Bar krodi'e Shah Nizar chads'e, sahi jano Sadardin.**

O'friend! The fort of heaven is very beautiful, unite those brothers who have been dispersed. The twelve crore emancipated believers will be with Shah Nizar (Pir Sadr al-Din). Truly accept Pir Sadr al-Din.

## **Pir Sadr al-Din - first Gujrati poet**

Sanskrit (*sanskṛta*, i.e. prepared, refined or cultivated), a classical literary language of India, came into existence probably with the outset of the Christian era. It is a scholarly language with a status similar to that of Latin in medieval Europe. It is an old Indo-Aryan tongue from which the Prakrit evolved during 11th century. The Prakrit is the mother of Marathi, Hindi and Gujrati languages. In its early stage, the Gujrati was known as an *apbrunsh* (corrupted) dialect during 12th century, representing an original imprint of the Prakrit. After having different transformations, the present Gujrati evolved with its full swing during the 14th century.

The history of Gujarati literature falls into four broad periods: 1) 1250-1456, 2) 1456-1650, 3) 1650-1825 and 4) 1825-2009. By about 1250 Gujarat became an individual political unit with considerable achievements in art and literature. The earliest Gujrati poets were Narshi Mehta (1414-1481), Mirabai (1499-1547), Bhalana (1434-1514), Nakara (1500-1575), Vishnudasa (1564-1632), Akho Bhagat (1591-1656), etc. Narshi Mehta was not the first Gujrati poet, but is considered to be the father of Gujrati.

The Ismaili Pir Sadr al-Din (1300-1416) flourished long before the above poets. He composed many *ginans* (hymns) into Gujrati. The language of his *ginans* is fascinatingly mixed. Its vocabulary is derived alike from Sanskrit and languages sprang from Sanskrit, chiefly Gujrati on one hand, and Arabic and Persian on the other. Similarly, Arabo-Persian vocabulary occurs with phonetic and grammatical adaptations to Indian diction. Among them, the Indian languages, such as the Punjabi, Sindhi and Sairaiiki. Among these, Gujrati predominates.

The best known Gujrati couplets in his *ginans* are as under:

***Satgur sa'th'e gothadi kij'e*** (Hold conversation with the Pir)

***Sa'tna sarovar sarasar bharia*** (The lake of the Truth is abundantly brimful)

***Tadhu'n tadhu'n mithadu boliy'e*** (Speak gently and sweetly)

***Ginan bolor'e nit nur'e bharia*** (Recite the *ginans* which are full of perpetual light)

***Sakhi mari a'atam'na odhar*** (O'Redeemer of my soul!)

***Gat mahe'n a'avin'e virabhai kar jodi rahiy'e*** (Be folded hand when come in prayer-hall)

***Nur vela nur piyo, Kario man anand'ji*** (Enjoy glimpse of the Divine Light during the hour of dawn and be joyous in mind)

***Bindra're van'ma sukh char'e re gavantri*** (The cow grazes peacefully in the forest of Bindra)

***Partak viloni'ne phans mandi*** (The hunter has widely spread a net)

***Sab ghat sami maro bharpur betha*** (My Lord dwells absolutely in every heart)

***Divada bati mahe'n jiyu'n tel samanna*** (As the oil is absorbed in the lamp's wick)

***Jirya're tu'n girbasthan vasanto*** (When you were dwelling in mother's womb)

***Sami Rajo a'ave Jangi dhol vajav'e*** (Biggest drums are beaten upon arrival of the Lord)

King)

It implies that Pir Sadr al-Din (1300-1416) was the first Gujrati poet in India, while the age of Narshi Mehta (1414-1481) was hardly two years when Pir Sadr al-Din died.

Besides, we will quote below one Gujrati *ginan* of Pir Sadr al-Din with translation:

1. **Eji Nindra'ne varo pranni tam'e jago kai'n suta,  
Jagi japo to Ali nit anant'e jai pahoncho.**

O'Soul! You control your sleep. You wake up, why are you asleep? You wake up and remember regularly, so that you reach to Ali (spiritually), who is Eternal.

2. **Eji Ardho janamaro pranni taro nindra ma'n'he jai chhe,  
Vanr'e sireva'e jiv taro khann khann khut'e.**

O'Soul! Half span of your life consumes in sleeping. Without worship, your breath reduces slow by slow.

3. **Eji Vikh'no virodhyo pranni tu'n din'thi chuko,  
Ghadi'e din ja'ta va'r na lag'e**

O'Soul! You have deviated from religion for being immersed in poison. Every second is decreasing and it takes no time for a day to pass.

4. **Eji Bhann'e Pir Sadardin pranni tam'e chetin'e chalo,  
To vaso vaikunth didar sahebji'no malo**

Pir Sadr al-din says: Walk cautiously, so that your abode may be destined in the paradise (as well as) graced with the didar of the Lord.

## **PIR HASAN KABIR AL-DIN**

Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din, the son of Pir Sadr al-Din was generally known as Sayed Hasan Shah, Pir Hasan Shah, Sayed Sadat, Gur Pir Hasan al-Hussain, Makdum Sayed Kabir al-Din Shah etc. He is however known in Uchh Sharif as Hasan Dariya. Since his lineage traced back to Imam Jafar Sadik, he is also known as al-Husayn. He was born in Uchh Sharif in 742/1341 and was the first Indian Pir to be born in India. He was edowed from birth with deep spiritual insight and strong common sense combined with sympathy and love for his fellow beings, and was also noted for his piety since childhood. He is also described as being clad in white dress or occasionally wearing the saffron colour cloth typical of the Indian ascetics, while he is believed to have become a staunch vegetarian.

The period followed by Pir Satgur Nur was noted as an era of pre-Muslim in Gujrat. The 7<sup>th</sup> Solanki ruler, Jaysinha Sidhraja (d. 1143) died childless and was succeeded by Kumarapala (1143-1173), a descendant of Karna, the third son of Bhima I, who seized the throne by force. He was succeeded by his nephew, Ajavapala, whose period saw the declination of the Solanki dynasty. His successor Mulraja II was too weak. The next Solanki ruler Bhima II also proved incapable to govern his empire, and the last ruler was Tribuvanpalo, from whom the power was snatched by the Vaghela branch of the Solanki in 1243. The new dynasty produced six kings who were constantly troubled by the Muslim invaders. The

last king was Karna, who had been overpowered by Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan, the generals of Alauddin Khalji in 697/1298. In 700/1300, Alauddin Khalji appointed Malik Sanjar, surnamed Alp Khan (1297-1317) as a governor of Gujrat and the old Hindu capital Anhilvad became the seat of the governor. Zafar Khan, surnamed Muzaffar Khan (d. 813/1403), one of the trusty nobles of Firuz Khan had been sent from Delhi as the governor of Gujrat in 793/1391. He established an independent Sultanate of Gujrat in 810/1407, and was the first Muslim ruler of Gujrat to suppress Shiism in his domains. His son Tatar Khan, surnamed Muhammad Shah (d. 846/1442) ascended the throne of Gujrat in his father's lifetime. He wanted to capture Delhi, but his father opposed him, thereupon, he imprisoned his father in 803/1403 at Asawal. He ruled for 32 years in Gujrat and twice (816/1414 and 824/1420) made fierce attempt to force the Hindus to adopt Islam. He was succeeded by his son, Ahmad I (d. 846/1442), who brought under his control the whole land of Gujrat and its adjoining territories. He too severely domineered the Ismailis. He was followed by Ghazan Khan, surnamed Taj al-Din Sultan Muhammad Shah, but he died soon afterwards. In the meantime, Muhammad Khan bin Nimat Khan, the vizir captured the throne and assumed the title of Alauddin Muhammad Shah. It will be appropriate to infer that during the Muslims occupation of Gujrat and its political turmoil, Pir Sadr al-Din and Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din had exercised strict *taqiya* during their missionary activities in Gujrat.

When Pir Sadr al-Din visited Iran for the second time, Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din eagerly desired to join him. Owing to tedious journey, he was not taken to Iran. Being become forlorn, Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din started his most famous petition, and prepared a turban for the headgear of Imam Islam Shah. It is known that he also managed to reach Kahek. Imam Islam Shah was rejoiced to see his devotion, and invested him with the mantle of a *hujjat*, or pir to be effective after his father.

Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din continued to follow the tract of his father's mission, and procured few tasks of the incomplete mission of his father. His proselytism in North Gujrat was significant, where the Ismailis emerged as the Momin (or Momana) in due course. His association with the Indian Sufis is also well known. Like his father, he also composed *ginans*. His dress, living and food were characterized by a rare simplicity. He was a man of quiet and unassuming disposition completely immersed in the interpretation of the ideas, which absorbed the greater part of his attention and concentration. He was contemplative, thoughtful and fond of loneliness. The tradition has it that he had all the times a bowl of coconut husk with him from which he ate and drank frugally. It is also said that shortly before his death he retired into solitude. He died in 853/1449 in Uchh Sharif, and was buried in his own house, which became a famous shrine in Uchh Sharif. Shaikh Abdul Haq Mohadis Dehvi (d.1052/1642) writes in his "**Akhbar al-Akhayar**" (comp. in 998/1590) that, "The greatest miracle of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din is that he converted sizable infidels to Islam. One has no courage to disobey and embraced Islam in a trice whom he preached, making the non-believers to flock at him in masses." (pp. 372-3)

Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din had eighteen sons and one daughter, viz. Sayed Awaliya Ali, Sayed Kathir al-Din, Sayed Ali Gohar Nur, Sayed Alam Shah, Sayed Rehmatullah Shah, Sayed Adil Shah, Sayed Jafar Shah, Sayed Israil Tayyar Ghazi, Sayed Shahbaz Ghazi, Sayed Sabzali, Sayed Islam Shah, Sayed Imam Shah, Sayed Farman Shah,

Sayed Ismail, Sayed Nur Muhammad, Sayed Darwish Ali, Sayed Lal Shah, Sayed Bala Shah Buland Ali, and a daughter Bai Budhai.

With the indescribable efforts of Pir Sadr al-Din and Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din, a large proselytism had been resulted in Sind, Punjab, Kutchh, Kathiawar and Gujrat by leaps and bounds during the period of Imam Islam Shah. Sayed Imam Shah admits in his “**Janatpuri**” (verse, 89) that, “Ismailism promulgated rapidly in India during the time of Imam Islam Shah.” The trading class among the Ismaili Khojas gradually began to visit Kahek to see the Imam. Unfortunately, none among the pilgrims had left the historical accounts of the journey.

W.Ivanow writes in “**Collectanea**”(Holland, 1948, p. 54) that, “How precious would have been such an original and unpretentious account of the journey to Persia by an intelligent Khoja traveller of the end of the fifteenth century if it had been preserved in the community.” Nevertheless, a manuscript of thirty pages has been discovered in 1977, belonging to a certain Rahim Bhimani (d. 1841) of Ahmadabad. It contains a meagre, rather a historical description of a certain Bhimani family. Rahim Bhimani derived his information from the manuscript of Sheith Jan Muhammad Tharu'ani in 1834. It indicates that a certain Nardas alias Bhimani (d.824/1420) lived in the time of Dhani Sarcar Nar Islam Shah. He visited Iran with a few Ismailis of Kutchh, and their caravan returned to India via port Hormuz.

### **PIR TAJ AL-DIN ALIAS SHAH TURREL**

Pir Taj al-Din most possibly was born in 796/1394 in Uchh, and got his early education from his elder brothers. He worked in Sind, Punjab and Gujrat under his brother, Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din. It is said that he was also deputed in Kutchh to draw new adherents to Nizari Ismailism, where his *astana* still exists.

He was appointed next *Hujjat*, or Pir for subcontinent after Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din. “Pir Taj al-Din was designated as the next Pir” (**Satveni'ji Vel**, 108:5, 112:4). Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah also imparts, “Adore uncle Taj al-Din, who indeed is the progeny of Pir Sadr al-Din and Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din as well” (**Ibid**, 149:10-11). He lived in the period of Imam Muhammad bin Islam Shah (827-868/1423-1463) and Imam Mustansir billah II (868-885/1463-1480). Sayed Rehmatullah Shah, the son of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din on the other hand, administered as a *vakil*, collecting religious dues in other parts of India.

Briefly reviewing the contemporary political condition of Uchh and Multan, it appears that the Mongols held sway until 1437 when the Langah Afghans broke out in rebellion. In 1443, Sheikh Yusuf of the Quresh was elected ruler of Multan and Uchh until expelled two years later by Qutubuddin, who ruled for 16 years. In 1469, he was succeeded by his son Hussain Langah who was a chief of the Baluchis.

The tradition relates that Pir Taj al-Din was handsome with piercing eyes. He used to put bud of flower on his robe like his grandfather, Pir Saheb al-Din (d. 775/1373), earning the title of *shah turrel* (the lord of the *tura* or bud). Another view suggests that the *tura* is the turban having some high scalf over it and thus



the word *tura* means an ornamental tassel worn in the turban or nosegay. Pir Taj al-Din wore it and was called the Lord of the nosegay (*Shah Turrail*). Noor Ali Valliani writes in his “**Pir Taj al-Din**” (Hyderabad, 2002, p. 9) that “Pir Taj al-Din used the rose essence, therefore, he was also called *shah turail* means the user of the rose essence.”

As a result of the dissension among the sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din in Uchh, Pir Taj al-Din left it to see Imam Muhammad bin Islam Shah in Kahek most possibly in 853/1449, “where he was invested with the turban (*sirband*) i.e., spiritual authority and appointed the Imam’s representative”(Satvarni Motti, 273: 1-4). It is seen that some followers in Sind expected a drastic action against few greedy sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din, who had misappropriated the religious dues. Pir Taj al-Din however followed a mild attitude in this context, causing displeasure of few Ismailis, notably an influential person called, Kamadia Kapur. When Pir Taj al-Din started his journey towards Kahek, Kamadia Kapur followed him with a view to lodge complaint against him for taking no measure against the sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din. In Kahek, he was highly astonished to see that Imam Muhammad bin Islam Shah and Pir Taj al-Din were taking meal together. Besides, he was much touched to watch Pir Taj al-Din joined in the hunting expedition with the Imam. He thus changed his mind and refrained from making complaint. In presence of Kamadia Kapur, Pir Taj al-Din was declared as the next Pir. Realizing the dignity of the Pir, Kamadia Kapur sought forgiveness and promised to work under him in Uchh and Sind.

The Ismailis in Sidhpur and Methan in North Gujrat had openly demonstrated their loyalty with Pir Taj al-Din, who had been converted by Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din. Thus, they won the hearts of the Ismailis of other regions, especially in Sind, who branded them as the faithful (*momin* or *momana*) Ismailis. Pir Taj al-Din made his footing in Sind, Kutchh and Kathiawar, and reached Sidhpur and Methan in North Gujrat to deliver the Imam’s message to the Momin *jamat*. During his short stay, he also imparted the *jamat* and converted the local Hindus. He appointed a Rajput Chief Punja Shin as their *Mukhi*, and then returned to Uchh.

Pir Taj al-Din faced formidable obstacles in heading the Ismaili mission after returning to Uchh, where he was harassed by his nephews, thus he outcast several of them (**Ibid.** 274:4-7, 275:1-2). It appears that some of the sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din embraced Sunnism. Jalal Shah played major role among them, who firstly renounced Ismailism and died at the age of 18 years. Dulla followed him, who survived for six months. Then Mast Qalandar was destined same fate after two years. Then Lal Qalandar hardly survived for 15 days in misguiding the Ismailis. “The end of the sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din was due to misappropriating the religious dues” (**Satveni’ji Vel**, 111). In sum, the appellations of Jalal Shah, Dulla, Mast Qalandar and Lal Qalandar are the titles, not proper names, resulting difficulties to identify which of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din’s sons seceded. However, Sayed Imam Shah, Sayed Rehmatullah Shah, Sayed Kathir al-Din, Sayed Awliya Ali and Bai Budhai and some other were faithful to the Nizari Ismaili Imams till death.

Pir Taj al-Din made Lahore as his centre in the beginning, because his opponents had made Uchh the fertile ground of quarrel. Pir Sadr al-Din had built a

Jamatkhana in Lahore, wherefrom Pir Taj al-Din conducted the mission works. He also took an opportunity in Lahore and Multan to direct the descendants of Pir Shams in the mission works. He seems to have sent few *dais* in Afghanistan and Central Asia, whose detail is not accessible. Pir Taj al-Din had notably converted one Lohana family of 20 men, 18 women and 40 sons in Punjab, near Uchh, whose family head was Seith Lakhimal.

According to **Satvarni Motti** (280:9-10), “Pir Taj al-Din has composed *ginans* in Lahore.” It indicates that he would have composed many *ginans* in Punjabi and Sairaiki dialects, but none of these are in extant. It is possible that his opponents had destroyed his *ginans* in Multan and Uchh. His one *ginan* is however accessible, which was discovered in Sind.

The tradition goes to relate that Pir Taj al-Din decided to visit Iran again in 870/1466. He wrote to his vakils in his jurisdiction to bring and deposit their collection of the religious dues in Uchh. Hence, a Sindhi deputation from District Junn also arrived in Uchh and handed over the religious dues along with a precious cloth of ten yards bearing Sindhi design to be presented to Imam Mustansir billah in Iran. It is said that Pir Taj al-Din assigned some missionary works to the Sindhi deputation with the instructions to stay in Uchh till his return from Iran.

With the religious dues being amassed in his period, a sum amounting to forty thousand gold coins (*mohor*) and ten yards of cloth (**Ibid.**, 280), he started his journey from Uchh and reached Kahek. He presented the cloth with other offerings. When Pir Taj al-Din started his homeland journey, the Imam gave him the same cloth as a gift, since none in Iran wore the dress made of Sindhi design.

It is recounted that Pir Taj al-Din returned after crossing the rocky regions of Kirman and arrived in Ormada and Sonmiani via Muscat. He alighted at the village of Kanjaro, about two miles from Uthal, a town about 74 miles from Karachi. He prepared a robe from the cloth presented by the Imam. The local tailor became his follower, which gave the Pir an opportunity to spread his mission around Uthal, where he stayed for about six months. The place (*a'stana*) where he stayed still exists in Uthal.

Pir Taj al-Din then dressed with the robe came in Uchh. He firstly came before the Sindhi deputation executing the missionary works being assigned to them, who had also given him that cloth for the Imam. He told them that the Imam had presented him the cloth. They bowed their heads in reverence. The tradition relates that a few sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din and his local associates, who were against him, searching ground to defame Pir Taj al-Din by one or another fake reason, suspected and “accused Pir Taj al-Din of embezzling it” (**Satvarni Motti**, 282-3). They encircled Pir Taj al-Din with the flood of questions with rigorous arguments, insulted and injured him. Pir Taj al-Din was also charged that he did not go to Iran, but was in North Gujrat. The tradition has it that a quarrel broke out between the members of the Sindhi deputation and the opponents. Some Sindhi Ismailis were injured in the encounter, and they were expelled from Uchh a day before the death of Pir Taj al-Din. He was highly shocked, resulting his sudden death, possibly by heart attack in 872/1467. It is highly curious to learn from the tradition that his enemies on this juncture played

another card to escape from the allegation and spread rumors that Pir Taj al-Din had committed suicide!

The uproar among his former followers was so tense that they would not allow his body to be buried in Uchh (**Ibid.** 286:7). Pir Taj al-Din told in advance to his maid servant, Dadali “to take his coffin at the border of Sind” (**Ibid.** 284:4) and “bury it where she alighted” (**Ibid.** 284:6). The folklore of the people claims that Dadali was a faithful woman belonged to the Junejo clan of Sind. She used to remain at the service of Pir Taj al-Din. She commanded vast knowledge on Ismailism and preached the ladies in Uchh and Sind as if a dai and that is the reason that she is also known as Dai Dadali. During the last moment of his life, Pir Taj al-Din is said to have summoned her and told, “I will depart tonight from the world. I assign you and your three friends to deposit my dead body in a coffin and put into the bullock cart, which is tied outside my house. You individually hold the four sides of the coffin firmly. It will run as fast as the flying falcon. You drive it till District Junn in Sind, where you inform the local *jamat* to make arrangement of my interment.” It was the midnight of Sunday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jeth, Samavat 1523/9<sup>th</sup> Zilhaj, 872 or 1467 A.D., when Pir Taj al-Din expired.

“Dadali was physically powerful. She found no labourer” (**Ibid.** 286:9-10). She put the Pir’s body in the coffin with the help of her three female friends and loaded it in the bullock cart and drove it towards the direction of District Junn in Sind. Since it was a long and difficult journey, the three other women lost courage and abandoned on the route. Dadali was the only lady, who drove the cart with resolute till the location of District Junn and alighted at about four miles from the town of Tando Bagho in Badin. Some followers including the local Muslims came from opposite direction, who disposed off the body of the Pir.

It appears from different sources that there was no trace of the sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din in Uchh and Multan after few years, who were responsible in the tragic death of Pir Taj al-Din. When the former followers in Uchh came to know the fact, specifically those who joined the group of the enemies of Pir Taj al-Din, they came in the village of Shah Kapur in District Junn and sought forgiveness from Kamadia Kapur. The repentants also obtained permission to build a shrine on the grave of Pir Taj al-Din, which was built in 889/1484. Dadali continued to serve as the caretaker of the shrine till her death. In the adjacent location, the local tradition has it that many other Sayeds were also buried. In female compound, the tomb of Dadali and the daughter of Sayed Ghulam Ali Shah (d.1207/1792) are significant, who died in Junn and were buried there. Another view suggests that the location of Pir Taj al-Din’s shrine belonged to Dadali, who presented it for the erection of the shrine.

It is said that Pir Taj al-Din did not marry in Uchh and Junn. This is the reason that a tradition was minted in these regions that he never married and remained bachelor till death, while the other side of the coin however reveals a different story.

Pir Taj al-Din seems to have assumed the name Prahlad among the Hindus of Tharparkar, where his betrothal took place with a Rajput Sodhi princess and thus, his descendants became known as Prahladpautras (the progeny of Prahlad). According to “**Gulzar-i Shams Tabrizi**” (Lahore, 1919, p.379), “The descendants

of Pir Taj al-Din reside on the bank of Runn of Salt, lying in the region amid Kutchh and Kathiawar.”

Noor Ali Valliani is our best source to provide its details (op. cit., pp. 24-28) that Pir Taj al-Din had visited Nara in Sind for the mission purpose, where he married Bibi Mihran, the daughter of Rana Jetamal, the chief of the Sodha tribe. At that time the major part of Thar desert was in occupation of Parmar Rajputs named Sodha. He left Nara after leaving behind his pregnant wife and advised her to name the son, Ismail to be born and delivered her a sword and a ring. Few months after his departure, there was born a son. The date of his birth cannot be ascertained, but it is said that he was born soon after the death of Pir Taj al-Din in 872/1467. The inhabitants of Hiral relate a curious story that his eyes were closed during his birth. The people thought that he was virtually a blind, to which Shah Ismail said, “I am not a blind. Since you are impure and when you will not remove your impurity, I will not open my eyes.” The people said, “He must be a Perraj.” The word *perraj* means a child talking in infancy. This is a reason that the descendant of Sayed Shah Ismail is known as the Perrajpautras or Pehlajani Sayeds. The Perrajpautras were the caretakers of the shrine of Pir Taj al-Din for a long period. The last reported among them was a certain Khalikdina, who died in 1860 and henceforward, none among them was seen in the shrine.

Sayed Shah Ismail was also known as the Lord of the Hiral because of his living in the village of Hiral in District Tharparkar. He married to a lady belonged to the Otha tribe. He had four sons, viz. Sadr al-Din Shah, Hashim Shah, Murtaza Shah and Hyder Shah. It is also said that he had one another son, called Shams al-Din Shah. It is said that the age of Shah Ismail was about 119 years, which means his death have taken place around 992/1588. He died in Hiral, where he was buried, and a splendid shrine was built on it.

It is also suggested that Jambha (1451-1536) was one of Pir Taj al-Din’s sons by the Sodhi princess, but it cannot be reckoned a conclusive view. It requires further research.

### **PIR PANDIYAT-I JAWANMARDI**

The **Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi** (maxims of fortitude) is a collection of the advices of Imam Mustansir billah II (d. 880/1475), which had been compiled in the time of Imam Abdus Salam (d. 899/1493). The word *pandiyat* is the plural of *pand* means *advice*, and *jawanmardi* means *manliness*. The term *jawanmard* is the Persian translation of *fata* means young man or brave youth. The Koran (18:10) called the Seven Sleepers *fityan* (pl. of *fata*). This term generally was connected with Hazrat Ali bin Abu Talib as the hadith reads: “There is no *fata* but Ali, and no sword but Zulfikar”.

It contains the advices (*pandiyat*) for the true believers (*mu'minin*) and to those seeking to attain the exemplary standards of manliness (*jawanmardi*). It is divided into three sections, viz. **Pandiyat great** (115 parts), **Pandiyat small** (105 parts) and **twelve Jawanmardi** (12 parts), also incorporated with few *farmans* of Imam Abdus Salam. It deals with the advices to the believers on ethics, humanity, behavior, etc. The Ismailis are referred to by the Sufic sounding

terms as *ahl-i haqq* and *ahl-i haqiqat* (the people of the truth), while the Imam himself is termed as *pir*, *murshid* and *qutb*. It is venerated as a *Pir* or *Hujjat* in India, and is also read in Yarkand, Gilgit, Hunza, Chitral, Badakhshan, and Iran.

**Satveni-ji Vel** (108:9-10) seems an earliest source to mention that, "Mustansir billah then became the Imam, who executed much works in the world. He narrated *Pandiyat* in Persian, also exhorted therein the *Jawanmardi*".

It has been heretofore referred that the tradition of sending the Pir from Iran for the Indian community had been suspended in the time of Imam Mustansir billah after the death of Pir Taj al-Din in 872/1467. The Indian tradition relates that a certain Nizamuddin Kapur, known as Kamadia Kapur or Kapura Lohana, whose tomb is near the Bhambari village, about eleven miles from Tando Muhammad Khan; had visited Iran with a deputation, and humbly urged Imam Abdus Salam to send next *hujjat*, or *pir* in India. He insisted that the whole Indian community should not be punished for the misconduct of few persons of Uchh. Imam Abdus Salam is reported to have said: "I cannot revoke the decision of my father." Kamadia Kapur and his team lodged in Shahr-i-Babak for some months and craved devotionally to win the heart of the Imam. One day, Imam summoned him at his residence and said: "My father has suspended the tradition of *pir* for India, which will not be revoked in my period. I, however, appoint a *samit* (silent) *pir* instead." The Imam thus gave him the book, namely "**Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi**" with an instruction to obey its advices as if a *natiq* (speaking) *pir*. The tradition further relates that the Imam had taken a word from Kamadia Kapur that the name of the persons, who misbehaved with Pir Taj al-Din in Uchh, would not be divulged in other Ismaili *jamats*, so as to retain the unity of the Indian communities.

The tradition further suggests that Kamadia Kapur promised and kept the sacred book inside his turban and walked towards his homeland without shoes. He thus brought the holy text in Sind. The *Mukhi* summoned the followers in the prayer-hall. On the low wooden table (*pa't*), there is a *gadi* in green colour, depicting the authority of the Pir. The text of *Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi* was placed with respect on the *gadi* and the followers recited *Salawat*. Similar simple ceremony was also performed in other *Jamatkhanas* in India. Hence, the *Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi* became 29th Pir.

It is related that the repentants, not among the sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din came in Sind and sought remission from Kamadia Kapur for siding the opponents of Pir Taj al-Din.

W. Ivanow comments on **Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi** that, "The book, or its greater part, was compiled under Shah Abdu's-Salam who succeeded Imam Mustansir bi'l-lah and thus really was the Imam of the time when the compiler was engaged in writing. The enigmatic passage on p. 56 may be easily explained if we suggest that Mustansir bi'l-lah told his followers not to disclose his own identity to outsiders, nor of the Imam of one's time generally. And as the Imam of the time at the moment when the compiler was writing was Shah Abdu's-Salam, he automatically mentioned his name."

It exercised the authority of *hujjat* or *pir* for about 80 years till the appointment

of next 30<sup>th</sup> Pir Hyder Ali in 960/1552 in the period of Imam Khalilullah Ali (d. 993/1585). The tradition further relates that when Imam Khalilullah Ali resolved to appoint the 30<sup>th</sup> Pir for India, he summoned Mukhi Shamdas Kapura of Sind with an original copy of **Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi**. A ceremony was performed to take away the authority from the book and transfer it to Pir Hyder Ali. Nothing is known about Pir Hyder Ali's activities, including his son Pir Alauddin.

### **SAYED IMAM SHAH**

His name was Imamuddin, surnamed Abdur Rahim. He was born in Uchh in 834/1430. He was the younger son of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din. The tradition has it that when Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din died in 853/1449, his all sons were present in Uchh with exception of Sayed Imam Shah. The tradition further attests that he reached late during the interment of his father's body, inducing many stories to be woven around it, which are almost legendary in character.

### **The "share" of Sayed Imam Shah**

It is related that Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din had 18 sons and a daughter, who were present in Uchh during the death of their father, while Sayed Imam Shah reached late when the bier procession was moving. Sayed Imam Shah reached Uchh at once, where he learnt to his great chagrin of his brothers' treachery, who had divided whatever they found in their father's house. He therefore, hurried thither, overtook the procession and reached the bier. He stopped it and addressed the corpse, saying: "Dear father, you have not left me my share in inheritance" ("**Janatpuri**", no. 4). His brothers and other participants in the procession thought that he had gone mad, making himself so ridiculous. Some began to laugh at him. The seven wise men of Uchh and numerous spectators covered their faces with handkerchiefs to conceal smiles, some laughed so much that their very bones began to ache" (**Ibid.** no. 5-6).

It implies that his brothers had received the shares in inheritance, which obviously does not mean the office of the Pir. The story suggests that his brothers had divided what they discovered in the house of their late father without parting the share of Sayed Imam Shah. In fact, they also found enormous religious dues, the right of the Imam, which they misappropriated. Since Sayed Imam Shah was strict in the religious matter, his brothers resolved to distribute it in his absence without putting aside his share. This matter was yet unknown to Sayed Imam Shah.

The story runs that some people addressed Sayed Imam Shah, saying: "Your business is, no doubt, important, but it is not an appropriate time for it. The time is ripe to pay the bill, not to present a demand for a benefit" (**Ibid.** no. 7). The time passed in altercations, nearly three hours in hot discussion. The people became hungry, being impatient over the hitch in the progress of the procession (**Ibid.** no. 8).

It means his right of share was accepted, but it was not an appropriate time to demand for it. He then turned towards the body of his father, asking him not to

delay his answer, because people jeered at him. There came out of the bier the hand of the deceased Pir. The crowd struck with awe, stood motionless. The hand of the deceased handed a rosary (*tasbih*) to Imam Shah (**Ibid.** nos. 9-10). While the hand was returning to its original position, Imam Shah said: “I shall never part with this little inheritance, the rosary. But bestow upon me also something more.” Then, the bier burst, so that the head of the deceased became visible, and to the consternation of the crowd, the hand of the corpse took from its mouth a piece of stone sugar (*misri*) and handed it to Imam Shah (**Ibid.** nos. 11-12). Sayed Imam Shah seems to have satisfied with it because his brothers had already distributed the shares. The rosary (*tasbih*) signified the devotion in worship and the stone sugar (*misri*) referred to the sweet persuasion. These two things represented the wealth of the *iman* (faith). It cannot be ascertained who misappropriated the religious dues among the sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din, claiming it being the property of their father. It seems that the matter was not clear in the mind of Sayed Imam Shah, but when he received the rosary and the piece of stone sugar from the coffin of his father, it must have revealed to him that the wealth in the name of his father belonged to the right of the Imam. This is the main reason that none among the sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din except Sayed Imam Shah was invited by the Imam in Iran. In other words, the rosary and the sugar revealing a secret message saved Sayed Imam Shah from being destined the baser stage like some of his brothers.

It must be noted that Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din had already imparted to the followers through the *ginan* not to consider his any son as the Pir. The *ginan* reads, “Know my progeny in the world, comprising of 18 sons altogether. You consider them from me, but don’t adore them by knowing as the Pir” (“**Anant Akhado**”, 388). If the followers were warned not to accept his any son as the Pir after him, then it is more likely that the father had strictly warned his sons in advance that none among them would succeed him as the next Pir. It means that the theory of the “share” in the above story does not refer to the office of the Pir, which cannot be divided or distributed among the sons like the property.

Hitherto, we have noted that the office of the Pir in India from Pir Shams (d.757/1356) to Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din (d. 853/1449) was almost hereditary, and when the office seemed to be revered in the followers like the hereditary office of the Imam, an effect was necessary to operate in the line of the Pirs before the time it might become an ingrained belief that the Pirs were succeeded by their sons. Thus, soon after the death of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din, Imam Muhammad bin Islam Shah (d.868/1463) designated his brother Pir Taj al-Din as the next Pir instead of any son of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din to cut down the growing theory of “father to son” in the line of the Pirs. On this juncture, one can hardly deny the logic springs in the designation of the brother.

While going through the scrutiny of the *ginans* and the traditions, it seems that Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din left behind a house in Uchh, which was disposed off and its amount was distributed among his sons quickly before the interment of their father. Sayed Imam Shah asked for his legitimate share from this property. According to “**Tawarikh-i-Pir**” (Surat, 1935, 2<sup>nd</sup> vol., p. 100), “Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din had ordered to dig a hole in the prayer hall and hide an iron trunk in it containing the religious dues.” The tradition has it that a similar hole was dug also in his house in Uchh, where the religious dues of different regions were kept.

After his death, his sons found enormous fund of the religious dues in the house, which was misappropriated by few ones. It is possible that someone had reported Sayed Imam Shah that he had been deprived of his share (*panti*), therefore, he rushed towards Uchh, but was too late. He was yet unknown that the so called property of his father contained the religious dues. The best things he received miraculously from the coffin of his father was the rosary and stone sugar through which it inspired in his mind that his some brothers distributed mutually the religious dues and thus, he was satisfied mere in the rosary and the sugar since he was a strictly religious minded. Sayed Imam Shah virtually got nothing from his brothers, to which he says, “I have nothing in hand as the brothers did not give me anything. Then, the father granted me the faith (*iman*) by giving the rosary and sugar” (**Sayed Imam Shah and Bai Budhai’no Samvad**, 14: 5-6).

Having completed forty days in mourning at Uchh, Sayed Imam Shah left for Sind, where he came to the district Junn. It seems that the *jamat* of Junn and around was much displeased with him because of stopping his father’s bier for three hours. In the evening, the local people said to have expelled him from the Jamatkhana. Thus, he remained in the village without food for full nine mealtimes, fasting all the time. At the time of the tenth he walked away from the Jamatkhana. “During these happenings he received three heavy blows on his sides with a stick, never complaining, however, and in his heart he did not feel himself offended” (**Janatpuri**, no. 20).

Before we proceed in this context, we must touch here a key point to be noted. The treatment of the Ismailis in Junn with Sayed Imam Shh was almost equally same as with the treatment advanced for Pir Taj al-Din in Uchh. The Imam took drastic action in the case of Pir Taj al-Din only because he was the Pir and was wrongly accused. Besides, the followers misbehaved with the office of the Pirship (Piratan), resulting the suspension of deputing Pir from Iran to India. On other side, Sayed Imam Shah didn’t hold the office of the Pirship (Piratan). The followers however misinterpreted the demand of his share and emotionally became aggressive that he had stopped the bier of his father for three hours. Thus, the suspension of the next Pir was not resulted had Sayed Imam Shah been an official Pir.

Then, he addressed the *jamat*, saying: “Do not forget that I am a Sayed and give me some food for the sake of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din” (**Ibid**, no. 21). The people replied to him: “We do not consider you as Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din’s successor, because he did not recognize you as his successor and give you your share” (**Ibid**. no. 22). Whereupon, Sayed Imam Shah added, saying: “O’brothers! Listen to me. I have no claim on you. Why should you be so intolerant?” (**Ibid**. no. 23). This seems the conclusive evidence that Sayed Imam Shah did neither succeed his father nor he ever claimed for it.

Then he proceeded further from that village. He was followed by a certain Khoja Premji, who offered him to have a meal in his house. Sayed Imam Shah went to his house and took meal and blessed him.

The death of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din rocked the local Ismailis due to the internal conflict among his sons. According to Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah, the religious dues destined for Iran were absconded by some of other sons (**Satveni’ji Vel**,



119). According to Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah's narrative, after an intense and fruitless effort to attract the followers who had been swayed to Sunnism by some of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din's brothers, his father (Sayed Imam Shah) was discouraged, gave up his activities, and remained in seclusion (**Satveni'ji Vel**, 124). In the meantime, the Imam in Iran, apprised of the situation and was well aware of the desertion of several of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din's children, summoned Sayed Imam Shah. The immense joy of Sayed Imam Shah upon receiving the letter from the Imam is picturesquely described in his *ginan*. He describes that "the Lord's letter came in India being brought by Chandan Vir" (99:1), "his heart overflowed with joy" (99:2), "had he wings, he would fly to reach Lord's abode, but what he should do? Since his body was not in his control to be flown" (99:3), "If his shoulders had been winged, his shoulders would fly too" (99:4).

The letter of Imam Muhammad bin Islam Shah (d. 868/1463) was brought by a certain, Khoja Devasi Chandan. Sayed Imam Shah started his journey for Kahek in 854/1450. He described the tedious journey in his "**Janatpuri**." Bawa Ghulam Muhammad arranged his meeting with the Imam. The Imam is said to have assigned him the mission in the Central Gujrat. He returned and converted a bulk of Hindu peasants in Gujrat.

Sayed Imam Shah married the daughter of Shah Muhammad Bakhri, who gave birth of Sayed Muhammad Shah. Sayed Imam Shah died in 926/1520 and was buried in Pirana, about ten miles south-east of Ahmadabad. It is said that he abjured Ismailism because of not succeeding his father, but it is not in conformity with the genuine traditions. Weighing up the extant evidence, it appears that he was ingrained in Ismailism and demonstrated unswerving loyalty to the Nizari Imams till his death, and never took other route to goal his so called ambition. According to "**The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam**" (Leiden, 1961, p. 167), "As far as it is possible to ascertain, he cannot be regarded as the founder of a new sect, as he remained loyal to the Imam of his time." He composed many *ginans*, which are recited by the Ismailis. He had four sons, viz. Sayed Alam Shah, Sayed Ali Shah, Sayed Bakir Shah and Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah, and a daughter, Shams Khatoon.

### **Growth of the Imam Shahis**

The Ismaili mission in Gujrat suffered a setback due to the negative propaganda of Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah (d. 940/1534), the son of Sayed Imam Shah. It seems that it was his negative attitude to renounce his allegiance with the Nizari Imams, and laid the foundation of a new sect, called Imam Shahis. It is however doubtful that he had ever claimed Imamate for himself.

It appears that a theory was cultivated among the Imam Shahis, equating Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad (d. 710/1310) with Pir Shams Sebzewari (d. 757/1356) as one and the same person. The theory has it that Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad abdicated the Imamate in favour of his son Imam Kassim Shah (d.771/1370) and himself took up the mantle of the Pir and started his mission in India. This **abdication theory** is also sounded in the "**Satveni'ji Vel**" of Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah, which seems to have been inserted in later period. The modern scholars curiously speculate that this theory was the creation of Sayed Nur

Muhammad Shah to legitimate his alleged claim to the Imamate that would have served his self-interest to endorse a genealogy, tracing his father back to the Ismaili Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad. It should be noted that the “**Satveni’ji Vel**” remained in private collection of the Imam Shahis in Pirana, containing 200 stanzas with countless errors and interpolations. Mukhi Laljibhai Devraj (1842-1930) obtained its manuscript in Pirana. It looks that its manuscript was not examined minutely. It is hard to know what criteria he applied in his selection? He however seems to have selected its 150 stanzas and got them printed in Khojki script in 1906 at Bombay for the Ismailis. The judgment of the scholars in favour of the alleged claim of Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah is absolutely minted on the above printed text. According to “**Ismaili Hymns from South Asia**” (London, 1992, p. 17), “The Devraj edition long remained standard, until the changes in the direction of the community necessitated its revision.”

W. Ivanow writes in his “**The Sect of Imam Shah in Gujrat**” (JBBRA, XII, 1936, p. 32) that, “As he (Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah) surely could not pretend to be a son of an Imam, he had to invent a theory of his descent from the line of the Imam, and the coincidence in the names of his ancestor, (Pir) Shamsuddin, with the name of Shamsuddin the Imam, offered an easy opportunity.” Hence, W. Ivanow advanced his observation on the alleged claim of the Imamate of Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah. Dr. Azim Nanji seems to have inspired with Ivanow’s comment and writes in “**The Nizari Ismaili Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent**” (New York, 1978, pp. 63-4) that, “Since he (Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah) claimed to be an Imam, it was necessary according to standard Ismaili belief that he should want to establish a direct lineage from the Imams in order to authenticate his claims. By making Pir Shams and Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad one and the same person, and by claiming direct descent from Pir Shams, he could thus substantiate his own right to the Imamate.”

The **abdication theory** making an Imam degraded to the office of the Pir is the creation of later period, when a part of the *ginans* including “**Satveni’ji Vel**” were in the possession of the kakas (headmen) in Pirana, who were responsible to distort and insert **abdication theory** to suit the flavour of their beliefs.

We will quote below few verses taken from the “**Satveni’ji Vel**” of Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah, which was printed in Bombay (1906):

**“Pir Shams had both offices (Imamate and Pirship)” 78 : 9**

**“Pir Shams then went to Punjab after consigning Imamate to Kassim Shah. It was Samavat 1366 (1310 A.D.) when Kassim Shah assumed Imamate. Hence, Pir Shams retained office of the Pir and Kassim Shah that of Imamate.” 94 : 1-6**

It is claimed in the above verses that Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad had come in India, and when he intended to proceed Punjab, he relinquished his office of Imamate to Kassim Shah, and retained the office of the Pir with him. It suggests that Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad henceforth came to be known as Pir Shams. In other words, the Imamate remained with Kassim Shah and his descendants, while the office of Pir with Pir Shams and his descendants. It is therefore crystal

clear to judge that any claim of Imamate being advanced in the line of Pir Shams cannot be validated since he or his descendants were not Imams, but Pirs. According to the standard belief of the Ismailis that an Imam is the sole authority to commission any person in his absolute discretion to the post of Pir, therefore, the **abdication theory** cannot be historically true, but was the causation of the later Imam Shahi kakas, whose beliefs used to be changed from time to time.

The scrutiny of the old manuscripts of the *ginans* suggests that the original work of “**Satveni’ji Vel**” would have been projected in 100 stanzas, dealing with the history of the Imams and Pirs. It was compiled most possibly between 922/1516 and 926/1520 when Sayed Imam Shah (d. 926/1520) was alive. It seems impossible that Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah had cultivated the **abdication theory** in the period of his father. There is another point to touch that Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah was admittedly well ground in the Ismaili history and knew that an Imam should be the son of the Imam, therefore, his so called claim to the Imamate is highly doubtful.

Sayed Imam Shah had composed “**Moman Chetamani**” in which he also admits that, “Shamsuddin was the son of Salauddin, who embarked from Tabriz, and he was Pir Shamsuddin to spread the religion.” (no. 204) and “He showed Kassim Shah, the Lord of the Age” (no. 362). Besides, the “**Janat-Nama**” of Sayed Imam Shah is a popular text, which reads : “Recognize Pir Satgur Nur, who is (in the same authority) that of Salauddin. His son was Pir Shamsuddin and Pir Nasiruddin was from the latter” (no. 77). It ensues from these verses that the **abdication theory** did not exist in the time of Sayed Imam Shah and his son, but was coined in later period.

It is also suggested that Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah had used the word *nar* for himself (Sayed **Nar** Muhammad Shah instead of Sayed **Nur** Muhammad Shah) in the *ginans* to boost his alleged claim, which is another layer of confusion added in the modern works. While dismissing the view, we will trace out actual reason. It is seen that the singers of the *ginans* used to pronounce the word *nar* as *nur* in many cases, and gradually they found coherence in the two words, and seems to have ignored distinction between them. They found striking parallels between these two words, and being an Indian by origin, the singers preferred to pronounce the Hindi word *nar* instead of the foreign word *nur* in many *ginans*. The singers also copied in writing what they recited. This is also a reason that **Pir Sadr al-Din** was recited and written as **Pir Sadardin**. It seems reasonable to judge that the scribes of the *ginans* had transmuted the word *nur* (light) for *nar* (Lord), resulting the rendering of **Nur Muhammad Shah** as **Nar Muhammad Shah**. This is sharply a transcriptional error, suggesting nothing to believe that Sayed Nur Muhammad have ever called himself as Sayed Nar Muhammad Shah. His extant *ginans* do not sound in this context a little likelihood.

It is however certain that Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah had violated the community discipline, engendering the principal cause of the split after 926/1520 and he was the real renegade to have abjured Nizari Ismailism. In “**Manazail a-Aqtab wa Basati’nul ahabab**” (compiled in 1237/1822), Sayed Nur Muhammad is made responsible for separating his followers from the main Ismaili stock. W. Ivanow also writes on its basis that a certain Mukhi Kheta was the head of 18000

converted Hindus during the time of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din. He was commissioned to collect religious dues in a tithe wallet (*jholi*) in Gujrat and deposit the accumulated funds in the central treasury in Uchh, Sind. This practice was in operation further in the time of Sayed Imam Shah as well as Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah. The tradition has it that soon after the death of his father, Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah ordered Mukhi Kheta that the religious dues collected in Gujrat should henceforth be deposited in Pirana instead of Uchh. Mukhi Kheta emphatically refused it, which is more likely a bone contention of the defection.

It seems that a large conversion resulted in the time of Sayed Imam Shah in Gujrat and Kathiawar, where Mukhi Kheta used to collect normally the religious dues, which was more enormous than Kutchh, Sind and Punjab. It is probable that Sayed Nur Shah had planned shifting of the central treasury from Uchh, Sind to Pirana, Gujrat, and if not, at least the religious dues of Gujrat should be deposited in Pirana, so that it could be utilized at his liberty. It must be noted that the veneration of the shrines of the Sayeds between 926/1520 and 931/1525 had developed on large scale in Pirana among the followers who supported Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah. It also appears that he intended to make Pirana a center of veneration more attractive than Uchh. In pursuit, he needed enormous funds, which could only be generated from the central treasury, and that is why he wanted to transfer it from Uchh to Pirana. He declared his father as the successor of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din and himself the successor of his father.

Mukhi Kheta seems to be a regular and faithful in his duty. In the absence of official orders, he could not follow the instruction of Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah. Sind was near Iran more than Pirana in remitting religious dues to the Imam, therefore, it was immaterial to shift the central treasury from Sind to Gujrat. In sum, the refusal of Mukhi Kheta and opposition of Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah marred the relations of the Ismailis in Sind and Gujrat, and it was an early brick of the schism, making the Indian Ismailis bifurcated into two branches, i.e., the Khojas Ismailis and the Imam Shahis or Pirana-panthis.

When his plan was foiled, Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah came up openly to misguide the Ismailis. Its report was sent to Imam Nuruddin Ali (d. 957/1550) in Iran, who at once outcast him from the community with an express orders, and instructed the faithful followers to refrain from their association with the Sayeds of Pirana. The schism took place in the emotionally charged climate around 931/1525, and certainly the majority of the Ismailis did not subscribe to the creed of the Imam Shahis. W. Ivanow writes in "**The Sect of Imam Shah in Gujrat**" (JBBRAS, XII, 1936, p. 45) that, "The split, caused by Nur Muhammad Shah's pretensions, has done incalculable harm to his sect. Instead of being followers of Ismailism, the ancient and highly philosophical branch of Islam, with its great cultural traditions and the mentality of a world religion, they have become nothing but a petty community of "Piranawallas," a kind of inferior Hindus, and very doubtful Muslims. Anyhow, orthodox Muslims do not regard them as Muslims, and orthodox Hindus do not regards them as Hindus." In short, the Imam Shahi branch lost all its cultural elements and rapidly sank deeper and deeper, with no prospect of early regeneration. It is now a hodgepodge of Hindu and Islamic elements being divided into rival Muslim and Hindu factions. In 1993, some of them egged on by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP founded on

29<sup>th</sup> August, 1964) have captured the shrine of Sayed Imam Shah and declared it to be a Hindu temple, naming it Prerana Peeth or Samadhi Mandir.

Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah died in 940/1534 and was buried in the mausoleum of his father in Pirana, the necropolis of the Imam Shahi sect. He had several sons, the oldest being Sayed Jalaluddin and Sayed Mustapha. Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah had appointed one of his younger sons as his successor, called Sayed Miran Khan, who was exiled from Pirana. Sayed Jalaluddin occupied the shrine of Sayed Imam Shah, which remained in his custody and his descendants for about a century, while the Pirs in the descent of Sayed Miran Khan were moving about the country. Sayed Miran Khan rambled as a successor of his father in Surat, Burhanpur and the towns of the Deccan.

### **Emergence of the Momin *Jamat* in Gujrat**

Satish C. Misra writes in “**Muslim Communities in Gujrat**” (New Delhi, 1985, pp. 103-4) that, “Momins, popularly called Momanas, are a cultivating community found all over north Gujrat, especially in the Banaskantha and Mehsana districts. Their legends ascribe their conversion to Islam to Pir (Hasan) Kabir al-Din, the 16<sup>th</sup> century Nizari missionary.” Pir Taj al-Din was notably the next to visit North Gujrat for the proselytizing mission.

Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din continued to follow the tract of his father’s mission, and procured few tasks of the incomplete mission of his father. His proselytism in North Gujrat was significant, where the Ismailis emerged as the Momin (or Momana) in due course.

The Ismailis in Sidhpur and Methan in North Gujrat openly demonstrated their loyalty with Pir Taj al-Din. Thus, they won the hearts of the Ismailis of other regions, significantly in Sind, who branded them as the faithful (*momin* or *momana*) Ismailis. Pir Taj al-din made his footing in Sind, Kutchh and Kathiawar, and reached as far as Sidhpur and Methan to deliver the Imam’s message to the Momin *jamat*. During his short visit, he also imparted the *jamat* and converted the local Hindus. He appointed a Rajput Chief Punja Shin as their *Mukhi*, and then returned to Uchh.

Sayed Imam Shah had converted a multitude of the Hindus of the agrarian and pastoral communities in Central Gujrat soon after his return from Iran in 858/1454. He visited the village of Girmath, about seven miles from Ahmedabad and made large conversion among the Kunbis tribe of Hinduism, and there the followers from the land of Kanam in Central Gujrat arrived including other from 74 villages. He however did not go to Sidhpur and Methan, but made a short visit of Ramwada between Gujrat and Kutchh. According to Sayed Imam Shah, “All *ginans*, who were originally converted by Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din and Pir Taj al-Din, and some among them were imparted by Sayed Imam Shah in Ramwada. Sayed Imam Shah however converted a group near Ahmedabad, who later joined the Imam Shahi fold, known as the Pragati Satpanthi Momins or Imam Shahi Matias. They had no relation with the Momin Ismailis of North Gujrat. Later, a group seceded the mainstream of the Momin Ismaili community and became the

Sunnis were called the Mashaikh Momins.

When Sayed Imam Shah died, the Ismailis in the Central Gujrat suffered a great reverse and the half-baked adherents of Islam were dragged into the most furious blasts of hostile winds. One major group in Sidhpur and Methan did not accept Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah being the successor of Sayed Imam Shah and steadfastly remained loyal to the Nizari Imams. The Momin Ismailis were the agrarian and pastoral *jamat* found all over North Gujrat, notably in the Banaskantha and Methan districts. Together with agriculture, they were the weavers and most every household had a hand-loom.

Fourth in the line of Sayed Mashaikh bin Sayed Rehmatullah Shah bin Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din, was Sayed Fazal Shah; who operated proselytizing mission in north Gujrat with a tremendous effect upon the local peasants. His disciples islamized their names and forsook irrelevant customs. He is said to have visited Iran in 1035/1625 during the period of Imam Nizar II (d. 1038/1628) and was appointed only conducted the proselytism afresh, but also accelerated the economical condition of the Ismailis. In the meantime, Sayed Fazal Shah died in the village of Jetral near Kadi in 1068/1659, and left behind two sons, Sayed Hasan Shah (1062-1126/1652-1715) and Sayed Mashaikh Shah II (1060-1108/1650-1697). Sayed Hasan Shah, known as Hasan Pir became next *vakil* and continued to work with Pir Kassim Shah in place of his father. It must be known that Pir Kassim Shah was a recognized Pir, while Hasan Pir was a *vakil* not a Pir. Since Hasan Pir was much revered by the Momin *jamat*, who called him Hasan Pir.

It is however related that Sayed Mashaikh Shah had strong proclivity towards Sunnism, and fell prey to worldly temptation, absconded with religious tithes and was excommunicated. He went to Deccan and sought support of the Mughal emperor Aurengzeb (d. 1118/1707) to convert the Ismailis. He also reviled the faith of his forbears to win the heart of the emperor. He composed “**Mu’azzizat**” dealing with the account of his journey to the Deccan when Aurengzeb was engaged in the campaign against Bijapur and Golconda. He relates his prayers for the emperor and his success.

The doctrinaires fanaticism of Aurengzeb is a historical fact, who wrote to Shujat Khan in Ahmedabad to take its action, who passed on the royal order to Mir Shamsuddin in Patan to take field against the Ismailis in Gujrat. Pir Kassim Shah and Hasan Pir were not in Gujrat, but were on a trip of Kathiawar. In their absence, Mir Shamsuddin assembled the Ismailis and read the royal decree, impugning them to forsake Ismailism and espouse Sunnism, otherwise they would be beheaded with their children and their properties and lands would be confiscated. Sayed Mashaikh Shah was also in the enemy’s troop, who also tried to convince them to give up Ismaili faith. Sensing the threat of hovering persecution, some Ismaili families came forward and aligned themselves with the Sunnism, but other 500 Ismaili families did not waver their faith inspite of the gloomy situation. They openly refused to give up their path. The Ismailis who joined Sunnism accepted Sayed Mashaikh as their Pir, who became known as the Sunni Momins, while those Momin Ismailis, who remained steadfast in their faith were called as the Chilia. These 500 Momin Ismaili families were imprisoned in the fort of Patan and put under trial. Pir Kassim Shah and Hasan

Pir rushed to Ahmadabad, and filed suit before the chief judge, who, after the proceeding of three days, exculpated the Ismailis, declaring them as true Muslims in a written verdict being handed over to Pir Kassim Shah. This may be perhaps the first legal verdict in India for the Ismaili Muslims if the tradition is genuine. Pir Kassim Shah and Hasan Pir came in Patan and relieved the Ismailis. Henceforward, the Ismailis broke their relation with the followers of Sayed Mashaikh Shah, known as the Mashaikh Momins, who died in 1108/1697 in Ahmadabad, and his followers later quarrelled, whether he was a Sunni or Shi'ite, causing further internal splits.

Pir Kassim Shah took about 250 Ismaili families and settled them in the villages of Mudana, Samoda, Meta and Bidar in Gujrat. Hasan Pir settled rest of 250 families mostly in Thanapipli in Kathiawar. Pir Kassim Shah died around 1121/1710, and was buried at a village, called Mudana, two miles from Sidhpur. Thus, Hasan Pir had to administer the mission both in Gujrat and Kathiawar. It is said that once Hasan Pir pitched his tent on the bank of Badar River near Ganod. Suddenly, a terrible storm drove him and his men into the river and died in 1126/1715. Hasan Pir was revered as the saint of the Momin Ismailis. In addition to his mausoleum in Thanapipli, near Junagarh, the local Ismailis built a shrine in 1128/1717 at Ganod, Gujrat as a tribute to Hasan Pir. His shrine is flocked by the multitude of visitors, and one like visit is noteworthy that of Mahomed Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, who as a child was taken from Karachi by his parents in the beginning of 1877.

After the death of Pir Kassim Shah and Hasan Pir, the Momin Ismailis were severely in trouble without any other *vakil* for many years. The Mughal governors seem to have continued the hostile policy of Aurengzeb, and the circumstances did not allow the Ismailis to divulge their faith or perform prayers in their prayer-hall. They had lived for generations in the teeth of bitterest opposition. Later fourth in the line of Sayed Zahir al-Din, the son of Pir Sadr al-Din was Sayed Ghulam Ali Shah or Sayed Ghulmali Shah (d. 1207/1792), who visited North Gujrat to impart the Ismailis and collect the religious dues. He was followed by Sayed Muhammad Shah Dhulla (d. 1228/1813). Then, the four *Kul Kamadias* of four villages, Varsilana, Methan, Meloj and Vanasarna visited Mahallat, Iran.

In Surat, the Momin Ismailis were yet tinged with the Hindu social customs and had to live sometimes under Shi'ite garbs. It seems that the Mughal authorities had made the Hindus and the Shi'ites as their main target, and as a result, the Momin Ismailis had to face on either side. It is said that they built a secret prayer-hall in Surat, where both the Muslim-Hindu styles were significantly employed at two main entrances. The first entrance facing the Hindu locality was ornamented like a temple. The second entrance lying at the street of the Shi'ite Muslims, imitated the design of a mausoleum. The edifice was known simply as Vada Bhuvan (big mansion). The Ismailis used secret code before admission. When the enemies hunted the Shi'ite Muslims in their locality, the entrance in that area was to be closed, and another was opened instead. And if the Hindus were persecuted in their locality, the gate lying in that street was to be shut, and other was opened for the service. This was a sort of *taqiya* that could avoid the Ismailis from being domineered. In the middle of premises, there was a big hall, whose underground chamber was used for prayers. It must be noted that a like tradition of two exterior looks of the prayer-hall is reported to have been

employed in Surat once again in the middle of 19th century, known as Dada'nu Ghar (house of the grandfather).

### **Mission of the Kadiwal Sayeds**

Bibi Khadija, the wife of Sayed Imam Shah seems to have played key role in the split. She advanced her explicit support to Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah and repudiated the recognition of the Nizari Imam. She is said to have declared Sayed Imam Shah as the successor of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din, making Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah the successor of her husband. She summoned Sayed Rehmatullah Shah (825/1422-925/1519), the son of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din at Pirana to win his support, but he refused to throw off his allegiance with the Nizari Imam. He however stayed in Pirana for few months and returned to Kutchh. He propagated through his messengers in Sind, Kutchh, Kathiawar, Gujrat and Punjab that he had no relation with the Sayeds of Pirana. He also sent a large amount of religious dues by two persons in Iran through the central treasury in Uchh. Khayr Khwah Herati (d. after 960/1553) also confirms the visit of two Indian Ismailis, the followers of Sayed Rehmatullah Shah, who had come to Khorasan on their way to search for the Imam to present religious dues, vide his “**Tasnifat**” (ed. by Ivanow, Tehran, 1961, p. 54).

There are different versions for the appellation of the word *kadiwal*. It is said that Sayed Rehmatullah Shah left Pirana and selected a village called Kadi in Kutchh, where he resided with his family, who became known as the Kadiwala Sayeds. It is also related that Sayed Rehmatullah Shah and his family shortly lived in the village, called Kadhi, lying between Uchh and Multan, and then he went to live in other village, also called Kadi in the northern Gujrat on the route to Junagadh. Hence, his descendant became known as the Kadhiwala or Kadiwala. Another tradition suggests that the male members of his family used to wear an iron band (*kadi*) round their arms, by which they earned the title of Kadiwala (the people of iron band). It is also related that his descendant used to recite a couplet (*kadi*) of the *ginan* before the new converts, who called them as Kadi'wala (reciter of the couplet). It is also said that Sayed Rehmatullah or his descendant lived in the village called Kaliyanwala, about five miles from Hafizabad in Punjab. This village was also pronounced as Kadiwala instead of Kaliyanwala, thus they were called Kadiwala Sayeds. It is also interesting to note that there is one village, about fifteen miles from Gujranwala on the way to Dakhanmandi in Punjab, whose inhabitants were the followers of Pir Shams, but it has not been ascertained whether Sayed Rehmatullah Shah had resided there or not. Culling up the accessible oral traditions, it seems however nearer to the possibility that Sayed Rehmatullah Shah and his descendants lived for a long time in a village, called Kadi in Gujrat, wherefrom they earned the title of Kadiwala Sayed. The Bohra community in Gujrat is known under the four regional terms, i.e., Patani Vohras, Charotar Vohras, Surati Vohras and Kadiwala Vohras. Likewise, the Ismaili Sayeds also became known as the Kadiwal Sayeds due to living in Kadi, Gujrat. In sum, Sayed Rehmatullah Shah and his descendant became known as the Kadiwala Sayeds, while in opposition, the Sayeds in the line of Sayed Imam Shah were called as the Piranawala Sayeds.

The Kadiwala Sayed carried on the mission in India for about 250 years. Some of



them retained their contact with the Iranian Imams, but some discontinued, and conducted the mission independently. Sayed Rehmatullah Shah mostly preached in Gujrat and Kutchh and died in 925/1519. He left behind two sons, Sayed Fazal Shah and Sayed Mushaq Shah, who continued the tradition of Ismaili mission despite several impediments.

### **Mission of the Bawa family**

The Bawa family was famous for their noble services to the Imam, who also conducted brisk mission in different parts of India. Unfortunately, we do not have any source to mention their services. Thanks God, an important manuscript in Gujrati has been unearthed, dealing with the accounts of the Bawa family. It was written by Khuda Bux Sher Muhammad. It came in possession of Mohammad Ali Dada Mia'n, then it reached in Calcutta to Janat Ali Muhammad Ali, whose daughter Zainab Khanu copied it on Friday, the 13th August, 1920. Then Kassim Ali Janat Ali copied with his own hand on Sunday, the 10th January, 1943. Speaking safely, its name is "**Account of the Bawas.**" With the help of our this and some other sources, we will discuss below the brief account of the Bawa family.

### **BAWA MUHAMMAD HASHIM**

Muhammad Hashim belonged to the Sayed family. His lineage runs as Muhammad Hashim bin Moinuddin bin Aminuddin bin Buraqanuddin bin Shamsul Wasak bin Quwwamuddin bin Sayed Ali II bin Muhammad II bin Hussain II bin Daud bin Zaid bin Ahmad bin Muhammad I bin Hamza bin Yousuf bin Hasan bin Sakhdakullah bin Abul Hasan bin Abdullah bin Sayed Ali I bin Imam Zayn al-Abidin.

His father Moinuddin resided in Kirman, who once visited the village of Kahek, where he was deeply astonished and impressed to see Imam Islam Shah (d. 827/1423) and embraced Ismailism. After his death, the Imam invited his son, Muhammad Hashim with his family in Kahek. He also joined Ismailism after long deliberations. It appears that like his father, Muhammad Hashim was also rooted in Sufism. The Imam appointed him as one of his attendants, and later the *Mukhi* of Darkhana Jamatkhana in Kahek. In his time, Pir Sadr al-Din (d.819/1416) and Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din (d. 853/1449) had visited Kahek. Imam Islam Shah (d. 827/1423) invested him the title of *Baba* (or *Bawa*) and sent him in *vakil* in 820/1417. The title of Bawa along with the office of *vakils* continued in his progeny. It took him some time to study the Vedic literature, and then started his proselytizing mission in Multan, where he assumed name of Harichandra. He is also said to have translated in Hindi some sayings of Imam Islam Shah, which he heard personally and circulated among the new converts. He died in 858/1453.

### **BAWA GHULAM MUHAMMAD**

Ghulam Muhammad, Gul Muhammad or Bawa Gulgul, the son of Bawa

Muhammad Hashim resided with the family in Kahek. He was yet in Kahek, who is said to have arranged a meeting of Sayed Imam Shah with Imam Muhammad bin Islam Shah (d.868/1463), which is described in the “**Janatpuri**” (30:43) that the Imam, receiving the news of a Khoja pilgrim asking for the *didar*, told Bawa Ghulam Muhammad to put him up and provide necessary food. It seems that he wished to entertain his guest with his own resources, therefore, he sewed a scull-cap and went to the market and sold and brought food, fruits, grapes for the money realized from the sale. He offered Sayed Imam Shah to eat. So far Bawa Ghulam Muhammad could not understand who was he? He however thought him as an ordinary Khoja. Sayed Imam Shah at last disclosed his name after three days, and his desire was accomplished when he beheld the Imam sitting on the throne in the Jamatkhana on Friday night.

Bawa Ghulam Muhammad was deputed in India at the end of 858/1453 as a *vakil*. He also brought some written advices of the Imam in India. He visited Iran in 865/1460, where he died.

### **BAWA MAHR AL-DIN**

Mahr al-Din, known as Moriya, the son of Bawa Ghulam Muhammad was appointed as a *vakil* for India by Imam Abdus Salam (d. 899/1493). He mostly resided with his followers in the village of Fulnai in Sind. He is also said to have spread the copies of “**Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi**” in India. He carried on his mission for few years and died in 901/1495.

### **BAWA KHAIR AL-DIN**

Imam Gharib Mirza (d.902/1496) appointed as a *vakil* to Khair al-Din, known as Kheraj, the son of Bawa Mahr al-Din. He visited Iran with some followers in the period of Imam Gharib Mirza. His associates deceived and left him alone in the house and went to see the Imam. The Imam asked them, “Who is great?” Nobody advanced satisfactory answer. The Imam said, “Someone is missing among you and he will reply me.” At last, Khair al-Din was brought, who replied, “The great is the *amr* (command) of the Imam.” The Imam was pleased and appointed him his *vakil*. He also resided in the village of Fulnai in Sind, where he is said to have died.

### **BAWA YASIR**

Yasir (or A'asar), known as Jesar was the son of Bawa Khair al-Din. The four *vakils* in the Bawa family, from Bawa Muhammad Hashim to Bawa Khair al-Din used to leave their families in the village of Kech in Makran, Baluchistan before entering Sind for security purpose. It created troubles for them to see their families, thus Imam Gharib Mirza ordered Yasir to live with the family in India. Yasir had three sons, Alauddin (A'as al-Din), Jamr al-Din and Dadu.

Bawa Yasir was commissioned the office of the *vakil*, who came in Sind with his family including his wife Pari Jahan Khanum, two sisters A'ijina and A'ish and

three sons. He was persecuted, therefore, he left his family with his son Dadu and went to Punjab and Kashmir with two sons, Alauddin (or A'as al-Din) and Jamar al-Din and examined possibility of Ismaili mission. He learnt that many Ismailis had become Sunnis due to persecution. He preached in secret and succeeded to bring them in the Ismaili fold.

The early Sumra rulers in Sind were the Ismailis, but the later Sumra adhered Sunnism. The Sumra dynasty in Sind ended almost before 762/1361. Henceforward, the local feudal chiefs descended from the Sumra rulers were also known as the Sumras. A certain feudal chief, called Muhammad Sumaro killed Hasan Arghun, the *amir* of Fateh Bagh and assumed the power. Fateh Bagh is a historical city near Tando Ghulam Hyder or in the north of Matli in Sind. He was deadly enemy of the Ismailis, whom he used to grind under the millstone of cruelty.

Bawa Yasir learnt in Punjab that the Ismailis were persecuted in Sind. He sent his two sons, A'as al-Din and Jamr al-Din in Sind and summoned his small son, Dadu to join him in his mission in Kutchh, Gujrat and Kathiawar. He told his sons to hold a meeting with Muhammad Sumaro at Fateh Bagh. Both of them arrived in Fateh Bagh, and requested Muhammad Sumaro to let the Ismailis live in peace. He called for the *qadi* and ordered to issue *fatwa* against them. The *qadi* issued *fatwa* and under the vehement agitation of the bigoted *qadi*, the two brothers, A'as al-Din and Jamr al-Din were paraded in the streets and beheaded.

Bawa Yasir was overwhelmed with grief in Jamnagar on the executions of his sons. He left his son, Dadu in Kutchh and himself started his journey towards Iran. Before departure, his wife expired in her native place, Jamnagar. She was buried however near the location, where the shrine of Hasan Pir was built in 1128/1717. There also exist her sisters' graves. Bawa Yasir was traveling towards Iran, but his health impaired on the route, therefore he alighted in the village of Kech in Makran. It is related that he brought the son of a goldsmith with him as his servant, who secretly reported the local Baluchis that his master had huge wealth. Bawa Yasir was thus plundered in a night and killed in 956/1549 when it was the period of Imam Nuruddin Ali (d. 957/1550). The local people call him Sir Pir and visit his shrine.

### **BAWA DADU (OR PIR DADU)**

He was also known as Sayed Dadu, Daud or Bawa Khair Shah, Dadu Pirdad, Pir Dino or Pir Dadu, the son of Bawa Yasir, born in 879/1474. He was an efficient scholar of Arabic, Persian and a man steeped in the deep understanding of the mystical teaching of Islam. He acquired high command in Indian languages and studied the Vedic literature. He came in Fateh Bagh soon after his father's death and built the shrine of his brothers with the help of local people. He resided in different parts of Sind without exposition.

According to "**Account of the Bawas**" (Ms. p. 15), an Ismaili caravan visited Iran in 957/1550 in the period of Imam Khalilullah Ali (d. 993/1585). The Imam was given latest jamati report of Sind. The Imam delivered them a written message

with necessary instructions. The letter was brought to India and in presence of the multitude of the followers including Pir Dadu, it was read in the main Jamatkhana of Sind. It reads: **“I consider Bawa Daud, the sincere son of late *vakil* Bawa Yasir as my elder son. You and the *jamats* must revere and obey him as a chief *vakil* above all other front ranking *vakils*. You must obey him. All the *vakils* have rendered efficient services with my orders to impart you with great deal of enthusiasm. They suffered difficulties and hurdles. I have now promoted his status above other *vakils*. I inform the *jamats* that I have authorized him to do what I used to do, therefore, I order to take his *dastbosi*.”** It was 14<sup>th</sup> Kattrak, Samvant 1605 according to the Vikram calendar when the above Imam’s message was read in the Jamatkhana. He earned gracious compliments in the *jamat*, who individually kissed his hand. The day was celebrated and followed by a dinner. The Ismailis continued to celebrate it on every year, namely ***Eid of the Shah*** for about 300 years.

It is important to note that the word *vakil* was a short form of *Vakil’i Shah* (vicegerent of the Lord) or *Vakil’i Mawla* (vicegerent of the Imam), and the term *Vakil’i Nafs’i Nafis’i Humayun* (vicegerent of the Imam in his spiritual and temporal capacities) was common in usage in Iran for the Indian *Hujjat* or Pir. In the above letter, it has been mentioned: **“You and your *jamat* must revere and obey him as a chief *vakil* above all other front ranking *vakils*”** and also **“I have now promoted his status above other *vakils*”**. This is indicated in unequivocal words that Pir Dadu was appointed not as an ordinary but head of the *vakils* or Chief *Vakil* in India. It seems that some Ismailis misinterpreted it that the “promotion” over other *vakils* referred to the office of the Pir and began to call him Pir Dadu in place of Bawa Dadu. When he visited and returned from Iran in 961/1554 with the mantle of the *vakil* (or Chief *Vakil*), the mainstream of the community understood his status, but the practice of calling him “Pir” seems to have stuck in his name, and as a result, it seems probable that some would have inserted his name as 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Pir in the list of the Ismaili Pirs, which was not in conformity with the official list recited in the old prayer. He was not an authorized Pir, nevertheless his identity as “Pir Dadu” became historical.

Pir Dadu visited Anjudan to see Imam Khalilullah Ali in 961/1554 at the age of 80 years. He reported the Imam the different changes he made in the community. He was authorized to make further changes in religious practices. With a new mandate, he returned to Fateh Bagh. The Imam’s assignments beckoned him for action.

Culling up the fragment of traditions, it seems that in accomplishing their mission with the maximum impact, the Ismaili *da’is* in India had lowered the linguistic and cultural barriers to conversion to great extent. What was commonly known in India that the term Khoja designated not religious identity, but affiliation to a caste of petty traders. Neither the orthodox Muslims nor Hindus would claim the Khoja Ismailis as co-religionists. The mixed character of Khoja Ismailis’ rituals and the Hindu elements in their society was such an index by which the Islamic character among them became hard to judge at that time. Their reverence towards the first Imam Ali, the commemoration of the event of Karbala however placed them among the Shi’ite Muslims, while the tributes they offered

to the Imams signified their affiliation to the Nizari Ismaili branch. In matter of marriages and funeral ceremonies, they had to knock the door of the Sunni *mullas*. In consideration of these conditions, Pir Dadu had laid much emphasis in enhancing the sense of their belonging in Islam, and tried to define a sharp position of the Khoja Ismailis. He first reviewed the religious practices for the first time after Pir Sadr al-Din with the instructions of Imam Khalilullah Ali. He also revised the old daily prayer, and removed some old practices and *ginans*. He also made certain changes in the tithe and introduced a new system called *petand* to give relief to the poor class. The word *petand* implies the dues levied what one's stomach devoured. The followers were told to make an account what they had eaten and give tithe on every month on the eaten items. Thus, his followers also became known as the Petandi. **(NB:** This practice continued for a long period and finally Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah abolished it in a *farman* made in Nairobi on April 19, 1945.

He also conducted proselytizing mission and converted a large number of Lohana class of the Rajput stock in Fateh Bagh, notably the family of Khoja Bhaloo (d.1016/1607) in the end of 961/1554. It is said that Bhaloo resided in Fateh Bagh without having a son. He asked to pray for a son, to which Pir Dadu offered him to embrace Ismailism at first and then he would pray. Bhaloo acceded and joined the Ismaili fold. Pir Dadu prayed for him and a son was born, named Lakho.

Maharao Hamir founded the city of Bhuj in Kutchh in 1510. In 1548, Rao Khengar (1510-1585), fled to Ahmedabad, was aided by Mehmud Shah in regaining his dominions in Kutchh and distinguished by the title of Rao. He founded Bhuj as his capital. Pir Dadu was in Fateh Bagh, where the local chief Muhammad Sumaro did not desist from hatching animosity against him. He resisted the bitter opposition, and when the gravity of brutal persecution of Muhammad Sumaro thickend, he realized that the local ruler was an insurmountable obstruction in his mission along with insecurity of his life in Fateh Bagh, Pir Dadu is said to have written a letter to Rao Bharmal I (1585-1631) in Bhuj, asking for refuge to tide over persecution. His request was acceded. He was also informed to bring his followers as more as he could for the prosperity of Bhuj. Another tradition relates that some state officers of Bhuj visited Fateh Bagh and urged Pir Dadu to visit Bhuj during his journey in Gujrat and Kathiawar too. In sum, he first came in Jamnagar with his servants and left behind his family in the custody of his son, Sadik. His visit however was very short and returned. In 994/1587, his caravan marched towards Bhuj with forty families along with the sons of his late brothers, where he was feted honour. He settled the Ismailis in the north of Bhuj. Soon afterwards, another batch of forty to fifty families was also invited from Sind. A plot of land near the town was assigned to them, known as the Khojawada. It was fortified with walls, one of its gates is still known as Dadu's Gate.

Kutchh was suffering from terrible famine for seven years due to scantity of rain. Rao Bharmal I asked Pir Dadu to pray for the rain. Pir Dadu prayed and it was rained. The ruler became so impressed that he brought him in a royal procession inside Bhuj and gave him another piece of land, where a Jamatkhana was built. With the influx of the Ismailis, Kutchh began to prosper. The ruler also granted them gardens and arable lands. Pir Dadu found Bhuj an ideal ground for the business activities; therefore, he wrote a letter to the *jamat* in Sind, insisting the

merchant class to come in Bhuj, where they would get facilities from the state. Thus, Varas Hematjani with 60 families and Rai Sachedina with 20 families marched towards Bhuj, where they were given agricultural lands alongwith residential places.

Rao Khangar is credited to have flourished Mandavi with a port in Kutchh. The Bhatia caste in Thatta, Sind was famous and expert merchant class. For promoting trade, Rao Khangar invited a certain Bhatia Seth Topan in Bhuj to build the city and port. Seth Topan built it with princely amount. In 994/1587, Pir Dadu had launched his missionary work and converted Seth Topan in the period of Rao Bharmal I. Besides, Bhaloo also joined Pir Dadu from Fateh Bagh to Bhuj. He was an efficient and obtained a piece of land, known as Iblani Fario. He also joined the state service and died in 1016/1607.

Jamnagar was historically known as Nawanagar (new city) in Gujrat. The founder of the princely state of Jamnagar was Jam Rawal, who founded it in 1510. In 1001/1591, Pir Dadu visited Jamnagar. He tied his amicable relation with the ruler, who offered him to bring more Ismailis from Sind for the prosperity of Jamnagar. Pir Dadu wrote letter to the Sind *jamat*. Varas Mudalgero Vasan firstly responded and brought about 40 families in Jamnagar. Hence, the influx of the Ismaili immigrants into Kutchh increased greatly. It also resulted an ideal region to promulgate Ismailism. He also visited Kathiawar and Halar. With his indescribable efforts, a large proselytism resulted in the Hindu Lohana.

In the meantime, a certain soldier Harkhai pretended to have fled from Delhi and took asylum in Jamnagar in the period of Jam Shataj. He brought with him some Arabs and Baluchis, who plundered the villages of Gujrat. Jam complained in Delhi but in vain. On the contrary, Navrang Khan received orders from Delhi to invade Jamnagar. Thus, he defeated the forces of Jam Shataj. The city was pillaged for several days. It is said that some Ismailis helped the Atit and Jogi soldiers of the state with food and water without participating virtually in the battle. The Hindu soldiers and the Ismailis were arrested and imprisoned in Sorath, Junagadh. The wives and children of the Ismailis approached Pir Dadu. He sent his son Sadik before the Nawab with a request that the battle was fought between the armies of the rulers. The subjects were like the children, therefore the Ismaili captives might be relieved. When Sadik arrived, the officers did not arrange his meeting with the Nawab. He returned in frustration and reported his father. The tradition has it that Pir Dadu immediately went into contemplation and prayed. On one night, one messenger knocked his door and told that the Nawab was suffering from acute stomach pain, who had summoned him for his treatment. Thoughts crowded in his mind, what to do? At last, Pir Dadu took his son Sadik and arrived at the camp of the Nawab. The officers said, "Your son had come to relieve your followers, but he returned disappointed. After about two hours, a pain started in the stomach of Nawab. The local doctors failed to treat him, rather his pain increased." Pir Dadu walked towards the tent of the Nawab. Looking Pir Dadu, the Nawab sought forgiveness and urged for treatment. Pir Dadu asked for a bowl with water and prayed and passed on to Nawab to drink. He drank and got rid of the pain and relieved the Ismaili prisoners.

It must be noted that Pir Sadr al-Din had laid foundation of the brotherhood in the Ismaili community. It seems that after his period, the newly converted ethnic

groups in some regions wanted to join the mainstream of the community, which was resisted by the old converts, who placed them on the second ladder of social status. Before the time it emerged strongly, Pir Dadu timely played important role to foster the spirit of brotherhood among the disciples. In a nutshell, the Ismailis in spite of their numerical weakness, they prospered in Sind, Kutchh, Kathiawar and Gujrat.

Like a soldier, Pir Dadu stuck to the post of his duty and continued to the very last day of his life, even when lying on his sick bed. His life's flickering candle tapered off in the period of Imam Nizar II (d. 1038/1628) at the age of 120 years in 1005/1595 at Bhuj. He was buried to the north of Bhuj and outside the fort. Khoja Nur Muhammad Dharamsi of Jamnagar built his shrine in 1180/1844 in the period of Ala'dad (d. 1266/1850). Umaid Ali, the son of Khidar Khan III renovated it. The shrine was not damaged despite the terrible stroke of an earthquake of 1875, but it caused some damages during the most terrible earthquake of 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2001. There are 66 graves inside its compound, in which only one belongs to Bibi Saheba, the daughter of Bahelur. The road leading to the shrine is known as Dadu Pir Road.

The Imams continued to appoint the subsequent *vakils* in the descendant of Pir Dadu. The best known among them was his son, Sadik. In 1005/1595, he joined the caravan of Kapura and other Ismailis and visited Iran in the time of Imam Nizar II, where he was consigned the office of *vakil* for Kutchh. It is said that the Imam had invested him also the title of *Selahshor* means champion. In India, it could not be pronounced properly, and the term *Selahshor* corrupted and became *Saltar*, thus he became known as Sadik Saltar. He died in Bhuj in 1011/1601.

Sadik's son, Khidar Khan I was the next *vakil*, who mostly preached the Hindu Lohana, where he adopted his name as Brahma. He died in Bhuj in 1064/1653. His son Mir Khudadad, who was well steeped in the Vedic literature and its philosophy, followed him. He died in Bhuj in 1083/1672. His son Khidar Khan II became the following *vakil*, who visited Iran, where he died in 1120/1708. He had two sons, Saheb al-Din and Islamuddin, both were twin brothers born in 1121/1709. There was an outbreak of a war between Kutchh and Katariawala in the period of Rao Pragmal I. Both brothers participated in the state army. In 1117/1705, Saheb al-Din went to reside in Halar due to bitter quarrels in the family, where he died in 1132/1719 and was buried in Bhuj.

Islamuddin on the other hand, continued his living in Bhuj. It is narrated that a certain Jiva Khoja discussed with Islamuddin and said, "When the ruler offered, what should be demanded?" He said, "Since you do not need wealth or land. You must ask that which may be beneficial to the community. I think the unclaimed wealth in the community should be deposited in the community treasury." Jiva Khoja liked his proposal and visited the court of Gonaji I (1715-1719) in Bhuj, where his demand was accepted, who declared it in a written decree. Islamuddin died in Bhuj. His son, Bayazid became next *vakil*. He was an influential person in the state and died in Bhuj in 1146/1734. His son, Ala'dad was the next *vakil*, who also died in Bhuj in 1208/1794. He had three sons, Jamar al-Din, Dost Muhammad and Khidar Khan III. Jamar al-Din became the next *vakil*, who also was a trader, and died in Bhuj in 1230/1813 without having a son, therefore, his

brother Khidar Khan III became the next *vakil*. Pir Khan, Bahelur and Umaid Ali were the sons of Khidar Khan III. It is said that Umaid Ali claimed being the next *vakil*. There ensued a conflict and the Ismailis in Bhuj did not hand over him the religious dues, declaring that he and his father were not authorized *vakils*.

In 1241/1825, when the British East India Company dominated whole Kutchh in the period of Rao Bharmal II, there arose some disputes among the Ismailis. The mainstream of the community broke their relation with Khidar Khan III, who was supported by a handful Ismailis including Kamadia Manek, the son of Chagla (d.1230/1814). In the meantime, Khidar Khan and his supporters resolved to include the land of Pir Dadu in the Sunni graveyard to win the favour of the local Sunnis. On other side, Umaid Ali submitted some documents to the British agency and recovered the land from being confiscated. In 1250/1834, when the British wound up their activities of East India Company in Kutchh and handed over the state power to Rao Desal II (1819-1861), Umaid Ali sought high post in the court. With the power of the state influence, he began to persecute the Ismailis in Kutchh. When it was reported to Imam Hasan Ali Shah (d.1298/1881), he sent his nephew Aga Muhammad Jafar Khan in Kutchh. Umaid Ali ignored and exposed his influence before him. It was reported to the Imam in Calcutta. The Imam wrote to Lord Earl Ellenborough (1841-1844), who subsequently wrote to the political agent in Kutchh for investigation. The British authorities recovered old financial records from Umaid Ali. It is said that he ignored the rights of his handful supporters, thus Kamadia Manek withdrew his support to Umaid Ali, and followed the orders of Imam Hasan Ali Shah.

In 1266/1850, Aga Muhammad Jafar Khan visited Halar and finally took over charge of the *vakil* in the family of the Bawa. Imam Hasan Ali Shah officially declared suspension of the office of *vakil* from Umaid Ali and ordered his followers to hold no intercourse with him. Thus, the tradition of the *vakil* came to an end in the progeny of the Bawas. Later, the descendant of Umaid Ali became Ithna Asharis.

Henceforward, the practice of collecting religious dues in different villages through the *vakils* came to an end in India, and the institution of the *Kul Kamadia* was introduced since the Imam resided in India, not in Iran. In Sind, the tithe-collector was called *khiyto*, whether he was a *vakil* or not. Later, the term *khiyto* the *Kamadia* in each Jamatkhana maintained the account. The *Kul Kamadia* was the treasurer in each province and collected the religious dues from the *Kamadias* in the Jamatkhanas of each district and province, and deposited in the central treasury, known as Itmadi Department in Bombay. During the campaign of collection, the province was broken into sub-divisions. The *Kul Kamadia* also appointed his assistants, known as the *Praganna Kamadias* for the division under his jurisdiction. The iron-safe in the Jamatkhana was known as *Sarcar Sahibi Tijauri*, whose one key was in the custody of the *Mukhi* and other with the *Kamadia*. It was opened once a month in presence of the *Mukhi*, *Kamadia* and *Praganna Kamadia* (Divisional Kamadia). The amount was counted and delivered to him, who gave them a receipt. The *Praganna Kamadia* safely transferred the funds to *Kul Kamadia* of his province or state, who sent the accumulated funds to the Itmadi Department in Bombay on 15<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of each month. The institution of the *Kul Kamadia* enforced in Kutchh in the period of Imam Hasan Ali Shah for the first time soon after the suspension of the office of the *vakil* from the Bawa



family. The system of the *Kul Kamadia* became successful during the British rule in India, therefore, its scope was enlarged and finally, it was applied in all the provinces and states on October 30, 1913. In short, the term *Kul Kamadia* was not a title, but an office of great responsibility. It must be known that there were many regions in India, where the title holders of Itmadi also performed the role of the *Kul Kamadia*. When the Ismaili Councils established with the Provincial Councils, the post of the Estate Office was created, who kept the account of the religious dues in Bombay. The Imam gradually appointed his Estate Officers in different countries and as a result, the office of the *Kul Kamadia* virtually came to an end in 1950.

It is a normal procedure that in the Ismaili community, the Imam appoints the *Mukhi* and *Kamadia* in each Jamatkhana, who are authorized to collect the religious dues from the followers and none else is assigned its authority. In other words, the present *Mukhi* and *Kamadia* execute also the role of the *vakils*. Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah said, “*Mukhi* and *Kamadia* are my *vakils* on my behalf.” (Zanzibar, 16/9/1899)

### **SAYED MITHA SHAH**

His original name was Sayed Muhammad Nurbaksh. He was the son of Sayed Awliya Ali bin Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din. He was born most possibly in 850/1446 in Uhh. His mother was Bibi Nur Fatima bint Sayed Salauddin bin Pir Sadr al-Din. He was also known as Sayed Mitha Shah in Punjab.

He came in Jamu and Kashmir for the Ismaili mission with his family during the rule of Ajab Dev. Earlier, Pir Salauddin, also known as Pir Salauddin Nurbaksh, the father of Pir Shams had come in Jamu and Kashmir. Sayed Mitha Shah was the second to come here after three hundred years. Since their names were identical, therefore, the historians called Sayed Mitha Shah as Nurbaksh II. He mostly preached in Kashmir and traveled to Kohistan, Tibet, Badakhshan, Gilgit, Iskardu and Yarkand. It must be noted that the order of the Nurbaksh in the name of Sayed Nurbaksh or Sayed Mitha Shah was started in Iran, and this order had nothing to do with Sayed Mitha Shah.

Sayed Mitha Shah married to his uncle's daughter, A'sifa bint Sayed Shahbaz Gazi. She gave birth of two sons, Sayed Mir Shamsuddin and Sayed Ismail. Both continued the mission of their father. Sayed Mitha Shah died in 910/1504 in Jamu.

### **SAYED MIRAN SAYED KHAN**

Sayed Miran bin Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah bin Sayed Imam Shah was also known as Sayed Saifuddin. He was born in Pirana. He was much interested to learn Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit since childhood. He had to go as far as Banaras to study the Vedic scripture. He mostly preached in the villages around Surat, Khandesh and Karnatak. He died in 996/1588 and was buried in Pirana.

### **SAYED SALEH**

He was the son of Sayed Miran Sayed Khan. He is said to have born on 984/1576. He also continued the mission of his father with the help of his mother. He died in 1021/1612 at the age of 37 years and was buried next to the shrine of his father in Pirana.

### **SAYED ABDUL NABI**

The extant sources provide no detail of Sayed Abdul Nabi. It infers however in his *ginans* that he lived in the period of Imam Nizar II (d. 1038/1628). He visited Kahek in Iran and rejoiced to behold the Imam in the garden, facing the palace, which he describes that, "I enjoyed a trip with the Imam, when my Lord was in the garden." In his another *ginan*, he said, "The Everlasting Lord resides in Kahek in the very form of Ali. The apparent Imam Nizar is the 77th epiphany of God, and the 40th Imam."

Imam Nizar appointed him as a *vakil* and sent him in Gujrat, Kathiawar and Kutchh. In Surat he came into contact of Momin Ismailis. He imparted them and organized weekly religious gathering, known as *satsang* (the pious congregation), in which the local Hindu families were also invited, notably the Laiwala, Naginawala and Jamiatram families. Sayed Abdul Nabi died in Surat, and his mausoleum is situated at Kankara Khadi, near Surat.

### **SAYED HASHIM SHAH**

He was the son of Sayed Saleh. He was born in 1010/1601 and died in 1045/1635 at the age of 35 years. He too continued the mission of his father and traveled from one to another village.

### **SAYED FATEH ALI SHAH**

Sayed Fateh Ali Shah (1733-1798) belonged to the Kadiwal Sayeds. His pen-name was Shamsi. Sind, Kutchh and Kathiawar were main venues of his activities. Imam Abul Hasan Ali (d. 1206/1792) had given him mantle of *vakil* for India. He seems to have visited Iran for two times, and lastly in 1210/1795 in the period of Imam Khalilullah Ali (d. 1233/1817). He sailed from Mandavi, Kutchh and reached Port Abbas, then joined a caravan proceeding towards Kirman. His caravan was plundered near Ispahan by the Bakhtiyari tribe. He walked on foot and reached Mahallat after a difficult journey. He put his step in the territory of Mahallat when it was the occasion of Navroz. His heart became forlorn when he learnt that the Imam had gone on a hunting expedition in the wood to the north of Mahallat. He described his quest for the Imam in the *ginan*, and ultimately his petition resulted his meeting with the Imam in the wood and then in the fort of Mahallat. He stayed for eight months in Mahallat and passed his life in Sind, where he died in 1213/1798. His shrine exists in Sonda, near Jerruk in Sind.

### **SAYED GHULMALI SHAH**

Fourth in the line of Sayed Zahir al-Din, the son of Pir Sadr al-Din, who died in Bhawalpur at the age of 102 years, was Sayed Ghulam Ali Shah or Sayed Ghulmali Shah. He was a prominent missionary in Sind, Kutchh, Kathiawar and Gujrat in the period of Imam Khalilullah Ali. He also converted many Hindus. He was also one of the composers of the *ginans* and died in Karachi in 1207/1792 and was buried in Kera, Kutchh.

### **SAYED MUHAMMAD SHAH DULLA**

He was the son of Sayed Hashim Shah. It is said that he was bachelor till death, therefore, he was honored with the epithet of *dulla* (bridegroom). He was descended from Sayed Awlia Ali, the son of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din. He was the last wakil in India to be sent from Iran. He visited Gujrat from time to time to collect religious dues. He mostly launched his mission in Kutchh, Kathiawar, Gujrat and Sind. He died on March 2, 1813 in Bombay, where his shrine exists. He had served as the Imam's wakil for 16 years.

### **PIR BIBI MATA SALAMAT**

Her name was Bibi Marium Khatoon. She was born in 1157/1744 and was the daughter of Pir Mirza Mohammad Bakir, the son of Imam Kassim Ali (d.1143/1730). Imam Khalilullah's marriage was solemnized with Bibi Marium Khatoon, who gave birth of Imam Hasan Ali Shah. Imam Khalilullah (d.1233/1817) consigned her honorific title of Mata Salamat, and she became first to be invested with the title of Mata Salamat. Besides, she was given the office of the Pir. It means that she was the first lady to become a Pir in the Ismaili history.

The fortune of the family of Imam Hasan Ali Shah was at low ebb when Imam Khalilullah was murdered in Yazd in 1233/1817. Pir Bibi Mata Salamat came to the court at Tehran with his son to seek justice. Her pleadings were immediately successful. Emperor Fateh Ali ordered his governor of Yazd, Haji Muhammad Zaman Khan to arrest the assassin and his gang.

In 1243/1827, a group in Bombay led by Habib Ibrahim refused to pay tithe and forced others to follow them. Its report was sent to the Imam in Iran in 1244/1828. In order to overcome the opposition, Imam Hasan Ali Shah deputed Pir Bibi Mata Salamat with Mirza Abul Kassim in 1245/1829 towards Bombay. She started her journey from Mahallat at the age of 85 years and arrived at Port Abbas and sailed for Muscat. During her marine journey, she alighted at Gwadar, where she stayed for two weeks in a location called Imama near a graveyard. She left Gwadar and came in Karachi. With the company of Sayeda Imam Begum, she travelled for Jerruk in bullock cart. She crossed Kutchh on camel after crossing Ramki Bazar in Badin, and finally reached Bombay.

She was a good orator and efficient in religious knowledge, and delivered sermons in the Jamatkhanas. She made several meetings with the leaders to remove the internal strife of the community. It is said that the Ismailis invited her in

Kutchh. She went Kera in Kutchh and delivered touching sermons. She expired in 1248/1832 in Kera. Her body was transported for Najaf for interment. Her memorial however is preserved in Kera. During his visit to Kera on December 2, 1903, Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah told to perpetuate the memory of the place, where she put her feet and breathed her last.

### **PIR SHIHABUDDIN SHAH**

Pir Shihabuddin Shah stands as 47<sup>th</sup> Pir in the traditional list. He was born probably in 1268/1851 in Baghdad. He was also called as Pir Khalilullah, the name also sounded in the old prayer book. He is also known as Shah Badin Shah.

Imam Aga Ali Shah had married with Marium Sultana in Iraq. On that occasion, five plates of fruits and sweetmeat were distributed in every house in Kazamin Sharif, Karbala and Najaf. Marium Sultana gave birth of two sons, i.e. Pir Shihabuddin Shah and Aga Nur Shah (or Nuruddin Shah). Both were brought up in Hasanabad, Bombay. Aga Nur Shah was a good sportsman, who fell down from his horse while riding and sustained a serious injury which proved fatal when he was 30 years old in 1301/1884. He married to Shah Bibi, the daughter of Aga Jalal Shah (d. 1871), the son of Imam Hasan Ali Shah. Aga Nur Shah left behind two sons, Hasan Shah and Kassim Shah and two daughters, Shah Sultan and Malek Sultan.

The second wife of Imam Aga Ali Shah belonged to the Shirazi family, and after her death, the third wife was Lady Aly Shah, whose maiden name was Nawab-alia Shamsul Mulk, the daughter of Mirza Ali Mohammad Khan Nizam-ad-Dawla, the grandson of Muhammad Hussain Isphani, the Prime Minister of Fateh Ali Shah (d. 1250/1834), the famous Iranian monarch of Qajar dynasty. Their marriage was solemnized in Iraq in 1867. She gave the birth of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah when the age of Pir Shihabuddin Shah was nearly 26 years.

Pir Shihabuddin Shah was appointed as the Pir by Imam Aga Ali Shah on 1299/1882 when he was 30 years of age. In 1300/1882, the Imam assigned him to revise the old daily prayer of the Ismailis with the pace of time. This leaves us to believe that he was well-versed in the Indian languages. He also held high command in the Arabic and Persian. Not only was he well-versed in the Holy Koran, but also a keen reader of the works of Maulana Rumi and Hafiz Shirazi. He devoted most of the time in the community works and passed the nights in writing his works. Pir Shihabuddin Shah also delivered sermons in the Jamatkhana and imparted the followers. Some of his advices are preserved in the anonymous manuscript of 1883, which he imparted during the vigil *majalis* of the *Lail at-Qadr* in the bungalow of Wadi, Bombay, whose fragments are given below:

- 1. Don't organize any kind of the *majalis* in the house, but arrange it in the Jamatkhana, which is the house of God. It is more beneficial to worship, meditate and glorify the Imam in the Jamatkhana rather than in the house.**
- 2. One who makes the *haqiqi* believer happy, he certainly makes happy to our heart. One who disheartens the *haqiqi* believer**

means he sets our house on fire.

3. Teach *dua* and the *ginans* to your children. Make them know the dignity of our house. Inspire them to serve us and our house as well as the *jamat*.
4. Recognize and obey the *amr* (authority) of the *Mukhi*.
5. Reward of the vigil night is so much that it cannot be expressed in words.
6. You all mix up with unity and love as if the sugar is dissolved in the milk.
7. Don't hatch hostility for others.
8. Cultivate friendship with the brothers-in-faith and avoid the company of faithless persons.
9. There is possibility of the remission of other sins except the sins of adultery, shortfall in the *dasond* and the missing of offering the *dua*.
10. It is much rewarding to wake up the friends and relatives in the early morning while going to the Jamatkhana. Inspire and encourage them to come in the Jamatkhana and you will be rewarded too much here and hereafter.

Pir Shihabuddin Shah compiled his renowned treatise, “**Risala Dar Haqiqat-i-Din**” (The True Meaning of Religion). It appears that he had projected it into two parts, but as far as is possible to ascertain, only the first part of it was published. It was translated in different languages. Its autograph copy is preserved in the library of Haji Musa Khan, one of the attendants of the Pir. Its text with an English translation was published by W. Ivanow in the series of Islamic Research Association of Bombay in 1933. It evoked considerable interest in the Ismaili community, as can be seen from the fact that its Arabic translation was published in 1935 in Lattaquie, Syria by Sheikh Ahmed bin Muhammad. Later on, a Gujrati version, by Mr. Gwadarwala, was published in parts in the weekly “**Ismaili**” (Bombay). Its Gujrati and Khojki versions also appeared in the “**Nizari**” (Bombay). Its complete translation was effectively reprinted in another Gujrati magazine, **Al-Islah** in August 10, 1946 in the African Diamond Jubilee Memorial Issue. It was freshly translated by V.N. Hooda in 1947 from the Ismaili Society series no. 1 and reprinted and published by the Ismailia Association for India. Since then, it has been translated into Urdu and Sindhi. The book was always been in demand, therefore, it was reprinted many times in India, Pakistan and East Africa. The importance of the “**Risala Dar Haqiqat-i-Din**” can be gauged from the fact that Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah had once recommended the mission students of Bombay to refer it. It however does not have an Ismaili imprint on the whole, but is meant for the reading of the general readers to know the ethical advices on Sufic strain.

The “**Al-Khitabat al-Aliyya**” is another work of Pir Shihabuddin Shah, a Persian treatise dealing the principles of the Ismaili doctrine, and the ethic in general. It is divided into 64 chapters, called *Khitab*, in which 22 chapters are devoted to the basic points on the Ismaili doctrine. The author however touches the esoteric dimension of Islam. The other work of the Pir is “**Nasa’ih-i Sarkar-i Pir**”- a short sermon in six pages, which almost resembles the former two works.

Pir Shihabuddin Shah was a learned scholar, talented philosopher and best known for his piety. He led a simple life. He passed his life mostly in Poona and Bombay. He solved the religious problems of the Ismailis. It is related that Imam Aga Ali Shah had deputed him in Afghanistan to see the followers, but there is unfortunately no historical record for it. It is however known that he found the Ismailis in Afghanistan offering the prayer with the Sunnis and Shias. In some remote places, he came to know that the Ismailis recited the old prayer, called “**Kalimatul Haq**” of the Alamut period. He is said to have brought its copy in Bombay and revised it into six parts. It was however printed in the period of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah in 1898 for the Ismailis of Syria, Iran and Central Asia.

Pir Shihabuddin Shah had married with a Persian lady, called Bibi Arus Khanum, who died most probably in the first or second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Arabia, where she spent last days of her life. She gave birth to a son, Abul Hasan Shah and six daughters, namely Talah, Nushi, Turan Malek, Khadija, Tuman Malik and Zarin Taj.

Pir Shihabuddin Shah died at the age of 33 years due to chest disease at Poona. His body was embalmed and brought to Bombay, and was kept in Hasanabad for forty days, then sent to be buried in the family cemetery in Najaf in January, 1885. With the help of few *farmans* of Imam Aga Ali Shah, it infers that he died on December 15, 1884, about 8 months before the death of Imam Aga Ali Shah, and not in May, 1885 as is generally mentioned in some books. The genealogical chart, which was produced before the Bombay High Court during the Haji Bibi Case of 1908 and the view of W. Ivanow also support the fact that he died in the second week of December, 1884.

### **PIR ABUL HASAN SHAH**

Pir Abul Hasan Shah was followed by his father, Pir Shihabuddin Shah, to which there is a *farman* recorded in the old manuscript that, “On the day of the *ziarat* of Pir Khalilullah (Pir Shihabuddin Shah) on 1301/1884, Imam Shah Ali Shah summoned the *jamat* in Wadi, and said, ‘I accept the son of Pir Khalilullah as a Pir and give him the authority of the Pir. Do all the *jamat* like this or not?’ So, the *jamat* said, ‘Khudavind! We like it.’ Hence, Dhani Salamat Datar said, ‘Well! then go and please the wife of Pir Khalilullah.’ All the *jamat* then approached the wife of Pir Khalilullah, and kissed the hand of Pir Abul Hasan Shah and confessed before the wife of Pir Khalilullah that, ‘He is now our Pir.” It is mentioned in the manuscript that Imam Aga Ali Shah also said, “Pir Abul Hasan Shah is physically an infant, therefore, I appoint a vakil to represent him.”

Hence, Pir Abul Hasan Shah became the 48<sup>th</sup> Pir when he was hardly two to three months old. His appointment in the infancy was a great trial for the believers. He could hardly hold the office for three to four months and died in 1885 at the age of about six months. His body was buried in Hasanabad, Bombay by the side of his great grandfather, Imam Hasan Ali Shah. In the mausoleum, there are three graves - two large and one small. One of the large ones is that of Imam Hasan Ali Shah, and other is built in the memory of Imam Aga Ali Shah, whose body was kept here for sometimes in this mausoleum before its transportation to Najaf. The small one, on which are hung some wooden miniature cradles is that of Pir Abul Hasan Shah.

### **SAYEDA IMAM BEGUM**

Bibi Tahira, commonly known as Sayeda Imam Begum from the Kadiwal family was the last reported member of the Kadiwal family. Her lineage runs as Sayeda Imam Begum bint Sayed Hashim bin Sayed Buzrug Ali bin Sayed Mashaikh II bin Sayed Muhammad Fazal Shah bin Sayed Sadr al-Din bin Sayed Zayn al-Abidin bin Sayed Abdul Hasan bin Sayed Mashaikh I bin Sayed Rehmatullah Shah bin Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din.

She was most probably born in 1199/1785 in Kera, Kutchh. Soon after the death of her father, she went to Pirana, Nawsari, Tando Muhammad Khan and Uhh. She is said to have made her first public appearance in 1245/1829 when she joined Pir Bibi Mata Salamat from Karachi to Bombay. Sayeda Imam Begum resolved to settle in Bombay in 1246/1830. She preached the Hindu ladies in Gujrat and Kutchh. She resided in Boparia Building, near Kandi Mola, Bombay.

Imam Hasan Ali Shah came in Bombay in 1845 and in those days, Sayeda Imam Begum was organizing the ladies' gatherings in the Jamatkhana of Kandi Mola, Bombay to discuss on the *ginans*. She also visited Kutchh and Sind around 1253/1837 and then moved to Karachi. She again returned to Bombay after four years. It is said that she resumed the ladies assembly in the Kandi Mola Jamatkhana daily at 9.00 a.m. This gathering lasted for one to two hours, and then its duration reached to four to five hours. It caused some problems for the men and the school going students. The men warned their women to wind up their gathering before 12.00 a.m., but it was of no avail. Later the matter was referred to the Imam through Kamadia Ladakbhai Haji (1827-1907). Sensing the hardship of the men and the children, Imam Hasan Ali Shah ordered Sayeda Imam Begum in Kandi Mola Jamatkhana to wind up her gathering immediately and go to the Wadi, Bombay. She however reached Wadi next day, resulting displeasure of the Imam that why his orders were not followed on yesterday. The Imam ordered that none of her *ginans* be recited in the Jamatkhana. On the other hand, Sayeda Imam Begum reached Wadi after the Imam's orders had been issued. She was highly shocked and sat beneath a tree facing the Imam's residence and began to long. She ate nothing and passed sleepless nights. On the third day, Imam Hasan Ali Shah graciously made his appearance from his residence and put his blessed hand on her head and forgave her.

The above event forced Sayeda Imam Begum to leave Bombay for ever, and she

made her way to Karachi once again in 1860 and started her living in the locality of the Lassi in Karachi, where she died in 1866 at the age of 80 years. She was a virgin.

Sayed Imam Begum was famous for her piety and learning and composed many *ginans*, and was the last among the *ginan* composers. Ten *ginans* are attributed to have been composed by her, but it is seen in the old manuscripts that she had composed 32 *ginans*. She also played *sitar* (long-necked fretted lute) and the *saranggi* (short necked bowed lute). She was a pious lady and hardly talked with the men. She was a strict vegetarian. She was afforded monthly allowance from Imam Hasan Ali Shah.

### **SOME ISMAILI SAINTS OF SIND**

It infers from the fragments of the tradition that after the tragic death of Pir Taj al-Din in 872/1467, the Imam most probably seems to have ordered to transfer the central venue of depositing the religious dues from Uchh to a safe place in lower Sind. It seems that a place was selected, which became known as the present Tando Muhammad Khan, about 25 km from Hyderabad. It was founded by Mir Muhammad Khan Shahwani Talpur (d. 1813). The Ismaili Sayeds and some other loyal to the house of the Imam frequented in Tando Muhammad Khan, wherefrom they spread in different villages and towns in lower Sind for the Ismaili mission. Their details are blanketed in dark except few ones, whose brief accounts are given below.

#### **Shah Kapur or Kamadia Kapur**

His shrine is situated in the village of Shah Kapur'jo Goth, about 12 miles from Tando Muhammad Khan, Sind. Dr. James Burnes (1801-1862) visited the village of Shah Kapur in 1828, but did not make its description in his “**A Narrative of a visit to the Court of Sindh**” (London, 1831, p. 18).

Tradition has it that he was a Hindu of the Lohana stock. He always donned simple attire of hermit and used to listen to the *ginans* recited in the Jamatkhana, which deeply touched him. It gradually led to the Ismaili faith to dawn on him in the period of Pir Taj al-Din. He is believed to have rendered invaluable services and became a famous *khiyto* (tithe-collector) in Sind to collect and transport the religious dues on bullock cart from Sind to Iran. It is said that he was physically a man of a fair skin (*kafur*), which made him known as *Kafur* (Persian) or *Kapur* (Sindhi). His generosity had reached to its zenith that the people called him the “Lord of the Kapur Village” (Shah Kapur), and became so popular with the title of “Shah Kapur” that his original name shrouded in mist. This does not denote his blood relation with any Sayed family. Besides, the office of the *khiyto* became known as the *Kul Kamadia* in the period of Imam Hasan Ali Shah (d. 1298/1881). and for this cause, he is also remembered as Kamadia Kapur, therefore, it is incorrect to reckon him the *Kamadia* of the Jamatkhana.

It is learnt that some followers in Sind expected a drastic action against few greedy sons of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din, who had misappropriated the religious



dues. Pir Taj al-Din followed a mild attitude in this context, causing displeasure of some Ismailis, notably Shah Kapur. When Pir Taj al-Din started his journey towards Iran, Shah Kapur followed him with a view to lodge complaint against him. In Kahek, he was highly astonished to see that Imam Muhammad bin Islam Shah (d. 868/1463) and Pir Taj al-Din were taking meal together. Besides, he was much impressed to watch Pir Taj al-Din joined in the hunting expedition with the Imam. He changed his mind and in his presence, Pir Taj al-Din was declared as the next Pir. Realizing the dignity of the Pir, Shah Kapur sought forgiveness and promised to work under him.

The tradition of sending the Pir from Iran for the Indian community had been suspended in the time of Imam Mustansir billah (d. 880/1475) after the tragic death of Pir Taj al-Din in 872/1467. The Indian tradition relates that Shah Kapur and Sayed Nizamuddin Shah visited Iran with a deputation and humbly urged Imam Abdus Salam (d. 899/1493) to send next *hujjat*, or pir in India. The Imam is reported to have said: "I cannot revoke the decision of my father." Shah Kapur and his associates lodged in Shahr-i Babak for some months and craved devotionally to win the heart of the Imam. One day, Imam summoned him and said: "My father has suspended the tradition of pir for India, which will not be revoked in my period. I, however, appoint a *samit* (silent) pir instead." The Imam thus gave him the book, "**Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi**" with an order to obey its advices as if a *natiq* (speaking) pir. Shah Kapur put the sacred book inside his turban and walked towards his homeland and brought the holy text in Sind.

Nothing else is known about him except that he died few years after the death of Pir Taj al-Din. The local people built a shrine on his grave in later period. It is commonly related that he was a bachelor till death; therefore the pregnant women are not allowed to visit his shrine. The people celebrate a fair at his shrine on the last Sunday of every lunar month.

### **Sayed Nizamuddin Shah**

His grave is located inside the shrine of Shah Kapur. He is considered the brother of Shah Kapur, but the latest reliable study indicates it incorrect. Their mutual relation was however cemented as if the real brothers. His lineage runs as Sayed Nizamuddin Shah bin Murad Shah bin Alam Shah bin Nurshah bin Sultan Adam bin Sayed Shihabuddin bin Sayed Shamsuddin II bin Sayed Nur Baksh II bin Sayed Awliya Ali Shah bin Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din. He mostly passed his early life in Uchh and admitted the authority of Pir Taj al-Din and then came in lower Sind.

It is related that he had launched his secret mission in different villages of Sind among the Lohana caste, where he assumed his name as Kapura Lohana. He was assisted by his six sons, viz. Sayed Fakir Shah, Sayed Rahim Shah, Sayed Ashraf Shah, Sayed Arif Shah, Sayed Darghi Shah and Sayed Chiragh Shah. It is said that his descendant later spread in Punjab and Kashmir. Sayed Nizamuddin Shah is reported to have visited Iran with Shah Kapur in the period of Imam Abdus Salam. He had also rendered his valuable services in the Ismaili community as the assistant of Shah Kapur and made several visit in lower Sind mainly for the collection of the religious dues.

### **Sayed Muhammad Ali Shah**

His shrine is situated in the village called Ismailsohe, about six miles from Mirpur Bathoro, Sind. He is related to have traced his descent from Pir Saheb al-Din bin Pir Nasir al-Din Shah. He conducted his mission among the Lashari tribe at Mirpur Bathoro and encountered opposition from vested secular and religious interests, which invariably oppose spread of the Ismailism. Some eminent powers among the Lashari tribe did not like his growing popularity and conspired to dislodge him from their territory. It is related that on one night, his opponents found him resting alone in the house and killed him mercilessly.

### **Sayed Kabir Shah**

His shrine is located about five miles away from Talhar, district Badin in Sind. His lineage runs as Sayed Kabir Shah bin Sayed Bakir Shah bin Sayed Murad Shah bin Sayed Sadruddin II bin Sayed Fazal Shah bin Sayed Rehmatullah Shah, and thus he belonged to the Kadiwal family. Nothing is known about him. It is however said that there resides a family in Tando Muhammad Khan, claiming their blood relation with Sayed Kabir Shah. The people celebrates fair in his shrine on every 14<sup>th</sup> of the Vaisakh (April-May) month according to the Vikram calendar.

### **Shaheed A'as al-Din and Shaheed Jamr al-Din**

Yasir (or A'asar), known as Jesar was commissioned the office of the *vakil*, who came in Sind with his family. He was persecuted, therefore, he left his family with his son Pir Dadu and went to Punjab and Kashmir with two sons, Alauddin (or A'as al-Din) and Jamar al-Din.

The early Sumra rulers in Sind were the staunch Ismailis, but the later Sumra adhered Sunnism. The Sumra dynasty ended almost before 762/1361.

Henceforward, the local feudal chiefs descended from the Sumra rulers assumed the title of the Sumras. A certain feudal chief, called Muhammad Sumaro killed Hasan Arghun, the *amir* of Fateh Bagh in the north of Matli and assumed the power. He was a sworn enemy of the Ismailis.

Yasir learnt in Punjab that the Ismailis were persecuted in Sind. He sent his two sons, A'as al-Din and Jamr al-Din and summoned his small son, Pir Dadu to join him. He told his sons to hold a meeting with Muhammad Sumaro at Fateh Bagh in this context. Both arrived and requested Muhammad Sumaro to let the Ismailis live in peace. Unfortunately, they were not responded. In the meantime, according to the oral tradition, two girls belonging to the ruling family fell in love with these two brothers and offered to marry with them, but they flatly refused. Being disappointed, the girls threatened to malign them but their piousness kept them from succumbing to this blackmail. To avenge the rebuff, the girls went wailing to the ruler accusing the brothers of harbouring evil intentions towards

them. Muhammad Sumaro angrily referred the matter to the *qadi* and ordered to issue *fatwa* against them. The *qadi* issued *fatwa* and under the vehement agitation of the bigoted *qadi*, the two brothers, A'as al-Din and Jamr al-Din were paraded in the streets and beheaded. However, as a consequence of the gross injustice meted out to them, they predicted dire result for the ruling family and the *qadi* in a couplet in Sindhi uttered before their martyrdom as under:

***Muo Mohamed Sumaro ne futo Fateh Bagh  
Thiy'e kazi kodhiyo, ne na kari sachi sharah***

“Muhammad Sumaro was destined to death and the fate of Fateh Bagh was sealed; and the *qadi* has cursed himself with leprosy, who didn't act on true law.”

The tradition has it that the above prophesy came true. The tragic episode started the decline of Muhammad Sumaro's power and Fateh Bagh was reduced to a ruin. The *qadi* was too beset with leprosy. Later, the local Ismailis erected a mausoleum over their graves in Fateh Bagh, about six miles from Tando Muhammad Khan, wherein a plate reads: “The shrine of the innocents” (*masum'e ji dargah*).

### **Sayed Rohshan Ali Shah**

His shrine is located inside Talhar. Nothing is known about him except that he belonged to the Kadiwal family. He is related to have come from Tando Muhammad Khan in the period of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah and preached in Talhar. He was locally best known for his piety and generosity and died in the time of Mukhi Khaliqdina or Mukhi Ali Muhammad Hashim Molvani. The people celebrate a fair at his shrine on every 14<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Sayed Shah Muhammad Noor Ali & Sayed Shah Muhammad**

Their graves are located inside a shrine in the site known as the Ilahi Khwajawala Tar in Chhachh Jehan Khan, near Jati, Shah Bandar. Sayed Shah Muhammad Noor Ali was the descendant of Sayed Bala Shah Buland Ali, the son of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din, while Sayed Shah Muhammad was his son. The shrine was looked after by the Balochis of Thatta between 1895 and 1900. It stood originally close to the sea and submerged into the water and went to rack and ruin by sea water corrosion. Presently, the shrine is far from the seashore, for which the oral tradition claims a curious story that once its caretaker inspired in a dream to take out the coffin (*sanduk*) in the shrine and load it on a camel and bury where it alighted. The caretaker is said to have informed Mukhi Muhammad, who referred it to Varas A'asar (1860-1957) in Mirpur Sakaro. Varas A'asar and some other persons visited the shrine, where he alone passed sleepless night and he too was inspired as such. Thus, a camel was purchased upon which the coffin was loaded. The camel followed by a pompous procession started moving slowly till it alighted in the region of Chhachh Jehan Khan. The site belonged to a certain poor Ismaili. It was purchased, but the owner returned the money. The *sanduk* was buried with due respect upon which a shrine was built. There are still few old persons, who had witnessed the above event. It is highly curious that a certain Imamdino

Jaro of Tar Khwaja of about 95 years old claimed that he was about seven to eight years old and had seen the event. It means that it may have been occurred around 1925. Later, Sayed Shah Muhammad, the son of Sayed Shah Muhammad Noor Ali was also buried in the shrine. Their fair is jointly celebrated on every 18<sup>th</sup> of Nahri month.

### **Sayed Nurshah & Sayed Shah Ismail**

Sayed Nurshah was the son of Pir Saheb al-Din bin Pir Nasir al-Din. His shrine with his son Sayed Shah Ismail is located at Rari, about 26 miles from Jati in Shah Bandar. It is related that when Sayed Nurshah expired, his one female follower mourned to such extent that she became a mad. She wandered and remained around his grave, thus the location became known as *rari* (to mourn profusely). The shrine is surrounded in the old Ismaili graveyard. His shrine was built probably in 1680 according to the old inscription given therein. On his way back to Sind from Lakhpat, Kutchh via Jati, the British surgeon to the residency at Bhuj, Kutchh, Dr. James Burnes (1801-1862) reached Rari on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1828 in the period of Amir Hyder Khan Laghari, the governor of the province of Jati and writes in his book, “**A Narrative of a visit to the Court of Sindh**” (London, 1831, p. 17) that the town of Rari was almost ruined due to the terrible earthquake of 1819. There were hardly five hundred inhabitants in Rari as most of them had migrated in other parts of Sind and Kutchh. He however writes, “The only object of interest at this place is a large mosque (the shrine), sacred to the memory of Peer Noor Shah, which is visible at a great distance, and which was built a hundred and fifty years ago, of stones brought from the neighborhood of Tatta.”

### **Sayed Amir Shah**

The earthquake of 1819 had rocked all villages of Shah Bandar in Sind, which dilapidated almost all the houses. It resulted mass migration of the people from one to another place. In those days, an eminent Ismaili merchant, called Seth Lakhpat, an origin of Deri Bandar came out from Rari in Jati in search of an arable land for the Ismailis. He traveled and procured a tract in the village, where Sayed Amir Shah resided, about 26 miles from Jati. The site he purchased was barren, arid and not befitting for cultivation due to scanty of water, where few Ismaili families from Rari could be settled. Later, he acquired another site at a distance of a mile from a landlord called Pir Hyder Shah, the origin of Shah Karim Bulri. This site yielded better outcome, therefore, the Ismailis evacuated the old one and colonized in the new site, which became known as Tar Khwaja. The Ismailis of Chhachh Jehan Khan also migrated to this place. The Sindhi word *Tar* refers to a berth on a river bank where a boat can take passengers on board to get them across. Tar Khwaja in Shah Bandar thus emerged as an Ismaili village over a hundred years ago.

It is related that Sayed Amir Shah came from Tando Muhammad Khan during the Aga Khan period. He belonged to the Kadiwal family through the line of Sayed Turab Ali, who died in the period of Mukhi Alijah Aziz Ali Nadwani (d. 24<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2002). Sayed Amir Shah served the incoming Ismailis in Tar Khwaja during their early

settlement and taught Ismailism to the children in a room, which later became the Religious Education Centre, and as such he is reckoned the first religion teacher of Tar Khwaja before the period of the famous religion teachers, such as Mukhi Balidino and Mukhi Iban Ali.

The last few years of his life was marred by illness. The Lakhpati family brought him in their residence to look after him. Sayed Amir Shah expired and was buried in the old site of the Ismailis, about a distance of a mile.

It must be known that the Ismailis of Tar Khwaja loaded the dead bodies on camels to be buried in Rari around the shrine of Sayed Nurshah. In the meantime, an epidemic broke out in Rari, which created a problem to transport the dead bodies. Imam Aga Ali Shah visited different villages of Shah Bandar during the course of his hunting expeditions in about 1270/1854, and when he came in Tar Khwaja after the death of Sayed Amir Shah, he said, "The old site is most suitable for the graveyard." Hence, the present graveyard is the place where the shrine of Sayed Amir Shah is located. The Ismailis celebrate a fair in his shrine on every 27<sup>th</sup> of the month of Nahri (Nov-Dec.)

### **Sayed Sajan Shah & Sayed Fateh Shah**

The shrines of Sayed Sajan Shah and Sayed Fateh Shah are close to each other in old Dero in old Auranga Bandar in Shah Bandar. Their shrines were ruined, therefore, the local people called it the black tombs (*karan quba*). Nothing is known about them for historical purpose. Seth Mehr Ali had renovated their shrines in 1842 according to the inscription given on the walls. The local Ismailis celebrate a fair for 3 days at their shrines on every 14<sup>th</sup> of Jeth month (May-June). On that occasion, the Ismailis cook Sindhi Pulao of cock in the name of Sayed Sajan Shah and Sayed Fateh Shah. Each cock is cooked in the name of each family member. The pregnant women are not allowed to visit inside the shrines. It must be noted that the personality of Sayed Fateh Shah should not be conflated with that of Sayed Fateh Ali Shah, whose shrine is located in Sonda, near Jerruk. Both were different persons in different period.

### **Sayed Hasan Shah & Sayed Sattu Shah**

Their shrines are located about two miles north of the shrine of Sayed Sajan Shah. These are close to the sea in the ruined condition and look like the heap of the stones. No detail is accessible about them.

### **Sayed Soban Shah**

It is said that the village of Chhachh Golo in Chhachh Jehan Khan was flourished between 1850 and 1860. The Ismailis from different parts of Shah Bandar, Khari Chhann and old Deri came to reside in Chhachh Golo. Here is located the shrine of Sayed Soban Shah. Nothing is known about him. The Ismailis celebrate a fair for 3 days in the shrine on every 13<sup>th</sup> of Jeth month. On that occasion, the Ismailis

cook Sindhi Pulao of cock. Each cock is cooked in the name of each family member.

### **Sayed Kachhilanni Shah**

He is said to have traced his descent from the Kadiwal family. His shrine is located in the village of Mir Khan Mori, about 3 miles from Tar Khwaja in Shah Bandar, Thatta.

### **Sayed Hussain Shah**

He also belonged to the Kadiwal family and his shrine is located in the village of Begna Mori, about 2 miles from Tar Khwaja.

### **Sayed Ali Madad Shah**

His shrine is located near Buharo in District Thatta being venerated by the Ismailis and local people.

### **Bai Budhai**

Sayed Rukn al-Din, the son of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din had a daughter, called Bibi Jeval Khatoon. She married to Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din and had five sons and a daughter, called Bai Budhai. She appeared in history in Uchh soon after the death of Pir Hasan Kabir al-Din in 853/1449. Whatever is known about her is derived from her dialogue with Sayed Imam Shah (d. 926/1520). It infers that she was born most probably in 835/1432. It is also related that her marriage took place with a rich cotton merchant of a Sayed family. She came in Uchh after the death of her father, where she stayed for six month with her brother, Sayed Imam Shah and learnt much about the faith of her forefather. She began to adhere to the Ismaili faith. The later historians write that she died and buried in Uchh, where no trace of her grave is found. We were also misguided in this context. Pirzada Sadruddin Dargawala was famous for having good knowledge of the locations of the shrines of the Ismaili Pirs and their descendants. He too failed to locate the shrine of Bai Budhai and writes in his “**Tarikh-i Pir**” (Navsari, 1935, p. 101) that, “The fact about her death and shrine is shrouded yet in darkness.” Dr. G.A. Allana simply writes in “**Ismaili Movement in Sindh, Multan and Gujrat**” (Karachi, 2008, p.60) that her shrine exists in lower Sind without mentioning specific place. It came to our notice during relevant investigation that her shrine is located in the village of Baranabad, about 22 miles from Jati. The local people call her Bai Budhi and celebrate a fair at her shrine on every Nahri month (Nov-Dec.). There is also a “Bai Budhi School” after her name.

## APPENDIX

### Amir Pir Mela in Sind - its Origin

The Ismailis in the province of Sind, Pakistan celebrate Amir Pir Mela (fair of Amir Pir) once a year in November. At the distance of 123 km from Karachi and 10 km from Jimpir to the east on the bank of the Kalari Lake lies the location of Amir Pir. The historical background of Amir Pir is shrouded in mist and whirled round the grip of oral and fictitious traditions, based on illusive bits and shreds. Many stories and contrive superstitious tales tinged with miracles have been invented to give vent to credulous stories. In short, the story tellers circulated among the people a host of tales fabricated in exaggeration according to their genius. E.P Delhose visited the location on February 10, 1839 and admitted that its story was involved in obscurity (vide "**Memoirs on Sind**," Karachi, 1979, 1<sup>st</sup> vol., p. 252). Its source of information has been taken on its face value without verification of the truth thereof. But history, as distinct from fiction, proves otherwise.

There is a famous oral tradition, largely mythological in character that a certain Seth Mehr Ali of Mulla Katiar, Sind had once dreamt and saw Muhammad Hanafia or Ibn al-Hanafia visiting Sind through a cave near Jimpir. He was also told that the cave was situated on the bank of Soneri Lake (now Kalari Lake by combining Soneri and Kinjar Lakes). He traveled in search of the hidden cave. He first came across a cave on Jam Tamachi Fort, which is now at a small distance of the north-east of the Amir Pir. He stayed there few days in veneration and concluded that it was not that very cave. He then roamed around the Soneri Lake and ultimately discovered the cave inside the rock. Seth Mehr Ali through premonitions in his dream was directed to raise a dome (*quba*) over the cave, which he did. He fixed 14<sup>th</sup> Shaban the date of visiting the location.

Following questions emerged while scanning the above tradition:

1. It indicates that there was only a cave, not the grave of Amir Pir. The "**Gazetteer of the Province of Sind**" (Bombay, 1927, p. 42) also admits that, "The saint is not, however, buried in the mausoleum of Amir Pir."
2. The date of 14<sup>th</sup> Shaban (Shab-e Bharat) suggests a non-Ismaili print in the story.
3. After the event of Kerbala, many sub-sects in Shi'ite sprang in Arab, and most of them held belief in the disappearance of their masters. The Shia Ismaili Muslims never believed the doctrine of concealment. Ibn al-Hanafia's concealment in the cave claimed in the above tradition denotes apparently the belief of the Kaysania sect.
4. The above oral tradition is built merely on the edifice of a dream, which cannot be reckoned as historical evidence.

## Dargha, A'astana or Khanaqah?

There are many old graves near the cave. The old record reveals that the original word for the fair was Jimpir Mela, then Amir Pir Mela, but the words *dargha*, *a'astana* or *khanaqah* were never attached to it. These three later terms are found in different plaques in Amir Pir, contradicting with one another. The word *dargha* means a place where one is enshrined, and *a'astana* refers to a particular spot where the saint had stayed, while *khanaqah* is a Sufic term for their cloister. It is a unique example of the contradictions as none of these terms suits to Amir Pir.

## Seth Mehr Ali

Seth Mehr Ali was an origin of Mulla Katiar in lower Sind. His father Megji belonged to Buj, Kutchh and migrated towards Ramki Bazar, Badin and then settled in Mulla Katiar. He was an influential merchant during the Kalhora (1737-1782) and Talpur (1782-1843) rules in Sind. It is related that he visited Iran in the period of Imam Abul Hasan Ali (1143-1206/1730-1792) and Imam Khalilullah (1206-1233/1792-1817). Seth Mehr Ali was popular not only in Sind, but also in Punjab, Kutchh and other parts of India. In Sind, he also hosted the Ismailis, who were going to Iran for the *didar* of the Imam.

The second phase of Seth Mehr Ali's life was quite different from his early life, which sounds his great leaning towards the doctrine of the Kaysania sect. In spite of the diversity in the oral traditions, there is a common story that Seth Mehr Ali had visited Bombay and then proceeded to Pirana, and came into the contact of the Kaka (headman) of the Imam Shahi sect, named Sayed Sharif (d. 1209/1795). This contact would have created his strong proclivity towards the veneration of the shrines. Soon after his return, he visited Multan and became the disciple of Makhdam Safdar Ali alias Jiwan Shah, the custodian of the mausoleum of Pir Shams. This contact prompted him to rebuild the mausoleum of Pir Shams. A sum of Rs. 75,000 was spent in its renovation, which he procured through donation in Sind in 1194/1779. He posed himself as a Sayed to win the hearts of the Muslims. This is the reason that he is called Sayed Mehr Ali in "**Tawarikh-i Zila'e Multan**" (Lahore, 1884, p. 85) by Munshi Hukam Chand and "**Multan: History and Architecture**" (Islamabad, 1983, p. 206) by Dr. Ahmad Nabi Khan.

He intended that the mausoleum should be crowded on the first Friday after 15<sup>th</sup> Shaban, therefore, he invited the local Shi'ites and the Ismailis of Sadiqabad, Uchh Sharif and Sind, but his objective was foiled. The Shi'ites venerated it and took its possession, which did not descend below the throats of the Ismailis, who made no response to it.

He did not retreat in his pursuit and operated its next launching on the bank of the Soneri lake near Jimpir, Sind where he is supposed to have found a cave of Ibn al-Hanafia on the basis of his so called dream. This time he failed to raise funds in Sind, so he visited Karachi and collected Rs. 25,000. He built a dome (*quba*) on the cave, few houses and inn (*musafarkhana*) of stone and lime. Culling up



the fragment of the traditions, it is purported that in accomplishing his mission with maximum impact, he invited the Shi'ites of lower Sind at first. Since the Shi'ites believed in the disappearance of their 12<sup>th</sup> Imam Mahdi in a cave of Samarra, the story of Ibn al-Hanafia's cave easily touched to their minds. After mustering gathering of the Shi'ites, he first invited those Ismailis who had close family ties with the Shi'ites. The Ismaili pilgrims were comparatively less; he then invited other Ismailis in Karachi and interior Sind by giving example of that small number of the Ismailis who were visiting. In short, he made the present location of Amir Pir the venue of vows.

Seth Mehr Ali could not attract Ismaili pilgrims as more as he expected. The Shi'ites not only came for veneration, but also used the location as their graveyard. Soon after his death, the Ismailis began to assemble at large number. Railway line from Karachi to Kotri was open for traffic on May 13, 1861. It provided facility to the Ismailis of Karachi to visit Amir Pir by train. They landed at Jimpir station and then traveled in the wheeled carriages. It caused the Ismaili foothold, making the Shi'ites visit comparatively less. The Ismailis removed the amulets (*taveez*), wooden horse (*duldul*) and painted pictures on the walls of the cave, and placed there the photos of the Imams.

Soon afterwards, the low class Hindus consisting of Bhils, Meghwars, Kohis, Gurgalas, Oads etc., also visited the location for fulfillment of their vows. Among other visitors, the followers of the Imam Shahi sect were also prominent. So far, the Ismailis visited informally for fulfillment of their vows, sometimes regularly or casually. The concept of the Mela (fair) however was not yet created.

Seth Mehr Ali passed rest of his life in the village of Shah Kapur, near Tando Muhammad Khan, where he was a wholesale grain dealer, and a large supplier of eggs to the British soldiers. He died in Shah Kapur and was buried in the location of Amir Pir.

### **Muhammad Hanafia or Ibn al-Hanafia**

Muhammad Hanafia was born in 11/632. His name was Muhammad Akbar, surnamed Abul Kassim, known as Ibn al-Hanafia. He was the son of Hazrat Ali and his mother was Khawla bint Jafar bin Qais al-Hanafia.

After the event of Kerbala, Mukhtar Thaqafi rose in Kufa against the Umayyad to take revenge of Imam Hussain's blood. He turned to Imam Zayn al-Abidin to seek his support. Baladhuri (d. 279/892) writes in "**Ansab al-Ashraf**" (5<sup>th</sup> vol., p.272) that, "Mukhtar wrote to Zayn al-Abidin to show his loyalty to him, asking if he could rally the Kuffans for him. He sent with the letter a large sum of money. Zayn al-Abidin refused this offer and declared Mukhtar publicly to be a liar who was trying to exploit the cause of Ahl al-Bayt for his own interests." Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/845) also writes in "**Kitab al-Tabaqat**" (5<sup>th</sup> vol., p. 213) that, "Imam Zayn al-Abidin had publicly denounced Mukhtar's mission." Mukhtar lost all hopes of winning Imam Zayn al-Abidin; he then turned to Ibn al-Hanafia in Mecca. On his part, Ibn al-Hanafia did not repudiate Mukhtar's propaganda for his Imamate and Messianic role; he nevertheless, maintained a non-committal attitude and never openly raised his claims to the heritage of Imam Hussain. Baladhuri (5<sup>th</sup>

vol., p. 218) writes that, "Ibn al-Hanafia gave Mukhtar only a non-committal reply. He neither approved nor disapproved of Mukhtar's intention to avenge Imam Hussain, and only warned him against bloodshed." In the event, however, the hesitation and political inactivity of Ibn al-Hanafia induced Mukhtar more and more to exploit his name for his own interest. In Kufa, Mukhtar propagated that Ibn al-Hanafia was an awaited Mahdi, and he was his minister (*vizir*) and commander (*amir*). It is curious that Ibn al-Hanafia did not refute the propaganda of Mukhtar.

Mukhtar mustered large following around him, propagating the Messianic role of Ibn al-Hanafia and captured Kufa. Ibn Sa'd (4<sup>th</sup> vol., p. 15) writes that Ibn al-Hanafia once thought of going to Kufa to join his over-energetic agent Mukhtar. This would by no means have suited Mukhtar's purpose, who was well aware of the advantage of professing to act for a master who was at a distance. He therefore let it be known that the Mahdi (Ibn al-Hanafia) was to be distinguished by the following test: if any one struck him with the sword in the street, the weapon would be unable to penetrate the Mahdi's flesh, and would cause no injury. Ibn al-Hanafia naturally regarded this as a threat that if he came to Kufa he would be assassinated, whence he kept away, and never visited Kufa till death.

In the meantime, the circumstances changed when Abdullah bin Zubayr proclaimed himself caliph in 64/683 in Mecca. Ibn al-Hanafia refused to pay homage to him in Mecca. In 66/685, Abdullah bin Zubayr detained Ibn al-Hanafia and his family and threatened them with death if they did not pay homage within a specific time. Ibn al-Hanafia wrote letter to Mukhtar, apprising him of his perilous condition. Mukhtar marshaled out four thousand soldiers and managed to liberate Ibn al-Hanafia, who left Mecca for Taif. Mukhtar was killed in 67/687 in an another encounter with Musab bin Zubayr in Kufa, while Ibn al-Hanafia died in 81/700 at the age of about 70 years, and was buried in Mecca.

Abu Hashim, the eldest son of Ibn al-Hanafia however continued the mission of Mukhtar, and his followers became known as the Kaysanias, who believed Ibn al-Hanafia as the successor of Hazrat Ali. Abu Hashim was poisoned by the Umayyad caliph Hisham in 99/718. Before his death, he quickly rushed to Humayma, and handed over his right to the caliphate and charge of the Kaysania sect to Muhammad bin Ali, the leader of the growing Abbasid power as he had no male issue.

The followers of the Kaysania held Ibn al-Hanafia as their Imam Mahdi and believed in his concealment and immortality. The fact is that he had died his natural death. The famous Umayyad poet, Kuthayyir bin Abd Rehman Azza (24-105/644-723) however was first to propagate that Ibn al-Hanafia was alive on the Mount Radwah, west of Medina that he was being guarded by a lion and a tiger, and that he had two rich springs of water and honey, and that he would reappear to fill the earth with justice, vide his "**Diwan**" (ed. By Ihsan Abbas, Beirut, 1971). In sum, the Kaysania sect held the doctrine of *raja* (the return to life of some of the dead before the resurrection). Sayed Himyari, one of the poets of Kaysania sect describes that, "Ibn al-Hanafia had not tasted death nor would taste it until he had led his hosts to victory. The place of his retirement was Mount Radwah, where food is miraculously supplied him, and he had a society of angels, besides

that of lions and panthers.” Shaharastani writes that, “This is the first appearance of the Shi’ite doctrine of concealment and return from concealment.”

Kashi also records a story about two men from the entourage of Imam Jafar Sadik, viz. as-Sarraj and Hammad bin Isa, who were known to believe that Ibn al-Hanafia was still alive. Imam Jafar Sadik reproached them and pointed out that Ibn al-Hanafia was seen being buried, and his property had been divided and his widow had remarried.

Undoubtedly, Ibn al-Hanafia neither came to help Imam Hussain during the terrible sufferings in Kerbala nor took revenge from a single person thereafter. He passed his peaceful life in Mecca and Taif, where he died. It is possible that the Sunni circle would have charged, why he did not come to help his brother, Imam Hussain in Kerbala? In order to cover it, the followers of the Kaysania sect had cultivated stories that he took revenge from the Kuffans, making it flooded in blood to such extent that his horse swam in it. These stories are not historical but fictitious. The reason for his concealment neither is known nor understood. Since the story of his revenge from the Kuffans and the Umayyads is quite incorrect and imaginary, the second story of his concealment becomes itself cripple and null.

The above details indicate that the concealment of Ibn al-Hanafia was not historical, but he met a natural death. In addition, his name was Ibn al-Hanafia, not Amir Pir or Pir Amir Ahmad. It has been also admitted that he was not granted the office of the *hujjat* or pir. The oral tradition however claims that there is a cave of Ibn al-Hanafia at the location 10 km from Jimpir.

### **Fictitious Narratives in the “Satveni’ji Vel”**

The Satpanth Literature or the *Ginans* were composed by 9 Ismaili Pirs and 22 Sayeds during their mission in Indian subcontinent. The *ginans* were preserved in different manuscripts. Mukhi Laljibhai Devraj (1842-1930) collected the old manuscripts in different places. It was difficult to judge the authenticity of each *ginan* a hundred years ago due to the lack of the competent scholars. He published the *ginans* in his printing press in Bombay with a view that if any published text was found irrelevant or doubtful, it would be never reprinted. During the process of printing, however, some compositions were found doubtful, such as the “**Chhatris Krodi,**” “**Dashtari Gayatri,**” “**Chetamani of Pir Imam Shah**” etc., which were never published. The “**Satveni’ji Vel**” by Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah (d. 940/1534) was however published without prior testing of its Ismaili root. Mukhi Laljibhai however appealed the Ismailis through his monthly magazine, “**Ismaili Satpanth Prakash**” (April 12, 1918) to draw his attention the errors, discrepancies or doubtfulness in the *ginans* he had published from his Khoja Sindhi Printing Press. On this juncture, the authenticity of the “**Satveni’ji Vel**” was challenged with evidences, which were minutely examined and resolved not to publish its next edition. The inventory of its evidences is not known except that “**Satveni’ji Vel**” contained non-Ismaili elements and suffered with interpolation.

Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah, the son of Sayed Imam Shah and the founder of the Imam Shahi sect had compiled “**Satveni’ji Vel**” most probably between 922/1516

and 926/1520, containing 100 verses. Its manuscript was in private collection of the Imam Shahis in Pirana (about 10 miles from Ahmedabad), where many fabricated verses were included. One old manuscript of 1890 contained 150 verses. It implies that the original text was adulterated by inclusion of later verses. Mukhi Laljibhai Devraj had gone to Ahmedabad in search of old manuscripts in about 1905, where he unearthed the manuscript of the “**Satveni’ji Vel**” consisted of 150 verses. He brought it in Bombay and published in the Khojki script in 1906. Patel Laljibhai Nanjibhai, the follower of the Imam Shahi sect reproduced the same text into Gujrati, entitled “**Motti Satveni’ni Vel**” in 1960 in Ahmedabad.

In 1978, its one rare manuscript was discovered in Buj, Kutchh. It was written in 1780, containing 100 verses. Comparing it with the above printed texts, it appears that 50 verses were incorporated at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The extra verses given in the printed texts, such as 23-24, 28-33, 75, 78-93, 97-100, 115-135 (total 50 verses) are not found in the oldest manuscript of 1780. It means that the interpolation would have taken place after 1780.

Scrutiny of the other accessible records also throws a flood of light that the original feature of the text (100 verses) was affected with the addition of 50 new verses. The anonymous composer hampered and interpolated the imaginary verses with his own sense of propriety. The Russian scholar W. Ivanow also reckoned it a “modern work.” Thus, in the later 50 verses, the stories of Amir Pir and Muhammad Hanif (Ibn al-Hanafia) are grossly misrepresented and highlighted skillfully. It is given in four places (verse nos. 23, 24, 29 & 30) under different headings, whose translation is given below with comments:

### **Verse 23<sup>rd</sup> (Muhammad Hanif’ki Tasanif)**

**“He was the 6<sup>th</sup> Pir. God invested him extraordinary prowess. He took revenge of the religion. He killed the infidels and tyrants and became a *gazi*. He led a piety life in the world and became an immortal till the Judgment Day. He killed forty thousand infidels and removed infidelity in the world. He himself conquered and raised a rule over the world. This very person (Muhammad Hanif or Ibn al-Hanafia) came in the world. His mother was Bibi Hanifa, the wife of Hazrat Ali and (he) Muhammad Hanif was from their family. He killed the infidels everywhere and became a devout *gazi*. Many people submitted, known as the believers of the Satpanth.”**

- a) Ibn al-Hanifa is shown as the 6<sup>th</sup> Pir, which is historically incorrect. It does not mention, which Imam had consigned him the office of the Pir? He was neither given the Piratan nor worked for the religious cause. The so called Piratan of Ibn al-Hanafia nowhere is mentioned even in the authorized literature of the *ginans*.
- b) It indicates that Ibn al-Hanafia took “revenge of religion” from the infidels and tyrants. Who were the infidels and tyrants? Apparently, it refers to the Kuffans and the Umayyads. It claims that he had taken revenge from forty thousand infidels and removed infidelity in the world. Between the event of Kerbala in 61/680 and his death in 81/700, there was a period of twenty

years, in which he executed not a single person. The removal of infidelity in the world is therefore curious and moreso is his immortality till the Judgment Day, which is illogical and irrational story. Such folklore cannot adulterate the face of history in the light of reliable sources.

For illustration, when an Arab leader Tarmah bin Adi found Imam Hussain in the plight at Kerbala, who was going home after pilgrimage came to the Imam and said, “O’ son of the Prophet! The Kuffans have proved faithless and disloyal. Come with me and I will take you to my tribe beyond those mountains. We have defended ourselves against the old tyrants of Hira Ghassan kingdoms and now will defend you.” Imam Hussain declined his offer. It ensues that an Arab chief had offered to help Imam Hussain, but Ibn al-Hanafia did not come in Kerbala to help Imam Hussain. How it can be believed that he had come in Kufa after Kerbala event to take revenge from the Kuffans and took field against the Umayyads? He had been in Mecca before and after the tragic event of Kerbala, and never visited Kufa or Damascus. There is also no historical evidence that he had ever met Imam Zayn al-Abidin in Medina after the event of Kerbala.

- c) It also claims that he alone made conquest and established his sovereignty in the world. Firstly, there is no indication of his fantastic military operations. He was not even the *hakim* or governor of any village, town or city in Arab, therefore, the question of his becoming the ruler of the world does not arise.
- d) The phrase, “Many people submitted, known as the believers of the Satpanth” refers to the followers of a petty sect, known as the Kaysania, which existed after the death of Ibn al-Hanafia. It is also noticeable that the composer misrepresented the followers of the Kaysania sect as the believers of the Satpanth!

### **Verse 24<sup>th</sup> (Muhammad Hanif’ka Gazipana)**

**“When he fought with the infidels, he killed them by his own hand. On that moment, he received a Divine inspiration: ‘How long will you fight for religion? Leave the infidels now alone and take rest in any place. You have conquered all countries including Damascus. You now leave and kill them during the Judgment Day. If you will kill them now, the world population will be decreased, and there will be no infidel in the world. If the infidels are reduced, how the affairs of the world will be run? How the believers will know the spiritual status? Believers achieve the spiritual status after facing the infidels because the eternal grade is gained after toleration of the grief.’”**

- a) It claims that he alone killed the infidels and conquered many lands including Damascus, which is also a bombastic story bereft of historical value. Damascus was the capital of the Umayyads, which fell in 132/750, while Ibn al-Hanafia died in 81/700. One can glean from the sources of Abu Mikhnaf (d. 157/774), Waqidi (d. 207/822), Baladhuri (d. 279/892), Yaqubi (d. 284/898), Tabari (d. 310/922), Atham al-Kufi al-Kindi (d. 314/926), etc. that Ibn al-Hanafia neither took revenge of Imam Hussain’s

blood from the Kuffans and the Umayyads, nor he ever came in Kufa, but remained in Mecca till death.

- b) It further indicates that he left the remaining infidels and took rest, lasting till the Judgment Day as per Divine order. It also exhorts that the remaining infidels would be killed in Judgment Day by him, not by God. The revenge of Imam Hussain's blood was assigned to him, half infidels were executed in the material world and remaining in immaterial world. Is it believable? While taking this story in Islamic perception, it is quite improbable that a human being in his physical state will kill the immaterial beings with a physical sword in Judgment Day?
- c) It claims that God commanded him not to kill all the infidels, otherwise the world population would be decreased. The enemies of Imam Hussain were in Iraq and Syria, why the composer of the verse made him to kill the infidels of other countries?

### **Verse 29<sup>th</sup> (Tasanif Amir'ki)**

**“Amir himself dwelt in a mountain and none knew his whereabouts. One ruler of Khorasan revered Satgur Amir. His name was Khaqan Mansur. He traced out every place and thought of Amir's whereabouts. He loitered everywhere in his search and went into the jungle with an army, where he found rocks everywhere. He arrived as far as Jimpir (*Jinjir*) and saw a cave in a rock, whereon was written: “Satgur Amir has gone inside, none is ordered to enter it.” (Finding his entry thus barred), Mansur stood there, delighting in heart. He built a dome (*quba*) on it, and earned (fame of) his name in the world. He had no issue and vowed for. One who vows in the dome, his wishes will be accepted. All come to this location, where their wishes are accomplished.”**

- a) The heading of the previous 23<sup>rd</sup> verse is **“Muhammad Hanif'ki Tasanif”** while the heading of 29<sup>th</sup> verse is **“Tasanif Amir'ki.”** Here it is clearly shown that both Muhammad Hanif (Ibn al-Hanafia) and Amir were two different persons.
- b) In the light of the accessible sources, no ruler bearing the name “Khaqan Mansur” is traceable in the history of Khorasan. It seems a fictitious name.
- c) It claims that Amir went to an unknown place. His follower, Khaqan Mansur wandered in his search from Khorasan to Sind and found a cave at Jimpir, where he saw a written instruction that, **“Satgur Amir has gone inside, none is ordered to enter it.”** It means he found only one cave between Khorasan and Sind and none else, and the composer of the verses made him to reach as far as Jimpir. Besides he found the whereabouts of Satgur Amir, not Ibn al-Hanafia. Granted that he found an instruction on the cave, it should have been written in Sindhi for the people of Sind, not in Arabic or Persian. If so, how he read it? Satgur Amir had gone in cave to take rest in seclusion till the Judgment Day, and not to fulfill the vows of the

needy people. Firstly, the purpose was to take rest, and then it changed into the vows. How the composer used his skill to translate his motif?

What was the reason of the written instruction on a cave? Who has written and why? Is not such instruction valid in present day? Why it is not seen today? Who had removed it? It implies that Khaqan Mansur did not enter the cave due to restriction. This is pretty good technique to make the venerators fearful psychologically, and restrict them to the extent of the cave. Contrary to it, there are many persons in present age, who have entered the cave and found there nothing but a small stony cellar of hardly two to three yards in the rock, and nothing happened to them.

- d) Khaqan Mansur obviously had not seen Satgur Amir, but brought faith merely upon the written instruction. The composer designed a dramatic tale in the name of Khaqan Mansur, exhorting the people to have a blind trust like him.
- e) The key point to draw attention in the above verse is the name “**Jimpir**” (**Jinjir**). The old persons in Jhimpir relate that in the period of the Kalhora rule (1737-1782) in Sind, one unknown English tourist, named Jim or Jem visited on camel in their area from Kotri. He joined the annual Hindu fair on February 18 in the temple of Shiva. He was a generous and deeply touched with the local poverty. He returned to Kotri and brought huge grains and clothes laden on camels for the poor. He made several trips in this context. The local people venerated him as if a Pir and called him “**Jim Pir**” or “**Jempeer.**” This location thus became known as **Jimpir** after his name.

Hence, the coinage of the name “Jimpir” came into existence during 18<sup>th</sup> century. How this word appeared in the “**Sateveni’ji Vel**” of 16<sup>th</sup> century?

Nothing prevent us in concluding that the above verses are forged, fabricated and were included at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

- f) The phrase, “One who vows in the dome (*quba*), his wishes will be accepted. All come to this location, where their wishes are fulfilled” is the principal objective of the composer to summon the illiterate people for the veneration of the cave.

### **Verse 30<sup>th</sup> (Mojiza Amir’ka)**

**“One follower lived in Sind with deep devotion upon Amir. Once he was going in a forest, where the bandits descended upon him. They began to plunder his camels laden with merchandise. While he was being beaten with a sword, he was much fearful and lamented, exclaimed, ‘Oh! Muhammad Hanifa Amir! I keep patience with your name. Come to relieve me from the bandits. Come to help in this moment.’ The Gur at once came on horse and killed the bandits into pieces with sword. His follower became cheerful and bowed before Gur Amir. Gur also patted and showered mercy. There was a rock,**

**where the Gur reached in a cave. The follower brought faith on him. (Gur) made him richest person. He built a dome (*quba*) in Sind.”**

- a) Gur Amir emerged from the cave upon exclamation of his Sindhi follower, where he returned. The present site of the rock having the cave faces the Soneri lake, not jungle. Granted that the jungle existed beyond the Soneri lake, where exists the old village of Sonda, near Jerruk. His coming on a horse and patting his follower indicate that his appearance was physical. It is thus unbelievable how he heard his follower’s cry at a long distance.
- b) We have seen in the previous verses that Khaqan Mansur Khorasani was destined to build a dome (*quba*) on the cave, and then the story is curiously changed, narrating that one another person in Sind built a dome (*quba*) on the cave. Both are reported to have discovered the cave and built the *quba*. To whom credit should be given? It is curious that the name of his one follower, Khaqan Mansur is clearly mentioned, but the name of another person in Sind is not given, why? Is it not possible that the person in Sind, who built the *quba* would have been Seth Mehr Ali and none else, which is also ascertained in the oral tradition? It seems that his name was deliberately hidden, otherwise, the secrecy of interpolation in “**Satveni’ji Vel**” would have been exposed in the period of the composer.
- c) Curiously, this verse equates Muhammad Hanif and Amir as **One Person**, giving them a joint name of “**Muhammad Hanifa Amir.**” To crown him as a Pir, the word **Satgur Amir** is applied in the previous 29<sup>th</sup> verse and **Gur Amir** in this 30<sup>th</sup> verse. This is an imprudent composition. Hence, the dominant force of the legendary accounts gave birth of the false tales, making Ibn al-Hanafia and Amir Ahmad as one character. Since Amir Ahmad was the 6<sup>th</sup> Pir, therefore, his Piratan and historicity are shifted skillfully to the account of Ibn al-Hanafia in the above verse. The composer aimed to brush aside the personality of Pir Amir Ahmad.
- d) He implored for help from Amir. Was the name Muhammad Hanifa Amir famous in those days among the vulgar section of Sind? If so, his association must be with the Kaysania sect.
- e) We have seen in the above 24<sup>th</sup> verse that Ibn al-Hanafia was commanded in the Divine inspiration not to kill any more till Judgment Day, but here the Divine order is violated, where the bandits, the tyrants are shown to be killed. Secondly, his purpose to remain in cave was only to take rest till the Judgment Day, then why he disturbed his rest and came out of the cave for the rescue of his follower? The composer put an imprint on the people that he was a rescuer and saviour!
- f) Making vow and become rich indicates to conquer the hearts of the poor people in lower Sind. In those days, the people were down trodden in economical and social fields. The poverty and illiteracy of the people impelled them to improve their economical condition by simple means. Thus, the poor class thought the making of vow in Amir Pir’s cave an easy means to become rich. The largest number of the pilgrims were those who



were seeking financial and material prosperity. Next in line were those who suffered from various ailments. Besides these the other objectives were blessing for a child, better treatment from in-laws, improvements in domestic relations, success in business enterprises, protection from epidemics, etc.

In sum, it was projected purposely to drag the Ismailis to the venue of immaterial practice. Firstly, it was implemented in Multan in the mausoleum of Pir Shams, but failed. The Ismailis were given one another taste of veneration in Sind, which was not foiled like in Multan. The articulator borrowed the distorted theory of the concealment of Ibn al-Hanafia from the Kaysania sect. Ibn al-Hanafia was not impressive figure on religious ground among the Indian Ismailis, it was therefore necessary to crown him with the office of the Piratan, and for implication, the historicity of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ismaili Pir Amir Ahmad was sacrificed. In other words, the historicity of Pir Amir Ahmad was brushed aside. The amalgamation of two theories was meant to magnify Ibn al-Hanafia, which influenced the Ismailis in lower Sind to some extent. In order to convince the Ismailis of Kutchh, Kathiawar and Gujrat, few supporting verses were composed in this context and inserted in the **“Satveni’ji Vel.”** Hence, a hotchpotch dish was prepared with the mixture of illusive bits and shreds to attract the Indian Ismailis towards the reverence of the cave.

Even taking for granted for a while that the **“Satveni’ji Vel”** was composed by Sayed Nur Muhammad Shah between 1516 and 1520 including above quoted four verses, then why the story of the cave in Sind remained in obscurity for over two hundred years and was only destined to Seth Mehr Ali to discover and disclose it? During these two hundred years, no Ismaili Pir or Vakil or any renowned person had ever referred to it. It is crystal clear that the above verses were added after two hundred years.

### **Legend of the Cave**

In the period of Ibn al-Hanafia, it deserves notice that the locations of Jimpir and Kotri geographically were submerged into Indus River. It is therefore, absurd to believe the frivolous tale of the cave, sprouted out in the rock in the period of Ibn al-Hanafia.

It is worth keeping in mind that there was a long stony rock lying on the bank of the Soneri lake. It is evident from the interior walls of the cave that a small prefigured space was definitely hollowed out in the rock by a talent mind. Its size is 10x12 feet with a height of 3 ¼ feet, and none can stand or walk inside. Its interior walls are very solid. The mouth of the cave was plastered, then cemented. Afterwards, it was decorated with a silver frame, which has been removed. It is also believed in the vulgar section that the original cave exists somewhere in Arab, whose tunnel ends at Amir Pir’s location. Mr. Mohammad Hussain, the President of the Ismaili Engineers & Architects Association had visited the location in 1983 with few members of the Regional Council for Karachi and Sind. He examined the cave and submitted his conclusive survey report that the structure of the cave was artificial, not natural.

Outside the cave, a chamber or the dome (*quba*) was erected, whose internal

height is 3 ¼ feet with the level of the cave. It could hardly accommodate 50 persons. In 1951, one another chamber to its right side was built to enlarge the space. Both chambers were partitioned by a wall, and when the wall was going to be demolished to make two chambers as one, it was seriously suggested to drop the program because the wall acted as the pillar and if it would be broken, the roof of the chambers with rock's debris would bury the chambers. Apprehending lest the chambers without wall would cause havoc, the wall was retained and the second new chamber was marbled in 1953. One can easily judge that the legend of the Amir Pir is so fictitious that a new story was floated in exaggeration to the account of Imam Aga Ali Shah, relating that he sometimes came down from his residence on hilltop and passed his days in seclusion and worship in this marbled chamber. This is absolutely false, the purpose of which was to legitimate the legend of the cave on religious ground.

### **Pir Amir - Mysterious Name**

While going through the traditional list of the Pirs contained in the old Dua, the name of Pir Amir Ahmad is documented as the 6<sup>th</sup> Pir. He is also called Amir, Amir Ahmad or Ahmad Ali. His period is controversial, not located conclusively, which provided most pregnant opportunity to the people to cultivate unreliable stories. Dr. Abualy A. Aziz in “**Brief History of Ismailism**” (Dar-es-Salaam, 1974, p. 110) writes that, “Pir Amir Ahmed, the sixth Ismaili Pir, was none other than Imam Jafar as-Sadiq.” The weakness of the later sources, indicating however a remote possibility, not strong one, that Pir Amir Ahmad was sent on special mission by Imam Muhammad al-Bakir or Imam Jafar Sadik. The oral disfigured tradition claims that he was that very person, known as Amir Pir in Jimpir. The name of Pir Amir Ahmad in the traditional list comes next to Imam Zayn al-Abidin, which also does not mean that both were contemporary.

We pause for a while to have a look at the traditional list of the Pirs as under:

1. Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him)
2. Hazrat Hasan
3. Kassim Shah
4. Jafar Shah
5. Zayn al-Abidin
6. Amir Ahmad

The above list ostensibly suggests at first glance that after assuming the Imamate in 61/680, Imam Zayn al-Abidin consigned the office of the Piratan to Amir Ahmad, but its historicity is inaccessible. Since the name Amir Ahmad is followed by Imam Zayn al-Abidin in the above list, it becomes convenient to the fabricators to make them contemporary.

It is however much nearer to reasonable possibility that Imam Wafi Ahmad (d.212/828) had consigned the office of the *Hujjat* or Pir to his son, called Ahmad. He propagated Ismaili *dawat* in the villages of Syria and Iran. He was succeeded to his father and assumed the title of at-Taqi (God-fearing). In Indian Ismaili literature, he is called “Pir Ahmad” or “Pir Amir Ahmad” when denoting him the Pir. He is simultaneously called “Taqi Muhammad” when referring him as an Imam.

Hence, Pir Amir Ahmad was the name of Imam Taqi Muhammad, who flourished in the Dawr'i Satr, and nothing to do with the period of Ibn al-Hanafia as is wrongly mentioned in the “**Satveni'ji Vel.**”

It is a trenchant point to keep in mind that Pir Amir Ahmad (Imam Taqi Muhammad) died in 225/840 long after the period of Imam Zayn al-Abidin, while Ibn al-Hanafia died in 81/700. How it is possible to consider both Pir Amir Ahmad and Ibn al-Hanafia as one and the same person when they were not even contemporary?

Imam Zayn al-Abidin returned from Damascus to Medina, while Ibn Hanafia was in Mecca. Is it possible to believe that Imam had given him the Piratan with a mandate to wage war against the enemies of Imam Hussain? Was the Piratan given merely for this purpose? Soon after the event of Kerbala, the Imam changed the policy not to take part in the politics. It was Mukhtar who emerged in history to take revenge to exploit his political interest. He declared Ibn al-Hanafia as the Mahdi and carried on the mission in his name. It is unbelievable that Imam Zayn al-Abidin had approved the cult of Mukhtar and supported his mission by appointing Ibn al-Hanafia as the Pir? In fact, Ibn al-Hanafia and Pir Amir Ahmad were different historical characters in different periods, and moreso Amir Ahmad was not the name or title of Ibn al-Hanafia.

Notwithstanding, the coinage of the term “Amir Pir” in Sind carries a different story without its least relation with “Pir Amir Ahmad” or “Ibn al-Hanafia”.

When Imam Hasan Ali Shah arrived in Sind, he held meeting with Sir Charles Napier (1782-1853), the then British political agent of Sind. This historical meeting made the Imam famous in Sind. The Muslims in lower Sind mostly of Shah Bandar and District Thatta revered the Imam as a **Pir** and called him the **Khwajen'jo Pir**. The British posted the Imam in Jerruk for guarding the route between Hyderabad and Karachi. The Imam arrived in Jerruk on March 1, 1843. The Jokia, Numeri and Kalmati tribes gathered together and attacked on the Ismailis in Jerruk led by Mir Sher Muhammad Khan on March 23, 1843. In the encounter, the enemies plundered 23 lac rupees cash amount of the Imam. Mirza Kalichbeg writes in “**History of Sind**” (Karachi, 1902, 2<sup>nd</sup> vol., p. 260) that Sir Charles Napier wrote letter to Mir Sher Muhammad Khan on April 7, 1843, which reads: “Chief, if you will give back to Aga Khan the plunder you took from Jerruck, and come in and make Salaam to me, I will pardon, and be your friend, and your jageers shall be respected. C.J. Napier.” Later, the amount of the Imam was recovered.

The news of the great robbery rapidly spread in Hyderabad, District Thatta and Shah Bandar, inducing the Muslims to say : “**Oh! Pir (Imam Hasan Ali Shah) is a rich (Amir) person.**” Gradually, the term “**Amir Pir**” (the rich Pir) was designated for Imam Hasan Ali Shah. The fact of the designation can be verified from the old records of Registrar of District Thatta.

Consequently, the two correlative names (Amir Pir and Pir Amir Ahmad) cropped on the surface in lower Sind. In order to distinguish the two relevant names, the Ismailis denoted the term “**Amir Pir**” for Imam Hasan Ali Shah, and “**Pir Amir Ahmad**” or “**Pir Amir**” was specified for the 6<sup>th</sup> Ismaili Pir. Since the fair began

by the orders of Imam Hasan Ali Shah, it became known as “**Amir Pir Mela**” after his name.

The “Amir Pir Mela” became widespread in India, where the Ismailis of Kutchh, Kathiawar and Gujrat were unknown with the other side of the coin, and tried to correlate Ibn al-Hanafia with Pir Amir Ahmad, the 6<sup>th</sup> Pir; and constructed a layer of confusion in locating the personality of Pir Amir Ahmad. Besides, the story of Seth Mehr Ali’s dream also prompted them to cultivate few other stories. This type of coining commenced in these areas, wherefrom this art was developed. Some irresponsible writers have even wrongly gone to the extent to equate the 6<sup>th</sup> Pir Amir Ahmad with the “cave tale” of Amir Pir, vide “**Pir Padhariya Aapan’e Duar**” (Bombay, 1986, pp. 99-106) by Abdul Hussain.

Their literature has intricately injected wrong views into the minds of the people. Unless the modern writers know before writing the theories of **disappearance in a cave, immortality of the Pir or Saint** and the **veneration of any location** quite contrary to the Ismaili tariqah, they would have never correlated two persons. This curious formula was arbitrary, irrational and wholly impracticable and divorced from reality.

### **Beginning of the Mela at Amir Pir’s Location**

When Imam Hasan Ali Shah left Iran, some faithful and loyal Shi’ite soldiers from Kirman also joined the Imam’s caravan. Soon after his arrival in Sind, Sir Charles Napier posted him at Jerruk at the end of February, 1843 to secure communications as well as restore peace between Karachi and Hyderabad. The Baluchi leader Mir Sher Muhammad Khan attacked at Jerruk on March 23, 1843. The Imam spurred his fleet horse and advanced with full gallop, penetrating the front ranks of the enemies and fought against the overwhelmed odds. In the skirmish, the Imam’s horse skidded and he fell on the ground. Some thirty Ismaili warriors managed to bring the Imam in Hyderabad for treatment.

Soon after the tragic event of Jerruk, the Baluchis attacked the Shi’ite soldiers of the Imam, who were patrolling on the route between Jimpir and Kotri. Some of them were killed and buried at the location of Amir Pir. When Imam Hasan Ali Shah arrived in Jerruk from Hyderabad after recovery, he visited the location with his few followers. He crossed the shallow water of the Soneri Lake and reached the hilltop of Amir Pir’s location on horse. He dismounted and offered *fatiha* on the graves of his Shi’ite soldiers. The followers preserved the marks of the Imam’s footprints, known as “*Shah’ja Kadam.*” The local Shi’ites walled the space with an *alam* (crest or emblem) inside on a staff, where a ceremony of its hoisting was performed before 1984.

The Ismailis from Muscat, Gwadar, Sind, Kutchh, Kathiawar and Gujrat flocked at Jerruk to behold the Imam before the attack on Jerruk. Looking the social and religious worth of a mixed gathering, Imam Hasan Ali Shah intended that such gathering should be held once a year in Sind for the scattered Ismailis to solve their social and religious problems. Jerruk was thick with the population of the Muslims, which could hardly accommodate the visiting Ismailis. During his above visit at Amir Pir, Imam Hasan Ali Shah liked its climate and resolved to

purchase the land on hilltop. On his return to Jerruk, he is said to have told to his followers to hold an annual gathering at an open place, where the Ismailis of Sind had already become used to assemble from time to time. The purpose of the Imam was to create unity among the Ismailis of District Thatta, who lived in 16 villages and Shah Bandar in 4 villages. The location was acquired from the British government in 1845 in the period of Mukhi Alidina Asani (1793-1881), the first Estate Agent of Karachi, Lasbela and Sind. In other words, the Ismailis connection with the Amir Pir Mela dates from the time of Imam Hasan Ali Shah. According to the "**Gazetteer of the Province of Sind**" (Bombay, 1927, p. 42), "The connection of the Khojas with this region dates from the time of the British conquest, shortly before which the grandfather of the present Agha Khan (Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah) came to Sind from Persia."

The Jimpir Mela however was formally begun in 1851. The Muslims in lower Sind considered that it was started by their Amir Pir (Imam Hasan Ali Shah), the fair therefore became known as Amir Pir Mela. It ensues from an old manuscript that the first mela was celebrated with great pomp. It was attended by the Ismailis of District Thatta, Shah Bandar, Mulla Katiar, Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan and Karachi. During the celebration, the marriages of 18 couples were solemnized.

### **Residence of Imam Aga Ali Shah**

Imam Hasan Ali Shah arrived in India in 1842. His son and successor, Imam Aga Ali Shah joined him in Bombay in 1852. Imam Hasan Ali Shah had consigned the office of the Piratan to his son in 1853, which he executed for 28 years till 1881. He used to visit lower Sind on hunting expeditions from Karachi. He visited Jerruk and the location of Amir Pir, where he found the tradition of Amir Pir Mela. He liked its climate and stayed there for many days. Like his father, he also realized that the assemblage of the Ismailis once a year would solve their social and religious problems, therefore, he is said to have told to continue the fair as usual and enter into matrimonial and business relations with one another.

In 1853, he built his residence lying behind the present Jamatkhana on hilltop. Its marble plate reads: "H.R.H. The Aga Khan II Aga Aly Shah Palace, 1853."

The Ismailis of lower Sind and Karachi visited the place for change of climate and it was a kind of get-to-gather assembly, but few among them visited the cave. The residence of Imam Aga Ali Shah was later renovated in 1984 and 1996.

### **Majalis Hall in Amir Pir**

In 1918, Wazir Fadhu Basaria (1848-1918), the third Estate Agent of Karachi, Lasbela and Sind is reported to have asked Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah at Bombay to issue an order to wind up the Amir Pir Mela due to the difficulties faced by the visitors. In reply, the Imam said to build there a Majalis Hall (old name for the prayer-hall, which had not acquired the status of a Jamatkhana, now the term "Community Centre" is used), so that the Ismailis might attend the Jamatkhana too. The Imam changed the date and fixed it from 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>

November. It suggests that Imam did not like to hamper into the customary veneration of the visitors due to the prevalence of illiteracy in the community.

Thus, a Majalis Hall was built in Amir Pir, making the visitors divided into their precepts. On November 16, 1919, Wazir Fadhu Basaria laid the foundation stone of the Majalis Hall in Amir Pir.

Imam Sultan Muhammad arrived in Karachi on April 10, 1920 for 27 days visit. Itmadi Mukhi Ghulam Hussain Alinani, the President of the Council of Tando Muhammad Khan presented a key and requested Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah on April 18, 1920 to visit Amir Pir and make opening ceremony of the Majalis Hall or Jamatkhana, which he had built. The Imam showed his inability to travel and told to Wazir Rahim Basaria (1885-1927) to execute its formalities on his behalf. It was built in a year at the cost of Rs. 30,000/- under personal supervision of Itmadi Ghulam Hussain Alinani. It was opened on November 15, 1920 by Wazir Rahim Basaria in presence of Varas Karim Kassim (1878-1958), Varas Bandali Kassim (1875-1956), Varas Muhammad Remu (1860-1924), Alijah Alidina Ali Muhammad (1884-1952), Alijah Vali Kassim, Pir Sabzali (1884-1938), Missionary Hamir Lakha (1888-1963), Missionary Thavar Abdul Hussain, etc. The Hyderabad, Sind Volunteer Corps managed the occasion excellently under Major Yonus Khalikdina.

It was renovated in 1951 and 1984. It was further repaired and coloured in 1995 quite in modern style, making its original look disappeared.

### **Mosque in Amir Pir**

The white mosque with a dome is the highest edifice on the hilltop. It cannot be confirmed who built it and why? E.P. Delhoste visited the location on February 10, 1839. He submitted to the British Government his “**Historical Report on the Routes leading from Karachi to Jerruk**” on December 26, 1839. He makes little mention of Amir Pir and other constructions, but did not make description of the mosque.

It deduces from an old manuscript that when the Shi'ite pilgrims perceived absolute foothold of the Ismailis in Amir Pir after the formation of the Jamatkhana, they built in their absence a mosque with a staircase leading to the cave in 1929 for restoring their dominance, but their plan was foiled. Quite possibly this is so.

### **Tradition of Annual Majalis in India**

The Indian Ismailis were quite isolated from one another devoid of the spirit of pluralism when Imam Hasan Ali Shah arrived in India in 1842. In order to bring the scattered Ismailis at one platform, the tradition of holding annual majalis in different parts of India was started for socialization.

The Panjibhai group of Kandi Mola, Bombay under Daud Khan Muhammad made humble request to Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah for inaugurating the

annual majalis in Kathiawar. The Imam graciously granted permission, and thus the first annual majalis started in 1887 in the village of Goga, Kathiawar. It was attended by 500 Ismailis. Varas Essa, Muhammad Budhwala and other delivered waez. The *jamat* was provided facilities of lodging and boarding. In 1888, Varas Ibrahim Varas Ismail Gangji deputed Mukhi Jamal Megji in Babariyawad to make survey for inaugurating the majalis in other regions. In 1892, another majalis started in the village of Unna, then in 1893 in the villages of Khamba, Saila, Akhiyana, Zalawad and finally in Rajsitapur in 1894. For overcoming the management of the majalis, few majalis were merged with one another, and only three majalis remained continued in Goga, Khamba and Rajsitapur. The Imam visited Kutchh in 1900, where Kamadia Haji urged for the annual majalis in Kutchh, which was allowed, and thus it was started in Jamanagar. On other side, the 4<sup>th</sup> annual majalis in Kathiawar also started in 1903 in the village of Vardha, then also in Poona and Ahmedabad. Besides, the similar majalis also began in 1904 at Kotada Sangani, Rajkot and Vankaner. In short, the tradition of annual majalis became more famous in Kathiawar, Kutchh and Gujrat. In 1920, Pir Sabzali also started an annual majalis in Sialkot due to the reason that the Ismailis were scattered in 71 different villages. In 1912, another three monthly majalis on every 14<sup>th</sup> of lunar month were started in Var, Ghulam Mulla and Mirpur Sakaro in District Thatta.

In the above annual majalis, the aim and objective were apparently to impart the *jamat* religious knowledge and save them from going astray. On other hand, its purpose ensuing from different *farmans* of the Imam was to bring the scattered Ismailis on one well-knit platform, to give them religious knowledge and latest news of other *jamats* and to enter them into mercantile as well as matrimonial relations.

The above annual majalis were not started in some other parts of India, where the purpose of socialization was already in operations to some extent, such as the annual fair of Pir Dadu, Hasan Shah and Sayed Ghulam Ali Shah in Kutchh, Sayed Fateh Ali in Kathiawar, Hasan Pir in Ganod, Kathiawar, Pir Kassim Shah in Mudana, Gujrat, Shah Turel, Shah Kapur and Amir Pir in Sind. Both the annual majalis and the annual fairs served the same purpose, except that the fairs in the shrines were famous in addition for veneration. On this juncture, Imam did not feel it necessary to touch the issue of annual fairs of different shrines. Whenever the Imam was asked to wind up the *mela* of a certain shrine, he ordered to build there Majalis Hall or Jamatkhana.

Be it known that during the Aga Khans period in India, the traditions, customs and practices of the Ismailis were quite different. The Imams had three options to operate. Either purge it by direct ruling, or by indirect injunction, or create such environment that the awakened minds should apply their own reason to judge the fact. These three methods highly proved beneficial in changing the religious and social conditions of the Indian Ismailis.

For instance, the Ismailis observed the Sunnite precepts on many occasions. In order to emphasize the Shi'ite root of the Ismailism, Imam Hasan Ali Shah issued a decree on October 20, 1861, in which he expressed his desire to bring the Ismailis to conform to the practices of the Shia Imami Ismaili creed of his holy ancestors, regarding marriage ceremonies, ablutions, funeral rites etc. The decree

ended thus, “He who may be willing to obey my orders shall write his name in this book that I may know him.” Hence, the Indian Ismailis were relieved from the bondage of the non-Shi’ite rites.

The Indian Ismailis thus knew it well that they were a branch of the Shi’ites. Being the Shi’ites, they commemorated the mourning congregations in the Moharam. It was therefore further necessary to make them known that they have no concern with such practice. The Imam made the indirect injunctions, such as Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah said, “The throne (*gadi*) of Imam Hussain is with me. I am Imam Hussain” (Nagpur, 28/11/1903), “It is the work of the Ithna Ashari to shed tear in eyes” (Rangoon, 17/2/1914), and “Keep yourselves away from the Yazid of present time” (Karachi, 26/1/1938).

Then, the Imam issued direct orders: “People go to Kerbala, where they physically look at the houses (shrines) of stones, clay and golden. So what? Make the esoteric houses, which are useful indeed” (Zanzibar, 16/8/1905), “There is no benefit in weeping and striking (the breast) while (listening) the story (*kissa*) of the Kerbala. Imam Hussain had laid down his life for the cause of Islam and showed prowess. You also perform such feats, do virtuous deeds and bring others in the path. Imam Hussain sacrificed his life for such works, not for weeping or striking. Do virtuous work in place of the *kissa*” (Bombay, 21/12/1934), “They have taken (the path of) paganism, who make the *tabut* (miniature of Imam Hussain’s tomb) in Lasbela. Close it who prepares the *tabut*. This is a wrong” (Karachi, 1/5/1920) and “I have made *farmans* thousand times not to make *tabut*. You have been told thousand times not to do it. It is not the Ismaili base to perform such practice of Moharam” (Karachi, 26/1/1938).

Likewise, it seems that the reverence to the shrines and making vows thereof during particular *mela* was left upon the rational thinking of the followers to decide with reason (*aql*) in the light of the Imam’s guidance whether such practice was permissible and forceful in Ismaili *tariqah* or not. For instance, the Imam said, “Do not bow before others except me. I give you what you demand, therefore, you do not run behind others.” (Hydrabad, 26/2/1900) and during the forgiveness of the vows, he said, “This time I forgive you. Do not make vows for anyone in future or on any occasion. I make this *farman* for all. Do not make any vow except in the Jamatkhana” (Zanzibar, 27/7/1914). The believers gradually pondered upon Imam’s exhortations with their reason (*aql*) and forsook all such immaterial trends. Consequently, it brought tremendous impact in the religious life of the followers.

In some places, the culture of veneration had a powerful hold as if the nails are set in the flesh. It is probable that a small lobby of the venerators would have given priority to their old practice, deviated or become an isolated body in the mainstream of the community had the Imam prevented them openly not to visit the place like Amir Pir Mela. Imam’s root policy was to consolidate the isolated community without hurting feelings of few followers. The Imam however ordered to build Majalis Hall in the *mela* to bring them close to their religious practices.

We have discussed heretofore that the Imam did not wind up the old traditional *mela* in India through direct injunctions for some reasons. Nevertheless, he never provided a free rope to the followers to start, grow, develop or nourish any rotten



trend or immaterial practice newly crept in the community, and ordered to close it immediately. For illustration, Sayed Hyder Shah belonged to another line of Pir Hasan Kabiruddin. He had a stable in the locality of Kharadhar, Karachi, known as “**Hyder Shah’ji Kothi**” (warehouse of Hyder Shah). He tied his horse in it, where a lamp remained lighted all the time. He died most probably in 1812 and was buried in the cemetery of Mian Shah. In 1898, his ruined warehouse was being sold, but some people opposed its disposal, rumouring that the warehouse (*kothi*) could not be sold because of its sanctity. Different stories were invented to prevent the sequestration of the property. The people concerned prepared an artificial grave of Sayed Hyder Shah in it, and the local people were made to believe that Sayed Hyder Shah was buried in the warehouse. It was also rumoured that he made his appearance on every Thursday night. The fabricated stories became effectual and prevented the sale of the warehouse on one side, but brought forth its negative effects on other side. It began to be venerated seriously on small scale as if a mausoleum, where the lamps were lighted in a row. Before the time it became a new venue of reverence, Chief Mukhi Rahmatullah Lutf Ali sent a report of the curious tendency of few people in 1918 to Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah at Bombay. During his visit to Karachi, the Imam made direct orders on May 3, 1920 that, “**All of you listen to the *farman* attentively, which I am making now. The lamp is lighted and some people make vows in the warehouse (*kothi*) of Hyder Shah. Lighting lamp and making vow are quite incorrect. This is an act of major sin. This place does not have a Pir, nay the grave of the Pir. (Making reverence) is not the Ismaili practice. Granted that there exists grave of a Pir and to keep a memory - it is too not permissible (in Ismailism). It is not appropriate in Ismailism if there is a grave; it is a house of paganism. No person, therefore, light the lamp. There would have been equally thousand of warehouses. What is its benefit? It is absolutely harmful, therefore, I forbid you.**” The Imam’s direct and timely guidance exterminated the growing plant of veneration in its embroidery stage. The warehouse of Sayed Hyder Shah thus finally sold in November, 1920 without any opposition.

The importance of the *mela* in Indian subcontinent has largely melted away, and wherever the mob of the pilgrims is seen, it indicates that most of them are not coming for that “purpose” in comparison with the “purpose” of the Ismailis of a century ago. It is also important to note that the Imam attended many annual *majalis* in India, but never participated in the *mela* of any shrine.

### **Imam’s *farman* on Amir Pir Mela**

In the Mehmani of Itmadi Ghulam Hussain Alinani, the President of the Council of Tando Muhammad Khan, Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah said in Karachi on April 18, 1920, “**You have taken much trouble to build a Majalis Hall on the (hill of) Amir Pir, an excellent work you have done. It is now hot season; therefore, I cannot come there, but will come on next trip in winter. Now you and the members of the Council visit in winter season to perform its opening ceremony. This is the territory of Sind, having such good mela, but its untimely celebration is not good. It is not better when the epidemic of cholera breaks out in such season, and sometimes (potable) water is also not available, causing many**

hardships. For example, the *majalis* in Poona was recently organized. I myself have established the *majalis*, but due to the hardships faced by the followers, I wound up the *majalis* in Poona. In Sind, the place for the *mela* is an ideal, therefore, I do not close it. I order that the *mela* should be celebrated in cool and moderate weather. The *mela* of Pir Amir should start on 15<sup>th</sup> November, when the climate is neither hot nor cold. The *mela* of Pir Amir should be performed on that time. The *mela* of Pir Amir was celebrated on 15<sup>th</sup> Shaban (*Shab'i Bharat*), it should be now on 15<sup>th</sup> November. Consider 15<sup>th</sup> November as the *Bharat's* date, and perform your vows and pledges relating to the *Bharat* on that occasion. I order to all that if you want to have a trip of Amir Pir, you must go on 15<sup>th</sup> November.”

- a) The Imam admired the services of Itmadi Ghulam Hussain Alinani for constructing a Majalis Hall in the barren site of Amir Pir. The Imam did not like that the *mela* should be confined to reverence in its entirety, therefore, the permission for the Majalis Hall was granted to summon the visitors close to their religious precepts as well.
- b) The Imam retained the tradition of the *mela* in Amir Pir in 1920 provided it was celebrated in winter season to mitigate sufferings of the visitors, who wished to attend it.
- c) The Imam cited an example of the annual *majalis* of Poona, which he established in 1903 and wound up after few years because of the hardships of the visitors. It was however merged with other annual *majalis*. In sum, the annual *majalis* were established, wound up, merged or substituted according to the circumstances. On the other hand, the condition in Amir Pir Mela was quite different. It executed role of a fertile site for socialization. It was not closed in 1920 because in its very nature, it could not be substituted or merged.

It is also probable that the winding up of the Amir Pir Mela was not ordered on April 18, 1920 because the Imam was to extirpate the growing plant of the veneration in the Hyder Shah'ji Kothi in Karachi on May 3, 1920. Its drastic action was necessary more than Amir Pir Mela. Reversely, the *mela* in Amir Pir provided a venue to solve social and religious problems of the Ismailis, therefore, no measure against it was taken in 1920.

- d) The Ismailis, rather Islam have no concept of Shab'i Bharat on 15<sup>th</sup> Shaban - the lunar date falling in summer and winter. In order to celebrate the *mela* regularly in winter, the Imam fixed the date of 15<sup>th</sup> November - a solar date.
- e) The Imam emphasized to perform henceforward the vows on 15<sup>th</sup> November by considering it the vows of Shab'i Bharat. Be focused a point in mind that the Imam indirectly initiated to relieve the Ismailis from the bondage of the culture of Shab'i Bharat.

The tendency of making vows was the causative factor of the gathering in Amir Pir. In the first phase, the Imam tactfully shifted the vows from Shab'i

Bharat to Amir Pir mela. When the time matured in next phase, he made several *farmans* against the vows. One can glean from the procedure the Imam had followed that the vows and reverences apart from the socialization in Amir Pir Mela were immaterial practices.

- f) In the above *farman*, the Imam did not make a slight reference of the cave and the legend thereof. Besides, the *farman* clearly refers to the *mela* on the hill, where the Majalis Hall exists, but not down the Soneri lake, where the cave exists.

### **Later Development**

Earlier, there was an open piece of land on the hill surrounded with small mounds and sand-hills. It is difficult to ascertain its size during its acquisition. It is however assumed that originally its size was 10 acres. Later, few more surrounding areas were obtained from the government. The document of the Registry Office of Thatta confirms that the size of the location was 14.10 acres in March 4, 1955. Further sites were also acquired till it reached to 24 acres. The location was thickly covered with thorns and wild bushes. The pilgrims came on camels and wheeled carriages and lodged in the small huts of jute. The local people at the distance of three miles in the village of Khoodie came to sell milk, butter, fish and mutton. Water was hygienically pure. The water carriers brought water in the earthen pitchers from the lake. Below the hill was the cave with simple enclosure of the *quba*, where the people reached through a rough slope passage.

The pilgrims visiting the cave were mostly the seekers of financial and material prosperity. The newly wedded couples came to untie the knot (*chhera chhori*), which had been tied during marriages by joining nuptial dress of bride and bridegroom. During the ceremony, they hurled coins in the air. Few families also brought their newborn babies to clear their scalps and tied the threads around their necks as the sign of good omen. The old vows were repeated, which were not fulfilled, or replaced by new vows. The pilgrims entered the chamber of the cave in sitting posture and crawled slowly onwards alike, and terminated from the exit door by keeping the faces focused on the cave. The kissing of the different articles in the cave was a normal feature. Each pilgrim was given a sacred thread and piece of coconut.

There was an old inn (*musafarkhana*) below the hilltop, being a square of 50 yards each side, made of stone and lime: three sides were formed into rooms, the front part supported on pillars of stones. The height of the inside walls was 15 feet. It was demolished most probably after 1840, but existed when Captain E.P. Delhoste visited Amir Pir's location in 1839.

There existed two main lakes called Kinjar and Soneri, lying between Thatta and Jerruk. These lakes were fed with water by hill torrents and heavy rainfall. Soon after the independence of Pakistan, these lakes were dried up and turned into two deep depressions. It was reported on March 1, 1957 that a biggest artificial lake would be made known as the Kalari Lake, spread over an area of 45 square miles, with at points, four miles width and 20 miles length. Its depth would range between 16 and 18 feet containing 1,25000 million gallons of water (20,000

million cubic feet). The long canal of 40 miles thus had been taken out from the right bank of the Indus at the Ghulam Mohammad Barrage, feeding the lake constantly to act as a reservoir for the lower Sind. The Kalari Lake engulfed the Kinjar and Soneri lakes situated on the right bank of the Indus at a distance of 80 miles from Karachi. This unification of Kinjar and Soneri lakes cherished as the Kalari Lake in 1960. Accordingly, the area of Amir Pir fell within the Kalari Lake. The Government built a *bund* (small dam) around the Amir Pir's cave at a cost of one lac rupees for its protection in October, 1958. In January, 1972, the Kalari Lake was renamed as the Kinjar Lake.

On March 4, 1996, Sayed Abdullah Shah, the Chief Minister of Sind performed ground breaking ceremony of drinking water supply scheme at Amir Pir. The scheme had been approved at a cost of Rs. 53,886 million executed by Sind Arid Zone Development Authority. Rs. 5 million had been provided under Social Action Program for its implementation. The scheme completed in two years. It started to provide sweet, clean and bacteria-free chlorinated water to about 9000 people and 50,000 animals of village Suleman Brohi and 16 other settlements in Union Council Jimpir through 22 km main and 12 km branch pipelines from Kinjar lake. The area fell within arid zone, the provision of sweet surface water for drinking to people of these parched areas mitigated their sufferings as they used to fetch potable water from far off places by foot in very hostile weather condition.

On November 17, 1920, the Ismaili leaders declared construction of the houses in Amir Pir, such as Itmadi Bhula Ali Khimani and Merali Khimani announced five houses each, one by Varas Rahim Basaria, two by Mukhi Sajan Damji, etc. According to a report, there had been 36 houses in 1930.

There is an old room to the right side of the cave. It is said that the Ismaili pilgrims used it for the prayers when no Majalis Hall or the Jamatkhana existed. It was lastly renovated in 1984.

In 1913, its supervision came into the hand of the Ismailia Supreme Council, Karachi. In 1920, the Imam changed its date and fixed 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November. Later, its supervision was handed over to the Hy-Sultanabad Local Council Management, who fixed the date from 10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November.

With the cooperation of the Hy-Sultanabad Council, Pir Amir Khidmat Committee in Kharadhar, Karachi was founded on June 16, 1968 for providing manpower of volunteers and other facilities during the *mela*. Its first President was Sadruddin Dhala Bachoo with Hon. Secretary Ashraf Ali Muhammad. In 1981, the Regional Council for Karachi and Sind took over its charge till 1989. When the Regional Council for Sind came into existence with the imposition of the New Constitution in 1986, it took over its charge in about 1990. In the meantime, the Pir Amir Khidmat Committee also liquidated in 1994.

On November 10, 1951, a certain Tajddin repaired the "*Shah'ja Kadam*" with marbled enclosure in memory of his late father, Muhammad Kurji. He put there a curious plaque, which reads: "Dargha Khanaqa'i Pir Amir." Beside, Tajddin also built a hall, known as the Vanda Hall on November 10, 1951 in memory of his late father along with the members of the Young Ismailia Club, Kharadhar, Karachi.

The mosque is the highest edifice on hilltop. It was built around 1929. In 1972 and again in 1980, the author did not find any trace of inscription or written plaque outside or inside the mosque. Later, someone has put there a plaque with the words, “Muhammad Hanif Masjid” with a false date of May 27, 1494.

In 1950, there was no significant construction of the houses. In 1951, the practice of building small houses started and became more rapid after 1984. According to a survey, there were 167 built houses in 1987.

In sum, the veneration of the cave attributed to Amir Pir is to the extent of some persons, who have leaning towards it. In order to legitimate the old traditions and enhance a further lease of life to the legend of the cave, many fictitious plaques and stories have been created by vulgar section. Before installation of any plaque, it must be verified and approved from authority concerned. This practice perhaps may influence the new visitors, but cannot resist before the historical fact. The physical face of the Amir Pir Mela will differ after ten to fifteen years if it is not restricted.

It must be mentioned in concluding lines that the followers of Mawlana Hazar Imam must look ahead and abandon the immaterial practices inherited from past period. If the making of vows in the cave was the part and parcel of the Ismaili faith, it would not exceed to Karachi and Sind, but the Ismailis of other parts of the world would have also required join the Amir Pir Mela. It devolves upon the Ismailis to decide with their own reason.

The Council, Huzur Department and the Tariqah Board jointly made an announcement in all the Jamatkhanas on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2012 that, “No *Mukhi* and *Kamadia* are appointed from July, 2012 for the shrines and graveyards. Hence, from July, 2012 neither the permission is granted to carry on the performances of any type of the ceremony in these shrines and graveyards nor it will be acceptable.” It implies that the jamatkhanas in the shrines like in Amir Pir have been wound up.



