

**SOCIAL HISTORY  
OF  
THE MUSLIMS IN BENGAL**  
( DOWN TO A. D. 1538 )

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*Published by*  
**The Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca.**  
East Pakistan.  
1959.

Thesis  
Approved for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
by the  
University of Dacca, 1959.

First Published : November, 1959.  
Price Rs. 16/-50

Printed by M. H. Choudhury, at the  
Paramount Press, Dacca-3

TO THE MEMORY OF MY PARENTS,

Late Sayyid Walzuddin

&

Late Sayyida Rashida Khatun

## PREFACE

No one can deny the need of a comprehensive social history of the Muslims in this sub-continent. The present work is a pioneer attempt in partial fulfilment of this need covering a limited period in Bengal's history. Prepared and submitted as a thesis, it earned me the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Dacca. We have gathered together all the relevant materials which help in tracing the origin and gradual building up of the Muslim Society in Bengal from the earliest time down to A. D. 1538, the terminal date being chosen as it marks a stage in the social development before the true Pathan (Afghān) and Mughal elements were introduced into Bengal. In this period Islām, which came as a foreign religion, was integrated into the socio-religious system of the people, and while it won over the general mass to its own ideals, many of the local customs, beliefs and practices stole into its fold and became recognised as the part and parcel of the local Muslim Society. Islām became a national religion in Bengal mainly under the patronising spirit of the Independent Sultāns.

The thesis first discusses the sources from which the materials are drawn and then outlines a politico-social background in order to understand the parts played by various forces in the society. The next chapter is the longest, divided into three sections, each assessing the contributions made by the Sultāns, the Scholars and the Şūfīs towards the growth of the Muslim Society. In the next three chapters the society is viewed as an integrated whole and analytical study is made to understand its composition, the popular elements and the daily life of the people. Finally the concluding chapter sums up the main points.

The whole treatment is historical and no attempt is made to solve any sociological problem. The social questions, as they arise in their historical perspective, have been considered. In short the thesis deals with the Muslim Society of Bengal as it passes through centuries on the basis of the available materials, and hence the title Social History of the Muslims in Bengal.

I take this opportunity to thank my teachers and colleagues in the Department of History, University of Dacca, who encouraged me all the time in carrying on research in such an interesting field. Words



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fail me to express my gratitude to Dr. A. H. Dani but for whose active help and guidance, I would not have been a success. He has also been kind enough to write a foreword to this book. Prof. A. Halim, Head of the Department, took keen interest in the progress of my work, and inspite of his manifold preoccupations, found time to go through the thesis before submission and make valuable suggestions. My colleague and former student Mr. Md. Sirajuddin helped me in the preparation of index. I am also indebted to Mr. Faiz Ahmad Choudhury of Persian department and Mr. Ahmad Sharif of Bengali department, Dacca University, for the help received from them. My friend Mr. M. A. Khan, Research Officer, Bureau of National Reconstruction, Govt. of E. Pakistan, helped me in many ways especially in proof reading. Dr. E. Haq, Dr. M. Ishaq and Dr. M. S. Hasan helped me by lending rare books from their personal libraries. My thanks are also due to the President and members of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca, who kindly undertook to publish this book.

University of Dacca.  
The 10th November, 1959.

Abdul Karim

## FOREWORD

From the mere tale of wars and conquests and those events that centre round a few personalities, it is pleasing to go over to the peoples' history and view in broad perspective the interaction of different civilisations, the mingling of the peoples of diverse races and qualities, and the social adjustments that accrue from the complexities of human life. In this unfolding of man's history the passions of war cool down to the necessities of human existence. Man appears as an individual—a part of the social group that is being created out of the chaos resulting from wars and conquests. It is precisely this aspect of the history of Bengal that has been attempted in the following pages by Dr. Abdul Karim. Away from the political bickerings he is concerned here with the problem of the fundamental change that the mediaeval society of Bengal was undergoing as a result of the impact of Islām. How was it possible for the flooded plains of Bengal to absorb the desert-born Islām, and what were the circumstances that led this far-flung area to become a Muslim-majority pocket? What forces were acting and reacting in the formation of the Muslim society in Bengal? Finally the attempt is made to analyse this social overgrowth on the planes of orthodox Islām and local beliefs and practices. The history traced here on the basis of the Persian chronicles, inscriptions, coins, foreign travellers' accounts, Persian and Bengali literature and the local traditions, mirrors the individual and the groups of individuals as taking part in the social phenomena that constitute the foundation of East Pakistan. An understanding of these forces is essential both for those who are engaged in the study of similar societies and for those who are busy in building up the new order. The book brings forth sufficient materials and draws certain conclusions, which even if not palatable to all, deserve careful reading and thinking over.

University of Dacca.  
The 10th November, 1959.

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Reader in History,  
University of Dacca.

## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The following system has been used :—

(i) For Arabic and Persian letters :—

ا = a	ص = s
ب = b	ض = d
پ = p	ط = t
ت = t	ظ = z
ث = th	ع = ‘
ج = j	غ = <u>gh</u>
چ = ch	ف = f
ھ = h	ق = q
خ = <u>kh</u>	ک = k
د = d	گ = g
ذ = <u>dh</u>	ل = l
ر = r	م = m
ز = z	ن = n
ژ = zh	و = w
س = s	ح = h
ش = <u>sh</u>	ع = ‘
	ی = y

Short vowels—a, i, u

Long vowels—ā, ī, ū

Diphthong—aw, ay

(ii) For Bengali letters :—

অ = a	ঐ = ai
আ = ā	ও = o
ই = i	ঔ = au
ঈ = ī	ক = k
উ = u	খ = kh
ঊ = ū	গ = g
ঋ = ri	ঘ = gh
ঌ = e	ঙ = ṅ

চ==	ch	ব==	b
ছ==	chh	ভ==	bh
জ==	j	ম==	m
ঝ==	jh	য==	y
ঞ==	ñ	র==	r
ট==	t	ল==	l
ঠ==	th	ব==	v
ড==	d	শ==	ś
ঢ==	dh	ষ==	sh
ণ==	n	স==	s
ত==	t	হ==	h
থ==	th	ড়==	r
দ==	d	য়==	y
ধ==	dh	ং==	m
ন==	n	ঃ==	h
প==	p	ঁ==	n
ফ==	ph		

The transliteration system has not been followed in bold letters.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- 'Afif' = *Tārīkh-i-Fīrūzshāhī* by Shams-i-Sirāj 'Afif, Bibliotheca Indica, A. D. 1890.
- Akhbār al-Akhyār* = *Akhbār al-Akhyār fī Asrār al-Abrār* by Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dehlawī, Dehli, A. H. 1332.
- Ā'yn-i-Akbarī* = *Ā'yn-i-Akbarī* of Abū'l-Faḍl, Vol. II & III, translated into English by H. S. Jarrett. Second edition, corrected and annotated by J. N. Sarkar, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, A. D. 1949.
- Baranī = *Tārīkh-i-Fīrūzshāhī* by Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī, Bibliotheca Indica, A. D. 1862.
- Barbosa = *The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Vol. II*. Translated into English by Mansel Longworth Dames, Hakluyt Society, London, A. D. 1921.
- History of Bengal, Vol. II* = *History of Bengal, Vol. II*. Edited by Sir J. N. Sarkar, Dacca University, A. D. 1948.
- Ibn Baṭṭūṭah = *Rihlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭah*, text edition and translated into French by Defrè-mery and Sanguinetti, Paris, A. D. 1853-59.
- J. A. S. B.* = *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.*
- Khazīnat al-Asfiyā'* = *Khazīnat al-Asfiyā'* by Ghulām Sarwar, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow.
- Memoirs* = *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua*, by 'Ābid 'Alī Khān and Stapleton, Calcutta, A. D. 1931.
- Minhāj = *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* by Abū 'Umar

- Minhāj al-Dīn ‘Uṭmān bin Sīrāj al-Dīn al-Jūzjānī**, Bibliotheca Indica, A. D. 1864.
- Muntakhab* = *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh* by ‘Abd al-Qādir Badāyūnī, Bibliotheca Indica, A. D. 1869.
- Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal* = *Bibliography of the Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal* by Dr. A. H. Dani in Appendix to the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. II, A. D. 1957.
- Riyāḍ* = *Riyāḍ al-Salāṭīn* by Ghulām Husayn Salīm, Bibliotheca Indica, A. D. 1898.
- Tārīkh-i-Firīshṭah* = *Tārīkh-i-Firīshṭah* or *Gulshan-i-Ibrāhīmī* by Muḥammad Qāsim Firīshṭah, Newal Kishore edition, Lucknow.
- Yaḥyā bin Aḥmad* = *Tārīkh-i-Mubārakshāhī* by Yaḥyā bin Aḥmad bin ‘Abd Allāh al-Sarhindī, Bibliotheca Indica, A.D. 1931.

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## CHAPTER I

### SOURCES

No attempt has so far been made to reconstruct the social history of the Muslims in this sub-Continent. The attention has centred round the political history chiefly because the Persian Chronicles, which are the main sources of Muslim history, confine themselves to a narration of political events. On Bengal also number of works<sup>1</sup> have been produced dealing only with the political history, though no contemporary chronicle of the pre-Mughal period has so far been discovered in this part of the country. This aspect of the history of Bengal is based on brief references found in the chronicles of Northern India and on the data collected from a study of inscriptions, coins and other archaeological evidence. There is, however, sufficient materials in these chronicles as well as in the contemporary literature—both Persian and Bengali — available, with the help of which social history can be reconstructed.

These materials fall into following groups :—

- (a) Persian and Arabic Works written outside Bengal.
- (b) Inscriptions and Coins.
- (c) Writings of Muslim Scholars in Bengal.
- (d) Writings of non-Muslim Scholars in Bengal.
- (e) Hagiological literature.
- (f) Accounts of foreign travellers.

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1. The following works deserve to be mentioned :—(a) Charles Stewart : *History of Bengal*, London, A.D.1813. (b) Contributions of Blochmann in *J. A. S. B.* 1873-75. (c) R. D. Banerjee : *Bāṅgālār Itihāsa*, Vol. II, Calcutta, A.D. 1917. (d) Contributions of Stapleton in *J. A. S. B.* from 1910-1922. (e) *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, Dacca University, A.D. 1948.

(a) **Persian and Arabic Works written outside Bengal**(i) **Chronicles**

The earliest chronicle referring to Bengal is the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣiri* of Abū 'Umar Minhāj al-Dīn 'Uṭhmān bin Sirāj al-Dīn al-Jūzjānī<sup>1</sup>. Though it is a general history of Islām, the author devotes a section<sup>2</sup> on Bengal dealing with the **Khālji** Malik of Lakhnawtī. He also refers to Bengal while dealing with the Sultāns of Dehlī and their officers connected with affairs of Bengal<sup>3</sup>. The author visited Bengal during the governorship of Malik 'Izz al-Dīn Ṭughral Ṭughhān **Khān**<sup>4</sup>. He received patronage from the said Malik, joined the war against the king of Orissa and acted as a mediator between his patron and Malik Tamar **Khān** Qirān, Governor of Oudh, when they were quarrelling for the possession of Lakhnawtī<sup>5</sup>. From his description of Bengal it is clear that the author took pains to collect information about the **Khālji** Malik from their surviving associates<sup>6</sup> and about other governors from the information available at the Dehlī court or by his personal observation. But unfortunately the book gives only a chronicle of political events. References to social affairs are limited to general remarks about the construction of mosques and *madrasahs*, (Schools or Colleges) the arrival of Muslim divines and the construction of *Khānqahs* (mystic convents) in the metropolitan city or the striking of coins and the reading of *Khutbah* (lecture delivered in Friday prayer in the name of the Sultāns). Nevertheless, it is of importance, as it is the only Chronicle which supplies information about the foundation of Muslim rule in Bengal.

Other contemporary Chronicles that refer to Bengal are, (a) *Tārīkh-i-Firūz Shāhī* of Ḍiyā'al-Dīn Baranī<sup>7</sup>, (b) *Tārīkh-i-Firūz Shāhī* of Shams-i-Sirāj 'Afif,<sup>8</sup> (c) *Tārīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* of Yaḥyā

1. Published in the Bibliotheca Indica Series, A.D. 1864.

2. See, *Ṭabqat* No. 20.

3. See for example, *Ṭabqat* Nos. 21 & 22.

4. Minhāj, pp. 243-44.

5. *Ibid*, pp. 245-46.

6. e.g., the information received from Mu'tamid al-Dawlah (Minhāj, p. 153).

7. Published in the Bibliotheca Indica Series, A.D. 1862.

8. *Ibid*, A. D. 1890.

bin Aḥmad bin 'Abd Allāh al-Sahrindī<sup>1</sup>, and (d) *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* of 'Iṣāmī<sup>2</sup>. The first three were written in Dehlī and the last in the Bahmani Capital under the patronage of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥasan<sup>3</sup>. None of these authors came to Bengal. Moreover they refer to Bengal only in connection with the invasion of that country by the Dehlī Sulṭāns. But the chief importance of these chronicles lies in the fact that while describing the battles between the Sulṭāns of Dehlī and their antagonists in Bengal, they occasionally refer to the geographical factors affecting the politics of the country<sup>4</sup>, the circumstances leading to the independence of Bengal Sulṭāns, the composition of their army and other connected subjects. From these chronicles, a student of Social history can sift materials for his own purpose.

The later chronicles are, (a) *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī* of Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad Bakḥshī<sup>5</sup>, (b) *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh* of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Badāyūnī<sup>6</sup>, and (c) *Tārīkh-i-Hind* of Abū'l-Qāsim Firīshṭah<sup>7</sup>. The first two works were written in Dehlī during the reign of the great Muḡhal emperor Akbar, while the third *i.e.*, number (c) was written in the Deccan. Badāyūnī's *Muntakhab* is a general history of the Muslim world. He refers to Bengal in connection with his discussion on the pre-Muḡhal Sulṭāns of Dehlī. No chapter is devoted in his book to the history of the Independent Sulṭāns of Bengal as is done by Niẓām al-Dīn Bakḥshī and Firīshṭah. Hence the two latter Chronicles are valuable, though their information is short and meagre. Another important Chronicle which has a chapter on Bengal is *Zafar al-Wāliḥ bi Muẓaffar wa 'Āliḥ* (*An Arabic History of Gujrat*) of 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad bin 'Umar al-Makkī *alias* Ḥājī Dabīr<sup>8</sup>. Ḥājī Dabīr

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1. Bibliotheca Indica, A. D. 1931.
  2. Edited by Agha Mahdi Husain, Agra, A. D. 1938.
  3. 'Iṣāmī : *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, edited by Agha Mahdi Husain, Agra, A. D. 1938, Preface.
  4. See, Baranī, p. 82.
  5. Published in the Bibliotheca Indica Series, A. D. 1927-35. There are three volumes, of which Vol.III has a chapter on Bengal.
  6. Bibliotheca Indica, A. D. 1869.
  7. Newal Kishore edition, Lucknow, A. H. 1281. The second Volume has a chapter on Bengal.
  8. Edited by E. Denison Ross, London, A. D. 1928, in three volumes. The third volume refers to Bengal.

was alive in 1020/A. D. 1611, and the latest event recorded in his book is the accession of Emperor Akbar in 963/A. D. 1556<sup>1</sup>. Though not a contemporary writer, he has utilised some earlier Chronicles like that of Diyā'al-Dīn Baranī and one of Ḥusām Khān, now lost to us<sup>2</sup>. He records the construction of a *madrasah* in the holy city of Makkah by Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh of Bengal and his receipt of investiture from the Khālifah of Egypt. The writer quotes al-Sakhāwī's *Al-Daw al-Lāmi' li-ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'*, which is discussed below.

### (ii) Other Works

The *Ā'yn-i-Akbarī* of Abū'l Faḍl<sup>3</sup>, written under the great Mughal emperor Akbar, forms a separate sub-class. This is a book approximating to modern gazetteers. The second volume of the *Ā'yn* devotes one chapter on Bengal and another chapter on the Ṣūfis in which some of the Bengal Ṣūfis have been included. The list of Bengal Sulṭāns as available in the *Ā'yn* is faulty, but the account of socio-economic condition is important as it gives an opportunity to examine them in the light of other corroborative evidences. The chapter giving statistical details of the revenue of Bengal, though of later period, is important in as much as it supplies for the first time names of important places and revenue divisions, some of which can no doubt be traced to our period.

The *Qir'ān al-Sa'dayn*<sup>4</sup> of Amīr Khusrāw occupies a unique place in the Persian literature of this sub-continent. It is more than a poetical description of the meeting between the opposing Sulṭāns, the father and the son, Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Bughrā Khān of Bengal and Sulṭān Mu'izz al-Dīn Kayqobād of Dehlī on the bank of the river Sarayu. The poet undertook to write the book in obedience to royal command but nevertheless it clearly brings to our view the licentious life of Sulṭān Kayqobād and his flattering court retinue, dancers and musicians who followed even in the wake of battle.

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1. E. Denison Ross : *An Arabic History of Gujrat*, London, A.D. 1928, Vol. II, Introduction.
  2. For Ḥusām Khān and his book, See, *Ibid*, Vol. II, Introduction.
  3. Published in the Bibliotheca Indica Series, A.D. 1877.
  4. Edited by Mawlawī Muḥammad Ismā'īl, Aligarh, A.D. 1918.

Another important Work is *Al-Ḍaw al-Lāmi' li-ahl al-Qarn al-tāsi'*, a biographical dictionary of famous men among the Muslims of the 9th century A. H. written by a contemporary scholar 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī<sup>1</sup>. The author refers to the construction of *madrasahs* in and sending of presents to the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah by Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh and Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh. He also relates the religious activities of Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh, the converted son of Rājā Gaṇeṣa and his receipt of investiture from the Khalīfah of Egypt. As the author spent much of his time and died in Madīnah,<sup>2</sup> there is no room to challenge the authenticity of his evidence. Ghulām 'Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī in his Khazānah -i-'Āmirah<sup>3</sup> (a history of the Persian literature) quoting from Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥanafī's *Tārīkh-i-Makkah*, relates Ghiyāth al Dīn A'zam Shāh's benevolent activities in Makkah and Madīnah and thus gives further stress on the authenticity of al-Sakhāwī's view. This evidence has also been cited in a 19th century manuscript, *Iḥāṭah-i-Ḥāṣirah li-Khazānah* -i-'Āmirah of Ḥamīd Allāh Khān.

### (b) Inscriptions

Contemporary inscriptions<sup>4</sup> and coins<sup>5</sup> have been discovered in large number. Their chief importance lies in the fact that they

1. Published in Cairo, A. H. 1303, in several Volumes. Al-Sakhāwī was born in Cairo in 830/A.D. 1426, and died in the city of Madīnah in 902/A. D. 1496. (See, Introduction to the first volume of *Al-Ḍaw al-Lāmi' li-ahl al-Qarn al-tāsi'*).
2. Al-Sakhāwī : *Al-Ḍaw al-Lāmi' li-ahl al-Qarn al-tāsi'*, Cairo, A. H. 1303, Vol. I. Introduction.
3. Newal Kishore edition, Kānpūr, 2nd Edition, A. D. 1900.
4. Inscriptions have been published in various historical Journals. Recently Dr. A. H. Dani has compiled a bibliography of inscriptions. (See, *Muslim inscriptions of Bengal*).
5. The coins have been published in different Catalogues, for example, (1) Thomas : *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, London, 1871. (2) Lane-Poole : *The coins of the Muhammadan States of India in the British Museum*, London, A.D. 1885. (3) H. N. Wright : *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, Vol. II, Oxford, A. D. 1907 ; (4) H. E. Stapleton : *Catalogue of the Provincial Cabinet of*

help in building up the chronology of the Sulṭāns. The find-spots of inscriptions and mint-names on coins enable us to trace the gradual expansion of the Muslim power and settlement of the Muslim population in different parts of the country. The reference to the erection of mosques and *madrāsahs*, the names of ṣūfīs, 'Ālims and the learned officers and kings found on inscriptions show how different sections of people contributed to the growth of the Muslim society. Similarly the titles of Bengal Sulṭāns on their coins and inscriptions indicate their attitude towards the *Khālīfah* of Islām, their love of power and show, their learning and particular inclinations and sometimes dynastic relations.

### (c) Writings of Muslim Scholars in Bengal

#### (i) Chronicles

So far no contemporary chronicle of our period written in Bengal has been discovered. Only two works are known which cover the political history of this period - *Riyāḍ al-Salāṭīn*<sup>1</sup> of Ghulām Ḥusayn Salīm, which was written at the instance of George Udney in the year A.D. 1788, gives a connected summary account, based on published materials of the Mughal period and the local traditions that the author could gather in Maldah. The other work which remains unpublished but for few extracts translated by H. Beveridge is the *Khurshīd-i-Jahān Numā*<sup>2</sup> of Sayyid Ilāhī Bakshsh. It does not add any new information.

#### (ii) Persian and Arabic Works

Important works of this category are, a translation of a Sanskrit *Yogic* work named *Amṛitkuṇḍ* by one Qāḍī Rukn al-Dīn al-Samarqandī in the reign of Sulṭān 'Alā'al-Dīn 'Alī Mardān *Khālji*<sup>3</sup>, a book

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*Coins, Eastern Bengal and Assam*, Shillong, A. D. 1911. (5) A. W. Botham : *Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet, Assam*, 2nd edition, Allahabad, A. D. 1930. (6) A. W. Botham and R. Friel : *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Provincial Cabinet of Coins, Assam*, Allahabad, A. D. 1919.

1. Published in the Bibliotheca Indica Series, A. D. 1898.
2. H. Beveridge has made a long summary translation in *J. A. S. B* 1895.
3. The original translations are nowhere available at the present time, but a second Persian recension made several years after

on *Fiqh* named *Nām-i-Ḥaqq*<sup>1</sup>, a Persian lexicon named *Sharfnāmah* by Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī<sup>2</sup> and a transcription of *Jāmi' al-Bukhārī* by Muḥammad bin Yazdān Bakḥsh, famous as *Khwājī Shirwānī*<sup>3</sup>. Except the translation of *Amṛitkuṇḍ* dealing with *yogic* philosophy all other works were meant for educating Muslim population in Islāmic sciences and literature.

### (iii) Bengali Works

The earliest Bengali Work by a Muslim author is *Yusuf Jolekhā* (correctly *Yūsuf Julaykhā*)<sup>4</sup> by *Shāh Muḥammad Ṣaghīr* written in

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by an anonymous writer is now available in different libraries of Europe and Islāmic countries. (For details see, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, Vol. I, Part I, January, 1953, p. 53, note 1). Recently Qazi Ahmad Mian Akhtar of Junagadh has published the preface of this second recension and the titles of chapters of the book in the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, Vol. I, Part I, January, 1953. Etche' in his *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office* (See Vol. I, Oxford, A. D. 1903, No. 2002), refers to a manuscript named *Baḥr al-ḥayāt*. According to him, the book, *Amṛitkuṇḍ* was translated by one Kanāma, a Brahmin of Kamrup, who accepted Islām when Sulṭān 'Alā al-Dīn *Khālji* invaded Bengal. The manuscripts in question are probably different transcription of the same work, because only the titles of works and the name of the Brahmin differ. Etche' probably confused between 'Alā' al-Dīn *Khālji* and 'Alī Mardān *Khālji*, because at the present state of our knowledge we know that Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn *Khālji* never invaded nor conquered Bengal.

1. There are two editions of the book, one from Bombay, A. D. 1885, and the other from Kānpūr in 1332/A.D. 1907.
2. A manuscript copy is now preserved in the 'Āliyah Madrasah Library, Dacca, (Ms. No. P.MSS 13/8).
3. *Catalogue of Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore*, Vol. V, Part I, Nos. 130-32.
4. There are three manuscript copies of the book in the Dacca University Library, (Old Catalogue Nos. 225-227 and New Catalogue Nos. 12-14), and one manuscript copy in the possession of Dr. Enamul Haq, Director, Bengali Academy, Dacca.



the reign of Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh<sup>1</sup> (A.D. 1392-1410). It gives in verse the love tale of Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf and Zulaykhā on the basis of the *Kitāb* and the Qur'ān.

Dr. Enamul Haq<sup>2</sup> suggests that three other Muslim poets wrote books in Bengali during the period under review. They were Zayn al-Dīn, Muzammil and Afḍal 'Alī. But a close examination shows that they belong to later period. Zayn al-Dīn, in his book *Rasūl Vijaya*<sup>3</sup> refers to one Yūsuf Khān who is identified by Dr. Enamul Haq with Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh (A.D. 1474-81). But except the similarity in name there is no other proof to be adduced. Moreover the name has been written as Yūsuf Khān. Had he been a king, he would have been called Shāh and not Khān. Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī in his *Sharfnāmah* records that one Amīr Zayn al-Dīn Harwī was the poet-laureate of Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh,<sup>4</sup> the father of Yūsuf Shāh, but it is difficult to identify him with the author of *Rasūl Vijaya*. Muzammil's works *Sātnāmā* (*Sa'tnāmāh*) and *Nītiśāstravartā* have been discovered<sup>5</sup>. The books deal with some popular beliefs of the Muslims in Bengal such as the auspicious days and hours to make visits, journeys, construction of houses, wearing new clothes etc. Dr. Enamul Haq attributes him to the 15th century A. D. on ground that the poet in one place refers to one Shāh Badar al-Dīn Pīr, whom the learned scholar identifies with Pīr Badar al-Dīn Badar-i-'Ālam of Bihar<sup>6</sup>. But the identification is obviously wrong because, except the similarity of name, there is no other proof for such an identification. Muzammil does not give any date of composition. His books deal with those popular beliefs which cannot be traced out from any other contemporary source. So to fix a date simply on the similarity of name is risky and unhistorical. A book named *Naṣīhatnāmāh* of poet Afḍal 'Alī

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1. *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, A.D. 1955, P. 56.
  2. *Ibid*, pp. 60-70.
  3. *Ibid*, pp. 61 ff. (Dacca University MS. No. 594).
  4. *Urdū*, October, 1952, pp. 61 ff.
  5. The manuscripts (Nos. 119 & 237) are preserved in the Dacca University Library.
  6. Enamul Haq : *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, 1955, pp. 66-68.

has been discovered<sup>1</sup>. Dr. Enamul Haq places it in early 16th century on the following grounds<sup>2</sup>. First, the poet refers to one Shāh Rustam who, according to local people of Chittagong, lived there three to four hundred years back. Secondly, in one Bengali *pada* (couplet) ascribed to one Afḍal 'Alī, the poet refers to Sayyid Firūz Shāh, identified with Sultān 'Alā'al-Dīn Firūz Shāh (A. D. 1532-33). None of these arguments is weighty. As for the first, the local tradition can hardly be accepted unless corroborated by other evidences; as for the second, there is no proof to identify Afḍal 'Alī, the *Padakāra* (the writer of couplet) with Afḍal 'Alī, the author of *Naṣiḥatnāmāh*. Sayyid Sultān's *Ophāte Rasūl*<sup>3</sup> (*Wafat-i-Rasūl*) dated towards the later half of the 16th century A. D. and Dawlat Wazīr Bahrām Khān's *Lāili Majnu*<sup>4</sup> dated between A.D. 1545-1553 contain in them traditional account of their religious and literary materials. Muḥammad Khān's *Maktul Hosan*<sup>5</sup> (correctly *Maqtul Ḥusayn*), a 17th century Bengali Work records the settlement of an Arab named Māhisawār in Chittagong and his contact with the local people.

#### (d) Writings of non-Muslim Scholars in Bengal

The contemporary Bengali books written by non-Muslims are many, but only two of them namely *Padma Purāṇa* of Vijaya Gupta<sup>6</sup> and *Manasā Vijaya* of Vipradāsa<sup>7</sup> make some reference to the Muslim society. Though other books like Mālādhara Vasu's *Śrī Kṛishṇa*

1. *Ibid*, pp. 72-75.
2. *Ibid*.
3. Edited by Ali Ahmad, Noakhali, B. S. 1356.
4. Edited by Ahmad Sharif and published by Bengali Academy, Dacca, A. D. 1957.
5. Abdul Karim : *Bāṅgālā Prāchīn Punthir Bivarana*, Part I, No. 1 (*Bāṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad Patrikā*, additional No. B.S. 1310, p. 157).
6. There are a few editions of the book, the one edited by B. K. Bhattachajee and published by Bāṅī Niketan, Barisal, has been followed.
7. Edited by Sukumar Sen and published by Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, A.D. 1953.

*Vijaya*<sup>1</sup>, Chaṇḍidāsa's *Śrī Kṛishṇa Kīrtana*<sup>2</sup>, Kavindra's *Mahābhārata*,<sup>3</sup> Śrī Kara Nandī's *Mahābhārata*<sup>4</sup> (*Aśvamedha Parva*) and Dviija Śrī Dhara's *Vidyā Sundara*<sup>5</sup>, do not refer to the Muslim society, the very fact that many of the authors were patronised by the Bengal Sulṭāns<sup>6</sup>, or their officers, show the sympathetic attitude of the Muslims towards the non-Muslim authors and their works.

Of the later Bengali literature, the biographies of Śrī Chaitanya Deva, such as *Chaitanya Bhāgavata* of Bṛindāvana Dāsa<sup>7</sup>, *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita* of Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja<sup>8</sup> need special mention. In depicting the superhuman power of Chaitanya and some of his followers they also refer to the Muslim population. Though shrouded with religious frenzy, they offer corroborative evidences. Mukunda Rāma's *Chaṇḍī Maṅgala* dated towards the end of the 16th century A. D.<sup>9</sup> depicts the religious and social life of the Muslims in a new settlement named Birnagar. The settlement itself seems to be imaginary, but he must have painted the Muslim society as he found it.

#### (e) Hagiological literature

The Muslim hagiological literature has so far remained untapped except for writing a few articles by Prof. H. Askari. They may be divided into three parts- (i) the Biographies of the *Ṣūfīs*, (ii) the *malḥūzāt* or discourses of the *Ṣūfīs* and (iii) the *maktūbāt* or letters written by the *Ṣūfīs*. We shall see later that Bengal was the seat of a

- 
1. Edited by Khagendra Nath Mitra and published by Calcutta University, A. D. 1944.
  2. Edited by Basanta Rañjan Roy and published by Baṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad, Calcutta, 2nd edition, B. S. 1342.
  3. Edited by Gaurī Nāth Śāstrī and published from Dhubri, Assam.
  4. Edited by D. C. Sen and Binoda Bihārī Kāvyaīrtha and published by Baṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad, Calcutta, B. S. 1312.
  5. *Baṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad Patrikā*, Vol. 44, pp. 22-24.
  6. See, D.C. Sen : *Baṅga Bhāshā O Sāhitya*, 8th edition, Calcutta, B. S. 1356, P. 73; Sukumar Sen : *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Calcutta, 1940, pp. 71 ff.
  7. There are a few editions of this book.
  8. There are a few editions of this book.
  9. Published by the Baṅgabāsi Kāryālaya, Calcutta. The book has also been published in two volumes by Calcutta University, A. D. 1924 and 1926.

large number of *Şūfīs*,<sup>1</sup> but very few of their *malfūzāt* or *maktūbāt* have come to light.

### (i) The biographies of the Sufis

A good number of biographical works dealing with the life sketch of Muslim saints of Indo-Pak sub-continent have been discovered. But unfortunately most of them do not refer to their activities in Bengal.

The contemporary biography *Manāqib al-Aşfiyā'* of *Shāh Shu'ayb* deals with only *Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī*<sup>2</sup>. In this connection the book makes casual reference to *Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah*, the teacher of *Makhdūm al-Mulk* who passed his later life in *Sunārgāwn* and *Mawlānā Taqī al-Dīn*, the teacher of *Shaykh Yaḥyā* (father of *Makhdūm al-Mulk*) who lived at *Mahi Santosh*. *Siyar al-Awliyā* of *Muḥammad Mubārak 'Alawī Kirmānī* alias *Amīr Khūrd* devotes a section to *Shaykh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uṭhmān*<sup>2a</sup>. Two other biographies that deal with a few Bengal Saints are of later date. They are *Akhbār al-Akhḡār* of *Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Dehlawī*<sup>3</sup> (written in the reigns of *Akbar* and *Jahāngīr*)<sup>4</sup> and *Mirāt al-Asrār* of 'Abd al-Raḥmān *Chishtī*<sup>5</sup> written in the reign of *Shāh Jahān*.<sup>6</sup> Both the works deal more with the activities of the *Şūfīs* outside Bengal, than their activities in Bengal proper. *Mirāt-i-Madārī*,<sup>7</sup> also of 'Abd al-Raḥmān *Chishtī*, deals only with the life of *Badi' al-Dīn Shāh Madār* outside Bengal. *Khazīnat al-Aşfiyā'* of *Ghulām Sarwar*<sup>8</sup> also a later work is practically a reproduction of *Akhbār al-Akhḡār*.

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1. See, Chapter III, Section (c).
  2. Extract printed at the end of the *Maktūbāt-i-Şadī*.
  - 2(a) *Ghulām Aḥmad Khān* has published an Urdū translation of this book from Muslim Press, Dehlī.
  3. Mujtabī Press, Dehlī, A. H. 1332.
  4. *Catalogue of Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore*, Vol. VIII, pp. 27-28.
  5. Manuscript Nos. 16 A. R./143 of the Dacca University Library and Ma 12/19-20 of 'Āliyah Madrasah Library, Dacca.
  6. *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Āliyah Madrasah MS. folio No. 190.
  7. Manuscript No. 217 of the Dacca University Library.
  8. Published by Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow.

Another biographical work is *Gulzār-i-Abrār*<sup>1</sup> of the Shaṭṭārī scholar Ghawthī, written in A. D. 1613. It also contains lives of many Ṣūfīs of Bengal.

Beside these, three other biographies dealing with three different Ṣūfīs were written in Bengal. The first is Śekh Śubhodaya<sup>2</sup>, (Shaykh Śubhodaya) dealing with the life of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī in Bengal. This is a Sanskrit work attributed to Halāyudha Miśra, a courtier of king Lakshmana Sena. But the book is said to be spurious and is generally dated to 16th century A. D.<sup>3</sup> The second is *Risālat al-Shuhdā*<sup>4</sup>, of Pir Muḥammad Shaṭṭārī, dated 17th century A.D. It deals with the life of Shāh Ismā'il Ghāzī in Bengal. The third is *Suhayl-i-Yaman* of Nāṣir al-Dīn Ḥaydar<sup>5</sup>, dated A.D. 1859. The book deals with the biography of Shāh Jalāl of Sylhet. Though of very late origin the author had the advantage of consulting two earlier manuscripts, *Risālah* of Muḥī 'al-Dīn Khādīm and *Rawḍat al-Salāṭīn*, now lost to us.

### (ii) The Malfuzat

The *malfūzāt* of Bengal Ṣūfīs have not come to light. But we have been able to lay our hands upon the following books containing the *malfūzāt* of some eminent Chishtīyah saints of northern India.

- (a) *Fawā'id al Fawād* of Ḥasan 'Alā Sajzī (collection of sayings of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā)<sup>6</sup>.
- (b) *Khayr al-Majālis* of Qalandar (collection of sayings of Shaykh Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, Chirāgh-i-Dehlī)<sup>7</sup>.

1. W. Ivanow : *Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta. Work No. 240, pp. 96-108.
2. Edited by Sukumar Sen, Calcutta, 1927.
3. *Memoirs*, pp. 105-6.
4. Text edition and English translation by G. H. Damant in *J. A. S. B.* 1874.
5. Newal Kishore edition, Lucknow, 1297/A. D. 1880.
6. Muslim Aḥmad Niẓāmī has published an Urdu translation with the title *Irshād-i-Maḥbūb* from Khawājah Press, Dehlī.
7. Aḥmad 'Alī has published an Urdu translation with the title *Sirāj al-Majālis* from Jāmi'ah Millīah Press, Dehlī, A. H. 1347.

- (c) *Afdal al-Fawā'id* and *Rāḥat al-Muḥibbīn* of Amīr **Khusraw** (collection of sayings of **Shaykh** Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā)<sup>1</sup>.  
 (d) *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn* (collection of sayings of **Shaykh** Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī)<sup>2</sup>.

These books throw some light on the life sketch of **Makhdūm Shaykh** Jalāl Tabrizī before his arrival in Bengal.

The *malfūzāt* of **Shaykh** Ḥusām al-Dīn Manikpūrī, compiled under the title of *Rafīq al-ʿArefīn* by one of his disciples Farīd bin Sālār have also been discovered. Recently Prof. Hasan Askari has published the relevant extracts which throw important light on Bengal<sup>3</sup>. As the **Shaykh** was a disciple of **Shaykh** Nūr Quṭb ʿĀlam of Pandwah<sup>4</sup> and as he himself visited Bengal, the materials derived from his *malfūzāt* may claim authenticity and genuineness.

### (iii) The Maktubat

The following eight letters of **Shaykh** Nūr Quṭb ʿĀlam have come to light<sup>5</sup>.

- No. 1 was written to one **Shaykh** Qāḍī Asad.  
 No. 2 was written to one **Shaykh** Muʿizz al-Dīn.  
 No. 3 was written to one **Shaykh** Rukn al-Dīn.  
 No. 4 was written to one Rafʿat **Khān**.  
 No. 5 was written to one Qāḍī Zāhid.  
 No. 6 was written to one anonymous person.  
 No. 7 was written to one Qāḍī.  
 No. 8 was written to some dear one.

All these letters, except the last one deal with *Taşawwuf* and hardly refer to the Socio-Political condition of the country. The last one hints at the interregnum of Rājā Gaṇeṣa in Bengal's politics.

1. Sayyid Rukn al-Dīn Niẓāmī has published Urdu translation from *Kutubkhānah-i-Maḥbūbī*, Dehlī.
2. **Ghulām Aḥmad Khān** has published an Urdu translation in *Khawājān-i-Chisht*, from Muslim Press, Dehlī, A. H. 1348.
3. *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Dacca Session, 1953. pp. 1 ff. (Reprint Section).
4. *Ibid* ; *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, p. 176.
5. Nos. 1-7 are in possession of Prof. H. Askari of Patna College. Extract from No. 8 has been published by Prof. H. Askari in *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. LXVII, No. 130, 1948, pp. 38-39.

But letters of two other Şūfīs who visited Bengal throw very important light on the subject. They are Mīr Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī and Mawlānā Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī. The following letters of Mīr Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī so far discovered throw light on Bengal's history<sup>1</sup> :—

- (a) One letter to Sultān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jawnpūr.
- (b) One letter to Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam.
- (c) One letter to Shaykh Ḥusayn Dhukkarposh.

These letters are very important as they throw light on the political condition of the country during the time of the interregnum of Rājā Gaṇeṣa and the resultant invasion of Bengal by Sultān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jawnpūr. They also refer to the condition of the Muslim divines during the time.

Mawlānā Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī wrote a number of letters<sup>2</sup> to Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẓam Shāh son of Sikandar Shāh. They deal with various subjects like qualifications of a king, the attitude of a Muslim ruler towards the non-Muslims, requesting the Sultān to arrange for shipping space in Chittagong Port for the followers of the Mawlānā who were out on pilgrimage to the holy cities. As such these letters throw important light on the Socio-political condition of the country.

Beside the hagiological literature, a large number of traditions are current in different parts of the country about various Şūfīs<sup>3</sup>. Though traditions hardly offer good materials for the reconstruction of the history, they sometimes corroborate other evidences. Names of a few Şūfīs have come down to us only through tradition<sup>4</sup>.

#### (f) Accounts of foreign travellers

The first traveller who came to Bengal during the period under review is the Moorish traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭah<sup>5</sup>. He did not stay here

1. Extracts published by Prof. Hasan Askari in *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. LXVII, No. 130, 1948, pp. 32-38.
2. Prof. H. Askari quotes extracts from twelve letters (See, *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLII, Part II, 1956, pp. 1-19.)
3. For traditions see, *District Gazetteers of Bengal*.
4. See, Chapter III, Section (c).
5. The Account of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah has been edited with French translation by Defre'mery and Sanguinetti in four Volumes, Paris, A. D. 1853-59.

for a long time. His intention of visiting Bengal, as he himself says was to meet Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī in the hilly region of Kamrup<sup>1</sup>. His account of the early Muslim rulers of Bengal is faulty<sup>2</sup> and as we shall see later he even gives a wrong name of the Şūfī, he met<sup>3</sup>. But nevertheless he supplies valuable information regarding the Socio-economic condition of Bengal, as he gives a list of commodities he found in the markets and their price. He also records the attitude of the ruling Sultān towards the Muslim *faqīrs*.

The following Chinese records on Bengal throw light on political, social and economic condition of the period under review<sup>4</sup>.

- (a) *Ying Yai Sheng lan* compiled by Ma-Huan between 1425 and 1432 A. D. It is a general account of Bengal without any reference to the king or court.
- (b) *Sing Ch'a Sheng lan*, compiled by Fei-Sin in A. D. 1436. This is also a general account of Bengal with some information on the king and the court but the name of the king does not occur.
- (c) *Si Yang Ch'ao Kung tien lu* compiled by Huang Singts'eng in A. D. 1520. Beside the general account of Bengal it contains the name of the king and a reference to the various embassies sent by him to the Chinese Court till A. D. 1438.
- (d) *Shu Yu Chou Tseu lu* compiled in A. D. 1574 by Yen Ts'ong Kien.
- (e) *Ming-She*, the official compilation was completed in A. D. 1739 but the materials were old.
- (f) *Tao-Yi-che-leo* compiled by Wang Ta-Yuan from A. D. 1349-50.

Of the European writers, Nicolo di Conti (Venetian),<sup>5</sup> Varthema

1. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, p. 216.
2. See for example, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1942, pp. 65-70.
3. See, Chapter. III, Section (c).
4. Only one Chinese Account that of Ma-huan was first translated by G. Phillips in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1895, pp. 523-35, and then all the Chinese Accounts were re-edited and translated by P. C. Bagchi and published in *Viśva-Bharati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134.
5. For Nicolo di Conti's Account see, Samuel Purchas : *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol. XI, Glasgow, A. D. 1906, p. 398.



(Italian)<sup>1</sup>, and Barbosa (Portuguese)<sup>2</sup>, have left valuable account on the Socio-economic condition of Bengal but unfortunately they are general accounts and it is hardly possible to find out anything exclusively on the Muslim society.

So far scholars working on the early Muslim history of Bengal dwelt on only the political events and as such they based their findings only on chronicles, inscriptions and coins. The sources such as writings of contemporary Muslim scholars, contemporary and later Bengali literature and the hagiological literature practically remained unexplored. With the help of these materials it is now possible to attempt a social history of the Muslims in Bengal from the conquest of Lakhnawtī by Muḥammad Bakhtyār Khaljī down to A. D. 1538.

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1. *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna*, English translation by John Winter Jones, edited by Penzer, London, A. D. 1928; Samuel Purchas : *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol. IX, Glasgow, A. D. 1905, Pp. 55-90.
  2. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, English translation by Mansel Longworth Dames and published by Hakluyt Society, London, Vol. II (London A. D. 1921).

## CHAPTER II

### POLITICAL BACKGROUND

#### 1. Socio-political Forces at work

##### (A) Early Muslim contact with Bengal

Traditional accounts<sup>1</sup> take back Muslim contact with Bengal to the early centuries of the *Hijrah*. But so far no authentic record has been found to establish their early settlement here<sup>2</sup>. In course of their eastern trade, the Arabs appear to have visited the Bengal coast, but how far they penetrated inland is not definitely known. Evidences of the preponderance of the Arabic words in the Chittagonian dialect and facial resemblance of the Chittagonian people with the Arabs have been produced<sup>3</sup> to claim early Arab colonisation, but these influences could as well be the result of slightly later contact when Muslims had become predominant in Bengal and carried on trade with the Arab world through the Chittagong port. The existence of

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1. For traditions see, *J.A.S.B.* 1889, vol. LVIII, pp. 12 ff; *J.A.S.B.* 1875, part I, No. 2, pp. 183-86; *J.A.S.B.* 1904, part I, No. 3, pp. 262-71; *Bengal District Gazetteers* : Pabna, Bogra, Dacca, Mymensingh. They have also been discussed in Chapter III, Section (C).
  2. The earlier theory that a small Arab kingdom was established in Chittagong, [ see, Enamul Haq and Abdul Karim : *Arākān Rājsabhāya Baṅgālā Sāhitya* ( Bengali Literature in the Arakanese Court ), Calcutta, A. D. 1935, p. 3 ] has recently been refuted. (See, A. H. Dani : "Early Muslim Contact With Bengal" in *The Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Karachi Session, 1951).
  3. Enamul Haq : *Pūrva Pākistāne Islām* (Islām in East Pakistan), Dacca, A. D. 1948, p. 19.

the commercial contact with the Abbasides is indicated by the discovery of a few coins of the *Khalīfah*<sup>1</sup>. It is possible that these businessmen created by their honesty a favourable atmosphere for the reception of Islām in this idolatrous country, as is traditionally known about the ship-wrecked Muslims who found shelter in Arakan.<sup>2</sup> Stories about a number of *Māhīṣawār* and other Muslim saints<sup>3</sup> coming by sea route, are widespread in the country, but it is difficult to examine their veracity or fix them to any definite chronology. One thing is certain that their influence could have hardly affected the society as no reference is found in the contemporary local literature or inscriptions.<sup>4</sup>

### (B) Early Muslim Governors

Islām, which completely changed the socio-religious pattern of Bengal, came in the wake of Turkish conquest towards the beginning of the 13th century A.D.<sup>5</sup> This conquest of Eastern India does not appear to have been the result of any pre-meditated plan. It was more a dare-devil attempt on the part of Muḥammad Bakhtyār Khajī to seek fortune in the eastern lands<sup>6</sup>, but the easy success that met Bakhtyār's arms in Bihar as well as in Bengal was possibly due to the

1. Three Abbaside coins, one from Paharpur and two from Mainamati have been found in excavations. (See, K. N. Dikshit : *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No.55, Delhi, A.D. 1938, p. 87; F. A. Khan: *Recent Archaeological Discoveries in East Pakistan: Mainamati*. Pakistan Publications, Karachi, p. 11).
2. *J. A. S. B.* vol. X, Part 1, 1844, p. 36.
3. See, note 1 at page 17.
4. The only exception is an inscription of Ratnapāla which refers to *Tājikas*, identified with the Arabs. See, *J.A.S.B.* 1898, vol. LXVII, p. 116; *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, 1951, p. 200. In a 15th century manuscript Persian dictionary, the word *Tājik* has been explained as non-Arabs and Turks. (See, Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī: *Sharf-nāmah*, 'Āliyah Madrasah MS. No. P. MSS/13.8, folio No. 128).
5. Minhāj, P. 151. For date see, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, June, 1954, pp. 133 ff.
6. Minhāj, pp. 147 ff.

great consternation spread about the Muslim conquerors<sup>1</sup>. This has again to be viewed in the general background of that role of conquest and annexation that began with the victory of Muḥammad bin Sām at the battle of Tarain in A. D. 1192<sup>2</sup>. Bakhtyār is a link in this chain, as his visit to Quṭb al-Dīn Aibak after his possession of *Audandbihāra*<sup>3</sup> and his presentation of gifts after his conquest of Nadiyā<sup>4</sup> clearly prove. The defeat or flight of the Hindu Rājās was alone to be achieved, as the masses are hardly known to have given an opposition<sup>5</sup> to the conquerors on political or military grounds. The Hindu rulers appear to have formed a class by themselves, being surrounded by Brahmanical aristocracy and having no contact with the masses. The former must defend themselves or be replaced by others who could muster a superior force. It is on this hypothesis that we can understand the imposition of a new hierarchy of rulers and land holders on the existing Hindu socio-religious structure and the way how these were accepted so willingly by the local people.

### (C) The Khalji Oligarchy

Minhāj<sup>6</sup> informs us about the entourage of Bakhtyār Khalji and we learn how men belonging to his tribe flocked around him in the hope of making fortune for themselves. True to the interest of his people Bakhtyār, after occupying a part of the Sena territory, distributed the acquisition among the Khaljī nobles, three of whom, Muḥammad Shīrān, 'Alī Mardān and Ḥusām al-Dīn 'Iwad were the most prominent, the latter two being explicitly called *Muqta's*.<sup>7</sup> They were not only in charge of the administration and land-revenue collection, but as is known from the example of Muḥammad Shīrān<sup>8</sup>, were also military commanders not only for the purpose of defending areas under them but also to wage wars against the neighbouring Hindu

1. Minhāj, pp. 148-50.

2. Muhammad Aziz Ahmad : *Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, Lahore, A. D. 1949, pp. 77-79.

3. Minhāj, p. 148.

4. *Ibid*, p. 151.

5. Minhāj (P. 150) refers to the flight of the Hindus towards Bang and Sanknat meaning Eastern Bengal.

6. Minhāj, p. 147.

7. *Ibid*, pp. 156, 158.

8. *Ibid*, p. 157.

Rājās. The history of these **Kh**aljī Amīrs, after the death of **Bakh**tyār when each of them tried to establish his own authority at **Lakhnawtī** or **Deokot**, shows how jealously they clung to their conquered territory. It is not unlikely that they regarded this land as their own heritage against the **Dehlī Sulṭānate** where the **Kh**aljīs had hardly any place. Only mutual rivalry forced them to turn to **Dehlī** for help as it was in the case of 'Alī **Mardān Kh**aljī<sup>1</sup>; otherwise right down to the end of 'Iwad's reign the **Kh**aljīs were supreme in the **Lakhnawtī Sulṭānate**. Probably to break this **Kh**aljī monopoly and to establish the **Dehlī (Ilbarī) Turks'** hegemony over them **Iltutmish** personally came to **Bengal** and later sent his favourite son **Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd**, who crushed their power and established his authority. Subsequent death or probably murder<sup>2</sup> of **Maḥmūd**, shows the strength that the **Kh**aljīs still possessed in **Bengal**, and though **Ikhtyār al-Dīn Balkā Kh**aljī acknowledged **Iltutmish's** suzerainty on his coins, **Iltutmish** himself was bent on uprooting the **Kh**aljīs for ever. Hence he overthrew them root and branch and started the practice of nominating governors from **Dehlī**, the first of whom was **Malik 'Alā' al-Dīn Jānī**.<sup>3</sup>

In this period beside the problem of their own adjustment to the new surroundings and their strained relation with the **Dehlī** emperors, the **Kh**aljīs were constantly at war with the neighbouring **Hindu Rājās**. Their existence was guaranteed only by their recurring raiding expeditions into **Hindu** dominions, their wealth increased by the imposition of taxes on the **Hindu** rulers and their prosperity assured by gradual expansion of their territory in the teeth of the **Hindu** opposition. They are referred to as *Gajjaneśvaras*<sup>4</sup> or *Turushkas*<sup>5</sup> in **Sanskrit** inscriptions and literature, which do not betray any cowardice on the part of the **Hindu** rulers; on the other hand they boast of winning victories over the **Muslims**<sup>6</sup>. The **Turkish** cavalry was no doubt the deciding factor in the war and the conquest in the early

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1. *Mīnhāj*, p. 158.
  2. Major **Raverty** in his translation of *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī*, (*Bibliotheca Indica*), p. 773, footnote.
  3. *Mīnhāj*, p. 174.
  4. *J.A.S.B.* Vol. XI, 1915, p. 42, note 3; *J.A.S.B.* 1952, Vol. XVIII, p. 140.
  5. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, pp. 361 ff.; *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Karachi session, 1951, p. 200.
  6. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XIII, P. 153,

stages followed those directions where the horses could easily move. The river-girt southern Bengal was left immune from the Muslim raids for a long time.

This was the formative period of the Muslim Society in Bengal. On the foundations laid in these few years depended the future edifice of Islām in Bengal. Fortunately the Khaljī nobility came forward to provide facilities<sup>1</sup> for the dissemination of Islāmic learning by founding *madrasahs*, for the propagation of Islāmic religion by helping the *dargāhs*, and for the observance of Islāmic rituals and ceremonies by building mosques. Traditional stories about the advent of Muslim saints in this period are many, the most famous among them relates to Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī<sup>2</sup>, who is said to have come at the time of Lakshmana Sena and established his reputation in Bengal. All these influences were acting on the then existing society. Its new attitude depended on what shape these new forces were assuming. It is well worth examining the future trend of these foreign influences.

#### (D) **Lakhnawti under Dehli Authority**

The break up of the Khaljī monopoly by Iltutmish opened the way for fresh migration of population—especially of the uprooted Turks from Central Asia—into Bengal. This was further facilitated by the appointment of new governors from Dehli, who on their part took up their posts at Lakhnawtī with all their adherents, loyal troopers and followers in order to assert their authority over a heterogeneous population. The Dehli emperor's name was pronounced from the pulpit, and occasionally his coins were issued from Lakhnawtī mint<sup>3</sup>. From time to time presents of elephants and treasure passed from Bengal to Dehli<sup>4</sup>, and the emperors conferred upon the governors titles, privileges of drum-beating, umbrella and flags<sup>5</sup>. The wealth and special status of Lakhnawtī became proverbial in Dehli and every ambitious servant of the state aspired to the high post of the governor of Lakhnawtī. It was this position which earned for them the

1. Minhāj, p. 151.
2. *Śekh Śubhodaya*, (Shaykh *Śubhodaya*) edited by Sukumar Sen, Calcutta, A. D. 1927. For details on this saint see, Chapter III, Section (C).
3. *History of Bengal*, vol. II, pp. 42-43.
4. Minhāj, pp. 226 & 243.
5. *Ibid*, pp. 181 & 243-44.

title of *Malik al-Sharq*<sup>1</sup> in actual name, fame and wealth. The government of Lakhnawtī became a replica of that at Dehli<sup>2</sup>, and this place along with Badāyūn, Kara and Oudh formed strong centres of administration of the eastern extension of the Dehli Sulṭānate. But soon after the death of Iltutmish political squabbles and party factions weakened the central authority, which gave opportunity to the provincial governors to rise and assert their powers over others on the basis of their own strength. Lakhnawtī was the worst sufferer in this respect as all of them had a covetous eye on it and fought their way to take possession of it<sup>3</sup>. The whole period is a sickening tale of such rivalries and fights between the ambitious governors. This state of affairs was put to an end by the strong hand of Sulṭān *Ghiyāth al-Dīn* Balban who appointed his own governor.

This was a period of turmoil in which fresh blood added to the complications of the then Muslim society in Bengal. New arrivals created new problems and they had to be provided for. Hence we hear of recurrent wars against the neighbouring kings.<sup>4</sup> But there was fundamental weakness of the Muslim power in Bengal due to mutual rivalry. On the other hand the Gaṅgā rulers of Orissa had not only increased their power but also integrated greater portion of south-west Bengal into their territory mainly owing to the weakness of the Senas, who on their part, were being squeezed between the Muslims in the west and the rise of the Devas in the east<sup>5</sup>. For the first time the Muslims suffered reverse in south-west Bengal at the hands of Narasimhadeva I, the Gaṅgā ruler, who is known to have advanced as far as the Ganges<sup>6</sup>. The Muslim territory shrank, though temporarily<sup>7</sup>, but on the other hand touched Bang along the left bank

1. For inscription with *Malik al-Sharq* title see, *Memoirs*, pp. 163-64.
2. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 42.
3. The most important example is the rivalry between *Tughral Tughān Khān* and Tamar *Khān Qirān*. (*Minhāj*, pp. 245-46).
4. For wars see, *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 42 ff.
5. *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Dacca University, A. D. 1943, pp. 253 ff.
6. *Minhāj*, p. 245; *J.A.S.B.* 1903, pp. 121 ff.
7. For success of *Mughith al-Dīn Yūzbak* see, *Minhāj*, pp. 262-63.

of the Padmā. Four great Muslim seats emerged in this period—Lakhnawtī, Deokot, Mahisantosh and Lakhnawr—this last was temporarily lost to the Gaṅgā rulers<sup>1</sup>. The individual Muslims especially the saints had further penetrated into the villages and even in the Hindu territories, as is known from the numerous graves scattered in the country<sup>2</sup>. Several generations of Muslims had by now passed in Bengal. This long stay had created a peculiar tendency among them, the effect of which was seen in the great revolt.

### (E) The Great Revolt

Ḍiyā'al-Dīn Baranī gives an explanation of the revolt. "The wise and the men of experience called Lakhnawtī, *Balghātkpur*, because from a long time past after Sulṭān Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad (bin) Sām captured Dehlī, any *Wālī* that the Sulṭān of Dehlī appointed for Lakhnawtī—Lakhnawtī being far away from Dehlī, being very extensive and wide and there having been tiresome difficulties (of communication) between Dehlī and Lakhnawtī—disobeyed and revolted (against the king of Dehlī). If the *Wālī* did not revolt, others revolted against him and killed him and the country was captured. For many years the revolt has become their second nature and habit. And every *Wālī* appointed there was turned away against the king by the trespassers and *balghākiāns* (rebels)"<sup>3</sup>. However,

1. Minhāj, p. 245.

2. For graves at Mahasthan see, inscription in *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. IV, 1918, pp. 178-179.

3. Baranī, p. 82.

ودانا یان وتجر به یا فتگان لکهنوتی را بلغا کپور خواندند  
 که از قدیم الایام ازان باز که سلطان معزالدین محمد سام دهلی  
 رافتح کرد - هر والی را که بادشاهان دهلی لکهنوتی داده اند  
 از جهت آن که لکهنوتی دوراست و عرصه بسے فراخ و درازاست و از دهلی  
 تا آنجا عقبات بسیار بیشتر است که ان والی بغی و طغیان ورزیده است  
 و اگر ان والی بغی نکرده است دیگران برو بغی کرده اند و او را کشته  
 و ملک فرو گرفته - و سالهاے فراوان است که اهل آن دیار را بغی  
 ورزیدن خوبی و طبیعت گشته و هر والی که در ان ملک نصب



the hold of Dehlī on Lakhnawtī mainly depended on the strength and unity that the reigning Sultān could muster. The local governors had by then established sufficient security in order to maintain the independence of their possession against any possible Hindu attack. Consequently, the weakness of the successors of Iltutmish<sup>1</sup> inspired a few local governors to assert their own authority<sup>2</sup>. But the greatest of the revolts occurred in the time of the strong-willed Sultān, Ghīyāth al-Dīn Balban. Mughīth al-Dīn Ṭughral, a former slave of the Sultān and lately in great favour, rose in rebellion, and Balban met the challenge with full determination. He was the second Dehlī Sultān to come to Bengal, to establish a system and to lay out a future programme of conquest<sup>3</sup>.

#### (F) The House of Balban

Balban left behind his younger son, Bughrā Khān, in charge of the affairs of Bengal with able advisers who had the explicit instruction to carry forward the limits of the Muslim territory<sup>3</sup>. Soon after Balban's death Lakhnawtī severed its connection from Dehlī. Throughout the period that the Khaljis were ruling at Dehlī, the Ilbarī Turks of the House of Balban or their supporters like Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh maintained their independent status in Bengal and Bihar.<sup>4</sup> The Sultānate of Lakhnawtī for the first time stood rival to the Dehlī empire and it was in this period that the neighbouring regions of Satgāwn, Sunārgāwn, Mymensingh and Sylhet were conquered<sup>5</sup>

شده است مشططان و بلغاکیان آنجاے البتہ اورا ازولی نعمت بگر  
دانیدند -

1. Important examples are those of Mughīth al-Dīn Yūzbak (Minhāj, p. 263. For his independent coinage, see, H.N. Wright : *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, Vol. II, Oxford, A. D. 1907, p. 147) and Mughīth al-Dīn Ṭughral (Baranī, P. 83). Others like Ṭughral Ṭughān Khān and Tamar Khān Qirān asserted their own power, though they did not openly revolt. (Minhāj pp. 242 ff., 247 ff.).
2. Baranī, pp. 92 ff.
3. Baranī, pp. 92 ff.
4. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 68 ff.
5. *Ibid*, pp. 75 ff.

and integrated into the Muslim Sulṭānate. The Gangeto-Brahmaputra delta, except the marshy tract of southern Bengal was united under one sceptre, and even the mighty forces of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī could not crush its freedom. Rightly speaking, the independence of Bengal began with the reign of Bughrā Khān<sup>1</sup>. Only a short interlude set in with the quarrel among the sons of Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh, as a result of which the Tughluq intervention once again established the Dehlī authority and demarcated three clear-cut administrative divisions, Lakhnawtī region, Satgāwn region, and Sunārgāwn region<sup>2</sup>. The administrative divisions could hardly work for a decade, when political chaos and disintegration towards the later half of the reign of Muḥammad bin Tughluq led local aspirants to try their luck and establish the rule of their own dynasty. Out of these chaotic wars was born the Independent Sulṭānate of Bengal under the authority of Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh.

In this period Muslim power in Bengal for the first time had full faith on its own strength. The Sulṭānate could hope to protect itself not only against Hindu insurrection but also against external aggression, and at the same time carry further Balban's programme of conquest and expansion. Bengal became the refuge of Ilbarī Turks and their supporters. Probably this addition in men and power aided in the extension of the Muslim territory. Along with this political growth must be viewed the development in the socio-religious side of the Muslims. We hear of numerous scholars, poets, *darwishes* and theologians arriving in Bengal and opening up new centres of education and religious instructions<sup>3</sup>. The new cities that rose to prominence were Bihār sharīf, Satgāwn, Pandwah (Fīrūzābād), Sunārgāwn, and Sylhet. They became the abode of Muslim saints, centres of Islāmic learning, administrative headquarters and commercial centres. It is this organisation of the cities that wielded Muslim authority in this vast region, and with the spread of Muslim population in the train of the saints, teachers and theologians that this authority sustained against the opposition of the Hindu populace. In this period was also laid the foundation of those institutions, social, religious and educational, that in due course led to the development of local Muslim culture. The foundation was laid by men who came from

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1. Baranī, p. 148; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 71.

2. Baranī, pp. 454, 461; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 97.

3. See, Chapter III, Sections (B) and (C).

far afield, like Abū Tawwāmah at Sunārgāwn, **Shāh** Jalāl at Sylhet while the *madrasah* of Zafar **Khān** at Satgāwn, the tradition of **Shaykh** Badar at Chittagong and the *dargāhs* of **Shaykh** Jalāl Tabrizī and Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam at Pandwah' laid this foundation on strong basis. Culturally the Muslim society in Bengal continued to keep contact or link with the Muslims outside, especially with the Muslim occupation of Chittagong the Arab migration received further impetus. Overseas trade appears to have increased and as a result Bengal silver coinage became a regular feature<sup>1</sup>. However this was a mere prelude to the real prosperity, peace and security that was to come during the period of Independent Sulṭāns.

### (G) The Independent Sultans

The Independent Sulṭānate in Bengal actually began in A.D. 1338, when after the death of Bahrām **Khān** (Muḥammad bin Tughluq's governor at Sunārgāwn), his *silāḥdār* Fakhrā took the insignia of royalty at Sunārgāwn with the title of Sulṭān Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak **Shāh**<sup>2</sup>. Two other governors of Muḥammad bin Tughluq, Qadar **Khān** of Lakhnawī and 'Izz al-Dīn Yaḥyā of Satgāwn came out to suppress Fakhrā but were themselves killed and in their place rose to power 'Alī Mubārak, the 'Āriḍ-i-Mamālik of Qadar **Khān**<sup>3</sup> and Ḥājī Ilyās, a newly arrived adventurer from Dehli and a foster brother of 'Alī Mubārak<sup>4</sup>. For the next few years Bengal witnessed two rival Sulṭānate with headquarters at Fīrūzābād and Sunārgāwn respectively. The former was held one after the other by two rival Sulṭāns 'Alī Mubārak, entitled Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī **Shāh** and Ḥājī Ilyās, entitled Sulṭān **Shams** al-Dīn Ilyās **Shāh**<sup>5</sup>. The latter was held by the House of Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak **Shāh**<sup>7</sup>. But although

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1. See, Chapter III, Sections (A), (B) and (C).
  2. For coinage of this period, see, H. N. Wright : *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, Vol. II, Oxford, A.D. 1907.
  3. Yaḥyā bin Aḥmad, p. 104.
  4. *Ibid*, p. 105 ; *Muntakhab*, Vol. I, p. 230.
  5. *Riyāḍ*, p. 95.
  6. *Muntakhab*, Vol. I, p. 230; N. K. Bhattasali : *Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 14-15 and 19 ff.
  7. *Ibid*, pp. 9-14 and 18-19.

there was mutual war among the Bengal Sultāns, the sovereignty did not pass to the Sultāns of Dehlī. Soon the situation took a new turn when in 754/A.D. 1353 Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh conquered Sunārgāwn and united the whole of the Muslim kingdom of Bengal under him<sup>1</sup>. Sultān Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq of Dehlī twice attempted to reconquer Bengal<sup>2</sup> but none of the attempts bore any fruit. The result was that from A. D. 1338, when Fakhrā assumed independence in Sunārgāwn till A. D. 1538, when Sher Shāh captured it<sup>3</sup>, Bengal was completely independent under its own rulers. This long duration of two hundred years is called the period of the Independent Sultāns in Bengal.

The period saw the rise and fall of four dynasties and a few Habshī usurpers. They are given below.

(1) **The House of Fakhr al-Din Mubarak Shah at Sunargawn**

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|--|------------------------|
| 1. Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak <u>Shāh</u> <sup>4</sup> | 739-750/A.D.1338-1349. |
| 2. Ikhtyār al-Dīn <u>Ghāzī</u> <u>Shāh</u>       | 750-753/A.D.1349-1353. |

Both the rulers of this House ruled in East Bengal with their headquarters at Sunārgāwn. All their coins have been issued from that mint-town. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭah<sup>5</sup>, Sultān Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh had only one son, who was killed by Shaydā during his lifetime. But Ghāzī Shāh, in his coins calls himself *Sultān bin Sultān* (king, son of king) which suggests that he was the son of Sultān Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh<sup>6</sup>, though strangely enough he does not mention the name of his father.

(II) **House of Ilyas Shah**

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|---|----------------------|
| 1. <u>Shams</u> al-Dīn Ilyās <u>Shāh</u> <sup>7</sup> | 743-758/A.D.1342-57. |
| 2. Sikandar <u>Shāh</u> <sup>8</sup> (son of No. 1).  | 758-795/A.D.1357-92. |

1. *Ibid*, p. 27.
2. Baranī, pp. 586 ff. ; 'Afif, pp. 112 ff. and 143 ff.
3. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 167 ff.
4. N. K. Bhattasali, *op cit*, pp. 9-14 and 18-19.
5. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, P. 215.
6. Thomas : "Initial Coinage of Bengal" in *J.A.S.B.* 1867, p. 55.
7. N. K. Bhattasali : *Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge, A. D. 1922, pp. 19 ff.
8. *Ibid*, pp. 52 ff.

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|---|----------------------------|
| 3. <u>Ghiyāth</u> al-Dīn A'ẓam <u>Shāh</u> (son of No.2) <sup>1</sup>           | 795-813/A.D.<br>1392-1410. |
| 4. Sayf al-Dīn Ḥamzah <u>Shāh</u> <sup>2</sup> (son of No. 3)                   | 813-814/A.D.<br>1410-11.   |
| 5. <u>Shihāb</u> al-Dīn Bāyazīd <u>Shāh</u> <sup>3</sup> (adopted-son of No. 4) | 815-817/A.D.<br>1412-1414. |
| 6. 'Alā' al-Dīn Fīrūz <u>Shāh</u> <sup>4</sup> (son of No. 5)                   | 817/1414.                  |

Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh, the founder of this dynasty, was a new comer, but in course of time he was able to build for himself a kingdom in Bengal. This was possible for him by siding with the interests of the local people, the Hindu *zamīndārs* and the Muslim nobility.<sup>5</sup> These people stood firmly with him when Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq invaded Bengal, and it was mainly due to their support that Ilyās Shāh could retain his independence. He well deserved the titles of "Shāh-i-Bangālah" and "Shāh-i-Bangāliyān" given by 'Afif.<sup>6</sup> He was the first independent Muslim Sulṭān to rule over the united kingdom of Bengal and it was from this time onward that the term "Bangālah" connoted the whole Sulṭānate.<sup>7</sup> Its boundary gradually extended and the marshy lands of southern Bengal were incorporated into it.<sup>8</sup> Muslim arms penetrated even far into the northern regions and Brahmaputra valley.<sup>9</sup> But the very support of the local people implied a concession to the local interests, which resulted in the patronage of

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1. N. K. Bhattasali : *Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge A. D. 1922, pp. 72 ff.
  2. *Ibid*, pp. 90 ff.
  3. *Ibid*, pp. 98 ff. ; *Riyāḍ*, pp. 109-110 ; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 116.
  4. N. K. Bhattasali : *op cit*, pp. 107 ff.
  5. 'Afif, pp. 114-118.
  6. *Ibid*.
  7. A. H. Dani : "Shamsuddīn Ilyās Shāh, Shāh-e-Bangālah" in *Sir Jadu-Nath Sarkar Commemoration Volume*, University of Panjab, India.
  8. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 131 ff.
  9. For Sikandar Shāh's coin with the mint-name of Chawalīstān 'urf Kāmru, see, H. N. Wright : *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, Vol. II, Oxford, A. D. 1907, p. 152, No. 38, Plate II.

local culture, art and literature and also in the formation of a party of local *zamīndārs* as opposed to the party of foreign elements that had so long been strong in the capital. It is from this time onward that we hear the names of Hindu *zamīndārs* being mentioned among the Sulṭān's courtiers and supporters, the Muslims taking pride in calling themselves Bengali<sup>1</sup>, and studying Bengali language and literature<sup>2</sup>; the Hindu officers, ministers and army commanders serving side by side with the Muslims,<sup>3</sup> the Hindu poets and writers praising the Sulṭāns and receiving rewards and titles.<sup>4</sup> The Muslim architecture took a new form and became acclimatised to this soil and climate.<sup>5</sup> The Hindus for the first time became reconciled to the Muslim Sulṭānate and began sharing in the government and political life of the country. The Muslims looked upon this country as their homeland and began re-creating a social order in which their ancestral Islāmic heritage would find due place in the local traditional culture. The religion and spirit of Islām spread widely in the country, and the popular tongue Bengali, found its literary medium side by side with the Persian.

But the conflict between the foreigners and the local interests sustained throughout this period. The Muslim immigrants continued to pour into this country and establish cultural link with other Muslim countries while pilgrimages to the holy places and the study of Persian and Arabic kept ablaze the idea of *Dār al-Islām* in the minds of the Muslims.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand local interests demanded a new outlook of life. The climax reached in A. D. 1415 when the Ilyās *Shāhī* rulers were temporarily set aside, and the House of Rājā Gaṇeśa occupied the Muslim throne after changing their religion from Hind-ism to Islām.<sup>7</sup>

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1. For example, the family of *Shaykh* 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq was known as *Bangālī*. (*Akhbār al-Akh'yār*, P. 143).
  2. For Muslim poet writing in Bengali, see, Chapter III, Section (B).
  3. Baranī, p. 593; Yaḥyā bin Aḥmad, P. 125, note 5; 'Afif, pp. 114-118.
  4. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1952, pp. 215-24.
  5. *The Museums Journal*, Peshawar, Vol. IV, No. 1, April, 1952, pp. 37 ff.
  6. For details see, Chapter III, Section (A).
  7. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 128.

(III) **The House of Raja Gaṇeśa**

1. Rājā Gaṇeśa.<sup>1</sup>
2. Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad<sup>2</sup> (son of No. 1). 818-836/A.D. 1415-1432.
3. Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Shāh<sup>3</sup> (son of No. 2). 836-839/A.D. 1432-1435

The local forces gained victory under the banner of Islām. The local cultural elements burst forth to find expression in the country's life. The king became the Khalīfah<sup>4</sup> for the people. Sanskrit and Bengali literature expanded and improved<sup>5</sup>. The Hindus jumped up the ladder of influence and political power. Naturally to the foreign Muslims this sudden change was a defeat of Islām and usurpation of the Muslim power by the Hindus. This attitude is aptly borne out in the invitation to Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jawnpūr<sup>6</sup> by

1. The former theory that Rājā Gaṇeśa actually crowned himself king (See, N. K. Bhattasali : *Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 117 ff.) has been challenged by A.H.Dani. (See *J.A.S.B.* Vol. XVIII, new series, No. 2, 1952, pp. 121-170.)
2. It was formerly held that his last date was 835 A. H. *J.A.S.B.* Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1952, pp. 143-54, 158-166. But recently the correct reading of his inscription shows that his last date was A. H. 836. (Ziauddin Desai in *Islamic Culture*, July, 1958.)  
The inscription in question is preserved in the Dacca Museum and published in *J.A.S.B.* Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1952.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad was the first Bengal Sulṭān to assume the title of Khalīfah. For his coins with Khalīfat Allāh title see, H. N. Wright: *Catalogue of coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, Vol. II, Oxford, A. D. 1907. (See also *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XVII, part II, 1955, P. 90.)
5. For the patronage of Rājā Gaṇeśa to a Bengali poet Kṛittivāsa and of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad to a Sanskrit poet Bṛihaspati Rāyamukuṭa, see, Sukumar Sen : *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Calcutta, 1940, pp. 87-88.
6. *Riyāḍ*, p. III.

Ḥadrat Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam, who led the opposite party. In spite of these political bickerings the dynasty ruled for two generations and left behind indelible impress on the future trend of cultural development.

(IV) **The restored Ilyas Shahi dynasty**

1. Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd I<sup>1</sup> . . . . 841-864/A.D.1437-1459.
2. Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh<sup>2</sup> (son of No. 1) .. 864-879/A.D.  
.. 1459-1474.
3. Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh<sup>3</sup> (son of No. 2) .. 879-886/A.D.  
1474-1481.
4. Sikandar<sup>4</sup> (son of No. 3)
5. Jalāl al-Dīn Fatḥ Shāh<sup>5</sup> (son of No. 1) .. 886-892/A.D.  
1481-1486.

The actual circumstances that led to the restoration of the old dynasty are not properly known, but it seems that squabbles among the party of the foreign elements favoured the reinstallation of the older line. In these rulers once again the older tradition of unity and harmony became identified. Though local literature continued to grow and local art and architecture flourished under them, the rulers equally patronised Persian literature, even appointed Persian poets at the court<sup>6</sup>, and took keen interest in the spread of Muslim education<sup>7</sup> and maintaining the Muslim *dargāhs*<sup>8</sup>. But the most important change brought about in this period was the introduction of Abyssinian element in the local populace. Recruited mainly as slaves to support the royalty, the Abyssinians greatly increased their power and with a fortunate chance ultimately broke that very line of the royal dynasty which had so long brought them up.

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1. *J.A.S.B.* 1952, p. 170; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 132.
  2. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, p. 298; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 132-136.
  3. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, p. 298; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II P. 136.
  4. *Riyāḍ* p. 119. (His reign lasted not more than three days.)
  5. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, p. 299; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 131-38.
  6. See, Chapter III, Sections (A) & (B).
  7. Chapter III, Section (A).
  8. *Ibid.*



(V) **The Abyssinian usurpers**

1. Bārbak Shāh<sup>1</sup>
2. Sayf al-Dīn Firūz Shāh<sup>2</sup> .. 892-896/A.D.1486-1490
3. Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd II<sup>3</sup> .. 896-897/A.D.1490-1491.
4. Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar Shāh<sup>4</sup> .. 897-899/A.D.1491-1493.

“From slavery to royalty” is an old proverb, and the Abyssinians like the Mamlūks of an earlier age, rose to the throne of Bengal. From being the support of the royalty, they became kings themselves. Perhaps their introduction in Bengal was the result of an earlier lesson learnt by the Ilyās Shāhis from their placing over-confidence in the support of the local people. But the lesson was less learnt than lost. The Abyssinians stole a march over others in the confidence of the kings till they usurped the power themselves. They became the sole power and faced the opposition of the country. Their hated rule was overthrown in A. D. 1493.

(VI) **The Husayn Shahi Rulers**

1. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh<sup>5</sup> .. 899-925/AD.1493-1519.
2. Nāṣir al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh<sup>6</sup> (son of No. 1). 925-938/A.D.  
1519-1531.
3. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Firūz Shāh<sup>7</sup> (son of No. 2)..938-939/A.D.1531-1532.
4. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh<sup>8</sup> (son of No. 1). 939-945/A.D.  
1532-1538.

1. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, p. 299.

2. *Ibid*, P. 300.

3. *Ibid*, pp. 300-301. (His parentage is a subject of controversy. For details see, *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 139-40.

4. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II. p. 301.

5. *Tārīkh-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, pp. 301-2 ; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 142 ff.

6. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, pp. 301-2; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 152.

7. *Riyāḍ*, p. 139; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 159. All his published coins are dated 939 and hence the numismatists have so far believed that he reigned for only one year i.e. in A.H. 939. But recently I have examined two of his unpublished coins in the Dacca Museum. Both the coins are dated 938.

8. *Riyāḍ*, pp. 139-42 ; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 159 ff.

'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh, a minister<sup>1</sup> of the last Abyssinian ruler, became the new Sulṭān. With him were restored peace and tranquillity in the kingdom, good administration and political harmony, expansion and commercial prosperity. The Ḥusayn Shāhīs were enlightened and tolerant rulers. It is during their rule that the local Bengali literature<sup>2</sup> found its clear expression and the various religious communities developed in perfect peace and harmony<sup>3</sup>. The spirit of sufism had permeated through the masses and in spite of Chaitanya movement, the mystic religion had overwhelmed various groups of people in Bengal<sup>4</sup>. The kings had endeared themselves to the people, and they on their part had adjusted themselves to share equitably in the prosperity of the country. The prosperity had been doubled by the opening of the European trade with the arrival of the Portuguese<sup>5</sup>. The country's industries and commerce grew and foreign silver poured into the land. The Ḥusayn Shāhī's was an age of peace at home, expansion over neighbouring territories and prosperity in overseas trade.

This period was brought to a close in A. D. 1538 with the defeat of the last representative of the dynasty Ghīyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd<sup>6</sup>, at the hands of Sher Khān, the future Sher Shāh, who was soon to integrate Bengal into his North Indian Empire.

## 2. Gradual expansion of the Muslim territory in Bengal

The foundation of the Muslim kingdom in Bengal was laid by Muḥammad Bakhtiyār in or about A. D. 1204<sup>7</sup> with his headquarters at Lakhnawtī. This was nothing more than a small principality in the north-western part of Bengal while the vast territory towards the north, east, south and south-west lay outside his dominion. Another run of two hundred and fifty years was to pass before the Muslims

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1. *Tārīkh-i-Firishtah*, Vol. II, p. 301.
  2. D. C. Sen : *History of the Bengali Language and Literature*, Calcutta University, A. D. 1911, p. 12.
  3. *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Dacca Session, A. D. 1953, p. 267.
  4. Chapter III, Section (C).
  5. Campos : *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, A. D. 1919, pp. 30 ff.
  6. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 163.
  7. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, June, 1954, pp. 133 ff.

could finish the task begun by Bakhtyār. In the beginning Muslim arms penetrated only towards the south and north of Lakhnawtī, where the cavalry could be profitably utilised. Soon they realised that the cavalry was of little use in the vast riverine tract of eastern and southern parts of Bengal. The first ruler to realise this secret was Ghīyāth al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ Khaljī, who for the first time organised a flotilla of war-boats<sup>1</sup>. Strengthened with this new system, the Muslim power advanced beyond the traditional line and encroached upon the neighbouring territories of the east and the south. It is during the later Ilyās Shāhī period that the whole of Bengal was integrated into the Muslim Sulṭānate.

Muḥammad Bakhtyār's principality was limited to a small tract of land round about Lakhnawtī, with Deokot in the north, the rivers Tista and Karatoya in the east and south-east, the main stream of the Ganges in the south, while in the west, he had his possession in Bihar<sup>2</sup>. Before he marched to Tibet, he sent an army under Muḥammad Shīrān Khaljī towards Lakhnawr and Jājnagar<sup>3</sup>. Nothing definite is known about the success or failure of this expedition. According to Minhāj<sup>4</sup>, as soon as the news of the murder of Muḥammad Bakhtyār reached him, he returned and came back to Deokot. So in all probability Lakhnawr remained outside the pale of the Muslim kingdom. This last locality does not come to the picture again before the time of Sulṭān Ghīyāth al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ Khaljī<sup>5</sup>.

Meanwhile the situation in Deokot did not go well for Muḥammad Shīrān Khaljī. Though he was able to imprison 'Alī Mardān and was accepted as the head of the principality<sup>6</sup>, the latter somehow escaped from prison, fled away to Dehlī and beseeched Sulṭān Quṭb al-Dīn Aibak to interfere in Bengal's politics<sup>7</sup>. The Dehlī Sulṭān took advantage of the situation and ordered Qāemāz Rūmī, his governor of Oudh to go to Bengal and settle affairs in Lakhnawtī<sup>8</sup>. Muḥammad Shīrān was not the person to surrender before Qāemāz Rūmī.

1. Minhāj, p. 163.

2. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 13-14.

3. Minhāj, p. 157.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 163; *Indian Historical Quarterly*, March, 1954, pp. 11 ff.

6. Minhāj, p. 158

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

He gave battle but was defeated<sup>1</sup>. The defeat led him to flee away towards Moseda and Santos, identified with Mahisantosh in Dinajpur district<sup>2</sup>.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ Khaljī was the first to make an attempt to extend the frontier towards the south and the east. Minhāj says, "In short, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khaljī was a virtuous, just and good-mannered Sulṭān. The neighbouring states of Lakhnawī such as Jājnagar, Bang (Eastern Bengal) Kamrup and Tirhut all sent tributes to him. And he conquered Lakhnawr and many elephants, much wealth and treasures came to his hand and he posted his own Amīrs there."<sup>3</sup> This categorical statement of Minhāj leaves no doubt that 'Iwaḍ conquered and annexed Lakhnawr. As for the rest of Minhāj's statement, i. e. the kingdom of Jājnagar, Bang, Kamrup and Tirhut sent presents to 'Iwaḍ, it was probably the result of the raids and not of annexation. A study of the pre-Mughal history of Bengal shows that the Bengal Sulṭāns never annexed the kingdoms of Jājnagar, Kamrup and Tirhut, though portions of those territories were occupied from time to time. In the case of Bang, as we shall see hereafter<sup>4</sup>, it was annexed to the Muslim sulṭānate only about one hundred years later.

The possession of Lakhnawr was lost by the Muslims, during the governorship of Malik 'Izz al-Dīn Ṭughral Ṭughān Khān. He

1. Minhāj, P. 158.
2. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 37. It is now in Rajshahi district in East Pakistan. According to Minhāj, (p. 158) quarrel broke out among the Khaljī Amīrs and Muḥammad Shirān Khaljī became a martyr. But according to a later tradition, (*History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 17) he was killed in an engagement with some Hindu *zamīndār* of that region.
3. Minhāj, p. 163.

فی الجملہ غیاث الدین خلجی مردے باخیر وعدل نیکوسیرت  
بادشاہی بود اطراف ممالک لکھنو تی چنا نچہ جاجنگرو بلادہنگ  
وکام رود وترت جملہ اورا اموال فرستادند وبلاد لکھنور اورا  
صاف شد ویلان واموال و خزائن بسیار ہدست آورد وامرای خود  
آنجا بنشانند۔

4. See, *Infra*, P. 37.

achieved some initial success in his battle against Orissa, but subsequently, he was out-generalled by his adversary. The Orissan general followed up his victory upto Lakhnawr, killed a large number of Muslims including the *Muqta'*, *Fakhr al-Mulk Karim al-Din Laghirf* and even laid siege to Lakhnawtī<sup>1</sup>. Malik *Ikhṭyār al-Din Yūzbak*, who assumed independence with the title of *Sulṭān Mughīth al-Din Yūzbak*<sup>2</sup>, retrieved to some extent the loss of the Muslim kingdom. He soon entered into war against Orissa and extended his southern frontier as far as *Uwardan*<sup>3</sup>, identified with *Mandaran* in the *Hughli* district<sup>4</sup>. But as misfortune would have it, this masterful prince, who brought glory to the Muslim kingdom, lost his life in course of his *Kamrup* expedition<sup>5</sup>. What became of his possession upto *Mandaran* after his death is not definitely known.

The appointment of *Bughrā Khān* as the governor of *Lakhnawtī* by his father is an epoch-making event in the history of the expansion of the Muslim kingdom of Bengal. The contemporary historian *Baranī* writes, "And he (*Ghiyāth al-Din Balban*) called him (*Bughrā Khān*) before his presence in private and made him swear that he (*Bughrā Khān*) should not have convivial assembly, nor drink, nor engage himself in pastime, before conquering the *Iqlīm* of *Bangālah* and taking it into his direct control."<sup>6</sup> Here the clear indication is that the *Sulṭān* ordered his son to extend the frontier. As a matter of fact it is from this time that an all-round expansion began. We do not know, what part did *Bughrā Khān* himself play in the expansion. His son *Rukn al-Din Kāykā'ūs Shāh* was the first to issue coin from the *Kharāj* of *Bang*<sup>7</sup>. It is during his time again that the conquest of

1. *Minhāj*, p. 245.

2. *Ibid*, p. 263.

3. *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XXI, part I, pp. 54-57.

4. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 61.

5. *Minhāj*, p. 265.

6. *Baranī*, p. 92.

و پیش خود در مجلس خلوت طلبیده سوگند داد که پیش ازان  
اقلیم بنگا له را بدست آرد و در ضبط خود مستقیم کند در هیچ روز  
مجلس نسازد و شراب نخورد و بلهو مشغول نشود -

7. *J.A.S.B.* 1922, p. 410.

Satgāwn or Triveni area began under his general Zafar Khān<sup>1</sup>. But the most important achievement in this connection was that of Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Firūz Shāh. During his time, Satgāwn was finally captured, Sunārgāwn, Bang and Ghīyāthpūr appeared as mint-towns<sup>2</sup>, thus indicating that Eastern Bengal including the area round about the present town of Mymensingh was annexed to the Muslim kingdom. The Sylhet inscription<sup>3</sup> shows that the eastern frontier of his kingdom extended upto Sylhet. Chittagong was conquered by Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh<sup>4</sup>. The fruits of their annexations fell to the lot of Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh, who for the first time united Lakhnawtī, Satgāwn and Sunārgāwn under him<sup>5</sup>. The southern outskirts of the province that was still left out was annexed by Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad and Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd I. Chātgāwn (Chittagong) and Fatḥābād appeared as mint-towns for the first time under Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad,<sup>6</sup> thus suggesting that he had firm control over Chittagong and Fatḥābād (modern Faridpur region<sup>7</sup>.) The inscriptions of Khān Jahān's tomb and the erection of mosque by him indicate that the Sundarbana area was occupied by the Muslims under Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd I.<sup>8</sup> The annexation of Bakerganj is learnt from an inscription dated 870/A.D. 1465 at Mirzaganj in Patuakhali sub-division<sup>9</sup>. As for the northern outskirts of the country, Shāh Ismā'il Ghāzī, a warrior-saint of the time of

1. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, July, 1956, pp. 198 ff.
2. Mir Jahan : "Mint-towns of Mediaval Bengal" in *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Dacca session, 1953. ; *J.A.S.B.* 1922, Pp. 410 ff.
3. *J. A. S. B.* 1922, pp. 413-14. See also *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 79. The inscription now preserved in the Dacca Museum records that Sylhet was first brought under Muslim control in the reign of Shams al-Dīn Firūz Shāh by his general Sikandar Khān Ghāzī.
4. J. N. Sarkar : *Studies in Mughal India*, 1919, p. 122.
5. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 105 ; N. K. Bhattasali : *Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge, 1922, p. 27.
6. *J.A.S.B.*, 1952, p. 145.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *J.A.S.B.* 1867, p. 135; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 131.
9. *J.A.S.B.* 1860, p. 407; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 135.

Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh was buried at Kantaduar in Rangpur<sup>1</sup>, thus indicating that by the time Bārbak Shāh was on the throne, the northern frontier of the Muslim kingdom extended at least upto Rangpur.

The above discussion shows that the small Muslim principality of Lakhnawī of Muḥammad Bakhtyār turned to be the Muslim kingdom of Bengal by the last half of the 14th century A.D. Within a further one hundred years, this kingdom was able to exert its power over even the nook and corner of Bengal having no rival to challenge its supremacy. The scene of warfare of the succeeding Sulṭāns e.g. Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh shifted from the inland towards the frontiers against Orissa, Kamrup, Tippera and Arakan.<sup>2</sup>

1. *J.A.S.B.* 1874, pp. 215 ff.

2. For his warfare, see, *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 143 ff.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GROWTH OF THE MUSLIM SOCIETY

#### Section (A)

#### The Part Played By The Sultans

The Sultān had a significant part to play in a society which had strong faith in monarchy. But the distinguishing feature of the monarchy in Bengal throughout this period was that in spite of the attempt made to the contrary it remained in the hands of the Muslims. All the political moves on the part of Rājā Gaṇeṣa<sup>1</sup> to found a Hindu monarchy broke down when his own son accepted Islām<sup>2</sup> and carried further the work of the earlier Muslim rulers.<sup>3</sup> The attachment to the Muslim monarchy was so strong that there was no compunction to accept a newly-arrived Muslim if he could muster strong the unifying forces and establish peace in the country, as we know in the case of Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh and 'Alā'al-Dīn Husayn Shāh. The main aim of these monarchs was not only to keep strong the Muslim ascendancy in Bengal but also to build up such institutions or initiate such works as would help in the growth of the Muslim culture. To illustrate the first we can cite the example of the Shaykhs and 'Ulamā who strongly reacted against Rājā Gaṇeṣa's move to disturb this established rule. But it is chiefly in the second branch that the real constructive works of the Sultāns are known. These may be grouped as follows :—

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1. *Riyāḍ*, pp. 110 ff. ; E. Denison Ross : *An Arabic History of Gujrat*, Vol. III, London, A.D. 1928, p. 978.
  2. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī : *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Ālīyah Madrasah MS. Folio No. 184; *Riyāḍ*, pp. 110 ff.
  3. E. Denison Ross : *An Arabic History of Gujrat*, Vol. III, London A. D. 1928, pp. 978-79. ; Al-Sakhāwī : *Al-Ḍaw al-Lūmi'li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi*, 'Cairo, A. H. 1303, Vol. VIII, p. 280,



(a) Erection of mosques, (b) Construction of *madrasahs*, (c) Promotion of Islāmic spirit, (d) Patronising Muslim scholars and Şūfīs, (e) Cultivation of learning by some of the Sulṭāns and their officers, (f) Benevolent activities of the Sulṭāns.

(a) **Erection of Mosques**

The mosques formed an important feature of the Muslim Society in Bengal. The construction of mosques began with the conquest of Muḥammad Bakḥtyār **Kh**aljī. Minhāj records<sup>1</sup> that after making Lakhnawtī the seat of government, Muḥammad Bakḥtyār built mosques, *madrasahs* and the **Kh**ānqahs. He praises Sulṭān **G**hiyāth al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ **Kh**aljī for building a number of *Jāmi'* (congregational) and other mosques.<sup>2</sup> As for the construction of mosques in the later period, especially from the time of Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā'ūs to the last of the Independent Sulṭāns, stronger and undoubted evidences are available. A large number of inscriptions recording the erection or repairing of mosques have been discovered from different parts<sup>3</sup> of the country. They were built mostly at the initiative of the Sulṭāns or their officers. The inscriptions generally begin either with a verse from the holy Qur'ān or tradition of the Prophet or both, indicating the rewards that await one in the next world for founding such religious institutions.<sup>4</sup> The Sulṭāns or their officers

1. Minhāj, p. 151.

2. *Ibid*, p. 161.

3. For inscriptions, see, *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*. A considerable number of these mosques exist even today. Notable among them are (a) Adina mosque of Pandwah, (b) *Sonā masjid* of Gaur, (c) *Shāṭ Gunbad* mosque of Bagerhat, (d) Bābā Adam **S**hahīd's mosque at Rampala, Dacca. (See, *Memoirs*; R. E. M. Wheeler : *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan*, London, A.D. 1950, pp. 111 ff.

4. Some of them are as follows :— (See *Memoirs*, pp. 80-81.)

قال الله تعالىٰ انما يعمر مسجد الله من آمن بالله واليوم الآخر  
واقام الصلوة واتى الزكوة ولم يخش الا الله فعسى اولئك ان  
يكونوا من المهتدين - وقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من بنى  
مسجد الله بنى الله له بيتا في الجنة مثله -

thus erected mosques not only for mere pomp and show but also in full realisation of their performance of a religious duty. The location<sup>1</sup> of these mosques reveals that the rulers adopted a systematic policy of building up a new society in Bengal; wherever Muslim power penetrated, mosques were built in order to give facilities to Muslim conquerors or the converted Muslims to perform their religious duty. The examples of **Khān-i-Jahān's** mosque at Bagerhat, the *Masjīdbārī* mosque near Mirzaganj in Bakerganj district, Zafar **Khān's** mosque at Triveni may be cited. In some cases mosques were built by the side of the tombs of **Şūfī's**,<sup>2</sup> thus making these *dargāhs* doubly attractive for the Muslims of the surrounding area. The Adina mosque of Pandwah offers some interesting points to be noted. It is the second biggest mosque in this sub-continent with a dimension of 507½ feet north to south and 285 ½ feet east to west.<sup>3</sup> This huge structure was built by Sulṭān Sikandar **Shāh** between 766/ A. D. 1364 to 776/A.D. 1374.<sup>4</sup> Several considerations might have prompted him to undertake its construction. First, non-Muslims were to be impressed by the might of the Muslim power. Most of its building materials were taken from the Hindu temples.<sup>5</sup> It probably played the same part as did the *Quwwat al-Islām* mosque in Dehli. Secondly, as 'Ābid'Alī **Khān** suggests, Sikandar **Shāh's** idea was to see that all Muslim population of Pandwah could gather in one place for their Friday prayers.<sup>6</sup> If this is true, the Adina mosque played a significant

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1. The location of mosques may be determined from the find-spots of inscriptions. Inscriptions have been discovered from all parts of Bengal and they reveal that mosques were built simultaneously with the expansion of the Muslim power. For find-spots see, *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*, pp. 117 ff. Of the extant inscriptions of the period, seventy four record the building of mosques and twenty six record the building of *Jāmi'* (congregational) mosques.
  2. For example the mosque near the *dargāh* of Mawlānā 'Aṭā (*J. A. S. B.* 1872, pp. 104-5).
  3. *Memoirs*, p. 127.
  4. *Ibid*; R. E. M. Wheeler suggests that it was built in the year A. D. 1369 or 1374. (*Five Thousand Years of Pakistan*, London, 1950, p. 112.)
  5. *Memoirs*, p. 129.
  6. *Ibid*.

part in the then Muslim society, in as much as it offered a meeting ground for all the Muslims living at the metropolis. Thirdly, as Sulṭān Sikandar Shāh was the second of the first important dynasty of the Independent Sulṭāns of Bengal, the idea of exhibiting parallel strength to the Sulṭānate of Dehlī might have lurked in his mind. The architecture of Bengal Sulṭāns with predominantly local influences<sup>1</sup> and the issue of coins by some later Sulṭāns beginning from Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh with *Khalīfat Allāh* title<sup>2</sup> substantiate this view. So long the mosque architecture of Bengal has been studied by historians and archaeologists from the points of view of dates, style and building materials, but to the students of social history it is of greater significance as it formed the nerve-centre of the Muslim society and the basic root of Muslim culture.

#### (b) Construction of Madrasahs

The next important contribution of the Bengal Sulṭāns and their officers, was the construction of *madrasahs* or schools and colleges for imparting religious instructions. Beside the evidence of Minhāj regarding the construction of *madrasah* by Muḥammad Bakhtiyār,<sup>3</sup> the inscriptions supply three concrete examples of *madrasahs* erected during the period under review.

In the year 698/A. D. 1298 one *madrasah* was built at Triveni in the reign of Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā'ūs.<sup>4</sup> One Qāḍī al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who for strength of his argument was styled, "Qāḍī, the tiger" spent large sum of money on education. The inscription is fragmentary but the few lines that have been deciphered are full of significance. It starts with a tradition of the Prophet calling the people, "You should acquire knowledge, for its acquisition is verily submission, its search is devotion, its discussion is glorifica-

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1. R.E.M. Wheeler : *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan*, London, 1950. p. 110.
  2. "The *Khalīfah* as recognised in the coins of Bengal Sulṭāns" in the *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XVII, part II, 1955, pp. 86 ff. See also "*Khalīfat Allāh* title in the coins of Bengal Sulṭāns" in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. VIII.
  - 3: Minhāj, p. 151.
  4. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1917-18, p. 13, Plate II.

tion."<sup>1</sup> Education is compared to "a shield that can avert such evils as cannot be avoided with the help of a shield-bearer."<sup>2</sup> The Qādī also spent a large sum in granting subsistence to "men of learning for the inculcation of the Muslim law", and "to manifest the Divine Faith among the haughty."<sup>3</sup>

A second *madrasah* was built in the same locality in 713/A.D. 1313 in the reign of Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh by one Zafar Khān.<sup>4</sup> The *madrasah* was known as *Dār al-Khayrāt* (the house of benevolence). A third *madrasah* was built at the order of Sulṭān 'Alā'al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh in the year 907/A.D. 1502.<sup>5</sup> The inscription recording the erection of this *madrasah* is attached to the enclosure wall of Firuzpur mosque, north-west of the English Bazar police station in Maldah district.<sup>6</sup> It starts with a tradition of the Prophet, "Search after knowledge, even if it be in China."<sup>7</sup> The *madrasah* was built "for the teaching of the sciences of religion and for instruction in the principles which lead to certainty, in the hope of obtaining from Allāh the great reward and begging from Him that He will ever remain pleased (with him)."<sup>8</sup>

Beside these three *madrasahs* evidenced by inscriptions, traces of other *madrasahs* are also available. N. N. Law says that Sulṭān

1. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1917-18, pp. 13 ff.

( قال عليه السلام ) تعلموا العلم فان تعلمه طاعته وطلبه

عبادة ومذاكرته تسبيح -

2. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1917-18, pp. 13 ff; *J.A.S.B.*, 1870, pp. 285-86.

يتقى به الشر ما لا يتقى بالتارس

3. *Ibid.*

لتدريس علم الشرع & لاظهار دين الله بين الغطارس

4. *Ibid*, p. 34; *J.A.S.B.* 1870, p. 284.

5. *J.A.S.B.* 1874, p. 303; *Memoirs*, pp. 157-58.

6. *Memoirs* p. 157.

7. *J.A.S.B.* 1874, p. 303; *Memoirs*, p. 157.

اطلبوا العلم ولو بالصين

8. *Ibid.*

لتدريس علوم الدين وتعليم احكام اليقين راجيا من الله اجر العظيم وسا ئلامنه رضوانه القديم -

Ghiyāth al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ Khaljī "built a superb mosque, a college and a caravansarai at Lucknauti soon after his election to the masnad of Bengal."<sup>1</sup> This statement is based on the evidence of Minhāj<sup>2</sup> who records the bestowal of stipends to the 'Ālims by the Sulṭān and his other construction activities. In Gaur near the village of Umarpur, between Mahdipur and Firuzpur, there is a plot of land which the local people call *Darasbārī* (reading-room or *madrasah*).<sup>3</sup> The name itself suggests that there was a *madrasah* in the site. There stands a large mosque in the same site known as the *Darasbārī Masjid*.<sup>4</sup> An inscription<sup>5</sup> found under the heap of rubbish at this place records that a mosque was built by Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh in the year 884/A.D. 1479.<sup>6</sup> The inscription is long in size, measuring 11 feet 3 inches in length and 2 feet one inch in height, and heavy in weight and thus it is suggested<sup>7</sup> that it could not probably move from its original site. It is therefore assumed that the inscription originally belonged to the *Darasbārī* mosque and that the *Darasbārī* or the *madrasah* was either attached to this mosque or it was a separate building.

'Ābid 'Alī Khān records that at the northern end of the *Chhoṭa Sāgar Dighī*,<sup>8</sup> there lie remains of a large building consisting of a number of grey and black polished stone pillars. The local people call it "the *Bhiṭā* of Chānd Sawdāgar." But another tradition records that it is the site of the *Belbārī madrasah*.<sup>9</sup>

Generally these *madrasahs* were built by the side of the mosques or mosques were invariably built in the *madrasahs*.<sup>10</sup> In far off places

1. N. N. Law : *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule (by Muhammadans)*, London, 1916, p. 106.
2. Minhāj, p. 161.
3. *Memoirs*, pp. 76-77; N. N. Law : *Op cit*, p. 108.
4. *Memoirs*, pp. 76-77.
5. *Ibid*. The inscription is preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, numbering 3239.
6. *Memoirs*, p. 77, plate III.
7. *Memoirs*, p. 77 ; N. N. Law : *Op cit*, p. 108.
8. It is situated beyond the Tantipara mosque at about the same distance from the Nawabganj road to the east, as the Gunmant mosque is to the west. It is called so to distinguish it from the *Sāgardighī* in the north-west of Gaur. See, *Memoirs*, p. 86.
9. *Memoirs*, pp. 86-87.
10. The system is prevalent even today. Nowadays the mosques

where only mosques were built they served both the purposes of *masjid* and *maktab*. In the Mughal period in Bengal generally the *maktabs* were held in the rooms provided at the ground floor, while the main mosque was in the first floor as is found in Khān Muḥammad Mirdhā's mosque at Dacca. The two sets of buildings helped the growth of Muslim society and Muslim culture in Bengal and the ruling power played a significant part towards this end. In Bengal *madrasahs*, both private and state owned, are continuing even to this day. The syllabus taught therein shows that there has been little change except the introduction of some modern subjects, thus indicating that these are the remnants of the old system introduced by the Sulṭāns.

### (c) **Promotion of Islamic Spirit**

The Sulṭāns of Bengal were very particular in the promotion of Islāmic spirit. They followed the general Islāmic practice of (i) recognising the Khalīfah as the *Anūr al-mu'minīn*, (ii) sometimes seeking recognition from the Khalīfah, (iii) constructing charitable buildings and educational institutions at the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah, (iv) sending lavish presents to the holy cities and (v) helping other Muslims to perform the ḥajj.

(i) Since the beginning of the Muslim coinage in Bengal, the name of the Khalīfah is found on them. Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ Khaljī was the first to start this practice.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of the name of Khalīfah Al-Nāṣir al-Dīn Allāh inscribed in the coins of 'Iwaḍ, the earlier numismatists propounded the theory that 'Iwaḍ actually received investiture from the Khalīfah of Baghdad. The theory held the ground till it was challenged by Dr. A. H. Dani.<sup>2</sup> The practice of Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ was followed even when the Baghdad Khilāfat came to an end and the name of the last Abbaside Khalīfah is found on the coins of the Bengal rulers<sup>3</sup> who came to the throne even after

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also serve the purpose of *madrasahs* for imparting instructions on religious principles.

1. Thomas : "Initial Coinage of Bengal", Part II, in *J.A.S.B.* 1873.
2. *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XVI, 1954, pp. 243-52
3. *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XVII, 1955, pp. 86-91.

A. D. 1258. Still later the name of the *khālīfah* was dropped but the phrase *Nāṣir-i-Amīr al-Mu'minīn*<sup>1</sup> continued to be used signifying the ruler's strong faith in the institution of *Khilāfat*.

(ii) We have got one definite instance from Bengal in which a ruler attempted to seek recognition from the *Khālīfah*. Leaving aside the doubtful question of 'Iwaḍ *Khālījī*, we have the explicit reference that Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad *Shāh*, son of Rājā Gaṇeśa, sought for and actually received investiture from the ruler of Egypt. This is evidenced by no less an authority than Al-Sakhāwī<sup>2</sup> himself. Following Al-Sakhāwī, Ḥājī Dabīr in his *Ẓafar al-Wāliḥ* (*Arabic History of Gujrat*) writes as follows,<sup>3</sup> "He (Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad *Shāh*) sent presents to al-Ashraf Barstāy, the ruler of Egypt, and he sought for investiture from the *Khālīfah*, and the robe of honour was sent to him (Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad) through a responsible man. Then he (Jalāl al-Dīn) put on the robe of honour and sent presents to the *Khālīfah*. His presents were sent to Egypt and Damascus through one 'Alā'al-Bukhārī". Al-Ashraf Barstāy, the ruler of Egypt, to whom Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad *Shāh* sent presents and from whom he received the robe of honour was Al-Ashraf Sayf al-Dīn Barsbāy,<sup>4</sup> the 9th ruler of the Burjī line of the Mamlūk rulers of Egypt, who ruled from A. D. 1422 to A. D. 1438.<sup>5</sup> This piece of information is of great importance to us, because it is not

1. *Ibid.*

2. Al-Sakhāwī : *Al-Ḍaw al-Lāmi' li-ahl al-Qam al-tāsi*,<sup>4</sup> Cairo, A.H. 1303, Vol. VIII, p. 280.

3. E. Denison Ross, ed : *Arabic History of Gujrat*, Vol. III, London, 1928, p. 979.

وارسل الى الا شرف برستای صاحب مصر بهديه - واستدعى  
التقليد من الخليفة فجهزه له شريف على يد شريف - فلبس الشريف  
ثم ارسل للخليفة هدية - وكانت هداياه متواصلة بالعلاء البخاري  
بمصر وبدمشق -

4. P. K. Hitti : *History of the Arabs*, 5th edition, London, 1951, p. 694, note 3.

5. The dates also suggest that Ashraf Barsbāy was a contemporary of Sulṭān Jalāl al Dīn Muḥammad *Shāh*, who ruled from 818/A. D. 1415 to 836/A. D. 1432, (*J.A.S.B.* Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1952, pp. 121ff. See also note 2 at page 30 above.

available in any other source and so long it was lost in obscurity. Even the coins of the Sulṭān do not bear the name of the Khālīfah. Towards the beginning of his reign till 834/A.D. 1430, he issued coins declaring himself *al-Nāṣir Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (helper of the Commander of the Faithful) or Ghawth al-Islām wa'l-Muslimīn (helper of Islām and the Muslims).<sup>1</sup> But from 834/A.D. 1430, he issued coins declaring himself Khālīfah<sup>2</sup> (خليفة الله, Khālīfah of God). It is difficult to explain at the present stage of our knowledge, why he did not inscribe the name of the Khālīfah in his coins even though he is said to have received the recognition. It is also not known what led him in 834/A. D. 1430 to declare himself Khālīfah.<sup>3</sup> We also do not know what was the date of his receipt of recognition, because in this point, Al-Sakhāwī is silent, while Hājī Dabīr is thoroughly unreliable; according to the latter, Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh died in 812/A.D. 1409, which goes against the accepted date or the evidence of coins.<sup>4</sup>

(iii) & (iv) It is interesting to note that at least two Bengal Sulṭāns built and maintained *madrasahs* (schools or colleges) in the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah. They were Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh and Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh. Al-Sakhāwī records the following in connection with A'zam Shāh.<sup>5</sup> "A'zam Shāh son of Iskandar Shāh son of Shams al-Dīn, Ghiyāth al-Dīn

1. *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XVII, p. 90.

2. *Ibid.*

3. For a discussion on the subject see "Khālīfat Allāh title in the coins of Bengal Sulṭāns" in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. VIII.

4. *J.A.S.B.* Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1952, pp. 121 ff.

N. K. Bhattasali : *Op cit*, pp. 123 ff. See also note 2 at page 30 above.

5. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī: *Al-Daw al-Lāmi*, 'Cairo, A. H. 1303, part II, p. 313.

اعظم شاه بن اسکندر شاه بن شمس الدین غیاث الدین ابوالمظفر  
السجستانی الاصل صاحب منجمله من بلا دالهند - کان حنفیا  
ذاحظا من العلم والخیر محبانی الفقہاء والصابغین - شجاعاً کریماً  
جواداً - اہتنی بمکہ عند باب ام ہانئ مدرستہ - صرف علیہا وعلی



Abū' l-Muẓaffar, al-Sijistānī by origin, (was) the ruler of Bengal in the country of India. He was a Ḥanafī (belonging to the School of Abū Ḥanīfah), favoured with learning and wealth, loved in the circle of the theologians and pious men, brave, generous and bountiful. He built (established) a *madrasah* at Makkah at the gate of Umme Hānī (باب امهانی) and spent for it and for its endowments twelve thousand Egyptian *mithqāl* (مئقال), established lectures in it, for the people belonging to four *madhhabs*<sup>1</sup> and the lectures came to an end<sup>2</sup> there in Jamādī II, in the year 14 (probably meaning 814/A. D. 1411). Similarly, he founded a *madrasah* in the city of the Prophet (Madīnah) at a place called the 'Old Fort', near the 'Gate of Peace'. This is in addition to his sending rich presents for the people of Ḥaramayn (Makkah and Madīnah) several times".

Ghulām 'Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī<sup>3</sup> gives further details on the point and writes as follows. "Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn, ruler of Bengal

اوقافها اثني عشرالف مئقال مصرية - وقرر بها دروسا للمذاهب  
الاربعة وانتهت ودرس فيها في جمادى الاخرة سنة اربع عشرة  
وكذا عمل بالمدينة النبوية مدرسة بمكان يقال له الحصن العتيق  
عند باب السلام - هذا مع بعثه غير مرة لاهل الحرمين بصدقات  
طائلة -

1. The four *madhhabs* are, Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālekī and Ḥanbalī, named after their founders.

2. There is a lacunae in the text; الشمس دروس is probably a mistake for الشمس الدروس

3. Ghulām 'Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī: Khazānah-i-Āmirah, Newal Kishore edition, pp. 183-84.

سلطان غياث الدين والى بنگاله زربسيارے مصحوب خادم خود  
ياقوت عنانى بحرمين شريفين فرستاد كه براهل هر دو مكان مقدس  
تقسيم يابد نيز مدرسه ورباطے درمكہ معظمه بنام سلطان تعميرشود  
واوقافے خريده در اعمال خير مثل تدريس وغيره صرف گردد ومكتوبه  
مولانا حسن بن عجلان شريف مكه نوشت وهدايائے جليله برائے او  
فرستاد شريف قبول كرد وفرمود تاموافق ارادۀ سلطان بعمل آرند -

sent to Makkah and Madīnah a huge sum through his personal servant Yāqūt 'Anānī, to be distributed among the inhabitants of both the holy places and also to establish a *madrasah* and to open a *sarāi* in the holy city of Makkah after his name. He purchased land for making *waqf* and spent on works of public utility such as education etc. He wrote a letter to Mawlānā Ḥasan bin 'Ajlān, the *Sharīf* of Makkah and sent him valuable presents. The *Sharīf* accepted (the presents) and ordered the works to be done according to the wish of the Sulṭān. The *Sharīf* took one third (of the wealth sent) according to his family custom and the rest were distributed among the learned and destitutes of the holy cities. So much wealth was sent that everyone of the two holy places got his own share there of. Yāqūt purchased two houses near the place known as Bāh-i-Ummehānī for building the *madrasah* and the *sarāi*. The two houses were demolished and the *madrasah* and the *sarāi* were built (on the same site). Two *aṣīl* and four *raḥba*<sup>1</sup>

اما شریف سوم حصه زر صدقه خود گرفت بطریق معتاد خود و آبا خود و باقی را برفقرا و فقها حرمین تقسیم نمود - آنقدر زر بود بمردم آنجا علی العموم رسید و یاقوت عنانی برائے تعمیر مدرسه و رباط دوخانه باهم متلاصق نزدیک باب آسمانی خرید و شکسته بجائے آن مدرسه و رباط ساخت و دو اصیل و چهار رجه خرید و بر مدرسه وقف نمود - و چهار مدرس مذاهب اربعه و شصت طالب علم مقرر کرد - و اخراجات ایشان را ازان وقف معین نمود - و خانه دیگر مقابل مدرسه بیانصد مثقال طلا خرید و برائے مصالح رباط وقف ساخت - و مولانا حسن شریف در عوض هر دوخانه که بجائے آن مدرسه و رباط ساخته شد - و هر دو اصیل و هر چهار رجه دوازده هزار مثقال طلا گرفت و سوائے آن زرے اخذ کرد که مقدار آن را که نمیداند - و نیز سلطان غیاث الدین زرے برائے تعمیر نهر عرفه یاقوت مذکور فرستاده بود - مولانا حسن آن را هم گرفت و گفت این کار را ما سرانجام میدهم - و آن ۳۰۰۰۰ سی هزار مثقال طلا بود -

1. *Aṣīl* is derived from *Aṣl* (root) and technically it means the original site of a house. *Raḥba* means the courtyard of a house.

of land were purchased and endowed to the *madrasah*. He appointed four teachers of four *madhhabs* and sixty students were gathered, the expenditure was to be borne out of the proceeds of the endowment. He bought another house in front of the *madrasah* at five hundred gold *mithqāl* and endowed it for the benefit of the *sarāi*. Mawlānā Ḥasan charged twelve thousand gold *mithqāl* for the two houses over the site of which the *madrasah* and the *sarāi* were built and the two *aṣīl* and four *raḥba* of land. In addition to this he took a large amount, which no one can tell. Sulṭān Gḥhiyāth al-Dīn also sent money for the excavation of a rivulet at 'Arafah through the said Yāqūt and Mawlānā Ḥasan accepted it and said, "we shall do the needful"—the amount was thirty thousand gold *mithqāl*".

The writer quotes from the *Tārīkh-i-Makkah* of one Qādī Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥanafī<sup>1</sup> and gives the actual Persian rendering of that Arabic work. Moreover the writer says that he visited the places and saw the *madrasah*, *sarāi*, and the rivulet of Sulṭān Gḥhiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Sḥhāh. The two scholars, al-Sakḥhāwī and Bilgrāmī give the same account, the latter giving more details than the former. As recorded earlier,<sup>2</sup> this same account is available in a 19th century manuscript, *Iḥāṭah-i-Ḥāṣirah li-Kḥhazānah -i-Āmirah* of Ḥamīd Allāh Kḥhān who however copied Bilgrāmī verbatim<sup>3</sup>.

The second Sulṭān who maintained a *madrasah* in Makkah was Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Sḥhāh. His *madrasah* is said to have been awe-inspiring (الله), probably in size<sup>4</sup>. These two instances show that the Bengal Sulṭāns kept close contact with the holy cities.

These evidences at once raise the prestige of the Bengal Sulṭāns to a high point. They illumine the character of both A'zam Sḥhāh and Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Sḥhāh. The former built two *madrasahs* in the cities of Makkah and Madīnah, which were open to people

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(See, Lane : *Lexicon*). What is meant here is that Yāqūt 'Anānī purchased original sites of two houses and courtyards of four others.

1. I have not been able to lay hand upon this book so far.
2. *Supra*, p. 5.
3. Manuscript in the library of Islamic Intermediate College, Chittagong.
4. 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad bin 'Umar al-Makkī *alias* Ḥāji Dabīr; *op cit*, p. 979.

belonging to four schools of thought. He built a *sarāi* at Makkah and caused the excavation of a rivulet at 'Arafah. In addition, he also sent presents to the people of the two cities so that everyone got his due share. Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh's *madrasah* in Makkah is described as awe-inspiring. The evidences set forth above, indicate only the general attitude of the two Sulṭāns towards Islām and Islāmic cultural centres ; they do not reveal anything about their promotion of Islāmic spirit in Bengal. But if they are read together with those discussed in the succeeding pages, they reveal a hitherto unknown feature of the Muslim Sulṭānate in Bengal. As will be discussed presently, almost all Bengal Sulṭāns patronised learning, 'Ālims, and the Ṣūfīs. They also built prayer houses, schools, and colleges. So, by keeping contact with the holy cities through construction activities and sending of presents Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh and Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh excelled all others of their rank. These were meant to generate an Islāmic spirit in the mind of their co-religionists in Bengal. Even today, Muslims of Bengal look towards Makkah and Madīnah for inspiration and guidance in religious matters.

(v) The Sulṭāns also gave facilities to the pilgrims to visit the holy cities during the time of Hajj. Recently, Prof. Hasan Askari has published a few letters,<sup>1</sup> written by Mawlānā Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī<sup>2</sup> to Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh. In a letter the Mawlānā writes, "Now the (pilgrim) season is approaching. A *farman* may kindly be issued to the officials (*Kārkuns*) of Chatgāon, directing them to accommodate in the first ship the band of *Darwesh* pilgrims for Mecca who have assembled around me, the poor man".<sup>3</sup> In another letter he writes. "This insignificant mendicant, Muẓaffar Shams, offers his peace and blessings. The auspicious '*farman*' has been received."<sup>4</sup> The Mawlānā's desire to be accom-

1. *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLII, Part II, 1956, pp. 1-19.

2. Mawlānā Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī was a disciple of Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī (See, *Ibid*, p. 2; 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Chishtī : *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Āliyah Madrasah Ms. Folio No. 199).

3. *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLII, Part II, 1956, p. 14.

3. *Ibid*, p. 17.

modated in the first ship, shows that more than one ship used to sail from Chittagong, the major sea-port of Bengal, towards Arabia carrying a large number of pilgrims from this country. The contemporary inscriptions also refer to **Hājīs** i.e. those who visited the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah. **Hājī Bābā Ṣāliḥ** who built a mosque at Sunārgāwn in the reign of Sulṭān 'Alā'al-Dīn Ḥusayn **Shāh** claimed himself to be a "servant of the Prophet, who made pilgrimage to Makkah and Madīnah and who visited the two foot-prints of the Prophet."<sup>1</sup>

#### (d) Patronising Alims and the Sufis

The 'Alims and the Ṣūfīs received patronage from the Sulṭāns and their officers. Muḥammad Bakhtiyār **Khajī** was the first to build **Khānqahs** for the Ṣūfīs.<sup>2</sup> In the reign of Sulṭān 'Alā'al-Dīn 'Alī Mardān **Khajī**, a Muslim scholar and Ṣūfī, Qāḍī Rukn al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, was probably under his employ in the capacity of a Judicial officer.<sup>3</sup> Of Sulṭān **Ghiyāth** al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ **Khajī's** encouragement to the 'Alims and the Ṣūfīs, Minhāj writes as follows. "And in that country (Lakhnawī) many marks of his goodness remained . . . . . He gave pensions to good men among the 'Alims (learned), the *mashā'ikh* (doctors learned in religion and law), and the *Sayyids* (descendants of the prophet) and other people received much wealth from his bounty and munificence."<sup>4</sup> In his time, one Muslim divine, Jalāl al-Dīn son of Jamāl al-Dīn **Ghaznawī** of Fīrūz-Koh visited Lakhnawī. He was called upon to deliver a theological lecture<sup>5</sup> in the audience-hall of the Sulṭān. The Sulṭān and the nobles presented such a huge sum to him that at the time of return he amassed a sum of eighteen thousand *tankahs*.<sup>6</sup> Minhāj-i-Sirāj came to Bengal and himself

1. For inscription see, *J.A.S.B.* 1873, p. 283.

2. Minhāj, p. 151.

3. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. I, Part, I, January, 1953, pp. 47 ff.

4. Minhāj, pp. 161-62.

وازوی دران دیار آثارخیر بسیار ماند ..... واهل خیر را از علما

ومشائخ و سادات ادارات داد و دیگر اصناف خلق را از بدل و اموال

واملاک بسیار بدست آمد -

5. Minhāj, pp. 161-62 ; *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1954, pp. 17-18.

6. Minhāj, pp. 161-62.

received patronage from Malik 'Izz al-Dīn Ṭughral Ṭughān Khān, the governor of Lakhnawtī.<sup>1</sup> Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish ordered the construction of a sacred building at Gangarampur near old Maldah. The building was renovated in the reign of Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd of Dehlī (son of Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish) by Jalāl al-Dīn Mas'ūd Jānī, the governor of Lakhnawtī.<sup>2</sup> As the place was probably a seat of a *Chillākḥānah* of Makhdūm Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī, this sacred building was probably attached to that saint.<sup>3</sup> Sulṭān Mughīth al-Dīn Ṭughral, (the rebel governor of Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban) was very much liberal towards *Qalandars*, whom he presented three maunds of gold.<sup>4</sup> Bughī ā Khān (son of Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban, who assumed independence after his father's death)<sup>5</sup> was the patron of two great poets, Shams al-Dīn Dabīr and Qāḍī Athīr.<sup>6</sup> Both of them and the great poet Amīr Khusraw visited Bengal in the train of the expeditionary forces of Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban.<sup>7</sup> Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh built a mosque in honour of Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq.<sup>8</sup> He took a great risk by attending the funeral of Shaykh Rājah Biyābānī at a time when he was besieged at the Ikdālah fort by Sulṭān Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq of Dehlī.<sup>9</sup> Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī Shāh built a shrine in honour of Makhdūm Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī.<sup>10</sup> On the patronage of Sulṭān Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah writes as follows. "There was an order of Sulṭān Fakhr al-Dīn not to take money from the *faqīrs*, while they travelled by

1. Minhāj, pp. 198-99, 243.
2. *Memoirs*, pp. 163-64.
3. *Memoirs*, pp. 163-64.
4. Baranī, p. 91.
5. Baranī, p. 148.
6. *Muntakhab*, Vol. I, p. 154. For details on Shams al-Dīn Dabīr see, Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān : *Bazm-i-Mamlūkīyah*, Azamgarh, 1954, pp. 267 ff. For the important part played by Shams al-Dīn Dabīr in Bengal see, *Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar Commemoration Volume*, Volume II, Panjab University, India, A.D. 1958, pp. 1 ff.
7. *Muntakhab*, Vol. 1, pp. 154-155.
8. For inscription see, *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1938-40, pp. 7-9, Plate IV (a).
9. *Riyāḍ*, p. 97.
10. *Ibid*, p. 94.

the river, to provide them with provision if anybody was in need of the same, and to pay them half a *dīnār*, whenever they reach a town or city.”<sup>1</sup> Sulṭān Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh was so fond of *faqīrs* that he made one of them named Shaydā, the ruler of Sudkāwān.<sup>2</sup> But the *faqīr* proved faithless, killed the Sulṭān’s son and received punishment from him.<sup>3</sup> Sulṭān Sikandar Shāh ordered the erection of a domed building at the shrine of Mawlānā ‘Aṭā, a great Ṣūfī, lying buried at Deokot.<sup>4</sup> In his reign a mosque was built by one Khān-i-A‘zam Ulugh Mukhlis Khān in the vicinity of the *dargāh* of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Kabīr Shāh, generally called Shāh Anwar Qulī of Aleppo.<sup>5</sup> In the year 863//A.D. 1459, a tomb was erected in honour of a great Ṣūfī, probably Ḥaḍrat Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam by one Khān-i-A‘zam Laṭīf Khān.<sup>6</sup> Poet Shāh Muḥammad Ṣaghīr, who wrote *Yūsuf Jolekhā* (correctly Yūsuf Zulaykhā) in Bengali, received patronage probably from Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A‘zam Shāh.<sup>7</sup> The Sulṭān was very much respectful towards the contemporary Ṣūfīs. He once sent a trayful of dishes to the celebrated Ṣūfī, Ḥaḍrat Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam.<sup>8</sup>

1. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, p. 293.

وامر السلطان فخرالدين المذكوران لا يوخذ بذك النهرمن  
الفقراء نول وان يعطى الزاد لمن لازا دله منهم واذا وصل الفقير  
الى مدينة اعطى نصف دينار -

2. *Ibid*, pp. 214-15. For identification of Sudkāwān see, N. K. Bhattasali : *Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 145 ff.
3. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, pp. 214-15.
4. For inscription see, *J.A.S.B.* 1872, pp. 104-5; *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1929-30, pp. 10-11.
5. For inscription see, *J.A.S.B.* 1870, p. 292.
6. For inscription see, *J.A.S.B.* 1873, p. 271. *Memoirs* pp. 115-116. (See also Chapter III, Section (c).
7. Enamul Haq : *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, 1955, pp. 56-58.
8. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī : *Mirāt al-Asrār*, ‘Āliyah Madrasah MS. Folio No. 197. *Rafīq al-‘Ārefīn* quoted by Prof. H. Askari in the *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Dacca Session, 1953, (Reprints from the Journal of Pakistan Historical Society Section) p. 5.

He also presented rich garments to Shaykh Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī who came to Bengal on his way to the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah for performing ḥajj.<sup>1</sup> He also made arrangement of ships for the voyage of the Shaykh and his disciples, from Bengal to Arabia.<sup>2</sup> The court of Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh was graced by the presence of a number of scholars, Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī, the writer of *Farhang-i-Ibrāhīmī* (better known as *Sharfnāmah*), Amīr Zayn al-Dīn Harwī, the poet-laureate, Amīr Shahāb al-Dīn Ḥakīm Kirmānī, the physician who also wrote a persian lexicon, Manṣūr Shīrājī, Malik Yūsuf bin Ḥamīd, Sayyid Jalāl, Sayyid Muḥammad Rukn, and Sayyid Ḥusayn, all of whom were poets.<sup>3</sup> Khān Jahān, who is considered to be the first to bring Bagerhat under the Muslims is credited to be, "the lover of the descendants of the leader of the Prophets and sincere towards the pious scholars."<sup>4</sup> Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Fath Shāh repaired a stone-building in the precincts of the *dargāh* of Mawlānā 'Aṭā Waḥīd al-Dīn.<sup>5</sup> Muḥammad Buda'ī 'urf Sayyid Mīr Alawī wrote a book, *Hidāyat al-Rāmī* (a book on archery) and dedicated to Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh.<sup>6</sup> The same Sulṭān patronised one *Muḥaddith* (traditionist), Muḥammad bin Yazdān Bakhsh who transcribed the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in three volumes in 911//A.D. 1503 in the capital city of Ikdālah.<sup>7</sup> He granted land for the maintenance of alms-house attached to the *dargāh* of Ḥaḍrat Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam.<sup>8</sup> In his reign a number of sacred constructions were made, attached to the *dargāhs* of the Ṣūfīs. A mosque was built by one Majlis Rāḥat in the shrine of the descendants of Sulṭān Adam of Balkh.<sup>9</sup> In the year

1. Letters of Mawlānā Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī quoted in the *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLII, Part II, 1956, p. 16.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 1-19.
3. *Urdū*, October, 1952, pp. 61 ff.
4. For inscriptions see, *J.A.S.B.* 1867, p. 135.
5. For inscription see, *Varendra Research Society Monograph*, No.6, 1935, pp. 3-4.
6. Charles Rieu : *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London, A.D. 1881, Vol. II. p.489, No. Add. 26, 306
7. *Catalogue of Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore*, Vol. V, Part I, Nos. 130-32.
8. *Tārīkh-i-Fīrīshah*, Vol. II, p. 302.
9. *J.A.S.B.* 1874, p. 302 ; *Memoirs*, p. 152.



900/A.D. 1494-95, a gate was built in the shrine attributed to Shāh Ismā'īl Ghāzī at Mandaran,<sup>1</sup> and a vault was erected in the *dargāh* of Shāh Nafah, near the old wall of Munghyr (Bihar) by Dānyāl Shāh-zādah (son of Sulṭān 'Alā'al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh.)<sup>2</sup> He (Sulṭān 'Alā'al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh) also built a *Siqāyah* (shed for supplying drinking water) in the precincts of the tomb of Shaykh Ākhī Sirāj al-Dīn,<sup>3</sup> and built a mosque in the shrine of Shāh Gadā.<sup>4</sup> In his reign, one of his officers Khālīs Khān erected a sacred building in the *dargāh* of Shāh Jalāl of Sylhet.<sup>5</sup> During this period, the tomb of Ḥājī Bābā Ṣāliḥ was built at Sunārgāwn.<sup>6</sup> The Sulṭān also caused the excavation of a tank in the village of Mangalkot, Burdwan district near the tomb of Mawlānā Ḥamīd Dānishmand<sup>7</sup> and one of his officers Rukn Khān built a mosque and a minaret in front of the gate of the *dargāh* of Mawlānā 'Aṭā in Deokot.<sup>8</sup> Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh built a gateway to the tomb of Shaykh Ākhī Sirāj al-Dīn<sup>9</sup> and a mosque in the Chillākhānah of Makhdūm Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī at Deotala.<sup>10</sup>

The patronage of the Sulṭāns and their officers towards the 'Ālims and the Ṣūfīs just discussed above show that they fall under the following categories :—

- (a) granting of stipend or making presents of money or dress or edibles.
- (b) exemption of the Ṣūfīs from the payment of conveyance charges.
- (c) encouragement to the poets and scholars for writing books.
- (d) building of *siqāyah* or excavation of tanks near the shrine of Ṣūfīs.

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1. *J.A.S.B.* 1917, p. 134.
  2. *J.A.S.B.* 1872, p. 335.
  3. *Memoirs* pp. 158-59.
  4. *J.A.S.B.* 1873, p. 294; *Memoirs*, p. 149.
  5. *J.A.S.B.* 1873, pp. 293-94.
  6. *J.A.S.B.* 1873, p. 283.
  7. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1933-34, p. 3.  
*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. IV, 1918, pp. 184-85.
  8. For inscription see, *J.A.S.B.* 1872, p. 106.  
*Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1929-30, pp. 12-13.
  9. *Memoirs*, p. 91.
  10. *Memoirs*, p. 171.

- (e) granting of lands for the maintenance of shrines.
- (f) building of tombs or other sacred buildings like mosques attached to the shrine of the *Şūfīs*.
- (g) giving facilities to the *Şūfīs* or *‘Ālīms* or others for visiting holy places.

As for categories a, b, c, e, and g, these are positive proofs that the Sultāns and their officers tried their utmost to encourage the *‘Ālīms* and the *Şūfīs* with an ultimate view of encouraging the growth of Muslim culture and Muslim society. Categories d and f are only indirect evidences. Naturally, the *dargāhs* of *Şūfīs* became places of pilgrimage, and they were visited by the people.<sup>1</sup> The *siqāyahs* were built and the tanks were excavated to meet the needs of such visiting people and those who settled round these places. Similarly the construction of sacred buildings like mosques were to give them an opportunity to perform their religious duties. The very fact that tombs were erected, is a sufficient testimony to the attitude of the rulers towards the *Şūfīs*. The discussion on the patronage of the rulers towards the *‘Ālīms* and the *Şūfīs* further proves that from the time of Muḥammad Bakhtyār K̄haljī upto the end of the period, it was a continuous process; almost all the Sultāns paid due attention towards the well-being of the *‘Ālīms* and the *Şūfīs*.

### (e) Cultivation of Learning by Sultans and their Officers

Some of the Sultāns and their officers were famous for their learning, their proficiency in the Holy Qur’ān, the *Ḥadīth* (tradition of the Prophet) and the *Shari‘ah* (the Islāmic law). In the reign of Sultān Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā’ūs, one Ikhtyār al-Dīn Fīrūz Aitgīn, the governor of Bihar claims himself to be an *‘Ālim*.<sup>2</sup> In an inscription, Sikandar Shāh claims himself to be “the lord of the age and the time, the causer of justice and benevolence.....learned and great monarch.”<sup>3</sup> Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A‘zam Shāh was fellow student

1. See, Chapter III, Section (C).

2. For inscription see, *Annals of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. XXXVI, 1955, p. 166. Dr. K. R. Qanungo (*History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 93) identifies him with Sultān Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh, who later on usurped the throne after Sultān Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā’ūs.

3. For inscription see, *J.A.S.B.* 1872, pp. 104-5.  
*Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1929-30. pp. 10-11.

of Ḥaḍrat Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam, the celebrated saint of Pandwah, both receiving education from one Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kunjnashīn of Nagawr.<sup>1</sup> The Sulṭān composed verses in Persian.<sup>2</sup> The anecdote recording his presence before the court on an warrant from Qāḍī Sirāj al-Dīn and his submission to his orders shows that he was fully aware of and had respect for the shari'ah.<sup>3</sup> In an inscription found at Zafar Khān's mosque at Triveni, Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh is called "the just, the liberal, the learned and the perfect."<sup>4</sup> Of Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh, Firishṭah<sup>5</sup> writes, "he was a learned, virtuous, and tactful king, who ordered for doing good and prohibited from doing evil. In his time nobody dared drinking openly and disobeying his orders. At interval he called the leading 'Ālims to his court and used to say, 'you should not side with anybody in discharging religious matters, otherwise there will be no good terms between you and me and I shall punish you.' As he was a learned man himself, most of the cases in which the Qāḍīs failed, he used to dispose of himself." Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Fatḥ Shāh is praised in one inscription<sup>6</sup> as, "revea-

1. *Riyāḍ*, p. 108. He cannot be identified with the famous Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn of Nagawr who predeceased Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā.
2. *Riyāḍ*, p. 105; *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLII, Part II, pp. 16-27.
3. *Riyāḍ*, pp. 106-8.
4. For inscription see, *J.A.S.B.* 1870, p. 290.
5. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, p. 298.

پادشاهی بود بعلم وفضل کاردانی آریسته ودرامر معروف ونهی

منکر مبالغه میفرمود ودرعهد او هیچکس را یارا نبود که علانیه شراب خورد وازحکم او تجاوزنماید صدور علما را بعد از چند روز یکبار بحضورطلبیده میگفت شما درمهمات شرعی جانب کسی را

مرعی ندارید وگرنه میان ما وشما صفائی نخواهد ماند وازار بلیغ خواهم کرد - وچون خودنیز ازعلم بهره داشت بسیاری از معاملات را که قضاات عاجز می شدند بنفس نفیس خود متوجه شده مفروغ می ساخت -

6. *J.A.S.B.* 1873, pp. 282-86; *Memoirs*, p. 87.

کاشف اسرارالقران عالم علوم الادیان والابدان

ler of the secrets of the Qur'ān, learned in all branches of learning both concerning religion and body (i.e. theological and medical education)." One Taqī al-Dīn son of 'Ayn al-Dīn, who built a mosque at Sunārgāwn in the reign of Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh claims himself to be "the chief of the lawyers and teachers of Hādīth."<sup>1</sup> Another Ulugh Majlis Nūr, who built a mosque in the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Faṭḥ Shāh was a "lord of the sword and pen."<sup>2</sup> Khān Jahān of Bagerhat was closely associated with "the true 'Ālims."<sup>3</sup>

(f) **Benevolent Activities of the Sultans**

The benevolent activities of the Sulṭāns were aimed at ameliorating the distress of the people. Sulṭān Ghīyāth al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ Khajī was the first to attend to such works of public utility. He caused the construction of a series of dykes to protect the city of Lakhnawtī and the suburbs from the inundation of the flood waters.<sup>4</sup> He also connected the two frontier cities of his time, Deokot on the north and Lakhnawr on the south with the head-quarters by causing the construction of a high road which was ten days' journey.<sup>5</sup> "Apart from the strategic and commercial importance of this royal high-way, it proved also a real blessing to the inhabitants of a considerable part of the Sultan's kingdom as a great cross-country *bund* that saved their home and harvests from flood—a yearly calamity even now to our people."<sup>6</sup> At a later time, Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh of the later Ilyās Shāhī dynasty made a similar attempt to control the flood in the vicinity of Lakhnawtī and in this work he was assisted by the famous warrior-saint Shāh Ismā'īl Ghāzī.<sup>7</sup> Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh's name is associated with construction

1. *J.A.S.B.* 1872, pp. 337-38,

قدوة الفقهاء والمحدثين

2. *J.A.S.B.* 1870, pp. 293-94.

صاحب السيف والقلم

3. *J.A.S.B.* 1876, p. 135.

المخلص للعلماء الراشدين

4. Minhāj, p. 162 ; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 25.

5. Minhāj, p. 162.

6. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 25.

7. *Risālat al-Shuhdā* in *J.A.S.B.* 1874, pp. 215 ff.

of well and excavation of tanks.<sup>1</sup> His granting of lands for the maintenance of alms-houses in the *dargāh* of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam has already been mentioned.<sup>2</sup> The *Riyād*<sup>3</sup> further mentions that he maintained alms-houses in each *sarkar* of his dominion and bestowed vast treasures to the poor and destitutes. Many of these works were meant to give succour to the people and these certainly popularised the Muslim administration in Bengal and indirectly popularised the religion that the Sultāns professed.

A Bengali Muslim poet Dawlat Wazīr Bahrām Khān<sup>4</sup> gives the following description of the benevolent activities of one Ḥamid Khān, one of the poet's ancestors and an officer of Sultān 'Alā'al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh.

"In old days, there was a world-famous king named Ḥusayn Shāh. His beautiful jewelled throne adorned the city of Gaur. His chief *wazīr* was Ḥamid Khān, whose qualifications are beyond description. He built houses of food (inns or beggar-houses) and mosques and he caused the excavation of tanks in different places."<sup>5</sup>

The poet claims that Ḥamid Khān, his ancestor, was the chief *wazīr* of Sultān Ḥusayn Shāh. This information is not available in any other source.

1. *Memoirs*, p. 90, note, 1 ; *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. IV, 1918, p. 184.
2. *Tārīkh-i-Firīshṭah*, pp. 301-2. See, *Supra*, p. 55.
3. *Riyād*, p. 135.
4. Dawlat Wazīr Bahrām Khān : *Lāilī Majnu*, edited by Ahmed Sharif, Bengali Academy, Dacca, 1957, pp. 7-8. The date of composition of the book has been put to A.D. 1545-53. (See, *Ibid*, Preface).
5. *Ibid*, pp. 7-8.

পূর্বকালে নরপতি      ভুবন বিখ্যাত অতি  
 আছিল হোসেন শাহাবর ।  
 তান রত্ন সিংহাসন      অতি মহা বিলক্ষণ  
 গৌড়ের শোভিত মনোহর ॥  
 প্রধান উজির তান      সুনাম হামিদ খান  
 তাহান গুণের অন্ত নাই ।  
 অনুশীলা স্থানে স্থান      মসজিদ সুনির্মান  
 পুষ্করনী দিলেক ঠাঁই ঠাঁই ॥

The discussion makes it adequately clear that the Bengal Sultāns were supporting a cause which ultimately proved to be the foundation of a new society and a new culture in Bengal. The construction of mosques, *madrasahs*, the close contact with the cultural centres outside the country including the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah, and the encouragement to the 'Ālims, all these helped to a great extent, the foundation of Muslim culture. Due credit should be given to Muḥammad Bakhtyār Kḥaljī, the first conqueror, who led the way to initiating cultural pursuits. His warlike disposition did not fail him to realise the danger of the presence of a handful of Muslims in the midst of a hostile multitudes. The construction of prayer houses, *madrasahs* and *Kḥānqahs* was therefore to base his political structure on a solid foundation. Happily for the Muslims in Bengal, his policy was followed with equal or more assiduity by his successors. Two of them Ghīyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh and Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh excelled all others by erecting *madrasahs* in the holy cities and sending presents to the Muslim population there. Their fame transcended the frontier of their own kingdom and resounded in outside cultural centres. The obvious conclusion, therefore, is that, but for the liberal patronage of the Sultāns, the expansion of Muslim culture in Bengal would have been checked at least temporarily if not for ever. For, the individual efforts could not have built so many mosques or *madrasahs* or could not have kept contact with the outside cultural centres in such extensive scale or even could not have encouraged the 'Ālims in their respective duties. The Kāykā'ūs inscription of Triveni records that Qāḍī al-Nāṣir spent money "to manifest the Divine Faith among the haughty."<sup>1</sup> This probably suggests the propagation of Islām among non-Muslims. Mawlānā Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī's letters to Sultān Ghīyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh, discussed earlier,<sup>2</sup> suggest that the Sultāns provided shipping facilities for pilgrims to Makkah. The fact that more than one ship sailed for Makkah manifests that the number of pilgrims was not small. Unless there was state-patronage, the pilgrims would have faced enormous difficulties. It is therefore evident that the part played by the Sultāns in the growth of Islāmic culture in Bengal was great and significant.

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1. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* 1917-18, p. 13.

2. See, *Supra*, pp. 51-52.

## SECTION (B)

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MUSLIM SCHOLARS

The very concept of the Islāmic world was such as to facilitate movement of scholars, traders and men of piety from one country to another. As the modern ideas of nationalism had not bound down people to the country of their origin, the Muslims had no compunction to migrate from one country to another and adopt a new homeland where they could find better means of livelihood. This migration of scholars and saintly men helped in both disseminating Muslim learning and religion and raising the general level to a high standard. This was possible by keeping Arabic as the language of the religion and Persian, as far as southern Asia was concerned, the language of culture. In the higher circles these languages were understood by the people of this sub-Continent. It is much later that their ideas, thoughts and traditions were translated in local languages for the benefit of the common mass. In Bengal we have evidence to show how Muslim scholars came from outside, some of them settled here and founded *madrasahs*, wrote books and held discussion with the non-Muslims and won them over to the religion of Islām. We have also materials produced in Bengali language.

Unfortunately very few of the original writings have come down to us. So far we have been able to trace out (1) one translation of a *Yogic* work from Sanskrit into Persian and Arabic, (2) a book on *Taşawwuf*, (3) a book on *Fiqh*, (4) a book of romance of religious nature in Bengali, (5) a Persian lexicon, (6) a book on *Ḥadīth*. (7) and a book on archery. A few letters (*maktūbāt*) of *Şūfīs* have also been discovered; they will be dealt with in a separate chapter in connection with the *Şūfīs*. Names of a few other poets have come down to us, but not their writings; either because they have been destroyed or they have till now escaped the notice of scholars.

#### (i) **Qadi Rukn al-Din al-Samarqandi**

The first Muslim scholar in Bengal, whose writing has come down to us, is *Qāḍī Rukn al-Dīn al-Samarqandī*. He translated a Sanskrit work named *Amṛitkuṇḍ* on *Yogic* system, first into Persian

and then into Arabic. The circumstances that led to the translation are as follows<sup>1</sup> :—

“There was in Hind an authentic book well-known among the philosophers and learned men named, Amritkund i. e. “the cistern of Nectar.” When the Muslims conquered cities of Hind and the banner of Islam was flown there, the news reached Kamrup, the extreme territory of Hind where lived its learned men and philosophers; and one of them came out to hold discussions with the learned divines of Islam. His name was Bhojar Brahmin, the Yogi, meaning in Arabic an ascetic. He reached Lakhnauti in Bengal during the regime of Sultan ‘Ali Mardān, entered the mosque on Friday and enquired about the Muslim divines. The people pointed out to him the abode of the Qāḍī Ruknuddīn of Samarqand. The Yogi asked him, “who is your Prophet?” “Muhammad, the apostle of God, (peace be on Him)” was the reply. The Yogi then asked, “is he the same

1. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 1, 1953, Part I, pp. 46 ff.

فان في الهند كتاب معتبر معروف عند حكمائها وعلمائها  
وهو يسمى انبرت كند يعنى حوض ماء الحيات فلما فتحوا المسلمين  
بلاد الهند وظهر فيها علم الاسلام - بلغ الخبر الى كابر (كابر)  
وهي اقصى بلاد الهند وفيها علماء وها وحكما وها - فخرج واحد  
منهم لطلب المناظرة مع علماء الاسلام ، واسمه بهوجر برهمين  
جوگى ، معناه بالعربية مرتاض عالم - حتى وصل الى لكانوت في  
وقت السلطان على مرد في تبكرا (بنگلا) قد دخل الجامع يوم الجمعة  
فسأل عن العلماء فاشا روا الى محل القاضي ركن الدين محمد  
السمرقندى - فقال من امامكم ! فقالوا محمد اصبلى الله عليه وسلم  
رسول الله - فقال الذى قال في الروح ”هومن امر ربي“ فقال  
صدقتم هذا الذى وجدناه في مصحف ابراهيمان وهما ابراهيم وموسى  
عليهما السلام - فاسلم وتعلم علوم الاسلام - حتى اجازواله  
العلماء الفتوى وعرض هو هذا الكتاب على القاضي المذكور عليه



Prophet who said about the Soul 'it is by the order of my Lord.'" "Yes, you are right", the Qāḍī affirmed. The Yogi then declared "we have found this Prophet in the scripture of "Brahmān" or two Abrahāms (i.e. Abrahām and Moses). Thereafter, the Yogi embraced Islam and learnt Islamic sciences to such an extent that the Muslim divines permitted him to pronounce legal decisions. The Yogi then presented this book to the Qāḍī (God's mercy on him) who admired it and practised the science of Yoga so much so that he reached the Yogi's stage. Then he translated the book into Persian and from Persian into Arabic."

The *Yogic* work *Amṛitkuṇḍ*<sup>1</sup> translated by the Qāḍī, contained ten chapters and fifty ślokas (verses). The titles of chapters themselves point out the subject matter of the book.<sup>2</sup>

Chapter	I :—	On the knowledge of microcosm.
"	II :—	On the knowledge of the secrets of microcosm.
"	III :—	On the knowledge of the mind and its meaning.
"	IV :—	On the knowledge of the exercises and how to practise them.
"	V :—	On the knowledge of the breathing and how it should be done.
"	VI :—	On the preservation of semen.
"	VII :—	On the knowledge of whims.
"	VIII :—	On the symptoms of death.
"	IX :—	On the subjugation of the spirits.
"	X :—	On the continuation of the story of physical and metaphysical worlds.

الرحمة - فتعجب من ذلك وعمل فيه حتى وصل الى مرتبتهم  
فنقله من الهندية الى الفارسية ومن الفارسية الى العربية -

1. An Arabic version of the book is available in *Journal Asiatique*, Tome CCXIII, pp. 292-344, under the title *Hawḍ al-Ḥayāt* (حوض الحياة).
2. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. I, Part I, January, 1953, pp. 54-55.

*Arabic table of contents :-*

الباب الاول - في معرفة كيفية العالم الكبير  
الباب الثاني - في معرفة السمات التي في العالم الصغير

As clear from the contents of the book, the subject matter is *Yoga* philosophy, with its practical application to human beings. Ways and means have been suggested and certain ascetic exercises have been described, which help the ascetics to achieve spiritual ascendancy. Nothing is known about Bhojar Brahmin, the *Yogi*, or the Sanskrit text, *Amṛitkuṇḍ*, from other sources. Bhojar Brahmin, the *Yogi*, came to Lakṣnawtī to hold discussion with the Muslim divines. But ultimately he embraced Islām and himself mastered Islāmīc religious sciences. Several other examples of similar disputations between the local *Sādhus* and the saint *Shaykh* Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī are found in the Sanskrit work *Śekh Śubhodaya*, (*Shaykh Śubhodaya*) in which these *Sādhus* were won over by the Muslim saint.

These instances give us an idea that the Muslim scholars began to influence the local culture soon after the establishment of

الباب الثالث - في معرفة كيفية القلب وحقيقته ومعناه

الباب الرابع - في معرفة الرياضة وكيفيةها

الباب الخامس - في معرفة النفس وكيفيةها

الباب السادس - في كيفية محافظة ماء الحياة

الباب السابع - في معرفة كيفية الوهم

الباب الثامن - في معرفة علامات الموت

الباب التاسع - في معرفة تسخير الروحانيات

الباب العشر - في كيفية تتمه الحكاية

*Persian table of contents* :---

باب اول - در معرفت عالم صغير وما هيت آن

باب دوم - در معرفت تاثيرات عالم صغير

باب سوم - در معرفت كيفيت دل و حقيقت واردات و تخيلات و مغيبات

باب چهارم - در معرفت رياضت و كيفيت آن

باب پنجم - در معرفت ايجاد انسان و انواع دم

باب ششم - در معرفت چگونگی جسد و ما هيت آن و محافظت منی

باب هفتم - در معرفت وهم

Muslim kingdom. They won over the non-Muslim *Sādhus* and *Yogis* and made them embrace Islām. But the most important point about the Muslim scholars that may be noted is that they did not hesitate to learn local language and study books of other religions. Qāḍī Rukn al-Dīn Samarqandī not only translated the *Yogic* work but also practised the *Yogic* science and “reached the *Yogi’s* stage”.

Qāḍī Rukn al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī is identified with Qāḍī Rukn al-Dīn Abū Ḥamīd Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-‘Āmīdī of Samarqand, who was a famous Ḥanafī (belonging to the school of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah) jurist and a Ṣūfī<sup>1</sup>. He was a distinguished Muslim theologian and was the author of *Kitāb al-Irshād*. He was also the founder of the science of *al-khilāfī wa’l-jadl* (dialectics). He died at Bukhārā on the 9th Jamādī II, A. H. 615/A.D. 1218. Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī Mardān Khaljī ruled in Lakhnawtī from A.D. 1210 to 1213<sup>2</sup>. The Qāḍī was present in Bengal during his time and was probably under his employ. But he went back to his native place where he died.<sup>3</sup>

#### (ii) Mawlana Taqi al-Din ‘Arabi

According to *Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā’* of Shāhī Shu‘ayb<sup>4</sup>, Shaykh Yaḥyā, father of Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī received his education at Mahisun under Mawlānā Taqī al-Dīn. Mahisun is probably Mahisantoshi, now in Rajshahi district.<sup>5</sup> Whether the Mawlānā maintained a *madrasah* is not known, but it

باب هشتم - در معرفت فساد جسد و ظاهر شدن علامت مرگ

باب نهم - در معرفت تسخیرات روحانیات

باب دهم - در معرفت حکایت مبدأ و معاد

1. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. I, Part I, 1953, pp. 50-51.
2. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 18-20.
3. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. I, Part I, 1953, pp. 50-51.
4. *Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā’*, extract printed at the end of *Maktūbāt-i-Ṣadī*, p. 339.
5. *History of Bengal* Vol. II, p. 37. Before A.D. 1947 this was included in Dinajpur district.

proves that he devoted his attention towards imparting religious instructions and he attracted students from as far a place as Maner in Bihar.

(iii) **Shaykh Sharf al-Din Abu Tawwamah**

Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah, the teacher and father-in-law of the celebrated saint of Bihar, Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī, came to Dehlī in or about A. D. 1260. He was a Ḥanafī jurist and a traditionist of great reputation and was well-versed in Chemistry, natural sciences and magic. Soon he gathered a large number of adherents and devotees in Dehlī. The Sultān of Dehlī became nervous at his growing popularity and with a view to getting rid of him urged him to go to Sunārgāwn.<sup>1</sup>

The date of Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah's arrival in Sunārgāwn has been a matter of controversy. Dr. Muhammad Ishaq, on the authority of Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir<sup>2</sup> of Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥayy is of opinion that he came to Sunārgāwn during the reign of Sultān Iltutmish of Dehlī<sup>3</sup>. Dr. Saghir Hasan al-Masumi<sup>4</sup> is of opinion that the Shaykh came to Sunārgāwn in 668/A.D. 1270 or 669/A.D. 1271, i. e. in the reign of Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban. He cites in his favour the Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā' of Shāh Shu'ayb<sup>5</sup>, an almost contemporary authority, and says that Makhdūm al-

1. (a) 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī : *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Āliyah Madrasah Ms. Folio No. 199.
- (b) *Calcutta Review*, Vol. LXXI, pp. 196 ff.
- (c) Muhammad Ishaq : *India's Contribution to the Study of the Ḥadīth Literature*, Dacca University, A. D. 1955, pp. 53-54.
- (d) *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXVII, No. I, January, 1953, pp. 8 ff.
2. Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥayy : *Nuzhat-al-Khawāṭir*, Vol. II, published from Hyderabad (Deccan), 1350/A.D. 1939.
3. Muhammad Ishaq, *op cit.* p. 53.
4. *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXVII, No. I, January, 1953, p. 10, note 9.
- 5; Shāh Shu'ayb : *Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā'*, vide at the end of *Maktūbāt-i-Ṣādī*. Shāh Shu'ayb was a cousin of Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī. (see, *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 71, 1939, p. 196)

Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī, who was born in 661/A.D. 1263, accompanied his teacher Abū Tawwāmah to Sunārgāwn at the age of 7 or 8 years.

Dr. Ishaq's opinion may be rejected on the ground that his source book *Nuzhat al Khawāṭir*, written only a few years back is not corroborated by *Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā*,<sup>1</sup> an almost contemporary authority. As for Dr. Saghir Hasan's view, an examination of his source-book, *Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā*,<sup>2</sup> shows that the date may be pushed forward at least by a decade. We quote below the relevant passage from the same book<sup>1</sup>.

"When he (Makhdūm al-Mulk) reached the age of maturity, he engaged himself in the religious learning and attained proficiency in it. At that time the fame of the wisdom, holiness and learning of Mawlānā Ashraf al-Dīn Tawwāmah had spread in the western regions of India, nay in Arabia, Iran and other countries. He

1. Shāh Shu'ayb, *op cit*, See, *Maktūbāt-i-Ṣadī*, pp. 339-40.

چون بیلاغت رسید و در تعلیم علوم دین مشغول شد علوم دین بکمال حاصل کرد - در آن وقت آوازه عظمت و بنورگی و دانشمندی مولانا اشرف الدین توامه در ولایت بلکه در عرب و عجم برآمده بود در جمیع علوم کمال داشت تا علم کیمیا و همیا و سیمیا نیز بر وجه کمال داشت - در علوم دین مرجع علماء دین بود - عوام و خاص امرا و ملوک همه معتقد و مطیع و منقاد وی بودند - در علوم سیمیا عجائبیها بخلق نمودی - از غایت اتقیا دخلق بادشاه دهلی بترسید که نبائید ملک را بگیرد - بحیله مولانا را درسارگانوں روان داشت - در آن وقت ولایت بنگاله در ضبط بادشاه دهلی بود - مولانا نیز بفراسات دریافت از انجا که اطاعت اولوالامر واجبست مولانا سفر سنارگانوں اختیار کرد - در اثناء سفر در قصبه منیر رسیده شیخ شرف الدین منیری برائے ملاقات رفت - بدیدن وفور علم و کمال دانشمندی مولانا اشرف الدین توامه فریفته گشت - گفت تحقیق علوم دین در خدمت و صحبت بغیر اینچنین محقق حاصل نگردد - عزم کرد که در خدمت مولانا و بصحبت او درسارگانوں برود -

was accomplished in all sciences; even in Chemistry, Natural science and magic he had experience and perfection. As for the religious sciences, the learned people used to consult him and the commons, the aristocrats, the *Amīrs* and the *Maliks*, were devoted to him. In magic, he displayed wonders to the public. Seeing the devotion of the people towards him, the King of Dehlī got nervous, lest he snatched the kingdom from him. He therefore, tactfully induced the Mawlānā to journey to Sunārgāwn. At that time the kingdom of Bangālah was under the possession of the ruler of Dehlī. The Mawlānā also wittily understood the king's motive, but since the obedience to the man of affairs (meaning the kings) is necessary, he undertook the journey to Sunārgāwn. During his sojourn, when he halted at Maner, Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Manerī paid a visit to him. The Shaykh being impressed by the learning and wisdom of Mawlānā Ashraf al-Dīn Tawwāmah thought that the religious sciences could be studied only with such a vastly learned man. The Mawlānā too admired the talent and manners of the Shaykh and thought it wise to help him in learning religious sciences. Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Manerī therefore, with the permission of his parents accompanied the Mawlānā to Sunārgāwn and endeavoured his best to master the religious sciences".

Two points, derived from the above passage may help us in determining the date of the Shaykh's arrival in Sunārgāwn. (1) The age of Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā who accompanied the Shaykh (Abū Tawwāmah) and (2) the categorical statement that Bangālah was at that time under the possession of the Sulṭān of Dehlī.

Dr. Saghir Hasan al-Masumi says that Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī accompanied his teacher to Sunārgāwn at the age of seven or eight years, but his authority does not bear him out. The *Manāqib al-Aṣṣiyā'* says that when Abū Tawwāmah, on his way to Sunārgāwn stopped at Maner,

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ومولانا اشرف الدين توامه نیز بدیدس قابلیت و روشن صلاح و تقوی  
 شیخ شرف الدین منیری خوش گشت و گفت در تعلیم علوم دین  
 در حق اینچنین کسے کوشش بائید کرد - شیخ شرف الدین منیری  
 به رضا مادر و پدر برابر مولانا اشرف الدین توامه دستارگانوں رفت  
 در تحصیل علوم دین باقصی الغایت کوشید -

the Shaykh of Maner visited him, who already attained the age of maturity and engaged himself in the study of religious science, and attained proficiency in it. He also became impressed by the learning and wisdom of Mawlānā Abū Tawwāmah and thought that the religious science could be studied only with such a vastly learned man. The very statement that he attained maturity, rules out the view of Dr. Saghir Hasan al-Masumi that he was a boy of only seven or eight years. Secondly, the statement that he engaged himself and attained proficiency in studies and that the Mawlānā (Abū Tawwāmah) also admired the talent and manner of the Shaykh, suggests that the Shaykh was not a boy of only seven or eight years, when he accompanied his teacher to Sunārgāwn. Rather, he must have been at least fifteen to twenty years old, so that his talent and manner could impress his teacher, or he could judge the worth of his own teacher. Considering from this standpoint, it may be assumed that they came to Sunārgāwn between the years (A.D. 1263<sup>1</sup> + 15) A.D. 1278 and (A.D. 1263 + 20) A.D. 1283.

The second point that Bangālah was at that time under the Sultān of Dehlī also suggests that the date may be pushed forward even after A.D. 1283. During the time when Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban invaded Lakhnawtī to chastise Mughīth al-Dīn Tughral, Sunārgāwn was under the possession of one Danuj Rāi, with whom Balban entered into an agreement<sup>2</sup>. Before leaving Bengal, Balban advised his son Bughrā Khān, the new Governor of Lakhnawtī, to conquer<sup>3</sup> Bangālah i. e. Eastern Bengal<sup>4</sup> which included Sunārgāwn. It is therefore evident that Sunārgāwn was not occupied by the Muslims at least upto A.D. 1282, when Balban came to Bengal<sup>5</sup>. The first

1. A.D. 1263 is the date of birth of Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī. (See, *Islamic Culture* Vol. XXVII, No. I, January, 1953, p. 10, note 9. Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān : *Bazm-i-Ṣūfiyah*, Azamgarh, A.D. 1949, p. 350.)
2. Baranī, p. 87.
3. Baranī, p. 92. See also *Supra*, p. 36.
4. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 71.
5. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 62.

Dr. Saghir Hasan al-Masumi (*Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXVII, No. I, January, 1953, pp. 8 ff.) says that Sunārgāwn together with Bang was first occupied by Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn 'Iwad Khālji. He cites Minhāj (p. 163) in his favour

Muslim coin from the **Kharāj** (land-tax) of Bang (Eastern Bengal which included Sunārgāwn) was issued by Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā'ūs<sup>1</sup> in the year 690/A.D. 1291 and the first Muslim coin from the mint-town of Sunārgāwn was issued by Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh<sup>2</sup> in the year 705/ A.D. 1305. It is, therefore, clear that Sunārgāwn was first conquered by the Muslims between the years A. D. 1282 when Balban came to Bengal and A.D. 1291 when Kāykā'ūs issued his coins from the (**Kharāj**) land-tax of Bang. Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah must have come to Sunārgāwn sometime during this period. Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā'ūs, who reigned in Bengal from 690/A.D. 1291 to 700/A.D. 1300, was for all practical purposes independent as his coins with full regal titles show<sup>3</sup>. After his (**Bughrā Khān's**) father's death in A. D. 1287, **Bughrā Khān** also assumed

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who says that the kingdoms of Jājnagar, Bang, Kāmruḍ and Tīrhut sent presents to him ('Iwaḍ). Any serious student of history will agree that this was just a general remark implying probably the result of raids, because neither of these kingdoms was actually conquered or annexed by 'Iwaḍ **Khālji** (*History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 20 ff). Moreover the learned scholar fails to note another statement of Minhāj, (pp. 163-64) saying that when Shāhid Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd (eldest son of Iltutmish) invaded Lakhnawtī, 'Iwaḍ was out in an expeditionary force towards Bang and Kāmruḍ, but as soon as he received the news of the happenings in his capital, he hurried back and fell a prey in the hands of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd and was killed. This statement implies that 'Iwaḍ could not capture Bang and Kāmruḍ. Again the learned scholar quotes James Wise (*J.A.S.B.* 1874, p. 83) to say that **Tughral** was punished by Balban in Sunārgāwn, a statement that goes against no less an authority than Baranī, (p. 91) according to whom the punishment was meted out in the *bāzār* of the city of Lakhnawtī.

1. *J. A. S. B.* 1922, p. 410.
2. A. W. Botham : *Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet Assam*, second edition, Allahabad, A.D. 1930, pp. 134-38; *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XVIII part I, A.D. 1956, pp. 76-85.
3. H. N. Wright : *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, Vol. II, Oxford, A. D. 1907, pp. 146-47; Thomas : "Initial Coinage of Bengal," part I, in *J.A.S.B.* 1867.



independence.<sup>1</sup> So, if there is any truth in the statement of Shāh Shu'ayb that Bangālah was at that time under the Sultān of Dehlī, the logical assumption is that Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah came to Sunārgāwn in between A. D. 1282 and A. D. 1287.<sup>2</sup>

At Sunārgāwn, Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah devoted himself to cultural pursuits. He maintained a *madrasah* for his students and a *Khānqah* for his disciples. Here he was surrounded by a large number of students and disciples, the chief of whom was Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī. The Makhdūm al-Mulk studied under his teacher *Tafsīr*, *Ḥadīth*, Jurisprudence and other branches of Islāmic learning<sup>3</sup>. An idea of the number of his students and disciples or the size of his *madrasah* and *Khānqah* may be obtained from the following anecdote concerning the life of Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī<sup>4</sup>. The *kantūrī* (dinner-table) of Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah was open to all students, guests and visitors. As the number of those attending the *kantūrī* was great, it took a longer time to finish one's meal and Makhdūm al-Mulk thought that it was a mere waste of time for himself. So he discontinued to attend it even at the risk of losing his usual meal. When Abū Tawwāmah came to know the reason of his absence from the dinner-table, he arranged to have his meals served separately.

Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah wrote a book named *Maqāmat*, a book on *Taşawwuf*. The book gained popularity among the learned in the whole of India. In a manuscript collection of *Tarassul-i-'Ayn al-Mulkī*, there are two letters, one written to Sayyid Nāṣir al-Dīn, the *Muḥta'* of Lahore asking for a copy of the *Maqāmat* of Abū Tawwāmah and the other acknowledging its receipt.<sup>5</sup>

1. Baranī, pp. 148-49. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 71, 75.

2. The dates fit in with another statement of Shāh Shu'ayb that Makhdūm al-Mulk took leave from his parents before accompanying his teacher. Now, as his father died in 690/A.D. 1291 (*Calcutta Review*, Vol. 71, p. 198), Makhdūm al-Mulk must have left for Sunārgāwn before A. D. 1291.

3. *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXVII, Nol. I, 1953, p. 11. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 71, p. 197.

4. Shāh Shu'ayb : *Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā*, vide at the end of *Maktūbāt-i-Ṣadī*, p. 340; *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXVII, No. I, 1953, p. 12.

5. Asiatic Society of Bengal, *Calcutta*, Manuscript No. F II. See *J. A. S. B.* 1923, pp. 274, 277.

It is very much regrettable that the book is lost to us. Whether the book was written in Bengal or outside is not known.

Dr. Saghir Hasan al-Masumi suggests<sup>1</sup> that the authorship of *Nām-i-Haqq*<sup>2</sup> a book on *Fiqh*, should also be ascribed to him. But a close examination of the book shows that the book was not actually written by him but by one of his disciples on the basis of his teachings. The author's introduction will bear testimony to it. The relevant portion is reproduced below<sup>3</sup> :—

- (1) "I admit of my inability and shortcomings. I am not unwise and unaware and ignorant (of my worth).
- (2) "Our predecessors have put forward the excuse, 'he who writes, becomes the target (of critics)' (thus implying that he also puts forward the same excuse).
- (3) "But to try so far as one can is better than to remain silent and inactive.
- (4) "I tried upto my ability; I put forward (have written) the *fiqh* in the garb of verse.
- (5) "Do not find fault with me; rather cover it with the robe of honour (i.e. improve upon it) if you can.

1. *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXVII, No. I, 1953, p. 11.

2. There are two editions of the book, one from Bombay, A.D. 1885, and the other from Kānpūr, A. H. 1332.

3. *Nām-i-Haqq*, Kānpūr, A. H. 1332, pp. 5-6.

- |                        |                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| نی چونادان احمق و خرفم | ( 1 ) من بعجز و قصور معترفم     |
| عز من صنف قد استهدف    | ( 2 ) پیش ازین گفته اند اهل سلف |
| به زیبکاری و خموشیدن   | ( 3 ) لیک بر قدر خویش کوشیدن    |
| فقره را برد نظم پوشیدم | ( 4 ) من بقدر مجال کوشیدم       |
| کہ درو حله بیوشانے     | ( 5 ) نکنی عیب گرتو بتوانے      |
| لاشه خویشتن نیند ازو   | ( 6 ) اسپ تازی اگرچه به تازو    |
| لائق روزگار اصحاب      | ( 7 ) صدوہشتاد بیت و ده باب ست  |
| لاجرم بے نظیر افتادست  | ( 8 ) موجز و دلپذیر افتادست     |
| نام آو درجهان بہر طرف  | ( 9 ) این ترایادگار از شرف ست   |
| درخراسان علوم مکتسبش   | ( 10 ) از بخاراست مولد و نسبش   |

- (6) "Though the Arabian horse runs swiftly, yet the lean and thin ass legs on i. e. somehow goes towards the goal.
- (7) "There are one hundred and eighty verses and ten chapters, which are befitting the people of today (i.e. commensurating the short time that they can devote towards religious studies.)
- (8) "It is short and pleasant, hence it has become unique.
- (9) "This is a reminiscence of Sharf for you; whose name is spread all over the world.
- (10) "His ancestry and birth-place is Bukhārā; he got education and other achievements in Khurāsān."

Verses No. 9 and 10 quoted above record that the book was a reminiscence from one Sharf whose name was spread throughout the world and who was born in Bukhārā and received his education in Khurāsān. So Sharf of verses may be identified with Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmāh. But they also suggest that he was not the author himself, rather from his reminiscence, some one else, probably his disciple wrote the book. In the first place, if he (Sharf) was the author himself, he would not have introduced himself in the third person while in the preceding verses, for example from verses 1-7, quoted above, he always used the first person. Secondly, he would not have claimed to be renowned throughout the world, while in the preceding verses, he expressed himself with humility.

Nothing is available in the book to ascertain the name of the author or the place where it was written. But the date of completion of the book suggests that the book was written in Bengal. "693 years have elapsed since the death of the Prophet upto this year. In the first half of Jamādī I, this versification was completed".<sup>1</sup> By the date, '693 years after the death of Prophet', the author must have referred to the *Hijrī* year. We have already noted that Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmāh came to Bengal in between A.D. 1283-1287<sup>2</sup>. The book was probably written in 693/A.D. 1293 in Bengal.

The book is a small one, having one hundred eighty verses and ten chapters. These ten chapters are in addition to three introductory

1. *Nām-i-Haqq*, Kānpūr, A.H. 1332, p. 18.

نود و سه برهت و ششصد سال      ازوفات رسول (ص) تا امسال  
نیمه از جمادی الاول      بود کاین نظم گشت مستکمل

2. See, *Supra*, p. 72.

chapters dealing with *Ḥamd* (praise of God), *Na'at* (Praise of the Prophet and the four *Khalifahs*) and the author's introduction. The ten chapters dealing with the subject-matter of the book, are divided as follows.

Chapter I deals with *Waḍū'* (ablution). It is divided into four sections :—

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Section | I — <i>Farḍ</i> (obligatory part) of <i>Waḍū'.</i>                         |
| ”       | II — <i>Sunnat</i> of <i>Waḍū'.</i>  |
| ”       | III — <i>Mustahab</i> (optional portion) of <i>Waḍū'.</i>                  |
| ”       | IV — <i>Makrūh</i> (that which is hateful and unbecoming) of <i>Waḍū'.</i> |

Chapter II deals with those matters that nullify *Waḍū'.*

Chapter III deals with *Ghusal* (bath). It is divided into three sections :—

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Section | I — <i>Farḍ</i> of <i>Ghusal.</i>  |
| ”       | II — <i>Sunnat</i> of <i>Ghusal.</i>   |
| ”       | III — deals with the quantity of water that is required in <i>Waḍū'</i> and <i>Ghusal.</i> |

Chapter IV deals with those matters that make *Ghusal* obligatory.

Chapter V deals with *Tayammum* (purification by sand).

Chapter VI deals with *Namāz* (Prayers). It is divided into four sections :—

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Section | I — <i>Farḍ</i> of <i>Namāz.</i>   |
| ”       | II — <i>Wājib</i> (near obligatory) of <i>Namāz.</i>   |
| ”       | III — deals with additional prostration necessitated by committing mistakes in course of prayer. |
| ”       | IV — <i>Sunnat</i> of <i>Namāz.</i>  |

Chapter VII deals with obligatory (*Farḍ*) prayers of the day and night.

Chapter VIII deals with obligatory *Sunnat* (*Sunnat-i-Mu'akkadah*) prayers of the day and night.

Chapter IX deals with the fasting in the month of *Ramaḍān.*

Chapter X deals with the penalty to be paid for breaking the fast in the month of *Ramaḍān.*

Last of all there is the Khātimah or the concluding part in which the date of completion of the book has been given.

(iv) **Shah Muhammad Saghir**

Shāh Muḥammad Saghīr composed *Yūsuf Jolekhā* (*Yūsuf Zulaykhā*) in Bengali in the reign of Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẓam Shāh<sup>1</sup>. The love story of Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf and Zulaykhā, the subject-matter of the book is available in the Holy Qur'ān<sup>2</sup> and a few works of persian poets<sup>3</sup>. As will be seen presently, in the words of the poet himself, he based his book on the *kitāb* meaning Arabic or Persian works and the Qur'ān.

The details about the life of the poet is not available. Dr. Enamul Haq<sup>4</sup> thinks that he belonged to a *darwish* family because he (the poet) takes the title of Shāh. He was probably in the service of the Sulṭān<sup>5</sup>.

The poet explains why he composed the book in Bengali. It is reproduced below<sup>6</sup> :—

“In the fourth place, I shall relate something about the *puṭhi* (book). I have made up my mind (to write the book) giving up the fear of sin. The people are plunged in tales and

1. Enamul Haq : *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, A.D. 1955, p. 56. For criticism see, *Muḥāmmadī* (a Bengali monthly journal of Dacca), *Paush*, B. S. 1364, pp. 197-202.
2. Qur'ān, XIII.
3. The Persian works were written by Firdausī and Shaykh 'Abd Allāh Anṣārī. (E. G. Browne : *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. II, Cambridge, 1928, pp. 131, 270).
4. *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, A.D. 1955, p. 58.
5. *Ibid*, p. 58.
6. E. Haq : *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, 1955, p. 59. Dr. E. Haq's ms. lines 79-96.

“চতুর্থে কহিবু কিছু পোখার কখন।  
পাপ ভয় এড়ি লাজ দঢ় করি মন ॥  
নানা কাব্য কথা রসে মজে নরগণ।  
যার বেই শ্রদ্ধায় সন্তোষ করে মন ॥

fictions; everybody satisfies himself with what is dear to him. No one writes about the religious tales for fear of being blamed by others. I have thought over and come to the conclusion that the fear is unnecessary (literally false); language does not matter if the words are true. I have heard great men say, 'in the store of jewels, words are a real worth.' Taking the jewel-like words I shall write the religious tale of love. Yūsuf and Zulaykhā became lovers; it is written in the *Kitāb* that they loved each other in a religious mood. (Even) when love did not find place in the heart of Yūsuf, Zulaykhā steeped into the sea of tragedy. I have seen much in the *Kitāb* and the *Qur'ān*; the story of Yūsuf and Zulaykhā is full of nectar."

Though the poet claims that he wrote his book on the basis of the *Qur'ān* and the *Kitāb*, it is not free from the local touch. It also depicts the Bengali setting. The following examples may be cited :

- (a) Shāh Muḥammad Ṣaghīr refers to the marriage of Ibn Amīn, younger brother of Yūsuf, with Bidhu Prabhā, princess of Madhupur<sup>1</sup>. Bidhu Prabhā is the name of a Hindu girl and Madhupur is also the name of a place in Bengal.

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ন লেখে কিতাব কথা মনে ভয় পাই।  
 দোষিব সকল তাক ইহ ন জুয়ায় ॥  
 গুণিয়া দেখিলু আঙ্গি ইহ ভয় মিছা।  
 ন হয় ভাষায় কিছু হয় কথা সাচা ॥  
 গুনিয়াছি মহাজনে কহিতে কখন।  
 রতন ভাণ্ডার মধ্যে বচন সে ধন ॥  
 বচন রতন মণি যতনে পুরিয়া।  
 প্রেমরসে ধর্মবাণী কহিনু ভরিয়া ॥  
 ভাবক ভাবিনী হৈল ইচ্ছুক জলিখা।  
 ধর্মভাবে করে প্রেম কিতাবেত্ত লেখা ॥  
 ন হৈতে প্রেমক ভাব ইচ্ছুক অন্তর।  
 জলিখা মজিল তাক বিরহ সায়র ॥  
 কিতাব কোরাণ মধ্যে দেখিলু বিশেষ।  
 ইচ্ছুক জলিখা কথা অমিয়া অশেষ ॥”

1. E. Haq : *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, 1955, p. 60.

The story of *Yūsuf Jolekhā* (*Yūsuf Zūlaykhā*) is found in the Holy Qur'ān, and the place of their activities is Egypt. The reference to these two Bengali names suggests that the book being written in Bengal received a Bengali character.

- (b) The merchant who bought Yūsuf, is called a *Manirū*<sup>1</sup>. But this is a Bengali word derived from *mani* (jewel).
- (c) In describing the marriage of Zūlaykhā with 'Azīz Miṣr, the poet freely refers to the ornaments and clothes used by the Bengali ladies even today. King 'Azīz Miṣr came to receive his bride on a *chaudol*, a kind of transport used by the Muslims in Bengal during marriages. King Tāimus (Zūlaykhā's father) and his queen were chewing the *pān* (betel-leaf) a favourite thing in Bengal<sup>2</sup>.

(v) **Ibrahim Qawwam Faruqi**

Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī wrote a Persian lexicon named *Farhang-i-Ibrāhīmī*, but it is better known as *Sharfnāmah*, because it was dedicated to the memory of *Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī*<sup>3</sup>. The book was written in the reign of Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak *Shāh*, of whom the author writes as follows :—"May Abū'l-Muẓaffar Bārbak *Shāh* be *Shāh-i-Ālam* (king of the world) and he is. May the kingdom of *Jamshid* be under him and it is."<sup>4</sup> Again he writes, "O' (the man) ^, who has given many horses to one who asks for. Those who go on foot were given thousands of horses. The great Abū'l-Muẓaffar, the world of favour that he is, whose smallest general gift is a horse."<sup>5</sup> The eulogistic verses show that the author was in some way or other grateful to the Sulṭān or was probably under his employ.

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Shāh Muḥammad Ṣaghīr : Yūsuf Zūlaykhā*, Dr. E. Haq's MS. Lines 121-124, 213-244, 1101.

3. *Urdū*, October, 1952, p. 61; For verses in praise of *Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī*, see, *Sharfnāmah*, 'Āliyah Madrasah MS. Folio Nos. 2-3.

4. *Urdū*, October, 1952, p. 66.

بوالمظفر باربک شه شاه عالم بادوہست

درنگین او ہمیشہ ملکت جم بادوہست

5. *Urdū*, October, 1952, p. 66,

The chief importance of the book lies in the fact that he has supplied the names of a few scholars and poets of the time. They are as follows<sup>1</sup> :—

(1) Amīr Zayn al-Dīn Harwī. He is called the poet-laureate  
(ملك الشعراء).

(2) Amīr Shahāb al-Dīn Ḥakīm Kirmānī. He is called the  
'pride of physician' (افتخار الحكماء).

He was also a poet and was the author of a Persian lexicon  
named *Farhang-i-Amīr Shahāb al-Dīn Ḥakīm Kirmānī*.

(3) Maṣṣūr Shīrāzī. He was a Persian poet.

(4) Malik Yūsuf bin Ḥamīd was a poet.

(5) Sayyid Jalāl was a poet.

(6) Sayyid Muḥammad Rukn was a poet.

(7) Sayyid Ḥasan was a poet.

(8) Shaykh Wāḥedī. He was probably a teacher of the  
author. He passed this world when the author wrote his  
book. The author also refers to a book of the Shaykh  
named Ḥabl Matīn the subject-matter of which is not known.

It is unfortunate that none of their writings have come down to  
us. We also do not know the subject matter on which they wrote  
except that of the lexicon of Amīr Shahāb al-Dīn Kirmānī. Ibrāhīm  
Qawwām Fārūqī quoted a few lines,<sup>2</sup> but they do not throw any new  
light on the authors.

#### (vi) **Muhammad bin Yazdan Bakhsh**

Muḥammad bin Yazdān Bakhsh famous as Khwājgī Shirwānī  
was a Muḥaddith (Scholar on the tradition of the Prophet)

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ایا بدا ده بهرما ئله فراوان اسپ  
پیادگان رایغشیده صد هزاران اسپ  
بوالمظفر والا جهان لطف که هست  
کمینه بخشش عامت بگاہ احسان اسپ

1. *Ibid.* pp. 61 ff. (See also, Sharfnāmah, 'Āliyah Madrasah MS.  
Folio Nos. 23, 43, 49, 60, 185, 231 and 241).

2. *Ibid.*



and transcribed in Ikdālah, the capital of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh three volumes of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.<sup>1</sup>

(vii) **Muhammad Buda'i 'urf Sayyid Mir 'Alawi**

His book *Hidāyat al-Rāmī*<sup>2</sup> was dedicated to Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh. *Hidāyat al-Rāmī* is a book on archery containing twenty seven chapters (*bāb*). Some drawings representing the archers in Indian costume drawing the bow in various attitudes are appended to the book. The date of composition of the book is not known. The transcribed copies preserved in the British Museum cannot be dated before the 17th century.

**Contribution—a resume**

The writings of the Muslim scholars may be grouped into following heads (1) Islāmic sciences like *Fiqh* and *Ḥadīth*, (2) the Persian lexicons and Persian poetry, (3) the religious tales and (4) the archery.<sup>3</sup>

(1) **The Islamic Sciences**

The writings on the Islāmic Sciences are represented by *Nām-i-Ḥaqq* and transcription of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. For a country like Bengal, where Islām just obtained its political hold, books of such nature were of supreme importance. They were meant to teach the people on fundamental principles of Islām. *Nām-i-Ḥaqq* deals with essential principles like *Waḍū'* (ablution), *Namāz* (prayers), Fasts in the month of *Ramaḍān* and *Ghusal* (obligatory bath), all those subjects that guide the Muslims in their day to day life. This shows that it was intended

1. *Catalogue of Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore*, Vol. V, Part I, Nos. 130-32.
2. Charles Rieu : *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London, A. D. 1881, Vol. II, p. 489, No. Add. 26, 306.
3. We do not know where the *Maqāmat* (see, *Supra*, p. 72) of Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah was written, neither do we know what was the subject matter of *Ḥabl Matīn* of Shaykh Wāḥedi (see, *Supra*, p. 79). We have not included Ṣūfī writings because (a) they have not come down to us except for a few letters and (b) the activities of the Ṣūfīs form a separate chapter. See, Chapter III, Section (c).

for ordinary persons i.e. those who did not receive advanced studies on theological subjects. The author of *Nām-i-Ḥaqq* himself says that the book was befitting the people of his time who could devote short time to the study of religious books.

### (2) The Persian Lexicon and Persian Poetry

We shall see later<sup>1</sup> that the official language during the period under review was Persian. Moreover many of the religious books available at that time were written in that language. *Nām-i-Ḥaqq* is an important example to be cited. So the importance of the Persian lexicons cannot be underestimated. The fact that one of the poets received the title of *Malik al-Shu'arā* (poet-laureate) suggests that the Persian poetry received patronage from the Sulṭāns.

### (3) The Religious Tales

The importance of the religious tales in Bengali has been explained by Shāh Muḥammad Ṣaghīr (the author of *Yūsuf Julaykhā*) himself.<sup>2</sup> He says that people were plunged in tales and fictions. The gravity of the situation will be clear if we remember that a large number of local people were converted to Islām;<sup>3</sup> they did not know the Arabic or Persian languages in which the religious books were then available. A Bengali Muslim poet makes the point further clear, when he says, "Bengalees are born in Bengal out of their misfortune. They do not understand Arabic language, nor do they understand their own religion. They all remain (satisfied) with mythological tales."<sup>4</sup> In another place he says, "Kavīndra composed the *Mahābhārata* at the order of Lashkar Parāgal Khān. Both Hindus and Muslims read that book in their respective houses and none remem-

1. Chapter VI.

2. See, *Supra*, pp. 76-77.

3. See, Chapter III, Section (C).

4. Sayyid Sulṭān : *Ophāte Rasūl*, (correctly *Wafāt-i-Rasūl*), edited by Ali Ahmad, B.S. 1356, p. 7.

কর্মদোলে বঙ্গের বাদলি উর্ভূপন ।  
 না বুজে বাদলি সবে য়ারবি বচন ॥  
 য়াপোনা দিনের বোল এক না বুজিল ।  
 পরস্তাব সকল লইয়া সব রৈল ॥

bers the name of *Khodā* and *Rasūl* (God and His Prophet).<sup>1</sup> Under the circumstance, it was but natural that the Muslim scholars should have taken up their pen to write Muslim religious tales just to divert the people from the non-Muslim ones. More importance may be attached to the fact that it was written in the language of the people and in so doing *Shāh Muḥammad Ṣaghīr* did a great service to the cause of Muslim culture in Bengal.

#### (4) The Archery

*Hidāyat al-Rāmī*, a book on archery suggests that the Muslim scholars also devoted their attention to the writing of books on military sciences. The Muslims were ruling a country where geography and climate were unfamiliar to them. So the book on archery helped them in understanding the war-tactics that they had to follow. This further suggests that the Muslims paid due attention to both religious and secular studies.

#### Syllabus Taught in the Madrasahs

It has been pointed out earlier that a number of *madrasahs* were built by the Bengal Sultāns.<sup>2</sup> *Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah* maintained an academy at *Sunārgāwn*<sup>3</sup>, while a few *Ṣūfis* also maintained some *madrasahs* or imparted religious instructions in their *Khānqahs*.<sup>4</sup> Nothing definite is known regarding the syllabus taught in these *madrasahs*. The following references are available in the inscriptions :—

- (a) *Qāḍī al-Nāṣir Muḥammad* granted subsistence to “men of learning for the inculcation of the Muslim Law and to manifest Divine Faith among the haughty”.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Sayyid Sultān : *Wafāt-i-Rasūl*, edited by Ali Ahmad, B. S. 1356, Preface.

লক্ষর পরাগল খান আজ্ঞা শিরে ধরি ।  
কবীন্দ্র ভারত কথা কহিল বিচারি ॥  
হিন্দু মোছলমান তাহা ঘরে ঘরে পরে ।  
খোঁদা রছুলের কথা কেহ না গোঙরে ॥

2. Chapter III, Section (A), pp. 42-45.  
3. *Supra*, p. 72.  
4. Chapter III, Section (c).  
5. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1917-18, p. 18.

- (b) Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh built a *madrasah* "for the teaching of the sciences of religion and for instruction in the principles which lead to certainty."<sup>1</sup>

Both these inscriptions emphasize the teaching of Muslim Law and the Islāmic religious sciences. The Islāmic religious sciences include the Qur'ān (the Holy Book), the *Tafsīr* (the commentary of the Qur'ān,) the *Ḥadīth* and the *Fiqh*. The writing of *Nām-i-Ḥaqq*, a book on *Fiqh* and the transcription of *Jāmi' al-Buḫārī*, just discussed earlier,<sup>2</sup> further strengthens the view that these subjects were taught in the *madrasahs*. Books on these subjects were then available, as also long after, only in Arabic and Persian languages.<sup>3</sup> So it may be concluded that Persian and Arabic languages were also included in the syllabus taught in the *madrasahs*. The fact that a Persian lexicon was written by Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī strengthens this view.

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1. *Memoirs* pp. 157-58.

2. *Supra*, pp. 80-81.

3. *Nām-i-Ḥaqq* was in Persian, the transcription of *Jāmi' al-Buḫārī* was in Arabic.

## SECTION (C)

### THE SUFIS AND THEIR INFLUENCE

#### (a) **Sufism**

“Of all great religions of Western Asia, Islam has generally been regarded as the most worldly and least ascetic”<sup>1</sup>. Yet from the second century of its existence, it let loose that popular force which later on came to be known as *Şūfīsm*.<sup>2</sup> “*Şūfīsm* speaks of advancement in the spiritual life as a ‘journey’ and the seeker after God as a *Sālik* or ‘traveller’. Its teaching is intended to guide the traveller to the attainment of perfect ‘knowledge’ (*maʿrifat*) of God, the only Reality diffused through all things. Subsequently, the wandering soul is led onwards by slow ‘stages’ (*maqāmāt*) and through the experience of certain states (*aḥwāl*), along a ‘Path’ (*aṭ-ṭarīqat*), to the desired goal of union with God, called *fanā fiʾl-ḥaqīqat*, absorption (lit. extinction) in Reality”<sup>3</sup> This *fanā* is the state which precedes that of *baqā*<sup>4</sup> (perpetuity) which is an eternal existence. According to Shushtery, “by *Fana*, the Sufi means self-negation or negation of earthly tendency, and *Baqa*, retention of spiritual existence or extraction of evil qualities or retention of virtue or permanency of mind from sensible objects to spiritual reality, the extinction of material desires and the loss of selfish consciousness”<sup>5</sup>

*Şūfīsm* developed into a number of Orders or Sects of which four exerted great influence in India. They are, (1) the *Chishtīyah*, (2) the *Suhrawardīyah*, (3) the *Qāderīyah* and (4) the *Naqsh-bandiyyah*. All other orders that developed later were sub-divisions of these

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1. H.A.R. Gibb: *Mohammedanism*, Oxford University Press, A.D. 1953, p. 129.
  2. *Ibid*, pp. 129–31.; *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XI (Saints and Martyrs).
  3. J. A. Subhan : *Sufism, its Saints and Shrines*. Lucknow, A.D. 1938, p. 67. For details on the stages of the *Şūfī* training see, A. M. A. Shushtery : *Outlines of Islamic Culture*, Vol. II, A. D. 1938, pp. 470–71.
  4. J.A. Subhan: *Op cit*, p. 83.
  5. A.M.A. Shushtery: *Op cit*, pp. 482-83.

four<sup>1</sup>. The order of many of the *Şūfīs* that came to Bengal, during the period under review, cannot be determined, though it may be assumed that quite a large number of them belonged to the *Chishtiyah* or the *Suhrawardiyah* schools.

### (b) **Sufism in Bengal**

The *Şūfīsm* in Bengal was not an indigenous growth; it was imported from the west, from Central Asia through Northern India. A large number of *Şūfīs* came to Bengal; according to tradition, some of them came even before the Muslim conquest<sup>2</sup>. An idea of the influence of *Şūfīs* in Bengal may be had from a letter written by Mīr Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī to Sulţān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jawnpūr<sup>3</sup>. He writes, "God be praised! what a good land is that of Bengal where numerous saints and ascetics came from many directions and made it their habitation and home. For example at Devgaou seventy leading disciples of the Shaikh of Shaikh Hazrat Shaikh Shahabuddin Suharwardī are taking their eternal rest. Several saints of the Suharwardi order are lying buried in Mahisun and this is the case with the saints of Jalilia order in Deotala. In Narkoti some of the best companions of the Shaikh of Shaikh Ahmad Damishqi are found. Hazrat Shaikh Sharfuddin Tawwama, one of the twelve of the Qadarkhani order whose chief pupil was Hazrat Shaikh Sharfuddin Maneri is lying buried at Sonargaon. And then there was Hazrat Bad Alam and Badr Alam Zahidi. In short, in the country of Bengal what to speak of the cities there is no town and no village where holy saints did not come and settle down. Many of the saints of the Suharwardia order are dead and gone under earth but those still alive are also in fairly large number"<sup>4</sup>.

It is, therefore, clear that Bengal became a stronghold of the *Şūfīs* during the early Muslim period. The present section has been divided into two parts. Part I deals with the biographical sketch of the *Şūfīs* and Part II with the influence of *Şūfīs* in the growth of Muslim culture.

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1. J.A. Subhan : *Op cit*, p. 174.; H.A.R. Gibb : *Op cit*, Chapters VII & IX.
  2. See *Infra*, pp. 86 ff.
  3. This saint was a disciple of *Şhaykh* 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq of Pandwah. (*Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, p. 166).
  4. Quoted by Prof. Hasan Askari in *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. LXVII, Serial No. 130, 1948, Pp. 35-36.

### Part I- The Biographical Sketch

The following biographical sketch is derived from hagiological literature. The accounts are full of mysterious tales, which on reasonable grounds seem to be preposterous. But no attempt is made to omit those materials. These details have been given to gauge the depth of credulity of the local people and the general influence that the saints exerted on them. Wherever possible, epigraphical and other evidences have been produced to check the mistakes in chronology. No attempt is made to give an exhaustive list of the saints. A select study is made below in order to show how these saints inter-linked Bengal with the rest of the Muslim world, and at the same time how they spread out in every part of Bengal.

#### (a) **Sufis, who are believed to have come before Muslim Conquest**

Some *Ṣūfīs* are believed to have come to Bengal before the Muslim conquest. They are immortalised in the hearts of men through tradition, handed down from generation to generation. It is difficult to determine how and when they came or how far they contributed to the spread of Islām in Bengal, but the places where they are believed to be lying buried, are venerated by the people even to-day.

##### (i) **Baba Adam Shahid of Rampal**

Bābā Ādam Shahid is generally considered to be the earliest in this category.<sup>1</sup> He is now lying buried at Rampal, about half a mile away from Ballāl-bāṛī, (believed to be the capital of one king Ballāl Sena) in Munshiganj sub-division, Dacca district. Tradition relates that while he was living in Makkah as a *faqīr*, a certain Muslim of Kanai-Cheng, a village not far from Rampal fled away from the oppression of king Ballāl Sena for his offence of sacrificing a cow on the occasion of the birth of his son, appeared before him (the saint) and related the story of his being persecuted by a Hindu king. Hearing that there was a country in which there was no religious toleration the saint was moved and came to Bengal with six to seven thousand of his followers. He encamped near Rampal and began sacrificing cows. This led to his conflict with king Ballāl Sena. The saint was ultimately killed by the king, but by a curious stroke of fate the king

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1. For the tradition of Bābā Ādam Shahid, See, *J.A.S.B.* 1889, Vol. LVII, pp. 12 ff.

and his family lost their lives by throwing themselves into *agnikuṇḍa* or a pit of fire. The tomb of the saint is found even to-day in front of a mosque, built in the time of Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Faṭḥ Shāh in the year 888/A.D. 1483.<sup>1</sup>

It has been pointed out earlier<sup>2</sup> that Muslims had contact with Bengal through the Arab traders long before the Turkish conquest. But whether this contact could lead to the settlement of the Muslims in the interior in a place like Rampal is doubtful. The Faṭḥ Shāh inscription attached to the mosque does not refer to the saint; it is doubtful whether Malik Kāfūr, the builder of the mosque, knew about the saint or the tradition. But the story (except its earlier portion i.e. king Ballāl oppressed a Muslim for sacrificing a cow, who fled away to Makkah and appeared before Bābā Ādam) has been related by Ananda Bhaṭṭa in his *Ballāl Charita*<sup>3</sup>. Ballāl's enemy has been named Bāyadumba, obviously a corruption of Bābā Ādam, and the enemies have been called *Mlechchas* (a word frequently used by Hindu writers in this period to denote the Muslims) consisting of five thousand strong. The fate of the king and his family has been described as it is found in the tradition. In spite of Ananda Bhaṭṭa's corroboration, the historicity of the event cannot be determined, because even Ananda Bhaṭṭa's date has been a matter of controversy and many scholars challenge its authenticity.<sup>4</sup> N. N. Vasu records that there was one Ballāl Sena, a *Zamīndār* of note who rose to some prominence in Vikrampur towards the close of the 14th century A. D. He belongs to *vaidya* caste and he was different from Ballāl Sena of the Sena dynasty and it was at his instance that Ananda Bhaṭṭa wrote his book.<sup>5</sup> The date of this second Ballāl Sena saw the complete dismemberment of the Hindu power in East Bengal. If this identification of N. N. Vasu proves correct, Bābā Ādam's date may be put to the end of the 14th century A. D.

1. For inscription of this mosque, See, *J.A.S.B.* A.D. 1889, p. 23, Plate, V. See also *J.A.S.B.* 1873, p. 285.
2. See, *Supra*, p. 17.
3. *Ballāl Charita* by Ananda Bhaṭṭa, translated by H. P. Śāstrī, Chapters XXVI & XXVII.
4. *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Dacca University, A. D. 1943, pp. 239-41.
5. *J. A. S. B.* 1896, pp. 36-37.



(ii) **Shah Sultan Rumi**

The *dargāh* of the saint exists at Madanpur in the Netrakona sub-division of the district of Mymensingh. In 1829 the Government tried to confiscate the property attached to the *dargāh*, but the **Khādīm** produced a Persian document of 1671 A. D. and saved the property. The document claimed that **Shāh Sultān Rūmī** came to Madanpur in 445/A.D. 1053.<sup>1</sup> It is said that a certain Koch King accepted Islām at his hands and donated the village to the saint.<sup>2</sup> If this is true, the story must relate to a much later date as the Kochas became supreme in this region<sup>3</sup> long after the overthrow of the Senas in 13th century A. D.

(iii) **Shah Sultan Mahisawar**

He is lying buried at Mahasthan in Bogra district.<sup>4</sup> It is said that he was the son of a certain king of Balkh. He occupied the throne after the death of his father, but left home being disgusted of luxurious life. He became a disciple of **Shaykh** Tawfīq of Damascus, who ordered him to preach Islām in Bengal. He arrived at Hariram Nagar via Sandvip and killed a *Kālī* worshipper, king Balarāma, while the king's minister accepted Islām. Then he went to Mahasthan where he fought against king Paraśurāma and his sister Śilā Devī. The king was killed, while his sister drowned herself in the river Karatoya.<sup>5</sup> The account of his war with king Paraśurāma, with minor variations, has come down through tradition, recorded by various authors. He is called Māhīsawār or fish-rider. It is said that he came on a boat shaped like a fish or with the figure-head of a fish. It is difficult to identify

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1. Enamul Haq : *Baḡe Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A. D. 1935, p. 138.
  2. *Ibid*; *Bengal District Gazetteers : Mymensingh*, A. D. 1917, p. 152.
  3. E. Gait : *History of Assam*, Calcutta & Simla, A. D. 1926, pp. 46 ff.
  4. For tradition on this saint see, *J. A. S. B.* 1875, Part I, No. 2, pp. 183-186.  
*J. A. S. B.* 1878, Part I, No. I, pp. 88-95.  
*Bengal District Gazetteers : Bogra*, 1910, pp. 154-5.
  5. Enamul Haq : *Baḡe Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A. D. 1935, pp. 140-41.

him,<sup>1</sup> but people of the locality regard him as one of the great saints. In the year 1096/A. D. 1685 Emperor Aurangzeb issued a *sanad*<sup>2</sup> to Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭāhir, Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā confirming their right on the *Lākhirāj* land attached to the *dargāh* of the saint. The deed bears the seal of Kokultash Muḥaffar Jang and is in the form of an order to the officials, *Mutaʿaddis*, *Chawdhuris*, and *Qanungos* of *Pargana* Silbari in *Sarkār* Bazuha and directs them to respect the *Lākhirāj* of the saint Muḥammad *Māhīsawār*. This *sanad* refers to earlier *sanads* and *farmāns* granted by earlier Sulṭāns. The *dargāh* was an old one, but how old nobody can say, because the earlier *sanads* referred to by this one, have not come down to us.

(iv) **Makhdum Shah Dawlah Shahid**

He is lying buried in Shahzadpur in the district of Pabna.<sup>3</sup> Tradition connects him with Mu‘āz-bin-Jabal, a companion of the Prophet. According to tradition he came from Yaman, with the permission of his father Mu‘āz-bin-Jabal and accompanied by a large number of followers, some of whom were his near relatives. On way he met Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī who gave him two pigeons. Their ship

1. H. Beveridge (*J. A. S. B.* 1878, Part I, No. I, p. 91) writes as follows :—“The only genuine inference which we can make, I think, from Muhammad Shah’s history is, that he was the hero of a popular rising. He was not a fighting man apparently, and is never called a *Ghazi*, like the famous Ismail of Rangpur. Parasuram was probably a bigoted tyrant, and was killed by those of his subjects who had turned Muhammadans. This view is supported by the local tradition that Parasuram could not bear the sight of a Musalman. It seems also certain that Muhammad Shah was helped by Parasuram’s own subjects; for the tradition is, that one Harpal, the Raja’s sweeper, used to convey information to Muhammad.”
2. The text and the translation of the *sanad* will be found in *J. A. S. B.* 1878, Part I, No. 1, pp. 92-93.
3. For tradition regarding Makhdūm Shāh Dawlah, See, *J. A. S. B.* 1904, part I, No. 3, pp. 262-271.  
*Bengal District Gazetteers : Pabna*, 1923, pp. 121-126.

continued eastward sail till at last it struck near Shahzadpur. The king, who was the master of Bihar, gave resistance to the settlement of these foreigners; the saint, including some of his followers lost their lives in the battle that followed.

The date of the saint is not so old as that of Mu'āz bin Jabal who died in A.H. 17 or 18<sup>1</sup>, though he might have connection with the family of that companion of the Prophet. The date of Jalāl al-Dīn Bu'ḥārī is fixed from A. D. 1192-1291.<sup>2</sup> If there is any truth in the statement that he met Jalāl al-Dīn Bu'ḥārī, it may be supposed that Ma'ḥdūm Shāh Dawlah Shahīd came to Shahzadpur in the 13th century A.D. i.e. after the conquest of Lakhnawtī by Muḥammad Ba'ḥtyār Khaljī. The Shahzadpur mosque attached to the *dargāh*, is endowed with 722 (Seven hundred twenty two) *bighās* of rent-free lands, held direct from Government by trustees or *mutawallis*<sup>3</sup>.

(v) **Makhdum Shah Mahmud Ghaznawi**

Dr. Enamul Haq relates a tradition<sup>4</sup> according to which the *dargāh* of this saint exists in Mangalkot in Burdwan district. He is commonly known as Rāhā Pir. He fought with king Vikram-Keśarī of Mangalkot and preached Islām.

Beside these, the *dargāh* of Sulṭān Bāyazīd of Bisṭām<sup>5</sup> and the fountain attached to the name of Shaykh Farīd, occupy important position in Chittagong. How these names came to be prevalent in Chittagong is not known, because none of these saints seem to have ever come to Bengal. Dr. Enamul Haq<sup>6</sup> identifies the former with Shāh Sulṭān Māhisawār of Mahasthan (No. iii above), and the latter with Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Ganj-i-Shakar<sup>7</sup> (died A.D. 1269). He also suggests that Shaykh Farīd in his wandering, might have once come to Chittagong and Faridpur., which again, according to the

1. *J.A.S.B.* 1904, Part I, No. 3, p. 270.

2. John A. Subhan: *Op cit*, p. 236.

3. *J.A.S.B.* 1904, Part I, No. 3, p. 267.

4. *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A.D. 1935, p. 129.

5. For details on this saint see, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā' of Farīd al-Dīn 'Atṭār*, edited by R. A. Nicholson, London, A. D. 1905, Vol. I, pp. 144ff.

6. *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A.D. 1935, pp. 147-48,

7. *Ibid*, p. 148.

same author was after the name of Shaykh Farīd<sup>1</sup>. In the contemporary hagiological literature, there is no reference to Shaykh Farīd's visit to Bengal. In the Muslim coins, inscriptions and Bengali literature, Farīdpur was for a long time known as Fatḥābād,<sup>2</sup> a name given to it by the Muslims after its conquest by Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh. Even if Farīdpur or Shaykh Farīd's fountain in Chittagong were named after Shaykh Farīd, the visit of the saint was not necessary, his disciples might have given the name as well.

### (b) **Sufis of the Early Muslim Period**

Names of Ṣūfīs of this category are available from comparatively reliable sources like inscriptions and biographical works. Even then, our sources are meagre and knowledge scanty. But as far as can be gathered, they exerted great influence in the spread of Islām; some of them even interfered in the politics of the country. The Sulṭāns looked upon them with esteem and respect; they visited the shrines, built Khānqahs, tombs and mosques in their honour. Some of them even granted lands for the maintenance of their shrines.

#### (i) **Makhdūm Shaykh Jalal al-Din Tabrizi**

Among the saints of this category, Makhdūm Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī<sup>3</sup> seems to be the first to come to Bengal. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, in his *Mirāt al-Asrār*<sup>4</sup> calls him Abū'l Qāsim Makhdūm Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī. He was born in Tabriz in Persia and was the disciple first of Shaykh Abū Sa'īd Tabrizi and then after

1. *Ibid*, p. 149.
2. "Mint-towns in Mediaeval Bengal", by Mir Jahan in *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, third session, Dacca, A.D. 1953. Blochmann's contribution in *J.A.S.B.* 1873. Vijaya Gupta: *Padma Purāṇa*, edited by B. K. Bhattacharjee, Bānī Niketan, Barisal, p. 2.
3. Details about him will be obtained from :-  
 (a) *Ā'yn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. II, p. 406; (b) *A'ḥbār al-A'ḥyār*, p. 44; (c) *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, Vol. I, pp. 278 ff. (d) *Khūrshīd-i-Jāhān Numā* of Ilāhī Bakḥsh in *J.A.S.B.* 1895. There were three Ṣūfīs in Bengal with the name of Jalāl. For other two see later.
4. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī: *Mirāt al-Asrār*, Dacca University manuscript No. 16. A.R./143, Folio 19.

his death, of Shaykh Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardy.<sup>1</sup> Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Dehlawī has given an example of his extreme devotion to his teacher Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardy. Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardy often used to make pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah and Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī used to follow him. As Shaykh Shahāb al-Dīn was ill, he could not take cold food. Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī used to put a stove on his head, so that he could provide his teacher with hot food whenever he wanted.<sup>2</sup> When Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī reached Dehlī, he was received by Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Illutmiṣh (A.D. 1210-1236) and the Shaykh al-Islām Niẓām al-Dīn Ṣughrā.<sup>3</sup> The Sulṭān ordered that arrangement be made for his stay near the palace. At this the Shaykh al-Islām grew jealous, and brought a few charges against him, the most serious one is that of incontinence with a disreputable woman.<sup>4</sup> But he was in good terms with Khwājah Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtyār Kākī and Shaykh Bahā 'al-Dīn Zakariyā.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately the falsehood of the charge was proved.<sup>6</sup> But Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī proceeded towards Bengal.<sup>7</sup>

The spiritual exploit of the saint in Bengal has been the subject of Ṣekh Ṣubhodaya, (correctly Shaykh Ṣubhodaya)<sup>8</sup> a later work

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1. *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, p. 44.; *Ā'yn--i--Akbarī*, Vol. II, p. 406.; *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, Vol. I, p. 278; *Ghulām Aḥmad Khān: Sirāj al-Majālīs* (Urdu translation of *Khayr al-Majālīs*, a collection of *malfūzāt* of *Khwājah Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd*, Chirāgh-i-Dehlī), Dehlī, A. H. 1346, p. 55.
  2. *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, p. 44; *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, Vol. I, p. 478. Muslim Niẓāmī: *Irshād-i-Maḥbūb* (Urdu translation of *Fawā'id al-Fawād*, a collection of *malfūzāt* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā), Dehlī pp. 351-52.
  3. *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, Vol. I, p. 289.
  4. *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, pp. 44-45. *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, Vol. I, pp. 279 ff.; *Ghulām Aḥmad Khān: Khwājgān-i-Chisht* (including Urdu translation of *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn*, a collection of *malfūzāt* of Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtyār Kākī), pp. 129 ff
  5. *Ibid.*
  6. *Ibid.*
  7. *Ibid.*
  8. Edited by Sukumar Sen, Calcutta, A.D. 1927. Regarding

attributed to Halāyudha Mīra, a courtier of King Lakshmana Sena (died sometime after A.D. 1205),<sup>1</sup> the last king of the Sena dynasty. According to scholars the book is spurious, "prepared to establish a right to the *Bāis Hazarī* estates during the preparation of Todar Mal's rent-roll in Akbar's time".<sup>2</sup> According to this book, the saint came to Bengal before Muḥammad Bakhtyār's conquest, and foretold the impending Turkish attack on Lakshmana Sena's Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> It relates that he was born at Etawah (in modern U.P. in India), his father's name was Kāfūr and he received education with the help of one merchant named Ramaḍān Khān and left home at the complicity of that merchant. He came to Bengal in black robe, with a turban on head, a bowl and an 'aṣā (stick) in hand. On reaching Bengal he built a Khānqah, where he used to feed thousands of poor, destitutes and travellers<sup>4</sup>. A number of miracles are ascribed to him. According to Shaykh Ṣubhodaya, one night while the Shaykh was living in a forest, three tigers came, saluted him and went away<sup>5</sup>. According to Akhbār al-Akhyār, he converted at a look, a Hindu milkman of Badāyūn<sup>6</sup>. Seeing his miraculous activities, the king (Lakshmana Sena) built a *dargāh* and a mosque and made liberal grant of land for their maintenance<sup>7</sup>.

The stories in Shaykh Ṣubhodaya are fictitious. This strengthens the view that the book is spurious. In the first place, Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī was not born in Etawah, rather he was born in Tabriz in Persia.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, he could not have come to Bengal before Muḥammad Bakhtyār's conquest. According to *Fawā'id al-Fawā'id*, *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn* and all later works on the biography of the Ṣūfis,

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the authenticity of the book see, *Memoirs*, pp. 105-106.

1. *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Dacca University, 1943, p. 225.
2. *Memoirs*, pp. 105-106.
3. Shaykh Ṣubhodaya, edited by Sukumar Sen, Calcutta, A.D. 1927, p. 7.
4. *Ibid*, p. 91.
5. *Ibid*, p. 11.
6. Akhbār al-Akhyār, pp. 44-45.
7. Shaykh Ṣubhodaya, edited by Sukumar Sen, Calcutta, A.D. 1927, pp. 11 & 98-113.
8. Beside the hagiological literature referring him as al-Tabrizī an inscription categorically calls him جلال الدين شه تبريز مولد (See *Memoirs*, p. 102).

he came to Dehli, when Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish was on the throne<sup>1</sup>. So he could not have come to Dehli before A. D. 1210 when Sulṭān Iltutmish ascended the throne, not to speak of coming to Bengal before that date. (Lakshmana Sena died in A.D. 1206).

In Pandwah, there is a set of buildings which go by the name of *Baṛī dargāh* or Shrine of Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī<sup>2</sup>. These buildings are, (a) one *Jāmi' masjid*, (b) two *Chillākḥānahs*, (c) one *Tanūr Khānah* (kitchen), (d) one *bhāndār khānah* (store house) (f) Hājī Ibrāhīm's tomb and (g) *Salāmī darwāzah* (entrance gate). The original shrine was built by Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī Shāh (A.H. 742-43/1341-42) at the order of the saint in dream.<sup>3</sup> The original mosque was also probably built by him, which was repaired by Shāh Ni'mat Allāh in 1075/A.D. 1664<sup>4</sup>. The *Bhāndār Khānah* was erected by one Chānd Khān in 1084/A.D. 1673<sup>5</sup>. The inscription attached to the Lakshmana Sena Dālān shows that the *astānah* of Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī was repaired by one Muḥammad 'Alī of Burji in 1134/A.D. 1722.<sup>6</sup> The inscription in *Tanūr Khānah* shows that it was built by one Sa'ad Allāh in 1093/A.D. 1682.<sup>7</sup> The endowment to the shrine of the saint is known as *Bāis Hazārī* (containing twenty tow thousand *bighās* of land).<sup>8</sup>

There is another *chillākḥānah* at a place called Deotala, which was given the name of Tabrizābād after the name of the saint. Four inscriptions, referring to Tabrizābād have so far been discovered. They are detailed below :-

(a) Inscription of Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh,<sup>9</sup> dated 868/A.D. 1464. It records the erection of a

1. *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, pp. 44 ff.; *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, vol I, pp. 278 ff.; *Irshād-i-Maḥbūb, op cit*, pp. 255-56; *Fawā'd al-Sālikīn, op cit*, pp. 129 ff.
2. For details see, (a) *Khurshīd-i-Jahān Numā* of Ilāhī Bakhsh in *J.A.S.B.* 1895, pp. 200-202, (b) *Memoirs*, pp. 97-106.
3. *Riyāḍ*, pp. 94-95.
4. *Memoirs*, p. 100. See also *J.A.S.B.* 1895, p. 201.
5. For inscription see, *Memoirs*, p. 102.
6. *Ibid*, p. 103; *J.A.S.B.* 1895, p. 201.
7. *Memoirs*, p. 104.
8. *Ibid*, p. 106.
9. *Ibid*, p. 169 ; *J.A.S.B.* 1874, p. 296. Blochmann has wrongly read Tirūābād.

- Jāmi'* mosque at Tabrizābād by one Uluḡ Murābit Khān;
- (b) a second inscription of the same Sultān.<sup>1</sup> The date is broken. It records the erection of a mosque "in the blessed town of Tabrizābād, generally known as Deotala";
- (c) one inscription of Sultān Nāṣir al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh dated 934/A.D. 1527.<sup>2</sup> It records the erection of a mosque by one Shir Khān, "in the town of Shaykh Jalāl Muḥammad Tabrizi";
- (d) an inscription of Sulaymān Karrānī<sup>3</sup>, dated 978/A.D. 1571. It records the erection of a mosque "in the blessed town of Tabrizābād, known as Deotala".

The above discussion brings out the following important points. The saint was born at Tabriz and his name was Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī. His original name might have been Abū'l Qāsim, as found in *Mirāt al-Asrār*. From the names of his contemporary saints, Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, Bahā'al-Dīn Zakariyā, Shaykh al-Islām Nizām al-Dīn Ṣuḡhrā under Sultān Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish, it may be concluded that the saint lived towards the later part of the 12th and the earlier part of the 13th centuries A.D. The evidence of Shaykh Ṣubhodaya that he came to Bengal in the reign of Lakshmana Sena cannot be accepted, because he came to Dehli, not to speak of Bengal, sometimes after A.D. 1210 when Sultān Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish ascended the throne.

The saint exerted a great influence in Bengal, attracting a large number of people around him. Two places in Bengal that received prominence by his presence are Pandwah and Deotala, the latter received the name of Tabrizābād after his name. The construction of Tanūr Khānah, Bhāndār Khānah referred to earlier,

1. *J.A.S.B* 1874.

في القصبه المبارك تبرزباد عرف ديوتلا

2. *Memoirs*, p. 171.

[ في البلادشيخ ] في البلادشيخ جلال محمد تبريزي

is a mistake for [في بلاد الشيخ] (See, *Ibid*, p. 171, note).

3. *Ibid*, p. 170.

في القصبه المباركة تبرزباد عرف ديوتلا



denotes that the **Khānqah** of the saint made arrangements for feeding the people that came to visit the *dargāh*.

The date and place of death of the saint is a matter of controversy. According to *Aḳḥbār al-Aḳhyār*<sup>1</sup> he is lying buried in Bengal, but according to Abu'l Faḍl, he died in Deo Maḥal<sup>2</sup>, identified with Maldive islands<sup>3</sup>. According to *Khazīnat al-Aṣṣfiyā'* he died in 642/A.D. 1244,<sup>4</sup> while according to *Tadhkirat-i-Awliyā'-i-Hind*, an Urdu biography of the saints, he died in 622/A.D. 1225.<sup>5</sup>

1. *Aḳḥbār al-Aḳhyār*, p. 46.

2. *Ā'yn-i-Akbarī*, p. 406.

3. *J.A.S.B.* 1895, pp. 230 ff; 1873, p. 260.

4. *Khazīnat al-Aṣṣfiyā'*, Vol. I, p. 283; *J.A.S.B.* 1873, p. 560; John A. Subhan; *Op cit*, p. 331.

5. Mirzā Muḥammad Aḳḥtār Dehlawī: *Tadhkirat-i-Awliyā'-i-Hind*, Part I, p. 56.

Enamul Haq: *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A. D. 1935, p. 96. H. Beveridge (See, *J.A.S.B.* 1895, pp. 230 ff.) does not accept either of these dates. He is of the opinion that **Shayḳh** Jalāl Tabrizī lived upto the middle of the 14th century A.D. and Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī **Shāh** had an interview with the saint; that this saint and the one named **Shayḳh** Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī by Ibn Baṭṭūṭah with whom he (Ibn Baṭṭūṭah) met were one and the same person and further that he was contemporary of **Shayḳh** Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā (died A.D. 1325). In forwarding this view, Beveridge has been misled by two statements—one of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah and the other of the **Khādīms** of the saint's *dargāh* at Pandwah. According to the former, he met **Shayḳh** Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī in Kamrup (See, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, p. 215) and according to the latter the saint lived in Pandwah till 728/A.D. 1337 (See, *J.A.S.B.* 1895, p. 203). Beveridge was so much influenced by these two statements that he suggests that the words **بالمقابل** of the *Riyāḍ* (p. 94, in which the receipt of the order of the **Shayḳh** by Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī **Shāh** to erect the shrine has been discussed) mean face to face interview with the saint and not in dream.

(ii) **Makhdum al-Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Din Yahya Maneri**

The celebrated saint of Bihar Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh

Beveridge begins with a note, "Ibn Batuta's book is unfortunately confused, and wanting in precision", but his whole argument is based on the testimony of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, while the corroboration has been found in the Pandwah tradition. At the present stage of our knowledge, we can say with certainty that Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī of Pandwah and Shaykh Jalāl with whom Ibn Baṭṭūṭah met in Kamrup and whom he wrongly calls Tabrizī were two different persons. The inscriptions cited above clearly mention that Shaykh Jalāl of Pandwah was Tabrizī, while the inscriptions discovered from Sylhet (See, *J.A.S.B* 1873, p. 293) mention that Shaykh Jalāl of Sylhet was Kunyāyī. Some of these inscriptions were issued within an interval of a few years (Cf. *J.A.S.B.*, 1873, p. 293 and *Memoirs*, p. 191 for inscriptions of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh and Nuṣrat Shāh). If they were not two different persons, the inscriptions issued within an interval of only twenty two years would not have used two different epithets to their names. Secondly, we know that Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī was a disciple of Shaykh Abū Sa'īd Tabrizī and Shaykh Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardy and that he came to Dehli during the reign of Sulṭān Iltutmish when Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Ṣughrā was the Shaykh *al-Islām*. How could he then live upto A.D. 1346 when Ibn Baṭṭūṭah visited Bengal? Even if the testimony of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah that he lived for one hundred and fifty years is accepted, the identification is impossible. Because if he died in A.D. 1347 after a life of 150 years, his birth falls in A.D. 1197 which means that he was a mere boy when he came to Dehli, though the sources at our disposal assert that he already served two of his teachers, and was a friend of two other great Ṣūfīs, Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyā. Therefore Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's reference to Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī in Kamrup is a mistake for Shaykh Jalāl Kunyāyī,

Sharf al-Dīn son of Shaykh Yaḥyā came to Sunārgāwn<sup>1</sup> with his teacher Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah at the prime of his youth<sup>2</sup> and stayed there upto the age of thirty. Here he passed

as he committed in many other cases in connection with Bengal. (Cf. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1942, pp. 65-70). Thirdly, there is no justification in discarding the evidences of Abū'l Faḍl and Firishṭah, simply on the ground that they are not corroborated by the Pandwah tradition and the doubtful testimony of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah. Beveridge himself admits that Abū'l Faḍl and Firishṭah make him a contemporary of Quṭb al-Dīn Bakḥṭiyār Kākī and Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyā and thus put his date to early 7th century of the *Hijrah*, but expresses doubt on the ground that Abū'l Faḍl "puts him in his list not only after Bahauddin, but after his son and grandson and also after Nizamuddin Awliya, who died in 725 A.H.". If Beveridge had examined *Ā'yn-i-Akbarī* carefully, he would have found that Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nagawrī, who died in 644/A.D. 1246 (according to *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār* A.H. 605, see p. 38) has been enlisted by Abū'l Faḍl after those of Bahā' al-Dīn's son and grandson and of Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā. There is no reason to think that Abū'l Faḍl wrote in chronological order. Except Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, there is no other authority which refers to the presence of Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī in Kamrup. The acceptance of Pandwah tradition in preference to Abū'l Faḍl and the change of meaning of the text (as in the case of *بسم الله* of the *Riyāḍ*, pointed out earlier) to fit in with later evidences are simple questions of ingenuity.

1. For details on this saint see, (a) 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī: *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Āliyah Madrasah MS. Folio nos. 199 ff. (b) *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, pp. 117 ff. (c) *Calcutta Review*, 1939 pp. 195 ff. (d) Muhammad Ishaq: *India's Contribution to the Study of Ḥadīth Literature*, Dacca University, 1955, pp. 66 ff. (e) *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1. pp. 8 ff.
2. For Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah and the circumstances that led him to come to Bengal, See, *Supra*, Pp. 67-72.

his whole academic career and “evinced great interest in his studies and became proficient in all the branches of Muslim learning viz. the commentary on the Qur’ān, Tradition, Jurisprudence, Theology, Logic, Philosophy, Mathematics etc. and his works are full of eloquent suggestions on these points”<sup>1</sup>. Sharf al-Dīn also turned his attention towards Ṣūfīsm. He spent much of his time in meditation and spiritual exercises<sup>2</sup>.

Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn married the daughter of his teacher<sup>3</sup> and had three sons by his wife. After completing his studies, he returned to his native place. Bengal thus lost the services of a great saint who in his later life earned great fame in the world of the Ṣūfīs. But the ground for his greatness was prepared in Bengal.

The following anecdote points out the Shaykh’s thirst for knowledge. While in Sunārgāwn, he was so much absorbed in studies that he paid no heed to the letters he received from home. He put the letters in a bag and forgot all about them. After completing his educational career he opened the letters in which he found one containing the news of his father’s death<sup>4</sup>.

(iii) **Shaykh (Shah) Jalal of Sylhet**

This saint must be distinguished from Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī discussed before. But unfortunately in the local traditions, even in the account of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah and in his biography, *Suhayli-Yaman*, written in the last century, no proper distinction has been made between the two. On the evidence of inscriptions, we are justified in talking of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī on the one hand and Shaykh al-Mashā’ikh Makhdūm Shaykh Jalāl Mujarrad bin Muḥammad on the other<sup>5</sup>. This last saint is said to be Kunyāyī i.e. hailing from Kunyā in modern Turkey in another inscription<sup>6</sup>. Fortunately this epigraphical evidence is corroborated by the account of the saint given in *Gulzār-i-Abrār* of A.D. 1613, which is based on an earlier account of Shaykh ‘Alī Sher’s Sharḥ-i-Nuzhat al-Arwāḥ<sup>7</sup>. “He

1. *Calcutta Review*, 1939, p. 197.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Calcutta Review*, 1939, p. 197. Some say that he married a slave-girl. See, *Ibid.*, p. 197, note 2.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

5. *Memoirs*, p. 102; *J.A.S.B.* 1922, p. 413, Plate IX. *Dacca Review*, August, 1913, p. 154.

6. *J.A.S.B.* 1873, pp. 293-94. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. II, 1957, p. 207.

7. Ivanow: *Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in*

was a Turkistan born Bengali. He was a *Khalifah* of Sulṭān Sayyid Aḥmed Yesvī. It is said that one day he represented to his bright-souled *pir* that his ambition was that just as with the guidance of the master he had achieved a certain amount of success in the Higher (spiritual) *Jihad*, similarly with the help of his objectfulfilling courage he should achieve the desire of his heart in the Lesser (material) *Jihad*, and wherever there may be a Dār-ul-Ḥarb, in attempting its conquest he may attain the high rank of a *ghazi* or a *shahid*. The revered *pir* accepted his request and sent 700 of his senior fortunate disciples (may they be honoured!) along with him. Wherever they had a fight with the enemies, they unfurled the banner of victory. Even more remarkable was the fact that in these far-flung campaigns they had no means of subsistence, except the booty, but they lived in splendour. Whenever any valley or cattle were acquired, they were entrusted to one of the accompanying saints and he was charged with the responsibility of propagation and teaching of Islam. In short, he (Shaikh Jalāluddīn) reached Sirhat (Sylhet), one of the areas of the province of Bengal, along with 313 persons. Rājā Gaur Govind who was the master of one lakh foot soldiers and many thousand horsemen, was the ruler of that place. He was very powerful as compared with this small group, which in comparison with his huge army was not even like salt in bread. When, however, the battle was joined, the manifestation of the verse (With the grace of God the few attained victory over the many) became visible and the idolater took to flight, taking with him only his life to Hell. All the region fell into the hands of the conquerors of the spiritual and the material worlds. Shaikh Mujarrad, making a portion for everybody, made it their allowance and permitted them to get married. In that distribution the town fell to the share of Shaikh Nūrul Hudā Abul Karāmat Sai'di Ḥusainī. He became a householder, begot children and Shaikh 'Alī Sher, who was one of his descendants, has narrated this account in the introduction of his commentary on *Nuzhatul Arwah*"<sup>1</sup>. Mr. Ikram<sup>2</sup> points out that "Shaikh Jalāl was not a native of Yemen and did not belong to Suhrawardī order. His

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*the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta. Asiatic Society work No. 240, pp. 96-108.

*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. II, 1957, p. 64.

1. *Gulzār-i-Abrār*, quoted and translated in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. II, 1957, p. 66.
2. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. II, 1957, p. 68,

Spiritual guide, Sayyid Aḥmed Yesvī was an important saint of the order of the **Kh**wājās of Turkistan ( which later developed into the Naqshbandī order) and finds prominent mention in *Rashhat* of Mulla Ḥusain Wa'iz Kashifi. He was a contemporary of Ḥaḍrat 'Azīzan **Kh**wājā 'Alī Ramtini, who died in 715 A.H. (1315-6 A.D.). Kashifi's account of **Kh**wājā 'Alī Ramtini shows that he lived in a period of great confusion and disorder—presumably owing to the Mongol invasion—and Shaikh Jalāl's urge for *Jihad* may very well have been a reaction against those conditions and Mongol aggression in Muslim lands".

It is difficult to decide which of the **Shaykhs** Ibn Baṭṭūṭah met. As we have seen<sup>1</sup>, the earlier one i.e. **Shaykh** Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī died in the year A.D. 1225; so he could not meet him. On the other hand this saint from Sylhet is Kunyāyī and not Tabrizī. It seems therefore that there is some confusion in the account given by Ibn Baṭṭūṭah. He also attributes in his book several miracles to the saint that he met<sup>2</sup>. The *dargāh* of the **Shaykh** in Sylhet is daily visited by a large number of people even to-day. People of East Bengal remember him in the popular ballads<sup>3</sup>.

(iv) **Shaykh Akhī Siraj al-Dīn 'Uthman**

He was one of the famous **Kh**alīfahs of **Shaykh** Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā of Dehli<sup>4</sup>. Akhī Sirāj, in his boyhood came to **Shaykh** Niẓām al-Dīn, who handed him over to Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī to teach<sup>5</sup>. The teacher gave him the title of 'Uṭhmān<sup>6</sup>. He read *Kāfiyah*, *Mufuṣṣal*, *Qudūrī* and *Majma' al Baḥrayn* under Mawlānā Rukn al-Dīn.<sup>7</sup> **Shaykh** Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā used to call him *ā'ina'-i-Hindūstān* (Mirror of Hindūstān), and asked him to preach Islām in Bengal<sup>8</sup>. After the death of his teacher he came to Bengal and began preach-

1. See, *Supra*, p. 96.

2. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, pp. 217 ff.

3. *J.A.S.B.*, 1873, pp. 280-281. *Dacca Review*, 1913-14, p. 142. Enamul Haq: *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A. D. 1935, p. 98.

4. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 86. Amīr **Kh**ūrd: *Siyar al-Awliyā*, Urdu translation of **Gh**ulām Aḥmad **Kh**ān, Muslim Press, Dehli, pp. 287-88

5. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 87; Amīr **Kh**ūrd: *op cit*, p. 288.

6. *Ibid*, p. 87; Amīr **Kh**ūrd: *op cit*, p. 288

7. *Ibid*; Amīr **Kh**ūrd: *op cit*, p. 288,

8. *Ibid*,

ing in Gaur and Pandwah. He had a number of disciples in Gaur and Pandwah, chief among whom was Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq<sup>1</sup>.

It is said that he buried the robes, that he received from his teacher, at a place in Gaur, and ordered his disciples to bury him near the grave of his robes<sup>2</sup>. The Shaykh died in Gaur, in A.H. 758/A.D. 1357<sup>3</sup>. His tomb is lying at the north-west corner of the *Sāgar dighī* in Gaur<sup>4</sup>. The following inscriptions recording the erection of a gateway to his tomb have so far been discovered :-

- (a) Inscription of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh dated 916/A.D. 1510<sup>5</sup>.
- (b) Inscription of Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh dated 931/A.D. 1524-25<sup>6</sup>.

Shaykh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn originally came from Badāyūn<sup>7</sup>, but he had long connections with Bengal, because, his mother used to live here. Before he was finally ordered to start for Bengal for preaching Islām, he came here to see his mother<sup>8</sup>.

The death anniversary of the saint is celebrated annually on 'Īd al-Fiṭr day. The heraldic symbol (*Jhāndā*) and the *Pānjā* (reproduction of the hand) of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam are sent to his *dargāh* from Pandwah as a mark of respect to the saint on this occasion<sup>9</sup>.

(v) **Makhdum Jahaniyan Jahangasht**

A little to the south of the tomb of Shaykh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn there is a mosque called *Jhan Jhaniyā Masjid* by the local people. 'Ābid 'Alī Khān takes the name to be a corruption of Jahāniyān and is of the opinion that the mosque was named after Makhdūm Jahāniyān Jahāngasht<sup>10</sup>. An inscription attached to the gateway records the erection of the mosque by Sulṭān Ghīyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh (A.D. 1533-38)<sup>11</sup>. Tradition connects two other relics to the sacred

1. *Ibid*, pp. 87 & 143.
2. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 87. Amīr Khūrd: *op cit*, p. 288.
3. *Ibid*; Khāzinat al-Aṣfiyā', Vol. I, p. 358.
4. *Memoirs*, p. 90.
5. *Memoirs*, p. 90.
6. *Memoirs*, p. 91.
7. Khāzinat al-Aṣfiyā', Vol. I, pp. 357-358; *Memoirs*, p. 91.
8. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 86; *Memoirs*, p. 91.
9. *Memoirs*, p. 91.
10. *Ibid*, p. 92.
11. *Ibid*, p. 93.

memory of this saint— *Jhāndā* (heraldic device mounted on a staff) and the *Qadam Rasūl* (the stone representation of the foot-print of the Prophet.) The first is preserved in the shrine of Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī at Pandwah and the second is preserved in the famous *Qadam Rasūl* building at Gaur<sup>1</sup>.

His original name was Mīr Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn. He was given the title of *Jahāniyān Jahāngash*t and the word Bukhārī from the name of his birth-place was appended after his name. He was the grandson of Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Surkhpush and son of Sayyid Aḥmad Kabīr<sup>2</sup>. It is said that he travelled round the world several times and on one such occasion he came to Pandwah<sup>3</sup>. He is said to have joined the funeral ceremony of Sayyid 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq and actually led the prayer<sup>4</sup>. But the available materials do not substantiate this view. According to *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*<sup>5</sup>, Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq died in A.H. 800, while the last date of Makhdūm Jahāniyān Jahāngash)t is put to A.H. 785, thus indicating that Makhdūm Jahāniyān predeceased 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq. Many Muslims, including some royal officials became his disciples<sup>6</sup>. He died in A.D. 1383 and is now lying buried at Uchh<sup>7</sup>.

(vi) **Shaykh Raja Biyabani**

According to the *Riyāḍ*<sup>8</sup>, Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh (A.D. 1342-57), the founder of the Ilyās Shāhī dynasty in Bengal attended the funeral of this saint *in cognito*, at a time when he was besieged in the Ikdālah fort<sup>9</sup> by Sulṭān Firūz Shāh Tughluq of Dehli.

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1. *Memoirs*, p. 64.
  2. John A. Subhan: *Sufism, its Saints and Shrines*, Lucknow, 1938, p. 236-37. An account of this saint is available in *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*.
  3. John A. Subhan; *Op cit*, p. 237.
  4. *Memoirs*, p. 109.
  5. *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, p. 143.
  6. Enamul Haq: *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A.D. 1935, p. 97.
  7. John A. Subhan; *op cit*, p. 238; H. E. Stapleton in *Memoirs*, p. 109 note.
  8. *Riyāḍ*, p. 97.
  9. For identification of Ikdālah fort, See, *J.A.S.B.*, 1922 and *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 107, note 1.



(vii) **Shaykh 'Ala al-Haqq**

**Shaykh 'Alā 'al-Haqq**<sup>1</sup> was the son of **Shaykh As'ad** of Lahore. He claimed to be a *Qurayshī Hāshimī* and traced his descent from **Khālīd bin al-Walīd**.<sup>2</sup> He was the spiritual disciple of **Shaykh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān**.<sup>3</sup> 'Alā' al-Haqq was very much proud of his high ancestry. **Shaykh Akhī**, when he received order from his teacher **Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā**, to go to Bengal, represented that he was no match for 'Alā' al-Haqq. **Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā** replied that 'Alā' would in time become his (**Shaykh Akhī**'s) pupil. 'Alā' al-Haqq is said to have taken the title of *Ganji-i-Nabat* (store of refined sugar) for which **Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā** cursed him, "May God strike him dumb". 'Alā' al-Haqq could free himself from the curse only after he became the humble pupil of **Akhī**.<sup>4</sup> **Shaykh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn** used to travel on horse-back; 'Alā' al-Haqq followed him with a hot pot on his head, which made him bald. In order to humiliate 'Alā' al-Haqq before his relatives who were occupying high government posts, **Shaykh Akhī** used to take him in this condition to the houses of his relatives.<sup>5</sup>

One of the miracles attributed to **Shaykh 'Alā' al-Haqq** is that he punished two *faqīrs*, who visited him and vexed him with un-becoming words. One was killed by an ox, another got an attack of orchitis, according to words uttered by the saint.<sup>6</sup> It is said that he spent a large sum of money in feeding the pupils, beggars and wanderers. The **Sulṭān** grew jealous because the state treasury also could not have borne such a huge expenditure. He ordered the saint to leave the capital and to go to **Sunārgāwn**. In **Sunārgāwn**, the saint spent twice the amount. Nobody knew wherefrom this huge sum came,

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1. An account of **Shaykh 'Alā' al-Haqq** will be found in (a) *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, (b) 'Abd al-Rahmān Chishtī : *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Āliyah Madrasah MS. (c) *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā*, Vol. I, (d) *Khurshīd-i-Jahān Numā* in *J.A.S.B.* 1895, pp. 206 ff. (e) *J.A.S.B.* 1873, pp. 261-62, (f) *Memoirs*, pp. 108 ff.
  2. *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā*, Vol. I, p. 368.
  3. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 143 ; *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā*, Vol. I, p. 368.
  4. *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā*, Vol. I, pp. 368-69.
  5. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 143.
  6. *Ibid.*

his possession included only two gardens, which also later on he gave to a beggar<sup>1</sup>.

He is lying buried at *Chhotī dargāh* in Pandwah, by the side of his more illustrious son Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam. According to *Akhbār al-Akh-yār*, he died in A.H. 800/A.D. 1398,<sup>2</sup> while according to a book in the possession of the *Khādims* of the shrine, he died in 786/A.D. 1384<sup>3</sup>.

Sayyid ‘Alā’ al-Ḥaqq left a large number of his disciples, of whom the most illustrious are, (a) his own son *Shaykh* Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam and (b) Mīr Sayyid *Ashraf* Jahāngīr Simnānī.

(viii) **Shaykh Nur Quṭb ‘Ālam**

He was the son and spiritual successor<sup>4</sup> of *Shaykh* ‘Alā’ al-Ḥaqq<sup>5</sup>. According to the *Riyāḍ*, he was a fellow student of Sulṭān *Ghiyāth* al-Dīn A‘zam *Shāh* and received education from Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nagawrī<sup>6</sup>.

*Shaykh* Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam assumed spiritual leadership at a time when Bengal was passing through a serious political disturbance. One Hindu noble, Kāns (Gaṇeśa) usurped the power and perpetrated oppression on the Muslims including the Muslim *Shaykhs* and divines. The situation came to such a point that the *Shaykh* was compelled to write a letter to Sulṭān Ibrāhīm *Sharqī* of Jawnpūr imploring his assistance<sup>7</sup>. The Sulṭān (Ibrāhīm *Sharqī*) was also encouraged to invade Bengal and to punish Gaṇeśa, by Mīr Sayyid *Ashraf* Jahāngīr Simnānī, a disciple of Sayyid ‘Alā’ al-Ḥaqq, who was then in Jawnpūr<sup>8</sup>. Sulṭān Ibrāhīm marched with a huge army and

1. *Akhbār al-Akh-yār*, p. 143 ; *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā’*, Vol. I, pp. 368-69.
2. *Akhbār al-Akh-yār*, p. 143.
3. *Memoirs*, p. 109 ; *Khurshīd-i-Jahān Numā* in *J.A.S.B* 1895, pp. 206-7.
4. An account of Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam will be found in (a) *Ā’yn-i-Akbarī*, (b) *Akhbār al-Akh-yār*, (c) ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī : *Mirāt al-Asrār*, ‘Āliyah Madrasah MS., (d) *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā’*, (e) *Khurshīd-i-Jahān Numā* in *J.A.S.B*, 1895, (f) *Riyāḍ al-Salāṭīn*, (g) *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua*, and (h) *J.A.S.B*. 1873, p. 262.
5. *Akhbār al-Akh-yār*, p. 152.
6. *Riyāḍ*, p. 108. *Supra*, p. 58.
7. *Bengal: Past and Present*, 1948, pp. 32 ff.; *Riyāḍ*, p. 112.
8. *Bengal: Past and Present*, 1948, pp. 32 ff.

encamped at Sarāi Firūzpūr. Rājā Kāns (or Gaṇeṣa) became frightened, humbled himself before Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam, begged him to pardon his offences and to remove Sulṭān Ibrāhīm's domination over the country. The saint demanded that the Rājā should turn a Muslim. The Rājā agreed but his wife forbade him. The Rājā then brought his twelve years old son Jadū and requested the saint to convert him. The saint converted the boy who was made the king with the title of Jalāl al-Dīn. The saint then requested Sulṭān Ibrāhīm to leave Bengal. An angry dispute followed in course of which the saint cursed both the Sulṭān and his Qāḍī. Sulṭān Ibrāhīm went back to Jawnpūr, but it is said that both the Sulṭān and the Qāḍī died the same year<sup>1</sup>. This description, however exaggerated it may be, shows that Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam was busy not only with the spiritual exercises but that he also interfered in the politics of the country, especially when the interest of Islām and the Muslims was in jeopardy.

It has been pointed out earlier that the Shaykh received his spiritual training from his father. It is said that, in order to practise the virtue of humility, he used to do all sorts of lowly works, such as the washing of clothes of beggars and wanderers, carrying fuel and water, keeping water constantly hot for ablution, sweeping the cell of his father and cleaning the privies attached to the house<sup>2</sup>. He also refused the invitation of his worldly brother A'zam Khān who was a *Wazīr*, to accept an office in the court<sup>3</sup>.

He is lying buried at *Chhotī dargāh* in Pandwah. The sources differ widely on the date of the saint's death. An inscription of the time of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd I (A.D. 1437-1459) records the death of a saint on Monday, 28th Dhī'l-Hijja 863/A.D. 1459<sup>4</sup>. *Ā'yn-i-*

1. *Riyāḍ*, pp. 112-114. The evidence of coins shows that Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī did not die the same year but continued to rule till 844/A.D. 1440 (See, H. N. Wright : *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, Vol II, Oxford, A.D. 1907, p. 211.) that is long after the alleged incident.
2. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, pp. 152 ff.  
*Khāzīnat al-Aṣfiyā*, Vol. I, pp. 392 ff.
3. *Memoirs*, pp. 106-7.
4. *Memoirs*, p. 115, Plate VI.

*Akbarī* puts the date 808/A.D. 1405<sup>1</sup>, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*<sup>2</sup> 813/A.D. 1410, *Khazīnat al-Aṣṣfiyā*<sup>3</sup>, on the authority of *Tadhkirat al-Aṣṣṭāb*, 851/A.D. 1447<sup>3</sup>, while *Mirāt al-Asrār* and the book in possession of the *Khādīms* of the shrine put the date 818/A.D. 1415<sup>4</sup>.

This last date is generally accepted today. The chronogram for this date is نور بنور شد (light went into light). But the wordings of the inscription of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh I, referred to above, lead us to believe that the saint referred to in the inscription was no other than Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam. The inscription is as follows :- "Our revered Master, the teacher of *Imāms*, the proof of the congregation, the sun of the Faith, the testimony of Islām and of the Muslims who bestowed advantage upon the poor and the indigent, the guide of saints and of such as wish to be guided, passed away from this transient world to the everlasting mansion on the 28th Dhī'l-Hijja, a Monday of the year 863 (1459 A.D.) during the reign of the Sulṭān of Sulṭāns, the Protector of the countries of the Faithful, Nāṣir al-Duniyā wa'l-Dīn Abū 'l-Muẓaffar Maḥmūd Shāh the Sultān"<sup>5</sup>. 'Ābid 'Alī Khān conjectures that this was applied to Shaykh Zāhid, the grandson and successor of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam<sup>6</sup>. But they are applicable more to the high reputation of

1. *Āyn-i-Akbarī*, p. 412.

2. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 154.

3. *Khazīnat al-Aṣṣfiyā*, Vol. I, p. 392.

4. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī: *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Āliyah Madrasah MS. Folio No. 198; *J.A.S.B.* 1895, p. 207; *Memoirs*, p. 111.

5. *Memoirs*, p. 115, Plate VI.

وانتقل معقد ومنا العلامة استاذالائمة برهان الامة شمس  
الامة حجة الاسلام والمسلمين نافع الفقراء والمساكين  
مرشد الواصلين والمسترشدين من دارالفناء الى دارالبقاء  
الثامن العشرين من ذى الحجة في يوم الاثنين وكان ذلك  
في السنة الثالث والستين وثما نمأ ته في عهد السلطان  
السلطين حامى بلاداهل اسلام المسلمين ناصرالدنيا  
والدين ابوالمظفر محمود شاه سلطان -

6. *Ibid*, p. 115.

Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam rather than to the comparatively less renowned Shaykh Zāhid. Moreover ‘Ābid ‘Alī Khān himself says that the death of Shaykh Zāhid took place on the 17th Rabi‘I, 860/A.D. 1455<sup>1</sup>. The chronogram of his death is حب دنیا چیزے نداشت (“He had no love for the world”). The epithets applied to the saint in this inscription are comparable to those applied to Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam in an inscription of A.D. 1493. It says<sup>2</sup>, “In this Ṣūfī building the tomb of the Pole of Poles was built, who was slain by the love of the All-giver, the Shaykh of Shaykhs, Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Nūr al-Ḥaqq wa’l-Shar‘a wa’l-Dīn Sayyid Quṭb ‘Ālam – may Allāh purify his beloved heart and may Allāh illuminate his grave”. The *Mirāt al-Asrār* says that both Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad (died 836/A.D. 1432) and his son and successor Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Shāh (836/1432 to 839/A.D. 1435) became disciples of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam<sup>3</sup> though the author puts his death in 818/A.D. 1415. What has been discussed above leads us to conclude that probably his death occurred not in A.D. 1415 but long after, though at the present state of our knowledge the date cannot be satisfactorily established.

It has been pointed out earlier that ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh granted a number of villages for maintaining the alms-house attached to the *dargāh* of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam<sup>4</sup>. The Sulṭān used to come every year from Ikdālah to Pandwah to visit the shrine of the saint<sup>5</sup>. Shāh Shujā‘ (son of Mughal Emperor Shāh

1. *Memoirs*, p. 118.

2. *Ibid*, p. 114.

بنی فی البیت الصوفیة الروضة لقطب الاقطاب قتل محبة وهاب  
شیخ المشائخ حضرت شیخ نورالحق والشرع والدين سيد قطب  
عالم قدس الله سره العزيز ونور الله قبره -

The inscription was issued in the reign of Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh.

3. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī: *Mirāt al-Asrār*, ‘Āliyah Madrasah MS. Folio No. 184.
4. Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad Bakhshī: *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī*, Vol. III, Bibliotheca Indica, pp. 270-71; *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, pp. 301-2.
5. *Ibid*. According to ‘Ābid ‘Alī Khān, (*Memoirs*, p. 113), ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh made a grant of forty seven villages.

Jahān) made a fresh grant to Shaykh Kabīr in the year 1058/A.D. 1648<sup>1</sup>.

Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam had two sons, Shaykh Rafaq al-Dīn and Shaykh Anwar<sup>2</sup>. Both of them received their spiritual education from their father. The former was celebrated for his humility and used to say that he was of less account than a market-dog<sup>3</sup>. The latter died a martyr in Sunārgāwn in the hands of Rājā Gaṇeśa<sup>4</sup>. Another spiritual disciple of the Shaykh was Shaykh Ḥusām al-Dīn Manikpūrī<sup>5</sup>.

(ix) **Mir Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani**

It has been pointed out earlier that he was a disciple of Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq. He came to Bihar, just when the renowned saint Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Mancrī had died in 782/A.D. 1380. He passed on to Bengal and stayed there for six years under the celebrated Bengal saint Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq. Then he went back to Jawnpūr where he finally settled and laid the foundation of the famous Khānqah of Kachaucha Sharif.<sup>6</sup>

His love for the land of his spiritual teacher is known from his letter to Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jawnpūr. This letter was written in reply to one written to him by the Sulṭān seeking his opinion on his intended invasion of Bengal at the instance of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam. Among other things, he writes as follows :-“If the sons and descendants of these holy personages (earlier he gave a list of such holy personages<sup>7</sup>), and particularly the son and family members of Hazrat Qutub Alam, are rescued from the clutches of the black infidels with your aid and assistance and the courage and bravery of your troops it would be an excellent thing.....I, the afflicted Darwash of the Alai order congratulate you on the firm resolve that you have made and I offer my prayer for the deliverance of Bengal from the hands of the infidels. I have already recited

1. *Memoirs*, p. 113.
2. *Memoirs*, p. 111; Khāzīnat al-Aṣfiyā', Vol. I, p. 393.
3. Akhbār al-Akhyār, p. 165; Khurshid-i-Jahān Numā in *J.A.S.B.* 1895, p. 208; *Memoirs*, p. 118.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Akhbār al-Akhyār, p. 176.
6. Akhbār al-Akhyār, p. 166; *Bengal: Past and Present*, 1948, Pp. 34-35.
7. Quoted elsewhere in this Chapter. See, *Supra*, p. 85.

the Fatiha prayer to God to render justice. As your object and that of your nobles is to free the land of Bengal and to champion the cause of Islam, if God wills you will achieve your aims in the best manner possible.....As the firm resolve and the sound judgment of the King are directed towards helping the cause and satisfying the heart's desire of the son of Hazrat Makhdum you should not neglect showing favour to that dear holy personage and you should never refrain from meeting him and fighting for his cause"<sup>1</sup>.

(x) **Shaykh Badar al-Islam**

He was a contemporary of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam. The *Riyāḍ* relates the following story about him. One day he sat before Kāns (Rājā Gaṇeṣa) without saluting him. When he was asked the reason for this conduct, he gave an evasive reply. Another day, the Rājā sat in a low room having a narrow entrance door and summoned the Shaykh before him. The Shaykh could realise the purpose. He first put his foot inside the room and then entered into it, without having had to bow his head. The Rājā got furious and had the Shaykh instantaneously put to death<sup>2</sup>. Mir Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī<sup>3</sup> in his letter to Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jawnpūr refers to two Shaykhs, Ḥaḍrat Bād 'Ālam and Badr 'Ālam Zāhidī. The latter has been identified by Hasan Askari<sup>4</sup> with Shaykh Badar al-Dīn Zāhidī, son of Khwājah Faḫr al-Dīn Zāhidī, who was a contemporary of Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī. The mausoleum of Shaykh Badar al-Dīn Zāhidī is at Bihar. Probably the former may be identified with Shaykh Badar al-Islām.

(xi) **Shaykh Husayn Dhukkarposh**

From the *Bayāz* of Mullā Taqyyā<sup>5</sup>, we know that Shaykh Husayn Dhukkarposh was a Khalīfah of Sayyid 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq. While Rājā Gaṇeṣa was perpetrating oppression on the Muslims he also shared the same. His son was slain by Rājā Gaṇeṣa<sup>6</sup>. Mir Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī gave him consolation in one of his letters.

1. Quoted by Syed Hasan Askari in *Bengal: Past and Present*, 1948, p. 36.
2. *Riyāḍ*, pp. 110-11.
3. *Bengal: Past and Present*, 1948, p. 36.
4. *Ibid*, note 28.
5. Quoted by Syed Hasan Askari in *Bengal: Past and Present*, 1948, p. 36, note 31.
6. *Ibid*, p. 37.

It reads as follows :- “Those who traverse the path of God have many calamities to suffer from. They have to undergo many trials and tribulations ..... It is hoped through the spiritual grace of the souls of Suharwardia and Ruhania saints of the past that in near future that kingdom of Islam will be freed from the hands of the luckless non-believers. The royal army is being sent from this side to render assistance and the result will soon become apparent. My Makhdum Zada (the son of my spiritual guide), “the blossoms of the garden of Alai and Khalidia house” may rest assured of the help of this Darwesh”<sup>1</sup>.

Shaykh Husayn Dhukkarposh (dust-ridden) maintained his Khānqah at Purnea<sup>2</sup>. He was the son of Makhdūm Shāh Husayn and Bibī Kamāl, the female saint of Kako in the Gaya district. She was the daughter of Ḥadhrat Sulaymān Langar-Zamīn and of Bibī Hadda, who was one of the four daughters of the famous Jethuli saint, Makhdūm Shahāb al-Dīn Pir Jagjot<sup>3</sup>.

(xii) **Shaykh Anwar**

It has been pointed out earlier that Shaykh Anwar, son of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam was a martyr at the hands of Rājā Gaṇeśa. He was famous for his generosity and used to have sheep fattened and killed for the *faqīrs*, though he did not touch the meat himself<sup>4</sup>. About his death, the *Riyāḍ* states as follows :- When the cruelties of Kāns (Gaṇeśa) passed all bounds, Shaykh Anwar complained to his father against the tyrant and said, ‘It is a matter of regret that in spite of such a holy saint of the time as yourself, Musalmāns should be oppressed and ground down by the hand of this infidel’. Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam was at that time absorbed in prayer and meditation. On hearing the utterance of his son he got enraged and replied in a fit of anger, ‘This tyranny shall cease only, when thy blood shall be shed on the earth’. Shaykh Anwar knew well that whatever came out from the lips of his holy father, was sure to pass<sup>5</sup>. It so happened that Rājā Gaṇeśa banished both Shaykh Anwar and Shaykh Zāhid (grandson of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam) to Sunārgāwn. There inhuman cruelties were perpetrated on them, so that they might

1. *Bengal: Past and Present*, 1948, p. 37.

2. *Ibid*, p. 37, note 32.

3. *Ibid*.

4. Khurshīd-i-Jahān Numā, in *J.A.S.B.*, 1895, p. 208.

5. *Riyāḍ*, pp. 115-116.



divulge the whereabouts of the hidden treasures of their fore-fathers. Shaykh Anwar was actually murdered. It is said that on the very day and the very moment when Shaykh Anwar was murdered at Sunārgāwn, and his sacred blood was shed on the earth, Rājā Kāns passed away from this world<sup>1</sup>.

(xiii) **Shaykh Zahid**

Shaykh Zāhid was the son of Shaykh Rafaq al-Dīn and grandson of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam. He was also banished by Rājā Gaṇeśa to Sunārgāwn along with Shaykh Anwar. About him Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam said, "The drum of the virtues of Zāhid shall resound till resurrection-day"<sup>2</sup>. He was also oppressed by the officials of Rājā Gaṇeśa to divulge the whereabouts of the treasures of his forefathers. When they attempted to take the life of Zāhid, the latter stated that in a certain village a large cauldron was hidden. The cauldron was found out but it contained only one gold-coin. On enquiry Shaykh Zāhid said, "Apparently some one has stolen it". But it is said that it was the outcome of miracle<sup>3</sup>. After the death of Kāns (Gaṇeśa), when Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad (the converted son of Gaṇeśa) assumed sovereignty he "called back the saint Shaykh Zāhid from Sunārgāwn and paid him every respect and honour, and rendering him services, was very often in attendance upon him"<sup>4</sup>.

Shaykh Zāhid died in 860/A.D. 1455. He is lying buried at Pandwah in the precincts of the *Chhoti dargāh*<sup>5</sup>.

(xiv) **Shaykh Husam al-Din Manikpuri**

He was a disciple and *Khalīfah* of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam<sup>6</sup>. He was a great *Ṣūfī* of his time. His *malfūzāt* have been compiled by his followers and given the name of *Rafīq al-'Ārefīn*<sup>7</sup>. It is said that after he received his spiritual education from his teacher, he

1. *Ibid.* It is not possible to examine the veracity of this statement because no other source throws light on the date of their death.
2. *Riyāḍ*, pp. 115-16.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Memoirs*, p. 118.
6. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 176; *Ā'yn-i-Akbarī*, p. 371.
7. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 176.

observed fast for seven years<sup>1</sup>. He died in 882/A.D. 1477<sup>2</sup> at Manikpur in U.P. India.

(xv) **Badi' al-Din Shah Madar**

His original name was Badi' al-Din,<sup>3</sup> and *Shāh Madār* was his title. He was the son of Abū Ishāq *Shāmī* of Syria, who was a direct descendant of *Ḥaḍrat Hārūn* (brother of *Ḥaḍrat Mūsā*)<sup>4</sup>. According to *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, he did not take meal for twelve years and dressed himself with one piece of cloth. He used to cover his face with a veil, because he was so beautiful that people had to prostrate before him at his look<sup>5</sup>. He was born in A.H. 715/A.D. 1315 in Syria and died in A.H. 840/A.D. 1436, on 18th Jamādī I at Makanpūr in the district of Kānpūr in the reign of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm *Sharqī*<sup>6</sup>.

Badi' al-Din *Shāh Madār* visited various places in India. He visited Gujrat, Ajmir, Kanauj, Kalpi, Jawnpūr, Lucknow and Kānpūr<sup>7</sup>. There is no direct evidence of his visit to Bengal, but some scholars believe so on the basis of a reference to the invocation of "Dam Mādār" in "Niranjaner Rushma" of *Śūnya Purāṇa*<sup>8</sup>. The chapter is said to be a 15th century interpollation<sup>9</sup>.

The influence of the *Madāriyah* saints in Bengal is visible even to-day. Dr. Enamul Haq thinks that Madaripur Sub-division

1. *Khazīnat al-Aṣṣiyā*, Vol. I, p. 400.
2. *Ibid*, p. 401. Prof. Hasan Askari, on the authority of *Akhbār al-Aṣṣiyā* puts his death on 15th *Ramaḍān* 853 A.H. (*Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference, Dacca Session, A.D. 1953, Reprint Section, p. 2*).
3. A biography of the saint has been written by *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān *Chishtī* in A.H. 1064. The title of the book is *Mirāt-i-Madārī*. There is a manuscript in the Dacca University Library, MS. No. 217.
4. 'Abd al-Raḥmān *Chishtī*: *Mirāt-i-Madārī*, Dacca University manuscript, Folio, 3.
5. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 164.
6. 'Abd al-Raḥmān *Chishtī*: *Mirāt-i-Madārī*, Dacca University MS. Folio 81.
7. 'Abd al-Raḥmān *Chishtī*: *Mirāt-i-Madārī*, Dacca University MS. Folios 55 ff.
8. *Śūnya Purāṇa*, edited by C. C. Bandopadhyay, Calcutta, B.S. 1336, pp. 232-36.
9. *Ibid*, Preface by Dr. M. Shahidullah.

in Faridpur district and Madarbari and Madarsha in Chittagong district were named after Shāh Madār<sup>1</sup>. There are a few customs in East Bengal which also bear testimony to *Madāriyah* influence. These are (a) lifting of bamboo of *Madār*, an annual festival in memory of Shāh Madār and (b) the name *Madārī* that is given to fish or tortoise in the ponds attached to a *dargāh*<sup>2</sup>. On the strength of these evidences, it is assumed that the *Madāriyah* saints exerted influence on the Muslim masses, though it is difficult to say whether Shāh Madār himself ever visited Bengal.

(xvi) **Pir Badar al-Din Badar-i-Alam**

He is lying buried in the *Chhotī dargāh* of Bihar<sup>3</sup>. He is said to have travelled from place to place. The name of Badar Pir is associated with *dargāhs* of various places. In Chittagong there is a *dargāh* which go by different names – ‘Badar ‘Ālam’, ‘Badar Muqām’ ‘Badar Pīr’, ‘Badar Awliyā’, ‘Badar Shāh’ and ‘Pīr Badar’<sup>4</sup>. Traditionally the name of Badar Pīr is associated with the spread of Islām in Chittagong.

1. *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, 1935, p. 112.
2. *Ibid*, p. 113.
3. *J.A.S.B.* 1873, p. 302.
4. *Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers: Chittagong*. For earliest reference to Badar ‘Ālam in Bengali literature see, Dawlat Wazīr Bahrām Khān: *Lailī Majnu*, edited by Ahmad Sharif, Bāngālā Academy, Dacca, 1957, p. 9.

নগর ফতেয়াবাদ                      দেখিয়া পুর এ সাধ  
    চাটিগ্রাম সুনাম প্রকাশ ।  
 মনোভব মনোরম                      অমরাবতীর সম  
    সাধু সৎ অনেক নিবাস ॥  
 লবণাষু সন্নিহিত                      কর্ণফুলি নদীতট  
    শুভপুরী অতি দিব্যমান ।  
 চৌদিকে পর্বত গড়                      অধিক উৎকলভর  
    তাত শাহা বদর আলাম ॥

Translation:-“The sight of the city of Fathābād (Fateyābād) fulfils the desire of one (who desires to look at it); it is better known as Chāṭigrāma. In beauty it is like Amarāvati and it is inhabited by many virtuous and honest men. It is near the sea

In Kalna, Burdwan district, there are two tombs, one of Majlis Şāḥib and the other of Badar Şāḥib<sup>1</sup>. It is said that they were two brothers, who came to Bengal to preach Islām. Their tombs are still venerated by the people, both Hindus and Muslims. Between the two tombs, which are apart by about a mile, people are considered to be safe from any accident. People offer them clay horses, fruits, sweets and flowers.

In Hemtabad, Dinajpur district, there is a *dargāh* of one Pīr Badar al-Dīn. According to tradition he came to preach Islām, while a certain Hindu king named Maheṣa was ruling there. Being oppressed by the Hindu king, the Pīr begged for help to Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh. The Sulṭān helped him; the result was the defeat of the Hindu king and the spread of Islām in the region. People locate the Ḥusayn Shāhī *Takht* ( throne of Ḥusayn Shāh ) and the palace of Maheṣa in the ruins not far from Hemtabad<sup>2</sup>.

It seems very likely that Pīr Badar of the few places mentioned above were one and the same person, identifiable with Pīr Badar al-Dīn Badar-i-'Ālam. Probably he visited all these places where later on *dargāhs* were erected and legends have grown up.

Pīr Badar al-Dīn Badar-i-'Ālam has become a legendary figure in the imagination of the people. The sailors of East Bengal take the name of Badar Pīr even to-day when they apprehend any danger<sup>3</sup>. Pīr Badar al-Dīn is said to have arrived at Chittagong floating upon a stone slab<sup>4</sup>. The local tradition is that Chittagong was at that time the abode of fairies and hobgoblins and no one could live there. Pīr Badar al-Dīn begged a space for his lamp. This was granted but when he lit it, its magic power was so great that the spirits were frightened away. In the local dialect the lamp is called

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( literally saline water ), on the bank of the river Karnaphuli. The city is heavenly. It is surrounded by hills and hillocks. Herein (lies) Shāh Badar 'Ālam".

1. Muhammad Enamul Haq: *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, 1935, pp. 132-33.
2. *Bengal District Gazetteers*: Dinajpur, 1912 p. 20.
3. Enamul Haq: *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, 1955, p. 23.; *Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers*; Chittagong, 1908, p. 56.
4. *Ibid.*

*Chāṭi* and people believe that the name *Chāṭigrāma* took its origin from the lamp of Badar Pīr. There is a hillock in Chittagong town called *Chāṭi pāhār* (hillock of lamp) where Pīr Badar lit his lamp. Candles are offered there by people, Hindus and Muslims and they are kept burning at night<sup>1</sup>.

(xvii) **Shah Safi al-Din**

In Chhota Pandwah (Hugli district) is situated the tomb of **Shāh Ṣafī** al-Dīn. Tradition<sup>2</sup> current at Pandwah has it that **Shāh Ṣafī** al-Dīn, son of Barkhurdār, a noble of the Court of Dehlī and brother-in-law of King Fīrūz **Shāh** came to preach Islām in Bengal. But the local king, Pāṇḍav Rājā was very powerful and antagonistic towards the Islāmic faith. Quarrel broke out between the saint and the king over the sacrifice of a cow on the occasion of the circumcision of a boy. The boy was killed by the king. The saint appealed to his uncle Fīrūz **Shāh** who sent a large army for the religious war. The saint also received the boon from the famous saint Bū 'Alī Qalandar of Panipat-Karnal. In the war that followed, the Hindu king was defeated. It is said that two other men of repute joined this war; one was Zafar **Khān Ghāzī**<sup>3</sup>, whose shrine is at Triveni, and the other was Bahrām Saqqā.

The tradition refers to the following persons – King Fīrūz **Shāh**, Pāṇḍav Rājā, Bū 'Alī Qalandar, Zafar **Khān Ghāzī** and Bahrām Saqqā. King Fīrūz **Shāh** may be identified with the Bengal Sulṭān of that name i.e. **Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh** (A.D. 1301-1322). Sayf al-Dīn Fīrūz **Shāh** (A.D. 1486-1489), 'Alā' al-Dīn Fīrūz **Shāh** (A.D. 1414) or 'Alā' al-Dīn Fīrūz **Shāh** (A.D. 1532-33) can not claim identification because long before them Triveni area was brought under the Muslims. Pāṇḍav Rājā is obscure in history. He might have

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1. Ḥamīd Allāh **Khān**: *Aḥādīth al-Khawānīn*, Calcutta, A.D. 1871, pp. 27 ff. *Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers: Chittagong*, Pp. 56-57.
  2. *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1870, pp. 123-25; *Bengal District Gazetteers: Hugli*, 1912, p. 297 ff.
  3. *J.A.S.B* Vol. XVI, 1847, pp. 394-97.  
*J.A.S.B.* 1870, p. 287.  
*J.A.S.B.* 1909, p. 248-51.

been a petty *Zamīndār*. Zafar **Khān Ghāzī** is known from other sources as a conqueror of Triveni area under Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā'ūs and **Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh**<sup>1</sup>. Bahrām Saqqā's shrine is at Burdwan and according to *Burdwan District Gazetteer*, he was contemporary of Mughal emperor Akbar<sup>2</sup>. On this evidence, Bahrām Saqqā can not be a contemporary of Bū 'Alī Qalandar, **Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh** and Zafar **Khān Ghāzī**. So there is some confusion in the tradition.

As the tradition refers to Bū 'Alī Qalandar who died in 724/ A.D. 1324, Blochmann identifies Fīrūz **Shāh** of the tradition with Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz **Khālji** of Dehlī<sup>3</sup>. But this identification can no longer be accepted. Bengal became independent after the death of Sulṭān **Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban**. Although independent coinage of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Bughrā **Khān** has not come to light, there is no doubt that his son and successor Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā'ūs was completely independent with full insignia of ryoalty. During this time the question of sending troops to Bengal by Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz **Khālji** does not arise. Secondly, there is undoubted evidence to show that Satgāwn-Triveni area was brought under the Muslims by one Zafar **Khān Ghāzī** during the period from A.D. 1298 to A.D. 1313 under Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā'ūs and **Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh**<sup>4</sup>.

The tradition also refers to one Zafar **Khān Ghāzī**. The two evidences therefore made **Shāh Ṣafī' al-Dīn** contemporaneous with Zafar **Khān Ghāzī** and it may be assumed that in the campaign that was undertaken by Zafar **Khān Ghāzī**, **Shāh Ṣafī' al-Dīn** also took part. And if there is any truth in the statement that **Shāh Ṣafī' al-Dīn** was related to Sulṭān Fīrūz **Shāh**, he was related to Sulṭān **Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh** of Bengal and not Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz of Dehlī.

1. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 77 ff.; *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. IV, Part III, July, 1956, pp. 198-202.
2. *Bengal District Gazetteers: Burdwan*, Calcutta, 1910, p. 190.
3. *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1870, p. 125.
4. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 77 ff.; *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. IV, Part III, July, 1956, pp. 198-202.

(xviii) **Shah Anwar Quli Halwi**

At Mulla Simla, Phurphura, in the district of Hugli, there is an old mosque and a tomb of a certain saint. According to tradition, **Shāh Anwar Quli Ḥalwī** whose original name was Muḥammad Kabīr is lying buried there<sup>1</sup>. The word Ḥalwī indicates that he came from Aleppo. Tradition relates that a *Bāgdī* king ruled in the area who was defeated by the saint and his companion Karam al-Dīn, but later on they were also killed by the enemy. The most important offering to this saint is the looking-glass, because it is said that looking-glass was very dear to the saint. Blochmann suggests that this was probably due to the fact that his birth-place was formerly famous in the East for its glass-wares<sup>2</sup>. An inscription attached to the entrance of the *dargāh* records the erection of a mosque by **Ulugh Majlis Khān** in 777/A.D. 1375 in the reign of Sulṭān Sikandar **Shāh**<sup>3</sup>. The inscription was probably taken from a nearby mosque which is without any inscription.

(xix) **Shah Ismail Ghazi**

Pir Muḥammad **Shaṭṭārī**, a 17th century biographer of **Shāh Ismā'īl Ghāzī** writes as follows about the saint<sup>4</sup>:—

**Shāh Ismā'īl Ghāzī**, a descendant of the Prophet, was born in the holy city of Makkah. He was a devout follower of religion and spent his time in preaching and teaching. After a long and tedious journey, he arrived at Lakhnawtī, the capital of Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak **Shāh**. Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak **Shāh** was then busy to find out ways and means for controlling the flood in the vicinity of Gaur. He engaged all engineers and craftsmen for the purpose, but failed. At last following the advice of **Shāh Ismā'īl Ghāzī**, he came out successful. This brought the saint to the notice of the Sulṭān. The saint was then appointed to conduct warfare in different frontiers of his Kingdom. He defeated Gajapati, the Rājā of Orissa and wrested from him Mandaran. Rājā Kāmeśvara of Kamrup was

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1. An account of this saint may be obtained from :—(a) *Bengal District Gazetteers* : Hugli, pp. 302-3; (b) *J. A. S. B.* 1870, pp. 291-92.
  2. *J. A. S. B.* 1870, p. 292.
  3. *Ibid.*, pp. 291-92.
  4. An account of this saint is obtained from *Risālat-al-Shuhdā*. See, *J. A. S. B.* 1874, pp. 215 ff.

defeated by him and was forced to pay tribute to the Bengal Sulṭān. Moreover the king of Kamrup polluted his caste by chewing the *pān* (betel leaf) from the mouth of Ismā'īl Ghāzī.

This warrior-saint, who did so much for the Muslim Sulṭānate, was beheaded by the order of the Sulṭān in 878/A.D. 1474. One Rājā Bhāndsi Rāi, a Hindu commander of Ghoraghat sent a false information to the Sulṭān that Ismā'īl Ghāzī had entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Rājā of Kamrup and intended to set up an independent kingdom. The Sulṭān got alarmed and at once ordered for beheading the Saint<sup>1</sup>.

Tradition has it that the head of the Saint was buried at Kantaduar in Rangpur district and the body at Mandaran. Both the places have since been sacred to the Muslims. In the district of Rangpur, there exist at present as many as four *dargāhs*<sup>2</sup>.

(xx) **Mulla Ata**

Mullā or Mawlānā 'Aṭā is lying buried in Gangarampur in the district of Dinajpur. His name has come down to us only through inscriptions. His *dargāh* is a place of pilgrimage even to-day. Four inscriptions have so far been discovered from the shrine of this saint.

- (a) An inscription of the time of Sikandar Shāh, dated 765/A.D. 1363.<sup>3</sup> In this inscription he is described as "the pole of the saints, the unequalled among enquirers, the lamp of truth, law and faith, Mawlānā 'Aṭā".
- (b) An inscription of the time of Jalāl al-Dīn Faṭḥ Shāh dated 887/A.D. 1482. In this inscription he is called "Makhdūm Mawlānā 'Aṭā Waḥīd al-Dīn"<sup>4</sup>.
- (c) An inscription of the time of Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar Shāh dated 896/A. D. 1491. Here he is called

1. *J. A. S. B.* 1874, pp. 215 ff.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *J. A. S. B.* 1872, pp. 104-5.

قطب الاوليا وحيد المحققين سراج الحق والشرع والدين  
مولانا عطا

4. *Varendra Research Society Monograph*, No. 6, (A.D. 1935), pp. 3-4.



“the well-known *Makhdūm*, the pole of the holy men, Mawlānā ‘Aṭā Waḥīd al-Dīn.”<sup>1</sup>

- (d) An inscription attached to a mosque in front of Mawlānā ‘Aṭā’s shrine is of the time of Sulṭān ‘Alā’al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh. It is dated 918/A.D. 1512. In this inscription he is called “*Shaykh* of *Shaykhs*, *Shaykh* ‘Aṭā’”<sup>2</sup>.

From these inscriptions, it is clear that Mawlānā ‘Aṭā died in the reign of Sulṭān Sikandar Shāh at the latest. But his *dargāh* was an object of veneration throughout this whole period. He may be grouped with the earlier *Ṣufīs* and was probably a contemporary of *Shaykh* Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn (died in 758/1357)<sup>3</sup>.

(xxi) **Shah Jalal Dakini**

Shāh Jalāl Dakīnī<sup>4</sup> was the disciple of *Shaykh* Piyārah. He was one of the greatest of holy personages of his time. He came to Bengal, sat on the throne like kings and exerted great influence upon the people. The Sulṭān of Gaur became suspicious of his power and beheaded him.

The royal army beheaded the *Shaykh* and his followers. According to *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, while his followers were being killed, he exclaimed, “*Yā Qahhār*” (O Destroyer, meaning God), but while he was himself killed, “*Yā Raḥmān*” (O Merciful) and after his execution his head called out “*Yā Allāh*” (O God)<sup>5</sup>. The date of his execution is 881/A.D. 1476<sup>6</sup>.

According to Late Ḥakīm Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān, he is lying buried with his followers within the precincts of the present Government House at Dacca. The area was formerly known as Moti Jheel. The Mausoleum of the saint is an one-domed structure<sup>7</sup>.

Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī in his *Sharfnāmah* has devoted a few verses in praise of one Jalāl al-Dīn wa’l-Dunyā. Dr. N. B.

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1. *J. A. S. B.* 1872, p. 107 ; 1873, p. 290.  
مخدوم المشهور قطب اوليا مولانا عطا
  2. *J. A. S. B.* 1872, p. 106.  
شيخ المشائخ شيخ عطا
  3. See *Supra*, p. 101.
  4. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 173.
  5. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 173.
  6. *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā*, Vol. I, p. 399.
  7. *Āsūdgan-i-Dhākah*, Dacca, 1946, pp. 32 ff.

Baloch identifies this Jalāl al-Dīn with Shāh Jalāl Dakīnī.<sup>1</sup> The verses are as follows<sup>2</sup> :—

زهى در حوضه جاہت جنان (یک) گنیز مینا  
 خطاب مستطاب بابت الحق جنت الماوا  
 گریزان دولت خصمت چواز کف آهوئے باقل  
 گرفته رفعتت سده چون وامق دامن عزرا  
 فراز عرش میگووند چون من قدسیان مردم  
 توئی (ای) حضرت سامی جلال الدین والدنیا

“Bravo ! the paradise is a pinnacle of the palace of your high rank; its door may correctly be called “*Jannat al-Māwā*”. The authority of your antagonist is fleeing before you just as a wild deer. Your high position has touched the heaven just as Wāmaq caught hold of the skirt of ‘Adhrā. The heavenly angels as well as I, say every moment on the throne of God that thou art the great Jalāl al-Dīn wa’l-Dunyā.”

(xxii) **Mawlana Shah Dawlah**

The saint is lying buried at Bagha in the Sadar Subdivision of the Rajshahi district.<sup>3</sup> His original name was Mawlānā Shāh Mu‘azzam Dānīshmand<sup>4</sup> but he is known by his more familiar name Shāh Dawlah. Tradition<sup>5</sup> records that he was a descendant of Hārūn al-Rashīd, the Abbaside *Khālifah* of Baghdad. He ran away from Baghdad, reached Bagha in the reign of Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh (A.D. 1519-32), and married the daughter of a certain influential noble ‘Alā Bakhsh Barḥurdār Lashkarī of Makhdūmpūr not far from Bagha. Since then the Mawlānā settled at Bagha and his descendants are living there even to this day. An inscription discovered from the place records that one mosque was built by Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh in 930/A. D. 1523-24.<sup>6</sup>

1. *Urdū*, October, 1952, p. 66.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *J. A. S. B.* 1904, No. 2, pp. 108 ff.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

The following popular story about the saint is available<sup>1</sup>. "An emperor of Gaur on his way to Dacca encamped near Bagha. As fire was wanted men were sent out to find a house. Coming to a jungle from which smoke was ascending, they found a fakeer who, though fires were burning and tigers were roaring round him, went on quietly with his prayers to God. The men seized up some fire and rushed back with it to the camp where they told the Emperor what they had seen. The Emperor, filled with curiosity, went forth and visited the fakeer and found him as has been reported. Then the Emperor waited on the fakeer whose name was Shāh Mahamed Doola (Shāh Muḥammad Daula) and besought him saying, "O man of God, shall thy servant advance to Dacca or wait here". Then the Fakeer answered and said, "Wait thou here one day". So the Emperor waited. And it came to pass the very same day there came messengers to him from Dacca saying, "Behold, the fighting is over, and the victory is thine". The Emperor was so pleased that he offered rent-free lands to the saint. As the saint did not accept the lands, the Emperor made a grant of 22 villages to the saint's son, Ḥaḍrat Ḥamīd Dānīshmand<sup>2</sup>. According to another account 'Abd al-Wahhāb, son of Mawlānā Ḥamīd Dānīshmand received a grant of forty two villages with an annual rent of rupees eight thousand from Prince Khurram Shāh Jahān, later on Mughal emperor, when the latter rebelled against his father and temporarily held the dictatorship of Bengal<sup>3</sup>. 'Abd al-Laṭīf<sup>4</sup>, who travelled in North Bengal in A. D. 1609 in the reign of Emperor Jahāngīr met one Hawadha Mian at Bagha, an old saint aged about one hundred years. The old man maintained a college, built of grass-thatched roofs and mud-plastered walls where many of his descendants and other students engaged themselves in study. The entire country-side around the village was granted to Hawadha Mian for his subsistence (*madad-i-ma'āsh*). Hawadha Mian of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's account may be identified either with Mawlānā Ḥamīd Dānīshmand or with his son 'Abd al-Wahhāb. In any case, there is no doubt that Bagha continued to be a Muslim cultural centre since the arrival of Mawlānā Shāh Dawlah till at least A. D. 1622 when Shāh Jahān came to Bengal in course of his rebellion against his father.

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1. *J. A. S. B.* 1904, No. 2. pp. 109 ff.

2. *J. A. S. B.* 1904, No. 2, p. 110.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 112 ff.

4. *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. XXXV, Part II, pp. 143-46.

Besides, there are a few more saints whose names at least may be noted. Among these the most famous are **Sh**āh Langar<sup>1</sup> at Mu‘azzampur (Dacca District), **Sh**āh Ni‘mat Allāh<sup>2</sup> at Purana Paltan (Dacca district), **Sh**āh Gadā<sup>3</sup> at Mughaltuli (Maldah), **Sh**āh Lankāpati<sup>4</sup> at Old Maldah and **Sh**āh Kākū,<sup>5</sup> a disciple of **Sh**aykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam.

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1. E. Haq : *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A.D. 1935, p.144.  
A. H. Dani : *Dacca*, Dacca, A.D. 1956, p. 158.
  2. Ḥakīm Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān : *Āsūdgān-i-Dhākah*, Dacca, A. D. 1946, pp. 30 ff.
  3. *Memoirs*, p. 149.
  4. *Ibid*, p. 153.
  5. *Khazīnat al-Asfiyā*,’ Vol. I, p. 400.

Dr. Enamul Haq (see, *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, 1935, p. 143) thinks that **Sh**āh ‘Alī Baghdādī now lying buried at Mirpur, a few miles away from the city of Dacca was living in the 15th century and died sometimes before A. D. 1480. His argument is that the mosque over his grave was built in A. D. 1480. But as the saint is lying buried within the mosque it is reasonable to suggest that the mosque is earlier than the death of the saint. The date of the saint cannot be satisfactorily established. See also A.H. Dani : *Dacca*, Dacca, A.D. 1956, p. 195.

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## Part II—The Influence Of The Sufis

The biographical sketch of the *Şūfīs* reveal that their activities were not confined only within the four walls of their *Khānqahs*, rather they exerted a great influence in the people's minds and in the society. Even if one is hesitant to accept the statement of Mīr Sayyid *Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī* that "there is no town and no village where holy saints did not come and settle down",<sup>1</sup> the names of *Şūfīs* and their account that have come down to us, either through tradition or literary and epigraphic sources establish the fact that their number was not too small to be by-passed. They came, established *Khānqahs*, gathered disciples around them, imparted instructions, while some of them settled and died in this country. Thus they added another factor in the Muslim society with those of the ruling class and the *Ālīms* (scholars). If only the location of their *dargāhs* is taken into consideration we find that they did not concentrate only in the metropolitan cities, but scattered throughout the country, extending from Chittagong and Sylhet in the east<sup>2</sup>, to Mangalkot (Burdwan district) in the west and from Bagerhat and Chhota-Pandwah in the south to Kantaduar (Rangpur) in the north. Their *dargāhs* and tombs are visited and venerated by hundreds of people even to-day. They influenced deeply the minds of the people in their lifetime. *Şūfīsm*, thus became a powerful factor in the then society and its contribution may demand a careful and proper assessment from the scholars.

The influence of the *Şūfīs* on the growth of the Muslim Society in Bengal may be grouped under the following heads :—

- (i) the expansion of the Muslim power,
- (ii) influence over the ruling class,
- (iii) imparting of religious instructions,
- (iv) and their influence over the society and missionary activities.

1. Quoted in *Bengal : Past and Present*, 1948, p. 36.

2. The *Şūfīs* visited further east as the tomb of *Ghiyāth al-Dīn* in Hajo *Tahşīl* in the Kamrup district, Assam, suggests. ( See, *Assam District Gazetteers : Kamrup*, Allahbad, 1905, Chapter III, p. 101.

(i) **The Expansion Of The Muslim Power**

The expansion of the Muslim power in different parts of Bengal and how and when they were subjugated have been discussed in a previous chapter<sup>1</sup>. But traditions and later writings record that some of the *Şūfis* fought against the local non-Muslim kings either on their own account<sup>2</sup> or in collaboration with the Muslim rulers<sup>3</sup>. Generally these accounts are full of superhuman colouring, thus raising suspicion on their validity. As for example, traditions of different places supply identical stories with minor variations. They refer to the existence of a Muslim family in the midst of a large number of Hindus; the trouble generally arose over the sacrifice of a cow on the occasion of the birth of a son or his circumcision. A kite was invariably there to carry bit of flesh and throw it in the vicinity of a Brahmin family and then the war broke out. The superhuman colouring and the identical stories show that there have been exaggerations of what actually happened. The clash between the incoming Muslims, be he a *Şūfī* or a layman and the local people who lived in this country from generation to generation can not be altogether ruled out. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the *Şūfis* required time to pacify or influence the local people by their peaceful pursuits, simplicity of life and devotion to God. The collaboration of some of the *Şūfis* with the *Sultāns* in the expansion of the Muslim power cannot also be ruled out altogether, because they thought that fighting for the cause of Islām was a *Jihād* (religious war), provided by the Islāmic law. It is from this standpoint that we should judge the collaboration of *Şaykh* Jalāl with the general of *Sultān* *Şhams* al-Dīn Fīrūz *Şhāh* in the conquest of Sylhet or of *Şhāh* Ismā'il *Ghāzī* with *Sultān* Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak *Şhāh* in his wars against Kāmrup or Orissa. These are the examples in which the saints themselves took to fighting for the cause of Islām. On the other hand there are a good many examples from Bengal which supply information of a reverse type; that is we have got real soldiers and conquerors treated as saints probably after their death, and their tombs

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1. See, Chapter II, pp. 33-38.
  2. The examples of Bābā Ādam *Şhahīd*, (*Supra*, pp. 86-87.) *Şhāh* *Sultān* Māhīawār, (*Supra*, p. 88-89), *Makhdūm* *Şhāh* Dawlah *Şhahīd* (*Supra*, pp. 89-90) may be cited.
  3. See for example the account of *Şhāh* Jalāl of Sylhet (*Supra*, pp. 99 ff.), *Şhāh* Ismā'il *Ghāzī* (*Supra*, pp. 118 ff) and *Şhāh* Şafī 'al-Dīn (*Supra*, pp. 116 ff.)

attaining the rank of shrines or *dargāhs*. Two important examples of this nature are the *dargāh* of **Kh**ān Jahān of Bagerhat<sup>1</sup> in Khulna district who was an official and a conqueror of this region in the time of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd **Sh**āh (A.D. 1442-1459), and the other is Zafar **Kh**ān **Gh**āzī<sup>2</sup> who conquered Triveni area in the time of Rukn al-Dīn Kāykā'ūs (A.D. 1291-1301), but today he is the renowned saint in that area.

### (ii) Influence Over The Ruling Class

The above point will be more clear, if we remember that the **Ṣūfīs** also interfered in the internal politics of the country and sometimes tried to influence the **Sulṭāns** in moulding their state-policies. We have pointed out elsewhere<sup>3</sup> that the **Sulṭāns** were respectful towards the **Ṣūfīs**, helped them in their missionary activities, built mosques, *madrāsahs* and *Khānqāhs* in their honour and even granted lands for their maintenance. But it is difficult to explain, why, in spite of generally respectful attitude of the **Sulṭāns** to the **Ṣūfīs**, Sikandar **Sh**āh turned **Sh**āykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq out of Pandwah and banished him to Sunārgāwn. The reason put forward by the author of *Akhbār al-Aḥyār*<sup>4</sup> is far from satisfactory, because he says that by a super-human power, the **Sh**āykh spent so much money in feeding the beggars, pupils and wanderers that even the state-treasury could not have borne such a huge expenditure. The **Sulṭān** grew jealous and ordered the **Sh**āykh to leave the capital. On the other hand we know that the same **Sh**āykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq was looked upon with regard and esteem by his (Sikandar's) father Ilyās **Sh**āh who built a mosque in his (the **Sh**āykh's) honour<sup>5</sup>. Even Sikandar **Sh**āh's attitude to the **Ṣūfīs** was all along one of respect and veneration; he built a mosque in honour of Mawlānā 'Aṭā<sup>6</sup>; he was in correspondence<sup>7</sup> with the celebrated saint of Bihar **Sh**āykh **Sh**arf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī. In view of these facts

1. *J.A.S.B.* 1867, p. 135.
2. *History of Bengal*, Vol II, pp. 75 ff.
3. See Chapter III, Section (A), pp. 52-57
4. *Akhbār al-Aḥyār*, p. 143.
5. For inscription see, *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1939-40 pp. 7-9, Plate (a). *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*, p. 10.
6. *J. A. S. B.* 1872, pp. 104-5.
7. *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLII, Part II, 1956, p. 8.

we are apt to conclude that there must have been very strong reasons that led him to take such a step. The subsequent history of Bengal leading to the Hindu interregnum after supplanting the Ilyās Shāhī dynasty, suggests that there must have been a wide difference between the Sulṭāns and the Ṣūfīs on the matters of state-policy, particularly on the question of the appointment of non-Muslims in the key-positions. That the situation took such a turn is proved from a few letters of Hadrat Mawlānā Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī, addressed to Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'ẓam Shāh of Bengal. The relevant extract is given below<sup>1</sup>:—

“The Exalted God has said, “Ye who believe take not into your intimacy those outside the ranks. The long and short of the matter is that in commentaries and lexicons they have said that the faithful should not make the unbelievers and strangers their confidants and ministers. If they say that they do not make them their favourites and friends but for the sake of expediency, the reply is that God says that it is not expediency but the cause of trouble and sedition. He says “*Lā Yālunakum Khabālan*” (they will not fail to corrupt you) i. e. *Lā Yaqseruna Ifsād-i-Amrekum*” (they will not hesitate or spare themselves in creating troubles for you). Therefore, it is incumbent on us that we should listen to the divine command and cast aside our weak judgement. God says “*Wadduna Mā Anittum*” (may only desire your ruin) i. e. when you make them intimate with yourself they will love to involve you in evil deeds. An infidel may be entrusted with some work, but he should not be made *Wāli*, (Chief Supervisor or Governor) so that he may have control over and impose his authority on the Muslims. God says “let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers and neglect God; if any do that, in nothing will there be help from God except by way of precaution, that ye may guard yourselves from them. There are severe warnings in the *Qur'ān* the ‘*Hadis*’ and historical works against those who have given authority to the unbelievers over the believers. God grants opulence and provisions from unexpected sources, and He gives deliverance from them.” There is an authoritative promise of provisions, victory and prosperity. The vanquished unbelievers with heads hanging downward exercise their power and authority and administer the lands

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1. “The correspondence of two 14th century Sufi Saints of Bihar with the contemporary sovereigns of Delhi and Bengal” in *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLII, part II. 1956, pp. 10-11.



which belong to them. But they have also been appointed (executive) officers over the Muslims, in the lands of Islam, and they impose their orders on them. Such things should not happen”.

The letter clearly indicates that the Bengal Sultāns allowed the non-Muslims to participate in the administration and even appointed them in the key-positions of the state. In fact this policy was first adopted by Sultān Shāms al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh.<sup>1</sup> Ḍiyā'al-Dīn Baranī, a contemporary historian writes as follows about Ilyās Shāh, which according to him justified the Lakhnawtī invasion of Fīrūz Shāh : “That Ilyās, the ruler of Lakhnawtī, who has taken possession of that country by force, at this time gathered together the *pāiks* (foot-soldiers) and *dhamuks* (bowmen) from the river-girt Bangālah and invaded Tīrhut without any reason”.<sup>2</sup> In another place the same author writes in describing the battle between Ilyās Shāh and Fīrūz Shāh, “The well-known *pāiks* of Bangālah who, for ye ars, gave themselves the name of *Abū Bangāl* (the father of Bengal) and claimed to be (heroic) men, took promise before Ilyās, the *Bhāṅg*-eater, to sacrifice their lives (for him) and standing in front of his (array of) horses, together with the *Rāis* of the river-girt Bangālah, (they) bravely threw about their arms and legs. In the time of battle, when faced with the brave soldiers and archers of the army of the victorious, (they) put their finger (in fear) into their mouths, lost their sense, threw away swords and arrows from their hands, rubbed their foreheads on the ground and fell to the swords of the enemies”<sup>3</sup>. The above passages therefore, reveal that Ilyās Shāh recruited the local people in his army as foot soldiers

1. For the attitude of the Muslim Sultāns towards their non-Muslim subjects see, “Early Muslim Rulers in Bengal and their non-Muslim Subjects” in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. IV, 1959.

2. Baranī, p. 586.

کہ الیاس ضابط لکھنوتی کہ بتغلب آن دیار رافرو  
گرفته است درین وقت حشری ازپایک ود هانک آب گرفته  
بنگالہ راجمع کرده است وازہے عاقبتی درترہت تازیدہ ۔

3. Baranī, p. 593.

پایکان معروف بنگالہ کہ سالہا خودرا ابو بنگال می  
خوانانیدند و مردہامی گویانیدند و بیرہ جانبازی ازپیش  
الیاس بہنگی برمی گرفتند وپیش رکاب آن سوداے

and bowmen. Yaḥyā Sarhindī gives the name of one Bengali supporter of Ilyās Shāh; his name was "Sahdeo" or "Sahdeva"<sup>1</sup> The condition of his time demanded such a policy from Ilyās Shāh, as he was opposed initially by two rivals in Bengal itself,<sup>2</sup> while towards the middle of his reign Sulṭān Firūz Tughluq of Dehli made a desperate bid to snatch away his sovereignty. The position was not better under Sikandar Shāh. Just on his accession to the throne, he faced the second invasion of Sulṭān Firūz Shāh Tughluq. In the face of such unfavourable circumstances, it was but natural that they turned towards the local people for help and appointed them in the important offices of the state. This very policy, which the rulers found as an expediency, was bitterly opposed by the Ṣūfīs, as has been shown from the letters of Ḥaḍrat Muḏaffar Shams Balkhī. Now if Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh could be warned by a Ṣūfī of Bihar, was it not possible for Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq to do the same in the time of Sikandar Shāh? It is unfortunate that the correspondence between Sikandar Shāh and Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī has been lost to us. It would have probably thrown further light on the subject, and in fact Muḏaffar Shams Balkhī alludes to this when he says, "You are enjoying the fruits of these blessings"<sup>3</sup> i.e. blessings of Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Manerī through his letters to Sikandar Shāh, A'zam Shāh's father. The above facts lead us to believe that the estrangement between Sikandar Shāh and Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq was not due to any personal jealousy, as Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Dehlawī would have us believe,<sup>4</sup> rather it was

بارایگان آب گرفته بنگاله دست وپا می زدند درحالت  
 محاربه درپیش شیرافکنان وتیر اند ازان لشکر منصور  
 هر دو انگشت دردیان می انداختند وخیردی میکردند  
 وتیغ وتیر از دست می انداختند وپیشانی بر زمین می  
 مالیدند وعلف تیغ می شدند

1. Yaḥyā bin Aḥmad, p. 125, note 5.
2. For rivalry among 'Alī Mubārak, Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh and Ilyās Shāh, See, *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 97 ff.
3. *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLII, Part II, 1956 p. 8.
4. *Akḥbar al-Akḥyār*, p. 143.

due to their wide difference on matters of state-policy. Sikandar Shāh, put in an adverse situation as he was, due to a hostile attitude from the Sulṭān of Dehlī, could not but rely upon the non-Muslim local people, thus giving a popular shape to the Muslim Sulṭānate in Bengal. The political condition and state-craft demanded such an outlook from the Sulṭān, while the Muslim divines reading the canonical law between the lines could not approve this attitude of the Sulṭān.

It is difficult to say who were right, the Sulṭāns or the divines, but the subsequent happenings leading to the Hindu interregnum of Rājā Gaṇeśa show that the policy of the Sulṭāns received a setback at least temporarily which required Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam, the greatest Muslim divine of Bengal of the day, to take active part in politics.

All the authorities agree<sup>1</sup> that the Muslim Sulṭānate of Bengal passed through a critical period towards the beginning of the 15th century. Taking advantage of the liberal policy of the Ilyās Shāhī Sulṭāns, Gaṇeśa (Kāns) gained ascendancy<sup>2</sup> and perpetrated oppression on the Muslims including the divines. This oppression led Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam to invite Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jawnpūr to invade Bengal and to save the Muslim Kingdom there. He also wrote a letter to Mīr Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī requesting him to utilise his good offices to urge upon Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī to come to the aid of the Muslims of Bengal. When Sulṭān Ibrāhīm reached Bengal and encamped in Fīrūzābād, Gaṇeśa was terrified and submitted before the saint. As regards the conversion of Jalāl al-Dīn, the *Riyāḍ* and *Mirāt al-Asrār* differ; according to the former<sup>3</sup> Gaṇeśa took his twelve year old son Jadū to the Shāykh, got him converted to Islām and renounced his sovereignty in favour of his son, but according to the latter Jadū, finding it difficult to rule over the Muslims

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1. 'Abd al-Rahmān Chishtī : *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Āliyah Madrasah Ms. Folio No. 184.; *Riyāḍ*, pp. 110-116.; *Bayāz* of Mullā Taqyya, quoted in *Bengal: Past and Present*, 1948, p. 36, Note 31. *Maktūbāt-i-Mīr Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī*, quoted in *Bengal: Past and Present*, 1948.

2. Recently Dr. A. H. Dani has tried to prove that Gaṇeśa or Kāns did not crown himself king. (See, *J. A. S. B.* Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1952, pp. 121-170).

3. *Riyāḍ*, p. 113.

embraced Islām, "because of his lust for Kingdom"<sup>1</sup>. Whatever might have been the case, there is no denying the fact that the conversion of Jalāl al-Dīn and the restoration of the Muslim Sulṭānate in his person was due to Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam. The Muslim Kingdom of Bengal was deeply indebted to this Muslim divine, but for whose timely action, the sovereignty of Bengal might have passed out of the hands of the Muslims for many years to come.

Two other saints who seem to have taken part in politics were Shāh Ismā'īl Ghāzī and Shāh Jalāl Dakīnī. Shāh Ismā'īl Ghāzī was executed at the order of Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh. According to *Risālat al-Shuhdā* the reason of his execution was as follows :— One Rājā Bhāndsi Rāi, a Hindu commander of Ghoraghat sent a false information to the Sulṭān that Ismā'īl Ghāzī had entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Rājā of Kamrup and intended to set up an independent kingdom. The Sulṭān got alarmed and at once ordered for beheading the saint<sup>2</sup>. It seems unreasonable that the Sulṭān took action on a false charge against a person who did so much for the cause of the Sulṭān and his Kingdom. He assisted the Sulṭān in building a dam for controlling the flood in the vicinity of Gaur<sup>3</sup>. He was the man who defeated Rājā Gajapati, the King of Orissa and Kāmesvara, the King of Kamrup<sup>4</sup>, and made them to pay tribute to the Bengal Sulṭān. Moreover Sulṭān Bārbak Shāh was a great patron of scholars and literature; his court was adorned by a number of Persian poets<sup>5</sup>; he encouraged Mālādhar Vasu, the writer of *Śrī Kṛishṇa Vijaya* who was given the title of Gunarāj Khān;<sup>6</sup> he himself was an 'Ālim. It seems unreasonable, therefore, that the Sulṭān took action on a false charge but probably on stronger reasons. Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh was the first to recruit Habshī slaves and appointed them in the key position of the state; he recruited about eight thousand of them<sup>7</sup>. This policy later on

1. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī: *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Āliyah Madrasah Ms. Folio No. 184.

2. *J. A. S. B.* 1874, pp. 215 ff.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Urdū*, October, 1952, pp. 61 ff.

6. Sukumar Sen : *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 72.

7. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, p. 298.

proved disastrous to the Bengal Sulṭānate as we find a Ḥabshī interregnum in Bengal about half a century after the interregnum of Rājā Gaṇeśa. Was there any difference between the Sulṭān and the warrior-saint on this policy or was it a fact that the warrior-saint actually proved faithless and intended to set up an independent kingdom? These questions cannot be answered with certainty, but there is no doubt that there was some sort of a disagreement between the two.

Of Sh̄h Jalāl Dakīnī tradition has it that<sup>1</sup>, he sat on the throne as kings and exerted great influence upon the people. The Sulṭān of Gaur became suspicious of his power and beheaded him. Though no clear idea may be obtained from such general remarks, it probably implies that the saint exerted some influence not liked by the Sulṭān. It is difficult to identify the Sulṭān of Gaur who beheaded the saint, but if the identification of the saint with Jalāl al-Dīn of *Sharfnāmā* is correct<sup>2</sup> as has been done by Dr. N. B. Baloch, we may identify the Sulṭān with Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Sh̄h.

The above discussion leads one to conclude that the Ṣūfīs did not remain merely spectators of the political events in Bengal, rather they in their own way, tried to influence them, when they thought that the Sulṭān's action was going against the spirit and interest of Islām.

### (iii) Imparting of Religious Instructions

From the beginning the Ṣūfīs paid their attention towards educating the people. Beside general reference to the establishment of *Khānqahs* and educating the people, we have some concrete examples to show that they taught the people and sometimes maintained academies for the purpose. The first important example is that of Bhojar Brahmin, the *Yogi*, who mastered himself in Islāmic Sciences<sup>3</sup> under the guidance of Qādī Rukn al-Dīn al-Samarqandī. The examples of maintaining academy or imparting instructions by Mawlānā Taqī al-Dīn and Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah have been cited already<sup>4</sup>. The next Ṣūfī who is given credit to maintain a *madrasah* was Ḥaḍrat Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam. In praise of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn

1. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 173.

*Supra*, p. 120.

2. *Urdū*, October, 1952, p. 66.

3. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. I, Part I, January, 1953, p. 47.

4. See *Supra*, pp. 67 ff.

Shāh, Stewart writes as follows :— “Amongst the numerous instances of his piety, he settled a grant of lands for the support of the tomb, college and hospital of the celebrated saint Kuttub al-Alum, which are continued to this day; and every year made a pilgrimage on foot, from Akdala to Pundwah, to visit the holy shrine of that saint”<sup>1</sup>. All later histories<sup>2</sup> confirm that Ḥusayn Shāh granted lands for the maintenance of the alms-house in the *dargāh* of the saint, but none of them refers to the maintenance of the college. We do not know wherefrom Stewart got this information, but if it proves to be true, it will leave no doubt that the saint Quṭb ‘Ālam maintained a college, which continued after his death and received a land-grant from Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh. N. N. Law suggests<sup>3</sup> that the college was founded by Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh himself as a memorial to the saint, but Stewart, his authority does not bear him out. The passage quoted above suggests unequivocally that Ḥusayn Shāh granted lands for the support of the college that was already in existence.

The importance of the teaching of the Bengal Ṣūfīs is borne out by the fact that a number of Muslim divines received training under them. Thus Shaykh Yaḥyā, father of Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī studied under his teacher Mawlānā Taqī al-Dīn in Mahisun (Mahi-Santosh) now in Rajshahi district<sup>4</sup>, Makhdūm al-Mulk himself studied under Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah in Sunārgāwn<sup>5</sup>, Mīr Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī and Shaykh Ḥusayn Dhukkarposh studied under Shāykh ‘Alā’ al Ḥaqq in Pandwah,<sup>6</sup> Shaykh Ḥusām al-Dīn Manikpūrī, Shaykh Kākū under Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam in Pandwah<sup>7</sup>. Ṣūfīsm received so much prominence that new mystic orders were introduced in Bengal. Mīr Sayyid Ashraf

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1. Stewart : *History of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1903, p. 129.
  2. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, pp. 301-2; *Riyāḍ*, p. 135; Niẓām al-Dīn Bakhshī : *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī*, Vol. III, Bibliotheca Indica, pp. 270-71.
  3. N. N. Law, *op cit*, p. 109.
  4. Shāh Shu’ayb : *Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā*,’ at the end of *Maktūbāt-i-Ṣadī*, p. 339. See, *Supra*, p. 66.
  5. Shāh Shu’ayb : *Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā*,’ at the end of *Maktūbāt-i-Ṣadī*, pp. 339-40.
  6. *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, p. 166.  
*Bengal : Past and Present*, 1948, p. 36, note 31.
  7. *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, p. 176.  
*Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā*,’ Vol. I, p. 400.

Jahāngīr Simnānī, in his letters refers to the following orders<sup>1</sup> :— (1) *Suhrawardiah*, the great mystic order after the name of Shaykh Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, (2) *Jalīyah* (*Jalāliyah* ?) of Deotala, after Maḵdūm Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī, in whose honour Deotala was given the name of Tabrizābād<sup>2</sup>, (3) *Qadarkhānī*, to which Shaykh Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah belonged, (4) 'Alāi, after the name of 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq, (5) *Khālīdiah*, meaning the order of Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq who traced his origin to Khālīd bin Al-Walīd, (6) Nūrī after the name of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam, (7) *Ḥusaynī*, after the name of Shaykh Ḥusayn Dhukkarposh and (8) *Rūḥāniah*, the identification of which is difficult. Among these orders the Suhrawardia was obviously of outside origin, but all others were named after Bengal saints. It appears, therefore, that each Ṣūfī gathered a number of disciples round him who claimed themselves to have belonged to the order of their respective teachers.

#### (iv) Their Influence Over The Society and Missionary Activities

A minute study of the biographical sketch of the Ṣūfīs reveals two important facts. First, people thought that they were endowed with superhuman powers like giving relief to the poor, sick and destitutes, being present in several places at a time, giving life to the dead, killing anybody at will and telling the future. Secondly, their *Khānqahs* were open to all poor, destitutes, mendicants and wanderers, who received food and shelter therein. Beside traditions, a number of contemporary inscriptions substantiate this view. The *dargāhs* of the Ṣūfīs were considered to be, "rest-giving building on earth" (بِعالَمِ اَيْنِ بِنَايِ رَاحَتِ افزا), "where people attain their wishes", (ازرے خلائقِ راسبِ تعصیلِ تمنا)<sup>3</sup>. The way in which the inscriptions refer to some of the Ṣūfīs is noteworthy. Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq has been referred to as, "the benevolent and revered saint, whose actions of virtue are attractive and sublime inspired by Allāh, may He illuminate his heart with the light of divine perception and faith, he is the guide to the religion of the Glorious"<sup>4</sup>. Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam has

1. Quoted by Hasan Askari in *Bengal : Past and Present*, 1948 pp. 32-39.
2. *Memoirs*, p. 170.
3. *Memoirs*, p. 104.
4. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*. 1939-40, p. 9.

been referred to as (a) “Ḥaḍrat Shaykh al-Islām, crown of nation, full moon among the saints, who have been united with Allāh, (b) “Ḥaḍrat Sultān al-‘Ārefīn (Sultān of Saints) Qutb al-Aqṭāb (pole of poles)” (c) “Our revered master, the teacher of *Imāms*, the proof of the congregation, the sun of the faith, the testimony of Islām and the Muslims, who bestowed advantages upon the poor and the indigent, the guide of saints and of such as wish to be guided”. (d) “the sun of the sky of religion and the moon of the mine of truth, a guide to the way of spirituality”<sup>1</sup>. According to another inscription, “Jalāl al-Dīn Shāh (Tabrizī) was the accepted of Allāh, Angelic in disposition and king of religion and of the world.”<sup>2</sup>

Now were these epithets attributed to the Ṣūfīs for nothing ? As will be seen presently the answer should be in the negative. The people really believed that they were endowed with super-human powers, they were inspired by Allāh, their hearts were illumined by the divine perception and they were the mine of truth. And all these were in spite of the fact that they led the life of simplicity and austerity. They did not hesitate to perform humble works even to work as sweeper at the bidding of their teacher. Makhdūm Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī used to follow his teacher with a heated stove on his head and a cooking pot thereon, so that he could provide his master with hot

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الشيخ المنعم المكرم الذى اعماله بالتقوى جباله (؟)  
عاليه من.....انار الله قلبه بنور المعرفة والايمان  
وهوالها دى الى دين السبحان -

1. *Memoirs*, pp. 109, 115, 123.

(a) حضرت شيخ الاسلام تاج الامه بدرالو اصلين مقبول  
بارگه رب العالمين -

(b) حضرت سلطان العارفين قطب الاقطاب -

(c) مخدومنا العلامة استاذ الائمة برهان الامه حجة  
الاسلام والمسلمين نافع الفقراء والمساكين مرشد  
الواصلين والمسترشدين

(d) شمس سماء الشريعة قمرکان الحقيقة هادئى راه ارادة -

2. *Ibid*, p. 104.

جلال الدين شه آن مقبول بأرى - فرشته خوى شاه  
دين ودنيا -



food on demand<sup>1</sup>. While he came to Bengal, he had only a bowl and an 'aṣā (stick) in hand<sup>2</sup>. Shāh Jalāl of Sylhet observed fast for forty years which he used to break only after ten consecutive days. As for his possession, he had only a cow<sup>3</sup>. Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq used to accompany his teacher Shaykh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uṭmān with a hot stove on his head, the cooking pot thereon, so that he became bald<sup>4</sup>. Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam used to perform all sorts of menial works including the carrying of wood and cleaning of lavatory<sup>5</sup>.

Such were the Ṣūfīs who made Bengal the cradle-home of their life. They were renowned for their simplicity of life, strength of character, devotion to faith and peaceful pursuits; their Khānqahs were rest-giving refuge, their alms-houses were open to all, poor, destitutes, wanderers and mendicants; they were regarded as having been endowed with super-human powers. Naturally, the people were attracted and enchanted towards them and it is in this way that they won over the mass of the Bengali people to Islām. Examples are not rare that substantiate the statement. We know from Šekh Šubhodaya (Shaykh Šubhodaya) that many people attached themselves to Shaykh Jalāl Tabrizī. The Shaykh restored to life a dying man whose wife was named Mādavi. Both husband and wife became his slaves<sup>6</sup>. It is also said that four servants of a certain minister of King Lakshmana Sena were jealous of the growing popularity of the Shaykh. They one day conspired together to test the super-human power of the Shaykh. They feigned to be blind, went to the Shaykh and asked him to cure them. The Shaykh listened to them carefully and asked them to see him some other day. While coming out, the servants found to their horror that they became actually blind. They immediately surrendered to the Shaykh and implored for pardon. The Shaykh became pleased and cured them. Since then, they with their wives became servants of the saint.<sup>7</sup> The saint influenced the people so much

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1. Akhbār al-Akhyār, p. 44.; *Supra*, p. 92.
  2. Šekh Šubhodaya, (Shaykh Šubhodaya) edited by Sukumar Sen, Calcutta, 1927, p. 7; *Supra*, p. 93.
  3. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. iv, p. 218.
  4. Akhbār al-Akhyār, p. 143; *Supra*, p. 104.
  5. *Ibid*, pp. 152 ff. ; *Supra*, p. 105.
  6. Šekh Šubhodaya, (Shaykh Šubhodaya) edited by Sukumar Sen, Calcutta, 1927, Chapter III.
  7. *Ibid*, chapter IV.

that, "all the people think only of the Shaykh. They consider him as king. . . . . The king (Lakshmana Sena) also does not remember anybody else except the Shaykh"<sup>1</sup> Shāh Jalāl also influenced the people of the hilly region of Sylhet. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, both Hindus and Muslims of the area used to bring gifts for the Shaykh and his followers lived mainly on those gifts.<sup>2</sup> The conversion to Islām actually began during the time of Muḥammad Bakhtyār Khaljī, who converted a certain Mech chief and gave him the name of 'Alī.<sup>3</sup> He was the person who led Bakhtyār in his expedition to Tibet. Beside the general references evidenced by traditions, we have some undoubted evidences to show that the Ṣūfīs converted people to Islām. In the reign of Sulṭān 'Alī Mardān Khaljī, Qāḍī Rukn al-Dīn al-Samarqandī converted one Bhojar Brahmin, the *Yogi*.<sup>4</sup> Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam converted Jadū (Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh).<sup>5</sup> The people of the hilly region of Sylhet accepted Islām in the hands of Shāh Jalāl.<sup>6</sup>

One great factor that must have helped in bringing the Muslim saints to the notice of the general mass is the fact that most of their *dargāhs* in Bengal are found on the top of the older sacred buildings. Shāh Sulṭān Māhīṣawār's *dargāh* at Mahasthan in Bogra district stands on the top of a Śaiva temple;<sup>7</sup> at the famous Buddhist monastery at Paharpur in Rajshahi district stands *Satyapīr Bhūṭā*<sup>8</sup> and on actual excavation Muslim relics were found there;<sup>9</sup> the *dargāh* of Bayazīd Bisṭāmī at Chittagong is occupying the top of a mound; and even the Khānqah of Shaykh Jalāl at Sylhet is placed prominently on an

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1. *Ibid*, Chapter IV, p. 24.
  2. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, p. 218.
  3. Minhāj, p. 152.
  4. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. I, Part, I, p. 47.
  5. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī : *Mirāt al-Asrār*, 'Āliyah Madrasah MS. Folio No. 148.
  6. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, p. 217.
  7. Prabhas Chandra Sen : *Varendra Research Society Monograph*, No. 2. (Mahasthan and its Environs) Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, August, 1929, p. 4.
  8. K. N. Dikshit : *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 55, Dehli, A. D. 1938, p. 80.
  9. *Ibid*, p. 87.

ancient mound. If we bear in our mind the attachment of the local people (Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims all alike) to the sacred places of old, it is not difficult to realise how these *dargāhs* continued to attract the general mass even when they had replaced the earlier object of reverence.

This archaeological evidence is of great importance. It at once reminds us of the stories given in *Śekh Śubhodaya* (*Shaykh Śubhodaya*) where we learn about the disputations held between the Muslim saints and the local *Sādhus*. It is not difficult to realise that after the defeat of the *Sādhus* and their conversion to Islām, their habitat was occupied by the saints and turned into *dargāhs*. Such an hypothesis alone explains the presence of so many *dargāhs* on top of mounds and at the same time rationalises the stories given in literature. These *Sādhus*, who were mostly *Tantric Gurus* had mysterious influence over the credulous masses. They were more than mere religious teachers. They had become an institution by themselves, round whom flocked the villagers in search of salvation, relief from miseries and solace in the distracted world. Their abode had become a *tīrtha* (place of pilgrimage). The people had blind faith on them. Naturally when these *Sādhus* were converted by the Muslim saints who occupied the old places, the devotion of the masses to these places did not diminish. On the other hand the miracles and the piety of the new saints worked more in their imagination leading ultimately to mass conversion of the local populace. They became Muslims in name retaining all their local beliefs and customs. They learnt the rudiments of Islām by attaching themselves to the new saints, but did not discard their own language and their particular ways of life. As a result local elements have mixed up with Islām in Bengal.<sup>1</sup> In this Islām the *dargāhs* quite naturally have played, and are playing today the most important part. It would not be an exaggeration to say that they are the nerve-centres of the Bengali Muslim Society. They have all the three, religious, educational and sociological significance. Some of the saints have been so popular that their names are incorporated in the local boat songs.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion, it must be stated that the Muslim saints and the *dargāhs* have deeply affected the growth of the Muslim society in Bengal. An important factor in Bengal's history is the preponderance of

1. See, *Infra*, Chapter V.
2. *Dacca Review*, August, 1913, p. 142.

Muslim population. Whereas in Northern India, the place under Imperial domination for centuries, Islām was confined into urban centres, in the deltaic Bengal, it captured the rural society. One reason for this position may be found in the missionary activities of the saints and the numerous *dargāhs* scattered all over the country.

## CHAPTER IV

### COMPOSITION OF THE MUSLIM SOCIETY

The building up of the Muslim Society in Bengal is a long process of gradual growth, as has been discussed in the last chapter. The composition of the society quite naturally also differed from century to century. Two factors were mainly responsible in swelling the ranks of the Muslims in Bengal: (i) the immigration of the foreign Muslim populace and (ii) merging of the local populace in the Muslim Society after their conversion.

The foreigners migrated into Bengal on several occasions—some came in the wake of conquest<sup>1</sup>, some joined later in the services<sup>2</sup>, some followed the appointment of new Governors from Dehlī<sup>3</sup>, some trekked in as peaceful settlers in search of livelihood<sup>4</sup>, some ventured as traders and businessmen<sup>5</sup>, and some were fired with missionary zeal<sup>6</sup>. Almost all of them came along with that horde of migration that

1. Minhāj (p. 147) refers how the **Kh**aljīs flocked together round Muḥammad Bakḥtyār after his initial successes in Bihar. Minhāj (p. 152) also refers to ten thousand soldiers with whom Bakḥtyār marched against Tibet.
2. The most important example is that of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥusayn **Sh**āh (later on Sulṭān) who first accepted office under the Sulṭān. (*Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, pp. 301-2). For appointment of Ḥabshī slaves see, *Ibid*, p. 298.
3. For those who were left in Bengal with Bughrā **Kh**ān, see, ‘Iṣāmī : *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, edited by Agha Mahdi Husain, Agra, 1938, p. 169; *Muntakhab*, Vol. I, p. 94. For recruitment of soldiers by ‘Alī Mardān **Kh**aljī, see, *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 18.
4. The examples of Amīr Zayn al-Dīn Harwī, the poet-laureate of Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak **Sh**āh (See, *Supra*, p. 79) and Mawlānā **Sh**arf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah, (*Supra*, pp. 67 ff.) may be cited.
5. For a businessman under ‘Alī Mardān **Kh**aljī see, Minhāj, pp. 159-60.
6. For Ṣūfī, see, Chapter III, Section (C).

was set afoot by the devastating flood of Mongol eruption from their homeland<sup>1</sup> north of China. Many uprooted families from Central Asia sought refuge in this sub-continent; many of the crowned heads thrown out of their *masnads* took the garb of royal saints,<sup>2</sup> and moved on to a new missionary life; many craftsmen, architects, poets and painters flew away from the raging scourge and found shelter in the plains of this sub-continent. In the biographical sketches of the saints and scholars we have traced before how they moved out of their homeland and settled in Bengal.

These immigrants introduced new elements in the Muslim Society. They came under the banner of Islām, but they brought with them their particular ways of life, and as far as practicable tried to keep a homogeneity of their group. The earliest such people were the Khaljī conquerors. Minhāj says how men belonging to Khalj tribe flocked around Bakhtyār, hearing about his dare-devil conquests<sup>3</sup>. It is they who formed the first Muslim nobility in Bengal, and it is round their oligarchy that the Muslim society began to take shape in Bengal. Later, with their subjugation new Turks poured into this country till towards the end of the 13th century A. D. Bengal became refuge of the Ilbarī Turks driven out from Dehlī<sup>4</sup>. Lakhnawtī and Dehlī, for more than a quarter of a century, stood face to face in a reversed position; the Khaljis along with the local converts occupying supreme place in Dchli, and the Ilbarī Turks with their supporters holding their own in Bengal. The Tughluqs, who were Qaraunah Turks, broke this rivalry and isolation and once again opened the way for fresh migration<sup>5</sup>. Their supporters from far off places like Panjab, Multan and Sijistan found an easy opening to Bengal. One such immigrant was Ḥājī Ilyās from Sijistān<sup>6</sup>, who founded the Independent Sulṭānate and who was the first to unite the whole of Bengal under him in A. D. 1353<sup>7</sup>.

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1. Dr. K.R. Qanungo in *History of Bengal*, Vol II, p. 1.
  2. For such saints, see Chapter III, Section (C), pp.88,112,123.
  3. Minhāj, p. 147.
  4. Under the House of Balban and their supporter Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh and his children.
  5. Baranī, pp. 450 ff., p. 454.
  6. Al-Sakhāwī : *Al-Daw al-Lāmi' li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsī*, 'Cairo, A.H. 1303, part II, p. 313.
  7. N.K. Bhattasali : *Coins and Chronology of the early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge, A. D. 1922, p. 27.



and joining hands with them. Many of the humbler people chose to identify themselves with the Muslims in order to be free from social

ধর্ম হৈল্যা জবনরূপি মাথাএত কাল টুপি  
হাতে সোভে ত্রিকচ কামান ।  
চাপিআ উত্তম হয় ত্রিভুবনে লাগে ভয়  
খোদায় বলিয়া এক নাম ॥  
নিরঞ্জন নিরাকার হৈলা ভেষ্ট অবতার  
মুখেত বলেত দম্বদার ।  
জতেক দেবতাগন সতে হয়্যা একমন  
আনন্দেত পরিল ইজার ॥  
ব্রাহ্মা হৈল মহামদ বিষ্ণু হৈলা পেকাশ্বর  
আদমফ হৈল সুলপানি ।  
গনেশ হইআ গাজী কান্তিক হৈল কাজি  
ফকির হৈল্যা জত মুনি ॥  
তেজিয়া আপন ভেক নারদ হইলা সেক  
পুরন্দর হইল মলানা ।  
চন্দ্র সূর্য্য আদি দেবে পদাতিক হয়্যা সেবে  
সতে মিলি বাজায় বাজনা ॥  
আপুনি চণ্ডিকা দেবি তিহঁ হৈল্যা হায়া বিবি  
পদ্মাবতী হল্য বিবি নূর ।  
জতেক দেবতাগন হয়্যা সতে একমন  
প্রবেশ করিল জাজপুর ॥  
দেউল দেহারা ভাঙ্গে কাড়্যা ফিড়্যা খায় রঞ্জে  
পাখড় পাখড় বোলে বোল ।

Translation : "There are sixteen hundred families of the Brahmins in Jājpur. They go to different places demanding *dakshinā*; where they do not get any, they pronounce their curse and thus burn the world. At Maldah they levy a regular tax. They go demanding *dakshinā*, where they do not get any, they pronounce their curse and thus burn the world. At Maldah they levy a regular tax upon all without distinction. There is no end of their knavery. They have grown very strong ; ten to twenty come together and destroy the worshippers of *Dharma*. They pronounce the *Vedas*, fire



injustice and to gain good position in the society<sup>1</sup>. It is these elements that created the popular aspect of Islām<sup>2</sup>. But there were higher section of the people who were gradually succumbing to the influence of Islām, either political or religious<sup>3</sup>. Among these may be mentioned

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issues forth incessantly, everyone trembles before them. Being aggrieved at heart, people say, O' *Dharma*, protect us. Who is there other than yourself who can rescue us? Thus do the Brahmins destroy the creation. This is burning injustice. *Dharma*, from his seat in the *Vaikunṭha* knew all this in his mind. He produced illusion and produced darkness. He assumed the form of *Yavana* (i.e. Muslim), wore a black cap on the head with bow and arrow in hand. The best is achieved without fear, with the utterance of one name of *Khodā* (God) who is formless and without any attribute and who is incarnate in *Behist* (Paradise). They utter the name of *Madār* (*Shāh Madār?*). All the gods with one accord wore the trousers with great delight. Brahmā became Muḥammad; Vishnu became *Paiḡhambar* (prophet); Śiva became Adam; and Gaṇeśa became *Ghāzī*, Kārtika became *Qādī* and *munis* became *faqīr*. Throwing away his proper vestment Nārada became a *Shaykh*, Indra became a *Malānā* (*Mawlānā*). The sun, the moon and other gods became foot soldiers and all began to play martial music. *Chaṇḍikā* transformed herself into Eve and *Padmāvati* became *Bibī Nūr*. All the gods with one accord entered *Jāipur*, broke the temple and images, seized (property) and called out 'catch hold of him' or them".

1. R. C. Mitra : *The Decline of Buddhism in India*, Viśva-Bhāratī, A. D. 1954, pp. 78-79, 81. According to Duarte Barbosa (Barbosa, p. 148) "the heathens daily become Moors to gain royal favour."
2. For populer aspect of Islām See, *Infra*, chapter V.
3. *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*, Adī, 14th.

হিন্দুকুলে কেহ হেন হইয়া ব্রাহ্মণ ।

আপনে আসিয়া হয় ইচ্ছায় যবন ॥

Translation :— "Among the Hindus there are some, who though they are Brahmins, become *yavanas* according to their own will."

the names of Bhojar Brahmin<sup>1</sup>, Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad<sup>2</sup> and 'Pirali Brahmanas'<sup>3</sup> (converted to Islām) in Khulna district. It is the presence of such people in Islām, which reacted to foreign elements and were mainly responsible in giving a local colour to the Muslim society of Bengal<sup>4</sup>.

There were also children of mixed marriages. Several examples of Muslim migrants taking Hindu wives are found in the literature<sup>5</sup>.

1. See, *Supra*, p. 64.
2. *Riyāḍ*, p. 113.
3. *J. A. S. B.* 1867, p. 132.
4. A. H. Dani : "The House of Rājā Gaṇeśa of Bengal" in *J. A. S. B.* 1952, Introduction.
5. (a) Vijaya Gupta : *Padma Purāṇa*, edited by B. K. Bhattacharjee, Bāṇī Niketan, Barisal, p. 56.

সেই ছিল হিন্দুর কন্যা তার কর্মফলে ।

বিবাহ করিল কাজি ধরি আনি বলে ॥

Translation : "She was a Hindu girl. It was her misfortune that the Qāḍī forced her away and married her."

(b) Abdul Karim : *Bāṅgālā Prāchīn Punthir Bivarana*, Part I, Baṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad Patrikā, additional number, B. S. 1310, p. 159.

মাহি আছোয়ার তবে সে দেশে ব্রহ্ম জবে

দেখিলেন্ত আচার্য্য নন্দিনি ।

রূপে বিদ্যাধর জিনি সুধাহাসি মধুবানী

নয়ান অমল কমলিনি ॥

দেখি মাহি আছোয়ার বিপ্রস্থানে সে কন্যার

মাগিলেন্ত বিবাহ করিত ।

আচার্য্য না দিল জাবে ব্যাঘ্র আরোহিয়া তবে

বিপ্র হার আইল স্বরিতে ।'

তয়ে ধাএ বিপ্রগণ আচার্য্য ভাবিয়া মন

দান কৈলা আপনা নন্দিনি ।

Translation : "While Māhī Asawār (correctly Māhī-sawār) was travelling through that country (Chittagong), he saw the daughter of *Achārya*. She excelled Vidyādhara (Singer in the court of gods) in beauty, her smile and talk outpoured nectar and her eyes were like lotus. When Māhī-sawār saw her, he proposed to the Brahmin to marry her. When *Achārya* did not agree, he rode on

The children of such persons attained rank in the society depending upon their father's station in life. The example of Muḥammad **Khān**,<sup>1</sup> a 17th century Bengali poet may be cited, whose ancestor, a certain Māhīṣawār came to Bengal, married a Brahmin girl, and left behind a line of children who were governors in Chittagong in the later Ilyās **Shāhī** and Ḥusayn **Shāhī** periods<sup>2</sup>. Tradition makes Ḥusayn **Shāh**

a tiger and appeared before the Brahmin. All the Brahmins fled away out of fear, *Achārya* paused and gave his daughter in marriage."

(c) For one **Shāh Kamāl's** marrying a Hindu lady see, *J. A. S. B.* 1874, p. 285.

(d) According to tradition Ilyās **Shāh** married a Hindu lady. (N. K. Bhattasali : *Coins and Chronology of the early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge, A. D. 1922, p.83.

1. Abdul Karim : *Bāṅgālā Prāchīn Punthir Bivārana*, Part I, No. 1, Baṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad Patrikā, additional number B.S. 1310. pp. 159-161.
2. Muḥammad **Khān** gives the following geneology :— ( Abdul Karim : *Bāṅgālā Prāchīn Punthir Bivārana*, Part I, No. 1, pp. 177 ff.; E. Haq and Abdul Karim : *Arākān Rājsabhāya Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Calcutta, A.D. 1935, p. 74).

Māhīṣawār

Ḥātīm

Ṣiddīq

Rāstī **Khān** (identified with Rāstī **Khān**, Governor of Chittagong under Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak **Shāh**).

Minā **Khān** (identified with Parāgal **Khān**, Governor of Chittagong under 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn **Shāh**).

Gābhur **Khān** (identified with Chhute **Khān**, Governor of Chittagong under 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn **Shāh** and Nuṣrat **Shāh**).

Ḥamzah **Khān**

Nuṣrat **Khān**

Jalāl **Khān**

Ibrāhīm **Khān**,

Mubārīz **Khān**.

Muḥammad **Khān**,

(See also *Proceedings of the Pakistan History conference, Karachi Session, 1951, pp. 201—202.*

in his early life a servant of a Brahmin<sup>1</sup> named Subuddhi Rai. He rose by dint of merit to be the Sulṭān of Bengal. The Ḥabshī slaves rose to *masnad* simply with the help of sword<sup>2</sup>. Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad Bakhshī<sup>3</sup> remarks, "They say that during some years, there was such a custom in Bangālah that whoever slew a ruler and sat on the throne, everyone became submissive and obedient to him." Low origin does not seem to have offered any barrier in gaining position in the society. There also does not appear to have been any stigma attached to the children of mixed marriages nor did they form any distinct class of their own.

Local tradition also attaches some significance to the migration of Arab traders in Chittagong and the growth of a Muslim population mixed with Arab blood in that region<sup>4</sup>. There is no doubt that the Arabs carried on trade with the Chittagong coast<sup>5</sup>, but as we have shown earlier<sup>6</sup>, no definite record is available to substantiate the hypothesis of such an Arab fusion. It must however be maintained that Chittagong, being an important port-town, Arabs, Persians and many other foreign merchants came there for commerce and trade. Barbosa<sup>7</sup> gives a similar account of the city of Bengal<sup>8</sup> and records the presence of "Arabs, Persians, Abexis and Indians."

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1. *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita*, Published by Vasumati Sāhitya Mandir, Calcutta, p. 304. ; *Bengal District Gazetteers: Murshidabad*, Calcutta, A.D. 1914, p. 20.
  2. *Tārīkh-i-Firishtah*, Vol. II, p. 299.
  3. *Ṭabaqāt i-Akbarī*, Vol. III, Bibliotheca Indica publication, p. 268.

گویند سالی چند در بنگاله چنین رسم شد که هر که  
 حاکم را کشته بر تخت می نشست همه مطیع  
 و فرمانبردار او می شدند -

4. E. Haq and Abdul Karim: *Arākān Rājsabhāya Bāngālā Sāhitya*, Calcutta, A. D. 1935, p. 3.
5. A. H. Dani : "Early Muslim Contact with Bengal" in *The Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference, Karachi Session*, A. D. 1951.
6. See, *Supra*, pp. 17-18.
7. Barbosa, pp. 135, 139.
8. For identification of the city of Bengal see, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIX, A.D. 1943, pp. 316 ff.

How were these people divided into social organisation, is still more difficult to say. The Holy Qur'ān says, "O mankind, Lo ! we have created you men and women, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo ! the noblest of you in the sight of Allāh is the most pious of you. Lo ! Allāh is Knower, Aware"<sup>1</sup> Thus the distinction among the Muslims is in respect of their piety and their affiliation to the nations or tribes and not in the sense of class distinction as it technically means to-day or what the caste distinction means in Hinduism. But this is a general religious principle. In practical life it is possible to distinguish some groups of people having mutual relations based on common interest. The earliest reference to such groups is found in the *Inshā-i-Mahrū*,<sup>2</sup> which contains a proclamation by Sulṭān Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq issued in the name of the people of the territory of Lakhnawtī on the eve of his first invasion of Bengal (A.D. 1353). Here the people are grouped as follows :—

- (i) The *Sādāt*, '*Ulamā*, *Mashā'ikh* and others of similar nature;
- (ii) The *Khāns*, *Maliks*, *Umārā*, *Ṣadrs*, *Akāber* and *Ma'ārif* ;
- (iii) The 'train and suit' of No. (ii) ;
- (iv) *Zamīndārs*, *Muqaddams*, *Mafruzmān* (*Mafruziān?*) *Madkān* (*Malkān* ?) and such like;
- (v) Hermits, *Sains* and *gabrs* (probably *gurus*).

Here we meet with a good cross-section of the upper class of the society in Bengal, who counted for being mentioned in the royal proclamation. It is not difficult to determine their exact meaning with the help of other details given in the document. In connection with Nos. (i), (ii) and (iii) the order speaks of "their fiefs, villages, lands stipends, wages and salaries". Obviously these were the sources of income to the persons concerned. Among these we can easily distinguish (a) *Sayyids* (b) '*Ālims*, i.e. scholars, (c) *Shaykhs* i.e. saints, (d) Officers, bearing titles like *Khān* etc. and (e) the servants of lower cadre attached to (d). It is important to note that the *Sayyids*, Scholars and Saints are grouped together and they are given precedence over the officials indicating that they held pre-eminent position in the society. With respect to class (iv), the order speaks of the "revenue", "produce", and "illegal taxes and dues" obviously implying that these have got to do with agricultural produce as distinct from the official class and the scholarly and saintly groups. To the last class are assi-

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1. Qur'ān, 49; 13.

2. Quoted in *J. A. S. B.* 1923, p. 280.

gned "hermits, sains and gabrs (?)" who also enjoyed income from "fiefs, villages, lands, wages and stipends etc." Their privileges are almost the same as those of class (i), (ii) and (iii). But the very fact that they are mentioned separately shows that there was some fundamental difference between the two broad groups. If the terms used are indicative of their true affiliation, it can be deduced that the persons of earlier group are Muslims and those of the latter are non-Muslims as *Sain* can be derived from the sanskrit word *Sādhu* and *gabr* is probably a mistake for *guru*.

It is necessary here to say something about the persons implied under different terms.

(i) **The Sayyids**

The *Sayyids*, being the descendants of the Prophet, were looked upon with veneration and respect by the general population. **Khān** Jahān of Bagerhat, who was the first to bring Khulna-Jessore area under the Muslim domination, claims himself to be a "lover of the descendants of the Prophet".<sup>1</sup> In the reign of Sulṭān Ghīyāth al-Dīn 'Iwāḍ **Khāl**jī, they received stipend from the State.<sup>2</sup> Fīrūz **Shāh** Tughluq promised increment of stipends to the *Sayyids*.<sup>3</sup> They had no hesitation to have matrimonial connections with those who did not claim such a noble ancestry or to receive training from those who were spiritually or in other way superior to them. For example, Sayyid Ḥusayn Makkī (later on Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn **Shāh**) married, according to tradition, the daughter of a Qāḍī of Rādha,<sup>4</sup> while his son Nuṣrat **Shāh** married the daughter of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Lodī<sup>5</sup>. It has been said earlier that Māhīṣawār, the ancestor of poet Muḥammad **Khān** married a Brahmin girl<sup>6</sup>. **Shaykh** 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq, who claimed to be a *Sayyid*, received his spiritual teachings from **Shaykh** Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān al-Badāyūnī, who did not claim such a high birth<sup>7</sup>.

The proclamation of Fīrūz **Shāh** Tughluq shows that the *Sayyids* formed an important element in the society of Pandwah<sup>8</sup>. Similarly

1. *J. A. S. B.*, 1867, p. 135, Appendix I.
2. *Minhāj*, p. 161.
3. *J. A. S. B.*, 1923, p. 280.
4. *Riyāḍ*, p. 132.
5. *Tārīkh-i-Firīshṭah*, Vol. II, p. 302.
6. See, *Supra*, p. 145, note 5.
7. See, Chapter III, Section (c), pp. 104-05.
8. *J. A. S. B.*, 1923, p. 280.

Vipradās'a description of the Muslim population of Satgāwn refers to the *Sayyids* as an important group<sup>1</sup>. A Sayyid dynasty, consisting of four rulers, ruled over Bengal for long forty five years (A.D. 1493-1538).<sup>2</sup> Lastly, a large number of *Şūfīs* claimed to be *Sayyids* and traced their origin to the family of the Prophet.<sup>3</sup> The fact that Sayyid Sulţān<sup>4</sup>, a mid-16th century poet wrote in the local language shows that the *Sayyids* not only settled in this country, but some of them mastered the local language. The *Sayyids* thus came to Bengal in different times, settled here and engaged in various professions. All the same the Muslims in general paid due respect to them in whatever walk of life they might be. They did not form a professional class, nor can this class be regarded as Brahmins are in the Hindu society, though in both the factor of birth is common. Unlike the Brahmins the *Sayyids* have no legal claim to superiority, though in practice they are respected because of their connection with the family of the Prophet.

#### (ii) The Alims

Etymologically, the word 'Ālim means one who knows, but technically it means a person who is well-versed in Islāmic sciences. Whoever could master the science of religion was called an 'Ālim. It is said that Bhojar Brahmin, the *Yogi* learnt the Islāmic science to such an extent that the Muslim divines permitted him to pronounce<sup>5</sup> legal decisions. The 'Ālims could also attain the status of a *Şūfī*. Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmah was a *Şūfī*, as his book *Maqāmat* suggests<sup>6</sup>.

Generally the 'Ālims accepted the profession of teaching. Sayyid Sulţān, a Bengali poet records the following duty of an 'Ālim. "Living in the country, if any 'Ālim does not teach (the religious principles),

1. See *Infra*, pp. 153-54.
2. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 142-163.
3. See Chapter III, Section (c), Biographical Sketch of the *Şūfīs*.
4. For details on Sayyid Sulţān, see, Sayyid Sulţān : *Ophāte Rasūl*, (*Wafāt-i-Rasūl*) edited by Ali Ahmad, B. S. 1356, Introduction.
5. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. I, Part I, January, 1953, p. 47. See also *Supra*, p. 64.
6. See, Chapter III, Section (B), pp. 67 ff.

he will surely be put to the hell. If the people commit sin, God will catch hold of 'Ālims and will punish them"<sup>1</sup>. The 'Ālims thus considered it their obligatory duty to teach the people. This is further substantiated by the fact that the 'Ālims maintained academies, imparted instructions and sometimes wrote books on religious sciences. We have seen earlier that Qādī Rukn al-Dīn al Samarqandī converted and taught Bhojar Brahmin, the *Yogi*<sup>2</sup>; Mawlānā Taqī al-Dīn, whose student was Shaykh Yaḥyā of Maner, imparted instructions<sup>3</sup>; Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Abū Tawwāmāh maintained a *madrasah* where he taught all branches of religious sciences<sup>4</sup>. *Nām-i-Ḥaqq*, a book on jurisprudence, was also written here by an 'Ālim<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, the erection of *madrasahs* by the royal patrons, as referred to earlier,<sup>6</sup> necessitated the appointment of 'Ālims to impart education on "the sciences of religion and instruction in the principles which lead to certainty"<sup>7</sup>.

Secondly, as they were learned in the religious sciences, they were also appointed as *Qādīs* i. e. the office in which an incumbent was required to be well-versed in Islāmic Law. We have on the authority of Firishṭah, discussed earlier, that Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh used to call the 'Ālims at intervals to admonish them not to side with anybody in discharging religious matters.<sup>8</sup>

### (iii) The Shaykhs

The word 'Shaykh' means old, but technically it means doctors in Muslim law and theology. In this sense they are 'Ālims, but the

1. Sayyid Sulṭān, *Ophāte Rasūl ( Wafāt-i-Rasūl )*, edited by Ali Ahmad, B. S. 1356, pp. 3-4.

দেশেত যালিম থাকি জদি না জানাএ।

সে যালিম নারকে পড়িব সৰ্ব্বথায় ॥

নর সবে পাপ কৈলে যালিমেক ধরি।

যাঙ্গার সাক্ষাতে মারিবেস্ত বেড়াবেড়ি ॥

2. See, Chapter III, Section (B), p. 64.
3. *Supra*, p. 66.
4. *Ibid*, p. 67.
5. *Ibid*, pp. 73 ff.
6. See, Chapter III, Section (A), pp. 42 ff.
7. *Memoirs*, pp. 157-158.

لتدريس علوم الدين وتعليم احكام اليقين

8. Chapter III, Section (A), p. 58, See also *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, p. 298.



**Shay'hs** are those 'Ālims, who themselves attain and train others in attaining spiritual development. This definition explains why the *Inshā-i-Mahrū* draws a distinction between the 'Ālims and the **Shay'hs**.<sup>1</sup> The word '**Shaykh**' has been appended to the names of almost all the **Şūfīs** of Bengal about whom we have discussed.<sup>2</sup> This is probably due to the fact that the **Şūfīs** actually devoted themselves to the teaching of Islāmic sciences along with their mystic performances. We have, therefore, identified the **Shay'hs** with the **Şūfīs**.

The **Shay'hs** played a prominent part in the Bengali society. We have seen earlier that a good number of them made different parts of this country the scene of their activities by establishing *Chillā-khānahs* or *Khānqahs*. Each of them had a large following under them.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, as has been pointed out earlier, they helped the expansion of Muslim royal power, imparted instructions, influenced the ruling class and lastly converted the local people to Islām. They maintained poor houses, giving relief to the poor and the destitutes.<sup>4</sup> In this period, especially in Bengal, the word **Shaykh**, as said before, was applied only to the Muslim saints. But today the connotation is changed. According to E. Haq and Abdul Karim,<sup>5</sup> in some parts of West Bengal it signifies the lower class Muslims, generally converted ones, and in East Bengal especially in Chittagong it is used for the aristocratic non-Sayyids.<sup>6</sup>

#### (iv) **The Official Class**

The bureaucracy in the kingdom formed the official class in the society. They bore the title of **Khān**, *Malik*, *Amīr*, *Şadr*, *Kabīr* and *Ma'ārif*. In the inscriptions of the period, **Khān** is the simplest title conferred on the officers. Their further elaboration is as follows:<sup>7</sup>

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1. *Supra* p. 148.
  2. Chapter III, Section (C).
  3. *Ibid.*
  4. Chapter III, Section (C), Part II.
  5. E. Haq and Abdul Karim : *Arākān Rājsabhāya Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Calcutta, 1935, p. 92.
  6. *Ibid.*
  7. For inscriptions see, *J. A. S. B.* 1870, p. 290 ; 1872, p. 106 ; 1873, pp. 272-73 ; 293-94 ; 1860, p. 407 ; 1909, p. 260 ; 1917, p. 149 ; *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1935-36, pp. 57-58. *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*, pp. 108-109 (table of honorific titles).

*Khān Mu'azzam, Khān al-A'zam, Khān-i-Khānān, Khān al-Mu'azzam al-Mukarram, Khān Khān al-Sharq wa 'l-Şīn*. *Malik* is another title borne by the officials. It has also different grades as follows<sup>1</sup> :—*Malik al-Mu'azzam, Malik al-Mu'azzam wa 'l-Mukarram, Malik al-Mulk, Malik al-Mulk al-Sharq, Malik al-Umārā wa 'l-Wuzarā*. But sometimes this was also assumed by the princes. Bārbak *Shāh* (later on Sulţān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak *Shāh*) is called in the inscription, *Malik al-'ādil al-bādhil al-Kāmil al-fādil* (the Malik, the just, the liberal, the learned and the perfect).<sup>2</sup> We have only one instance of the use of *Amīr* before the name of a Sulţān and that is in the case of Sulţān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad *Shāh*.<sup>3</sup> *Şadr* probably was the chief of the department of justice.<sup>4</sup> *Kabīr* and *Ma'ārif* probably implied the aristocratic class of the kingdom.

This evidence about the Muslim society, derived from the Persian source, needs to be checked from the local information. Fortunately we have a similar reference in *Manasā Vijaya* of Vipradāsa dated A.D. 1495,<sup>5</sup> who mentions about the Muslim population of Satgāwn.<sup>6</sup> He speaks of the following people :—

1. For inscriptions see *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1933-34, pp. 23-24 ; *J. A. S. B.* 1872, pp. 337-38 ; *J. A. S. B.* 1873, p. 283. *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*, pp. 108-109. (table of honorific titles).
2. For inscription see, *J. A. S. B.* 1870, p. 290.
3. *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*, p. 14.
4. I. H. Qureshi : *Administration of the Sultanate of Dehli*, 2nd edition, Lahore, A. D. 1944, p. 85.
5. Sukumar Sen : *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Calcutta, A. D. 1940, p. 105.
6. *Ibid.* p. 114.

নিবসে যবন যত                      তাহা বা বলি [ব] কত--  
 মোঙ্গল পাঠান মোকাদ্দীম।  
 সৈয়দ মোল্লা কাজি                      কেতাৰ কোরাণ রাজি,  
 দুই ওজু করে তহ্লিয় ॥

Translation :—“The Muslim population of (Saptagrāma) is innumerable; they belong to Mughals, Pathans and Mokādīms (*Makhdūms*). The *Sayyids*, *Mullās* and *Qādīs* are busy with the Qur'ān and the *Kitābs* (religious books).”

- (i) *Mongol, Pathan.*
- (ii) *Mokādim (i. e. Maḥdūm).*
- (iii) *Sayyid.*
- (iv) *Mullā.*
- (v) *Qāḍi.*

All these people he calls by the general name of "Yavana" and speaks how they pray in the mosque and read Qur'ān and *Kitāb* (probably religious books.) Herein we get a picture of the Muslim society as it appeared to a Hindu living far away from the capital. Here there is no reference to the official class, except the Qāḍi, who came in contact with the common people in smaller towns more than the higher officials. The name of *Mullā* is very significant. The part played by him has been discussed in another place.<sup>1</sup> The *Sayyids* have already been discussed before.<sup>2</sup> The *Maḥdūm* is another word by which the Muslim saints are remembered in the inscriptions.<sup>3</sup> They have been dealt with before.<sup>4</sup> Mongols and Pathans are racial terms, used probably to refer to the foreign Muslim populace of the place.

The use of these two racial terms in A. D. 1495 by Vipradāsa is difficult to explain. In the sanskrit inscriptions we get only *Turushka*<sup>5</sup> or *Tājika*,<sup>6</sup> besides the general nomenclature *Yavana*.<sup>7</sup> It is true, Mongols were not unknown to the Muslim historians of this sub-continent, as we have several references to them in connection with invasion from the north-west, and they are also known to have settled in Dehlī.<sup>8</sup> But no other evidence is available to show that the peaceful Mongol settlers pushed as far east as Satgāwn, especially in such a large number as to have been mentioned by Vipradāsa.

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1. See *Infra*, Chapter, V, p. 170.
  2. See *Supra*, p. 149.
  3. For inscriptions see, *J. A. S. B.* 1872, p. 107; *J. A. S. B.* 1873, pp. 271, 290, 294; *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1929-30, pp. 11-12; *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*, pp. 103-107.
  4. Chapter III, Section (C), See also *Supra*, p. 151.
  5. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, pp. 361 ff.; *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Karachi Session, A. D. 1951, p. 200.
  6. *J. A. S. B.* 1898, Vol. LXVII, p. 116.
  7. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XIII, p. 153.  
*J. A. S. B.* 1892, p. 325.
  8. *Baranī*, p. 219.

Even the use of the word "Pathan" throws some doubt on the authenticity of the evidence. 'Pathan' is no doubt, the general term used in the sub-continent for Afghāns, but the use of this word became more current after the overthrow of the Afghāns from Dehli by Mughal invasion in A.D. 1526 (and later the destruction of the Sūrī empire) and their consequent spreading out in Eastern India. In Bengal the descendants and supporters of Dāūd Khān Karrānī (died in A.D. 1576<sup>1</sup>) are referred to as Afghāns or Pathans as opposed to the Mughals, who displaced their authority and established their rule here. Most probably from this time onward in Bengal the generic term Pathan was used for pre or non-Mughal Muslim population as opposed to the Mughals. In common parlance in India we get only four terms Shaykh, Sayyid, Mughal and Pathan. The first refers to the saints, the second to the descendants of the Prophet and the last two are the same kind of generic terms as used by Vipradāsa. Though no definite date can be fixed to the origin of this general proverb, it seems that it is of Mughal or post-Mughal creation. Therefore, it appears that the use of the terms 'Mongol' and 'Pathan' by Vipradāsa may not be taken seriously.

From another Bengali poet, Mukunda Rāma of a slightly later date (late 16th century<sup>2</sup>) we get a picture of the Muslim society of a lower cadre. He says<sup>3</sup>, "There are some people called golā (correctly goalā or milk-man). They do not perform *Rozā* (fasting) and *Namāz* (prayer). Those who accept the occupation of weaving are called *jolhā* (weavers). Those who drive bullocks are called *Mukeri*. Some sell cakes and are called *Pithāri*. Those who sell fish are called *Kābāri*; they do not keep beard and always tell a lie. Those Hindus who

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1. *History of Bengal*, Vol II, p. 192.
  2. Sukumar Sen : *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 433.
  3. Mukunda Rāma : *Kavikañkan Chaṇḍī*, published by Baṅgabāsi Kāryālaya, Calcutta, p. 86.

রোজা নমাজ না করিয়া কেহ হৈল গোলা ।

তাসন করিয়া নাম ধরাইল ছোলা ॥

বলদে বাহিয়া নাম বলয়ে মুকেরি ।

পীঠা বেচিয়া নাম ধরাল্য পীঠারি ।

মৎস্য বেচিয়া নাম ধরাল্য কাবারি ।

নিরস্তর মিথ্যা কহে নাহি রাখে দাড়ি ॥

became Musalmāns, are called *Ghorsāl*. Those who beg for alms at night are called *Kāl*. Those who make the looms are called *Sānākār*; they earn their livelihood at the mercy of weavers. Some move from town to town with their paintings, while others make bows and are called *Tirakar* (bowmen). Some make paper and are called *Kāghā* (from *Kāghaz*), while the *Qalandars* wander from place to place. Some who paint clothes with dye-stuff are called *Rang-rez*; they wear red clothes on their head and they possess manliness. Some perform the work of circumcision and are called *Hājjām*, they move from one town to another without any rest. Some sell beef and are called *Kasāi*. They will have no place in *Yamapura* (next world). Those who cut clothes and then sew them are called *darzi* (tailor).”

The above description gives only professional classes and throws light on the occupational groups of the Muslims. The first is named *golā* (*goālā?*)<sup>1</sup>. Then follow *jolhā* or *julāhā*, the weaver, *mukeri* in the

হিন্দু হয়ে মুসলমান বৈসে গয়সাল ।  
 কান হয়ে মাঙ্গে কেহ পায়্যা নিশাকাল ॥ \*  
 সানা বান্ধিয়া নাম ধরে সানাকার ।  
 জীবন উপায় তার পায়্যা তাঁতিষর ॥  
 পট পঢ়িয়া কেহ ফিরয়ে নগরে ।  
 তীরকর হয়ে কেহ নির্মাণে শরে ॥  
 কাগজ কুটিয়া নাম ধরাল্য কাগতি [কাগচা] ।  
 কলন্দর হয়্যা কেহ ফিরে দিবারাতি ॥  
 বসন রঙ্গায়্যা কেহ ধরে রঙ্গরেজ ।  
 লোহিত বসন শিরে ধরে মহাতেজ ।  
 সুলুত করিয়া নাম বোলাল্য হাজাম ।  
 সহরে সহরে ফিরে না করে বিশ্রাম ॥  
 গোমাংস বেচিয়া নাম বোলায় কসাই ।  
 এই হেতু যম পুরে তার নাই ঠাঞি ॥  
 কাটিয়া কাপড় জোড়ে দরজির ঘট ।

\*Another reading :—

নিশাকালে ভিক্ষা মাগে নাম ধরে কাল ॥

(cf. J. N. Das Gupta : *Bengal in the 16 th Century*, Calcutta University, A. D. 1914, pp. 89 ff.

1. That Muslims also adopted the profession of milkman is supported by James Wise, who made an elaborate study

sense of cowherd, *pithāri* i. e. baker, *kābāri* i. e. fish-seller. Strangely enough the converted Muslims are called *ghorsāl*, a term, the meaning of which is difficult to determine, unless we take it for *gol-sāz* (maker of firework<sup>1</sup>). Other classes include *kāl*. i.e. beggar, *sānākār* i.e. loom-maker, painter, *Tīrakar* i.e. bowen, *kāgchā* i.e. paper-manufacturer, *rang-rez* i.e. dyers, *darzi* i.e. tailors, *kasāi* i.e. seller of beef, and *hājām*, who performed circumcision. One more class mentioned is that of the *Qalandars* i. e. wandering *darwishes*.

It appears that most of these professional classes were hereditary groups as they have been noticed in later period of history.<sup>2</sup> This is an important evidence suggesting that in the lower cadre the class system was based on profession and probably also on heredity. This may be an influence from the Hindu society, but it is not possible to say definitely how far they accepted other caste rules, like those of marriage, diet etc. of the Hindus.

As a whole the materials at our disposal give us a picture of the Muslim society divided into two broad classes, the higher class and the lower class : the higher class follow the usual pattern of the Muslim society in this sub-continent, but the lower class show survivals of local practices or influences from the Hindu society.

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of the Muslim society in the last century. *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, A. D. 1883, p. 68.)

1. James Wise (*Ibid*, p. 77) writes, "The maker of fireworks, always a Muhammadan, is often called "Golsaz" but the Persian title of "Atash-baz" is no longer in use."
2. James Wise : *Op cit*.

## CHAPTER V

### ISLAM AS PRACTISED BY THE MUSLIMS OF BENGAL

The spread of Islām in Bengal was a gradual process. As the number of immigrants into Bengal does not appear to be considerably high, it was all the more necessary to win over the support of the local people either by converting them or by pacifying them. This necessity implied some sort of compromise with the local customs and beliefs, as has been said before<sup>1</sup>. But fortunately, the problem was not so difficult for Islām in Bengal, because, (i) there has always been a preponderance of non-Aryan population in this region<sup>2</sup> and (ii) Buddhism has been a great competitor of Hinduism throughout the pre-Muslim period.<sup>3</sup> The non-Aryan elements had somehow identified themselves with the degraded Buddhism of the pre-Muslim period.<sup>4</sup> When such a keen rivalry was raging in the country, Islām came as a relieving force<sup>5</sup>, in which many found an easy opening to success and salvation. As it has been said before, there seems to have been mass conversion in Bengal wrought by the Muslim saints.<sup>6</sup> These converts retained their long-inherited customs, beliefs and even love for old Hindu epics. Even in the late 16th century the Bengali poet Sayyid Sulṭān complains of the Muslim masses' more devotion to this literature than to Qur'ān and other Islāmic subjects.<sup>7</sup> Such being the state of affairs, it is not unnatural to expect that many popular

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1. See Chapter II, p. 28. For local influences see *Infra*, pp. 162 ff.
  2. A. H. Dani, "Evolution of the Bengali Muslim Society" in *Bengali Literary Review*, Karachi, A. D. 1956.
  3. *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Dacca University, A.D. 1943, Chapter on Buddhism.
  4. A. H. Dani, "Evolution of the Bengali Muslim Society" in *Bengali Literary Review*, Karachi, A. D. 1956.
  5. "Niranjaner Rushma" in *Sūnya Purāna*, edited by C.C. Bandopadhyay, Calcutta, B. S. 1336. For quotation see, *Supra*, pp. 142-43.
  6. See, *Supra*, pp. 134 ff.
  7. Sayyid Sulṭān : *Ophāte Rasūl*, ( *Wafāt-i-Rasūl* ), edited by Ali Ahmad, B. S. 1356, p. 7. For quotation see *Supra*, pp. 81-82.

elements have crept into the general belief of Islām in Bengal. However, this does not mean that Islām in its orthodox forms was not practised here at all. The following points help in understanding the nature of this aspect of Islām :

- (1) A large number of mosques were erected<sup>1</sup> that enabled the Muslims to offer their prayers, individual or congregational.
- (2) A number of *madrāsahs* were established wherein religious instructions were imparted.<sup>2</sup>
- (3) Muslim scholars wrote books on *Ḥadīth* and *Fiqh*. These were to teach the Muslims the fundamentals of Islām.<sup>3</sup>
- (4) People of Bengal visited the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah.<sup>4</sup>
- (5) Muslims in Bengal observed fasts as it was in the case of Shāh Jalāl of Sylhet.<sup>5</sup>

Beside these, some important information is also supplied by the Bengali literature.

(i) *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*

Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh said to Haridāsa (*Yavana* Haridāsa of Vaishṇava literature) :

“It is a good fortune that you became a *Yavana*; why do you follow Hindu practices? We do not take our meal after seeing a Hindu; you forsake that (religion), although you belong to *Mahāvārṇsa* (great family). You violate the rules of your own community and religion; how will you escape (punishment) in the next world? Remove whatever sins you have committed out of ignorance by reciting the *Kalimah*.”<sup>6</sup>

This passage refers to the important tenets of Islām, the Day of Resurrection and the belief in the Oneness of God and belief in the Prophet as the Messenger of God.

1. For details see, Chapter III, Section (A), pp. 40-42.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 42 ff.
3. Chapter III, Section (B), p. 73.
4. Chapter III, Section (A), pp. 55-57.
5. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, p. 217.
6. *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*, Adi, 14th.

কত ভাগ্যে দেখ তুনি হঞাছ যবন ।

তবে কেন হিন্দুর আচারে দেহ মন ॥

স্মারন হিন্দুরে দেখি নাহি ধাই ভাত ।



(ii) Vijaya Gupta : *Padma Purāṇa*

When the people of Hāsān Hāti were afraid of snakes, a certain *Mullā* told as follows<sup>1</sup> :

“Why do you salute demon while the *Pīr* exists and why do you bow your head to a demon when there is God ?”

The passage indicates that there was belief in the supreme power of God and also a super-human power of the *Pīr*.

(iii) Mukunda Rāma : *Kavikañkan Chaṇḍī*\*

“Leaving the city of Kalinga, the *ryots* of all castes settled in the city of Bīr (name of a hunter). So many people came to the city of Bīr. Accepting the *pān* (betel-leaf) of Bīr (in token of their consent of the agreement), the Musalmāns settled there. The western end of the town

তাহা ছাড় হই তুমি মহাবংশ জাত ॥  
জাতি ধৰ্ম লঙ্ঘি কর অন্য ব্যবহার ।  
পরলোকে কেমনে বা পাইবা নিস্তার ॥  
না জানিয়া যে কিছু করিলা অনাচার ।  
সে পাপ বুচাহ করি কলিমা উচারণ ॥

The question of Haridāsa is a controversial point in Bengali literature. According to the Hindu version, he was converted from Islām to Vaishṇavism, long before the birth of Chaitanya. But the miracles attributed to him throw doubt on the whole story. This quotation from *Chaitanya Bhāgavata* is also a Hindu version of the story.

1. Vijaya Gupta, *Padma Purāṇa*, edited by B. K. Bhattacharjee, Bāṇī Niketan, Barisal, p. 57.

পীর থাকিতে কেন ভুতেরে সেলাম ॥  
খোদা থাকিতে কেন ভুতেরে নোয়াও মাথা ।

2. Mukunda Rāma : *Kavikañkan Chaṇḍī*, published by Baṅgabāsi Kāryālaya, Calcutta, pp. 85-86.

কলিঙ্গ নগর ছাড়ি                      প্রজালয় ধর বাড়ী,  
নানা জাতি বীরের নগরে ।  
বীরের লইয়া পান,                      বৈসে যত মুসলমান,  
পশ্চিম দিক্ বীর দেয় তারে ॥

was assigned to them. There came the *Mughals*, the *Sayyids* and the *Qāḍis* mounting on horse. *Bīr* gave them rent-free lands for house. They built their houses at the extreme western end and named it *Hāsān Hāti*. They rise early in the morning and spreading a red *Pāḍi* (mat), they say their prayers five times a day. Counting the *Sulaymānī* beads, they meditate on *Pīr* and *Paighambar* (Prophet) and illuminate the seat (*dargāh*) of the *Pīr*. Ten or twenty sit together to decide cases and always recite the *Qur'ān* and the *Kitāb*, while others sitting in the market places distribute the *Shīrīnī* (offerings of confectioneries) of the *Pīr*, beat the drum and raise the flag. They are very wise, they care for none, they never give up *rozā* (fasting) as long as they have life in them. Their appearance is formidable, they keep no hair on their head but allow their beard to grow down to their chest. They always adhere to

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আইসে চড়িয়া তাজি,                    সৈয়দ মোগল ক্বাজি,  
 খয়রাতে বীর দেয় বাড়ি ।  
 পুরের পশ্চিম পাট,                    বোলায় হাসন হাটী,  
 এক সমুদায় গৃহ বাড়ী ॥  
 ফজর সময়ে উঠি,                    বিছায়্যা লোহিত পাটী,  
 পাঁচ বেরি করয়ে নমাজ ।  
 ছিলিমিলি [সোলোমানি ?] মালা ধরে,                    জপে পীর পেগম্বরে,  
 পীরের মোকামে দেই সাঁজ ॥  
 দশ বিশ বেরাদরে,                    বসিয়া বিচার করে,  
 অনুদিন কিতাব কোরাণ ।  
 সাঁজে ডালা দেই হাটে,                    পীরের শীরনী বাঁটে,  
 সাঁজে বাজে দগড় নিশান ॥  
 বড়ই দানিসবন্দ,                    কাহাকে না করে ছন্দ,  
 প্রাণ গেলে রোজা নাহি ছাড়ি ।  
 ধরয়ে কাষোজ বেশ,                    মাথে নাহি রাখে কেশ,  
 বুক আচছাদিয়া রাখে দাড়ি ॥  
 না ছাড়ে আপন পথে,                    দশ রেখা টুপি মাথে,  
 ইজার পরয়ে দঢ় করি ।  
 যার দেখে খালি মাথা,                    তা সমে না কহে কথা,  
 সান্নিয়া চেলায় [চেলায় ?] মারে বাড়ি ॥

their own ways, wear ten-sided caps on their head, and they wear *ijār* (trousers) which is tied tight to their waist. If they meet anybody who is bare-headed, they pass him by without uttering a word, but going aside they throw clods of earth at him."

Here the poet gives the description of a group of religious minded Muslims.

In the orthodox form of Islām, the Muslims practised religious principles, notably the fundamentals like *Imān* or belief in God and His Apostles, *Namāz* or prayer to God, *Rozā* or fasting and *Ḥajj* or pilgrimage to the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah. Of the fifth i. e. *Zakāt* (poor-rate) reference is not available. It is not possible at this stage of our knowledge or with the materials at our disposal, to say whether all the Muslims or a substantial portion of them did adhere to all the fundamental principles of the orthodox Islām. But this much is certain that the conception was there and it was the endeavour of those at the helm of affairs to forge out a culture in accordance with the Islāmic principles. Mukunda Rāma's description also shows that there were people who held fast to the orthodox Islām.

The popular form of Islām included (i) the *Pirism* or the concept of the supremacy of the *Pirs*, (ii) *Mullāism* or the growth of the priestly influence and (iii) the reverence to the foot-prints of the Prophet.

#### (i) **The Pirism**

Etymologically the word *Pir* means old. But it is used generally to denote the teachers from whom people receive the spiritual instruction. As hundreds of people learnt from the *Ṣūfīs* during the period under review, the *Ṣūfīs* came to be known as *Pir* in the popular phraseology.<sup>1</sup> It has been pointed out earlier<sup>2</sup> that super-human powers

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1. "Pir is a term denoting a spiritual director or guide among the *Ṣūfīs*, or mystics of Islam. The functionary described by the title is known also under the names : **Shaiḵh**, **murshid**, **ustādh**. *Pir* is a Persian word, but is applied to a spiritual guide more commonly in India and Turkey than in its native home; **Shaiḵh** in our special sense is in general use throughout Islam; **murshid** is also wide-spread, but in Turkish or Arabic-speaking countries rather than in India; **ustādh** is found in Persia," (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. X, p. 40.)
  2. See, Chapter III, Section (C), Part II.

were ascribed to the  $\text{Şūfī}$ s such as giving relief to the poor, destitutes and the patients, being present at several places at a time, giving life to the dead, killing anybody at their wish and telling the future. Naturally, the  $\text{Khānqahs}$ ,  $\text{Chillākhānahs}$  or tombs of the  $\text{Pīrs}$  became places of pilgrimage where constructions were made giving the name of  $\text{dargāh}$ .<sup>1</sup> The devotees illuminated the graves and made offerings to the  $\text{Pīrs}$  or their departed soul. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah records that the people of the hilly region of Kamrup used to come and visit  $\text{Shāh Jalāl}$  and bring for him gifts and presents.<sup>2</sup> It was on these presents that the  $\text{dargāh}$  subsisted. It may also be remembered that Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn  $\text{Shāh}$  granted lands for the maintenance of the shrine of  $\text{Shaykh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam}$ .<sup>3</sup>

The reverence to the  $\text{Pīr}$  or the concept of the superhuman power of the  $\text{Pīr}$  was not of Bengali origin, rather it was imported from the west through Northern India by the immigrants. But in Bengal they found a fertile soil and were established on a solid foundation. The existing local population, the Buddhists had the practice of worshipping the  $\text{chaityas}$  or the  $\text{stupas}$  and adoring them with flowers and burning incense.<sup>4</sup> The Hindus had an identical idea in their  $\text{Avatārisms}$ .<sup>5</sup> The

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1. The following examples of  $\text{dargāhs}$  may be cited :
    - (a)  $\text{Baṛī dargāh}$  at Pandwah (see *Memoirs*, pp. 97 ff.)
    - (b)  $\text{Chhotī dargāh}$  at Pandwah (see *Memoirs*, pp. 106 ff.)
    - (c) Shrine of Mawlānā 'Aṭā (see *J. A. S. B.* 1872, Part I, p. 107 ; 1873, Part I, p. 290.)
  2. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, p. 218.
  3.  $\text{Tārīkh-i-Firishtah}$ , pp. 301-2.

Later traditions record that articles of daily use were also offered to the memory of the  $\text{Pīrs}$ . For example, people offered looking-glasses to the memory of  $\text{Shāh Anwar Qulī Ḥalwī}$  (see, Chapter III, Section (C), p. 118). In some places clay horses are offered with the belief that lame babies get recovery through the good will of the saint (see, Enamul Haq :  $\text{Baṅge Şūfī Prabhāva}$ , Calcutta, 1935, p. 238).

4. For Buddhist monasteries and  $\text{stupas}$  in Bengal, see, R.E.M. Wheeler : *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan*, London, 1950, pp. 98 ff.
5. Books were written on the  $\text{Avatārisms}$  of  $\text{Kṛishṇa}$ , see for example, (a)  $\text{Chañḍīdāsa}$  :  $\text{Śrī Kṛishṇa Kīrtana}$ , edited

*Pirs* appeared to them either as the *Tāntric gurus* or the teachers of the *Śākta* order. It is no wonder that the converts found the *Pirism* in Islām somewhat parallel to their own traditions and superstitions. The following facts lend support to this conclusion. First, a large number of places where the tombs of Muslim *Şūfīs* or their *Chillā-khānahs* stand to-day were originally Hindu or Buddhist sites.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, sometimes false tombs were erected in those places. They

by Basanta Rañjan Roy and published by Baṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad, Calcutta, B.S. 1323; (b) Mālādhara Vasu : *Śrī Kṛishṇa Vijaya*, edited by Khagendranath Mitra, published by Calcutta University, 1944.

1. For details see Cunningham : *Archaeological Survey of India*, Vol. XV.; R. D. Banerjee : "Saptagrāma" in *J. A. S. B.* 1909; See, *Supra*, p. 138. Dr. K. R. Qanungo (*History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 69-70) writes on the subject as follows ;

"The 'saints' of Islam completed the process of conquest, moral and spiritual, by establishing *dargāhs* and *Khānqahs* deliberately on the sites of those ruined places of Hindu and Buddhist worship. This served a double purpose of preventing the revival of these places of heathen sanctity, and later on, of installing themselves as the guardian deities with tale of pious fraud invented by popular imagination. Hindus who had been accustomed for centuries to venerate these places, gradually forgot their past history, and easily transferred their allegiance to the *pirs* and *ghazis*. The result of this *rapprochement* in the domain of faith ultimately created a more tolerant atmosphere which kept the Hindus indifferent to their political destiny. It prepared the ground for the further inroad of Islam into Hindu society, particularly among the lower classes who were gradually won over by an assiduous and persistent propaganda regarding the miracles of these saints and *ghazis*, which were in many cases taken over *in toto* from old Hindu and Buddhist legends."

became the places of pilgrimage and satisfied the superstitious nature of hundreds of people.<sup>1</sup>

(a) **The Worship of the Satya-Pir**

A huge literature grew up in Bengal towards the beginning of the 18th century A.D. centering round the *Satya-Pir*.<sup>2</sup> While the Muslim writers call him *Satya-Pir*, the Hindus change the word *Pir* for *Nārāyana* though there is hardly any difference between the *Satya-Pir* of the Muslims and the *Satya-Nārāyana* of the Hindus.<sup>3</sup> The worship of the *Satya-Pir* (or *Satya Nārāyana*) by both Hindus

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1. Examples of false tombs are as follows : (a) tomb ascribed to Bāyazīd of Bisṭām in Chittagong ( see, Enamul Haq : *Bāṅge Ṣūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, 1935, p. 147), (b) tombs in Mandaran ascribed to Shāh Ismā'īl Ghāzī ( see, *J. A. S. B.*, 1917, pp. 131 ff ). Late Mawlawī Ḥamīd Allāh Khān of Chittagong in his book *Aḥādīth al-Kh*awānīn, Calcutta, 1871, p. 17, composed and published in the 19th century writes as follows :

دران حین بعضی از آوارگان جهان نورد وسیا حان  
صعراگرد از فقراء و مساکین اسلام می آمدند و بمقا بله  
مشاهد هندوان و معاید مکهان مزارات و قبور باطله  
بنام قبر یا آستانه سلطان العارفين بايزيد بسطامی قدس  
الله سره السامی و حضرت غوث الاولیا شیخ عبدالقادر  
جیلی رحمه الله تعالی که گاه این بزرگان درین  
دار الکفر نیامده بودند امثال آن ساخته و پرداخته ذریعه  
ارزاق و وسیله اجتماع مردمان از نواحی و آفاق کرده بودند  
که بتدریج سبب آمد و شد مسلمانان هم پیدا شد  
و تخمینا زیاده ازدویست -

2. Sukumar Sen: *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Calcutta, 1940, pp. 832 ff.  
3. *Ibid*; see also E. Haq : *Bāṅge Ṣūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, 1935, p. 241.

and Muslims could be noticed in different parts of Bengal, especially in the western and northern districts even in the 20th century<sup>1</sup>. A wooden plank is used to denote the seat of the *Satya-Pīr* and offerings of edibles like confectioneries, milk, sugar, betel-leaf, betel-nuts are made. The earliest work on *Satya-Pīr* is attributed to Shaykh Fayḍ Allāh, whose *Satya-Pīr Kāvya* was composed in between A. D. 1545 and 1575<sup>2</sup>. It is needless to mention that the *Satya-Pīr* idea could not have grown in a day or in a year; it took many years to gain popularity among the people and to be a part and parcel of the social customs. If we allow at least one hundred years for the *Satya-Pīr* idea to obtain force in popular imagination so that it could influence a poet to write on it, and if the date assigned to Shaykh Fayḍ Allāh proves to be true, or even if his date is pushed forward by at least half a century, it may be concluded that the *Satya-Pīr* idea emerged sometimes in the later part of the period under review. D. C. Sen thinks<sup>3</sup> that Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh was the originator of the *Satya-Pīr* movement, but there is no evidence to support his view.

The later Bengali literature records two traditions<sup>4</sup> regarding the *Satya-Pīr* (or *Satya-Nārāyana*) worship. According to the first, *Srī Hari* (Hindu god) appears in the guise of a *faqīr* before a poor Brahmin and advises him to make offerings of *shīrnī* (confectioneries) to the *Satya-Nārāyana*. The Brahmin obeys the order and becomes rich due to the boon of the *faqīr*. The second tradition is as follows : A certain merchant obtains a female child with the blessings of the *Satya-Nārāyana*. He gives his daughter in marriage and takes the son-in-law with him on a certain trading voyage. There he was put to troubles before a certain king, because he did not worship *Satya-Nārāyana*. But as his wife worshipped him, the merchant got out of troubles and returned home. When they reached near the house, the merchant's daughter neglected *prasāda* (offerings) of the *Satya-Nārāyana* and rushed out of the house to see her husband, and thus enraged *Satya-Nārāyana*. The boat capsized. *Satya-Nārāyana*

1. *Ibid.*
2. E. Haq : *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, 1955, pp. 113-14.
3. D. C. Sen : *History of the Bengali Language and Literature*, Calcutta University, A. D. 1911, p. 797.
4. Sukumar Sen, *Op cit*, p. 835.

was again worshipped. The merchant, his son-in-law, all trading vessels were recovered from the water.

How the *Satya-Pir* idea originated in Bengal, no one can say for certain. But a close examination of the traditions and the method of worship give the following points :

(i) *Satya-Pir* or the *Satya-Nārāyana* claims worship from the devotees in the same manner as the Hindu local goddesses Manasā or Chāṇḍī does, as depicted in the Bengali literature<sup>1</sup>.

(ii) The method of worship shows that *Satya-Pir* is not represented by any deity but by only a wooden plank.

(iii) Offerings of edibles are made just as they are made to the Hindu gods and the Muslim *Pirs*.

These points indicate that there is both Muslim and Hindu elements in the conception of *Satya-Pir* or it can be said with some amount of certainty that the *Satya-Pir* concept originated through a mixture of the Muslim idea of the *Pir* and the Hindu notion of their deities. Judging from this standpoint, the origin or evolution of the ideal may be traced as follows : It is the result of the *Pirism* or the Muslim conception of the super-human power of the *Pirs*. When the local people were converted to Islām, they got this conception of *Pirism* mixed up with their old ideas of the super-natural power of the deities. A further evolution of this process saw the culmination in the personification of the *Pirism* in *Satya-Pir* or the *Pirism* itself began to be conceived of as a super-human power.

#### (b) **The Panch-Pir or The Five Pirs**

Closely associated with the *Pirism* and probably directly derived from it is the worship of *Pānch-Pir* which played a prominent part in the Bengali Muslim society. In some districts of Bengal like Midnapore and Burdwan, the *Pānch-Pir* is worshipped even to-day<sup>2</sup>. "In West Bengal the 'five saints' form one of the main objects of adoration, not only of Muhammadans, but also of Hindus of the lower grades. They are often worshipped as family deities, represented by a small mound on a clay plinth erected in the north-west corner of

1. For details, see (a) Vijaya Gupta : *Padma Purāna*, edited by Basanta Kumar Bhattacharjee, Bāṇī Niketan, Barisal; (b) Mukunda Rāma. *Kavikañkan Chāṇḍī*, edited by D. C. Sen, Calcutta University.

2. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IX, p. 600.



one of the rooms of the house. On this is fixed a piece of iron, resembling in its shape the human hand, each finger symbolizing one of the quintette, with a piece of yellow cloth bound where the wrist should be."<sup>1</sup> In Sunārgāwn, there is a *dargāh*, known as *Pānch-Pīr dargāh*<sup>2</sup>. The sailors of East Bengal remember the *Pānch-Pīr* even to-day along with the name of Pīr Badar, with a view to getting relief from dangers<sup>3</sup>.

It is difficult to trace the origin of the worship of the *Pānch-Pīr*. It is hardly possible to put any date for the *Pānch-Pīr dargāh* of Sunārgāwn. The tombs are now found in a modern wall-enclosure. By its side there is a mosque, which has also been completely renovated. It is just mentioned that the *Pānch-Pīrs* are remembered by sailors along with the name of Pīr Badar. Who is this Pīr Badar? If he is identified with the celebrated Bihar saint Pīr Badar al-Dīn Badar-i-'Ālam, the origin of the worship or at least the conception of the *Pānch-Pīr* may be dated to the 15th century A. D. But there may be objections to such conjecture, because the *Pānch-Pīr* could have been associated with the name of Pīr Badar at a later date as well.

Equally difficult is to answer the question, who were the five *Pīrs*? The list of five *Pīrs* differ in different places though the name of one or two local *Pīrs* are found in the lists<sup>4</sup>. In Bengal it differs from district to district, though in all lists, *Ghāzī Miyān* finds prominence<sup>5</sup>. It is also difficult to say whether *Ghāzī Miyān* is a

1. *Ibid.*

2. Cunningham : *Archaeological Survey of India*, Vol. XV, Calcutta, 1882, p. 139.

3. E. Haq : *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A. D. 1935, pp. 242 ff.; *Dacca Review*, August, 1913, p. 142.

আমরা আছি পৌলপান  
গাঙ্গী গঙ্গা নিষাবান ।  
শিরে গঙ্গা দরিয়া  
পাঁচ পীর বদর বদর ॥

Translation :—"We are little children, *Ghāzī* and *Gaṅgā* are our protectors. We bow our heads to thee, Oh Ganges stream. (Help us) Oh Five Saints. We invoke you in the name of Badar, Badar."

4. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IX, p. 600.

5. *Ibid.*

historical figure. It seems, therefore, that the conception of *Pānch-Pīr* is purely conventional and there were no five *Pīrs* who constituted the list.

An examination of both Hindu and Muslim religious practices shows that the numeral five is important to both Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus put importance to (a) the five chaste women, viz. *Kausalyā*, *Draupadi*, *Kunti*, *Tārā* and *Mandudārī*; (b) the *Pañchavati* i.e. the jungles of five *vatas* where *Rāma* and *Sitā* were exiled; (c) the five *Pāṇḍava* brothers and (d) the five rivers i.e. the five feeder rivers to the Indus<sup>1</sup>. The Muslims also put importance to the numeral five in some respects, because they have to say their prayers five times a day, to recite five *Kalīmahs*, and according to Islāmic principles there are five pillars of Islām i. e. *Imān* (belief), *Namāz* (prayer), *Rozā* (fasting), *Ḥajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah and Madīnah) and *Zakāt* (poor-rate). The Buddhists had the conception of five *Dhyāni Buddhas*. It may thus be suggested that the worship of *Pānch-Pīr* originated through the extreme reverence to the *Pīr* by both Hindus and Muslims. Though the approximate date of its origin cannot be fixed with certainty, this much is certain that it took a long time for the system to gain a popular force and to be accepted by both Hindus and Muslims as part of their socio-religious life.

### (c) **Minor Features Connected With Pirism**

Later practices show that a number of imaginary *Pīrs* receive reverence from the credulous masses. These *Pīrs* are given different names like *Mānik Pīr*, *Ghoṛā Pīr*, *Kumbhīra Pīr*, and *Madārī Pīr*. Offerings are made to them motivated by various gains and seeking relief from dangers. For example, offerings of milk and fruits are made to *Mānik Pīr* in north, south and south-west Bengal<sup>2</sup>. Folk songs called *Mānik Pīrer Gān* are composed and sung in various districts<sup>3</sup>. In south-west Bengal offerings of clay horses are made to *Ghoṛā Pīr* with the notion that lame babies get recovery at the boon of the *Pīr*<sup>4</sup>. *Kumbhīra* or crocodiles are offered edibles and meat<sup>5</sup>. The

1. *Ibid.*; E. Haq : *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, 1935, pp. 242 ff.
2. E. Haq : *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A. D. 1935, p. 240.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

following account of the crocodiles of the **Khān Jahān's** tank at Bagerhat, will throw light on the point<sup>1</sup>. "...the fact appeared to be that the simple people of the district believe that these crocodiles can bless young ladies to come into an interesting condition, and their blessings are sure to bear fruit. Accordingly many young women repair to this place to bathe in sacred water of the tank, and implore the blessing of the saurian monsters. They offer them fowls and kids; then paint a human figure with red lead on a stone pillar in the neighbourhood, and, embracing it, vow to give away to the crocodiles the first fruit of their blessings. This vow is never broken, the first born is invariably brought to the tank, and when, at the call of the Fakirs, the crocodiles rise to the surface, the child is thrown on the water's edge with words implying a presentation. But it is taken up immediately after, and borne home amid the rejoicings of the family." In some *dargāhs* people bind coloured threads to the branches of nearby trees to have the desired effect<sup>2</sup>. In some places stones or walls attached to *dargāhs* are washed with lime<sup>3</sup>. Sometimes people offer edibles to fish or tortoise of the tanks attached to the *dargāhs*<sup>4</sup>. The fish or tortoise are called *Madāri*. In some districts in north Bengal, people arrange a festival known as *Madārer Bānstolā* (lifting of the bamboo of *Madār*) in memorium to *Madāri Pir*<sup>5</sup>. It is difficult to trace the origin of these practices and beliefs. There is no evidence to show that they were prevalent during the period under discussion. But it is probable that they are also the result of popular influence as we have seen in the case of *Satya-Pir* or *Pānch-Pir*.

#### (i) **The Growth of Mullaism or Priestly Influence**

Vijaya Gupta, a contemporary Bengali poet, supplies the following information about the *Mullās* :

- (a) "A certain *Mullā* (learned man) named Takāi (correctly Taqī) is well-versed in religious books. If the *Qāḍī* arranges a feast, he is called in before anybody else. The *Mullā*

1. *J. A. S. B.*, 1867, p. 129.
2. As in the case of the *dargāh* ascribed to Bāyazīd of Bisṭām in Chittagong.
3. As it is found in Sunārgāwn.
4. For example, the *dargāh* of Bāyazīd of Bisṭām in Chittagong.
5. E. Haq : *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Daḥḥa, A. D. 1955, p. 131.

tells many things ( implying that he gives instructions) by unfastening the edge of his cloth and after finishing his *japa* ( probably recitation of names of God) he kills the fowl.”<sup>1</sup>

- (b) “There was a teacher of the *Qāḍī* named *Khālās* ( correctly *Khālīs* or *Ikhlās* ) who always engaged himself in the study of the *Qur’ān* and other religious books. . . . . He said, if you ask me, I say, why are you afraid of demons, when you have got the religious books. Write (extracts) from the book and hung it down the neck. If then also the demons (implying snakes) bite, I shall be held responsible. The *Qāḍī* accepted what the *Mullā* said and all present took amulet from him (the *Mullā*)”.<sup>2</sup>

Mukunda Rāma<sup>3</sup> writing towards the end of the 16th century,

1. Vijaya Gupta : *Padma Purāṇa*, edited by Basanta Kumar Bhattacharjee, Bānī Niketan, Barisal, p. 54.

তকাই নামে মোলা কিতাব তাল আনে ।

কাজির মেজমান হইলে আগে তারে আনে ॥

কাছা খুলিয়া মোলা ফরমায় অনেক ।

অপ সাজ করি মোলা মারয়ে মোরগে ॥

2. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

কাজির ওস্তাদ এক নামেতে খালাস ।

কেতাব কোরাণে তার বড়ই অভ্যাস ॥

.....

মোলা বলে আনারে জিজ্ঞাসা যদি কর ।

কেতাব থাকিতে কেন ভুতের ডরে মর ॥

কেতাব লিখিয়া দাও গলে যেন থাকে ।

তবে যদি ভুতে লঙষে সে দোষ মোরে লাগে ॥

মোলার বচন এখন কাজির মনে লয় ।

তাবিজ লিখিয়া তখন সকলেই লয় ॥

3. Mukunda Rāma : *Kavikāṅkan Chaṇḍī*, Baṅgabāsi Kāryālaya, Calcutta, p. 86.

বসিল অনেক মিয়া, আপন তরফ লৈয়া,

কেহ নিকা কেহ করে বিয়া ।

corroborates to some extent what Vijaya Gupta wrote and gives some more information. It is quoted below :

“Many *Miyās* (persons) settled there with their own *taraf* (landed property). Some of them contract *nikā*, while some contract *biyā*<sup>1</sup>. The *Mullās* perform the ceremony of the *nikā* and get a reward of four annas and bless the couple by reading the *Kalimah*. He (*mullā*) takes a sharp knife, kills the fowl and gets a reward of ten *gaṇḍās* of *cowri*<sup>2</sup>. For butchering a she-goat, the *mullā* gets six *buṛis* of *cowri*,<sup>3</sup> as also the head of the animal killed.’

In these passages we have got the conception of a *Mullā* as he was ordinarily held in the villages of Bengal—a practice which is not far different from what we see even to-day in the villages. The *Mullā*, who was fairly well-versed in religious principles, especially who was master in the day to day practice of Islām, was usually consulted by the ordinary less educated villagers. He, therefore, had a special role to play in the Muslim village society, as it was considered necessary that all the ceremonies and the functions should have an Islāmic

মোলা পড়ায়া নিকা,      দান পায় সিকা সিকা,  
 দোয়া করে কলমা পড়িয়া ॥  
 করে ধরি খর ছুরী,      কুকুড়া জবাই করি,  
 দশ গণ্ডা দান পায় কড়ি ।  
 বকরি জবাই যথা,      মোলারে দেই মাথা,  
 দান পায় কড়ি ছয় বুড়ি ॥

1. *Nikā* is derived from Arabic word نكاح (*nikāḥ*) and *biyā* is derived from Sanskrit word *bibāha*. Here Mukunda Rāma draws a distinction between *nikā* and *biyā*, though in strict sense both the words mean marriage. In popular usage in some districts of Bengal like Dacca, even to-day *biyā* is used for first marriage and *nikā* for second marriage.
2. Ten *gaṇḍās* of *cowri* are equivalent to 1/3 of a pice. (See, J. N. Das Gupta : *Bengal in the 16th Century*, Calcutta University, 1914, pp. 89-92.)
3. Six *buṛis* of *cowri* are equivalent to about a pice. (*Ibid*).

touch<sup>1</sup>. This was done variously as has been described by Vijaya Gupta and Mukunda Rāma. For this purpose the *Mullās* charged certain fees, rates in one village have been given before on the evidence of Mukunda Rāma. As similar functions had to be performed in most of the Muslim villages, it was very necessary to have at hand the services of a *Mullā*. As a result the number of *Mullās* must have grown sufficiently and also their hold on the then society. The *Mullās* lived on the petty income that they had out of these religious performances. But it is very difficult to say whether the *Mullās* did form a class by themselves. Probably they did not as it could not be maintained against the explicit injunctions of Islām. However, *Mullās* were a force in the society and they kept together the credulous masses by sanctioning popular religious ceremonies. As we learn from an inscription of the time of Nuṣrat Shāh, they formed an important group<sup>2</sup> in the society and they were in charge of the property belonging to a mosque, just as a *Mutawallī* is to-day.

### (iii) The Reverence to the Foot-prints of the Prophet

The *Qadam Rasūl* building of Gaur stands even to-day<sup>3</sup> and bears testimony to the fact that the foot-print of the Prophet was an object of veneration to the then Muslim<sup>4</sup> of Bengal. Even to-day it is an object of veneration to the Muslims. The structure was built by Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh to preserve the stone-representation of the foot-print of the Prophet, said to have been brought from Arabia by Maḥdūm Jahāniyān Janhāngashī<sup>4</sup>. It was formerly preserved at Pandwah in the *Chillākhānah* of Maḥdūm Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī<sup>5</sup>. From that place it was removed by Sulṭān 'Alā'al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh to Lakhnawī who put it in a beautiful wooden box-table, inlaid with gold and silver<sup>6</sup>. Sulṭān Nuṣrat Shāh placed it in the above mentioned building<sup>7</sup>.

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1. For example, uttering the name of God before starting a work, performing a *mīlād* ceremony before a house is built, uttering the first *kalimah* before a goat or a fowl or a cow is killed etc.
  2. *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*, p. 72.
  3. *Memoirs*, pp. 61 ff.
  4. *Ibid*, p. 64.
  5. *Ibid*, p. 63.
  6. *Ibid*.
  7. Two such buildings, built in the later period, are still to be found, one at Nabiganj, opposite Narayanganj

The stone-representation of the foot-print of the Prophet is not permitted by orthodox Islām. Outside Eastern India such examples of stone-representation are not rare<sup>1</sup>. Its reverence must have been imported to the Muslim society of Bengal from outside, though it was strengthened here as a result of the popular force. On the eve of the Muslim conquest and after, the *Dharma* worshippers of south-west corner of Bengal comprising the modern Burdwan division, ( West Bengal, India ) used to worship *Dharma-pādukā* (footwear of *Dharma*)<sup>2</sup>.

The feet of elder people are always held sacred in the Hindu society<sup>3</sup>. We hear in the Sanskrit inscriptions such names as *Vishṇu-pāda giri* (i. e. the hill bearing the foot-print of Vishṇu)<sup>4</sup>. Even the early Buddhists revered Buddha's foot-print (*Buddhapāda*)<sup>5</sup>.

in the district of Dacca, and the other preserved in one room attached to a mosque, known as *Qadam Mubārak Masjid* in the Chittagong town. According to Mirza Nathan, the author of *Bahāristān-i-Ghaybī*, the foot-print now deposited at Nabiganj was obtained by Ma'şūm Khān Kābulī from some merchants, who brought it from Arabia, on payment of a large sum of money. See, *Bahāristān-i-Ghaybī*, translated by M.I.Borah, Government of Assam, A. D. 1936, Vol. II, p. 710.

1. Important examples are, *Masjid al-Aqdām* in Damascus, (Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, vol. I, pp. 226-27), Adam's foot in Ceylon (Sayyid Sulayman Nadvi : '*Arab wa Hind ke Ta'alluqāt*', Allahabad, A.D, 1930, p. 2) and *Qadam Sharīf* in Dehli (H. Sharp : *Delhi : It's Story and Buildings*, Oxford University Press, A. D. 1928, p. 60).
2. *Śūnya Purāṇa*, edited by C. C. Bandopadhyay, Calcutta, B. S. 1336, pp. 48,55, 111. For details on *Dharma* worship, see (a) "Dharma-Worship" by K. P. Chattopadhyay in *J. A. S. B.* 1942, (b) Introduction to *Śūnya Purāṇa*, edited by C. C. Bandopadhyay, Calcutta, B. S. 1336.
3. The wooden sandal of Rāma Chandra is too well-known to be cited.
4. Mehrauli pillar inscription of Chandra in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, 1897, p. 6.
5. Albert Grunwedel : *Buddhist Art in India*, London, A. D. 1901, p. 72.

In Bengal even today one form of salutation observed by the Muslims is that the younger touch the feet of the elders<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore not an exaggeration to say that the symbolic representation of the foot-print of the Prophet had deeply affected the Muslim mind in Bengal. It has almost become a religious duty to them to visit the foot-print of the Prophet<sup>2</sup>.

1. An important reference is found in *Rasūl Vijaya* of Zayn al-Dīn. (E. Haq : *Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, A. D. 1955, p. 61. The date of the poet is controversial. (See *Supra*, p. 8).

সান্ত দান্ত গুণবন্ত            মর্যাদার নাহি অন্ত  
 পীর শাহা মোহাম্মদ খান ॥  
 তান পদরজ-পঙ্ক,            ভালে তিল পরি রঙ্ক  
 কহে জৈনুদ্দীন ইহ লোকে ।  
 জয় দিব নিরঞ্জন            ধর গিয়া সে চরণ  
 কোন শৌকে ভাব মন দুখে ॥

Translation :— “(My) *Pīr*, *Shāh* Muḥammad *Khān* is modest and virtuous; there is no end of his prestige. Anointing the forehead with the dust of his feet (as a *tilak*), Zayn al-Dīn says, “go and catch hold of his feet; God will grant you success, what sorrow is there to perturb your mind?”

2. In an inscription of the time of Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥusayn *Shāh* one Ḥājī Bābā Ṣāleḥ claims himself to be *حاجى الحرمين وزائر القدمين* (pilgrim to two holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah and visitor to two foot-prints of the Prophet. *J. A. S. B.* 1873, p. 283). In a coin, Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Faṭḥ *Shāh* claims himself to be “the *Shaykh*, who waits on the *Qadam Rasūl*. (*J. A. S. B.* 1890, p. 173).



## CHAPTER VI

### THE DAILY LIFE OF THE MUSLIMS

Having discussed the gradual development of the Muslim society and its composition in Bengal, we are now in a position to discuss the daily life of the Muslims i.e. the language they spoke, their profession, the dwelling houses, the diet, the dress, the position of women, the social gatherings, the appointment of slaves, their pecuniary condition and their contact with the local people.

#### (i) The Language

The immigrants must have brought with them their own mother-tongue Arabic, Persian or Turkish as the case might be, while the language of the local Muslims (converts) must have been Bengali. No official document of the time except inscriptions and coins has come to light. The coins were issued in Arabic<sup>1</sup>, while the inscriptions were issued both in Arabic and Persian, majority being in Arabic, only one so far discovered being in Sanskrit<sup>2</sup>. The official titles used in inscriptions such as *Sar-i-Lashkar*, *Shiqdār*, *Mir-i-Bahr*, *Kotwāl*, *Sharābdār-i-Ghayr-i-Mahālī*, *Jāmdār-i-Ghayr-i-Mahālī* are all Persian<sup>3</sup>. The official language, therefore, was Persian, while they adopted Arabic in all religious matters. It has been pointed out earlier<sup>4</sup> that the Persian language received patronage from the ruling power. This is evidenced by the fact that Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Bārbak Shāh appointed one Zayn al-Dīn Harwī as the poet-laureate<sup>5</sup>. Moreover in his time there flourished in Bengal a number of Persian poets and at least two lexicon writers<sup>6</sup>.

The Chinese account,<sup>7</sup> compiled by Ma Huan between A.D. 1425-1432 says that "the language in universal use is Pang-Kie-li

1. For specimen of coins see, H. N. Wright : *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, Vol. II, Oxford, 1907.
2. For inscriptions see, *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*.
3. For titles see, *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*, pp. 94-102.
4. Chapter III, Section (B), pp. 52-57; 78-81.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, 1945, Vol. I, p. 117.

(Bengali); there are also those who speak in Pa-enl-si (Farsi-Persian)". The Chinese mission came to visit the royal court and the account shows that it deals more with the description of the court than with the general condition of the country. Similarly it may be assumed that they came in contact more with the ruling class than with the common people. In spite of this when the Chinese account says that the language in universal use was Bengali, it may logically be assumed that not only the local people spoke in Bengali but also some of the immigrants. The following points add strength to the validity of this view. In the first place, the immigrants settled in the country for a long time and had long association with the local people. The first Muslim immigration must have begun with the foundation of the Lakhnawī kingdom by Muḥammad Bakhtiyār Khaljī and the Muslim settlement also began from his time. Apart from the ruling dynasties, the most important example of such settlement is of the family of As'ad Lāhorī. Due to the settlement of the family in Bengal, his son Shaykh 'Alā'al-Ḥaqq received the epithet *Bangālī* with his name<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, they had established social contact with the local people. We have already pointed out that the immigrants sometimes accepted local wives<sup>2</sup>. But they also established some sort of a village-relationship which they considered to be more genuine than the matrimonial one.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, in conducting the

1. *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 143.

2. See *Supra*, pp. 145 ff.

3. *Chaitanya Charitāmṛta*, *Adi*, 17th.; Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja records the following dialogue between the Qāḍī of Nadiya and Chaitanya Deva :—

প্রভু বলে আমি তোমার আইলাম অভ্যাগত ।  
 আমা দেখি লুকাইলা এ ধর্ম কেমত ॥  
 কাজী কহে তুমি আইস ক্রুদ্ধ হইয়া ।  
 তোমা শাস্ত করাইতে রহিনু লুকাইয়া ॥  
 এবে তুমি শাস্ত হইলে আমি মিলিলাম ।  
 ভাগ্য মোর তোমা হেন অতিথি পাইলাম ॥  
 গ্রাম সম্বন্ধে চক্রবর্তী হয় মোর চাচা ।  
 দেহ সম্বন্ধে হৈতে হয় গ্রাম সম্বন্ধ সাঁচা ॥  
 নীলাশ্বর চক্রবর্তী হয় তোমার নানা ।  
 সে সম্বন্ধে হও তুমি আমার ভাগিনা ॥

administration of the country they came in contact with the people in general and with their colleagues, many of whom were recruited from the children of the soil.<sup>1</sup>

While the immigrants learnt the local language, the local Muslims also, at least some of them, must have learnt Arabic and Persian. The very fact that they accepted Islām necessitated them to learn at least something of Arabic, because without Arabic it was difficult to follow some of the fundamentals as in the case of saying prayers. Similarly, if they accepted office and there is no reason why they or some of them should not have accepted office, they must have learnt Persian, the official language.

### (ii) The Profession

The Muslims were engaged in various kinds of professions, like state service, trade and commerce, artisanship, agriculture and medical profession.

ভাগিনার ক্রোধ মানা অবশ্য সহয়।

মাতুলের অপরাধ ভাগিনা না লয় ॥

“The Lord (Chaitanya) says, ‘I am a guest to you; how is it that you kept yourself concealed at my approach?’ The Qāḍī says, ‘You came indignant, so I kept myself concealed to make you cool. Now that your anger has subsided I have come to meet you. It is my good fortune that I have got a guest like you. According to the village relationship, Chakravarty (Nilāmbar Chakravarty, maternal-grandfather of Chaitanya) is my uncle, and you know village-relationship is more genuine than bodily (or blood) relationship. Nilāmbar Chakravarty is your maternal-grandfather, so you are my nephew. The maternal uncle tolerates the anger of the nephew, while the nephew does not take into account the faults of the uncle.”

1. For appointment of Hindu officers under Ḥusayn Shāh, See *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 151 ff. See also *Supra*, pp. 128 ff.

## (a) Service

As the heads of the state were Muslims<sup>1</sup>, they appointed a large number of Muslims under them. The sources supply the names of the following officers<sup>2</sup>--*Iqta'dār*, *Wazīr*, *Dabīr-i-Khāṣ*, *Sar-i-Lashkar*, *Āriḍ-i-Lashkar*, *Silāḥdār*, *Qāḍī*, *Shiqdār*, *Mīr-i-Baḥr*, *Kotwāl*,

1. The former theory that Rājā Gaṇeṣa actually crowned himself King (See N. K. Bhattasali: *The Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge, 1922) has recently been challenged. (See A. H. Dani : "The House of Rājā Gaṇeṣa of Bengal", in *J. A. S. B.* Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1952).
2. *Iqta'dār* - 'Alī Mardān **Kh**aljī and Ḥusām al-Dīn 'Iwaḍ **Kh**aljī were *iqta'dārs* under Muḥammad Bakhtyār **Kh**aljī (Minhāj pp. 156, 158). *Iqta'* is derived from **قطعة** (pieces). So *Iqta'dārs* were appointed over a piece of territory into which the state was divided at the initial stage of Muslim administration.

*Wazīr* - The *Wazīr* was the highest officer of the state with both administrative and financial powers. Among the Muslim *Wazīrs* we may mention the names of A'zam **Kh**ān, brother of **Shaykh** Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam (*Akhbār al-Akh'yār*, p. 156), Malik Andīl Ḥabshī (*Tārīkh-i-Fīrishah*, p. 299), and Ḥusayn **Sharīf** Makkī, later on Sulṭān 'Alā'al-Dīn Ḥusayn **Shāh** (*Ibid*, p. 301). Contemporary inscriptions show that *Wazīrs* were sometimes entrusted with the administration of smaller units like '*Arṣah* and *Shahr* and combined in them other posts like *Sar-i-Lashkar*. (For inscriptions, See *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*).

*Dabīr-i-Khāṣ* - As the name suggests, *Dabīr-i-khāṣ* (Private Secretary) occupied an important position with the rank of a minister. **Shams** al-Dīn **Dabīr** who accompanied **Buḡhrā Khān** to **Lakhnawtī**, probably, did not go back and

*Jāmdār-i-Ghayr-i-Maḥalī*, *Sharābdār-i-Ghayr-i-Maḥalī*, *Jāndār*, *Ḥājib* and *Darbān*. Some of these officers used to take lofty titles like *Khān-i-Aʿzam*, *Khān-i-Jahān*, *Majlis-i-Āʿlā*, *Majlis al-Majālis*,

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remained under the employ of *Buḡhrā Khān* (Baranī, p. 95; *Muntakhab*, Vol. I, p. 154). Besides *Shams al-Dīn Dabīr*, the name of no Muslim *Dabīr* has come down to us, though we know definitely that the office of *Dabīr-i-Khāṣ* did exist. According to Bengali literature, Rupa was a *Dabīr-i-Khāṣ* of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn *Shāh*. (See, *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*, published by M. K. Ghosh, Calcutta, *Gaurabda*, 440, pp. 82 & 350). The functions of a *Dabīr* required an incumbent to be well-versed in literature and the art of composition and to be master of style and diction (I. H. Qureshi: *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Lahore, 2nd Edition, 1944, pp. 86-87) and as the official language was Persian (See *Supra*, pp. 176-78), it may be concluded that the *Dabīrs* must have been appointed from among the Muslims.

*Sar-i-Lashkars* were the army officers, having a number of soldiers under them. For reference to *Sar-i-Lashkar*, in contemporary inscriptions, See, *J.A.S.B.* 1870 pp. 290, 293-4; *J. A. S. B.* 1873, pp. 272-73, 285-86.

*Silāḥdār*—*Fakḥrā*, later on Sulṭān *Fakḥr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh* was the *Silāḥdār* of Bahrām *Khān*, the Imperial Governor of Sunārgāwn. (*Yaḥyā bin Aḥmad*, p. 104). From the analogy with Dehli we know that *Silāḥdārs* were armed soldiers who waited upon the rulers when they gave public audience or rode out. (See I. H. Qureshi: *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Lahore, A. D. 1944, p. 63).

*Khān-i-Majlis*, *Majlis-i-Nūr*, *Maṭik al-Mu‘azzam* and *Majlis al-Mu‘azzam*.<sup>1</sup> The sources do not help us in determining the implication of many of these titles, though there is no doubt that these titles were conferred upon officers according to their rank and grade.

(b) **Trade and Commerce**

The foreign accounts and the Bengali literature furnish a long list of agricultural, natural and industrial products of the country during the Muslim rule. These products became the source of extensive

**Qāḍī** - The Qāḍī was charged with the administration of justice. (See *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Dacca Session, 1953, p. 258; *Riyāḍ* pp. 106 ff.

For references to *Shiqdār* (persons entrusted with the administration of the *Shiq*), *Mīr Bahr* (Commander of the fleet), *Kotwāl* (City Superintendent of Police), *Jāmdār-i-Ghayr-i-Maḥālī* (cup-bearer outside the palace), *Sharābdār-i-Ghayr-i-Maḥālī* (cup-bearer outside the palace), *Jāndār* (body-guards), in contemporary inscriptions, See *J.A.S.B.* 1872, p. 106, pp. 109-10, *J. A. S. B.* 1873, pp. 272-73, *J. A. S. B.* 1870, p. 290. For references to *Ḥājib* (Chief officer of the Royal palace) and *Darbān* (porter), see *Riyāḍ*, pp. 100, 106, 120-25).

**‘Ariḍ-i-Lashkar** - He was the paymaster of the army. ‘Alī Mubārak, later on Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī *Shāh* was the ‘*Ariḍ-i-Lashkar* of Qadr *Khān*, the Imperial Governor of Lakhnawī. (See Yaḥyā bin *Aḥmad*, p. 105).

1. For these titles in the contemporary inscriptions, see, *J. A. S. B.* 1873, pp. 271, 272-77; *J. A. S. B.* 1874, pp. 296-97; *J. A. S. B.* 1872, pp. 337-38, 333; *J. A. S. B.* 1870, p. 90. See also *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*, pp. 94 ff.

internal and foreign trade.<sup>1</sup> The interwoven rivers and rivulets within the country facilitated the transportation of commodities from one side to the other and developed internal trade while the fretted sea-coast afforded the country to carry on extensive trade with foreign merchants like the Arabs, the Chinese and the Portuguese.<sup>2</sup>

Contemporary authorities refer to the existence of market-places where shopkeepers dealt in various commodities. Baranī refers to the market-place of Lakhnawtī, which was one mile in length, on each side of which the shopkeepers sold their commodities.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūṭah saw commodities being sold cheaper in Bengal's markets.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese visitor Hon-Hien saw Sunārgāwn "a walled place, with tanks, streets and bazars which carried on business in all kinds of commodities".<sup>5</sup> He saw the bazar of Pandwah "well-arranged, the shops side by side".<sup>6</sup> The foreign writers refer to the sea-ports of Chittagong and Satgāwn. According to the Chinese Account, the first port that the merchants were to enter in Bengal from the south and south-east through the Bay of Bengal was Chittagong, situated on the mouth of the sea. It is in this port that the merchants from foreign countries came from outside and anchored their ships. It is there again that they assembled and divided the profit of their merchandise.<sup>7</sup> The first reference to Satgāwn in foreign accounts is to be found in that of Master Caesar Frederick,<sup>8</sup> according to whom,

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1. (a) Fruits:- Orange, lemon, mango, banana, jack-fruit, sour-pomegranate.  
(b) Domestic animals:- Camel, horse, mule, water-buffalo, marine goat, fowl, duck, pig, goose, dog, cat. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134; Barbosa, pp. 135-48; Mālādhar Vasu : *Śrī Kṛiṣṇa Vijaya*, edited by Khagendra Nath Mitra, Calcutta University, 1944. Vijaya Gupta : *Padma Purāṇa*, edited by B. K. Bhattacharjee, Bāpī Niketan, Barisal).
  2. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134.; Barbosa, pp. 135-48.
  3. Baranī, p. 91.
  4. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, p. 210.
  5. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134.
  6. *Ibid.*
  7. *Ibid.*
  8. Quoted by J. N. Das Gupta in *Bengal in the 16th Century*, Calcutta University, A. D. 1914, p. 106. Barbosa

“In the port of Satagan every yeare lade thirtie or five and thirtie ships great and small. . . . The citie of Satagan is a reasonable fair citie for a citie of the Moores, abounding with all things”. All these towns mentioned by the foreigners as important centres of commerce and trade were under the possession of the Muslim Sulṭāns. Both Lakhnawtī and Pandwah were seats of government,<sup>1</sup> while Sunārgāwn and Satgāwn, sometimes occupied the status of provincial capitals.<sup>2</sup> All these towns including Chittagong were the mint-towns of the Sulṭāns<sup>3</sup>. Besides, a study of the coins issued by the Bengal Sulṭāns suggests that a large number of mint-towns were established, thus indicating that they were important centres of administration. Besides Lakhnawtī, Pandwah, Satgāwn, Sunārgāwn and Chittagong, these mint-towns include, Mu‘azzamābād, Ghīyāthpūr, Fatḥābād, and Khālifātābād.<sup>4</sup> Apart from their importance in the administration of the country, they also must have been commercial centres.

It is difficult to determine what part did the Muslims play in this extensive internal and external trade. There are occasional references but they are far from satisfactory. Minhāj refers to a Muslim merchant who lost his fortune and prayed for help from Sulṭān ‘Alā’al-Dīn ‘Alī Mardān Khālījī.<sup>5</sup> The Chinese Account says, “Every one of them is engaged in business, the value of which may be ten thousand pieces of gold, but when a bargain has been struck,

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(Barbosa, p. 135) and Varthema (J. N. Das Gupta: *Op cit*, p. 117) did not mention Satgāwn but they referred to the city of Bengala. (For identification of the city of Bengala, see, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIX, A. D. 1943, pp. 316-17.

1. Minhāj, p. 151; *Riyāḍ*, p. 96.
2. Yaḥyā bin Aḥmad, p. 98; Baranī, p. 451; *Tārīkh-i-Mubārakshāhī*, translated by K. K. Basu, Gaekwad Oriental Series, pp. 106-7.
3. “Mint Towns of Mediaval Bengal”, by Mir Jahan, in *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Dacca Session, 1953, p. 234.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 224 ff. Mint-towns identified with Lakhnawtī, have been omitted here. For identification of these mint-towns, see, *Ibid*.
5. Minhāj, p. 159.



they never express regret".<sup>1</sup> According to Duarte Barbosa, the Muslim merchants used to go upcountry to bring slaves for selling them to exporters.<sup>2</sup> These references prove beyond doubt that the Muslims did take part but they do not give any clear idea of the actual position they held in the country's trade and commerce. The Chinese Account, if literally accepted, indicates that the Muslims played an important part and carried on an extensive trade, but it should be accepted with caution. In the first place, as the account shows, the Chinese visited only the metropolitan cities from Chittagong to Pandwah via Sunārgāwn; they did not go inland. Secondly, the Chinese Accounts do not categorically refer to Muslim traders, though the statement has been made in course of describing the Muslim population, dealing with the Hindu customs separately. Thirdly, the Chinese Account is not corroborated by any other source. Minhāj refers to only one businessman and Barbosa refers to only slave trade.

The medium of exchange in Bengal's trade were the coins. The introduction or rather the re-introduction of coins both of silver and gold by the Bengal Sultāns is an important factor in the socio-economic history of Bengal. While coinage was not unknown to Bengal rulers of the early period,<sup>3</sup> not a single coin of the Pāla and the Sena periods has so far come to light, and the medium of exchange during the period was in all probability the *cowri*.<sup>4</sup> The re-introduction of the coinage in Bengal by the Muslim Sultāns, therefore, greatly facilitated both internal and external trade of the country, though *cowri* was also current during the period under review.<sup>5</sup>

1. *Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 122.
2. Barbosa, p. 147.
3. *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Dacca University, 1943, pp. 665-67.
4. *Ibid.* Recently silver coins of the Pattikera type have been discovered at Mainamati excavations. F. A. Khan: *Recent Archaeological Discoveries in East Pakistan*: Mainamati, Pakistan Publications, Karachi; F. A. Khan: *Second Phase of Archaeological Excavation in East Pakistan*: Mainamati, Public Relations Department, Government of East Pakistan.
5. *Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134. *Cowries* have also been mentioned in the Bengali literature of the Muslim period. See for example, *Chañḍī Dāsa* : *Śrī Kṛishṇa Kīrtana*, edited by Basanta Rañjan Roy,

(c) **The Artisan Class**

The only clear cut reference to the industry in which the Muslims engaged themselves is weaving. Vijaya Gupta refers to a weaver family, who were undoubtedly Muslims.<sup>1</sup> The weaving or the textile industry developed to such an extent that the foreign writers are loud in praise of the cotton and silk fabrics produced in Bengal of various size and use.<sup>2</sup> The *Ā'yn* praised Sunārgāwn for its fine muslin.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūṭah testifies to the extraordinary cheap prices of fine clothes.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese Account has referred to the following varieties of textile goods.<sup>5</sup>

- (i) *Pi-po* :--- It was of several colours and of cotton stuff. According to one account, it was over three feet broad and fifty six feet long and according to another, over two feet broad, the length being the same. It was as fine and glossy as painted stuffs.
- (ii) *Man-che-ti* :--- It was of ginger yellow colour, four feet broad and over fifty feet long. It was very closely woven and strong.
- (iii) *Sha-na-pa-fu* :--- It was five feet broad and thirty feet long. It was like *Sheng-lo* of the Chinese and a cotton gauze.
- (iv) *Ki-pai-lei-ta-li* :--- It was three feet broad and sixty feet long.

Baṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad, Calcutta, 2nd edition, B.S. 1342; Mālādhar Vasu : *Śrī Kṛishṇa Vijaya*, edited by Khagendra Nath Mitra, Calcutta University, A. D. 1944.

1. Vijaya Gupta: *Padma Purāṇa*, edited by Basanta Kumar Bhattacharjee, Bānī Niketan, Barisal, p. 59. That the weaver family was Muslim is clear from the following facts :—The husbandman, who died of snake-bite was buried, arrangement was made for his *Kāfan* (wrapping the dead body with cloth before burial according to Islāmic system of funeral), and his mother-in-law was considering to get her daughter married a second time.
2. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134; Barbosa, pp. 135-48.
3. *Ā'yn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. II, p. 136.
4. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV. p. 211.
5. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134.

It was loosely woven and coarse. It was a cotton gauze.

- (v) *Sha-ta-eul* :--- It was a stuff used for turbans. Its measurement was either five inches broad and forty feet long or two and half feet broad and four feet long. It was like *San-so* of the Chinese.
- (vi) *Ma-hei-ma-lie* :-It was a stuff four feet broad and twenty feet long. On the wrong side it was covered with a nap half an inch long. It was like *tu-lo-kin* of the Chinese.

Beside these, the Chinese refer to silk and embroidered silk handkerchiefs and brocaded taffetas. The presents which the Bengal Sulṭān sent in A. D. 1438 to the Emperor of China included among other things *Sa-ha-la* (*Shawl*), *Cha-fa-hei-ta-li* cloth and *tu-lo-kin*.<sup>1</sup>

Duarte Barbosa<sup>2</sup> praises the Bengal textiles as follows :—"In it are woven many kinds of very fine and coloured clothes for their own attire and other white sorts for sale in various countries. They are very precious, also some which they call *estravantes*, a certain sort, very thin kind of cloth much esteemed among us for ladies' head-dresses, and by the Moors, Arabs and Persians for turbans. Of these great store is woven so much so that many ships take cargoes thereof for abroad; others they make called *mamonas*, others *duguzas*, others *chautares*, others *sinabafas*, which latter are the best of all, and the Moors held them the best for shirts. All these sorts of cloth are in pieces, each one whereof contains about three and twenty or four and twenty Portuguese Yards. Here they are sold good cheap, they are spun on wheels by men and woven by them."

It is difficult to determine, to what extent did the Muslims contribute to the manufacturing of these textile fabrics, which received so much praise from the Chinese and Portuguese writers. It has just been pointed out that the *jolhā* (weaver) family as described by Vijaya Gupta was Muslim, which indicates that the Muslims also took part in textile industry.

The foreign accounts<sup>3</sup> show that the paper and sugar industry also developed in Bengal, though it is not possible to derermine, with

1. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134.

2. Barbosa, pp. 145-146.

3. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134; Barbosa, p. 146.

the materials at our disposal, how far the Muslims contributed to the growth of these industries. Mukunda Rāma,<sup>1</sup> writing towards the end of the 16th century says that there was a section of Muslims who were known as *Kāgchā*, because they prepared and sold *kāghaz* or paper. Although Mukunda Rāma wrote a few years later<sup>2</sup> than the period under review, it may be assumed that the condition of the people did not change suddenly.

The erection of a large number of mosques<sup>3</sup> and the issuing of a large number of inscriptions<sup>4</sup> suggest that the Muslims produced masons and stone-workers. The non-Muslim masons or stone workers might have been appointed for the purpose, but it is futile to think that during the whole period of about three hundred years or more they depended solely on the Hindu masons and stone-workers.

Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja<sup>5</sup> refers to a Muslim tailor, who prepared shirts for Śrī Bāsa, a companion of Śrī Chaitanya Deva. We shall see later<sup>6</sup> that the Muslims used sewn cloth like gown, shirt and sash. It is, therefore, reasonable to hold that tailoring was an important profession adopted by the Muslims.

#### (d) **Agriculturists**

Firishṭah says that Nāṣir al-Dīn (later on Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd I), before he was put to the throne, was engaged in agriculture.<sup>7</sup> Though Firishṭah does not clearly say whether he was actually the tiller of the soil, the very fact that he belonged to the ruling dynasty supplanted by the House of Rājā Gaṇeṣa, suggests that he was no ordinary cultivator, rather he was of the nature of a land-owner, working as a middle man between the ruler and the tillers of the soil. The land-owning class was not altogether absent during the period under review. We have on the authority of Minhāj<sup>8</sup> that the *Rāes* sent *kharāj* (land-tax) to Sulṭān 'Alī Mardān *Khajī* when he assumed

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1. *Kavikañkan Chaṇḍī*, published by Baṅgabāsi Kāryālaya, Calcutta, p. 86.
  2. See *Supra*, p. 155.
  3. *Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal*.
  4. *Ibid.*
  5. Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja : *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita*, published from Basumati Sāhitya Mandir, Calcutta, p. 85.
  6. See *Infra*, pp. 192 ff.
  7. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, p. 298.
  8. Minhāj, p. 159.

independence. According to Shams-i-Sirāj 'Afif<sup>1</sup>, when Sultān Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq reached Lakhnawtī and Ilyās Shāh took shelter in Ikdālah fort, the *Rāes*, *Rānas* and the *zamīndārs* of the place joined Fīrūz Shāh and were favourably received. In his proclamation, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq promised relief of tax and revenue to the *Zamīndārs* and *muqaddams* of Bengal.<sup>2</sup>

We have also got references to actual tilling of the soil carried out in the country. The Chinese Account says, "Their fields are very fertile and yield two crops in the year. There is no need of sowing the seeds (? irrigation)- the crops grow by themselves in the proper season. Both men and women are diligent in ploughing and weaving."<sup>3</sup> "These people (of Bengal) owe all their tranquillity and prosperity to themselves, for its source lie in their devotion to agriculture whereby a land originally covered with jungle has been reclaimed by their unremitting toil in tilling and planting."<sup>4</sup>

#### (e) Medical Profession

Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī says that one Amīr Shahāb al-Dīn Kirmānī was an *Iftākḥār al-Ḥukamā* (the pride of the physicians).<sup>5</sup>

Mukunda Rāma refers to the following occupations adopted by the Muslims<sup>6</sup>—*Jollhā*, *Mukeri*, *Pithāri*, *Kābāri*, *Sānākar*, *Tirakar*, *Kāgchā Qalandar*, *Hājīām*, *Darzi*. As for *Jollhā*, *Kāgchā* and *darzi*, we have already shown<sup>7</sup> that the Muslims adopted these professions. As for *Mukeri*, because Bengal was an agricultural country, cattle formed an important element of the country's economy; the tilling of the soil required the help of the cows or bullocks as it is also the system even to-day. So the existence of cattle drivers or shepherds cannot be denied. As for *Kābāri*, or seller of fish, fish was abundantly available in Bengal as it is the case at present. Even now the Bengalees, Muslims or non-Muslims take more fish than meat. As weaving was an important industry as has been mentioned before,<sup>8</sup> the *Sānākar* or

1. 'Afif, p. 112.

2. Quoted in *J. A. S. B.* 1923, p. 280.

3. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 132.

4. *Ibid*, p. 99.

5. *Urdū*, October, 1952, pp. 86 ff.

6. *Kavikañkan Chaṇḍī*, published by Baṅgabāsī Kāryālaya, Calcutta, p. 86.

7. See *Supra*, pp. 185-87.

8. *Ibid*.

manufacturer of looms found their profession profitable and the same thing applies to *tirakar* or bow-makers because the fighting with bow and arrow did prevail during the period under review.<sup>1</sup> Similarly the existence of *Pithāri* or seller of cakes also cannot be ruled out altogether. The profession of *Hājjām* is important because circumcision is an integral part of the Islāmic practices. Even now it is adopted by a section of the Muslims in Bengal. Mukunda Rāma's testimony that the *Hājjām* did not find rest is interesting but difficult to explain. Does it mean that the number of *Hājjām* was less and the number of neo-Muslims was great? The local people who were converted to Islām, in most cases, must have retained their former profession. These professions seemingly minor in importance were adopted by the poorer section. The sources do not help us to say who adopted these professions, only the local people or the immigrants as well.

### (iii) Dwelling Houses

The Chinese Account is loud in the praise of the Royal palace, built of bricks, ornamented with flower representation and animal figures, having flat roofs, supported by pillars and having flight of steps. The halls were white-washed inside. The doors were of triple thickness and of nine panels. There were verandahs on each side of the audience halls.<sup>2</sup> Poet Kṛittivāsa reached the King's court after crossing nine halls.<sup>3</sup> The peon who was sent by Qāḍī Sirāj al-Dīn to summon Sulṭān Ghīyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh to the court, could not have access to the king. He began to recite the *Adhān* (calling to prayer) and thus drew the attention of the Sulṭān.<sup>4</sup> The Royal palace was surrounded by fortified wall and the palace doors were well-guarded. The ruins of the Royal palace can be seen in the cities of Gaur and Pandwah.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Baranī ( p. 586 ) refers to the *pāiks* ( foot-soldiers ) and *dhanuks* (bow-men) gathered by Ilyās Shāh against Sulṭān Firūz Shāh Tughluq of Dehli.
  2. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134.
  3. Quoted by Sukumar Sen in *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 84. The word used by Kṛittivāsa is *বৈষ্ণবী* which is used to-day to denote outer-house or audience-hall or the visiting room.
  4. *Riyāḍ*, pp. 106-7.
  5. For ruins, see *Memoirs*.

An idea of the dwelling houses, other than the royal palace may be obtained from the following sources. The Vaishṇava literature refers to the garden in front of the house of the Qāḍī of Nadiya, destroyed by Chaitanya's followers.<sup>1</sup> According to Duarte Barbosa, "they bathe often in great tanks which they have in their houses,"<sup>2</sup> and according to Abū'l Faḍl "their houses are made of bamboos, some of which are so constructed that the cost of a single one will be five thousand rupees or more and they last a long time."<sup>3</sup> Even to-day the houses of the poorer section of the people are built of wood or bamboos. The difference between the richer and the poorer people was probably in the amount of expenditure; while the rich spent more and used good quality wood or bamboo to make the house stronger and more durable, the poor could not do so. The dwelling houses built of bamboos at the present time are not flat-roofed rather they are sloping from a central ridge so that the rain-water can immediately go down and does not get stuck on the roof. Such domical roofs are known from the existing mosques<sup>4</sup> of the time like the *Khān Jahān's* mosque at Bagerhat and *Chhota Sonā Masjid* at Gaur. The testimony of Barbosa that the Muslims had tanks of their own is significant. At present, in some districts at least,<sup>5</sup> there is hardly a family which does not have its own tank. The tanks were essential to the Muslim families; as we shall see presently, unlike Hindu women, the Muslim women observed *pardah* (seclusion) and could not have gone out for having their bath in the rivers.

#### (iv) Diet

Their diet included meat consisting of beef,<sup>6</sup> mutton,<sup>7</sup> fowl<sup>8</sup> and duck<sup>9</sup> prepared with spices.<sup>10</sup> According to the Chinese Account, they

1. *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita, Adī*, 17th.
2. Barbosa, p. 147.
3. *Ā'yin-i-Akbarī*, Vol. II, p. 134.
4. As in the case of Bābā Adam Shahīd's mosque at Ram-pala in the district of Dacca. It was built by one Malik Kāfur in the reign of Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Faḥ Shāh. For inscription see, *J. A. S. B.* 1873, pp. 282-83.
5. As in eastern districts of Bengal.
6. *Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 127.
7. *Ibid*; *Kavikañkan Chandī*, published by Baṅgabāsi Kāry-ālaya, Calcutta, p. 86.
8. Vijaya Gupta : *Padma Purāna*, edited by B. K. Bhattacharjee, Bānī Niketan, Barisal, p. 54.
9. *Dharmapūjā Vidhāna*, edited by Nani Gopal Bandopadhyay, Baṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad, Calcutta, B. S. 1323, p. 221.
10. *Śekh Śubhodaya*, (*Shaykh Śubhodaya*) edited by Sukumar Sen, Calcutta, 1927, p. 8.

took both smoked and roasted meat.<sup>3</sup> Though reference to fish and vegetables are not available in the sources at our disposal, there is no reason to think that the Muslims did not take those things. Bengal being primarily an agricultural country with riverine tracts, both fish and vegetables were abundantly available,<sup>3</sup> as in modern times. Moreover the local people who were converted to Islām,<sup>3</sup> must have retained the practice of taking fish and vegetables. We have just seen that Mukunda Rāma's account refers to a group of Muslims known as *Kābāri* who used to sell fish.<sup>4</sup>

The aristocratic people used to drink wine; it is not definitely known whether the common people were accustomed to it. According to the Chinese Account there were four kinds of wine in Bengal, one was made from cocoanut, the second from rice, third from the aquatic plant called *Kajang* and the fourth from *Tung* seeds.<sup>5</sup> The same source records that on certain occasions drinking of wine was prohibited on the ground that "it might lead to trouble" and it was a "breach of decorum"<sup>6</sup> but they used to drink on festive occasions.<sup>7</sup> It is further recorded that after meals sweetened rose water and honey were supplied.<sup>8</sup> Naturally this was a custom prevalent among the aristocrats. The Muslims also took the various fruits available in the country such as banana, jack-fruit, pomegranates and sugar-cane.<sup>9</sup>

#### (v) Dress

The following account of the dress of the Muslims is available from the sources :—

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1. *Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134.
  2. The Chinese Account (*Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134) has given a long list of Bengal's products. According to the Vaishṇava literature (See, *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*) Chaitanya was fond of śāk (preparation of vegetable leaves).
  3. See, Chapter III, Section (C).
  4. *Supra*, pp. 187-189.
  5. *Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134.
  6. *Ibid.*
  7. Barbosa, p. 148.
  8. *Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 122.
  9. *Ibid.*



(a) Vijaya Gupta<sup>1</sup> refers to a certain *Mullā* who kept beard and put on turban on head and *ijār* (trouser) tied down the waist.

(b) The Chinese Account :—

(i) *Sing cha Sheng lan*, compiled by Fei-Sin in A.D. 1436<sup>2</sup>:—

“The men wear a white cotton turban and a long white cotton shirt. On their feet they wear low sheep-skin shoes with gold thread. The smarter ones think it a correct thing to have designs on them. . . . The women wear a short shirt, wrap around them a piece of cotton, silk or brocade. They do not use cosmetics, for they have naturally a white complexion ; in their ears they wear ear-rings of precious stones set in gold. Around their necks they hang pendants and they do up their hair in knot behind. On their wrists and ankles are gold bracelets and on their fingers and toes rings”.

(ii) *Si Yang Chao Kung tien lu*, compiled by Huang Sing-ts'eng in A. D. 1520<sup>3</sup> :—

“All men cut off their hairs and wrap their head with a cotton turban of white colour. They wear long gown with a round collar with a coloured sash on the lower part of their body, and put on leather slippers on their feet. The women dress their hairs in knot on their heads. They wear a short shirt and wrap their body with a piece of coloured cloth, silk or brocade. They wear ear-ring of precious stones set in gold. Around their neck they have pendants, on their wrists and ankle gold bracelets and on their fingers and toes rings”.

(c) Barbosa's Account<sup>4</sup> :—

“The respectable Moors walk about clad in white cotton smocks, very thin, which come down to their ankles, and beneath these they have girdles of cloth, and over them silk scarves, they carry in their girdles daggers garnished with silver and gold, according to the rank of the person

1. Vijaya Gupta : *Padma Purāṇa*, edited by Basanta Kumar Bhattacharjee, Bāṇī Niketan, Barisal, pp. 54-55, 61-62.
2. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 122.
3. *Ibid*, p. 124.
4. Barbosa, p. 147.

who carries them; on their fingers many rings set with rich jewels, and cotton turbans on their heads”.

- (d) According to *Śekh Śubhodaya*<sup>1</sup> ( *Shaykh Śubhodaya* ), the *Shaykh* (Jalāl Tabrizī) came to Bengal in black attire, with turban on head and a bowl and ‘aṣā (stick) in hand.
- (e) Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja refers to a certain Turk called a *Pir* in black attire.<sup>2</sup>

The passages quoted above show that the dress of the Muslim men included turban on head, long shirt or gown with collar, *ijār* (trouser) or sash on the lower part of the body. They used shoes or slipper in the leg and rings of jewels or gold in hand. They cut off their hair and kept beard. The dress of the females included a short shirt on the upper part of the body, a piece of cloth like the *sāfī* of the present day to wrap the body. They used various kinds of ornaments like ear-rings of precious stones, they hang pendants round their neck, they used gold bracelets on their wrists and ankles and used rings on fingers and toes. They bound their hairs in knot and did not use cosmetics. The *Pir* or Muslim *faqīrs* used black attire. But it seems to have been a picture of the Muslim nobles and aristocratic class. For example the *ijār* or the trouser and the shoes and slippers could not have been used by all the people. In a country like Bengal where practically half of the year is covered by rainy season and the roads or pathways remain inundated and muddy, it is futile to think that all people, especially the labourers, the tillers of the soil could have used this dress. Even to-day hundreds of people living in the villages go without shoes or use a piece of cloth tied up to the waist. Apart from the pecuniary condition of the people one reason why they use this sort of dress is the climatic condition of the country. As regards other dress of both men and women including the ornaments, these might have been used by the people, according to their own means. The rich spent larger amount and used jwelleries and golden ornaments while the poor were satisfied with baser metals or even conch-shell.

#### (vi) Position of Women

Women observed *pardah* (seclusion) and did not come out of their houses at day time; in the words of Barbosa “they kept them

1. *Śekh Śubhodaya*, (*Shaykh Śubhodaya*) edited by Sukumar Sen, Calcutta, 1927, p. 127.
2. *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita*, published by Vasumati Sāhitya Mandir, Calcutta, pp. 227-29.

carefully shut up."<sup>1</sup> But they were treated well by their husbands who gave them great store of gold, silver and apparel of fine silk.<sup>2</sup> Polygamy was prevalent. According to Barbosa, 'every one has three or four wives or as many as he can maintain',<sup>3</sup> though the general Islāmic law is to have not more than four wives at a time. Sometimes, Muslims accepted Hindu wives.<sup>4</sup> The widow-remarriage was prevalent.<sup>5</sup> A specific time was observed by widows, before which they were not remarried.<sup>6</sup> Vijaya Gupta<sup>7</sup> refers to the vegetarian life led by the widows of Muslim *Jolha* family. This is probably due to the fact that the poet was ignorant of Muslim custom and in his poetic imagination painted the Muslim widow in imitation of the Hindu practices. Or, if there is any truth in the statement of Vijaya Gupta it may be assumed that the *Jolha* family were neo-Muslims and as such were not fully acquainted with the Islāmic practice. According to the Chinese Account, their marriages and funerals were both guided by the Islāmic law.<sup>8</sup>

#### (vii) Social Gatherings and Entertainments

The Muslims occasionally met in social gatherings, in which visitors were entertained with music and dances.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes, the Sultāns sat in assembly with nobles, in which games, music and dances were the common features.<sup>10</sup> Actresses and dancing girls were dressed in coloured cloths with decorations of flowers. They used ornaments of various types and of high value.<sup>11</sup> Generally visitors were entertained

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1. Barbosa, p. 148.
  2. *Ibid.*
  3. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-48.
  4. Vijaya Gupta: *Padma Purāna*, edited by B. K. Bhattacharjee, Bāṅī Niketan, Barisal, p. 56; See *Supra*, pp. 145-46.
  5. Vijaya Gupta: *Padma Purāna*, edited by B. K. Bhattacharjee, Bāṅī Niketan, Barisal, pp. 59-60.
  6. *Ibid.*
  7. *Ibid.*
  8. *Viśva Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 124.
  9. *Viśva Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 124.
  10. The indirect reference is available from an order of Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban to his son Bughrā Khān. He ordered him not to indulge in such assemblies. Baranī, p. 92.
  11. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 122, 125, 132; Barbosa, p. 148.

with betel-leaf and betel-nuts, but when "they invite guests, they arrange for feastings and amusements".<sup>1</sup> When the ladies visited their relatives or neighbours at night, they had great festivities, rejoicings and superfluity of wines.<sup>2</sup> *Riyāḍ al-Salāṭīn* and *Tārīkh-i-Firīshṭah*, record that the nobles in Bengal used to take food in golden plates and for a time it became the custom that whoever could present more golden plates on festive occasions was considered to be higher in status.<sup>3</sup> Beside these, there were other entertainments like tiger-play in the market-place and before the houses of the rich.<sup>4</sup> *Vipradāsa* gives a long description as to how the Muslims were addicted to tobacco-smoking in a festive mood,<sup>5</sup> but the passage in question seems to be of later interpollation because tobacco seems to have been introduced long after in the reign of Akbar.<sup>6</sup>

1. *Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 124.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Riyāḍ*, p. 132; *Tārīkh-i-Firīshṭah*, Vol. II, pp. 301-2.

4. The Chinese writer (*Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 118-19), has given the following account of these amusements:—"There are people called *Ken-Siao-su-lu-nai* who are mounte-banks. Every day at the stroke of five they come around the gates of the houses of high officials and of the wealthy people blowing *so-na* (*Surnā-flageolets*) and beating drums and then pass on to another. When comes the break-fast hour they go to each house to be rewarded with wine, food, money or other things. Besides these there are also every other kind of players.

"(Thus there are people who) go about the market places and to the houses with a tiger held by an iron chain. They undo the chain and the tiger lies down in the courtyard. The naked man then strikes the tiger who becomes enraged and jumps at him and he falls with the tiger. This he does several times after which he thrusts his fist in the tiger's throat without wounding him. After this performance he chains him up again and the people of the house do not fail to feed the tiger with meat and reward the man with money. So the tiger-tamer has a promising business."

5. *Vipradāsa* : *Manasā Vijaya*, edited by Sukumar Sen, *Bibliotheca Indica*, A. D. 1953, pp. 66-67.

6. J. N. Das Gupta : *Op cit*, pp. 121-22.

(viii) **Slavery**

The higher class people used to appoint slaves both males and females for house-hold works. The *Riyāḍ* refers to the affection of Sulṭān Ghiyāth-al-Dīn A'zam Shāh towards three slave-girls, Sarw, Gul and Lālah.<sup>1</sup> Vijaya Gupta refers to a *bāndī* (slave-woman) in the house of the Qāḍī of Hāsan Hāṭi.<sup>2</sup> The Abyssinian slaves appointed by later Ilyās Shāhī Sulṭāns proved to be usurpers of the throne.<sup>3</sup> The slaves were bought and sold in the market-places. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah purchased one beautiful slave-girl named 'Ashūrā.<sup>4</sup> According to Barbosa, Muslim merchants used to go up country to purchase heathen boys either from their parents or from those who stole them. Boys so purchased were castrated, (in which process many would die) and then they were sold to the merchants. The people engaged them as the guardian of their women, estates or for other house-hold works.<sup>5</sup>

(ix) **Pecuniary Condition**

From economic point of view, the Muslims may be divided into two distinct classes—the rich and the poor. It has been pointed out earlier that the officials received salary, villages and lands.<sup>6</sup> The army received salary and rations.<sup>7</sup> Obviously they were richer and had a better living. It has also been pointed out that the nobles used golden plates and it became a custom to display wealth through the number of such plates they possessed.<sup>8</sup> The merchants formed the next richer class, who sometimes invested ten thousand gold coins.<sup>9</sup> There were

1. *Riyāḍ*, p. 105; *Memoirs*, pp. 25-56.
2. Vijaya Gupta : *Padma Purāṇa*, edited by B.K. Bhattacharjee, Bāṇī Niketan, Barisal, p. 61.
3. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 138 ff.
4. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV, p. 212.
5. Barbosa, p. 147.

A slave sale deed of the time of Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh I is available in the Dacca University Library, attached to a Bengali manuscript *Sāradā Tilaka*, No. 4608, dated S. E. 1361/A.D. 1439.

6. *Inshā-i-Mahrū*, in *J. A. S. B.* 1923, p. 280.
7. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 118.
8. *Tārīkh-i-Firishṭah*, Vol. II, pp. 301-2. ; *Supra*, p. 195.
9. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 122.

also people, who built their houses at a cost of five thousand *tankahs*.<sup>1</sup> Their dress, diet, practice of keeping slaves, and their dwelling houses indicate that the people were rich and happy. But this is one side of the picture. The picture of the *Mullās* as drawn by Vijaya Gupta and Mukunda Rāma is very deploring. The fees received by the *Mullās* were meagre in amount.<sup>2</sup> They received ten *gaṇḍās* of *cowri* (about one third of a pice) for killing fowl, six *burīs* of *cowri* (about a pice) for killing goat and the head of the animal killed, only four annas for performing the marriage rituals.<sup>3</sup> Though the *Mullās* served as priests in the society and as such deserved the respect and veneration of all, their dress (only *ijār* or trouser and cap) shows that they did not enjoy a rich living. The *Mullā*, named *Khālās* (correctly *Ikhālās* or *Khālīs*) who was the teacher of the *Qāḍī* of Hāsan Hāṭī, is seen moving with a torn *ijār* (trouser). The reference to his movement from house to house indicates, how difficult it was for him to earn his livelihood. On the other hand, he was the man, who always engaged himself in the study of the *Qur'ān* and the *Kitāb* (holy book).<sup>4</sup> The weaver of Hāsan Hāṭī who died of snake-bite left only four *pans* of *cowri* (about half an anna) for his wife.<sup>5</sup> The above references show that there was a section of Muslims who were poor.

While considering the economic condition of the people, one has to remember that the cost of living was very low.

The following index of price level supplied by Ibn Baṭṭūṭah will throw light on the subject.<sup>6</sup> (Taken from the table drawn in *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, in terms of present standard of weight and value).

(approximately) 8 maunds of rice	were sold at	Rs. 7/-
" 28 "	of paddy	" " " Rs. 7/-
" 14 seers	of ghee	" " " Rs. 3/8/-
" 14 "	of sesame oil	" " " Rs. 1/12/-
" 14 "	of rose water	" " " Rs. 7/-

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1. *Ā'yn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. II, p. 134.
  2. See *Supra*, pp. 171-172.
  3. Mukunda Rāma : *Kavikañkan Chaṇḍī*, published by Baṅgabāsi Kāryālaya, Calcutta, p. 86. The relevant passage has been quoted above. See *Supra*, pp. 171-172.
  4. Vijaya Gupta : *Padma Purāna*, edited by B. K. Bhattacharjee, Bāṇī Niketan, Barisal, p. 61.
  5. *Ibid*, p. 59.
  6. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Vol. IV. pp. 210 ff. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 101-2.

Approximately 14 seers of sugar	were sold at Rs. 3/8/-
8 fat fowls	" " " Rs. 0/14/-
1 fat ram	was " " Rs. 1/12/-
1 milch cow	" " " Rs. 21/-
15 pigeons	were " " Rs. 0/14/-

Judging from the price-level drawn above, it may be assumed that the common people were not hard hit by their low income. Those were the days when one was satisfied having a gift of a jute-piece as in the case of Kṛittivāsa, who received one such piece from the King of Gaur.<sup>1</sup> Śrīdhara, a disciple of Chaitanya, earned his livelihood by dealing in radish, sheath of bamboo, and the spathe of plantain tree.<sup>2</sup> The needs of the people were not great and they were happy with their lot. Judged from this standpoint, the people were generally happy. According to the Chinese Account, "the seasons of heaven have scattered the wealth of the Earth over this kingdom, the riches and integrity of its people surpass, perhaps those of Ch'in Chiang (Palembang) and equal to those of Chao-wa (Java)."<sup>3</sup>

#### (x) Contact with the Local People

It has been pointed out earlier<sup>4</sup> that some of the social features of the Muslims such as the worship of *Salya-Pīr* and the introduction of the foot-print of the Prophet were due to the mixture of both Muslim and non-Muslim conceptions. There was a close contact between the people of diverse communities. That such contacts were not rare may be gleaned from the following facts.

- (a) We have seen earlier<sup>5</sup> that a number of local people were converted to Islām.
- (b) Muslim rulers in their fight against the Dehli Sulṭāns recruited local soldiers.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Quoted by Sukumar Sen in *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 86.
2. Bṛindāvana Dāsa : *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*, published by M. K. Ghosh, Calcutta, *Gaurābda*, 440. pp. 72-73.
3. *Viśva-Bhāratī Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, p. 99.
4. *Supra*, pp. 165 ff.
5. Chapter III, Section (C).
6. See Chapter II, p. 28.

- (c) Local people were appointed in important positions of the state.<sup>1</sup>

Beside these there are references in the Bengali literature to show that the Muslim learned men held discussions with those of the non-Muslims on religious matters. Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja refers to two such discussions, one between Chaitanya and the Qāḍī of Nadiya, and the other between Chaitanya and a certain Turk called a Pīr.

### (A) Discussion Between Chaitanya and the Qadi

The Qāḍī prohibited the *Kīrtana* in Nadiya, probably due to a number of complaints he received from some anti-Vaiṣṇava Hindus.<sup>2</sup> But Chaitanya ordered for *nagara-kīrtana* (*kīrtana* in procession) in

1. For appointment of Hindu Officers by 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn Shāh, see, *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 151 ff. See also *Supra*, pp. 128-30.
2. That the Qāḍī received such complaints is clear from the following verses of Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja himself. *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita*, *Adi*, 17th.

হেন কালে পাষণ্ডী হিন্দু পাঁচ সাত আইল ॥  
আসি কহে হিন্দু ধর্ম ভাঙ্গিল নিমাই ।  
যে কীর্তন প্রবর্তাইল কড়ু গুনি নাই ॥

মঙ্গল চণ্ডী বিষহরী করে আগরণ ।  
তাতে নৃত্যগীত বাদ্য যোগ্য আচরণ ॥  
পূর্বেব ভাল ছিল এই নিমাই পণ্ডিত ।  
গয়া হৈতে আসিয়া ঢালাল বিপরীত ॥  
উচচ করি গায় গীত দেয় করতালি ।  
বৃন্দজ করতাল শব্দে কর্ণে লাগে তালি ॥  
না জানি কি খাঞা মন্ত হঞা নাচে গায় ।  
হাসে কাঁদে পড়ে উঠে গড়াগড়ি যায় ॥  
নগরিয়াকে পাগল কৈল সদা সংকীর্তন ।  
রাত্রে নিদ্রা নাহি যাই করি আগরণ ॥  
নিমাই নাম ছাড়ি এবে বোলায় গৌরহরি ।  
হিন্দু ধর্ম নষ্ট কৈল পাষণ্ডী সঝারি ॥  
কৃষ্ণের কীর্তন করে নীচ বার বার ।  
এই পাপে নবদ্বীপ হইবে উজাড় ॥  
হিন্দু শাস্ত্রে ঈশ্বর নাম মহামন্ত্র জানি ।



violation of the Qāḍī's order. According to Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja, Chaitanya at the height of his emotionalism reached the Qāḍī's palace and had the following discussions with him.<sup>1</sup>

“The lord says, ‘I have come to put some questions! The Qāḍī says, ‘say whatever is in your heart’. The lord says, ‘You take cow-milk, so cow is your mother. Bulls earn food for you, so bulls

সর্ব লোক শুনিলে মস্তের বীৰ্য্য হয় হানি ॥

থ্রামের ঠাকুর তুমি সবে তোমার জন ।

নিমাই বোলাইয়া তারে করহ বর্জন ॥

Translation :— “At that time, some five to seven *pāshandī* (irreligious Hindus) came and complained that Nimāi (Chaitanya) was destroying the Hindu religion and that they did not hear such *kīrtana* before (as was introduced by him). . . . . Dance, song and beating of drums were befitting to the Chaṇḍī and Manasā worship. Formerly this Nimāi Paṇḍit was good, he went astray after his return from Gaya. He sings loudly and claps his hands; the sound of drum and clapping deafen those who hear. Nobody knows what edibles give him strength to become mad, to dance, sing, laugh, cry and to go on rollings. The towns-men are maddened with continuous *kīrtanaṣ* so that they cannot sleep at night. Now they call him *Gaur-Hari* in place of Nimāi; being irreligious, they are destroying the Hindu religion. Even the lowly persons make *kīrtana* of Kṛishṇa; at this sin Nadiya will be depopulated. In the Hindu religion, the name *Īśvara* is a *mahāmantra*; if everybody hears, the *mantra* loses its sanctity. You are the *Thākur* (leader or officer in charge) of the village; call Nimāi before you and urge upon him to give up (this peculiar way of life).”

1. *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita, Adi, 17th.*

প্রভু কহে প্রশ্ন লাগি আইলাম তোমার স্থানে ।

কাছী কহে আজ্ঞা কর যে তোমার মনে ॥

প্রভু কহে গোদুগ্ধ খাও গাভী তোমার মাতা ।

বৃষ অনু উপজায় ভাতে তিস্তে পিতা ॥

পিতা মাতা মরি খাও এবা কোন ধর্ম ।

কোন বলে কর তুমি এমত বিকর্ম ॥

কাছী কহে তোমার যৈছে বেদ পুরাণ ।

তৈছে আমার শাস্ত্র কেতাৰ কোরাণ ॥

are your father. What is this that you kill your father and mother and eat their flesh? How do you do this illogical work ?” The Qāḍī says, ‘As you have the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas*, I have my religious books, the *kitāb* (holy book) and the *Qur’ān*. According to these books, there is distinction between ‘Path of Active Life’ and ‘Path of Passive Life.’ According to the latter, the killing of animal is prohibited while according to the former, killing of cow or bull is allowed. There is no sin in killing in the manner as it is prescribed by religion. Your *Vedas* allow killing of cow, and so great *munis* (sages) used to kill cow.’ The lord says, ‘The *Vedas* prohibit killing of cow, so no Hindu kills any cow. According to the *Vedas* killing of animal is allowed only if

সেই শাস্ত্রে কহে প্রবৃত্তি নিবৃত্তি মার্গ ভেদ ।  
 নিবৃত্তি মার্গে জীব মাত্র বধের নিষেধ ॥  
 প্রবৃত্তি মার্গে গোবধ করিতে বিধি হয় ।  
 শাস্ত্র আজ্ঞায় বধ কৈলে নাহি পাপ ভয় ॥  
 ভোমার বেদেতে আছে গোবধের বাণী ॥  
 অতএব গোবধ করে বড় বড় মুনি ॥  
 প্রভু কহে বেদে কহে গোবধ নিষেধে ।  
 অতএব হিন্দু মাত্র না করে গোবধে ॥  
 জীয়াইতে পারে যদি তবে মারে প্রাণী ।  
 বেদ-পুরাণে এই আছে আজ্ঞাবাণী ॥  
 অতএব জরদগব মারে মুনিগণ ।  
 বেদমত্রে শীঘ্র করে তাহার জীবন ॥  
 জরদগব হঞা যুবা হয় আরবার ।  
 তাতে তার বধ নহে হয় উপকার ॥  
 কলিকালে তৈছে শক্তি নাহিক ব্যাক্ষণে ।  
 অতএব গোবধ কেহ না করে এখনে ॥  
 ভোমরা জীয়াইতে নার বধমাত্র সার ।  
 নরক হইতে ভোমার নাহিক নিস্তার ॥  
 গরুর যতেক রোম তত সহস্র বৎসর ।  
 গোবধী রোরব মধ্যে পচে নিরন্তর ॥  
 ভোমা সবার শাস্ত্র কর্তা সেহ ব্রাহ্ম হৈল ।  
 না জানি শাস্ত্রের মর্ম ঐছে আজ্ঞা দিল ॥  
 শুনি স্তব্ব হৈল কাজী নাহি স্কুরে বাণী ।  
 বিচারিয়া কহে কাজী পরাভব মানি ॥  
 তুমি যে কহিলে পণ্ডিত সেই সত্য হয় ।

## SOCIAL HISTORY

ed to life. So the *munis* (sages) killed old-aged  
eir life with the help of the Vedic *mantras*. The  
ung ones, so the killing became a boon for them.  
Brahmins have no such power, so nowadays they  
u only kill, you cannot restore to life, so you will  
e cow-killers will live in hell as many thousand  
airs in the body of the cow. Your religious leader  
he has given such direction without knowing the  
: (religious law.)' Hearing this, the *Qāḍī* became  
utter any word and said, 'I accept defeat, O'  
d the truth".

### ion between Chaitanya and a Turk

Kavirāja refers to the meeting of Chaitanya  
Chaitanya was then coming back from Brindā-  
among these men, one clad in black attire,  
ory is that once Chaitanya fell senseless in extreme  
emen came to the spot and suspected his followers  
! by making him swallow the leaves of *dhuturā* (a  
leaves) and arrested them. On recovering from  
ssness, Chaitanya testified to the innocence of his  
ered into agrument with the black-clad horseman  
vas convinced. All the horsemen accepted  
ir meeting has been described as follows<sup>8</sup> :—

r) propounded monotheism and one common God,  
holy book (viz. the Qur'ān). But the Master refuted

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*ya Charitāmṛita, Madhya, 18th.*

arkar : *Chaitanya's Pilgrimages and Teachings* (English  
dition of *Madhya-līla* of *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita*),  
n, 1913, pp. 226-27.

engali verses (*Chaitanya Charitāmṛita, Madhya*,  
re as follows :—

ই ম্লেচ্ছ মধ্যে এক পরম গভীর ।

ব্রহ্ম পরে সেই লোক কহে পীর ॥

ব্রহ্ম হৈল তার প্রভুকে দেখিয়া । ]

বিশেষে ব্রহ্ম স্বাপে স্বশাস্ত উঠাইয়া ॥

ব্রহ্মবাদ সেই করিল স্বাপন ।

ব্রহ্ম যুক্ত্যে প্রভু করিলা ঋণ ॥

all his propositions by arguments based on the sci was silenced. The Master continued, "Your scri common God (in the beginning) and refuting the end a particular God, who is full of all pov embodiment of *sat chid* and *ananda*, the perfect all-pervading, eternal, the self of everything, life and destruction, the refuge of all universe:

যেই যেই কহে প্রভু সকলি খণ্ডিল  
উত্তর না আইসে মুখে মহা স্তব্ধ হৈ  
প্রভু কহে তোমার শাস্ত্র স্থাপে নির্  
তাহা খণ্ডি সবিশেষ স্থাপিয়াছে শে  
তোমার শাস্ত্র কহে শেষে একই ঈ  
সবৈশ্বর্যপূর্ণ তিহো শ্যাম কলেবর।  
সচ্চিদানন্দ দেহ পূর্ণ ব্রহ্ম স্বরূপ।  
সর্বাঙ্গা সর্বজ্ঞ নিত্য সর্বাদি স্বরূপ।  
সৃষ্টি স্থিতি প্রলয় তাঁহা হৈতে হ  
স্থূল সুক্ষ্ম জগতের তিহো সমা  
সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ সর্বারাধ্য কারণের কারণ  
তাঁর ভজ্যে হয় জীবের সংসার ত  
তাঁর সেবা বিনা জীবের না যায়  
তাঁহার চরণে প্রীতি পুরুষার্থ সার।  
মোক্ষাদি আনন্দ হয় যার এক ক  
পূর্ণানন্দ-প্রাপ্তি তার চরণ-সেবন ॥  
কর্ম জ্ঞান যোগ আগে করিয়া স্ব  
সকল খণ্ডিয়া স্থাপে ঈশ্বর সেবন  
তোমার পণ্ডিত সবার নাহি শাস্ত্র  
পূর্ববাপর বিধি মধ্যে পর বলবান  
নিজ শাস্ত্র দেখ তুমি বিচার করি  
কি লিখিয়াছে শেষে নির্ণয় করিয়  
মুচছ কহে যেই কহ সেই সত  
শাস্ত্রে লিখিয়াছে কেহ লইতে না  
নিবিশেষ গোসাঞি লঞা করেন  
সাকার গোসাঞি সেব্য কার নাহি  
সেই ত গোসাঞি তুমি সাক্ষাৎ ঈ  
ঝোরে কৃপা কর মুঞি অযোগ্য

the most excellent, adorable by all, the first cause of everything. Men are saved by faith in Him, and freed from the bondage of the world only by serving Him. Delight in Him is the supreme human attainment while salvation can give only a particle of that bliss. The highest beautitude comes only from serving His feet. After first insisting on work, knowledge and mental abstraction, these are then set aside and the service of God is laid down as the final duty. Your theologians have no knowledge of their own scriptures; they forget that where there are two injunctions, the latter is stronger. Decide after studying your own holy books, and see what is laid down as the final conclusion."

"The Muslim replied, 'True are your words. What is written in the scriptures cannot be changed by men. The abstract God (*Gosain*) is discussed by theologians; nobody thinks of adoring the incarnate God. You are such, God's own self. Have mercy on me unworthy sinner !"

The discussions prove that learned men of one community were conversant with the religious books of the other community. For example, the *Qāḍī* of Nadiya referred to the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas* in his discussions with Chaitanya. Unless there was a close contact between the two people such discussions could not have been possible. *Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja* goes a step further and says that both *Qāḍī* of Nadiya and the Turk called *Pīr* were convinced of the arguments of Chaitanya and begged of him to make them his disciples. This is not corroborated by any other source. Such important events, conversion of an important officer like the *Qāḍī* and another *Pīr*, would not have been left unnoticed by other *Vaishṇava* writers, if there was any basis in them. *Bṛindāvana Dāsa* also refers<sup>1</sup> to the *Qāḍī*-Chaitanya encounter, but he does not say that the *Qāḍī* accepted the teachings of Chaitanya. The whole book of *Kṛishṇa Dāsa Kavirāja* was written to deify Chaitanya and to paint his character with a superhuman colour. In this particular case also he could not rise above the sectarianism and probably exaggerated the facts.

Materials at our disposal are not sufficient to furnish a comprehensive picture of the socio-economic life of the Muslims in Bengal. Nevertheless, the available ones as sifted above give the impression of a composite culture. The immigrants and converted Muslims mixed together in a social system where both the foreign and

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1. *Bṛindāvana Dāsa* : Chaitanya *Bhāgavata*, *Madhya*, 23rd.

the local elements were accommodated as noticeable in all walks of life. None of the languages, Persian, Arabic or Bengali was neglected. Persian continued as official language and Arabic that of religious matters. The local language, i. e. Bengali not only received royal patronage, but also was learnt by the immigrants, the latter thus adapting themselves in their new habitat. The result is noticeable both in the period under review and in the succeeding period when hundreds of Bengali books were written by the Muslims. Although they came from deserted lands, they had to adapt themselves to the peculiar geography and the climatic condition of Bengal. Thus in dwelling houses, diet and dress, they had to consider the question of suitability and availability. These features were therefore, common to both immigrants and converts, varying however, according to means of subsistence. As for the economic life, the immigrants looked more to the state service, rather than to commerce and agriculture, though the examples of their adoption of these latter professions are not altogether absent. The local converts, no doubt, preferred the state services but they were engaged primarily in their old professions. Be that as it may, as no stigma was attached to the converts, there was no bar on their coming to the same level with the immigrants

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE CONCLUSION

To a student of political history, the history of Bengal from the conquest of Nadiya by Muḥammad Bakhtyār Khaljī<sup>1</sup> till A.D. 1538 is a mere record of events in the gradual expansion and consolidation of Muslim political power. In fact, during this period of more than three hundred years the Muslim power expanded throughout the nook and corner of Bengal.<sup>2</sup> But to a student of social history, the period unfolds a greater significance, as it witnessed the introduction and gradual development of a fresh element i.e. the Muslim society, in the socio-religious history of the country. Although the political history of Bengal offers several landmarks, the social historian hardly finds any, because the social forces have got a continuous growth and development without caring for or rather encouraged by time and tide. The period covered by the present study passed from the formative stage of the Muslim society to a complete overhaul of the social forces in the country in which the religion of Islām and the Muslims became predominant.

The Muslim society in Bengal developed on three important supports : the Muslim ruling class, the Muslim scholars and the Muslim Ṣūfīs. The most important contribution of the ruling class was that they expanded the political power so that the small principality of Lakhnawtī of Muḥammad Bakhtyār was, within about one century and a half of its existence, turned to be a great Muslim kingdom of Bengal. Without the political power at the top, the Muslim society would hardly have survived the throes of its birth in clash with the hostile multitudes round about them. To the ruling class, especially to the Independent Sulṭāns, goes the credit of giving Bengal a homogeneous Muslim kingdom, independent of the political forces of Dehli. Shams al-Dīn Ilyās Shāh was the first to unite the whole of Bengal under him,<sup>3</sup> while his successors till A.D. 1538 held the same position

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1. For date of the conquest of Nadiya, see *Indian Historical Quarterly*, June, 1954, pp. 133 ff.
  2. See *Supra*, pp. 33-38.
  3. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 103-5. A. H. Dani : Shamsuddīn Ilyās Shāh, Shāh-e-Bangālah“ in the *Sir*

without break. The Muslims thus got an opportunity to consolidate their position without any hindrance. Beside the expansion of their power, the ruling class also encouraged the scholars and the *Şūfīs*, built mosques, *madrasahs* and *khānqahs*, afforded facilities to the Muslims for visiting the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah. In short, they helped the growth of a distinct Muslim society in Bengal. The scholars, in their turn, wrote books on Islāmic sciences and literature. They paid special attention to *Fiqh*, *Ḥadīth*, *Taşawwuf*, Persian poetry and even Bengali language.<sup>1</sup> They also maintained academies and imparted instructions to the people.<sup>2</sup> The contribution of the *Şūfīs* covered a wider range. They were not indifferent to the political happenings, but sometimes, influenced the rulers in moulding the state-policy on Islāmic lines.<sup>3</sup> They even helped the expansion of political power. But the most important contribution of the *Şūfīs* was that they educated the people in religious principles, helped the poor and the destitutes, attracted the local people around them by their religious disposition and converted many to Islām.<sup>4</sup> It is thus clear that they devoted themselves to the cultural pursuits and with the help of the royal power, trained the Muslims in the observance of religious principles. Based on these three supports, the Muslim society developed to such an extent that it occupied a prominent position in the socio-religious life of the people.

When Muḥammad Bakhtyār *Khaljī* laid the foundation of the principality of Lakhnawī, the Muslim population was composed of merely immigrants, numbering a few thousand.<sup>5</sup> They came either with the invading hordes or as adventurers after the conquest. The society thus established, was subsequently fed in two ways, either by fresh immigration from the west or by local conversion.<sup>6</sup> Thus, we notice that the Muslim society comprise of people from Arabia, *Shīrāj*, *Herāt*, *Samarqand*, *Tabriz*, *Bukhārā*, *Balkh* and *Abyssinia*. As regards tribal affiliation, there were the *Khaljīs*, the *Turks*, the

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*Jadu Nath Sarkar Commemoration Volume*, Panjab University, India.

1. Chapter III, Section (B)
2. *Ibid.*
3. Chapter III, Section (C).
4. *Ibid.*
5. According to Minhāj (p. 152), in the Tibet expedition, Bakhtyār's army consisted of ten thousand soldiers,
6. Chapter IV.



**Habshis** and probably the **Afghāns** and the **Mughals**. Similarly the society included a few groups of people like the **Ālims**, the **Sayyids**, the **Ṣūfīs** and the local converts.<sup>1</sup> These people helped the growth of the Muslim society in their own way; some formed the bulk of the ruling class, being appointed in civil, military and revenue departments, while others educated the people.<sup>2</sup> In their daily life the Muslims used both Persian and Bengali languages. Bengali was used not only by the converted local Muslims, but also by the immigrants. The immigrants did not try to keep themselves isolated from the social current of the country. They adopted various professions like trade and commerce, crafts, industry, and agriculture, beside accepting offices in the State. They built their dwelling houses with the materials locally available. Even the court-patronised stone or brick architecture developed a local style, suited to the climate of the country. Their diet included meat, fish or vegetables as they were locally available.<sup>3</sup>

The fame of the Muslim kingdom and the Muslim population of Bengal spread far and wide. Beside trying to obtain political hold over the neighbouring kingdoms, as evidenced by occasional raids, the Bengal Sulṭāns exchanged ambassadors with the kingdoms of China, Dehlī and **Khurāsān**.<sup>4</sup> On occasions, the Bengal Sulṭāns were invited to help settling disputes over succession in favour of one or the other prince in Arakan and Tippera.<sup>5</sup>

The Muslim society in Bengal developed the orthodox principles of Islām and at the same time gave way to the popular forces. As for the orthodox side, they adhered to the principles of *Imān* or belief

1. Chapter IV.

2. Chapters III, IV and VI.

3. Chapter VI.

4. *Viśva-Bhārati Annals*, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 96-134; *J.A.S.B.*, 1952, pp. 168-69; Yaḥyā bin Aḥmad, pp. 125-27.

5. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 59; *J.A.S.B.*, 1844, pp. 44 ff. It is said that the Burmese kings appointed Muslim soldiers including shipmen under them, (*Islamic Culture*, July, 1936, p. 425) though it is difficult to say whether they were from Bengal. At a later date the Ahom King Rudra Singh (A. D. 1696-1714) imported masons and artificers from Bengal (E. Gait : *A History of Assam*, 2nd edition, Thacker, Spink & Co. Calcutta and Simla, 1926, p. 181). But it is not possible to determine whether they were Muslims.

in God and His Prophet, *Namāz* or prayer, *Rozā* or fasting and *Hajj* or pilgrimage to the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah.<sup>1</sup> The society looked for its strength towards the mosque, *madrasah* and *Khānqah*. These served as the pillars of the social structure and all eyes were turned towards them for guidance. Besides, the Bengali Muslims, through the favourable attitude of the Sultāns, kept a close contact with the holy cities of Makkah and Madīnah. Both Sultān *Ghiyāth al-Dīn A'zam Shāh* and Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad *Shāh* deserve special mention for establishing *madrasah* in Makkah and Madīnah and making liberal grants for the people thereof.<sup>2</sup>

The most important element of the popular force in Islām was the *Pirism*.<sup>3</sup> The people considered the *dargāh* of the *Pir* as a place of pilgrimage. They made offerings to the *Pirs* or their departed soul, built tombs and illuminated them. The rulers made endowment of land for the maintenance of their shrines and other establishments attached to them.<sup>4</sup> They also introduced the stone-representation of the foot-print of the Prophet (*Qadam Rasūl*). The *Pirism* did not originate in Bengal, but the long settlement of the Muslims in this land side by side with the local people, many of whom were converted and taken to the fold of Islam made the conception deeply rooted in the society. The converts found in the *Pirs* a resemblance of the *Tāntric gurus* and in the tombs and *dargāhs* that of *chaitya* or *stupa*. Moreover, the converts could not readily learn the religious principles, as the religious books were then available in languages foreign to them. No doubt, the religious teachers tried to teach them the fundamental principles of Islām, but it is futile to think that they succeeded in keeping the converts completely isolated from their age-old customs and traditions. This is why, Sayyid Sultān, a mid-16th century Bengali poet, regretfully writes that the Bengali Muslims engaged themselves in reading Hindu mythological tales due to their ignorance of Arabic language.<sup>5</sup>

The *Pirism* gave way to the further growth of concepts like those of *Satya-Pir*, *Pānch-Pir*, *Mānik-Pir*, *Ghoṛā-Pir* and *Madārī-Pir*. Evidences for them are not available during the period under review,

1. Chapter V.
2. Chapter III, Section (A).
3. Chapter V.
4. Chapter III, Section (C).
5. Sayyid Sultān : *Ophāte Rasūl*, (*Wafāt-i-Rasūl*) edited by Ali Ahmad, B. S. 1356, p. 7.; *Supra*, pp. 81-82.

though it may be said with certainty that the *Pirism* formed the basis of their growth. The Hindu society of the day worshipped deities like Manasā and Chaṇḍī for relief from all sorts of dangers.<sup>1</sup> The *Satya-Pīr* etc. probably occupied the same place among the Muslims, as these deities did in the Hindu society.

The Muslims of Bengal did not confine themselves to the orbit of their own society, rather they had contact with the non-Muslims, sometimes they held religious discussions with them.<sup>2</sup> Credit goes to the liberal Muslim administration<sup>3</sup> that although the rulers helped the growth of the Muslim society, they did not persecute anybody simply for difference of faith. Rather they encouraged the non-Muslims, recruited them in the army and even appointed them in the key position of the State.<sup>4</sup> They also encouraged poets to write in the local language by awarding rewards and titles.<sup>5</sup> They also attended to the local problems by the construction of dykes and roads and excavation of tanks and digging wells.<sup>6</sup> These were for the benefit of all and sundry and not of any particular group of people. This explains why the local people stood at the back of the Sulṭāns in their fight for independence against the Sulṭāns of Dehlī.

To conclude, therefore, it can be said that the Muslim society in Bengal developed gradually, so that after a lapse of more than three hundred years, it became a part and parcel of Bengal's body politic. The facts that the Muslims settled in this country, learnt the local language, lived in harmony with the local people, accepted local wives, adopted various professions suited to their genius, and that in their

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1. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 1955, Vol. XVII, Part III, pp. 503 ff.
  2. See Chapter VI, pp. 198-204.
  3. "Aspects of Muslim Administration in Bengal down to A. D. 1538" in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 1958.
  4. Baranī, p. 586; 'Afif, pp. 114-18; *History of Bengal*, Vol. II pp. 150-52. ; "Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal and their non-Muslim Subjects" in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. IV, 1959.
  5. D. C. Sen : *Bāṅga Bhāshā O Sāhitya*, 8th edition, Calcutta, B. S. 1356, p. 73; Sukumar Sen : *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Calcutta, 1940, pp. 71 ff.
  6. See *Supra*, pp. 59-61.

dietary system and dwelling houses they depended on materials locally available, bear out that they considered Bengal as their homeland. Side by side they adhered to the Islāmic religious principles and built religious institutions of their own. There is, therefore, good ground to suggest that a Bengali Muslim society already passed its formative stage, took a definite shape, and breathed a new spirit of tolerance, equality and universal love in the country so much so that large masses accepted Islām and even the then Hinduism was deeply affected as traceable in some of the elements of the Chaitanya movement.<sup>1</sup>

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1. For example, their mass worship, their *kirtana*, their casteless society etc. For details see, E. Haq: *Baṅge Sūfī Prabhāva*, Calcutta, A. D. 1935, pp. 164 ff.
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