The conception of saintlihood, of course, differs greatly in various religious systems. Whilst all involve uprightness of character and life and, generally, at least, beneficence to others, in some, there is also the inclusion of the conception of ascetism or intensity of devotion and even absorption in the Divinity.

Almost in all religions, saintlihood does imply the dwelling and inspiration of "Divinity" in the person. The saint has a supernatural quality by reason of which he (or she) is held to be above criticism and is thought by some to be invulnerable against an attack on either his body or soul. It is this quality that explains the super-human knowledge and extra-ordinary power of the saint and makes him a source of either miraculous blessings or terrible and mysterious curses.
Arabia was a sum-total of loose and disconnected congregation of tribes. Amongst them there lay no duty and no obligation. There was nothing but constant plunder and unceasing warfare. There was no social order and no organised government. The law of sheer brute force prevailed, untempered and unrestrained by any civilizing or controlling influence. Their religion was nothing more or less than gross fetishism, the worship of tree and stone, the veneration of certain personified divine attributes and meaningless rituals and ceremonials. The fear of God never exercised any practical effect over their conduct and actions. It was this fallen humanity whom Muhammad, the son of 'Abdullāh assisted. He gave them a religion inspired by a faith in one formless Creator. He wove various discordant elements into a brotherhood which stands unique in the history of the world. By his personality and by his claim to direct divine guidance, he

actually made the most impossible possible, the union of all existing warring factions and emancipation of them from superstitions and shackles of hereditary bondage. This was a mighty transformation; nay, it was, indeed, a super-human achievement amounting to a miracle.

The universal, rational, progressive and tolerant religion taught by him became known by the name, Islam which does internally mean submission to God's will but it also implies striving after righteousness. As such, the religious life of Islam is so intimately connected with saints and their worship and its history is so interwoven with them that to think of the one without the other becomes an impossibility. The saints were men of piety and usually attracted attention of masses by their miraculous powers. They provided an invincible proof of Divine favour and people sought their company for worldly as well as spiritual profits. Their words and deeds were carefully noted and were executed by their followers.

The common Arabic term for a saint is 'WALI' derived from 'WILAYAT' which is interpreted as signifying "nearness". It connotes spiritual proximity. It is usually applied to living saints but is very generally employed for the dead as well. The living saint is particularly spoken of as the Sheikh, in the same honorific way as people make use of "elder" though with a more intensive meaning. ZAHID has a special reference to the ascetic self-denial of the eminently pious. 'WALIH' is the hermit who retires from the common life to dwell in a desert or a forest. The Sufi is a member of the mystical movement called

---


2. The origin of the name Sufi is explained by the Sufis themselves in many different ways; but of the derivations which have been given by them only three possess a claim to consideration viz: those which cannot it with 'Sophoi' (a Greek word which means 'wise') or with 'Saфа' (purity) or with 'Sufi' (wool) - (Jami-Mafatul-Ush, p.3). The first two are inadmissible on linguistic grounds though the derivation from 'Saфа' is consecrated by the authority of the Sufi saints and is generally accepted in the East. The reason for this preference appears in such
in Islam, 'tasawwuf'. He may be a saint but the term does not necessarily declare that he is.

**INVISIBLE HIERARCHY**

According to the accepted view, the wāliā form an invisible order with ascending dignities and ranks. At the head there is the leading saint of the age who bears the title 'Qutb'. He is unique of his kind. On his right and left, there are two persons called 'Abdul-Malik' and another is known as 'Umāna'- one is named 'Abdur-Rabb. Abdul-Malik takes a man to the highest degree of spiritual world, while 'Abdur-Rabb purifies the heart of a man. When the one definitions because the 'sufī' is he who keeps his heart pure (Saif) with God. Whoever is thus chosen and made pure from all except God is the true sufī. Woollen garments were frequently worn by men of ascetic life in the early times of Islam in order that they might distinguish themselves from those who affected a more luxurious fashion of dress. Hence the name 'Sufi' denotes an ascetic clad in wool (Suf)...

1. 'Abdur-Rashid Lālā Modūd Chishti- Makhbir-ul-Awliya (MS)
2. The plural of 'Amīn' meaning 'trustworthy people'.
3. 'Abdur-Rashid Lālā Modūd Chishti- Makhbir-ul-Awliya (MS)
in the middle dies, the one on his left succeeds him, and the one on the right in turn takes his place. The latter's place is then filled up by one from amongst all 'Awtâd' who are in four. There are also five 'Awnâr' who take the place of the 'Awtâd' one after the other. There are 'Akhyâr' who succeed the 'Awnâr'.

Over and above these there are forty 'Shuhûd' who are also known as the 'Rijâlul-Ghâib'.

The surface of the globe is a 'dâira' divided into thirty parts equal to the days of the month. It has four directions - east-west-north and south. All 'Wâlis' together wander over the 'dâira' in certain directions of the compass, fixed for each day of the month of which they all possess perfect knowledge.

Cont'd from p.5...

through the 'data' written in this 'daira'. Saints believe implicitly in their existence. Mecca is their centre and point of departure and to that place they return daily. All the transactions of mankind come under their jurisdiction and are decided upon spiritually previous to being carried into execution temporally by the rulers of the death. They are the 'Nahba' and the Vakilas of the prophets and saints who have left this world and all the activities of mankind are revealed to them by God. The designs of individuals depend upon their will for execution; for if they do not favour them, unexpected obstacles arise to frustrate them. Besides, it is also a prevalent belief that there are spiritual beings called the 'Abdāl' who often exercise a strong influence, though unknown, in their true character.

1. ʿAbd-ur-Rashid Īlā Mūdūd Chishti – Mukhbir-ul-Awliyā (MS); Khwāja ʿĪbādullāh Aḥtār-ʿIlm-i-Taṣawwuf, p.98;

2. Abdāls are forty and hence they are also called Chihiltan. ʿAbd-ur-Rashīd Īlā Mūdūd Chishti – Mukhbir-ul-Awliyā (MS).
According to the Sufi philosophy, reality is the universal rule, external light and supreme beauty, where nature is manifestation, reflected in the mirror of the universe. The world in comparison with the reality is a mere illusion or non-reality. The sūfis believe in the oneness of the existence. They base their doctrine on the principle of love and prefer the course of love. They count upon love to be the essence of all religions and the cause of creation and its continuation. God is unknowable, but may be thought through some concrete comparisons. Phenomenal diversity is the reflection of the supreme beauty. In His absolute beauty, He is called 'Jāmāl' and in His phenomenal, 'Hūnā'.

Man possesses three natures, viz: sensual, intellectual and spiritual. He becomes virtuous or wicked according to the predominance of one of these three qualities. His mind must receive gradual training for which a guide is necessary. The selection or following of a spiritual guide is the most important duty of a sūfī.
STAGES OF TRAINING

The stages of spiritual training is generally classified as under:

Shari'at: The Qur'an says, "Obey God and obey the Prophet and obey those amongst you who hold the command!"

Therefore, the Sufi must discipline his mind by living according to the orthodox law and must observe all religious rituals - prayer, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, charity, etc. When thereby, his mind is thoroughly trained to obey and serve, he proceeds to the second stage, viz: Tariqat.

Tariqat: It is the path in which in addition to religious observances, he must seek a spiritual guide (called in Arabic Shaikh and in Persian, Pir) and receive instruction from him with respect to conduct, control over the lower self and inner purity. He must love his spiritual guide more than anything else in this world. When he is Sufi admitted by the Shaikh into a Sufi order, he must observe its rules such as service, humanity, vigils, fasts, collection

of alms, meditation etc. As a novice he must obey all the directions of the Shaikh without any doubt, argument or hesitation, so much so that he must annihilate his will into that of the Shaikh. This is called fanāf-i-sh-Shaikh. As the Sufi poet Hafiz says:

Divān-i-Hāfīz, p.1. "Colour the prayer-carpet with wine if the Pīr-i-Mughān (Spiritual guide) bids you; for the spiritual guide is not ignorant of the manners and customs of the stages."
In theology, unity means the oneness of God. Sufis believe that there is nothing real but God; the creator and the creature are both the same, one the real and the other the shadow or reflection of the same. The majority of them base their doctrines on beauty and love. God is the supreme beauty and only deserving object of love. The Supreme Beauty is God and therefore He is the Perfect Being and one who wishes to become perfect must imitate him and endeavour to become like Him.

Every one can reach perfection according to the capacity and ability in his constitution. Such endeavour is called love.

Qalb: It means the heart. There are three hearts, one physical on the left side, another, the animal soul, on the right side and a third one between the other two considered by Sufis as a spiritual faculty—a kind of mirror in which the Supreme Will is reflected. It is by keeping this heart pure from worldly attachment that human beings can approach the Creator. The real knowledge is God's illumination of this heart.

The human being in his essence is good and therefore he can rise to the higher stage of perfection.

His soul is different from his body. It is a spiritual substance created but not shaped. It may be compared with the Universal Soul as rays are to the Sun. It is restless because of its unnatural relation with matter and seeks union with its origin.

As Jalâl-ud-Dîn Rûmî begins his Mathnawi with the verses:

1. Listen to the reed (soul) how it tells a tale complaining of separation. Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my lament caused men and women to moan.

2. Further, he says—Every one who is far away from his origin, wishes and seeks again for the time of his union.

(Jalâl-ud-Dîn Rûmî - Mathnawi, p.3*)
If a man's deeds are good, his death is a birth to a life closer to God, but if they are bad, the gulf between two is widened. Therefore, a seeker of the truth and lover of God, who has passed his life preparing himself for a higher spiritual stage does not fear death but rejoices in approaching God.

Revelation is a state in which a prophet passes from human to superhuman condition, when he is able to hear the Divine speech or perceive the abstract ideas hidden and unknown to ordinary individuals. Miracles can be performed not only by prophets and sages but even by one who, though a follower of wrong religion, worships the deity with sincerity.

Among the cardinal tenets of sufism may be mentioned the following. A Sufi devotee must treat his spiritual guide with great respect and obey him like the corpse in the hands of corpse-bearer. In the same manner, he must
submit to the will of God. In brief, he must resign himself to the divine will.

It is called Riza in the Sufi terminology.

'Ikhlas' meaning sincerity and devotion is opposite to Riya meaning hypocrisy or pretended love. It demands self-sacrifice and indifference to all other things in the world, when it becomes perfect self-consciousness also is lost.

'Tauba' or repentance indicates the return or conversion from the world to God. The human soul being pure in his essence, when polluted, becomes restless and asserts its true nature by feeling repentance for its unnatural tendency.

A Sufi must have Tawakkul or trust in God. Some extremist went to the extent of neither working nor even begging and of expecting that the daily visions would reach them without making efforts to obtain them.

'Kashf' (unveiling of the spiritual mysteries) is of two kinds—(a) Muhasara in which intellect is the means of reaching the end and
(b) Mushaheda in which personal knowledge is the
proof of 'Wajd' (ecstacy) and 'Hal' (the condition
attained). 'Wajd' is the true state of yearning or
momentary absorption in God. A constant state of
'wajd' leads to complete submission to the divine
will.

The sufi must minimise his worldly needs and
should become harmless to other creatures. He
must consider this life as a source of training
himself for a true life.

Every order has its own 'Dhikr' (recitation)
and 'Murâqaba' (meditation). In a general Dhikr is
divided into 'Jalî' (loud muttering) and 'Khaﬁ'
(silent muttering). Both of these are based on
the text of the Qur'an. There are different
methods of performing Dhikr and Murâqaba.

Among the words selected for recitation
are generally Allah and La sûhâ ila sûhâ. Each
order observes a particular formula for 'Dhikr'
and keeps a particular posture.
'Fana' (annihilation) and 'Baqa' (perpetuity) are the two highest stages of spiritual progress.

By 'Fana' the Sufi means self-negation or negation of earthly tendency and by 'Baqa', retention of spiritual existence, the extinction of material desires and the loss of selfish consciousness.

The Sufi lives, acts and does everything as a second person without selfish interest.

EARLY SAINTS

All mystics whether in Iran or in India, 'Arabia or China, Europe or Asia emphasize the idea of love and the love of one Supreme Beauty. There may be difference in detail but in the main principle, all are united in drops of one ocean. All are seekers of God. The ways leading to Him are variant but He is one.

The early companions of the Prophet, the first four Caliphs and other saints of the time were noted for their intense zeal and enthusiasm for the cause of Islam, for piety and the ascetic
life they led. There were other companions of
the Prophet, whose extreme poverty had made them
homeless, lived in the mosque built by the Prophet
and were known as men of the Suffa (or raised floor)
over which they slept. They were devoted to Islam
and passed their time in reading the Quran and
discussing questions related to the subject of
religion. 'Ali was among those Muslims who first
set the example of voluntary renunciation of
worldly store, not as might be supposed as an act
of penitence but to put into practice what has
been said in the Quran - * The best of men is
he who is useful to mankind." It was not the
case of other saints. They withdrew from the
worldly cares to purify their soul in order to
ultimately annihilate it into the divine
existence. For that purpose, they adopted
different practices which developed into the
traits of their followers. They became divided

1. Mawlawi Muhammad Ali - The Holy Qur'an,
into different groups or orders in conformity with their individual ways and means as the result of their spiritual affinity.

**Sūfi Orders**

Sūfi orders were started to systematise spiritual training. They first became prominent in Persia and Bukhara, though they originated in Arabia. From there, they travelled into Syria, Turkey, Egypt and Morocco to the shores of the Mediterranean and as far as the limits of the territories of India. Gradually each order was divided into a number of branches, each having its own founder and tracing connection with other orders of the more calibrated early sufis and finally tracing up relationship with the Prophet through 'Ali, the fourth Caliph. 'Ali initiated as his Caliph Khwāja Hasan Baṣrī (d. A.H.110/A.D.728) who appointed as his deputies Khwāja Habīb ʿAjami (d-A-H.110/A.D.738) and ʿAbdul-Wāhid bin Zaid Kufī.
From the former have descended nine orders.

1. Ḥabībiya from Khwāja Ḥabīb Ājami
2. Ṭaifūriya from Bayazīd Bastāmī surnamed Ṭaifūr
3. Karkhiya from Shaikh Māḥf Karkhi
4. Junaidiya from Junaid Baghdādi to which the Tabaqātī saints trace their origin.
5. Saqatiya from Sāriṣaqati
6. Gāzarūnī from ʿAbd-ullāh Ḥaqīqī also known as Ḥanīf Gāzarūnī
7. Tartūgiyan from ʿAbd-ull-Farrāḥ Tāṭusi
8. Suhrawardiya from Shaikh Zīā-ud-Dīn Ṭabar Abū Najīb Suhrawardī
9. Firdausiyya from Najm-ud-Dīn Kubra Firdausī

From the fourth saint have sprung up five groups:

10. Zaidiyān from ʿAbd-ul-Wāhīd bin Zaid
11. Ayaziyān, from Fuzail bin Ayāz
12. Adhamiyān, from Ibrahim Adhān Balkhi
13. Hubairiyān, from Amin-ud-Dīn Hubarāt-ul-Ḥārī

So all the founders of orders had a number of people who lived an ascetic life and who visited Mecca as many times as they could. Some of them had Khamqādas (hermitages) and each had a small circle of followers. Some orders developed to a great extent and from some of them branches grew; while some became extinct in the course of time. Both men and women were admitted into the order and Khára (a certificate of passing through the Sufi ordeal) was granted to women as well. Celibacy was permitted by a few orders but the majority of them did not approve of it. The married Salik was admitted into the order after receiving baiát (vow) in the presence of other murids from the Shaikh. He had to make a vow that he would undergo spiritual training by serving God and obeying the order of his Shaikh. He had to live in a hermitage for a number of years observing the rules of the order.
In the fundamental principles, there was no difference of observances among various orders, though in certain matters of detail, each had its own method of training. A person seeking initiation into an order is received in an assembly of the fraternity presided over by the 'Shaikh' who touches his hand and breathes into his ear three times the words, *La Ilaha illa'llah* (there is no God but Allāh), commanding him to repeat them every day. This ceremony is called the 'Talqin'. The recipient, faithful to the order of his chief, obligates himself to spend his time in perfect retirement and to report to the 'Shaikh' the visions or dreams which he may have during the course of his novitiate. These dreams, besides characterising the sanctity of his vocation and his spiritual advancement in the order, serve likewise as so many supernatural means to direct the 'Shaikh' regarding the periods when he may again breathe into his ear the second words of
the initiation, Ya Allah! and successively all the
attributive names of God to the last, Ya Qahhar!
The full complement of this exercise, which they
call "chillah" requires six, eight or ten months;
sometimes even a longer period, according to the
dispositions, more or less favourable, of the
candidate. When he arrives at the last stage he
is supposed to have fully ended his career and
attained the degree of perfection (i.e. the
'takmil-i-suluk') for his solemn admission into
the corps to which he has devoted himself. During
all his novitiate, the recipient bears the name
of 'kuchak' and the Shaikh who directs him in
this celestial career takes the appellation
'murshid'.

In each convent there is a hall, consecrated
to these exercises. Nothing is simpler than its
construction; it contains no decoration; the
middle of the hall turned towards Mecca contains a
niche which serves as an altar; in front of it
is a small carpet, mostly made of the skin of a sheep on which the Shaikh of the community reclines, over the niche the name of the founder of the Order is written. In some halls this inscription is surmounted by two others - one containing the confession of faith and the other the words Bismilläh. In others are seen on the wall to the right and to the left of the niche tablets on which are written in large letters the attributive names of God, that of Muhammad and those of the four first Caliphs. In some of them are seen the names of Hasan and Hussain, the grandsons of the Prophet and some verses of the Qurân.

The exercises which are followed in the halls are of various kinds in conformity with the practice of each institution; but in almost all of them they commence with the recital of the seven mysterious words by the Shaikh. They are as follows:
1. La ilaha illa 'Allah (It is a confession of Allah's unity).

2. Ya Allah ! (It is an exclamation referring to Him, the Almighty).

3. Ya HuI (It is an authentic acknowledgement of Allah's eternal existence).


5. Ya Hai ! (O Living God).

6. Ya Qayyum ! (O Existing God).

7. Ya Qahhar ! (O Revenging God)

The Shaikh next chants various passages of the Qur'an and at each pause, the saints, placed in a circle round the hall, respond in chorus by the word, Allah ! or HuI. In some of the societies they sit on their heels, the elbows close to those of each other and all making simultaneously light movements of the head and the body. In others the movement consists in balancing themselves slowly, from the right to the left, and from the left to the right, or inclining the body methodically forward and aft. There are other societies
in which these motions commence seated, in measured cadences, with a staid countenance, the eyes closed or fixed upon the ground, and are continued while remaining on foot. These singular exercises are consecrated under the name of "muraqabah" (i.e. meditation) and also under that of "tauhid" (i.e. celebration of the divine unity), from which comes the name tauhid-khana, given to the whole of the halls devoted to these religious exercises.

In some of these institutions, such as the Qadiriyas and the Rifaiyas, the exercises are made each holding the other by the hand, pulling forward always the right foot and increasing at every step the strength of the movement of the body. This is called "daur" or "rotation". The duration of this dance is arbitrary — each one is free to leave when he pleases. Every one, however, makes it a point to continue as long as possible. The strongest, most robust and most enthusiastic among them strive to persevere longer than
others; they uncover their heads, take off their turbans, form a second circle within the other, entwine off their arms within those of their brethren, lean their shoulders against one another, gradually raise the voice and continuously repeat 'Ya Allah' or 'Ya Hu' increasing each time the movement of the body and not stopping until their entire strength is exhausted.

Saints of some orders particularly 'Chistiya' and 'Mawlwiya' approve of sama (hearing of songs and playing an musical instruments) on condition that it must be to stimulate spiritual emotion. There is a common feeling among these sufis that the earthly beauty is a bridge to the universal beauty. Dances and rotations are performed to the tune of soft music. The verses they sing are erotic and interpreted in an allegorical sense. When the Qawwal (musician) sings a verse and plays on the instrument, the hearers listen to it with rapt attention. All hearers interpret the verse according to the extent of their
knowledge. They repeat the verses that appeal to
them and at times ask the singers to sing them
over again. Some who get more affected weep,
dance and even become unconscious. Sa'd Shams-
ud-Din, the immediate successor of 'Abd-ul-Qadir
Gilani, the founder of the Qadiriya Order was the
first to set an example of this kind. In A.H. 565

* Some sufis were poets and themselves good
singers and masters of music, e.g. Shah Latif of
Sind was gifted with a melodious voice and used
to play on 'tambūra' and Amir Khumraw, the eminent
Persian poet of India was a 'sufi' and great
musician. It is said about Khwaja Qutb-ud-Din
Bakht-Yar Kaki that when in the assembly of
Sama', the Qawwāl was reciting the following
verse: 

(Every one killed by the dagger of 'taslim' has
every time another soul from the invisible world.)
The condition of Wajd permeated throughout the
body of Qutbi-Alam and he was like the bird of
(28)

(A.D. 1170) he allowed his disciples to use only tambourines to mark the measure of their steps and to sustain the vivacity of their movements. This practice, though repressed by Islam, was, nevertheless, at length adopted by the Rifai, the Mawlawi, and such other orders. The Mawlawi have added the flute which is open at either end, called by them the nai; the greater number of the saints of this order play on it exquisitely; only their exercises are accompanied by various airs, all of a soft, tender and pathetic expression. The convent of the general of this order is distinguished from all others by a band of music composed of different instruments. There are some, who devote themselves to an absolute retirement from

Contd. from 27.
sacrifice, restless. He was brought to the 'Khanqah' in the same condition but even in that state he continued to repeat the same verse. He performed ablution and offered prayers when there was the time for the same. And again he made suggestions to repeat that verse. In the same condition he remained for five days and ultimately left the world.
the world and to the most rigid abstinence, living only on bread and water even for twelve days successively in honour of the twelve 'Imāms of the race of Ḥazārat ʿAlī. This peculiar exercise is called 'Khalwat' (solitude). The more devoted among these saints observe sometimes a painful fast of forty days consecutively, called by them the 'Arbaʿīn (forty) for the expiation of their sins, the sanctification of their lives, the glorification of Islām and the prosperity of state. During the period they remain engrossed in divine contemplation.

Independent of these general considerations, which render the whole corps of the orders so commendable to the nation, the miraculous virtues attributed to the greater part of their Shaikh inspire special devotion to them. They claim the power of interpreting dreams and of healing by means of spiritual remedies, both mental and physical diseases. These remedies consist in exercising
and prayers. Ordinarily, they put their hand on the head of the invalid, make mysterious breathings on his person, touch the suffering parts and give the individual small rolls of paper on which hymns have been written of their own composition, or passages taken from the Qurān—generally from the two chapters which refer to the work of malevolence, enchantments, witchcraft, etc.

It is not only to the sick that they give these cabalistic writings; they distribute them to persons in good health, as so many preservatives against physical evils and more afflictions.

SAINTS AND SHRINES

The cult of 'Wāli' (saints) induced a large number of non-Muslims all over the world to come under the banner of Islam, in one way refined Muslim character itself and produced many celebrated saints and poets. It had its defects also, a causing inactivity, encouraging superstition and inducing a slavish mentality and even immortality
among the masses. Before long, the ‘Walis’ became numerous all over Muslim countries. Some were really pious, but a great many were undeserving men who posed piety. The veneration extended on the extent of the ignorance of their followers and the devotion they paid to them. Khalifas, Emperors, Sultans, Kings and even the absolute and merciless tyrants have made no secret of their respect for this class of men and are known to have paid visits and sought their blessings. After the death of a ‘Wali’ or ‘Pir’, large sums have been expended in putting up magnificent structures in their honour. They have been consulted as much in spiritual as in worldly affairs and some times they have done duty as thaumaturgists, performing miracles and predicting victories and defeats in battles etc. Their popularity is accordingly very great. There is scarcely a village in Iran, in which one or more tombs of ‘Walis’ and ‘Pirs’ are not
found. Many believe that if their own bodies are buried somewhere near the tomb of a patron saint, their souls will find rest and peace. Many of the famous shrines are such surrounded with a large number of graves. Besides the tomb, the existence of large trees or natural springs, adds to the importance of the place, healing powers being attributed to them.

VISITS TO THE TOMBS OF SAINTS

The common word used for the dead saint is 'FIR' and the visit to his tomb or shrine is called "Ziyārat". These tombs and shrines are usually under the care of guardians (called 'Mujāwir') who are usually their direct lineal or spiritual descendants.

The homage paid to the saints at their shrines is of a simple character. It consists of two separate divisions; the first is for the

* The visit to a living saint is also called 'Ziyārat'.

(31)
benefit of the saint and the other for that of the visitor. In the first, the visitors may make offerings of money, sweets, flowers as well as the provision for the 'chirag' (the lighting of the lamps) and the 'loban' (the burning of frankincense) and thereafter they recite the 'Fatihah'.

As for the other part of the homage the visitor stands or sits somewhere near the shrine, facing it and communes in his heart with the saint. In it he makes a vow to make certain offerings and oblations in case he would be immune from his troubles. Such offerings consist of money, pieces of cloth generally to cover the tomb, cooked rice, sugar, sweets and a cocoa nut. After the fulfilment of the desire, such things are placed, first of all on the shrine and after some time the visitor takes a part of it, out of which a small portion is distributed as *tabarruk* to the people assembled.

* A portion that has received the special blessings of the saint.
at that spot including a large number of people seeking alms.

The relics of the known saints, if available, are preserved with great care, for example, a turban, a coat, a shirt, shoe or anything written by him, particularly a copy of the Qur'an. There are some towns in India as well as in Muslim countries where the ghābar-i-Sharif (venerated hair of the Prophet's beard) is kept as a sacred reliq and a ceremony in its honour is held once a year.

**CELEBRATION OF DEATH ANNIVERSARIES**

Just as it is the custom to visit the saint's shrines on particular days, so also it has become a convention to celebrate saints' anniversaries generally on the day of their death. This celebration is called "URS". On that day the followers of the particular saint whose anniversary is celebrated meet there and perform usual rituals.

* On account of the Sufistic belief that the death of the Sufi is the union (Waṣl) of his soul with Allah.
In the course of time a common practice has developed to hold there a fair wherein shopkeepers set up their shops. Biographies of saints in general and that of the saint in whose memory the 'URS' is celebrated in particular are sold.

The solemn part of the 'URS', of course, is the performance of the religious rites. Every male visitor enters bare-footed the enclosure of the shrine, recites the Fatiha, makes some offering either of money or of sweets or of both and retreats silently without turning the back to the shrine. Generally the following might the holy QURAN is read by followers sitting near the shrine. This most solemn part of the ceremony is called a KHATM. In it different PARAS (Sections) of the QURAN-I-SHARIF are distributed among them. The particular attention is paid to see that by this method the whole of the Holy Book is read through to get the divine sanctification on the saint's soul.