Chapter - 6

EMERGENCE OF SYNCRETIC SHRINES AND CULT
It is a common observation that the Shrines built over the graves of the Sufi Saints draw pilgrims. A pilgrimage to a shrine is more often than not an extension of the excessive honour paid to them in their lifetime. Flowers are offered on the mazar and small earthen lamps are lit and placed mostly on Thursday. The shrine called a mazar (place of pilgrimage) and sometimes called a dargah (court) may be dedicated to a saint.¹

A shrine is the place for special ceremonial performances during specified period or periods. Devotees flock to the shrine and the atmosphere takes on a festive look. There are special rites attached to the holy assemblage (Urs) of individual saints.

¹ Tara Charan Rastogi; *Islamic mysticism and sufism; starting publication private Ltd., New Delhi, 1982, P-95
Dargah is a Persian word which means "Place of a door" usually used in regards of royal court as palace in Persia. But in India with the additional specialized sense it is used to a tomb or a shrine of a pir or a spiritual guide. The conception of dargah entered Assam along with the arrival of the Sufi saints, a number of whom founded their dargah where they used to live for a long time, when-ever some other Saints who did not founded any dargah but only used wonder with a view to propagate the teachings of Islam. In the present chapter an attampt has been made to discuss upon the dargah of the present Brahmaputra and Barak Valley of Assam which flourished since thirteenth century till nineteenth century or till India got her independence.

GARIGAON DARGAH

The Garigaon dargah is one of the prominent dargahs of Assam. It is situated about ten kilometers western side of Guwahati, where a mosque and one tomb or Mazar are beautifully decorated. There is a strong belief among the Muslims of Assam that Hazrat Jalal Uddin Tabrizi had passed away here in Garigaon and the Mazar is belongs to him graveyard. But it is a matter of great contradiction amongst the historians as to where and when this esteemed saint had his last breath and where he has undergone to his eternal steep. It is also known that Hazrat Ghiyas-ud-Din Aniiya had halted at Garigaon with his companions before his settlement at Hajo. Therefore, it may be assumed that some of his companions or descendents might have died there. Whose tomb is located in the dargah which is wrongly considered as the dargah of Hazrat Jalal Uddin Tabrizi.


3 M. Neog - Pavitra Assam pp-298, 299


5 B.C. Allen - Assam District Gazetteers, Kamrupa, 1905, p-139.
It is matter of fact that despite having lot of contradictions as to the settlement and death of Jalal Uddin in Assam have their deep respect for Tabrizi, who consider the Mazar of Garigaon is not Hazrat Jalal Uddin Tabrizi and used to pay homage to the saint in this dargah.

HAZRAT ADAM KAKI MAZAR:

The land of Badarpur is rich for spiritual and missionary activity. During medieval period some of the Sufi Saints flourished in this area, who were Shah Badar, Hazrat Adam Kaki, Shah Jiauddin, Hazrat Abdul Malik and Shah Sikandar Gazi. They were the 360 Auliyas or companions of Hazrat Shah Jalal Muzarrad of Sylhet. Hazrat Adam Kaki was one of the prominent Sufi Saint. He came to Badarpur for Sufi Missionary activity. He established a Khanqah there. Due to his liberal religious teachings both Hindus and Muslims became his disciples in a large number.

The dargah of Hazrat Adam Kaki is situated at the western part of Badarpur, adjacent to the PWD road Badarpur, Karimganj, Assam. It is to be mentioned that on every Thursday night thousands of devotee flock to this dargah from far and distance area and offer prayers there. Irrespective of Caste, creed and religion both the Hindus and Muslims visit the Shrine which became the centre of pilgrimage and loving symbol and embodiment of Hindu Muslim Unity.

FAKIR SHAH MADAR DARAGAH:

It is known from a Copper Plate grant issued by the Ahom King Lakshimi Singha in 1790 A.D. in favour of Hazi Anowar Fakir, that there were several maqams or khankahs in the Kamrupa district of Assam, which attained their celebrity in those days. These maqams were the Bar Maqam of Fakir Shah Madar of the Baushi parganah, the maqam of Shah...

---

6. Y. Tamizi, Sufi Movement and Eastern India, p-86
Fakir of Barnagar and panch pirar dargah at Khetri. This presupposes that the two maqams and the dargah were established long before the date. It is learnt from Deodhar Buranji that during the Ahom-Mughal wars in the early sixteenth Century A.D. One Madar, a Muslim who has been described as Bairagi (Fakir) was captured by the Ahoms. This Bairagi Madar perhaps was a follower of Fakir Shah Madar and he was subsequently allowed to stay in Bausi parganah in the district of Kamrupa where he had founded this maqam or Khankah. But in the present day no authentic documents of these places are available.

DARGAH OF HAZRAT HASSAN CHISTI:

The dargah of Hazrat Sheikh Hassan Chisti is situated on the top of the Buraburi hill at Mayong in the present district of Morigaon in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. Hazrat Sheikh Hassan Chisti deserves special mention among the disciples of Shah Jalal Mujrrad. He was a reputed Sufi saint and was a Sufi of a higher order. The place where he passed his whole life in prayer and austerity has became a centre of pilgrimage. People both Hindus and Muslims visit the place and offer these ...-0-niyaz to get their desires fulfilled. The place where Sheikh Hassan Chisti used to offer prayer is situated on the top of the hill. His foot print and hand print are still can be seen on the stone-plate which is believed to be his prayer carpet.

It is said that the saint has always used one big stone to be seated on it, while delivering his sermons to the disciples. The stone chair is still visible there in the dargah. The Sufi Saint lived a very simple life with high thinking.

10 Reported by Maulana Mufti Md. Ibrahim Ali
11 Reported by Ahamad Ali, Khadim of Hassan Chisti dargah. Buraburi hill at Mayong in the present district of Morigaon, Brahmaputra valley, Assam
PAGAL PIR DARGAH :

The pagal pir dargah is located at patpara village near Dhupdhara. Pagal pir, who is believed to be the founder of a dargah in Dhupdhara lying about fifty miles east of the Goalpara town and on the western boarder of Kamrupa district. The dargah is said to have endowed with vast tract of tax free land till 1859 A.D., after which these lands were included in the Bijni Raj Eastate of Zamindary. The amount of this tax free land was about 630 bighas. It is also known that this dargah was established by the ancestors of Fakir Duman shah and Fakir Ali Shah. The dargah is still running with poor facilities. It is known in Assam, Koch Bihar area of Bangal.

THE DEGDHOWA DARGAH :

The Degdhowa dargah is situated at Degdhowa hills very near the brahmaputra river which is about four miles south east from Goalpara town. It is believed that this dargah is also as old as the Dakaidal dargah. The saint who is still unknown came with an invading army of the Mughals, whose name is not known, lived there till he was stabbed to death by one of his disciples. Even today boatman of both Hindu and Muslim communities happening to pass by the dargah, miss no chance to pay their homage to the pir and to make offering on the tomb with prayers for a safe journey on the Brahmaputra.

The general belief concerning the name “Degdhowa” is that the soldiers of the invading army with whom the founder saint of the dargah came, washed their ‘degs’ or cooking pans at the place. The terms ‘deg’ means pan and ‘dhowa’ means washing in Assamese language, where from the word Degdhowa might have been derived.

---

12 M.K. Saikia, Assam Muslim Relation and its cultural Significance, P- 309, Golaghat, 1978
13 M. Neng, Pavitra Assam, P-337, Gauhati, 1960 246 Na’s records of Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara dated 31- 01-1839,
14 M.Y. Tanzi, Sufi Movement in faster India, P-162 New Delhi
15 Maheswar Neng, Pavitra Assam, P-336 Gauhati 1960, Ibid- p- 337
16 M.K. Saikia, Assam Muslim Relation and its cultural significance, p-208
17 Ibid - p-208
18 Ibid, pp-208,209.
The term Degdhowa, in fact, reminds us of the story of Degdh carried on his head by Hazrat Jalal Uddin Tabrizi in order to serve warm food for his apostle with whom he used to move from place to place. It may also be noted here that the name of Hazrat Jalal Uddin Tabrizi is associated with a few ancient dargahs and mazars in Gauhati. The Muslim festival like Maharam is celebrated in this dargah every year with befitting manners. 'Urs' also celebrated in the dargah where both Hindu Muslim meet together and pay due respect to the Shrine.

POWA MACCA DARGAH:

The Powa Macca Dargah as generally believed., was founded by Hazrat Ghiyas-Ud-Din Auliya. But the modern scholars are not unanimous that when and by whom this dargah was founded. There is also a tradition, which says that Hazrat Jalal Uddin Tabrizi had founded this dargah during the first quarter of thirteenth Century, while he was on the way to visit to Kamrupa. It was Gyiyas-Ud-Din Auliya who later on rejuvenated it around 1256/57 A.D. when Ikbtiyar Uddin Malik yazbak erected a Mosque there. Even Ibn Batuta had visited the dargah, situated on the top of the Garudhachal Hill at Hajo. Shah Shuja, son of Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb had reconstructed the mosque, as known from the persian Rock inscription, attached to the wall of the Mosque, in the year 1657 A.D./1067 A.H, while he was the subedar of Koch Hajo. At present a tomb, adjacent to the Mosque, which is believed to be the tomb of Hazrat Ghiyas U-Din Auliya.

At the night of ‘Magh Purnima’ the death anniversary of the Saint or ‘Urs’ is celebrated every year with great pomp and luxury.

---

19 Repeted by, i) Janglti, Shah ii) Samad Ali Fakir iii) Ishaqc Ali Fakir. Date 16/05/03
20 Dr. Maheswar Neog, Pavittra Assam, p-298, 299, Kamrupar Bhuranji. By S.K. Bhuya, p-121
people from distant places and of every religion visit the Shrine at Powa Macca and offer ‘Nazrana’ as a mark of respect to the saint and with a hope to fulfill their cherished desire.  

We find that the tradition concerning the Powa Macca dargah of Hajo, also refers to the Ucchu Parbat or High mountain in the east of the modern town of Gauhati. The kachari tribals who live in the villages near the foot of the Ucchu Parbat have the firm conviction that this mountain is the abode of a Muslim Saint and they make offering of milk on a rock in the name of the “Gosain”.  

In our account of Hazrat Ghiyas-Ud-Din Auliyia it is said that Hazrat Ghiyas Uddin Auliya having inlaid holy earth from Macca in this dargah named it as Powa Macca, ‘a quarter of Mecca’.  

DARGAH OF HAZRAT ADAM GURU :  

The dargah of Hazrat Adam Guru is situated at Kalitakuchi near Hajo in the district of Kamrupa. Perhaps this dargah flourished during Fourteenth (14th) Century. According to local tradition this dargah was founded by Hazrat Adam Guru who was a disciple of Hazrat Ghiyas-Ud-Din Auliyia. In order to preach Islamic philosophy and doctrines he was sent to Kalitakuchi by his spiritual guide. Here he spent or devoted his whole life for the preaching of Islam. Adam Guru here added to the number of Islamic people. After the death of the Sufi saint, he was engraved and a tomb was built. Later on this tomb became a centre of pilgrimage for every section of Society irrespective of caste creed and religion.

---

24 M. K. Saikia, Assam Muslim Relation and its Cultural Significance, p- 212, Golaqhat, 1978
25 Dr. Beeg, Alice Barbhuya, Growth of Muslim population and its impact of Assamese Society, p-28, 2005, North Lakhimpur
26 Reported by Dr. Alice Beeg Barbhuya.
SARAGURI DARGAH :

The dargah of Hazrat Shah Miran alias Azan Fakir of Assam or the Saraguri Dargah is situated in the hearts of Saraguri on the bank of the river Dikhow near its confluence with the Brahmaputra in the Sivasagar district of upper Assam. This dargah was founded by the most popular saint named Azan Fakir, after getting the land grant from Ahomi king Rudra Singha during the middle part of Seventeenth century, with earthen ramparts around it which can still be seen there. The ancient dargah is said to have contained about a hundred bighas of land. At present the dargah stands as one of the important religious places both for the Hindus and the Muslims.

KHANDARKAR PIR DARGAH :

The Khandarkar pir Dargah is situated on the bank of the river Dihing, about eight miles away from the Sivasagar town. Till today the dargah is enjoying about twenty bighas of revenue free land. There are popular tradition that the Saint Hazrat Osman Gani alias Khandarkar pir had ended his life himself with the help of a grass blade, in this place. As nobody engraved the deathbody, white ants build a mount on his body where subsequently his displies raised a tomb. There is a pond near the sepulchar which bears some miraculous events relating to the Saint. Hundreds of people even now visit the Shrine with noble intensions of getting divine blessing by dint of the miracles of the pir.

It is to be mentioned that some people of the Ali of Sivasagar to the dargah to pay thir homage to the pir, and that when they went down to the pond which was then all dry and cleared the bed of it in search of water, they discovered a pair of wooden sandals and some other relies connected with the pir. When the people brought these to their home, something evil happened to them. They therefore, placed them again in their old place.

28 Maheswar Neog, Pavitra Assam, p-62
29 Ibid - p-63
Hundreds of people even now go there to pay their homage to this great pir in his dargah.

**NABI PIR DARGAH/SALEH PIR DARGAH**

The dargah of Hazrat Nabi pir the brother of Azan Fakir is said to have been situated near the Simulaguri railway station in Sibsagar from where he had continued his mission for propagation of Islam. This place is in the vicinity of the Ahom royal palace in Nazira. Dr. Maheswar Neog mentions that the khakah of this saint is situated at the Tiru Pathar near the Ahom metropoies on charaideo Hills in Sivasagar.\(^{32}\) The people of all communities visited this places and pay their homage for the fulfilment of their own desire.

**SAWAL PIRAR DARGAH**

Sawal pir is one of the eminent contemporary Sufi Saint of Hazrat Azan Fakir/ Shah Milan. The dargah or shrine of Hazrat Sawal pir is situated in the Ririya village on the bank of the river Dichang, Eighteen Km. north-east away from present Sibsagar town. Sawal peer again was popularly known as Bandar pir, as he was fond of roaming in the deep forest to remain far from the madding crowd.\(^{33}\) This dargah was discovered only in recent times. It is said that the pir appeared before an inhabitant of Ririya village in dream and he himself gave the information of the dargah situated in the nearby the forest. According to the instructions reported by received in the dream, the villager along with some of his companions went out in search of the dargah into the forest and found a tomb near a tank there. From that very time thousand of people and the devotees irrespective of caste and creed visit this place. As a result this dargah become a centre of pilgrimage and the people pay their homage to the pir entombed there in and gradually the

\(^{32}\) Dr. M. Neog, *Pavitra Assam*, pp-64,65

\(^{33}\) M.K. Saikia *Assam Muslim Relation and its Cultural Significance*, p-216
importance of the place enhanced. In the subsequent period the people here constructed a beautiful mosque near the tomb.

PANCH PIRAR DARGAH : NO.1

The location of Panch pirar dargah is in Dhubri town ward no.- 1, which founded by the five pirs named, Shah Akbar, Shah Bagmar, Shah Sufi, Shah Sharan and Shah Kamal, who were brought to Assam by Raja Ram Singh, the Rajput General of the Mughal army in 1667 A.D. whom he led his positive expedition against Ahom King Chakradhwaja Singha, with a view to overcoming the Assamese black art and magic.

According to a tradition the dargah contains the tombs of five pirs and therefore, it has come to be know as “Panch Pirar Dargah” or the dargah of five pirs. But some people hold the view that the dargah contains only the tomb of Shah Akbar, the Chief of the five pirs. Since it is believed that Shah Kamal who was one of these five pirs, founded a separate Khankah at Mahendraganj, South west of Garo hills in Meghalaya. Therefore, it may be presumed that all these five pirs, except Shah Akabar, might have moved in different parts of the country from Dhubri dargah and established Khangahs in their respective places of stay. But after their death their mortal remains were probably brought and entomed in the Dhubri dargah where their leader Shah Akbar was laid at rest.

PANCS PIR DARGAH NO.2

The panch pir dargah is said to have been situated near Dhubri district jail in Dhubri town, where stayed one of the five pirs named Shah Kamal brought to Assam by Rajput general of the Mughal army Raja Ram Singh in 1667 A.D. when he led his punitive expedition to Assam. According to local tradition the panch pir Dargah No.2 was founded by shah kamal.

34 B.C. Allam ; Assam District Gazetteer, Goalpara, 1905 p-7 Annals of Delhi Badshahate p-10 Maneswar Noc, Puvitra Assam, pp-357, 358
After the death of the pir a tomb was built which became a centre for pilgrimage for every section of the Society.  

DARGAH OF DEKABABA:

There is a legend that Azan Fakir sent a Muslim. It is however, not known as to how and to what extent that preacher succeeded in preaching the ideals of Islam in that stronghold of vaishnavism. But soon he was to leave for Lakhimpur where he is said to have married a Hindu girl. This preacher known as Dekababa or deka Fakir had his dargah of the village of Bilatiya in North Lakhimpur. At the time of annual examinations both Hindu and Muslim students offer prayers of the major or dargah of Dekababa for doing well in Examinations by burning wicks, candles and incense sticks. Moreover, for getting cured from diseases or on festive occasions both Hindu and Muslim visit the dargah of Dekababa. Hindu offer prasad and the Muslims Shrine.

LONGAR SHAH DARGAH:

The dargah of Hazrat Longar Shah is situated in Chandmari in Golaghat town. The dargah was founded by the prominent Sufi Saint Hazrat Longar Shah. Hazrat Longar Shah settled himself under a big tree from where he delivered sermons to his disciples still can be seen. Hazrat Longar Shah dargah obtained 14 bigas of revenue free land from the Ahom King. Hazrat Longer Shah spent his whole life for the preaching of Islam and made both the Hindus and the Muslims his disciples. After the death of the Sufi Saint he was engraved and a beautiful tomb was built. Another one beautiful mosque is also build near the tomb. The Sufi Saint used to live a very simple life. Ist of Ahar month is celebrated as Urs mubarak. During the time of Urs

---

37 Dr. Begg, Alice Borbhuya, "Growth of Muslim population in Assam and its impact on Assamese Society, P.S.I. 2005, North Lakhimpur
38 Reported by Dr. Alice Begg Borbhuya, Maheswar Neog, Paviitra Assam, p-22, 3rd edition, Ghy, 1991
mubarak thousand of people irrespective of Caste creed and religion visit the
dargah to pay due respect to the Saints eternal soul. 41

DAKAIDAL OR PANJATAN DARGAH :

In Goalpara district there are a number of Muslim Shrines
which are acclaimed to be ancient. The Dakaidal or Panjatan dargah is
situated near Shri Surrya hills at the tenth mile. South East of Goalpara
town. The dargah contains the tomb of the pir who established it, but no
definite information is available about its founder. It is known that one Sufi
Saint of high esteem, entered Assam with some army of Muslim expedition.
This very saint was the founder of the dargah who lived there till his death. 42
It is said that after the death of the pir, Mutawalis or Khadims were
appointed by the Mughal emperors, 43 who in course of time used to play the
role of a pir or saint. The tomb received a tax free land (madad-l-Mash) land
grant of 1002 Bigha area. 44 The whole area of the dargah was, it is said
adorned with an elegant flower garden surranded by a brick wall. The traces
of this wall still be seen there. But now the greater part of the dargah has
been eroded away by the river Brahmaputr which flows very close to it. 45
The Muslim festival of Maharram is celebrated in this dargah every year
with befitting manner.

DHAMDAMA DARGAH :

Pir Mina Uddin is the man to be the person behind the establishment
of the Dhamdama dargah, a native devotee of Powa Macca dargah, founded
this dargah after receiving ‘Khilaphat’ from his murshid, Haji Anowar
Fakir. 46 According to local tradition it is believed that Mina Uddin had
constructed a Mosque, and as mentioned in ‘Padshahnama’, the mughal

41 Mohd. Y. Tomizi ; Sufi movement in Eastern India, Delhi, 1992-p-163
42 Dr. Maheswar Neog ; Pavitra Assam, p-336
43 19 No. record of the Deputy Collector Goalpara, Signed on 18-11-1857
44 M.K. Saikia ; Assam Muslim Relation and its cultural significance, Golaghat, Assam,
1978, p-207. Reported by Dewan Nazrul Kadir
45 Reported by Dewan Nazrul Kadir
46 S.K. Bhuyaii ; Annals of the Delhi Badshahate, p-15
army had encamped at this mosque during the invasion of Mir Jumla. The original mosque building has naturally been destroyed, where on the place a new mosque has been constructed by his disciples. The tomb of the pir is standing to the east of the mosque picking up respects, homage and nazranas subsequently offerings from his disciples and admirers.

KHURASONI PIR DARGAH:

This dargah or mazar is situated on a small hillock in Goalpara town which was established by Hazrat Abdul Qasim Khurasan. Abdul Qasim was born in Khurasan Sometime during the early part of eighteenth century and he hailed to the Indian subcontinent and finally decided to settle in Goalpara, where he founded the dargah and lived till his death in 1896 A.D. The tomb where he is laying for his eternal sleep has now become a centre for pilgrimage. On every 21st Safar of Hijri era ‘Urs’ or death anniversary is celebrated there. His descendents are still living around the Mazar. People of all the religious faiths came to this shrine to pay homage to the Saint and to pray for the fulfillment of their desires.

SIJUBARI DARGAH:

Hazrat Pir Shah Mukhdam Shah is said to have founded the Sijubari dargah perhaps in Sixteenth Century during the Ahom King Pratap Singha. It is said that Shah Mukhdam hailed from Siraj of Baghdad and reached the hillside of Sijubari via Ajmeer, Gauda, and Hajo. Mukhdam Shah received a tax free land grant under Beltola Mouza and founded a Mosque on the hill of Sijubari at the east of Gawahati. The Saint, as believed, learnt Assamese language and married an Assamese lady, whose descendents are still living near the locality of the dargah. Shah Mukhdam was buried at the adjacent to the east of the Mosque, where his disciples

---

48 Reported by Mohammad Bahii Uddin , Grand son of the death Sufi Saint
51 Maheswar Neog, Pavitra Assam pp-99.
have constructed a beautiful tomb during subsequent period. The festival of ‘Urs’ is celebrated in the month of February, every year when it became a common place of worship for the people of every religion. It is known from a copper plate of king Siva Singha dated 1714 A.D. that the King granted a plot of 37 (thirty seven) Bighas of land to the saint as revenue free land. 52

KHANKARPARA DARGAH

The Khankarpara dargah is situated at Bhella about 10 kilometer east from Barpeta town. It is believed that the dargah was founded by Hazrat Sayed Shahnoor Dewan, who might have flourished sometime during the region of Ahom King Chandra Kanta Singha. 53

It is also known that Shahnoor Dewan received a revenue free land grant of 100 Bighas (One dhular kub area) from Ahom King Siva Singha. It is said that the Saint had always used one big stone to be seated on it, while delivering his sermons to the disciples. The stone is still visible there in the dargah. As the saint lived a very simple and plain life with high thinking, he did not construct any pacca building there in the dargah. At present a beautiful Mosque. One rest house, one Kitchen hall, one Iddgah field and the tomb of the saint, all these are the subsequent constructions are visible in the campus of the dargah. People irrespective of belief and faith visit the dargah in order to pay respect to the Saints’ eternal soul. 54

SAYED ROUSAN ALI CHISTI DARGAH

OR BAGA BABA MAZAR:

Baga Baba Mazar or Sayed Rousan Ali chisti dargah is situated in amolapatty, Kalibari Road in the vicinity of the Railway station of Dibrugarh. It is known that Sufi saint shah Boga Baba hailed to the place

52 Maheswar Neog, Pavitra Assam, p-299
Golaghat, 1978
54 Maheswar Neog, Pavitra Assam, P-34, Guahati P-160 ibid P-35.
from Uttar Pradesh during the first quarter of twentieth century and started
to live in a poor hut.55

It is also reported that the pir had a very small utensil in which
he prepared his food and miraculously could provide the food to each and
every one who had visited him. For this miracle people of all the belief and
faith come to him for hearing his sermons. Thus many people became his
disciples which increased day by day. The saint is said to have died during
the sixth decade of the twentieth century. His pious body was engraved at the
place of his cottage. Subsequently his followers has constructed a mazar and
a beautiful mosque at that place of pilgrimage for the people are in quest of
peace and tranquility. Admirers approve Baba a living legend warmly. Boga
Baba Mazar is a shrine for all devoid and devotee, mendicants are getting a
living by the charity of attendances.56

Votive candles are ablazed with lights as a mark of respect
with expression of gratitude. It is believed that Sincere prayrers are always
being answered.

An assemblage of zealous at the shrine deemed to be a conflux
of Hindu and Muslim, it could be only possible by toil undertaken by this holy
spirit which eventually became a precedent of true sense of secularism to be
followed by with a great esteem57.

HOLY PLACE AT GARUKATA PARBAT:

There is a holy place on the solitary hillock to the north of the
Urdhagaon, Nowgong district of Assam which is known as Garukata Parbat
or the hillock of cow slaughter. Though there is not a single mosque or
dargah, muslims of the locality regard it as holy place and visit the place for
religious prayer. There is a popular tradition in the locality that this might be
the same place here Rupai Garia, the muslim officer of Asom king Gadadhar
Singha instituted a “Shirni function” having slaughtered seven cows. As his

55 K.Zamal Ahmed, ed., Samenboy, An Assamese Magazine published by Boga Baba dargah,
P-20, 14th and 15th Oct.-2000, Dibrugarh, P-20
56 Reported by (I) Muhammad Idrish Ali Khadin of Boga Baba (II) Muhammad Abdul
Ali dargah.
57 J.A.R.S. Vol-1 & 2, P-40, 1813
contemporary saint, Azan Fakir, refused to attend the function. Rupai Gariya branded the pir as the enemy of Islam and its followers in Assam, and having taken orders from the king by blackmail he punished the pir by extracting his eyes.\textsuperscript{58}

During Mir Jumla's Assam campaign in 1662 A.D. the Mughal forces advanced not only as far as Gargaon, the Ahom metropolis, but also occupied it on March 17, 1662 A.D. and held it for some time. At Gargaon, Mirjumla struck coins in the name of the emperor Aurangzeb and constructed a mosque at Mankacher in Goalpara.

Mirjumla, however, soon went back after excluding a treaty with the Ahom king Jayadhraj Singha of January 9, 1663 A.D. whereby the Ahom king had to surrender more than half of the province of Darrang to the Mughals. It is said after Mirjumla's return, a number of qualified Muslim family's called Khanikar were given settlement by the Ahom King in the area near Dalbagaon which was seven miles away from Gargaon. After the conclusion of the treaty of Ghilajarghat Mirjumla on his return to Dacca, died at Mankachar on 31 March 1663. His graveyards is situated at Mankachar in the district of Goalpara Asom valley\textsuperscript{59}.

OTHER PETTY DARGAHS:

Apart from these. There are ample numbers of petty dargahs in the Brahmaputra of Assam, which have flourished during the period of our study. It is however be noted that most of these dargahs are not only insignificant but also bear no long tradition of history in their credit. But for a comprehensive idea about the shrines of the Brahmaputra valley, the importance of this dargah are not be under estimated in almost all these dargahs there are some fragments of ancient tombs or graveyards, but nobody, knows the origin or whatabout of these tombs. Yet it is an interesting matter that the people use are lying there for eternal sleep, considering them as spiritual saints of medieval Assam. Amongst such dargahs the name of

\textsuperscript{58} Dr. Alice Begg Bhuiya, \textit{Growth of Muslim population and it impact on Assam economic.}, p-19

\textsuperscript{59} M.K.Saikia : \textit{Assam Muslim Relation and its cultural significance. Golaghat 1978, P-213.}
Majdia dargah in Barpeta. Ulubari dargah in Guwahati. Bashvari dargah at Lakhimpur. Malegaon dargahs at Abhaypuri, Kameswar dargah at Hajo. Kamalpur dargah at Kamrup, Mir Jumla dargah Mankachar. Rajabazar dargah, Kalita Kuchi dargah, Agiathuri Hill dargah, Sila Senduri ghopa dargah, Madhapur dargah etc. may be mentioned. It is from the Statement of these dargahs, its appears that most of them are connected with some important figures of Assamese history and culture.

Besides all these, as it is known that in the vicinity of the Pingaleswari Siva temple of Hustasal within the Pati-Darrang Mauza in the district of Kamrupa, there is a ‘Maqam’ or holy place. There is a mosque within the “Maqam” which is said to be of recent origin, but it possesses a copy of “Holy Quran” which is said to be very old, and as the tradition goes, it was discovered in a place near the Pingaleswari Siva temple, where it was earlier kept buried in a wooden Box and alongwith the images of certain Hindu deity and a bull hewn made of stone. The images and the bull are said to have been preserved in the temple, while the Quran is kept in the mosque by the local Muslims. Adjacent to the temple there is a small earthen mound, which is believed to have been gradually rising above the ground and has been claimed by some local Muslims as the tomb of certain pir. But there is controversy as regards this assumption of the Muslims.60

There are another interesting tradition concerned the Iccha Parbat or high mountain in the east of modern Guahati. Around the mountain the people of Bodo tribal community live, who belief that this mountain is the abode of a Muslim ‘Gosain’ or Muslim saint, the holy spirit of whom still moves around the hill and there are people among the tribe who, as it is said have experienced the vision of this holy spirit on certain occasions. Often they come across, as they say, some warm and cooked food neatly placed on a certain rock, although no human being can be found around the place. Therefore in order to please the ‘Gosain’ they make offerings of milk on that rock.61

---

61 E. Gait, A History of Assam, P-36, Guwahati, 1984
This conviction of the Bodos as mentioned by Muhini Kumar Saikia about the holy spirit of the Musalman “Gosain” reminds us of Menhaji account that far in 1205 A.D., a chief of the Mech people accepted Islamic faith from Muhammad. Ibin-Bakhtiyar Khiliji and that all the followers of the chief became true admirers of the later. The Mech people from a branch of the Bodos or Kacharies of Assam. We may therefore presume that in the first quarter of thirteenth century Hazrat Jalal Uddin Tabrizi visited Assam and established his khangah in these places which were inhabited chiefly by the followers of the Meeh chieftains, who demonstrated their fidelity to, and admiration of Mahammad-Ibn-Bakhtiyar Khiliji and came for his rescue after his whole army was destroyed by the Ra of Kamrupa in 1206 A.D. on the bank of the river Barnadi to the east of Hajo.

SALIENT FEATURES AND CHIEF FUNCTIONS OF THE DARGAHI

From the foregoing discussion upon the shrines or dargah of the Bahmaputra valley of Assam, certain things are observed, which will not be unworthy to mention here. Though in the prophetic Islam, there are no any provision of Saint worship or tomb worship. But here in the Sufistic Islam, perhaps not only in Assam but every where in the globe. The Saint or tomb worship is very much common and a legal practice, as it is found, during the whole course of study. In life time the Saints were the man of piety and usually attracted attention because of alleged miraculous powers with having proofs (?) of divine favour and after their death their graves turn into a place of pilgrimage and worship.

Saint worship or the belief in saint and the worship of their shrines and tombs by the Muslims of India is not however peculier to Indian Islam. In fact, this all came largely ready-made to India, through those who introduced the religious orders into the country from Afghanistan, Persia and Iraq.

---

63 M.K. Saikia : Assam Muslim Relation and its cultural significance, Golaghat, 1978, P-212
64 T.Titus, Murry : Indian Islam P-131
65 Reported by the Khadims of Ghivas Uddin Auliya Mazar/dargah
Adopting the same trends, the Assamese Muslims have also adopted the method of Saint worship as a religious part of their life. In fact, the Muslim masses of the region seem to enter into the worship of Saint and their tombs with more enthusiasm than into the regular religious exercise which are obligatory. It is also a matter of fact that along with the growth of Khangah, dargah or mazars, the predominance of Mosques have considerably declined, however the other functions and festivals held in the mosques simply continued with its dim observance.

It is generally observed that the masses have deep belief on Saints whom they usually called Baba or Pirbaba or Murshid and their ability to grant requests fulfill desires and perform miracles is still a real, positive and practical belief. The devotee believes that the spirit of the Saint is actually present in the tombs, that he hears the petitioners and will intercede with Almighty Allah to grant requests or that the Saint may even fulfill them himself. This close intimate, personal relationship which the individual feels with the Saint and which he somehow believes the Saint holds for him, forms one of the most interesting phases in the study of Sufism and its missionary activities in (the Brahmaputra valley of) Assam.

They even believed that the miraculous powers of the Saints can help and solve almost the whole category of human needs. Therefore, the dargahs are being visited by litigants seeking victory in law cases, by the farmers for agricultural developments, by the women who desires a child, by the father who seeks healing for his sick children, by the merchants who desire prosperity in business, by the hunters who wants a lucky day, by the gambler and even by the thieves for safe atmosphere, by the students to do better in the examinations by the beloved for the fulfillment of their love and so on.66

It is also deserved that the tombs or the dargahs are usually under the care of guardians or management committees. Khadims are appointed to serve there in the dargahs. The dargah of the humble Saint like Ghiyas Uddin Auliya or Hazrat Jalal Uddin Tabrizi, enjoyas a humble care

---

66 Reported by the Khadim of Azan Fakir Dargah
in accord to their worth and dignity. The guardian Committee of the dargah are usually the direct lineal ir spiritual descendents of the concerned Saint, who are the sole authority to the income derived from the collections received from the visitors and other sources.

The visitors or the devotees who came to the dargah, generally made offering of money or any thing of value, the offering of flowers or the lighting of a lamp (chirag) or course they do merely made the recitation of “All Fathiha” (the first chapter of Quran), Durud Sharif and do ‘Munazat’ (prayer), obviously not in the mosque adjacent to the tomb, but in the tomb itself. Even many of the visitors used to stand or sit some where near the tomb, facing it and communes in his heart with the Saint, telling him his troubles, difficulties, desires, aspirations and rowing that, if the saint will be gracious enough to fulfill this desire, he will come again and will make as offering and obtain, which he there and then determines upon and promises to the Saints.

Another common aspect, as it is celebrated in almost all the dargah, is the celebration of “Urs” or death anniversary of the Saints. “Urs” is an Arabic term which means “wedding” and is used to refer to the Saints’ death, because in Sufi doctrine, it is believed that at his death there occures the union or wedding of his soul to that of Almighty Allah. Some times the “Urs” celebration continues for several days, but the great day of the feast is always the anniversary of the saints dargah. It has became an occasion for great rejoicing, meeting of friends and feasting, as well as the observance of religious exercise in memory of the Saint. Shop-keepers came and set up their rows of shops. Amusement makers are present with their merry-ground and swinging chairs. Book fairs are organises with the books containing the biography of the Saints, accounts of his miracles and marvelous deeds and elegies written in his praise. People go dressed into their best and gayest-attire. It became a time of festival for people of the locality, whether they have any particular belief on the Saints or not.

---

67 T. Titus, Murry : Indian Islam P-136
The main part of the “Urs” had to do with the rituals in connection with the Saints tomb, where every visitors are permitted to enter the enclosure of the mazar, after having carefully removed their shoes. Fathihas are said for the Saint, offerings of money, sweets, flowers, candles etc. are made and the worshipers pass out at night the “Khatam-e-Quran Pak” (reading of the whole Quran through at one sitting) is done. In order to do this, thirty parts or divisions of the Quran are allotted to thirty readers for reading and thus the “Khatam” ends for the benefit of the Saints soul. In this way, ‘Urs’ is a very important factor in the religious life of the Assamese Muslims and takes its place along with the other religious festivals. While some Ruses are of only local importance, others such as that of Ghiyas Uddin Auliya at Powa Macca or Hazrat Azan Fakir of Sibsagar, and others have a most extended influence, where thousands of people visit annually from great distances, at the time of this Urs festival.”