CHAPTER-2

Hazrat Makhdūm Ashraf ‘Jahāngīr’ Simnānī [R.A.]
(d. - 832 A.H. / 1428 C.E.).

Majār Sharīf of Hazrat Makhdūm Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.A.)
Kachwacha Sharīf, Faizabad, UP, India.
Section- A

A short biography of Hazrat Ashraf ‘Jahāngīr’

Simnānī [R.A.]
(d. 832 A.H. / 1428 C.E.)

The running proverb in Arabic is said to be a ‘catch-a-word’ [found currency on the common tongue]; anyone falling into Basra reached Hindūstān.

(إِيَّا نَا وَصَلِ الْبَصْرَةُ بِلغّةِ الْهَنْدَ)

According to ancient versions, Hind, out of all, was widely and deeply known to the outer world—Arabs, for that matter, Arabian Peninsula was universally known to the Sub-continent ‘Hindūstān’ in particular. Central Asian hinterland frequently used on way to Hindūstān touched on Simnān, a tiny principality under Muslim-rule having proud-heritage of antiquity. Known to be the thriving abode of Khalīd Bermakī, the illustrious ancestor of the Wazīr Family during Abbasid regime, Simnān produced another illustrious scion of the family Hazrat Mīr Saiyīd Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī [R.A.] (d. 832 A.H. / 1428 C.E.) by name, who relinquished the ruling authority on the throne and set for Hindūstān while he was still young man of only 25 years of age. Needless to say, half a million after the conquest of Sind [during 712 A.D.] the flow of the savants and the sages up to Hindūstān was said to be not much interrupted, which was again overwhelming on the ‘Fall of Baghdad’ [1258 A.D.] i.e. at the early second half of the 13th Century.

The earliest traceable event of his outing de-tour is found put on record in Iraq, where he had visited the Mazār of Hazrat Saiyīduna Gaus Pak [R.A.] (d. 561 A.H. / 1166)1 and afterwards repaired the journey on foot and
reached the ‘Uch’ where he was immensely blessed with the ‘Suhbat-o-Faij’ of Sheikh Rukn al-Dīn Abul Fath (d. 735 A.H. / 1335 C.E.)\(^2\) under the close supervision of Hazrat Makhdūm Jahāniān Jahān-Gasht Saiyid Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī [R.A.] (d. 785 A.H. / 1384).

There from, he set for ‘Hermain Sharifain’. He stayed for long days in the service of Imām Ābdullāh Yāfe’yī [R.A.] (d. 768 A.H. / 1367)\(^3\). He made travels far and near till he reached back upto Hindustān during the reign of Sultān Mohammad Tuglaq, the Delhi Sultān while he attended on the Darbār of Hazrat Nasīr al-Dīn Mahmūd Rawshan Chirāgh [R.A.], (d. 757 A.H. / 1356 C.E.) the Principal Khalīfah of Mahbūb-i-Ilāhī Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn Awliā [R.A.] (d. 725 A.H. / 1325). Herein he was vested with assignments to conduct the associates and attendants of Darbār to pursue and promote the Chistīah Tariqah for a good long many days. Without much delay, he sat for the Darbār of Makhdūm Jahāniān Jahān-Gasht [R.A.] wherein Makhdūm Jahāniān\(^4\) warmly received him and bestowed on him the square responsibility on his behalf. Thenceforward, he took to Mulk-i-Bangālah. ‘Mulk-i-Bangālah’ since long time-past became renowned to have been the hospice for numerous preachers, sages and savants (أولياء الله الكاملين) belonging to the different Tariqahs as their prominent harbingers that evoked the enshrined sanctity of the holy souls thereof and took up the way of tedious journey for unknown destiny -- “Bangālah”.

Sheikh Ālā al-Dīn ‘Ganj-i-Nabāt’ (d. 800 A.H. / 1398) [latterly renowned to be Sheikh Ālā al-Haque Manerī]\(^5\) alongwith his distinguished Associates got out of the town only to receive and welcome him. The Sheikh enthusiastically covered the journey up to his own and arranged for his comfort so much so that the traveling man on the street instantly felt at home.
“What a good fortune and happy hour it is! That long afterwards’ waiting a Seeker can fulfill, perchance, his long-cherished hope!”

Professor Saiyid Ábd al-Bari while giving detailed description referred to the following extracts in particular:

“Hazrat Ashraf Simnänī [Q.S.A] passed 4 years of tormenting experience pervasive in the Darbār that was noted for corporeal labor and hardships beyond measures. With total submission to utmost perseverance with ‘Etiquettes and Formalities’ of the Darbār very soon he rose to eminence, nay, pre-eminence and won the title of ‘JAHAŃGīR’, the most coveted title from a great saint of imperial glamour. The event has become memorable with his own composition of the ensuing verses: -

مرا از حضرت بیر جهانبخش
خطاب آمد که ای اشرف جهانگیر
کنون گیرم جهان معنؤی را
که فرمان آمد از شاهم جهانگیر

“It felt to my great fortune from His Highness, my preceptor (Álā al-Haque Ganj-i-Nabāt) who was reputed to be ‘the bestower of the world’, as he addressed me with ‘JAHAŃGīR’ i.e. all-pervading controller of the Universe. Through-which I chanced to see in to the esoteric world as it is. Thus I got the exalted Ordinance from my preceptor to be myself ‘all pervading controller of the Universe’.”
In this context there is an incidence of profound spiritual value that seems to be a parallel as follows:

"Sometimes, Sheikh Álā al-Dīn tartly acknowledged his spiritual attainment and bestowed on him the invaluable ‘Kirquah’ (cloak) received from his own Sheikh Akhī Sirāj [R.A.] via Mahbūb-i-Ilāhī Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn Awliā [R.A.] (d. 725 A.H. / 1325 C.E.), which he himself awarded him (Simnānī), as a gift, in acknowledgment of the perfectness and superiority in apex, as an when Sheikh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn (R.A.), as soon as he was found by the Sheikh to be at the highest stage of attainment. At this, Sheikh Simnānī received everything in absolute humility with perfect satisfaction and inexplicable contentment. But it so happened that the next day Hazrat Simnānī gave out the priceless Gift to a Faqir, [i.e. wretched attendant of the Darbār]. It struck otherwise the Disciples of the Darbār as to the fact that so much invaluable a gift bestowed on him by his Sheikh that had had the auspicious (‘Mutabarrak’) linkages along the blessings bestowed upon him by none else than one, known to be ‘Mahbūb-i-Ilāhī’, the leading sage allover the Muslimdom."

This sort of murmuring in respect of the bestowal in the long run reached the hear of Sheikh Álā al-Dīn ‘Ganj-i-Nabāt’ who instantly said, “Ask it from Ashraf”. Because, a divinely linked-up man cannot do anything useless.” In way of explanation Sheikh Simnānī spoke out “The Gift shall have to be either ‘Ain’ or ‘Ghair’ (selfsame or not) of my beloved Pīr-o-Murshed. In case, I am concerned with other than the Sheikh (selfsame of his holy person), it shall be of no use at all. In that case ‘Nisbat-i-Sheikh’ (نسبت شيخ) will be simply meaningless. Hence to get rid of it is the principal and primeval way, ‘to get along with him in sole and spirit’ rather than going for
the thing-outward taken for show-off in popular parlance". Needless to say, the same attitude used to be indispensable for principle of Spiritualism (روحانية) that was found in practice with the classical sages and savants.

Then the Sheikh [R.A.] expressed absolute satisfaction at this and prayed for him to be blessed with endless flavors spreading squarely far and wide the entire world over”.

Having all the graces of the Sheikh, he bent up his mind to leave for Jawnpur asper the noble consent of his Sheikh. It may be mentioned that the ‘Farewell Ceremony’ was so much memorable as good as a princely farewell. On his way upward, he made his so-journ at Mohammadabad having stayed at Manier for sometimes. Thenceforward a noble Sheikh, Shirājī-i-Hind Sadr al-Dīn, attended on him on the way and blessed him with high-spiritual attainment. Out of all, a distinguished sage known as ‘Sheikh-i-Kabir’ Sarwarpuri (the father of Durr-i-Yatīm-در يتيم) followed the suit along his renowned Follower and ‘Sāhib-i-Asrār’ [the Mastermind].

Then he returned to Hindustān via Yemen where he met Sheikh Ābdullāh Yafēi who incidentally read out to him certain verses of the noted saint Abū Saʿyīd Abul Khair that impressed upon him with the gist note that ‘anyone on closing days recites the same verses is released from agony and altercations’. Right at the same time at Jilan, a young boy named Ābd al-Razzāq [not much distantly related—a nephew from maternal aunt’s side] sued for discipleship; short of which he never rested satisfied who afterwards reached the ‘top-point’ of spiritual attainments so much so that he owned his inner-most confidence to be succeeded to his arch-representative ‘Khalīfah’-
renowned to be ‘Nūr al-‘Ain’. It may be mentioned that Nūr al-‘Ain was chosen to say pre-burial prayer (Janāzah) on the holy soul.¹³

Hence forward, he made his way upto Makkah Muāzzamah, meanwhile he had been to Damascus, and proved his sagacity on occasions with the learned circles therein; where he met Imām Ābdullāh Yafeyī (d. 768 A.H. / 1367 C.E.) and kept himself in constant touch with the assembly of the Imām and his learned discourses and he came across with Sheikh Saiyid Ālī Hamdani (R.A.) at the same time. He accompanied Saiyid Ālī Hamdani upto 'Jabal al-Fatah' of Egypt in order to be associated with ‘the band of Dervishes’ that had assembled there.¹⁴

Then he turned towards Yemen and was blessed with the august company of Sheikh Abul Gais Yemenī (R.A.).¹⁵ In the same place, Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn Yemenī also met him.

These happenings were put on record with a year 750 A.H. / 1347 C.E., in which he was put up with Yemen wherefrom he set for Hindustān-- and straightway made himself present at the Darbār Sharīf of Pandua, his ultimate destination. It may be mentioned that on his way to Jaunpur he was received by a noted family of traditional aristocracy-- Malek Mahmūd being its Head, offered him a plot of land that was considered pleasant for settlement by the Sheikh and it, afterwards, turned to be the Kachwacha Sharīf, his homestead.¹⁶

An inhabitant thereof was a renowned Yogi, reputed for his arch magic and mesmerism, having large number of followers and devotees known as Chelas was immediately impressed by the holy soul converted to
Islam and took to his discipleship. Malek Mahmūd, as well, constructed a hospice (Khānqāh) for the Sheikh and brought his kith and kin into the noble fold of the Sheikh who named it ‘Ruh-ābād’ and bestowed the title ‘Kasrat-ābād’ on the ‘Khānqāh Sharīf’ and the quarter (حجره) fixed for him was named with ‘Wahdat-ābād’.

Having reached Ayodha, a youth named Shams al-Dīn accepted his discipleship, who was afterwards renowned to be Shams al-Dīn Fariyād-Ras. i.e. Shams al-Dīn, the Rescuer.

On his arrival at Lucknow, Sheikh Abul Muzaffar Mohammad, the most illustrious sage and the noted poet, composed a ‘Qasidah’ on him.

His reputation being spread squarely, he was betaken to Lucknow where he met Sheikh Safī al-Dīn known to be the Abū Hanīfah II, who immediately courted his discipleship. The Sheikh bestowed on him blessings in terms of learning, in particular.

The second travel of the Sheikh towards Hermain Sharifain in the year 770 A.H. / 1367 C.E. was very much noteworthy. Sheikh Shams al-Dīn Fariyād-Ras was eager to accompany him but was debarred and put him towards enlightening the people with spiritual development there.

Prof. Bari opined that details of the travel though are not available he referred to his stay at Ahmadābād wherein a sage, Sheikh al-Islam, versatile in astrology and cosmology debated on certain problems--almost irrelevant with the pursuit of Sheikh; and the Sheikh retorted with comments, “My bussiness is ‘Wafā (وفا)’ i.e. the fulfilment of Devine commandments
and yours is ‘Jafā (جفا’) i.e. untoward allegations. Now we are concerned with neither with ‘Wafā’ nor with ‘Jafā’; rather we are face to face with ‘Safā (صفا)’ (inner purification, esoteric development).²²

Needless to say, our Sheikh used to be confronted with peculiar questions everywhere which he intelligibly faced with contextual argumentations. In the long run, ‘Sheikh al-Islam’ eventually yielded to him. He stayed for long two years at Gujrat and enlightened the people at large. At a result, the task, difficult to be done by the kings with authority of forces was achieved through his passionate sincerity. A large number of devotees being enfolded, he composed the Risālah (booklet) Ashraf al-Fawāid with an eye to improve their enlightenment.²³

On his way-back to Ruhābād, he had been to ‘Gulbargah Sharīf’ for his usual Faizyābī (فیضیابی). Almost ten thousand people being brought to his fold, he got their names enrolled in a Register, seemingly an unprecedented work up to the time. According to the version of ‘Ashraf’, the disciples having been innumerable, the same sort of Registers was thrown into water by himself.²⁴

In the year of 779 A.H. / 1375 C.E. on the death of ‘Sheikh-i-Kabīr’ Sarwarpurī, he patronised his son Sheikh Mohammad with open heart and bestowed on him the title of ‘Durr-i-Yathim’ (unique pearl) and made him the Successor (Khalīfah). It may be remembered that this ‘Sheikh-i-Kabīr’ in his youth dreamt a holy soul of Divine Beauty as if to become to his disciple and remained in quest of the same for long. It so happened that he (Sheikh-i-Kabīr) attended on ‘Chirāg-i-Hind’ but found the person unlike that he dreamt.²⁵
Having passed long days there he flocked to the Darbār of Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī while his reputation was at the apex. The Sheikh got him in and declared to all, “This is the young-chap, of whom my Sheikh (Hazrat Ālā al-Haque Manerī) predicted to be the ‘Sher-i-wilāyat’ (lion of sainthood). I had been looking for his advent”. It is to be mentioned that this news being reached, Chirāg-i-Hind minded it rudely and cursed Kabīr ‘to face death’ as he transgressed here from to be enfolded there”. As Mīr Simnānī heard it, urged the new disciple to utter something as he liked. Accordingly Sheikh-i-Kabīr stated, “Hājī Chirāg shall die first”. It happened as such while Sheikh-i-Kabīr too died five years afterwards.  

In the year 782 A.H. / 1381 C.E. the Sheikh stayed in ‘Kachwacha’, during Ramadan enormous populaces were enshrined with his Devine treatment. His compassionate hospitality was as proverbial without parity across Hindustān, nay, throughout Asia in entirety.  

In 782 A.H. / 1381 C.E. he again set for Panduah to attend on his Sheikh. Meanwhile, he had been to Bihar where incidentally, Hazrat Sheikh Sharf al-Dīn Ahmad Yaḥyā Manerī (d.- 782 A.H. / 1381 C.E.) expired and he was chosen to say pre-burial prayer on him in accordance with the ‘Wasiat’ made by the Sheikh beforehand. (The ‘Wasiat’ contained three conditions (a) The man has to be a Sayid as per pure pedigree, (b) He has to be an abdicator of the throne, (c) He has to be an expert of Seven Qirāts. None else than Hazrat Simnānī was found accomplished with three conditions). He thoroughly studied the ‘Maktūbāt’ and well-utilized them all.
According to Ashraf -- his third travel is no less noteworthy than the rest. The author made a striking emphasis on it by referring it to the tours of Hazrat Khidr (A.H.) that no where-else likelier tours have been accomplished by a holy soul than the present Sheikh in the person of Simnānī (R.A.). In this third travel, he was accompanied by a man of established reputation to whom went the credit of composing ‘Latāîf-i-Ashrafi’, the fundamental narrative of Sheikh’s biography. Sheikh Bad’ī al-Dīn Shāh Madar (d. 838 A.H. / 1429 C.E.), Master of prevailing esoteric achievement, too had the privilege of his company for a while.

After having visited Rum and Syria he betook himself to Palestine, the traditional holy city. Following the crusades warfares and the consequent instabilities along the Ayubites and Jangis the vast Muslim populace were under the ghastly over-powering of the Christians. Hazrat Simnānī inculcated into them the spirit of the Fait (إيمان) and Islamic Enthusiasm while they were suffering from utter helplessness for inimical atrocities before the Turkish onward march therein. Hazrat Simnānī (R.A.) restored confidence and enlightened the wayward mystics and agnostics. This very yeomen service has been latterly referred to with adequate appreciation.

After his second come-back to Hindustān he again visited Gulbargah where in Hazrat Bandah-Nawāz Gesū-Darāz (R.A.) (d.- 825 A.H. / 1422 C.E.) had already stayed. His pre-occupation with Gujarat, in particular, denoted the incessant undertakings of the Sheikh towards material upliftment of teeming millions of the area.
Unlike others, ‘Ashraf’ pinpointed his Fourth Travel towards Syria, Persia, Rum and Transoxiana, the hot bed of the prevailing cross-currents of universal import, heaped up and rose out from the Era of Sultan Baizid up to Taimurlane’s (d.- 1398 C.E.) encroachments. At that time one person said to be versatile in science and letters came into conflict with the Sheikh on the point of preference of ‘Tariqah’ to ‘Shariah’. Hazrat Simnānī (R.A.) challenged him to point-out any tiny action of the Savants contrary to the ‘Shariah’. In that case, he (Simnānī) shall readily accept his opinion. Verily he mentioned, Tariqah is the self-same of Shariah itself and none is different from either. As a matter of fact, The Savants sifted out of the glorious ‘Quran’ all that are amenable to character-building and purification of the spirit within and without.33

It may be mentioned that the Sheikh al-Islam of Rum too came into conflict with him – he had been jealous of his all pervading honour and reputation and was up to harassing him with tit-bits of complexities of ‘Shariah’ in the open forum but instantly failed and surrendered to his feet with humility and apology.34

It is, as well, put on record that once he had been at Jame Mosque of Damascus wherein Qāḍī-zādah Mohammad Rūmī (scion of the illustrious Qaḍī of Rum) and Makhdūm-zādah-i-Moulānā Rūm (the son of Moulānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī)35 were present. Certain person stated that a man claiming to be the Mahdī-i-Ākheruj-Jamān; at that the Sheikh retorted that the credentials available in the ‘Traditions’ (Akhāri wa’Aṯār) have to be considered in letter and spirit. He further demanded the person to be met. The man turned up the next day. He cast his look on him and entreated, “The same blessings (to be Mahdī) could not be achieved by claim, pure and simple. Allah, the
Merciful shall bring forth the august signs of him whom He bestows the similar blessing. Never get yourself into that whirlpool”. Instantly, that man repented and shunned up the claim.36

He visited (Ziārat) all the shrines of the Prophets (peace be upon them) at Bait al-Muqaddas. Ascending on the peak of Tūr (جبل الطور) whereby he was chance to meet Iblis—he wanted to know why he (the Satan) declined to prostrate before Adam. He replied, “I am a genuine lover. Why should I prostrate other than Him?” Hazrat Simnānī explained that he (the Satan) failed to get at the mystery (راز) of desire of the beloved. His (Allah’s) command was to serve His beloved (محبوب). The lover is duty-bound to carry out his Master’s advice. It implies that one’s disappointment verily lies in His satisfaction. Hence, one’s satisfaction is simply useless and irrelevant there.”

The Sheikh was keenly aware with reputation of Ḥāfiz Shirāzī (d. 800 A.H. / 1398).38 Accordingly, he went there and met the sage. The Sheikh was up to visit every nook and corner of the world wherever the spiritual esoteric were traceable. He turned back up to Simnan from Shiraz and found his mother already dead and his brother (Mohammad Aāraf) on the throne.39

Thence he visited Transoxiana and met the Sajjādanashīn, the man vested in the line of Khwājah Ahmad Yasowī, the worldwide reputed saint. In the same travel, he met Khwājah Bahā al-Dīn Naqshbandī (d. 791 A.H. / 1388). At that time he was asked by somebody, “Up to whom your Silsilah does reach”? In reply he said, “Silsilah does reach nowhere; Suluk- i.e. theosophical lineage concerns no Silsilah but it relates to ‘Esoteric’ line-up (سلسلة معنوي).”40
It is to be noted that one of ‘Taimurs’ generals named Amīr ʿĀlī Beig gained his holy company and was awarded the title of (أبو المكارم) Abū al-Makārim by the Sheikh- who was entrusted with the assignments of Tablig-i-Dīn and guidance of the people of Samarqand. He was found over-concerned with the people of any talent and genius whom he grasped to be put for public service of egalitarian business of welfare in the world—Here and Hereafter; the same was aptly urged by Āllāmah Iqbal as he says:

(نگاه عشق دل زنده کی تلاش میسین ہے)

It means that “a passionate insight is up to trace down the souls alive”. Sometime, one of his devotees named ‘Kamal Yugi’ was out to meet natural call amidst heavy snowfall. With clearance and ablution the man was left almost stunned with severe coldness; the Sheikh instantly apprehending it as such, forthwith, asked the attendance to trace down his what-about and it was found that the man was almost solidified from ice-stroke. Then and there he was brought and put under heat till he was restored in natural order.

It so happened that certain Dervish in a large assembly thereof tartly spoke of wonders of the world and exclaimed, “The provision (Rijq) is certain and determined. Why do people roam about inquest of it”? At this Simnānī explained, “When Allah Himself maketh us move-about, there is no way-out otherwise. It is astounding to note, How queer the Dervish is! He finds nothing else than the quests for food-provision (رزق) save and excepting it so much and so many are there all around”.

Being off from the third tour from ‘Mamalik-i-Islamiah’ (Muslim-dom) he set for Uch for the third time where he had been first to meet Hazrat Makhdūm Jahāniān Jahān Gasht (d. 785A.H. / 1384 C.E.). Eventually, he
visited Dagestan where Emperor Taimurlane sued for his attendance on his foot and sent a deputation. The Sheikh enfolded some of them and entrusted with the assignments of spiritual enshrinement.\footnote{This action likely symbolized the Sheikh's impressive influence and connection to high-ranking officials.}

It may be noted that on his (Timor’s) expedition of Delhi in 800 A.H. / 1398 C.E. the Sheikh was present therein after his return from the 4th travel. Thence forward Simnānī witnessed the downfall of the ‘Tuglaq Sultānat’. Again he visited Pandua. In the mean time his Sheikh ‘Ālā al-Dīn Ganj-i-Nabāt (R.A.) expired and he participated in the Succession ceremony of ‘Hazrat Nūr Qub-i-‘Ālam’ following his father and sheikh’s demise.\footnote{This event marked a significant transition in the Sheikh’s leadership and legacy.}

According to ‘Latāif-i-Ashrafi’, the successors of the Sheikh are reported to have fallen-out regarding the succession where Sheikh Nūr al-Haque emerged as a pre-eminent claimant which case the Sheikh Simnānī promoted—it so happened that the Sheikh Simnānī had been present in ‘Fātiha-Khānī’ in the resultant tumult; he took Nūr al-Haque to a distant hillside and urged him to bring the discordant here and to declare that whosoever can call up the hill to move and the hill obeying the call can make a case in favour of the man-in-question to succeed. No sooner had he (Simnānī) finished the talk than the hill started moving. Than the Sheikh asked the moving hill to be stand still as—"I am talking to Makhdūm-zādah at present". The next day the contending parties accordingly presented themselves there. The Second party tried their utmost to get the hill moving but utterly failed; as soon as the ‘Sheikh Nūr al-Haque’ ipher e, the hill started moving and thus his claim proved in right earnest and he was installed as such. Thus his reputation spread far and near bringing the contemporary Sultān’s homage and respect in his favour.\footnote{This account highlights the Sheikh’s proficiency in resolving disputes and his remarkable powers, possibly attributed to his spiritual authority.}
Last but not the least, Hazrat Simnānī’s retorts are ‘so much’ and ‘so many’ that none can afford to ignore them out of which one instance needs to be mentioned here a new. In his last travel at Jaunpur, he happens to be, as usual, almost surrounded with the sages and saints of the locality; while Ibrāhīm Sharqī (renowned as Sultān al-Sharq, d.1436 C.E.) started his sovereign rule on Jaunpur, Qaḍī Shihāb al-Dīn Dawlatbādī, called Malik al-‘Ulamā, in the court under high impression of the Sheikh managed to organise a meet between the Sultān and the revered Sheikh. As a result, all the princes of Sultān along with the entourage were enfolded into the blessed Fold. Principal ‘Ulamā too were encircled around him. The Sultān showed him utmost respect and was heavily impressed, though he was himself a disciple of Hazrat Makdhum Jahānīān Jahān-Gasht (d. 785 A.H. / 1384 C.E.). His spontaneous submission along with priceless presentation made the Sheikh well-convinced though he regretted humbly to excuse him for his refusal thereof.

The Sheikh was thus always found head long busy with nerve-taking issues and problems of all kinds related to ‘Aḥkām-i-Sharī‘ah’ and mundane affairs of all sorts and thus he turned to ‘be-all and end-all’ for all and sundry. It so happened that in the pressing untoward questions once he uttered, “The people, all in all are Slaves of my Slave”. It was taken for a highfalutin and highbrowed excellence provoking the mass sentiment as well as the grudge of the ‘Ulamā’ till it reached the Sheikh making him utterly anguished. Even Qaḍī Shihāb al-Dīn Dawlatbādī entreated him with the otherwise reactions of the ‘statement’ he uttered.
The Sheikh in usual sobriety explained it with universal implication of its meaning along with an illustration. As a matter of fact, people, in general, are found to be the slaves to ‘whims and passions’ (هوام) and I, by the grace of Allah, got my ‘whims and passions’ captivated. In this way too people are, indeed, being slaves to their ‘whims and passions’ are slave to the same which I have already captivated in to-to. Consequently, they are ‘ipsofacto’ slaves of my slave quite in fitting with the famous maxim: 49

“Once a King requested a Dervish (savant) to ask something from him. In reply, he (Dervish) sent to the King a quatrain (رباعی)

اژ حرص و هوا دو بنده دارم
در ملك خدا از باشهم
تو بندہ بندگان ماتی
اژ بندہ بندگان چه خواههم

It means that, “Greed and passions are two natural instincts turned to be my slaves. In the territory of Allah, I am myself the King. Thou art the slave of my slaves. Why I shall ask from ‘the slave of slaves’! Incidentally, the Sheikh refers to the same diction of a by-gone saint whose quatrain bears the same retort as he himself did. Verily, this very extempore response of the sheikh to a tough-most allegation speaks out his all-round wisdom and erudition. In this way, a circumstance of revering repercussions was cooled down in respect of the Sheikh and his wisdom. 50
In closing days, he was hardly found spared from his usual business and preoccupation that he always undertook to carry out himself. Very few persons of square qualities of ‘head and heart’, like his, are traceable to have encountered with so many stalwarts- dead and alive and renowned spots throughout his world-wide journeys across the Muslim Dom.

In those good old days, frequent and cross-wise travels along far-fletched frontiers of the numerous lands and countries were far from the range of possibility while the Transport was so much meagre and inadequate. Hence his biographer Prof. Bari’s assertion as to the fact that ‘whole of the world seemed to have contracted ‘space-wise’ from all around to facilitate ‘cross-wise’ journey’s on the part of the noble soul’ is true to the letter. The learned author further emphasized that no corner of Central Asia, Middle East, Asian Regions and the Sub-continent, in particular, was deprived from the bliss-bounty of this celebrated holy soul.

It is mention-worthy that this wide and frequent travels were, by no means, related with or referred to so-called ‘Tourism’ adopted in quest of pleasure and entertainment whatsoever. All his biographers almost unanimously agreed on the point that his was a most passionate and susceptible heart to share with the grievances and afflictions of the people—down-trodden and up-stationed—all ranks and file. In the annals of Hindustân, a man of so vast and deep sacrifice, arch laborious and straggling personnel, Spiritual agitator are hard to be found.
Though Hazrat Ashraf Simnani was heavily involved with ‘Suluk’ work and functions in solitude, it is surprising to find him authoring numerous books of world-wide recognition. Such as

1. *Al-Ashrafīah* in Arabic Grammar,
2. *Al-Fatāwā al-Ashrafīah*,
4. *Al-Fusūl fī al-Usūl,*
5. *Sharh Fusūs al-Hikam*,
7. *Kanz al-Daqāiq,*
8. *Bahr al-Adhkār,*
9. *Fawāid al-Ashraf,*
10. *Bashārat al-Dhākirīn,*
11. *Tanvīh al-Ikhwān,*
12. *Hujjat al-Dhākirīn,*
13. *Al-Awrād al-Ashrafīah,*
14. *Sharh Āwārif al-Maʿārif,*
15. *Qawāid al-Āqāid,*
16. *Risālah Manāqib al-Khulafā* and
17. *Tahqīqāt-i-Īshq etc*, etc. \(^{52}\)
References:

1. Shāh Jahāngīr I Sheikhl ‘Ārefīn Moulānā Mukhlesur Rahmān, *Sharh al-Sudūr fi Dafā al-Shurūr*, Mujtabai Press, Kolkata, India, 1322 A.H. / 1904, p. 96... Hazrat Sheikhl ‘Ārefīn stated that Spiritualist and Ascetic scholars hardly ever-missed to mention the fact that the Central Asian Ascetics who for long large in number and usually put themselves into the pursuit of Ūlūm al-Sulūk as soon as the formal acquisition in terms of Ūlūm al-Fiqh was over. Side by side, these Seekers (Tullāb) never afforded to miss the holy shrines of the stalwarts in Iraq even there are references that Novices and Young-Scholars started their Ziarah with Imam Abu Hanifah and his followers, who in their eyes happened to be the ‘ascetics par excellence’. Cf. Husain Nasar: *Mystics Celebrities Across the World*, Isik Kitabeches, Istambul, 1973, pp. 229-230; Frithjof Schuon: *Mystics Celebrations and its undertaking in Implications*, California, 1979, pp. 401-404.

2. Prof. Saiyid ‘Abd al-Bari, *Ashraf Jahāngīr*, Danish Book Dipu, Faizabad (U.P.), India, 1981, p. 19... The learned scholar mentioned that Hazrat Ashraf Jahangir was immensely benefited as a disciple under the canopy of Sheikh Rukn al-Dīn Abul Fath who at that time disseminated science and learning of every kind for the serious seekers far and near.

3. Islamic Scholars—modern and medieval---referred to his name for innumerable authorship of great works of sagacity such as Rawd al-Riyāḥīn fi Hikayat al-Ṣāleḥīn, Mir’āt al-Janān, etc. Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz Muhaddis Dehlawī never shrank from calling him 'al Imām'; short of which he believed himself as if to have committed a crime.

4. John A. Sobhan, *Sufism—its Saints and Shrines*, Lucknow, India, 1938, p. 41... Earliest writers are found confounded whether Hazrat Makhduum Jahānīān Jahān-Gasht was widely known through the visit of Hazrat Nasīr al-Dīn Mahmūd Rawshan Chirāg; even John Sobhan casually remarked that Rawshan Chirāg, too, has become famous and illustrious at the same time having come-in-contact with Makhduum Jahānīān. Khalique Ahmed Nizāmī in a passing reference wonders to what extent both the cases are reciprocal-supplementary and complimentary.
5. Sheikh Álā al-Haq was the son of Sheikh Asad of Lahore. He was the disciple of Sheikh Akhī Sirāj Āaina-i-Hind. Sheikh Akhī, when he received order from his Pīr-o-Murshid Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn Awliā, to go to Bengal, represented that he was no match for Álā al-Haq. Nizām al-Dīn Awliā replied that Álā would in time become his (Sheikh Akhī’s) pupil. Álā al-Haq is said to have taken the title of Ganj-i-Nabāt (store of refined sugar). Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn Awliā took exception to this title, because he thought the title was taken to place himself (Álā al-Haq) at par with his (Nizām al-Dīn Awliā’s) teacher Hazrat Sheikh Farīd al-Dīn Masʿūd who took the title of Ganj-i-Shakar (store of sugar). So, Nizām al-Dīn Awliā cursed Álā al-Haq, ‘May God strike him dumb’ Álā al-Haq could free himself from the curse only after he became the humble pupil of Sheikh Akhī. Sheikh Akhī Sirāj used to travel on horse-back; the pupil Álā al-Haq followed him with a hot pot on his head so that he could provide his teacher with hot food on demand. As a result, Álā al-Haq became bald.


6. The self-same verse has been quoted in almost all life-sketches, beginning to end ‘Latāif-i-Ashrafi’, in particular that happens to be the earliest traceable biographical write-up found in currency; ‘Latāif’ by Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn Yemenī, Nusrat al-Matabe, Delhi, 1295 A.H. / 1878. This chronicle seemingly petty, is of enormous significance; the author Nizām al-Dīn Yemenī happens to be the disciple of the Sheikh. As a matter of Fact, the same write-up remained in manuscript from for long till it was published in 1878. It is further worth-mentioning here that Mr Abu Ahmad Ashrafi (Gaus-i-ʿĀlam
Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.A.), Ashraf Jahāngīr Academy, Ctg, 1996, p. 54) identified the author Nizām al-Dīn Garīb Yemenī to have belonged to the ascetic fold in 750 A.H. / 1347 and obtained 58 years of holy association under the Sheikh Simnānī; hence this description merits evidential significance as a potential document.


8. Regarding ‘Alqāb’ i.e. ‘Titles’ very many interpretations and implications are in currency. Since long past with and without it, the ‘Sheikhs’ are held to be the architect of Kawāni-i-Dunyā. Accordingly, they are found to allocate specific and particular authorities to the Supreme Commands as Gaus, Qutb, Awtād and Abdāl etc. Likewise, among these titles ‘JAHANGIR’ pronounced in favour of Hazrat Ashraf Simnānī that has been put-on-record for the first time involving uncommon and unusual significance thereof. Dr. Jilani dwelling upon the title in detail referred to the concise and specific meaning thereof. ‘Jahāngīr’ means overpowering check and maintenance of thing. It is to be noted that in his devotion during the Lailat al-Barāt, Hazrat Ashraf Simnānī passed no time without auspicious Services till the house all around was heard vibrated and reverberated with the self-same word ‘Jahāngīr’. Henceforward the title continued to be awarded and rewarded for the reserving subsequence; while Shāh Jahāngīr I happens to be the next. Dr. Saiyid Mohammad Ashraf Jilani, Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī Ki ‘Ilmī, Dīnī aur Ruhānī Khidmat ka Tahqīqat Jaizah, A Ph.D. Thesis, University of Karachi, Pakistan, 2003, pp. 80-82.; Bankey Behari, Sufis Mystics and Yogis of India, 3rd Ed., Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1991, pp. 17-27.; Jalāl al-Dīn Ābd al-Rahmān Al-Suyūṭī, Al-Khabr al-Dall alā Wujūd al-Qutb wa al-Awtād wa al-Abdāl, Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, Lebanon, 1418 A.H., pp. 1-4.; Āllāmah Shams al-Dīn Ābd al-Rahmān Al-Sakhavi, Nazm al-Laāl fi Hadith al-Qutb wa al-Awtād wa al-Abdāl, Lucknow, India, n.d., pp. 17-24.


15. It may be remembered that Állámah Yúsuf Nibhání in his work titled *Jâmé Karâmât al-Awliá‘* reported that on certain occasion Imâm Yafeî (R.A.) while attending on the Rawdah Mubarak of Hazrat Saiyiduna Rasúl Maqbul (peace be upon him) there was a response from thereof directing him to earn blessings of Ten Awliás—five alive and five dead of Yemen—and uttered the name of Sheikh Abul Gais to start with (ایوب الخیت غدا اهل من لا اهل له). It is said that the verse was acquired as stated above—that means—“In the forthcoming days Abul Gais shall be preceptor of all those who do not have the preceptor”. It will not be irrelevant here to mention that this Sheikh Abul Gais in his early age had been a professional robber. Sometime, it so happened that he was lying in wait of the gang of travellers (فائله). Incidentally he heard from within, “Thou art waiting for a gang and Somebody-else is waiting on Thee”. Instantly, he was alerted giving up the evil ways and turned to asceticism. (Nibhání, *Jâmé Karâmât al-Awliá‘*, vol. 2, Al-Maktabat al-Siqáfiyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1991, p. 251.


20. *Ibid*, p. 34. Thereby the entire family was renowned for scholarship far and near; to the same family belonged the learned and illustrious Sheikh, Hazrat Ábd al-Quddâs Gangûhî, the last-link to the entire Chistîah Nizâmiah Quddûsiah and Chistîah Sâbirîah


22. Ibid, p. 35.


32. Ibid, p. 38; Saiyid Sabah al-Dīn Ābd al-Rahmān, Bazm-i-Sūfīah, p. 524.


35. Hazrat Jalal al-Dīn Rumi (1207-73 C.E.), who lived in Afghanistan, Persia and Turkey in the thirteenth century, is one of the leading exponents of Sufism, the mystical movement within Islam. A religious scholar, preacher, teacher and Sufi leader, on whose teachings the Mevlevi Sufi order of Whirling Dervishes was founded, he produced a vast outpouring of poetry, prose and letters. His most famous work, the Mathnawī, a narrative poem of 25,000 verses in six volumes, is widely considered to be the greatest spiritual masterpiece ever written. In fact, Rumi, one of the most celebrated mystics of all time, turned to poetry in order to convey his deep spiritual experiences. His language is that of love and it speaks to us today as it did 700 years ago, surpassing the confines of time and culture.


37. Ibid, p. 41.

38. Hāfīz, whose given name was Shams al-Dīn Mohammad (c. 1320-1389), is the most beloved poet of Persia. Born in Shiraz, he lived at about the same time as Chaucer in England and about one hundred years after Rumi. He spent nearly all his life in Shiraz,
where he became a famous Sufi master. When he died he was thought to have written an estimated 5,000 poems, of which 500 to 700 have survived. His Divan (collected poems) is a classic in the literature of Sufism. The work of Hafiz became known to the West largely through the efforts of Goethe, whose enthusiasm rubbed off on Ralph Waldo Emerson, who translated Hafiz in the nineteenth century. Hafiz’s poems were also admired by such diverse writers as Nietzsche, Pushkin, Turgenev, Carlyle and García Lorca; ever Sherlock Holmes quotes Hafiz in one of the stories by Arthur Conan Doyle. In 1923, Hazrat Inayat Khan, the Indian teacher often credited with bringing Sufism to the West, proclaimed that “the words of Hafiz have won every heart that listens.” More than any other Persian poet, it is perhaps Hafiz who accesses the mystical, healing dimensions of poetry. Because his poems were often ecstatic love songs from God to his beloved world, many have called Hafiz the ‘Tongue of the Invisible.’ For an account of his life and times... A.J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature*, Ruskin House, London, 1938, pp. 17-24; Paul Smith, *Hafiz, Tongue of the Hidden: Poems from the Divan*, New Humanity Books, Melbourne, 1986; Claude K. Streit, *Hafiz, Tongue of the Hidden*, Viking, New York, 1928.


47. Shāh Mubin Ahmad Farūqī Radawlavic, *Shakhsīyat wa Strat-i-Hazrat Makhdūm al-Mulk Shāh Ábd al-Haq Sāheb-i-Tawshah (R.A.)*, Radawlī, Barabunkī, India, 1973, p. 63... The learned author points out that Qāḍī Shihāb al-Dīn Dawlathābādī was known as


Section-B

Certain Meeting Points between Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr and Hazrat Shāh Jahāngīr of Mīrzākhil Darbār Sharīf

An account of ‘meeting-points’ between the two Harbingers belonging to certain Tarīqahs, is of great importance and implication for Socio-Cultural exploration of any subject matter on point of socio-logical consideration.

Self-same unity in the title of both (Shāh Jahāngīr)

The covetous title, ‘SHĀH JAHĀNGĪR’, meaning all pervading authority and control all over the Universe, is said to have been bestowed upon a number of perfect disciples by their illustrious Sheikhs. It may be mentioned, in this connection, that Sultānul Mashāikh Mahbūb-i-Ilāhī Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn Awliā (R.) (d. 725 A.H. / 1325) happens to be the First to avail that;1 of course, Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.) too was renowned with the same title that won him the universal name and fame on account of that.2 Almost more than half a millennium afterwards Shāh Jahāngīr Hazrat Moulānā Muklesur Rahmān (Sheikhul ‘Arifin R.A.) was also awarded the same ‘title’ which was a most celebrated I for the Sheikh who prized it utmost as a glaring attainment in the Way of Allāh.3

It is noteworthy and glaring fact that all three stalwarts belonged solely to Chisṭīah Silsilah in as much as their pathway (Tarīqah) flourished unlike the rest, all-over Hindustān with the pre-dominant spirit of ‘Ilm (knowledge) and M’arifat (Spiritualism).
It is concurrently narrated that on the 10th Muharram, 1266 A.H., corresponding to 26th Nov., 1849 C.E., on a fine morning *Hazrat Shāh Jahāngîr Sheikhul 'Ārefîn* disclosed the Award being bestowed upon him in the state of surpassing contentment and resplendent state of his mind and soul.⁴

Needless to say, on this point it earned an ‘Occasion of Celebrity’. As a matter of fact, with the same title both the sages being blessed made a ‘meeting-point’ in the achievements of their holy souls. Here in a researching student finds the common points in the two; wherein lies the ‘research-paradigm’ of the ‘Binding-Cord’ for the Duet appeared in the Surname of our pursuit.— ‘Hazrat Ashraf ‘Jahāngîr’ Simnānî (R.A.) and his odd-encounters in Sultanāt-i-Bangalâh : Mîrzâkhil Darbâr Sharîf – a case study’.

The most important phenomenon lies in the concurrence and convergence of the Ways i.e. ‘Tariqahs’ more than one to which both of them find linkages in multiple ways. Hazrat Simnānî (R.A.) (d. 832 A.H. / 1428) belonged to *Chistīah Tariqah* through his Sheikh ‘Ālā al-Hoque *Ganj-i-Nabāt* (d. 800 A.H. / 1398) in the main, that ended upward up to *Sultānul Hind* Khwājah Muʿīn al-Dīn Chistī (R.A.) (d. 633 A.H. / 1236 C.E.) via Hazrat Akhī Sirāj (d. 758 A.H. / 1357).⁵ At the same time, he had been gifted with *Suhbat* and *Ijazah* from Hazrat Makhdūm Jahāniān Jahān-Gasht (d. 785 A.H. / 1384) Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī (R.A), reputed to be the illustrious Sheikh of *Qādirīah-Silsilah*.⁶
Incidentally, Sheikhul 'Arefin Moulana Mukhlesur Rahmān Shāh Jahāngīr I (d. 1302 A.H. / 1885) is connected through his preceptor Sheikhul 'Ālam Shāh Saiyid Emdād Ālī (R.A) (d. 1304 A.H. / 1887) up to Sultān al-Hind Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chistī via-Hazrat Khwājah Khidr Rūmī (d. 750 A.H. / 1349) and renowned to be the Chistīah Sheikh as such. His connection, however, with Hazrat Saiyiduna Gaus Pak Ābd al-Qādir Jilānī (d. 561 A.H. / 1166) is cognizable through Sheikhus-Shuyukh Shihāb al-Dīn Sahrowardī (d. 632 A.H. / 1235) via-Saiyid Mubarak Gajnāvī (R.A). This, well, proves the union of both into Chistīah Tariqah and Qādirīah Tariqah as well.

Moreover, his relation with Firdawsiah Tariqah through Sultān al-Muhaqqeqīn Sheikh Sharf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Man‘erī (d. 782 A.H. / 1381 C.E.) and the famous Naqshbandiah Tariqah through Sartāj-i-Āgrah Hazrat Saiyidena Mīr Abul Úlā (d. 1061 A.H. / 1651 C.E.—the Founder of Abul Úlāyah Tariqah) is found to be poignant with ever-more significance leading to their conjunction within the Naqshbandiah Order. This very phenomenon of ‘Linkages’ of the Individual Sheikh into multiple orders—Qādirīah, Chistīah, Naqshbandiah and Firdawsiah etc, is to be found in vogue in the said linkages discernible at the outset along with the same occurrences.

In the same tradition, yet more illustrious successor emerged in the holy person of Hazrat Fakhrul ‘Ārefīn Shāh Allāmah Ābdul Ḥai, Shāh Jahāngīr II (d. 1339 A.H. / 1921 C.E.), his credentials in terms of Career and Calibre beggar description.
The Moulâna got installed to succeed his father in 1904 while he had been put to wait since 1885. Initially, he is linked up with Hazrat Saiyiduna Gaus Pak Ābd al-Qādir Jîlânî (R.A) through his son Hazrat Ābd al-Razzâque (d. 603 A.H.) via-the great sage Hazrat Ābd al-Razzâque Ferungîmahallî (d. 1307 A.H. / 1890), author of innumerable illustrious books. As it had happened that at a certain time a galaxy of scholars gathered together at Ferungîmahal; while Hazrat Ābd al-Razzâque Ferungîmahallî was spiritually connected with Hazrat Ābd al-Razzâque son of Hazrat Ābd al-Qādir Jîlânî (R.A.) via Hazrat Ābd al-Wâli Ferungîmahallî (d. 1279 A.H. / 1862), the Sheikh of Allâmah Ābdul Ḩai Ferungîmahallî (R.A.) (d. 1304 A.H. / 1887 C.E.) also. At the same time, Shâh Jahângîr II Moulâna Ābdul Ḩai, as a tutor of Shams al-‘Ulamâ Ābd al-Baqî Ferungîmahallî and Shams al-‘Ulamâ Ābd al-Hamîd Ferungîmahallî became close to Hazrat Ābd al-Razzâque Ferungîmahallî being blessed with ‘Baiât and Ijâzah’. Thus, owning the Qâdiria Silsilah again in this way Shâh Jahângîr II performed holy pilgrimage in the year 1310 A.H. / 1893 C.E. and chanced to attend on Hazrat Hajî Emdâdullâh Muhâjîr Makkî (R.A.) (d. 1317 A.H. / 1899) as his pupil for Mathnawî Sharîf, while he had attended on Moulâna Rashid Ahmad Gangûhî in Gangûh beforehand.

Incidentally, Shâh Jahângîr II expressed his extreme desire to be connected with Silsilah-i-Nizâmiah Quddûsiah and Silsilah-i-Sâbirîah Quddûsiah, which the Sheikh (Hazrat Hajî Emdâdullâh Muhâjîr Makkî (R.A.) readily bestowed on him at the same time.

Apart from ‘the meeting points’ i.e. linkages ascribed to and stated above, some certain peripharel incidents going together are worthy of consideration in this respect.
A noble link-up and unity from a novel incident

*Sheikh al-Islām* Hakīm Saiyid Sikandar Shāh, by profession he was a noted physician (Hakīm), the keen student of celebrated *Hāziq al-Mulk* Hakīm Ajmal Khān (1868-1928), resident of Kanpur spiritually attained superb development, who had been the constant participant and attended the Mīrẓākhīl Darbār Sharīf as an when occasions provided him with the opportunity. To him went the credit of compiling the incident thereof in the name of *Sirat-i-Jahāngīrī* (published-1919) leading to his illustrious work *Sirat-i-Fakhru'l-Ārefīn*¹³ (published 1934) covering a period of about 107 years chiefly under the dictation of Shāh Jahāngīr II. As a matter of fact, his narration with direct conversation and ‘hearsay’ from those who had survived up-to his time, making his work as one of the up-to-date records available for modern researches based on data put-on-record.

Needless to say, the writer as an ‘eye-witness’, made his narration a contemporary evidence scientifically wrought-up to receive universal acceptance (*Qabūliyat*). To follow a particular narration, one incident deserves revaluation here. It is said that¹⁴ Moulānā Ghulām Muzher (1875-1927 C.E.), an established lawyer joined Shāh Jahāngīr II as a disciple. In 1898, Shāh Jahāngīr II, was occasioned to have stayed for thirteen days at Banaras in a place near Purānī Ādālat (Old Court). Then Moulānā Ghulām Muzher informed of the advent of the Sheikh, become some what curious and indeed dreamt that a Great saint with a sword at hand beaconing him and charged him as to why he did not go to attend the Darbār of that famous sage staying at the 2nd story lying close to his. He instantly excused himself that he had been chained ‘head to foot’. Thereupon, the Shiekh seemed to have moved the sword and asked him to attend without bar; at this Ghulām Muzher Shāh rushed towards him and got himself enrolled within his
discipleship. This busy man engrossed in his multiple assignments almost forgot every thing; it was so occasioned that his wife (Bibi Safiyah) fell seriously ill. Moulana Muzher in utter helplessness found no way out. At length, his wife pitied upon him and asked him to remember the incident of his joining an illustrious Sheikh coming from Chattgām to sue for Allah’s mercy through him. At this Muzhar Shah recollected the incident of long-past and instantly set for Chittagong in 1919. Incidentally, at Mīrzkhal there was the 35th Urs Sharīf of Hazrat Shāh Jahāngīr I (i.e. 12th Zilkad, 1337 A.H.). As it happened, Shāh Jahāngīr II facing the huge populace thronged before him pointed Muzhar Shāh out of the lot and urged him to narrate the past ‘Dream’ that had led him to be here this day. Hazrat Shāh Jahāngīr II added, “The man with a sword you saw was none else than Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.A.) who spiritually wanted you to join the Tarīqah of a sage in order to get you transferred from a Tariqah up to a new one.”

Verily this incident makes noble union through a novel ‘way-out’ between which there lies ‘Nisbat’ which is exclusive into definite and particular traits and characteristics. It denoted, ipsofacto in spirit, yet another ‘link-up’ between the two (Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.) and Hazrat Sheikhul ‘Arefin Shāh Jahāngīr I).

With reference to the holy dream stated in detail, it has come to light that as Moulana Abdul Hai Shāh Jahāngīr II, addressed Nanne Miā(n) i.e. Moulana Ghulām Muzher Shāh, “After eighteen years you turned up here and in reality your shackles in chain (being cut clear off) are no longer—the holy souls you saw in dream there had been among others that celebrated saint Hazrat Makhdūm Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.A.), on whom you attended earlier as a disciple. He himself got the shackles clear off and pave
the way for you to catch hold of the cord and thus got you transferred back into the same line as if through the ‘Joint-venture’ i.e. the ‘Binding Cord’ of the same Tariqah. This very statement is self-explanatory to the ‘meeting point’ as we find it to be as such.

Apart from that the self same pronouncement of Shāh Jahāngīr II, himself is a positive indicator of our view. Shāh Jahāngīr II added further, “My spiritual father (Sheikhul ‘Ārefīn Hazrat Mukhlesur Rahmān) was spiritually bestowed with the title ‘Jahāngīr’ in as much as Hazrat Simnānī (R.) too had been gifted with the coveted title ‘Jahāngīr’. In the title of both the sages there lies the self-same unity. This is the remarkable characteristic in particular (Khusūsiyat-i-Khās).”

This very novel incident point out in his (Shāh Jahāngīr II) own word that a great savant gifted with high-culture of multiple languages and lofty status, Deputy Faizūllāh Khan (d.-1919 C.E.) very recently had passed away making a great vacuum in the ‘Darbār’ for which the Sheikh (Shāh Jahāngīr II) had been in utter anguish ever since. The learned Shiekh made welcome appreciation of Nanne Meah (Moulānā Ghulām Muzher Shāh) to be brought into the fold after long 18 years as a ‘Marked Substitute’ (نرم البلد) for the loss beforehand. The Sheikh said, “Hence the august transfer from the previous to the present”. So, Hazrat Fakhrul ‘Ārefīn urged him to visit ‘Kachwacha Sharīf’, the Mazār of Hazrat Simnānī (R.A.) on his way back—where upon Sheikh Ghulām Muzher visited ‘Kachwacha Sharīf’ accordingly and stated that this time he experienced spiritual amity in acumen of unprecedented divinely bliss that erased certain persisting confusion leading to the meaningfulness of the divinely gifted title of the holy souls.
In response Moulānā Ghulām Muzher, Nanne Meah composed a pretty long poetry of which a particular couplet depicts heart-rendering homage.¹⁸

فيضان لطف شاه جهانگیر کیا که ہوئے ہمین انکے جادہ ایمہ مالا مجھے
صدقہ میں انکے جاده ایمن ملا مجھے
آنکھوں سے جلکے چوم در شیخ العارفین مہ
اجس در پہ حق سے نور کا خرمش ملا مجھے

What is to be said about the overflow of the graces of Hazrat Shāh Jahāngīr! Through his bounty I got my mainstay blessed and secure. Go ahead and kiss through eyes the doorsteps of Sheikhul 'Ārefīn from which noble pathway the lighted attire (تال) I have been gifted with”.

This incident seemingly impractical was out and out a spiritual phenomenon that occurred and Shāh Jahāngīr II readily actuated it in to-to. This sort of occurrence made extra-ordinary influence of practical Union through a poignant Transfer which adequately points to the meaningful linkages and reciprocal relationship of ‘head and heart’ that made both the Tariqahs almost one and the same.

One thing is noticeable here that Hazrat Makhdūm Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.) had been active all along and did not fail to by-pass the potentiality of incumbent ‘JAHĀNGĪR’ to whose discipleship he was instrumental after more than half a millennium to add his own disciple to a Tariqah belonging to Shāh Jahāngīr I; whereas, the case was seldom found that the ‘Transfer’ occurred otherwise making the Jahāngīri Tariqah ending into the same crucible of Spiritualism towards a happy union.
It is also noticeable that both Hazrat Simnānī and Shah Jahāngīr of Mīrzākhil Darbār Sharīf despite, their deep devotion and ascetic assignments, undertook to various and veritable intellectual exercises as the prolific authors of scholastic and monumental works with terminal veracity.  

Along with all that hewed up to the formation of illustrious Linkage is to be considered in terms of ‘pedegree’ and geneology that bound up in direct and positive connections between the two, emerged as a predominant line-up of the paternal associations making both of the singular stock and staff one and the same inflow of the ‘Ahl-i-Bait’, the harbinger of spiritual heritage in Islam that made itself all the more accurate and approving phenomenon of holy linkages in between.

We can, well, state rather than assert the fact that Hazrat Ashraf Simnānī (R.) happens to be the 20\textsuperscript{th} progeny of Ahl-i-Bait vide Ismā’īl Aāraj while Hazrat Shāh Jahāngīr Sheikhuł Ārefīn, the founder of Mīrzākhil Darbār Sharīf is the 30\textsuperscript{th} progeny of the one and the same vide Hazrat Imām Mūsā Kāzim (A.) both meeting in the self-same entity of Hazrat Imām Jāfar Sādiq (A.).
References:


4. Ibid., p. 9.

5. See Appendix- A.


7. We have described this connection in Appendix-B under Silsilah-i-‘Āliyah Chishtiyah Qalandariah Jahāngīrīah.

8. We have described this connection in Appendix-B under Silsilah-i-‘Āliyah Qādirīah Sahrowārdiāh Jahāngīrīah.

9. We have described this connection in Appendix-B under Silsilah-i-‘Āliyah Firdawsiyāh Jahāngīrīah.

10. We have described this connection in Appendix-B under Silsilah-i-‘Āliyah Naqshbandiāh Abul Úlāyiah Jahāngīrīah.
11. We have described this connection in Appendix-B under *Silsilah-i-‘Āliyah Qādirīyah Razzāqīyah Jahāngīrīyah*.

12. We have described these two connections in Appendix-B under *Silsilah-i-‘Āliyah Nizāmīyah Quddūsīyah Jahāngīrīyah* and *Silsilah-i-‘Āliyah Sābirīyah Quddūsīyah Jahāngīrīyah*.

13. A typical Narrative of minute details with numerous sources *i.e.* mostly living persons through whom he reached the ‘dead-past’ by constant Questions and Hearsays.


17. *Ibid.*, p. 89; Incidentally, this researcher has been blessed with the *Ziarah* of Moulānā Shāh Ghulām Muzher in Banaras during his visit to the holy shrines of the illustrious Sūfīs of India in 2009.


19. We have mentioned earlier in this dissertation *vide* Chapter no. 1&2 some works of Hazrat Makhdūm Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī of Kachawcha Sharīf and Shāh Jahāngīr I & Shāh Jahāngīr II of Mīrzākhil Darbār Sharīf.

20. Towards establishment of linkages, this put-forward made the last never the least link is to be taken for granted as a sound and solid ‘datum’ that referred to the ‘Sādāt’ in Bengal which was widely copied by the earliest chroniclers ranging from Ibn al-Jawzi upto Ferungīmahallī Schools that found varied acceptance for the subsequent writers whom innumerable authors of the Darbār duly followed in different write-ups based on perfect narration acceptable to all.


21. We have described this linkage in Appendix-C&D.
Section- C
The ‘Odd Encounters’ of Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.A.) in Sultanat-i-Bangālah

From now on, we have to busy ourselves with the ‘Odd Encounters’ that befell the struggle of Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī I and his Associates in spiritual enterprises rather than the Political Encounters in which his consummate endeavour achieved glorious results of square significance which were rarely expected out of that unorganized and unarmed community of ascetic fraternity—pure and simple.

There are very few parallel historical events—these ‘Odd Encounters’ were considered much more than ‘Interference’ in the annals of the History of Bengal.

Unlike the encounters hitherto occurred between the contenders and spirants for the throne leading to the change of Rulers (from Muslim to Non-Muslim) was few and far between—this happens to be the glaring exception in the ascendance of Raja Ganesha on the Muslim Dynastic rule in Bengal—like of which did never occur throughout the Muslim rule in Hindustān.\(^1\) Needless to say, this very event made extraordinary tumult and uproar all over the Muslim-dom wherein the Sultan of Jaunpur, Ibrāhīm Sharqī’s involvement through the entreaties of Sūfī fold headed by Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī, Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam and the like.\(^2\)
It is quite in perfect order to devote our pursuit for the rise of the family of Kāns (Ganesha). Prof. Mohar Álī analyzed the total perspective of the rise of Ganesha with a particular reference to his encounter with Ibrāhīm Sharqī in his latest explications which emerged as a grand book of volumes.

Part- I

RĀJĀ KĀNS AND JALĀL AL-DĪN MOHAMMAD SHĀH—

1. Usurpation by Rājā Kāns and his sad end.

The usurpation of power by Rājā Kāns is the most intriguing episode in the history of Muslim Bengal. The origin and background of his rise to power in the Ilyās Shāhī court at Fīrūzabād (Pandua) is not definitely known; though it may be assumed that his rise in general was due to the policy of the Ilyās Shāhī rulers in entrusting Hindus with positions of responsibility and trust----- a policy against which some of the ‘Ulamā’ had of course uttered timely warnings. The contemporary Arab historians Ibn Hajar al-’Asqālanī and Al-Sakhāwī refer to the incident, but they do not give us any detail, concentrating as they do their attention more particularly on the conversion of Kāns’s son to Islam and the latter’s succession to the Sultānat of Bengal under the name of Jalāl al-Dīn Mohammad Shāh. The information supplied by the later Delhi historians like Nizām al-Dīn Ahmad Bakhshī, Abū al-Faḍl and Firishta, is sketchy and incidental, and is also faulty in respect of chronology and facts. The only detailed information about the episode is supplied by Ghulām Husain Salīm in his Riyād al-Sālatīn (written about 1788 A.C.) and by Dr. Hamilton Buchanan, who compiled his account about 1810 on the basis of a manuscript history found at Pandua. Based on local traditions and facts preserved in the families of some Sheikhs who were contemporary with the Rājā, these two accounts are more reliable that the rather careless and casual notices in the Delhi chronicles. Moreover these
two accounts are corroborated in their essential features by the contemporary Arab historians mentioned above. On the basis of these two sets of accounts we may obtain a tolerably clear idea about the episode.

The Riyād al-Salātīn calls Kāns the “Rājā of Bhāturiā”. This territory has not yet been clearly identified. Blochmann thought it to be somewhere lying to the east of Malda. All the authorities, however, name the usurper as “Kāns”, the Arab historians calling him “Kas” or “Fandu”. It was E.V. Westmacott, an English civil servant at Dinajpur in the early seventies of the nineteenth century, who first suggested that “Kāns” should be read “Ganesh”, who was most probably a Rājā of “Dynwaj” or Dinajpur. Subsequent writers accepted this suggestion and began to use the revised name “Ganesh” instead of Kāns, one of them even holding that the Rājā’s name was carelessly written in the Persian manuscripts “with Kāf instead of Gāf”, and that no Hindu could “name his son Kansa, the tyrant who tried to murder the god Krishna”. It is, however, a little strange that all the contemporary or near-contemporary historians should have been uniformly careless in writing the name, particularly when the sound of the Sanskrit or Bengali letter Ga could be easily represented, phonetic subtelities apart, by the Arabic letter Ghain or the Persian letters Ghain and Gāf. Moreover, the assumption that “Kāns” stands for ‘Kansa’, the tyrant of the Hindu mythology, is purely imaginary. If the historians meant the name to be Kansa, they would have added an alif with the last letter sīn (كَانْسَا), as is the general practice in writing such names in Arabic and Persian. Hence the suggestion of Col. Dalton that the name “Kāns” stands for “Kons” or “Konch”, the “same as Koch (Koch Bihar)” seems more plausible. “Koch is often pronounced with a nasal twang”, rightly points out Blochmann, “as if it were spelt Köns.” Kuch Bihar lies to the north-east of Rangpur and at that time bordered the Sultanat of Bengal. It is not unlikely that a chieftain of
Kuch origin was offered to the position of a noble for some consideration at the Ilyās Shāhī court. Clearly the expression ‘Rājā Kāns’ appears to be a popular or surname, rather than the full and original name of usurper, and it is obviously more reasonable to use the name as written by all the historians than to attribute a general carelessness on the part of all of them.

The rise of Rājā Kāns has to be understood against the background of the overall political situation in the subcontinent at that time. The Ilyās Shāhī Sultānat came into being more or less as a sequel to the troubles and rebellions that beset the later years of Mohammad Tughlaq’s reign. In order to resist the attempt of the next Tughlaq Sultān, Firūz Shāh Tuglaq, to recover Bengal, Ilyās Shāh and his son Sikandar Shāh had perforce to make local recruits and rally the support of local Hindu Chiefs. It is significant that Baranī speaks about “mouldy looking Bengali Rājāhs” in the army of Ilyās Shāh when he unsuccessfully met Firūz Shāh Tughlaq’s army in Bihar. This dependence upon local recruits might explain the appointment of Rājā Kāns, and probably some other nobles, at the Ilyās Shāhī court. The seemingly unexpected good relationship which both Ilyās Shāh and Sikandar Shāh cultivated with the Tughlaq Sultān even after his clearly unsuccessful campaigns in Bengal rather suggests that the Bengal Sultāns were not quite unaware of the inherent danger of their policy of dependence upon Hindu elements. Secondly, the break-up of the Tughlaq Sultānat at the time and the rise of a number of succession Sultānats, of which the Ilyās Shāhī Sultānat itself was one, left the Muslims divided and weakened throughout the subcontinent. And the disintegration and isolation of the Muslims were complete when, shortly after Firūz Shāh Tughlaq’s death, Timur Lane sacked Delhi in 1398 A.C. Rājā Kāns, who was undoubtedly an intelligent and ambitious person, did not fail to keep an eye on the course of developments. Particularly the rise of the Hindu Kingdom of Vijaynagar on
the ruins of the Tughlaq authority in the South about this time must not have escaped Rājā Kāns’s attention who seems have been actuated by a similar desire to supplant Muslim rule in Bengal too.

The rise of the Rājā was thus neither an unintelligible nor an unconnected event. As indicated above, he came to prominence in the Illiyās Shāhī court towards the close of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Aʿẓam Shāh’s reign. Whether the latter was murdered by Kāns, as related by the Riyād, or died peacefully, the murder of his able minister Khān-i-Jahān Yahyā shortly after the Sultan’s death in 814 / 1411-12 brought Kāns in the forefront of the struggle for power. During the short reign of Saif al-Dīn Hamza Shāh it assumed a more acute form. The Rājā either removed Hamza Shāh from the throne and killed him, or concentrated power in his hand by completely relegating the prince into the background. This led Shihāb al-Dīn, a mawla of Hamza Shāh, to oppose the Rājā. For a time Shihāb succeeded in overpowering and confining the Rājā, and in taking power in his hand under the name of Sultan Shihāb al-Dīn Bāyazīd Shāh. Ultimately, however, the Rājā gained the upper hand, overthrew and killed Shihāb in 817/1414, and “openly ascended the throne after crushing the Islamic party in the state” and also killing, most probably, Bāyazīd’s son ‘Alāʾ al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh, who kept up the resistance to Rājā Kāns’s usurpation for sometime, as is evidenced by his coins issued from Muʿazzamabad and Sātgāon in 817. The struggle thus lasted for at least four years, from 814 to 817, in the course of which the minister Khān-i-Jāhān Yahyā, Sultan Saif al-Dīn Hamza Shāh, the latter’s slave and Sultan Shihāb al-Dīn Bāyāzīd Shāh, and his son, prince ‘Alāʾ al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh, besides presumably others, fell bloody victims to the machinations of the Rājā.
Coming to the throne as he did for the purpose of supplanting Muslim rule, Rājā Kāns followed a systematic policy of elimination and persecution upon the Muslims, particularly those who mattered in public affairs. “Oppression and bloodshed followed;” writes the Riyād, “he tried to kill all Muslims, and had many learned men murdered.” It is related that Sheikh Badr al-Islām and his son Faid al-Islām, who refused to pay homage to the Rājā, were summoned at court and on their persistence in refusing to acknowledge his supremacy, were executed. The same day a boat-load of learned men were also drowned to death at the orders of the Rājā. He also destroyed many mosques. The subsequent developments, as narrated by both the Riyād and Hamilton Buchanon are as follows. The persecution and oppression of the Rājā at last drove the Muslims to rally round Sheikh Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam, the leading Sheikh in Bengal at the time. The latter then addressed an appeal to the Jaunpur Sultān, Ibrāhīm, detailing the plight of the Muslims in Bengal and imploring him to come to their rescue. Accordingly the latter marched with his army into Bengal and pitched his tent at Sarāī Fīruzpūr. Unable to resist the Jaunpur forces, and seeing no other way out of the crisis, Rājā Kāns submitted to Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam and begged him to intercede with the Jaunpur Sultān. The Sheikh consented to do so if only the Rājā embraced Islam. The latter at first agreed to do so, but being misled by his wife, offered his son, Jadu, to be converted and placed on the throne. The Sheikh then converted Jadu to Islam, gave him the name Jalāl al-Dīn Mohammad, placed him on the throne and then persuaded the Jaunpur Sultān to withdraw from Bengal. After the latter’s withdrawal, however, Rājā Kāns confined his son, and in order to reinstate him into Hinduism, “made several hollow cows of gold, threw Jalāl into the mouth of one, and pulled him out behind; the gold was then distributed among the Brahmans. He hoped that the boy would thus return to his old faith. But as Jalāl had been converted to Islam by a Sheikh like Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam, he remained faithful to his new
belief and the talk of the infidels made no impression upon him”. Rājā Kāns now again commenced to persecute the Muslims. His persecution reached the climax when he arrested Nūr Qutb al-ʻĀlam’s son Sheikh Anwār, and his brother’s son Sheikh Zahid, both of whom were banished to Sunargaon. After some time Sheikh Anwār was executed at the Rājā’s orders. That very day, however, Rājā Kāns was overthrown and killed by his son Jalāl al-Dīn who then succeeded to the throne.

The outlines of the episode thus given in the Riyād and Buchanan’s account agree well with the numismatic evidence that has come to light and with the account of the contemporary Arab historians. Coins of Jalāl al-Dīn Mohammad dated 818 and 821 to 823 have been discovered, with gap for the years 819 and 820; whereas some coins with Bengali characters and issued by “Danuj Mardan Dev” and “Mahendra Dev” with the Saka dates 1339 and 1340, corresponding to 820 and 821 A.H., have been discovered. On these coins “Danuj Marden” and “Mahendra” describe themselves as “devoted to the feet of Chandī” (Hindu goddess Kālī). It has been reasonably suggested that “Danuj Marden Dev” is the name which Rājā Kāns assumed after capturing the throne16 and that “Mahendra” was most probably a younger son of Rājā Kāns.17 Now, several points emerge clearly from these coins.

First, Jalāl al-Dīn’s coins dated 818 clearly prove that his conversion and assumption of the royal privilege of issuing coins took place in that year at the latest, that is only a few months after the usurpation of power by Kāns. Obviously the latter could not continue for long in his ill-gotten power in the first instance and that within a short time events took such a turn that he had to step down and allow his son to embrace Islam and issue coins in his new name of Jalāl al-Dīn. Nothing short of physical force
and a real threat of annihilation could have compelled the ambitious Rājā to accept this position. Hence the story of Sheikh Nūr Qutb al-ʻĀlam’s intervention and the advance of the Jaunpur army upon Bengal cannot but be true. Secondly, the gap in Jalāl al-Dīn’s coinage for the years 819 and 820, coupled with the existence of Danuj Marden Dev’s coins of 820 confirm the account of the Riyād and of Buchanan that after the departure of the Jaunpur forces Rājā Kāns betrayed his pledge, placed Jalāl al-Dīn under restraint, probably trying to readmit him into Hinduism by performing some prescribed rites, and began himself to exercise royal power by issuing coins in his newly assumed name of “Danuj Mardan Dev”. Thirdly, the fact he did away with the Hijrī era and Arabic character, used the Saka era, and assumed the “highly significant”\(^{18}\) title of “Danuj Mardan Dev” and one “Devoted to the feet of Chandaī”, the Hindu goddess of bloody vengeance upon all her opponents, tend only to emphasize the correctness of the Riyād’s statement that the Rājā was bent upon banishing Islam and the Muslims and in carrying out a systematic persecution upon them. Lastly, the reappearance of Jalāl al-Dīn’s coinage from the year 821 shows that reaction against Kāns’s oppressive rule developed within a couple of years and that he was definitely overthrown in 821. Obviously the Muslims rallied round Jalāl al-Dīn, who was steadfast in his faith and who led the revolution against his father and recaptured the throne after putting him to death. That the Rājā was violently overthrown and killed is not only stated by the Riyād, but also by the contemporary Arab historian Ibn Hajar al-ʻAsqalānī who specifically states that Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammed revolted against his father and killed him.\(^{19}\) That the transition was anything but peaceful is also suggested by the coins of “Mahendra” of the Saka year 1340 (821 H.). According to Stapleton and others, Mahendra was a younger son of Rājā Kāns who was set up as a rival king by Hindu ministers but who, before long, had to give way to Jalāl al-Dīn.\(^{20}\)
Thus Rājā Kāns’s attempt to supplant Muslim rule was frustrated. Considering the time and circumstances in which he acted, he was definitely a bold and adventurous person and his persecutory role was not also unnatural. Some modern Hindu scholars have, however, attempted to offer apologies for the Rājā. The foremost of these is the late Sir Jadunath Sarkar’s “modern reconstruction of the history of Ganesh”, as he calls it.\textsuperscript{21} It is avowedly based on his “historical imagination”, because, according to him the Riyād and Hamilton Buchanan’s account were not reliable and because he thought “no inscription of Ganesh or Jalāl al-Dīn.... Nor any fifteenth century writing about them” were forthcoming. The existence of the contemporary Arab historians’ accounts on the subject and the discovery of at least two Inscriptions of Jalāl al-Dīn\textsuperscript{22} should at once render Sarkar’s interpretation obsolete. Yet some of his inconsistencies and the way in which he has in effect accepted and then distorted the facts supplied by the Riyād and Hamilton Buchanan may be noted. Sarkar imagines that by virtue of his “ability and experience” and his personal infantry “Ganesh naturally became the de facto ruler of the state” when Ghiyāth al-Dīn A`zam Shāh left “only raw youths for his successors”. This, says Sarkar, “naturally set up against” the Rājā “the mothers of the other princes and the disappointed nobles who followed the fortunes of the latter. Plots against Ganesh and attempts to stir up civil war resulted and the Ḫīber Sultān may have been lured into rising against his regent..... At the very last, Ganesh, (now an old man), assumed the crown himself in 817 A.H..”\textsuperscript{23} It should be at once pointed out that the usurpation by Kāns was undoubtedly due to the inefficiency of Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s successors and the division and disunity among the Muslim nobility, besides the overall political situation in the subcontinent indicated above, and that Kāns might even have drawn some Muslim nobles to his faction; but the suggestion that “naturally” became the de facto ruler simply because of the weakness of the princes and that he was rather an unwilling occupant of the
throne in consequence of plots and risings against his “natural” position of de facto ruler and “regent” is obviously far too much of an apology for him. All the extant sources rather show clearly that he came to occupy the position which he did by clever machinations resulting in a series of murders. If Kāns became the de facto ruler after Ghiyāth al-Dīn A’zam Shāh’s death, it was by. No means without calculated moves on Kāns’s part. Secondly, Sarkar characterizes the accounts of the Riyād al-Salātīn and of the Pandua manuscript which Hamilton Buchanan used as “pious frauds”. Yet Sarkar accepts directly or indirectly all the essential facts in these two sources and then distorts them in his own way. Thus he accepts the fact of Sheikh Nur Qutb al-‘Ālam’s invitation to the Jaunpur Sultān but then casts doubt on the latter’s having come in person and then hastenes to add that “that does not necessarily mean that no general of the Jaunpur kingdom led an army into Bengal.” Having said so Sarkar ingenuously suggests that the “Jaunpur force went back, probably for a money consideration and certainly on the promise that Ganesh would convert his son Jadusen to Islam and make him Sultān of Bengal in his own place.” Now, whether the Jaunpur Sultān did personally come or sent an army under a general is not that important as is the fact that the Jaunpur intervention was brought about by Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam’s appeal. That being the position, it is not understandable why that army should have withdrawn without having made a satisfactory settlement of the question which had necessitated their coming here. Sarkar does not indicate any source wherefrom he got the hint of Kāns’s having recourse to bribery in order to ward off the danger. In fact, Sarkar projects this imagination of his in order to lend support to his another imaginary point that Jalāl al-Dīn (Jadusen) embraced Islam after Kāns’s death. In this connection Sarkar twists the vague expression of Fīrishta, which has long been regarded as faulty on this subject. Yet Sarkar accepts the Riyād’s story about the purificatory ceremony for readmitting Jalāl al-Dīn into the fold of Hinduism and then
adds: "we may be quite sure that the backward Hindu society of those early days refused to accept *sudhi* (reconversion to Hinduism) however richly gilt." Clearly Sarkar here fails to see his own inconsistency; for the question of the purificatory ceremony does not arise unless Kāns’s son had embraced Islam as condition precedent for the withdrawal of the Jaunpur forces. That Jalāl al-Dīn (Jadusen) embraced Islam at the latest by 818 is proved by his coins of that date which, according to Sarkar’s own admission is much prior to Kāns’s death. But then Sarkar presents his skillfully woven inconsistency to his readers in order to press his next imaginary point that "Kāns died in old age, not murdered by his son Jalāl al-Dīn as piously imagined by Ghulām Husain Salīm on the ‘gossip of some’ (*ba qaul-i-bāze*) and that Jalāl al-Dīn went over to the Muslim society because he was not accepted by the Hindus." As pointed out above, Ghulām Husain’s statement in this regard has for its solid support the categorical statement of the contemporary historian Ibn Hajār al-‘Asqalānī who unequivocally mentions that Jalāl al-Dīn revolted against his father and killed him. Sarkar’s rendering of Ghulām Husain’s phrase "*ba qaul-i-bāze*” is palpably tendentious; its plain meaning is not “gossip of some”, but “according to another statement” which, as it is now clear, has reference either to the contemporary account noted above, or to some other work based on it. Obviously it was not Ghulām Husain Salīm who indulged in “pious imagination”, but rather Sarkar who piously imagines a peaceful death for Rājā Kāns. In fact Sarkar accepts directly or indirectly all the material facts supplied by Ghulām Husain Salīm, such as Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam’s appeal to the Jaunpur sultān, the latter’s march upon Bengal, Rājā Kāns’s submission to the demand of the *Sheikh*, conversion of Kāns’s son to Islam, the story of the purificatory ceremony, etc., but Sarkar distorts each item of these facts with his imagination in order to bring home, as it appears, his main thesis that the Rājā was popular with the Muslims and did not persecute them. Yet, it is only against the
background of the Rājā’s persecutory role that these facts become intelligible. As already pointed out, it was only natural on the Rājā’s part to turn against the Muslims. The very legend “devoted to the feet of Chandī” inscribed on his coins is an eloquent testimony to the spirit of his regime. The contemporary historian Al-Sakhāwī categorically states that Jalāl al-Dīn repaired and renewed the mosques destroyed or harmed by his father, thereby indicating that his father destroyed mosques. Sarkar indeed falls back on Firishta’s indirect remark about the Rājā’s alleged popularity with the Muslims but ultimately admits indirectly that the Rājā did persecute the ‘Ulamā’. Sarkar concludes his laboured apology for Kāns thus: “The charge against him of having vowed to extirpate the Ulamā and Sheikhs which we find only in the monkish legends of Pandua and Malda, clearly sprang from his attempt to reduce the overgrown and unruly Muslim monastic orders to obedience and to squeeze out of them a portion of vast treasures they had accumulated by beguiling Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn ‘Āzam Shāh in his old age and taking leases of the administration of districts (like Satgaon). Their position was exactly parallel to that of the Buddhist monks to whom the Emperor Asoka gave away all his state treasures in his dotage”. In this Sarkar in effect admits the truth of Ghulām Husain’s statement about Kāns’s persecution of the ‘Ulamā’, particularly his execution of Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam’s son Sheikh Anwār for his alleged knowledge about hidden treasures at Sunārgāon. In doing so, however, Sarkar makes a very miserable attempt to kill two birds, the Buddhist monks and the Muslim Sheikhs, at one throw. Whether Ašoka did actually give away all his treasures to the Buddhist monks is a moot question, but Sarkar’s innuendo against the Muslim Sheikhs is utterly unwarranted. The Sheikhs of whom we get information through various sources did not in any way form themselves into such institutions as the “monastic orders” of Medieval Europe, nor were they, by all accounts, such greedy wealth-seekers as Sarkar would have us believe. Be that as it
may, it is clear that even in his laboured and inconsistent apology Sarkar admits all the facts mentioned by the *Riyāḍ al-Salatīn* and the Pandua manuscript of Hamilton Buchanan though he arbitrarily characterizes them as "monkish legends" and "pious frauds".

To conclude, Rājā Kāns was no innocent and unwilling participant in the episode, nor was he a friend of the Muslims. Taking advantage of the position of influence in the Muslim court which Ilyās Shāhī liberalism had afforded him, he made a deliberate and vigorous effort to emulate the founders of the Vijayanagar kingdom in the south and to supplant Muslim rule in Bengal. He did not succeed, and had his nemesis at the hand of his own son who not only did away with him but also shattered his dream of consolidating a "Chandī-dom" by himself embracing Islam and furthering its cause in a way comparable only to the record of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Aʿzam Shāh. Whether Jalāl al-Dīn went over to the Muslim society because the so-called “backward” Hindus of the time did not receive him within their fold is nowhere on record; but the very fact that he succeeded in alliance with Islam and the Muslims goes to show that the Muslim elements in the country, the nobility and generality combined, constituted by that time the preponderating factor in the body politic as against the non-Muslims and others.

**Part II**

**JALĀL AL-DĪN ABŪ AL-MUZAFFAR MOHAMMAD SHĀH**

After conversion to Islam Rājā Kāns’s son ‘Jadu’ was given the “Mohammad” and was enthroned under the title “Jalāl al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn abū al-Muzaffar Mohammad Shāh al-Sultān.” As mentioned above, his earliest coin is dated 818/1415 on the obverse of which the above-mentioned title is recorded and on the reverse he is described as “Helper of Islam and
the Muslims.” On another variety of coin of the same date he is described as the “Helper of the Amīr al-Mu’minīn, and aid of Islam and the Muslims”. These expressions are significant in the context of the circumstances under which he came to the throne. These coins also establish indisputably, despite the different views of historians regarding the time and circumstances of his conversion, that he embraced Islam and was enthroned at least in that year, so that the usurpation of Kāns did not last in the first instance for more than about a year, the last coins of the preceding Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn, and of another prince named Fīrūz Shāh, being dated 817 / 1414. Jalāl al-Dīn’s effective rule began, however, from 821, after the final overthrow of Kāns and the pretender “Mahendra”, most probably a younger son of the latter. The intervening period from 819 to 820 witnessed Rājā Kāns’s second attempt to grab power. The triumph of Jalāl al-Dīn marked in fact the victory of the Islamic party. It also indicates that despite his capture of power Rājā Kāns could not carry the people with him and that the Muslim population in Bengal had by that time formed the decisive factor in moulding its political destiny.

Jalāl al-Dīn proclaimed aloud the principles of Islam in the state and himself adhered to the Hanafī madhab (school of Shari`at). He reconstructed and repaired the mosques and similar other buildings destroyed or mutilated by his father, and also erected new ones. Like Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn A`zam Shāh, he also sent money etc. to Makka, particularly in the year 832 / 1429, for distribution there and built an impressive madrasa in that holy city. These benevolent activities at Makka were only an extension of similar measures of the Sultān in Bengal. An inscription dated 5 Jamādī I 835 / 12 January, 1432 and found at Sultānganj in the Rajshahi district records the construction of a Jāmi ‘Mosque-cum-madrasa in that year by his governor of Sutia bearing the title of Malīk Sadr al-Millat. Sutia was an
important trade centre, described in the inscription as *Khās* territory (crown land), at the confluence of the Ganges and the Bhagirathi in the Murshidabad district.\(^{36}\) The Sultan also beautified the city of Pandua with many splendid structures and it flourished so much under him that, in the words of the *Riyād*, "it cannot be sufficiently described." About the year 822 H. he transferred the capital from Pandua to Gaud which city also he adorned with similar architectural monuments, particularly a mosque, a reservoir, the 'Jalālī tank' and a *Sarāi*.

For raising his status as an independent Muslim Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn established diplomatic relationship with the Timurid ruler Shāh Rukh of Herat and the Mamlūk ruler of Egypt, al-Ashraf Bārsbāy. In the Sultānganj inscription noted above Jalāl al-Dīn is found using both the titles of *Sultān* and *Amīr*. It may be mentioned that this latter title is not found on any of his coins. It has therefore been suggested that he used this title in order to placate the Timurid ruler who did not recognize the ‘Abbāsid Khalīfa of Egypt and who bore the title *Amīr*, “an intermediary step between Sultān and Amīr al-Mu’mīnīn.” Sometime after having established the *madrasa* at Makka Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn sent gifts and presents to al-Ashraf Bārsbāy of Egypt and asked for a letter of nomination from the Abbāsid Khalīfa there.\(^{38}\) This request was granted and a formal letter of nomination, together with a robe of honour was sent to him through two messengers named Muhmil and Bargūt in 833/1440. The Sultan put on this robe and sent a letter of acknowledgement, together with money-gifts for the Khalīfa and presents for the Sultan al-Ashraf Bārsbāy. Jalāl al-Dīn also used to send gifts regularly to an worthy ‘ālim of the time, Sheikh ‘Alā’al-Bukhārī who lived in Egypt and Damascus. After having received the letter of nomination from the Khalīfa, Jalāl al-Dīn issued a new coin in 834/1431 assuming the title of *Khalīfatullāh* for himself.\(^{39}\) This is very significant. It may be pointed out that because of the disintegration of
the ‘Abbasid Khilāfat some Muslim jurists of the time like Ibn Jama and Ibn Khaldūn had suggested that there could be delegation of Caliphal prerogatives and that there might have even two imāms at one and the same time if there was sufficient distance between the two to preclude any possibility of conflict of jurisdiction. It has been suggested that the Sultan of Bengal exploited this legal subtlety and assumed the title of Khalīfat Allah in order to outbid his contemporary Sultan of Jaunpur who merely assumed the title of Khalīfat Amīr al-Mu’minīn and inscribed the name of the ‘Abbasid Khalīfa on his coins. “It was undoubtedly a constitutional issue. It could not be solved without the support of the ‘Ulamā’ of Bengal.”

Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn had a peaceful reign of about two decades. From his coins and inscriptions it is clear that he exercised his authority over the entire territory inherited from Ghiyāth al-Dīn A’zam Shāh including eastern Bengal (Mu‘azzmabād) and Chittagong. It speaks much for his ability and sagacity that he could completely identify himself with the Muslims and win over the ‘Ulamā’ and Sheikhs with whose support and cooperation he not only raised his own status but also that of the Sultānat of Bengal in contemporary eyes. By establishing mosques and madrasas, and by his patronage of the ‘Ulamā and the Sheikhs at home and abroad, he truly carried on the traditions established by his predecessor Sultāns, notably Ghiyāth al-Dīn A‘zam Shāh. Though a convert, he did not at the same time exhibit any narrowness of vision, nor any unintelligent zeal against non Muslims. He even patronized persons of merit among the latter. It is no record that he patronized persons of merit among the latter. It is on record that he patronized a Hindu scholar named Brihasapati, bestowing presents and titles upon him, and also helped a number of Brahmans. Towards the close of his reign he nominated his son Ahmad as crown prince and allowed him to issue coins in his name. A silver coin of Ahmad dated 836 A.H. / 1432-1433 C.E.
has been discovered. On the basis of this coin and also on the basis of Jalāl al-Dīn’s hitherto discovered coins which only go up to the year 834 scholars have hitherto assumed that the Sultān died in 835 A.H. / 1431-32 C.E.. But this is not correct. One of Jalāl al-Dīn’s inscriptions is in fact dated Jamāḍī 1, 836 which shows that he was reigning at least up to that year. Moreover, both Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī and Al-Sakhāwī specifically mention that he died in Rabī’ ii, 837 and that he was succeeded in that year by his son Ahmad.
References:


2. It is mentionworthy that after the holy demise of Hazrat Álā al-Haque Manerī in the Succession-case Simnānī was destined to play determinant role in deciding the succession of Hazrat Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam *viz-a-viz* his brother Aāzam Khān, the noted vizir.


6. Ziauddin Desai (*op. cit.*, p. 201-202) reasonably supposes that the name “Fandu” might have been a confusion for Panuda.


10. *Ibid*.

11. That the isolation of the Bengal Sultanat from the centre of Muslim power was an important factor in Kāns’s calculation appears clearly by his prompt submission as soon as the Muslims succeeded in getting the help of the Jaunpur Sultān. See below.

13. H.B. II, p. 121. Dr. A.H. Dani tries to show, by an interpretation of the *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*’s expression استبلا باقه that Kāns did not in fact assume kingship ("The House of Rājā Ganesh in Bengal", *J.A.S.B.*, letters, vol. VIII, No. 2, p. 127, 135); but this view is not correct and is categorically contradicted by the contemporary Arabic sources and other historians.


22. See *infra*, pp. 161-162.


29. Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Dawu’ etc.*, vol. VIII, p. 280. His exact words are وجدت ما خزيه أبوه من المساجد ونموها.

31. According to Riyād al-Salātīn, his original name was Jadu. Fīrishta calls him “Jatmall” or “Jaimall”, the MSS differ.

32. J.A.S.B., 1873, p. 267, plate viii, no. 4.

Obverse: جلال الدنيا والدين أبو المظفر محمد شاه السلطان ناصر
Reverse: الإسلام والمسلمين خلال الله ملكه
Margin: ضرب هذه السكة... السنة

33. Ibid. The Arabic expression is:

ناصر أمير المؤمنين غوث الإسلام والمسلمين


35. Ibid. Also Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, op. cit. The latter writes: وأرسل إلى مكة بأموال يصدق بها سنة اثنتين وثلاثين.


38. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, Inbā’ etc. vol. II., p. 497. The text runs as follows: ثم أرسل هدية إلى مصر بعدها وطلب التقليد من الخليفة جهژ إليه مع رسوليده مهل وبرغوث في سنة ثلاث فصاعد جوابه سنة أربع وصحته مال للخليفة والسلطان هدية.

Al-Sakhjāwī (Al-Ḍawu’ etc., vol. VIII, p. 280) also writes: وأرسل الشرف برسواني صاحب مصر بهديه واستدعى العهد من الخليفة فجهز له مع تشريف على يد شريف فليس التشريف ثم أرسل للخليفة هدية وكانت هداياه متواصلة بالعلاج البخاري بمصر ودمشق.

Thus while Ibn Hajar al’Asqalānī used the words طلب التقليد al-Sakhāwī uses the expression طلب العهد, both meaning, however, a request for nomination as successor or deputy. The names of messengers are mentioned by the former as Muhmil and Bargūt, whereas the latter mentions that the robe and letter of nomination were sent by the hand of “Sharif”, which might mean the name of a person, or a title signifying connection with the prophet’s family.


41. M.A. Ghafur, *op. cit.*, p. 64.


Section-D
The role of Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.A.) to the rescue of the nascent Muslim rule in Bengal under Iliyās Shāhī Dynasty:

In the prevailing circumstances that the usurper Rājā Kāns having thus established himself as a monarch, he opened up ruthless atrocities and oppressions against the ruling elements under the Iliyās Shāhī Dynasty wherein great Ulamā and Sages became immediate target for the cruelties of Rājā Kāns so much so that people, at large, particularly Ulamā and Mashāikh at the helm of affairs, became the wholesale martyrs throughout the nook and corner of the country. Hazrat Nūr-Qutb al-ʿĀlam alarmed at the situation wrote down a letter to Ibrāhīm Sharqī, the Sultan of Jaunpur supplicating his endeavours to attack the usurper in rescue of the nascent Muslim rule under Iliyās Shāhī Dynasty. This event made extraordinary uproar that involved the attention of Hazrat Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.A.), an ascetic of supreme authority at that time. At this Ibrāhīm Sharqī approached Hazrat Simnānī (R.A.) regarding whatabout the situation in currency. Herefrom a great significance emerges out of the clarification which Ibrāhīm Sharqī wanted to explicate out of ‘Sheikh’s opinion’ in this regard.¹

Part-1
The Letter of Hazrat Nūr Qutb al-ʿĀlam to Ibrāhīm Sharqī

The letter written to Ibrāhīm Sharqī by Nūr Qutb al-ʿĀlam, the illustrious Sheikh depicts the whole affairs as such in a nutshell. In the letter, the Saint expresses his remorse at the ascendancy of infidels and the misfortunes that befell on the followers of Islam. The saint regrets at what
had taken place and asks everybody to pray to god. Although the saint does not mention the name of Ganesh (i.e. Rājā Ganesa); he writes very clearly about the oppression of the infidel over the Muslims. For example, he writes, “How strange is the affair and astonishing the time that in the river of God, the Unapproachable and unmovable a ruffle has come and thousands of doctors of religion and learned men and ascetics and devotees fell under the command of an infidel, a zaminder of 400 years.” Again he writes, Alas! Alas! O, how painful! with one gesture and freak of independence He caused the consumption of so many souls, the destruction of so many lives, and shedding of so much of bitter tears. Alas! woe to me, the sun of Islam has become obscured and the moon of religion has become eclipsed.”

**Part- II**

**The Letter of Hazrat Simnānī (R.A.) to Ibrāhīm Sharqī**

Prof. Karim in his *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal* quotes the letter written by Simnānī (R.A.) to Ibrāhīm Sharqī in to-to. The letter *interalia* stands out as such:-

“If the sons and descendants of these holy personages and particularly the son and family members of Hazrat Qutb ‘Ālam, 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 Dervish 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 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 Makhdūm you should not neglect showing favour to that dear holy personage and you should never refrain from meeting him and fighting for his cause”.

It may be recalled that Hazrat Simnānī (R.A.) was aware of Ibrāhīm Shāh Sharqī since long time; and met him a number of times beforehand. On the other hand, Ibrāhīm Shāh Sharqī, as well, was very respectful and fearful of his stature and ever-spreading name and fame in the East. Over and above, Nūr Qutb al-ʿĀlam and Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Aʿzam Shāh had been discipies of Kāzī Hamīd al-Dīn Nagorī who was perchance closely associated with Sheikh Ālā al-Haque Manerī to whom Sultān Ibrāhīm Sharqī too was very respectful in alliance and cross-alliances developed between them all.

It so happened that Ibrāhīm Shāh Sharqī along with top courtiers—‘thirty’ in number-attended the Darbār of the Sheikh Simnānī -- the scenario was amazing for all—Sultān supplicated the Sheikh for good wishes so that his forces already despatched to conquer the ‘Fort Zanada’ be successful. At this the Sheikh offered him a token of sanctity which he brought home and read himself, “What a Great Sayid, Ālī Janāb, Maqāsid Māb (purpose maker) that is available in this country!” The Sultān convinced of the victory, made it a celebrated occasion. Likewise, another narration relates that sometime within 3 days afterwards, the great Sultān alongwith his family-off-springs-big and small—turned up in the Darbār and urged for spiritual affiliation. Now the Sheikh unmindful of the applause and celebration uttered, “It is the Sultān to whom the congratulation evermore due.” In retort, the Sultān uttered, “Credit must be gone to the celebrated Sheikh who, in fact, materialized everything through me, the dormant destitute.”
Amidst the prevalent situation, the Iliyās Shāhī Kingdom already rendered fraudulent, utterly needs soccor from all around – where Sharqī Power in practice came out instantly. Though, there Rājā Kāns got himself established almost as a sovereign power and succeeded in his ruthless atrocities undoing the Muslim authority everywhere. Circumstances assumed and cropped up such a dimension that anything short of material might and mien can stand anyway- herein from an unseen quarter emerged a personality— Hazrat Makhdūm Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī and his comrade Hazrat Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam through their ‘Fraternity’ proved a Thunderbolt for the knaves and rogues under Rājā Kāns who sooner than usual tumbled down under the spiritual might of Simnānī and Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam as they happened to be yoked under the Sheikh ‘Alā al-Haque Manerī (R.A.) d.- (800 A.H. / 1398).

Hazrat Makhdūm Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.A.), the centurian spanning over almost two centuries of world-wide phenomenon as far as spiritualism in its unending expansion is concerned. His activities called to be the ‘prima-facie’ involved Continental tours across the minute far-off localities hitherto known in terms of frequent visitations of the holy souls; his was almost exceptional in terms of recurrences and frequencies. According to his biographers, the life of the Great Sheikh was full of events unbound. Consequently, the chroniclers were found pre-occupied with his ‘Sawāneh’ (life-sketch) in which his ‘Birth-date’ evaded astute attention making it almost confused and confounded. Accordingly, his ‘Death-date’ amidst multifarious cross-currencies of the history, sometime, prognosticated the similar confusion as they came up to the fore in the writings of different authors. Verily, in spite of assumed differences, his role and status asper his ‘Odd Encounters’ remain all the same.
References:

1. Ibrāhīm Sharqī gave extraordinary importance upon his opinion thinking that Hazrat Simnānī, a descendant of a Dynastic rule shall be a veritable person to advise in this crisis; as he himself has, to his credit, a sound administrative experience which he gave up without coercion whatsoever. It is to be noted that Sultān Ibrāhīm Sharqī deeply felt the importance of consultation with the emerging political tumult, as he thought, Sultān Ashraf Jahāngīr had the honorous experience of ruling Simnan for long and his abdication afterwards. In the present situation, his advice was found to be vital for Sharqī's advancement against the usurper; hence Ibrāhīm Sharqī particularly sought the Sheikh's opinion for his armed struggle against the mighty Iliyās Shāhī Kingdom found the usurper's hegemony and atrocity of all sorts. Needless to say, the Sultān of Simnan in his young age led the expedition against the Mongols and won victory.


3. Dr. Ábdul Karim, *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal*, (Down to A.D. 1538), Chittagong, 1985, pp. 30-31... The learned author opines that the following three letters of Mīr Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī throw light on Bengal:
   a. One letter to Sultān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jaunpur.
   b. One letter to Sheikh Nūr Qutb Alam.
   c. One letter to Sheikh Husain Zukkarposh.

These letters are very important as they refer to the political condition of Bengal during the interregnum of Rājā Ganesh and the resultant invasion of Bengal by Sultān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jaunpur. But the chief importance of the letters lies in the fact that they open before us the hitherto unknown chapter of the Muslim movement in Bengal, particularly the activities of the Sūfīs of various orders. Reports about the various cultural centres developed round the Khāṅqāḥ and Chillahkhānas of Bengal Sūfīs are also available in these letters.

Section- E

A critical study of the ‘Death-date’ of Hazrat Makhdūm Ashraf
Jahāngīr Simnānī (R.A.)

Spiritual functionaries of top order are hardly traceable here with so much working tempo and action oriented enthusiasm all along his long life he lived without a parallel, for more than a century. Having thus narrated certain events of far-reaching consequences we are now up to the point of his noble demise connected with spectacular instructions for the followers while his death-date is still, found shrouded in mystery, that needs to be ascertained; hence and here our research is apt to more at that end.

So far we studied, the profuse and manifold events we mentioned along his life-sketch are natural and circumstantial making him a historical personage quite apart from the ordinary biographies of the sages that found popular currency up to that time; hence ‘the death time’, according to Hosain Nasar, ‘far more important’ than ‘the birth-date’- as he explained, the death-date in question is consequence of his vast attainments, activities that made him a ‘Historical person’. It is on this point that we are prone to and careful for making a ‘critical study’ (Tahqīq) of his life-sketch, the ‘Death’ in particular.

Fortunately, we came by a priceless dissertation accomplished by Dr. Saiyid Mohammad Ashraf Jālānī for his Ph.D. thesis in the University of Karachi, Pakistan, in the year 2003 under the title of ‘Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī Kī ʻIlmī, Dīnī awr Rūḥānī Khidmat kā Tahqīqī Jāizah’ (حضورت سید اشرف جهانگیر سمنانی کی علمی، دینی اور روحانی خدمات کا تحقیقی جائزہ)
Unlike the very many of its kind, the author followed the latest Methodology as he reviewed, not uncritically the renowned works and widely-read books related to his life-bound literature; the learned research deserves to be copied in to-to.

As he says, "There is a difference of opinion in the 'birth-date' and 'death-date' of Hazrat Simnānī (R). Even 'Latāif-i-Ashrafī,' the fundamental work acknowledged by all, fails to mention the 'birth-date'. And certain Biographers put forward different views as to his birth and death dates are as follow:-


808 A.H. as 'death-year'.

(2) Shāh Wajh al-Dīn, *Bahr-i-Zakhkār*,

808 A.H. as 'death-year'.


Year of Birth-770 A.H. Year of Death- 871 A.H.


"He died in 28 Muharram, 808 A.H.. He lies buried in Kachwacha and it is the spot of common visitation"; as it is available in *Mahr-i-Jahāntāb*.


Year of Death 808 A.H. / 1405 C.E.
"But all these years of Death stated above, are never uniform and almost topsyturvy in character; and none of the chroniclers seemed to have undertaken required labour and adequate care for ascertaining of the dates, rather they copied the dates found in the previous ‘writes-up’; as a result, the ‘death-date’ 808 A.H. continued unabated until Saiyid Ashraf Wahid Kachawchawi proved it to be wrong by his work, ‘Hayat-i- Saiyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani’. Six years afterwards, Saiyid Ashraf wrote ‘Ashraf Simnani’ and got it first published in 1981 wherein he criticized some certain
evidences of Saiyid Ashraf Wahid and passed the way far further research, 
though he, too, falsified the date 808 A.H."

Dr. Mohammad Ashraf opines, “Except the two authors, none ever 
put their mind to the same problem. Therefore, I would, hereby, state the 
documents concerned and would make due discourse thereon.”

The chronicle, ‘Ashraf Simnānī’ states that,³ ‘Mir‘āt al-Asrār’ 
(author: ʿĀbd al-Rahmān Chistī) happens to be the first book recording 808 
A.H. as a death-date. It is based on a `Qīt`ah’.⁴

جُن سيد اشرف أن شاه جهانگير
در جان به سلك وصل حق سفت
خرد از بهر تاريخ وصالش
بوصل حق دهد جان منتهى گنت

“When Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr filled the life-pearl wreathed into 
the fold of God, in quest of the death-date, the wisdom indicated that for 
‘Eternal meet’ the life is ‘ending’ (متهي).”

Out of the word ‘Muntahā’ death-date is derived from ‘Abjad’– 
808 A.H..

Afterwards, in ‘Bahr-i-zakhkhār’⁵ the date was recorded 
accordingly as 808 A.H. (Bahr-i-Zakhktar was composed after Mir‘āt al-
Asrār).

It is known through ‘Ashraf Simnānī’, that the death-date 
808 A.H. was taken from ‘Mir‘āt al-Asrār’ recorded ‘first of all’ as it comes 
out from the text.
Next, ‘Bahr-i-zakhkhār’, ‘Khazīnāt al-Asfīā’ and all other books were composed afterwards. And the same ‘wrong-in-thought’ perpetrated and it was literally copied in to-to.

The books recorded 808 A.H. are countable to be about 10 (ten) in number. Apparently, it is considered to be true; but the studies (تحقيق) of Dr. Wahid Ashraf, too revealed it to be wrong. He points out to a person named Hushang Khan Ghori, King of Malwah, contained in a certain letter of ‘Maktūbāt-i-Ashraft’.  

The letter clearly denotes that it was addressed to him by the Sheikh on the occasions of his (Hushang’s) coronation ceremony (رسم تاج) in terms of wishing and blessings.

The letter containing the starting words that mean ‘the event’ is like someone ornamenting the throne, i.e. as good as the august occasion to be spread over all around centering the person of Hushang. May Allah save him—All these indicated lofty and grandiloquent bliss conferred upon the king.

According to ‘Tabqāt-i-Akbarī’, vol. 3, p. 289, Hushang captured Malwah in 809 A.H.. While ‘Firistah’ recorded the year of enthronement of the king to be the 808 A.H.. Another event as stated by Dr. Wahid Ashraf indicates that succeeding his father in 808 / 809 A.H. he was made captive by Muzaffar Shāh Gujrati and became free in 810 A.H. and afterwards he captured Mandu (the capital of Malwah) and celebrated the ‘enthronement ceremony’.
Eventually, *Firishtah’s* records denote against it as he writes, “After Delwar Khan his son Alph Khan ascended the throne with the name of Hushang and all the courtiers and principle organs of the kingdom took ‘Baiát’ on him promising the total submission. It was not much later that the new king was informed of the advent and encroachment of Muzaffar Shāh Gujrati. It is said that Hushang got his father Delwar Khan dead through poisoning and likelier news reached Muzaffar Shāh who was friendly with his father and called him brother (بیانی); hence he resolved for expedition against Hushang as a token of punishment for the crime. Accordingly Hushang got out of ‘Fort Dahār’ to face the invader. Both of them fought a sanguinary battle in 810 A.H. wherein Sultān Muzaffar won.

According to *Firishtah*, Sultān Hushang Khan and Sultān Muzaffar Shāh fought each other in 810 A.H.. Hushang was defeated and captivated. Dr. Wahid Ashraf deduced out of the event the year 810 A.H. to be the year of his freedom and opined that he was enthroned in 810 A.H. or sometime about it afterwards and Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī wrote to him the letter in the same year (810 A.H.). That means, as he thought, that the letter was written after 808 A.H. while he himself stated that Hushang’s father died in 808 and or in 809 A.H..

In view of it, Hushang won the throne in either 808 or in 809 A.H.. In the case of Delawar Khan’s death in 808 his son Hushang was likely to have succeeded him forthwith while he was face to face with emergent problems of ruling the state. In utter needs of new principles and solutions, the Sheikh Simnānī might have issued the letter of ‘guidelines’ on his demand as such; and the letter was written in 808 A.H.. In case, Delwar
Khan died in 809 A.H., it may be said that Hushang succeeded him in 809 A.H.. So, the letter was issued in 809 A.H..

In the same condition Dr. Wahid’s argument becomes strong as he thought that the Hazrat Simnānī survived after 808 A.H..

Now we are giving below the arguments of Dr. Wahid Ashraf in detail.  

Dr. Wahid extends the life of the Sheikh even after 825 A.H.. He narrates, through *Latāif-i-Ashrafi* and *Makhtūbat-i-Ashrafi* and refers to his travel at *Gulbargah* wherein the reference to Hazrat Gesū-Darāz was extant. Again, in a letter written to Hamīduddin it is mentioned that in the same travel the Sheikh and Gesū-Darāz made discourses on latter’s contribution and compositions.

It is further to be noticed that the first travel found both of them in mutual contact; whereas in the second travel there is no reference to Gesū-Darāz rather his grandsons Shāh Yadullāh and Shāh Safiullāh came in contact with the Sheikh.

Dr. Wahid Ashraf derives the fact out of it that:-

(a) The Sheikh’s first travel occurred in 804 A.H. as Gesū-Darāz traveled to *Gulbargah* in 804 A.H. and stayed there.

(b) When the Sheikh reached Gulbargah for the first time, Gesū-Darāz already wrote his *Kitāb ‘Sīrat al-Nabī’*, while the same book was written (as a matter of fact) in 810 A.H.. It denotes that the first travel of the Sheikh occurred in 810 A.H..

(c) In his second travel the Sheikh did not mention the name of Gesū-Darāz; in its place, he is said to have met his grandson Shāh Yadullāh and Shāh Safiullāh and the death of Hazrat Gesū-Darāz occurred in 825 A.H.
This indicates that the second travel of the Sheikh might have taken place after 825 A.H. / 1422 C.E.

Dr. Jilānī concluded out of the circumstances stated above whatever results Dr. Wahid Ashraf had made out of it are not worthy of acceptance."

"Because, there is nothing found as an evidence to support the fact that the Sheikh did not die in 808 A.H.. He wrote that the first travel of the Sheikh occurred after 804 A.H., because Saiyid Gesū-darāz reached Gulbargah from Delhi in the same year. Dr. Wahid Ashraf appears to have concluded from the premise— When the Sheikh made his first travel the date was to be after 804 A.H., naturally the second travel is to be after 808 A.H.. Consequently, he was alive even after 808 A.H.. We can not regard it as evidence; may be he has made first travel in 805 and the second in 807 A.H..

Therefore, 'the 1st conclusion (a)' and its results is not worthy of acceptance.

And 'the 2nd result (b)' is also not free from doubt. According to his narration in the first travel of the Sheikh, Hazrat Gesū-Darāz had already completed writing of book 'Sirat al-Nabi' and the book was written after 810 A.H.. As a result, it appears, as if he had traveled the first time to Gulbargah after 810 A.H.. It may be mentioned here that 'Hazrat Gesū-Darāz completed writing the book in 810 A.H., is left by Dr. Wahid Ashraf without any reference whatsoever.'

"Hence, it can hardly be said that the book-in-question was written in 810 A.H. it is possible that the same has been done beforehand. If any
document (positively) had been at our hand supporting the fact that the book had been written in 810 A.H. or afterwards we could conclude the survival of the Sheikh after 810 A.H. onwards.

In ‘the 3rd phase(c)’ Dr. Wahid Ashraf’s conclusion as to his missing the name of Hazrat Gesū-Darāz, too does not hold water as an argument. As the author basing his thought on missing of Gesū-Darāz in the same travel mentioned meeting Shāh Yadullāh and Shāh Sāfīullāh, which indicates again Hazrat Gesū-Darāz being dead in 825 A.H., the Sheikh survived in 825 A.H. and afterwards. It is never to be established that Gesū-Darāz died in 825 A.H. when the second travel of Sheikh Simnānī took place and the name of Gesū-Darāz was not mentioned therein—simply non-mentioning of the name of Gesū-Darāz never indicates that the Sheikh was dead. Because anybody’s absence (to be mentioned) is never the evidence of his death. It is evermore possible that during the Sheikh’s 2nd travel Gesū-Darāz might have gone away elsewhere; may be, he had been in the similar travel and all that. So, to conclude his (Gesū-Darāz’s death) out of it is never worthy of approval in historical estimate.”

So long we had been pre-occupied with the differences occurred as to his ‘Death-dates’. According to Husain Nasar, known to be a noted historical philosopher, difference of opinions -‘huge and hazy’- certainly provides scope for ‘longevity’ of life-span rather than ‘the shorter’ one; hence in the researching modes, we are bound to follow the conclusion of Dr. Shamim Ashraf that was based upon his sharp and shrewd analysis of the probable gaps traceable in the arguments of Dr. Wahid Ashraf.

According to him (Dr. Shamim), among all 75 letters of the Sheikh the letter no-45, in fact, was a response to the letter written by Nūr Qutb al-
Alam that had referred to the atrocities of the King Kans. So, connecting it with the date of Kans’s living cannot result in the fixation of the life-span of the Sheikh Simnānī.

“What prominently comes out as such, that the theory of Sheikh’s writing letters within 817 to 821 A.H. cannot stand valid for the particular letter numbered 45, denoted the fact otherwise—the Sheikh Simnānī wrote no letter at all whatsoever to Kāns.”

“Herein, the statement of Nizām al-Yamenī (qtd. in Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr by Dr. Saiyid Mohammad Ashraf) gives out the positive fact stated in the Latifah No. 56 vide (Latāīf-i-Ashrafi). The same stated that Saiyid Ābd al-Razzāque Nur al-‘Āīn lived 120 years. Explaining it in detail that he courted discipleship while he was 12 years and for 40 years he was pre-occupied with the ‘Rushd-wa-Hidāyat’ i.e. spiritual guidance and the rest of his life he set up to the service of the Sheikh Simnānī. It is a fact accepted by all that the Sheikh Nur al-‘Aīn died in 872 A.H. Now deducting 40 from 872 A.H., comes up 832 A.H. and it is in keeping with the natural estimate that Hazrat Simnānī lived up to 832 A.H. / 1428 making his life-span 120 years in total.

The life-time (Birth and Death) of a note-worthy saint of worldwide repute so great as Hazrat Ashraf Simnānī, is apt to be thronged in multifarious facts and facets; hence something different in nature is likely to emerge in this connection which none can afford to overlook. Making the discussion concerned, in length and breadth, the chroniclers fixed up the death-date of Hazrat Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam being 818 A.H. / 1415 C.E. round
which revolve many other connecting events that have got direct bearing upon and consonance into the same.

It is historically put on record that at the ‘death-bed’ of Hazrat Simnānī at Kachawcah people flocked there form all around where the name of Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam deserves particular mention. In utter anguish Hazrat Nūr Qutb al-‘Ālam noted the meritorious services of the Sheikh in Hindustāni Islam, nay, the entire Muslim Dom—“the world of Islam still demands and desires far-more longer stay of your good self”. At this, the Sheikh Simnānī humbly uttered, “My allotment of ‘Khidmat’ was perhaps fulfilled and the coming-time left for all of you which I cherished to be all the more blissful”.

These utterances prima-facie (as it appears) point to the almost closing hours of Simnānī’s life-time. Dr. Wahid Ashraf and Dr. Jilānī carried into effect details of data, available at hand, and undertook almost inhuman labour towards the similar target—moulding and remoulding all of them as if towards the lengthening of the life-span thereof up to 832 A.H. / 1428 C.E..

Over and above, both the illustrious authors happened to be the far-later in time-sequence who elaborately utilized the previous works found at hand; but they furnished no data at all towards any tendency whatsoever that might pinpoint to the lengthening of life-time any longer than 808 A.H. / 1405 C.E.17 far-from any ground betaking the date up to 832 A.H. / 1428. In ultimate analysis, the argument seems to be inadequate to stand firm to run along with the ‘passing-references’ available in ‘Tabaqāt-i-Akbari’ and ‘Tārīkh-i-Firishtah’ and the like.
It may be noted here that the event connected with Delawar Khan and his son Hushang Khan in terms of ‘Inheritance’ and ‘Coronation Ceremony’ etc needs to be wrought-up to fit in with the emerging chronology contributing to the expected date of Hazrat Ashraf Simnānī’s ® death-date—in plain historical methodology this sort of unending labour of events connected with particular epoch to be made extendable with a death-date of a historical personage as great as Simnānī, is to make the plain history over-loaded with things non-historical.
References:


9. Jam‘ul Akhtar Ashrafī, *Gaus-i-‘Ālam Hazrat Ashraf Jahāṅgīr Simnānī*, Ashraf Jahāṅgīr Academy, Chittagong, 1996, p. 43. The learned author, on the other hand, made them both (Simnānī and Gesū-Darāz) alive at the same time making discourse mutually.


11. Dr. Jilānī, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.


It may be remembered that Hazrat Sharf al-Dīn Ahmad bin Yaḥyā Maneri (R.A.) (d. 782 A.H. / 1381 C.E.) lived for 120 years, the same case was with Hazrat Bandah-Nawāz Gesū-Darāz (R.A.) (d. 825 A.H. / 1422) and Sharf al-Dīn Bu Ḍū Qalandar (d. 724 A.H. / 1324); even Ābd al-Razzāque Nūr al-ʿĀin lived for 120 years without doubt making the same event simultaneously for the same length of life that, in deed, was the case though shrouded in mystery, emerged as factual happening in as much as Allah willed.
