



THE ENCHANTING SHRINE OF KASHMIR: UNVEILING THE LEGACY OF KHAWAJA HASSAN QARI

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Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive case study exploring the remarkable shrine of Kashmir, focusing on the profound legacy of Khawaja Hassan Qari. The study delves into the historical, cultural, and religious significance of the shrine, shedding light on its enchanting allure and the enduring impact of Khawaja Hassan Qari's contributions. Through extensive research and analysis, this paper aims to unveil the captivating narrative of the shrine and highlight the intricate details of Khawaja Hassan Qari's life and teachings. The findings offer valuable insights into the rich heritage of Kashmir and the spiritual heritage left behind by this revered figure.

Keywords: *Khawaja Hassan Qari, legacy, Historical Significance, Cultural Importance, Religious Heritage, Enchanting Allure,*

Introduction

In every corner of the valley, Muslim shrines have played a vital and widespread role in advancing Islam and the teachings of the Quran. Shrines have emerged as potential organizations for dispensing both spiritual and temporal precepts. A true and accurate picture of society cannot be formed unless it is seen in the context of the shrines and their contributions. In addition to their significance for education, the shrines had a profound impact on the sociocultural fabric of people throughout the valley. But throughout time, the influence has been exaggerated and misunderstood because of the widespread illiteracy, which finally encouraged people to engage in such activities and duties that, to a large degree, diverted the shrines from their prescribed course of activity. The caretakers (mujavirs) of the shrines' blatant self-interest complicated the situation. Even in modern times, custodians are highly esteemed and respected by people of all demographics, especially the rural populace. Abul Fazl mentioned over 131 ancient yet significant Hindu preserves in Kashmir, which has a long and illustrious history of shrines. Furthermore, there were seven hundred locations where stone-cut figures of snakes were praised. In fact, Kashmir has been the home of gods and goddesses, famous ray sites, lamas, sadhus, Pandits, Rishis, Pirs, and fakirs since the beginning of time. Collectively, they represented the most powerful force in the community. Muslims from Kashmir expressed their devotion to God through shrines. The people who believed in superstitions thought that the saints buried in shrines had godlike powers. Even those who chose not to come for one reason or another did not question the holiness of the shrines. Obviously, very few individuals were able to resist the saints' and their zirats' heavenly power. The shrines were thought to have the secret to gaining the favour of the gods. The seeker and the suppliant visited the shrine often in an effort to appease the saint in order to achieve the satisfaction of a deeply held wish. The people loved and revered the shrines more than their own lives as a result of their immense and unrestricted faiths. For the sake of Pir and the shrine, they were prepared to sacrifice whatever was most important to them. Even if they had to sell some household items, the inhabitants of Kashmir would always offer something to the shrine if they were going hungry.

Importance of Shrines

The Kashmir region, nestled in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent, has long been regarded as a land of breathtaking beauty and spiritual significance. This paper presents a comprehensive

case study that explores the profound legacy of Khawaja Hassan Qari and unveils the captivating narrative of the shrine of Kashmir. Kashmir often referred to as "Paradise on Earth," has been a hub of diverse religious and cultural practices throughout history. The region has witnessed the confluence of various faiths, resulting in a unique blend of traditions and beliefs. Amidst this vibrant tapestry, the shrine of Khawaja Hassan Qari has emerged as a significant spiritual landmark. Khawaja Hassan Qari, a revered figure in Kashmiri history, was a renowned Sufi saint and scholar who lived during the medieval period. His teachings and spiritual practices had a profound impact on the people of Kashmir, influencing their religious and cultural fabric. The shrine dedicated to him became a sanctuary for devotees seeking solace, guidance, and blessings. The allure of the shrine lies not only in its architectural grandeur but also in the ethereal ambiance that surrounds it. The ornate designs, intricate carvings, and serene environment create an enchanting atmosphere, attracting pilgrims and tourists from far and wide. However, it is the legacy of Khawaja Hassan Qari that truly sets the shrine apart. Through extensive research and analysis of historical records, religious texts, and oral traditions, this study seeks to unveil the intricacies of Khawaja Hassan Qari's life.

Kalhana said that Kashmir had turned into a place where "there was not a space as big as a grain of sesame without a tirtha." Given their long-standing practice of adoring holy sites, it is not unforeseen that Kashmiris repudiate Tauhid Islamic teachings while being welcoming of "shrine worship". Using Walter Lawrence's words, "In their hearts they are Hindus and the religion of Islam is too abstract to satisfy their superstitious cravings, so they turn from the mean priest and the mean mosque to the pretty shrines of carved wood and a roof bright with iris flowers where the saints of bygone eras lie buried." They like looking at the saint's ancient robes and turban, as well as the cave he lived in as an ascetic. Every Kashmiri thinks that saints would respond to appeals from mortals and that a deceased saint has greater power than a living priest. Foreigners refer to Kashmiris as Pir Parast, or saint-worshippers, and the term is well-deserved. The postmortem function of the saints' cults, many of which have 'functioned in a way antagonistic to the ideas and acts of the saint living in their cultic tomb,' is perhaps the most notable illustration of the local context of the "shrine worship". It should be emphasized that all of the Sufi saints, whose shrines are prominently located in Kashmir, detested earthly pleasures, believed that mastering nafs was the key to achieving closeness to Allah, and disapproved of anybody who came to their shrines for unimportant reasons. However, it is paradoxical that their shrines have evolved into destinations for solitary worldly fervor.

Shrine of Khawaja Hassan Qari

Sufism has a long and illustrious history in Kashmir, and the region is home to a number of prominent Sufi shrines that contribute significantly to the region's cultural and religious history. Visitors who come to pay respect, offer prayers, and seek blessings frequently visit these Kashmiri Sufi shrines. These shrines frequently have a reverent, devoted, and spiritual environment. The shrine of Khawja Hassan Qari (RA), which is located in the village of Hardshiva Zaingair Sopore, is one of the many Sufi shrines in Kashmir. Khawja Hassan Qari (RA) made the decision to settle in Hardshiva after receiving a heavenly directive from his Murshid Sheikh Hamza Makhdum (RA). According to the author of *Chill-chillat-ul Arifeen*, Khawja Hassan Qari (RA) carried out forty chillas by himself in the wilderness of Hardshiva. The first thing that Khawja Hassan Qari did after coming to Hardshiva was to create a Khanqah. This Khanqah functioned as a centre for adult education, education for women, remembering, love, and contemplation, as well as Islamic sciences. There is a cottage located at this khanqah, and it was there that the inhabitant's brother used to live in seclusion for a period of twenty-two years. The shrine is a testament to the solitary existence he led, and the cottage in which he resided is still standing and unaltered to this day. Mishkawti and Baba Nasib-u-din Gazi personally oversaw this Khanqah, which was extremely important in the spread and expansion of Islam in Sopore. This Khanqah was known for its widespread implementation of the *Tafseer-e-Hussaini*, and it offered its guests every convenience

they could ask for to ensure their utmost comfort. People travelled long distances to pay their respects to Khawja Hassan Qari and to present him with offers.

During the last years of his life, Khawja Hassan Qari made his home in the peaceful village of Hardshiva. During this period, he focused on his devotion to God via prayer, solitude, education, and the leadership of others along the Islamic spiritual path. Following his death, he was put to rest within the walls of the Khanqah, which was also the location where he had spent his last days. Unfortunately, following his passing, the Khanqah began to deteriorate over time and was unable to recruit the necessary people to keep it operational. As a result, it was eventually abandoned. In spite of the fact that it was a simple building consisting of only four walls, the Khanqah was successful in doing something that had never been done before. Within its doors, a great number of people had surely encountered the genuine heart and truth of spirituality, yet it is unclear how many lost souls had sought direction there. The Khanqah bears a permanent imprint of Khawja Hassan Qari's commitment to his religion and has served as a refuge for countless people seeking enlightenment. Despite the fact that it is in a state of deterioration at the present time, the Khanqah continues to stand as a testament to the transformational power of spirituality and religion. Only a few individuals were residing in Hardshiva at the time the Khanqah was initially built. However, throughout the course of time, the population has grown, and at the present moment, the Khanqah is surrounded by a sizeable number of people, the majority of whom belong to the Reshi caste. The name "Reshi Mohalla" is widely used to refer to this particular community.



Sacred Shrine

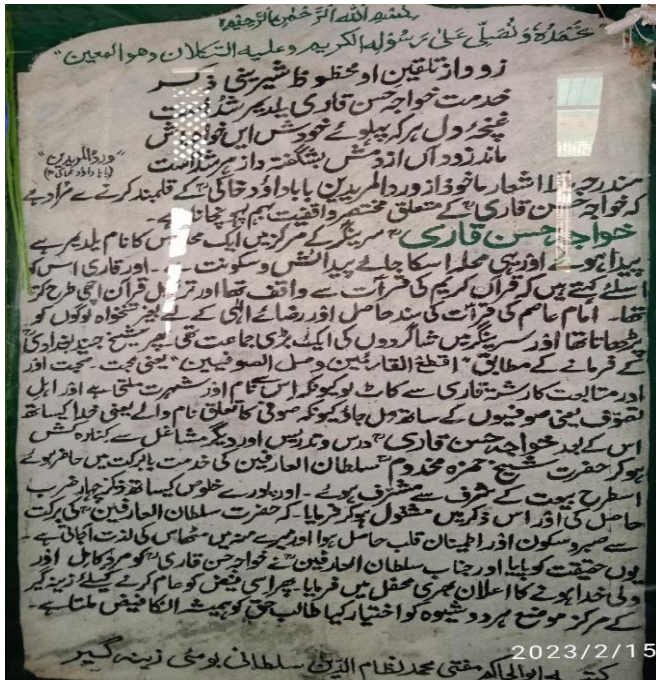


Sacred Cottage

Building Design of the Sacred Shrine

Sufis and Reshis found adequate seclusion in various places of the valley, notably atop hills, to establish their communities. There, they could pray, contemplate, and adore the Lord without disturbance. The religious sites and shrines that may be found in Kashmir combine to create a living museum. It is quite unlikely that you will come across any such community that does not have at least one shrine or other precious relic linked to a saint. Beautiful shrines were built in honour of the local saints by the faithful community as an expression of their love and respect for those individuals. Nearly the entire valley is dotted with sacred sites that may be visited. The architecture of Kashmir's shrines is an important part of the region's heritage. There are holy places

that date back hundreds of years. The people of Kashmir devote all of their love and dedication to the process of preserving and embellishing these holy places. Nearly every hamlet and town in the Valley is home to some kind of holy site, whether it be a large or a tiny one. The architecture of Kashmir is reflected in the shrines of both Sufis and Reshis. The architecture of the Kashmir region is called 'Kashmiri wooden Architecture' or 'Kashmiri Islamic Architecture'. The architectural style is characterized by the use of wood, brick, and stone, with intricate carvings and elaborate designs. The use of wood is particularly prominent, with wooden roofs, pillars, and balconies being common features of Kashmiri architecture. The style has been influenced by various cultural and historical factors, including Islamic, Persian, and Mughal architecture. One of the examples of this type of Architecture is the shrine of Khawja Hassan Qari (RA). Wood, mud, and unbaked bricks were used to construct the Ziyarat, or shrine, of Khawja Hassan Qari (RA). It has withstood the test of time, yet over the years it has experienced some development and evolution. The most obvious change that has been made is at the front of the shrine, where glass displays have been added. The verandas that run down both sides of the steps and the fact that the shrine faces south are two characteristics that are typical of shrines in Kashmir. When guests approach the sacred room, they are met with a door made of wood, and once inside, they discover a board on the wall that provides information on the life of Khawja Hassan Qari (RA). Mufti Muhammad Nizamuddin Sultani, a local of Bomai Zaingair, was the one responsible for compiling the information on this board. The primary shrine is draped in fabric and protected by four walls; it may be found at the chamber's exact centre. Tile work and calligraphy decorate the lower half of these walls, while wooden pillars with glass infill support the upper portion of these walls. Because of this, worshippers are able to have a good look at the principal temple. The design, which is carved into the wood, contributes to the visual appeal of the shrine. Tile work is located at the baseline on the inside of the fencing that surrounds the shrine. Pinjrakari work is located in the centre of the fencing and wood carving at the top both inside and outside. The ceiling features Khatmband art of work, while the roof is covered with metal sheets.



Board



Main Shrine



Pinjra-kari



Wood Carving Designs

The Khanqah portion of the shrine is built completely out of solid timber blocks, which function both as load-bearing and support components. Brick infill provides further solidity to the structure. The building is elevated on a plinth, and a tunnel has been built through it so that water may flow through the Khanqah without causing any harm to the structure. The Khanqah has two

stories, and wood was used to create the steps and balconies. On the other hand, the fence and railing of the balconies exhibit elaborate Pinjrakari motifs, which lend an aesthetic touch to the construction, and the windows have been outfitted with panes of glass. The protection afforded by the roof is enhanced by the use of metal sheets, while the ceiling is a straightforward wooden design. Insofar as the primary entry gate is concerned, it is likewise crafted out of tile work and features three cinquefoil arches in its design.

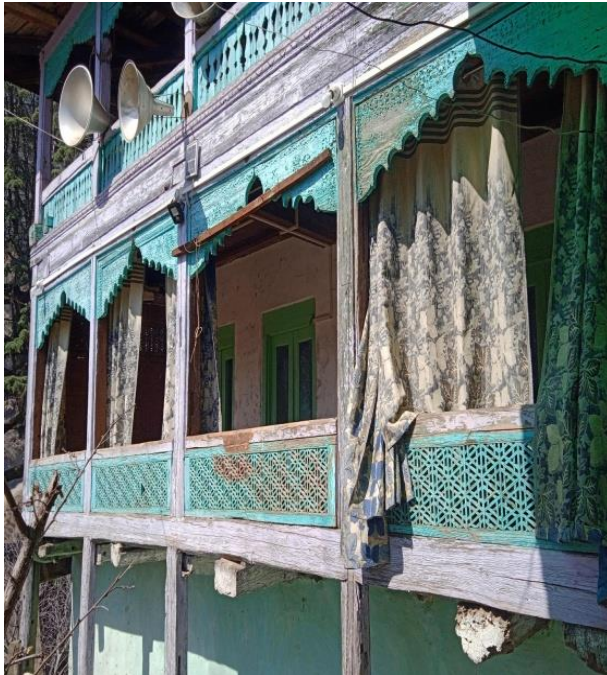
The holy site of Khawja Hassan Qari has survived the test of time and has been transformed into a contemporary structure, yet it is still considered an important cultural heritage of Kashmir Dangerpora, who. It is an outstanding illustration of the one-of-a-kind architectural style of the area and serves as a useful reminder of the need to protect cultural heritage for the benefit of future generations. The Ziyarat of Khawja Hassan Qari (RA) has seen major changes throughout the course of time. However, Ziyarat Sharief has been able to endure mostly as a result of the efforts of the local community. The people who live in the hamlet have been very generous in their gifts, and they have worked together to ensure the shrine and the area around it are both preserved and developed. Although the participation of the government has been relatively insignificant, it is important to highlight the efforts made by Haji Abdul Rashid, the Member of Legislative Assembly for Dangerpora has shown considerable concern for the upkeep and development of the shrine's infrastructure. His financial aid made a number of improvements to the shrine feasible, one of which was the laying of floor tiles on the shrine lawn.

It is gratifying to see that the community has taken ownership of the shrine and is trying to conserve and develop its spiritual and cultural value, since this gives one reason to have hope. It is heartening to see that the community acknowledges the significance of the Ziyarat Sharief of Khawja Hassan Qari (RA) as part of the village's legacy and is working to guarantee that it will be around for future generations to enjoy. In this respect, the donations of people who have realized the significance of this shrine, such as Haji Abdul Rashid, are equally significant, and we are really grateful for their help. Overall, the contributions of the community have been essential in preserving and advancing the Ziyarat Sharief of Khawja Hassan Qari (RA) as an important cultural and spiritual monument. This has been accomplished through a variety of activities.

Tunnel

Pinjrakari on fencing of the balcony

Balcony



Pinjrakari on the Railing of balcony



Entrance Gate

Contribution of the Shrine

The village of Hardshiva has benefited tremendously from the mausoleum of Khawja Hassan Qari (RA), which was built in his honour. People from all over the valley make their way to this location because it acts as a hub for spirituality and community participation and has become an essential destination. The presence of the shrine has also played an important part in the economy of Hardshiva since it draws people from far and wide, who in turn contribute to the success of the local companies, most notably the transportation industry. Furthermore, the shrine has been actively involved in philanthropic endeavors, such as the giving of free meals known as "Langer," which has had a significant influence on the neighborhood around it. In general, the shrine of Khawja Hassan Qari (RA) has been an important contributor to the growth of Hardshiva, both in terms of the city's spiritual life and its economy. People from all across the valley have been drawn together by its existence, which has fostered a sense of togetherness and community among those individuals. The humanitarian work that is done by the shrine has also had a great influence on the lives of the people by giving them the necessary assistance and nutrition they require.

Conclusion

The shrine of Khawaja Hassan Qari in Kashmir stands as a testament to the rich cultural and religious heritage of the region. Through this comprehensive case study, we have unveiled the captivating narrative of the shrine and explored the profound legacy of Khawaja Hassan Qari. Our examination of the historical, cultural, and religious significance of the shrine has shed light on its enduring impact on Kashmiri society. We have discovered that the shrine serves not only as a physical monument but also as a spiritual sanctuary, attracting devotees seeking solace, guidance, and blessings. Khawaja Hassan Qari, a revered Sufi saint and scholar, played a pivotal role in shaping the spiritual landscape of the area. His teachings and spiritual practices left an indelible mark on the people of the region, influencing their religious beliefs, cultural norms, and collective memory. The shrine itself exudes an enchanting allure, with its ornate designs, intricate carvings, and serene environment. It serves as a physical embodiment of the spiritual and cultural heritage of Kashmir, drawing pilgrims and tourists from far and wide. By appreciating and preserving the heritage of the shrine, we can continue to honor the teachings and contributions of Khawaja Hassan Qari. Moreover, we can promote interfaith dialogue, cultural exchange, and mutual understanding, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious society.

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