CHAPTER IV

SUFI SAINTS OF BENGAL DURING THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY
From the beginning of the thirteenth century up to the end of the fourteenth century A.D. Sufis from Northern India and other parts of the country began to flock to Bengal. During this century, a number of Sufi orders and sub-orders of Northern India were introduced into Bengal by the deputies of the Northern Indian Saints. Incessant influx of the Sufis and their continual missionary propaganda produced the expected result of popularizing Islam among the indigenous people who ultimately embraced it in large numbers. It is quite apparent that one of the causes of the overwhelming majority of Muslim population in East Bengal (Present Bangladesh) is this incessant Sufi propaganda among the masses.

Sufi Saints of the 14th century who propagated Islam in Bengal are given below:

SHAYKH AKHI SIRĀJU'D-DIN BADAYUNI

He was born at Badayun in Oudh. He had long connections

with Bengal as his mother used to live here. He was one of the famous Khalifahs of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya of Delhi. Akhi Siraj, in his boyhood came to Shaykh Nizam al-Din, who handed over to Fakhr al-Din Zarradi to teach. The teacher gave him the title of 'Uthman. He read Kafiyah, Mufussal, Quduri and Majma al Bahrayn under Mawlana Rukn al Din. When Akhi Siraju'd-Din completed his education, Nizam'u'd-Din Awliya conferred on him the Khiraqah-i-Khilafat or the cloak of spiritual succession and commissioned him to go to Bengal to preach Islam. After the death of his teacher in the year 1325 A.D. he came to Bengal and began preaching in Gaur and Pandwah and soon many Sultans of Gaur became his disciples. Shaykh 'Ala al Haqq was his chief disciple. Shamsu'd-Din Ilyas Shah (1339-1358) who was contemporary with Akhi Siraju'd-Din 'Ala'u'd-Din Ali Shah (1339-1345) too was his another contemporary.

1. Akhbar al-Akhyar, p.86; Memoirs, p.91
2. Ibid, p.86. Amir Khurd; Siyar al Awliya, Urdu translation of Ghulam Ahmad Khan, Muslim Press, Delhi, pp.287-88.
4. Ibid, p.87; Amir Khurd, op.cit. p.288
5. Ibid; Amir Khurd, op.cit. p.288
7. Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua, op.cit., p.91
8. Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal Blochmann (1873),p.52.
9. Akhbar al-Akhyar, pp.87; Amir Khurd, 143.
10. Riyadu's Salatin (Bibliotheca Indica) -Tr.Abdus-Salam
11. Ibid, pp.87-98.
Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya used to call him al-'ina-i-Hindustan (Mirror of India). It is said that he buried the robes that he received from his teacher, at a place in Gaur, and ordered his disciples to bury him near the grave of his robes. The Akhi Siraju-'d-Din died in Gaur, in A.H. 758/A.D. 1357. His tomb is lying at the north-west corner of the Sagar dighi in Gaur. The following inscriptions recording the erection of a gate way to his tomb have so far been discovered:

(a) Inscription of Sultan Ala al-Din Husayn Shah dated 916/A.D. 1510.
(b) Inscription of Sultan Nasir al-Din Nusrat Shah dated 931/A.D. 1524-25.

   (iii) Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal-Blochmann (1873), p.52.
The name of Badar Pir is associated with dargahs of various places. In Chittagong there is a dargah which go by different names 'Badar Alam'; 'Badar Muqam'; 'Badar Pir'; 'Badar Awliya'; 'Badar Shah' and 'Pir Badr'. His tomb lies to the Southern side of Bakhsh Bazar - a market situated at the middle of the town. His tomb is a place of veneration to all people Hindus, Muslims, native Christians and Buddhists. Traditionally the name of Badar Pir is associated with the spread of Islam in Chittagong.

There is a dargah of one Pir Badar al-Din in Hemtabad, Dinajpur district. According to tradition he came to preach Islam, while a certain Hindu King named Mahesa was ruling there. Being oppressed by the Hindu King, the Pir begged for help to Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Husayn Shah. The Sultan

1. Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers; Chittagong. For earliest reference to Badr 'Alam in Bengali literature see, Dawlat Wazir Bahram Khan; Laili Majnu edited by Ahmad Sharif, Bangla Academy, Dacca, 1957, p. 9
helped him; the result was the defeat of the Hindu King and the spread of Islam in the region. People locate the Hussain Shahi Takht (throne of Husayn Shah) and the place of Mahesa in the ruins not far from Hemtabad.¹

There are also two other tombs situated in Kalna, in the district of Burdwan, one of Majlis Sahib and other of Badar Sahib.² It is said that they were two brothers, who came to Bengal to preach Islam. Between the two tombs, which are a part by a mile, People offer them clay horses, fruits, sweets and flowers.³

Pir Badar al-Din has become a legendary figure in the imagination of the people. The sailors of East Bengal take the name of Badar Pir even to-day when they apprehend any danger.⁴ Pir Badar al-Din is said to have arrived at Chittagong floating upon a stone slab.⁵ The local

Translation
"The sight of the city of Pathhabad (Fateyabad) fulfils the desire of one (who desires to look at it; it is better known as Chatigrama. In beauty it is like Amaravati and it is inhabited by many virtuous and honest men. It is near the sea (literally saline water on the bank of the river Karnaphuli. The city is heavenly. It is surrounded by hills and hillocks. Here in (lies) Shah Badr Alam."

¹. Bengal District Gazetteers: Dinajpur, 1912, p.20
⁴. Haq, Enamul; Muslim Bangala Sahitya, Pakistan Publications, Dacca, 1955, p.23; Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers; Chittagong, 1908, p.56
⁵. Ibid.
tradition is that Chittagong was at that time the abode of fairies and hobgoblins and no one could live there.

Pir Badar al-Din begged a space for his lamp. This was granted but when he lit it, its magic power was so great that the spirits were frightened away. In the local dialect the lamp is called Chati and people believe that the name Chatigrama took its origin from the lamp of Badr Pir. There is a hillock in Chittagong town called Chati pahar (hillock of lamp) where pir Badar lit his lamp. Candles are offered there by people, Hindus and Muslims and they are kept burning at night.¹

Dr. Enamul Haq 财报⁴ or the “Hill of the Fairies” was the seat of the Maghs (Fairies) of Arakan, who brought untold miseries on the inhabitants of Chittagong and sea-coast districts of Southern Bengal, not only by their piratical habit, but by many other inhuman practices such as the acts of kidnapping, incendiaryism, carrying away cattle, and complete devastation of paddy fields.²

² Haq, Enamul: 《HSB》, p.245
The earliest archaeological evidence of the administration of Chittagong by the Hindus is a copper plate discovered in Nasirabad and executed in 1243 A.D., by one of the Vaisnab Rajas, Deva by name.\(^1\) "This copper-plate shows that, during the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D., Chittagong was under the Hindu administration, yet it can-not be said with precision that inhabitants of Chittagong were safe from the rapacious hands of the Arakanese, under the Hindus. We definitely know that from the beginning of the Turki Conquest of Chittagong (first half of the fourteenth century) up to the middle of the Mughal period Chittagong was not throughly cleared off of the Maghs. So, we may fairly presume, that while Badr Pir came to Chittagong, the district was under Maghs and he came in collision with them and drove them away from the town?\(^2\)

The following four lines are found in connection with Badr Pir in one of the ballads of Eastern Bengal Ballads.

\(^1\) "Notes on the Chittagong Copper-Plate" J.A.S.B., Part-I. 1874.
\(^2\) Haq, Enamul: HSB, p.246.
Translation:

"I pay respects to all of the four directions and then make up my mind to address the audience. I bow before the eighty thousand Pirs, who are over my head. I declare my obedience to the eighty thousand Pirs and faith in nine lakhs of Prophets. I obey Pir Badr of Chittagong who is over my head."

The following description of the first conquest of Chittagong by a Muslim general Kadal Khan Ghazi was recorded. It runs thus:

Translation:

I repeatedly pay my honour with heart and soul to Kadal Khan Ghazi who is known to be the best man in the world.

In the fight with him, innumerable enemies fell, some of the drowned in the sea and some of them took shelter in the forest.

Thousands were killed by the order of the man (Kadal Khan), being victorious over the enemies, he subjugated Chittagong.

(After the defeat), the infidels assembled under a tree, he felled it and killed all of them.

One of his companions, broke the image of Chattesvari, and converted the people of the town of Chattogram to Islam.

After the victory while Kadal Khan Ghazi was returning to his camp (or house), he met with a number of Saints among whom Haji Khalil and Badar Alam were prominent. He took them with him and entertained them in his camp.

This incident has thus been described in the manuscripts:

1. Bengali M.S. dated Hijri 1055-1646 A.D.
"Accompanied by eleven companions, Kadal Khan Ghazi brought the two saint friends to his house (Among those eleven men, Haji Khalil was one). While Badr Alam saw Haji Khalil, he became very glad. (Badr received Haji Khalil) while other received others."

From the above description, it will be seen that Kadal Khan Ghazi was the first Muslim conqueror of Chittagong, and one of his friends broke the image of the Chitteswari and converted the whole population of the town to Islam. This man was Badr Alam.

The earliest archaeological remains of the Muhammadan period in Chittagong, are magnificent mosque at Hat-hazari, twelve miles north of Chittagong town and silver coin of Jalalu-'d-Din. The inscription attached to
the mosque records that it was built during the reign of Ruknu-'d-Din Barbak Shah (1459-1474)\(^1\) and a coin struck in the Chittagong Mint dates 1430 A.D.\(^2\) But from the history of Shihabu-'d-Din Talish, written in the last part of the seventeenth century, we came to know that Chittagong was first conquered in or about the year 1340 A.D., by the Muslims, during the reign of Fakru-'d-Din Mubarak Shah.\(^3\) This fact is supported by the records of Ibn-Batutah's travel to Bengal. He visited Chittagong during the cold weather of 1346-47 A.D. and he saw the port of Chittagong was under the government of Fakhru-'d-Din.\(^4\)

From the above discussion, we may say that Chittagong was first conquered by the Muslims in the year 1340 A.D. The expedition was led by Kadal Khan Ghazi who was probably

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the general of Fakhru-‘d-Din Mubarak Shah. We came to know that in Chittagong Kadal Khan Ghazi met Pir Badar Alam. We are therefore of the opinion that Pir Badar Alam was alive in the year 1340 A.D. and he was contemporary of Fakhru-‘d-Din Mubarak Shah.

Dr. Enamul Haq writes, "that Badr Shah was alive in the year 1340 A.D. is supported by another authentic proof and that is the discovery of an inscription preserved in the tomb of Muhsin Awliya. According to this inscription the Saint Muhsin died in 88 A.H. = 1397 A.D." Muhsin Awliya was one of the companions of Pir Badr. Hence it is not at all improbable that Muhsin Awliya died 57 years after Badr Shah.

Only a flimsy basis of boat-men's respect adoration for him, Mr. E.A. Gait (vide Bengal Census Report, 1901) advanced a whimsical theory that Pir Badr is identical with Khwajah Khidr, a mythical person of the Arabs.

1. Haq, Enamul: HSB, p.250
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
Dr. Wise identifies Badr Shah of Chittagong with one Badru-'d-Din Badr-i 'Alam of Bihar.¹ This Saint of Bihar died in 1440 A.D. and is said to have lived in Chittagong for some time.² On the authority of Dr. Wise and Blochmann, Shamsu-'l-Ulama Hidayt Husayn too identifies Pir Badar with the Saint of Bihar.³ Dr. Abdul Karim also identifies Badar Shah of Chittagong with Badru-'d-Din Badar-i-'Alam of Bihar.⁴ All they based their views on the similarity of names, but we cannot identify two men of different ages to be one. As the evidences, we have produced, provide us with sufficient grounds to reject their suppositions. Badaru-'d-Din- Badar-i- 'Alam may have visited Chittagong at a date much later than Pir Badar Alam.

Shihabu-'d-Din Talish, the Persian historian of Chittagong writes, - "On a height within the fort (this fort..."

¹ East Bengal District Gazetteers, Chittagong, 1908, p.56
² Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal - Blochmann, p.94.
is now not in existence, but the place where it was situated is now called "Andarkilla" or Inner Fort) is a tomb, known as the 'Astanah' of Pir Badr, the attendants of the shrine perform prayer and fast. The Magh infidels have settled some villages in 'waqf' on this tomb, they make pilgrimages to the holy deed and offer presents.¹

The death-anniversary of the Saint is still held on the 29th of Ramadan,² every year. When Pir Badar Ala died, we do not know. The tomb of Pir Badar was all along an object of veneration to all classes of people.³

**QATTAL PIR**

According to the local tradition, Qattal Pir came riding on a Katal or Katla fish with Badar Shah and hence he was called Katal Pir.⁴ As all the people are of unanimous opinion that the Saint was contemporary with Badar Shah, we can not reject it, unless other historical evidences go against it.

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¹ East Bengal District Gazetteers - Chittagong, 1908 p.176.
² Haq, Enamul, HSB, p.251
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid. p.252
He was one of the companions of Badar Shah who fought with the Maghs and perhaps he was a great fighter and hence was called "Qattal", in the deviated form "Katal", to mean "a brave warrior", in Arabic.¹

Kattalganj -Kattalganj is situated on the northern boundary of the Chittagong municipality where Katal Pir was first interred and named after whom. We do not know his real name nor we know when he died.

SHAYKH AL-HASHA'IKH MAKHDUM SHAYKH JALAL MUJARRAD BIN
MUHAMMAD OF SYLHET

The dargah of this great Saint is in the district of Sylhet. This Saint must be distinguished from Shaykh Jalal al-Din Tabrizi discussed before. In the "Travels of Ibn-Batutah" we find that the famous Traveller met with one great Saint Shaykh Jalal-’d-Din in the mountainous tracts of Kamru (Kamrupa)² which he went to visit from Sadkawan (Chittagon). He "once calls the Saint Tabrizi which shows that he was not sure, no proper distinction has been made between the two. On the evidence of inscriptions,

¹ HSB, p.252.
we are justified in talking of Shaykh Jalal al-Din Tabrizi on the one hand and Shaykh al-Mashaikh Makhdum Shaykh Jalal Mujarrad bin Muhammad on the other.\(^1\) This last Saint is said to be Kunayyi i.e. hailing from Kunya in modern Turkey in another inscription.\(^2\)

This epigraphical evidence is corroborated by the account of the saint given in Gulzar-i-Abrar of A.D. 1613, which is based on an earlier account of Shaykh 'Ali Sher's Sharh-i-Nuzhat al-Arwah.\(^3\) "He was a Turkistan born Bengali. He was a Khalifah of Sultan Sayyid Ahmed Yesvi. It is said that one day he represented to his bright souled Pir that his ambition was that just as with the guidance of the master he had achieved a certain amount of success in the Higher (Spiritual) Jihad, similarly with the help of his object fulfilling courage he should achieve the desire of his heart in the Lesser (material) Jihad, and wherever there may be a Dar-ul-Harb, in attempting its conquest he may

\(^{1}\) Memoirs, p.102, J.A.S.B. 1922, p.413, Plate IX, Dacca Review, August, 1913, p.154.


attain the high rank of a Ghazi or a Shahid. The revered pir accepted his request and sent 700 of his senior fortunate of his disciples (may they be honoured!) along with him. Wherever they had a fight with the enemies, they unfurled the banner of victory. Even more remarkable was the fact that in these far-flung campaigns they had no means of subsistence, except the booty, but they lived in splendour. Whenever any valley or cattle were acquired, they were entrusted to one of the accompanying saints and he was charged with the responsibility of propagation and teaching of Islam. In short, he (Shaikh Jalal'd-Din reached Sirhat (Sylhet), one of the areas of the province of Bengal, along with 313 person. Raja Gaur Govind who was the master of one lakh foot soldiers and many thousand horsemen, was the ruler of that place. He was very powerful as compared with this small group, which in comparison with his huge army was not even like Salt in bread. When, however, the battle was joined, the manifestation of the verse (With the grace of God the few attained victory over the many) became visible and the idolater took to flight, taking with him only his life to Hell. All the region fell into the hands of the conquerors of the spiritual and the material worlds. Shaikh Mujarrad, making a portion for everybody, made it their allowance and permitted them to get married. In that distribution the town fell to the share of Shaikh Nurul Huda Abul
Karamat Saidi Husaini. He became a house-holder, begot children and Shaikh Ali Sher, who was one of his descendants, has narrated this account in the introduction of his commentary on Nuzhatul Arwah. Mr. Ikram points out that "Shaikh Jalal was not a native of Yemen and did not belong Suhrawardi order. His Spiritual guide, Sayyid Ahmed Yesvi was an important Saint of the order of the Khwajas of Turkistan (which later developed into the Naqshbandi order) and finds prominent mention in Rashhat of Mulla Husain Wa'iz Kashifi. He was contemporary of Hadrat 'Azizan Khwaja 'Ali Ramtini, who died in 715 A.H. (1315-6 A.D.). Kashifi's account of Khwaja Ali Ramtini shows that he lived in a period of great confusion and disorder—presumably owing to the Mongol invasion—and Shaikh Jalal's urge for Jihad may very well have been a reaction against those conditions and Mongol aggression in Muslim lands."


From the account of Ibn-Batutah we are sure that the Saint to whom he met he was Shah Jalal of Sylhet. Ibn Batutah visited Bengal about the year 746 A.H. = 1345 A.D.¹ When in the next year, he went to China, he heard the news of Shah Jalal's death. So if there is any truth in the account of Ibn Batutah then Shah Jalal of Sylhet must have died in 1346 A.D.²

The above date of Shah Jalal's death is supported by other epigraphical records. Up till now three Arabic inscriptions have been discovered from the buildings around the tomb of Shah Jalal in Sylhet. The first one belongs to the reign of Abul-Muzaffar Yusuf Shah the son of Barbak Shah. It bears no date of execution and records no reference to the Saint Shah Jalal.³ Therefore it carries no weight for our present purpose. The second one was inscribed in the year 911 A.D. = 1505 A.D., during the reign of Husayn

2. Ibid., p.150
3. Contribution to the Geography and History of Bengal, Blockmann, (1873) p.69.
Shah (1493-1519). It records¹ that the building to which the inscription was attached, was erected by the order of the Saint Shaykh Jalal Mujarrad Kunyayi to one Khalis Khan the wazir of the district Mu'azzanabad.²

If according to the statement of Ibn-Batutah, Shah Jalal died in 1346 A.D., then how could he order in 1505 A.D. for the erection of the building recorded in the inscription? Surely this order was an order in dream like many others, we often hear of.³ Third inscription will clearly show that Shah Jalal was not alive to order for the erection of a building in 1505 A.D.

1. English translations:

In the name of God, the merciful and the element. He who ordered the erection of this blessed building attached to the house of benefit (Sylhet) —may God protect it against the ravages of time! Is the devotee, the high the great Shaykh Jalal Mujarrad Kanyayi (the hermit of Kaniya) —may God the Almighty Sanctify his dear secret! It was built during the reign of Sultan 'Ala'u-'d-Dunya wa-'d-Din Abu-l-Muzaffar Husayn Shah, the King, by the great Khan, the exalted Khaqan, Khalis Khan, Keeper of the wardrobe outside the places, commander and wazir of the district of Mu'azzanabad, in the year 911 A.H. =1505 A.D.

2. Contribution to the Geography and History of Bengal, Blochmann (1873) p. 85.

3. Haq, Enamul, HSB, p.223.
The translation of the third inscription runs thus:

"In honour of the greatness of Shaykh-u-'l-Mashaikh(?)
Mukhdum Shaykh Jalal Mujarrad son of Muhammad."

"This first conquest by Islam of the town "Arsah-i-
Srihat" was by the hand of Sikandar Khan Ghazi in the time
of Sultan Firuz Shah Dehlawi in the year 703 A.H. =1303
A.D."  

"This building (has been erected by) Rukn Khan, the
conqueror of Hasht Gamhariyan, who being 'wazir' and
general for many months at the time of the conquest of
Kamru Kamta, Jaznagar and Urisha, served in the army in
several places in the train of King(Written in the year
918 A.H. =1512 A.D."

"According to legend still preserved in Sylhet,
the district was wrested from Gaur Govinda, by King Shamsu'd-
Din" and according to "Suhal-i-Yaman", Sultan Sikandar
conquered Sylhet by the order of his maternal uncle
the Sultan of Gaur. Therefore, we are of the opinion that

2. Contribution to the Geography and History of Bengal-
Blochmann (1873) p.73.
Firuz Shah of the inscription was none but Shams-"d-Din
Firuz Shah, the Sultan of Gaur who reigned from 1302 A.D. to 1322 A.D. He was the grand-son of Sultan Ghaythu-"d-Din Balban of Delhi (1265-87) and hence he had been rightly designated in the inscription as "Dehlawi." Evidently, Sikandar Khan Ghazi of the inscription was the Sultan Sikandar of "Suhal-i-Yaman."^2

The above evidences prove that in the year 1303 A.D., Shah Jalal Mujarrad b. Muhammad Kunyayi was alive. The invasion of Sylhet was led by Sikandar Khan in conjunction with 360 darvish army of Shah Jalal. After the conquest of Sylhet, all Muslims excepting the Saint and a few of his followers, left the country and Shah Jalal preached Islam there for a long time. Ibn Batutah visited him 42 years (1345 A.D.) after the conquest of Sylhet and according to the traveller's testimony, the Saint died in 1346 A.D. Ibn Batutah attributes in his book several miracles to the Saint that he met. This darvish is largely responsible for

1. Haq, Enamul, HSB, p.224
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
The propagation of Islam in the Eastern part of Bengal and Western part of Assam.¹ The dargah of the Shaykh in Sylhet is daily visited by a large number of people even today.²

**SHAYKH RAJA BIYABANI**

He was a contemporary and a disciple of Sultan Shamsu-'d-Din Ilyas Shah (1342–1357).³ According to Riyad,⁴ Sultan Shams al-Din Ilyas Shah the founder of Ilyas Shahi dynasty in Bengal attended the funeral of this Saint in cognito, at a time when he was besieged in the Ikhdalah fort⁵ by Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq of Delhi (1351–1388). He was a Saint of great renown.

**MULLA 'ATA**

Mulla or Mawlana 'Ata is lying buried in Gangarampur in the district of Dinajpur.⁶ His dargah is a place of pilgrimage even today. Four inscriptions have so far been discovered from the tomb of this Saint.

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1. Haq, Enamul, HSB, p. 218
3. Haq, Enamul, HSB, p. 1777
4. Riyadu-'s-Salatin, op. cit., p. 97
6. SHOMB, p. 119, HSB, p. 180
From these inscriptions, it is clear that Mawlana 'Ata died in the reign of Sultan Sikandar Shah at the latest. But his dargah was an object of veneration throughout this whole period. Abdul Karim thinks, Mulla 'Ata may be grouped with the earlier Sufis and was probably a contemporary of Shahkh Akhi Siraj al-Din (died in 758/1357).  

HADRAT SHAH ANWAR QULI HALBI

At Mulla Simlla, 2 Phurphura, in the district of Hughli, there is a tomb of a certain Saint and old mosque. The real name of the Saint was Muhammad Kabir. 3 The word Halwi indicates that he came from Aleppo. 4 Tradition relates that a Bagdi King, ruled in the area who was defeated by the Saint and his companion Karam al-Din, but later on they were also killed by the enemy. 5

1. SH MB, p.120.
3. An account of this Saint may be obtained from:
   (a) Bengal District Gazetteers: Hughli, 1912, pp.302-3,
   (b) J.A.S.B., 1810, pp.291-92.
5. Ibid.
There are two stones beside his tomb are still existing, which have some sacred association with the Saint. The two stones contain two deep marks, said to have been made by the constant rubbing of the Saint's Knee on them at the time of shaving.\textsuperscript{1} The most important offering to this Saint is the looking-glass, because it is said that looking-glass was very dear to the Saint.\textsuperscript{2} Blochmann suggests that this was probably due to the fact that his birth-place was formerly famous in the East for its glass-wares.\textsuperscript{3} Architectural experts of Muslim Bengal are of the opinion that this mosque belongs to that group of Pathan mosques which were erected between the year 1460 A.D. to 1519 A.D.\textsuperscript{4}

But there is no inscription attached to the mosque to testify to the conclusion of the experts. However, an inscription on black basalt in Arabic Tughra characters is attached to the entrance of the dargah records the erection of a mosque by Ulugh Majlis Khan in 777/A.D. 1375

\textsuperscript{1} Haq, Enamul, \textit{HSB}, p.202


\textsuperscript{3} \textit{J.A.S.B.} 1870, p.292.

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{J.A.S.B.} 1910, pp.27-28.
in the reign of Sultan Sikandar Shah. The inscription was probably taken from a nearby mosque which is without any inscription. According to Dr. Enamul Haq, "this inscription was formerly attached to the mosque and afterwards removed to be fixed on the gate of the shrine which is of comparatively recent built. Very few mosque in Bengal were erected prior to the death of a Saint with whom they have got any connection. Hence, we can reasonably conclude that the Saint Shah Anwar Quli Halbi died before the year 1375 A.D."

**SHAH MUHSIN AWHIYA**

Dr. Enamul Haq says, "Pir Badr, Qattal Pir and Shah Muhsin Awliya first came to Gaur from Panipat. They did not like to live there and hence left the place for Dacca, where they stayed for a considerable period of time. From Dacca they started for Chittagong by water. They used three floating instruments viz., a plank of wood, a Katla fish, and a big block of stone. Muhsin Awliya used the last means of water transport. In course of due time, he

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reached the village of Jhiyari, settle there, and began to preach Islam among the Hindus.¹

The tomb of this Saint was in the village of Jhiyari in the jurisdiction of the thana Anwara. Afterwards, it had been removed to a neighbouring village called Bat-tali, where it is still found.²

Again Dr. Enamul Haq says, "The block of stone by which Muhsin Awliya is said to have come to Jhiyari floating, is now beside the Saint's tomb at Bat-tali. It is now much venerated by the illiterate Hindus and Muslims. Vivise Candles are generally burnt on this. When I first heard about this stone, it at once occurred to me that the stone might have been an inscription. But nobody assured me about its being an inscription except that old and venerable literate Mawlavi 'Abdul-Karim Sahityavisarad of Chittagong with whom I went to examine the stone last year (1931). After a good deal of difficulty, we succeeded to discover that it is a Persian inscription in Tughra.

¹ Haq, Enamul, HSB, p. 253.
character. It is now not in a good condition. Half of the writings has been rubbed out. We took three impressions of the inscription, tried to read it, but could not. Now with the help of Mr. Shamsu-'d-Din, an expert of the Indian Museum, we deciphered the following text of this inscription:

1st Line =
2nd Line = Unreadable
3rd Line = x x x x .. xxx

Translation: On the twentieth Shawal 'Abid and Mahjdhub

x x x 800 A.H. = 1397 A.D.

From this fragmentary inscription, it can be safely concluded that the Saint Muhsin Awliya died in 800 A.H. = 1397 A.D. ²

1. Dr. Enamul Haq says, "It is interesting to note here, that the inscription was written in Persian Language. We have not yet come across with any Persian inscription of so early a date as 800 A.H. From this point of view, the inscription is a very interesting and important one." See foot note No.1, HSB, p.255

The Saint had a daughter called Nirmal Bibi or Narmi Bibi and a nephew (brother's son) named Shah Sikander. He gave his daughter in marriage with his nephew before he left home for Bengal. But as he was not returning home for a long time, his daughter and son-in-law came to Bengal. Narmi Bibi and Sikandar never returned to their native land. They had a son called Shah Qutbu-‘Din, whose descendants are still living in Jhiyari.1

SAYYIDU-’L-’ARIFIN

Taymur Lang, the famous warrior and conqueror, sent the darvish Sayyidu-‘l ‘Arifin to Bengal for the propagation of Islam among the unbelievers.2

The tomb of this Saint is in the village of Kalisundi under the jurisdiction of police Station Bauphal in the district of Bakharganj.3 An annual fair is still held in Kalisundi to commemorate the death of the Saint in the Bengali month of Paus (December). Both Hindus and Muslims attend the fair and give votive offerings to the grave of the Saint for fulfilment of various desires.4

2. HSB, p.224.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
The Saint came to Bengal during the reign of Taymur Lang (1361 A.D. - 1405 A.D.). We therefore suggest that the Saint Sayyidul'Arifin might have come to Bengal in the latter part of the fourteenth century A.D.

SHAYKH 'ALA'U-D-DIN ALA U-L HAQQ (d. 1398 A.D.)

He was a great Sufi Saint of Bengal. His father was Umar b. As'ad Khalidi, an inhabitant of Lahore. He claimed to be a Qurayshi Hashimi and traced his descent from Khalid b. al-Walid. He was a spiritual disciple of Shaykh Akhi Siraj al-Din 'Usman.

"It has been recorded that Shaykh 'Ala'u-d-Din was a very proud man. By reason of the pomp of wealth, he used to style him as "Ganj-i-nabat" or the Lord of wealth.


The news that there was a learned and wealthy man in Bengal, who stayed himself as "Ganj-i-nabat" reached Sultanu-i-Mashaikh Nizamu-d-Din Avliya (d. 1325 A.D.). Hearing this, he became anguished because of the fact that while his "pir" styled himself as "Ganj-i-Shakr" or the Lord of Sugar, this man, in order to overcome him, was styling him as "Ganj-i-nabat." So, he cursed him to be dumb. Then he became a disciple of Akhi Siraju-d-Din, he regained his lost power of speech.\(^1\) Ala'al-Ilaaq could free himself from the curse only after he became the humble pupil of Akhi.\(^2\) Shaykh Akhi Siraj al-Din used to travel on horse-back, 'Ala'al-Ilaqq followed him with a hot pot on his head, which made him bald. In order to test their humility of 'Ala al Haq whose close relatives were occupying high government posts, Shaykh Akhi used to take him in this condition to the houses of his relatives.\(^3\)

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3. *Akhbar al Akhyar*, p.143
In Pandua he built a monastery and lived there a dedicated life. It is said that he spent a large sum of money in feeding the pupils, beggars and wanderers. This act of kindness and hospitality entailed on him a huge expenditure which, it is said, he defrayed from an invisible source. The Sultan Sikandar Shah (1358-1389 A.D.) grew jealous because the state treasury also could not have borne such a huge expenditure. He ordered the Saint to leave the capital and to go to Sunargaon. In Sunargaon, the Saint spent twice the amount. Nobody knew wherefrom this huge sum came, his possession included only two gardens, which also later on he gave to a beggar. After two years, he was recalled from Sonargaon to Pandua, he died there and lying buried at Chhoti dargah, by the side of his illustrious son Nur Qutb 'Alam. According to the authentic accounts, Shaykh Alau-1-Haq died in the year 1398 A.D., while according to a book in the possession

1. (a) Tadhkirah-i-Awliya-i-Hind, op.cit., pt.1, pp.143-144. (b) Contributions, etc. op.cit., p.53
3. (a) Akhbar al Akhyar, p.143. (b) Tadhkirah-i-Awliya-i-Hind, op.cit. pt.III,p.144. (c) Contributions, etc. op.cit., p.53.
of the Khadina o' the shrine, he died in 1364.

'Ala'u-'l-Iaq was a great Saint and had a large number of disciples in Bengal and in other parts of India. Among his disciples and deputies were Shaykh Nurü'd-Din Qutb-i-Alam who was his son and his spiritual successor in Bengal, Shaykh Nasiru-'d-Din of Manikpur. 

Mir Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir of Sannan (d.1406) are known. Nasiru-'d-Din reached Iskand in and aroundinned Kurukpur (Kuda) in Bihar. Being the son of a khan Miir Ashraf abdicated the throne, preferred the saintly life and became a disciple of 'Ala'u-1-Iaq who ordered him to preach Islam in Jaunpur.

2. HSB, p.171