CHAPTER IV

SACRED PERFORMANCES
In this chapter the Sacred Performances which are observed daily at different intervals, at the dargāh are discussed. The chapter also focusses on the importance of the festivals conducted by the dargāh. A detailed account of the annual festival of the saint is given in the following pages. A place is considered 'divine' when it becomes a common platform of religious resort and where people of different sections of society converge,
with the feeling of oneness of devotion, to pray and worship Almighty. These divine places are gradually developed into pilgrimage centres due to attachment of sanctity and visiting them is believed to earn religious merit. Such places are termed as "Sacred Centres because purity and pollution is maintained" (cf. Vidyarthi, 1961:131). Secondly, rituals and ritual activities are conducted there. These rites can be performed either directly by devotees themselves or indirectly through the priests of the shrine who are called "Sacred Specialists". This is due to their role in the sacredotal activities and their role in the annual festival connected with the various rituals of the shrine. These rituals and celebrations are termed as "Sacred Performances", as such, these ritual acts have certain "merit" attached to them.

The sacred performances, conducted at Nagore-e-Sharief may be broadly divided into two types, viz, the activities followed as per Islamic religious law (Shariat) and the services though not prescribed in the Qurān followed by most of the Muslims in India, according to local traditions particularly the activities related to the death anniversaries of Sufī saints. They are known as non-Islamic or folk observances. The services of the former type are conducted at the mosque and that of the latter at the dargāh of a Sufī saint. In this study, we are confined to the latter type only.
RITUAL OBSERVANCES AT THE DARGĀH

The ritual activities conducted at the dargāh which are of local tradition, are a mixture of both Islamic and non-Islamic practices such as reciting the Qurān, performing the Fatihāh ritual and at the same time observance of the death anniversary celebrations of the saint. The saint during his life time strictly followed the preachings of the Prophet and also devoted his entire life to spread the divine message of Allāh to all. During the course of this, he not only mixed with the local populace freely but also managed to solve their problems. So, he was attracted by the local people who included Muslims, Hindus and Christians, et al. The saint's concern to his devotees did not stop after his mortal death and so his devotees continued to visit his tomb on a pilgrimage. Their faith in his capacities is so high that they visit the tomb at least once a year.

Rituals conducted at the dargāh

The saint preached the gospel of Sufism. He became popular not because of his ancestors came from holy land of Arab, but his concern for the needy and also because of his possession of miraculous powers. These were accepted not only by Muslims but also by people who belong to other faiths. After his death, his tomb became a centre of pilgrimage and so got established as a place where many rituals and celebrations were started, by his descendants.
They could do that since they were traditionally in charge of the dargāh and its activities. Both as custodians and hereditary descendants they are respected by all devotees of the saint. Even the rulers of Thanjavur and the Nawab of Arcot obliged and arranged a number of rituals at the dargāh. With this the local traditions which are according to Sūfī tradition, took precedence over the textual traditions. Once established as a tradition the hereditary descendants framed their own religious and ritual code of conduct and imposed these on the pilgrims. This included the duties, manners and style of performing rites, offering prayers and reciting the Fatihāh within the dargāh and gifts of offerings.

The rituals and practices performed at the dargāh can be classified into two types: The rituals observed as (1) daily routine and (2) on special occasions such as the festival days and annual festival (Kanduri) as follows:

The Daily Rituals

The daily rituals conducted at the dargāh consists of three primary services by the saint’s descendants. The first one is known as Khidmat conducted twice daily, once in the morning and again in the evening. The next service is known as Roshini, lighting the sacred lamps. This is followed by the ceremonial closing (Kadavu Adkaradu or Mukuradu) and opening (Kadavu Terakaradu) of the main doors of the shrine.
These services are considered sacred and are performed by the Mujāwars. First, in the morning at 4.20 the official key keeper of the dargāh (Adhīnam) opens the main gate of the dargāh. This gate is located towards the Southern end of the sacred centre. He along with the Mujāwars, walks through the inner door, and enters the dargāh. As they enter, the doors are closed, behind them. First, he lights the sacred lamps, which are located inside the dargāh and later those near the tombs of Yusuf Sahib (saint’s son) and Sultan Bibi Amman Sahiba (saint’s daughter-in-law).

In the mean time the Mujāwar enters the tomb chamber of the saint and removes the flowers which were offered during the previous night. In the mean time the floor of the tomb chamber is swept by the ritual attendants. Later fresh flowers, which were collected earlier from the sacred garden, are offered. After this service, the main doors of the chamber are opened to the pilgrims. To announce this, as a custom, the dargāh cannon is fired. All these activities are completed in just half an hour. By 7 a.m. the doors of the shrine are again closed till the evening service, when the above said activities are repeated. Every time the gates are opened and closed, the cannon is fired, to convey this to the pilgrims. However, the opening and closing of the dargāh gates for the day, do not coincide with the activities of the mosques there. In a dargāh the morning service starts before the call for the early morning prayer (Azan) at 5 in a mosque and ends in the early hours of the day i.e., just after the
completion of the early morning prayer (Fajr Ki Namaz) at 7 at the mosque. The evening services start just before the evening prayers (Moghrib Ki Namaz) at 6 and close after the night prayers (Isha Ki Namaz) at 8.30 at the mosque.

Roshini

Roshini in Persian literally means light. It refers to ritual lighting of the sacred lamps near the tombs of the saint and of Yusuf Sahib and Sultan Bibi Amman Sahiba. This ritual is conducted twice daily i.e., once in the morning and again in the evening, which are followed by service to the saint. For this rite first a plate (Agardan) containing sweets, incense sticks, small and round pieces of aloe-wood (Ud) are brought and placed in the middle of the outer railings of the shrine, by one of the Mujâwars. Simultaneously, Four large sacred lamps, incense sticks (Shamdân) are also kept in front of the tomb of the saint, while lighting the lamps and sticks. Holy drums and pipes are sounded at the Nawabat Khana. Then the priest lights the sacred lamps, which are fixed to the silver frame, towards the head direction of the tomb. Then the lamps and incense sticks kept in the other tombs are also lit. Lastly, the aloe-wood smoke is raised first in the tomb chamber of the saint and later in other tombs of the shrine. This concludes the rite of lighting the holy lamps.
Kadavu Mukuradu (Adakaradu)

This ritual is connected with the closing of the doors of the shrine for the day. The inner doors of the tomb chamber are closed twice daily, i.e., once in the morning and again in the evening. Except the inner doors of the tomb chamber, the main gates of the shrine are also closed during the nights, around 11. The closing time is extended by a few hours during the annual festival of the saint.

The pilgrims are allowed into the tomb chamber of the saint during the period between the two services. Only men are allowed inside the tomb chamber while women stand outside its main door and offer their prayer. The devotees who wish to enter the tomb chamber have to purchase an entry token, paying Rs. Two, per head. When the gates of the shrine are opened to the devotees the sacred specialists at the tomb chamber take their seats. Just outside the tomb chamber the servants who got this post by tradition Bandaris stand holding a stick (Asha) in their hand. All this arrangement looks like the setting in a royal court, since the saint is considered the king of the spiritual world (qutb ul Akthab). The servants stand as if they are waiting upon their master. This practice has been continued ever since the death of the saint.

Devotees first visit the tomb of the saint of Nagore and pay their respects by offerings vowed objects, tributes and homages and then only visit other tombs. The tributes are
paid in the form of conveying greetings (Salam), reciting the first page of the Qurān (Fatihāh) and invoking the blessing of the almighty, through reciting His names (Darud). The homage is paid even by way of offerings (Nazarana) such as flowers, sweetmeats sugar crystals, flags to be hoisted on the minarets, in honour of the saint. Some times the offerings are made in cash and paid to the priests or spent on feeding the poor, in the name of the saint. These ritual and meritorious activities are conducted with the help of Mujāwars in the shrine. A fixed fee is charged by the dargāh management for this service. But unofficially the priests accept gifts of cash (Nazarana) from the pilgrims. These ritual services can also be performed by the devotees themselves without the mediation of the priests. Besides these, services such as playing of holy pipes is performed twice daily i.e., once in the morning and again in the evening, in honour of the saint.

Like this, the rituals of the shrine are conducted by the Mujāwars who have this as a hereditary right and as the hereditary descendants of the saint. By virtue of this they are also the custodians of the shrine.

Special rituals of the Dargāh

In addition to daily and routine rituals a number of special rituals are conducted from time to time. They may be weekly, monthly and annual rituals conducted to mark some
special event in the life of the saint or his activities. Thursday is the week day of the shrine. On the night that falls between Thursday and Friday a special ceremony of audition (Moulud) is arranged inside the dargāh. The Trustees of the dargāh arrange for the conduct of the rituals in honour of the saint. The Trustees along with the local people, assemble at the Big Mosque, after the night prayer. The ceremony begins with the recitation of (Fatihāh) and the honour is sent to the saint. Lastly, sweetmeats specially prepared for the ceremony are distributed to the assembly, which includes the dargāh trustees, lineal descendants and pilgrims. On this occasion, a meditation (Zikr) session is also arranged. The audition concludes praising the saint’s genealogy (Silsila).

In addition to the audition at the weekend, the dargāh trustees as well as devotees arrange for the recitation of the entire Qurān (Qurān Khāwan), by equally sharing its different chapters by adequate number of reciters. In between the ceremony, tea is served to the gathering. At the end these reciters are rewarded by the assembly by giving them some amount of cash. After the ceremony as a custom, once again the first part of the Qurān is recited, by the gathering and the genealogy of the saint is read out. Finally sweetmeats and rose petals are distributed to the assembly.
A few festivals and death anniversaries of Sufi personalities are celebrated with great reverence by the dargah management. The latter are celebrated as annual festivals with great pomp and gaiety. Devotees from different religious faiths gather and worship the saint according to their own way. The annual death anniversary rituals celebrated, are for the saint, and the ancestors such as Yusuf Sahib, Sultan Bibi Amman Sahiba, Baba Fakruddin and Sultanul Arifin et al. It is believed that during the celebration, these great souls will be present at the dargah and also in an active state. So, praying and offering of gifts to them are believed to yield favourable results. So, devotees make use of these occasions and come on pilgrimage. To keep up this notion, the Sufi tradition of performing the festivals and the death anniversaries of Sufi personalities is conducted at the dargah of Nagore saint.

In South India the term Kanduri is used for the annual festival of a dargah. It is stated that the term is derived from Persian where it means "covering a table". In Indonesia the term used means "to connote a feast", "a commemorative meal" (Leiden, 1978:540). The New Royal Persian English Dictionary (1932:336) states that Kanduri means a feast or ceremony observed in honour of Holy Personages. The Tamil Lexicon and Jubilee Tamil Dictionary (1932) specifically explain that Kanduri is the festival held at Nagore in honour of the Holy saint of Nagore (Ibid:718).
In Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka the death anniversaries of Sufi saints are called by both the names Urs and Kanduri. In a few places it is known as pot (Kunde) festival, where in sweetmeats brought by the devotees are offered in small bowls, made in wheat flour. For example Rajab Ke Kunde and Sadiq Ke Kunde festivals are celebrated in honour of the saints of Khawaja Moinuddin Chisti, of Ajmer and Jaffar Sadiq of Iraq.

In some places the festival is observed by hoisting flags (Jande). For example the festival of Gyarmi/Mahaboob be Subahani-ke-Jhande of Bagadad and Khader Wali-ke-Jhande/ Syed Sahul Hameed Nagore Andavar-ke-Jhande are observed all over South India. In Nagore, the death anniversary of the saint is observed as Kanduri festival. Hence, it is called the annual festival Kanduri. The festivals conducted at the dargāh (see Chart. No. 4) are as follows:

1. Gyarmi

It is the death anniversary of Hazarat Syed Abdul Quadir Jelani of Bagadad, observed on the 11th day of Rabi II. Special dishes of the saint's liking are prepared and offered over the Fatihāh. Then the festival food is distributed to the poor in the name of the saint. A special recitation of Qurān is conducted during the night and the honour is sent to the saint. His miraculous deeds are remembered by the devotees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Name of the Festival</th>
<th>Festival Commemorations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rabi II</td>
<td>Gyarmi</td>
<td>Commemorating Hazrat Gousal Azam Syed Abdul Quadir Jelani's Ziyārat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rajjab</td>
<td>Rajjab-ke-kunde</td>
<td>Commemorating the Saint Jaffar Sadiq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rabiul Awwal</td>
<td>İd-Milad</td>
<td>İd-Milad or Miladu Nabi and Barah Wafat. Commemoration of the birth and death of the Prophet, Muhammad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Moharram</td>
<td>Moharram</td>
<td>Commemorating the Martyrdom of Imâm Hussain. On 10th day Tazia cenotaph are taken out in procession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rajjab</td>
<td>Shabbe-Miraj</td>
<td>The day Prophet was welcomed to Heaven. It is also known as Lailatul Miraj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shaban</td>
<td>Shabbe-Barat</td>
<td>Eve of the 14th Shabbe-barat. Night of seeking conferment of immunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shawwal</td>
<td>İd-ul-Fitr</td>
<td>Feast of breaking the fast of İd-ul-Fitr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Zul- Hijjah</td>
<td>İd-ul-Azha</td>
<td>İd-ul-Azha: festival of Sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Zul- Hijjah</td>
<td>Annual Festival</td>
<td>Commemorating Yusuf Sahib’s Ziyārat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rajjab</td>
<td>Annual Festival</td>
<td>Commemorating Baba Fakru-ddin’s Ziyārat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Moharram</td>
<td>Annual Festival</td>
<td>Commemorating Sultanul Arifin’s Ziyārat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rajjab</td>
<td>Annual Festival</td>
<td>Khawaja Moinuddin Chisthi’s Ziyārat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Shaban</td>
<td>Annual Festival</td>
<td>Commemorating Sultan Bibi Amman Sahiba’s Ziyārat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jamathal Akhir (Oct)</td>
<td>Annual Festival</td>
<td>Commemorating Sahul Hameed Nagore Andavar’s Ziyārat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Rajjab ke Kunde

Kunda literally means pot and Rajjab Ke Kunde is the festival of pots. But here the pots are prepared out of wheat flour and worshiped in commemoration of saint Jaffar Sadiq, on the 10th day of Rajjab month. The festival is celebrated for 1 to 30 days depending upon the availability of funds, by preparing and offering sweet dishes. In the beginning the myths related to saint's miraculous powers are read and the honour is sent to him. The food offered to the saint is consumed by the assembly with great reverence. The tradition says that only the Muslims are invited to this feast, because if some body takes the food without the state of purification, he will invite problems for himself. So even the Muslims go with great care, by taking a ritual bath, to eat the feast. The left over food is buried in the earth lest it should be consumed by wrong persons. Or else it is believed it will inflict trouble to both the persons: (1) those who conducted the feast and also (2) those who took the food with them. So devotees show great reverence towards this feast and festive occasion.

3. Id-Milad/Mila-du-Nabi/Bara-Wafat

The Prophet's birth and death days are popularly known as Bara Wafat. Bara means twelve and Wafat means death. It is celebrated on the 12th day of the 3rd Islamic month, in commemoration of Prophet's birth and also the illness he suffered for twelve days which finally led to his death. On
this occasion Quran is recited and the glory is sent to the Prophet. Houses and mosques are decorated and processions are taken out after the Fatihāh ritual.³

4. Moharram

Moharram literally means sacred month. The first month in the Muslim calendar year is considered sacred and rejoiced. During this month a festival is celebrated in commemoration of the martyrdom of Imām Hussain, the Prophet's grand son, who died on the 10th day of Moharram, for the sake of religion. Mourning is observed by the Shia Muslim community and cenotaphs (Tazia) are taken out in a procession and in memory of the martyrs.

5. Lailathul Miraj or Shabbe Miraj

In the month of Rajjab, the night that falls between 26th and 27th days, the Prophet got the call from Heaven. This is recorded in the Qurān (Chapter, 53:11-23; Chapter, 80:1-17). On this particular night, the Muslims assemble at the mosque and offer prayers for the forgiveness of their past mistakes.

6. Shabbe Barat

Barat literally means writing a conferring immunity. It is believed that on the 15th day of Shaban month, God takes account of all actions of human beings. So the Muslims want
to present a good account of themselves. So keep awake during the entire night and read Qurān and sing invocations in honour of Allāh, on their own behalf as well as their kith and kin. In the morning ancestral graves are visited to greet and pay respect to the departed souls. It is believed that the Prophet too visited the martyrs on that day.

7. Ḫidul-Fitr

The festival is celebrated after observing 30 days of fast, during the month of Ramazān. A special prayer of 20 genuflections called Tarawīth Namaz, is conducted daily during the night and one reading of Qurān is completed during this month. The special prayer Ḫid-Namaz, is conducted at an open community prayer ground (Ḫidigah). It is celebrated in memory of the night of power and destiny.

8. Ḫidul-Azha

It is celebrated on the 12th day of Zul-Hijjah month by those Muslims who have performed Hajj. This is observed in memory of the Greater Pilgrimage they performed to Makkah. On that day, in all the Muslim countries world over, the ritual of sacrificing an animal is performed. This ritual is the replica of the act conducted at Makkah 36 and for the benefit of those poor Muslims who because of their poor economic condition, may be unable to perform (Hajj) pilgrimage. Hence, the same ritual is conducted in every household by the Muslims world over and the honour is sent to
the saint Hazarat Ibrahim. It is celebrated in remembrance of the sacrifice willingly made by Hazarat Ibrahim his only son, Hazarat Ismail. A special prayer is conducted in the open community prayer ground, on that day. This festival is also called Bakr-īd at local level. Bakra means animal and īd means festival and so the festival is known as the festival of animal sacrifice.

Like this, throughout the year, one or other celebration or ritual is arranged at the dargāh of the saint, by the management. These activities help in keeping alive the spiritual values among the devotees. These also provide an opportunity to the devotees to come on pilgrimage to the dargāh which serves as a place of healing and relief to those who are suffering from ailments, pain and mental stress and strain. This service is provided to the devotees without any discrimination of caste and creed or consideration of financial and social status.

9. Annual Festival of Yusuf Sahib

Yusuf Sahib is the great grand father of the present lineal descendants of the dargāh. His death anniversary is celebrated by dargāh management in the month of Bakrīd, the last month in Muslim calendar year. On the 3rd day of the month the tomb is annointed with sandal paste and for this all the descendants of the saint and local devotees attend.
10. Annual Festival of Baba Fakruddin

Baba Fakruddin was the first son of Syed Yusuf Sahib. His tomb is located in Kattava Palli in Pudikottai district of Tamil Nadu. His death anniversary is observed in the fifth month of Muslim calendar year as an annual festival in that village.

11. Annual Festival of Sultanul Arifin

Sultanul Arifin was the second son of Yusuf Sahib and his tomb is located at Nattam in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu. His death anniversary is celebrated by the dargah management as an annual festival in that village.

12. Annual Festival of Khawaja Moinuddin Chisti

The death anniversary of Khawaja Moinuddin is celebrated in the Rajjab month, from 1 to 6th day, in the dargah.

13. Annual Festival of Sulthan Bibi Amman Sahiba

She is the wife of Yusuf Sahib, the spiritual son and daughter-in-law of Nagore saint. The day of her death is celebrated as the annual festival of the dargah built in her honour, in the month of Shaban. On that day a flower shawl (Chadar) is offered to her tomb, by her descendants.

ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF THE SAINT OF NAGORE

The death anniversary of the saint Sahul Hameed Nagore Andavar is celebrated as the Kanduri festival of dargah.
The myth associated with this festival says that as per the wishes of the saint, his son visited the grave of his father on the 3rd day after the death and greeted his father and got the reply. With this it was proved that his father, the saint, was present there and alive. So, he decided to observe this day as an annual festival and spread the news to the devotees and like this the annual festival started. This in the beginning, was conducted by only the lineal descendants of the saint, in a small scale. Later as the number of devotees increased it is observed in large scale. It is celebrated with great pomp and splendour and so it is known as the "Grand Kanduri festival". On this occasion, devotees throng the shrine from all parts of India and abroad and the participation of pilgrims from aboard has brought international repute. The festival lasts for fourteen days. It also brings the fusion of Hindu as well as Islamic rituals. At every stage, during the fourteen day festival, elements of Classical Islamic tradition such as recitation of Qurān, though only the first page is red, has become common. The daily and annual celebrations are conducted according to local traditions; which is a Hindu influence. The participation of non-Muslim devotees is another important aspect of this festival celebration. The rituals conducted at this festival are grouped into the following types, and the time table for the year 1993 is also given (See Appendix No. 11 and 12).
Chart No. 5: Sacred Performances Conducted at the Nagapatnam and Nagore Sacred centres (1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival Dates</th>
<th>Sacred performance</th>
<th>Place conducted the ritual conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates as per Muslim calendar</td>
<td>conducted during the Kanduri festival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparations</th>
<th>Festival Dates</th>
<th>Sacred performance</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26th Jamathal Avval 93 (J.Avval)</td>
<td>2 p.m. erection of flag posts on the five Minarets</td>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th J. Avval</td>
<td>11 p.m. receiving of Dargah flags. Installing the Iradum in the ‘Usimaram’</td>
<td>Nagapatnam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th Avval</td>
<td>8.30 p.m. firing of crackers at the Iradum</td>
<td>Nagapatnam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st day</td>
<td>1st J.Akhir 8.30 p.m. receiving of Faqir Jamas</td>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st day</td>
<td>1st J.Akhir 12 p.m. procession of Kodai</td>
<td>Nagapatnam &amp; Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st day</td>
<td>1st J.Akhir 8.30 p.m. flag-hoisting ceremony</td>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th day</td>
<td>8th J.Akhir 8.30 p.m. display of fireworks</td>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th day</td>
<td>9th J.Akhir 8 a.m. installation of Chandana Koodu in the Charriot</td>
<td>Nagapatnam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th day</td>
<td>9th J.Akhir 10 p.m. installation of Pir</td>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th day</td>
<td>10th J.Akhir 7 p.m. reception of Shawl</td>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th day</td>
<td>10th J.Akhir 8.30 p.m. procession of Chandana Koodu</td>
<td>Nagapatnam &amp; Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th day</td>
<td>11th J.Akhir 4.30 p.m. anointment of Sandal Paste to Saint’s Tomb</td>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th day</td>
<td>12th J.Akhir 5 p.m. Pir proceeds to sea-shore to end the fast</td>
<td>Nagore &amp; Chilladi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th day</td>
<td>14th J.Akhir 8.30 p.m. flag downing ceremony</td>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Today the annual festival is an important celebration of the dargāh. It attracts lakhs of devotees from near and far of places. Preparations for this festival start several days earlier to the day of celebration and a number of them go on till the day of the annual festival (See Chart No.5). They are as follows:

Erection of flag post

A ritual flag each is hoisted on the five minarets to mark the beginning of the annual festival. For this on the 26th day of Jamathul Avval, the 5th Muslim calendar month, the lineal descendants and the trustees of the dargāh assemble in the dargāh. In the attendance of the devotees, the first version of the Qurān is recited and the flags are hoisted from the five minarets. In the evening, the reading of the Qurān and meditation are performed by the Trustees of Thirupalli Manbarul Attukar Rathib Khana Trust. The founder of this Trust a poet, was a great devotee of Nagore saint. Hence, the singing of his devotional sings is arranged in the night. The celebrations, on that day, start by 10 p.m. and conclude on the following morning of 27th.

Reception to Nagore Dargāh Flags

On the 30th day, of the 5th Muslim calendar month by around 8 a.m., the town Khaji, along with the Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath, visits the Nagapatnam port to ceremonially
receive the four flags sent by the descendants of a devotee of the saint in Singapore. In the past the flags were sent by boat straight to Nagapatnam port. Now, since no passenger ships come to Nagapatnam, the same are sent by air to Madras and, there they are received by the Nagapatnam town Khaji. From Madras they are brought by a cargo ship to Nagapatnam port. Here the flags are received by the port authorities and kept in a place which is traditionally fixed. When the Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath and the town Khaji come to take them, they all together recite the first page of the Qurān and the flags are handed over to them. To these a fifth flag from the descendants of the Maharaja Pratap Simha of Tanjavur, is added. Each flag is arranged in a customary manner. 4

From the Port Office the flags are brought to the sea coast with great reverence and by keeping them on an elephant back, owned by the dargāh. Large number of devotees assemble on this occasion and show their reverence to the flags. After this, they are taken in a procession to the Nagai Meeran mosque. The myth relates that when the saint first came to Nagapatnam, he stayed in this place and performed his daily prayers and so to commemorate it later, a mosque was built and named after him. The flags are displayed at the mosque for the benefit of the devotees.
Procession of Nagore Dargah flags

The five flags are taken to the dargāh in a procession from Nagapatnam. Usually after the sighting of the New Moon, on the first day of the 6th Muslim calendar month (Jamathal Akhir). Earlier to the commencement of the procession a Fatihāh ritual is conducted. Next day the procession starts at 12 noon, accompanied with the five gift offerings to the saint and placed in - the big chariot (Peria Ratham), small chariot (Chinna Ratham), ship model (Muhammad Ghouse Testa), (Muhammad Gwalior Testa), and chettiar palanquin (Chetti Pallaq). The procession moves along the streets of Nagapatnam to sanctify its different residential areas.

Immediately ahead of the procession will be the aloewood cart and the fumes rising from the fire in the oven is believed to sanctify the path it moves. Just behind the flag procession will be the musicians playing the holy pipes. The procession which starts from the Nagapatnam Meeran mosque and passes through the Abhiram Ammal Sannidhi, Neela Datchayani Amman West street, East street, North street, Netaji road, Hospital road of Nagapatnam. Later in Nagore it moves along the route which is traditionally specified such as Kunjali Maraikkkar street, Miya street, Pandhaha Salai street, Thirupalli street, Sayyadupalli street and enters the illuminated Alankara Wasil gate of the Nagore Andavar Dargāh.

When the flags reach the illuminated west gate of the dargāh, they are received and carried on head by Quose Maraikkkar, the Khaji of Nagapatnam town. The lineal
descendants of the saint perform the ritual of reciting the Fatihāh to the flags. The flags are hoisted in an order depending upon the importance of the place. The first flag to be hoisted is on the Talaimattu minaret, located towards the head side of the saint's tomb and this is brought by placing it on the big chariot. The procession cost of this chariot is borne by the Jamath of the Nagapatnam town.

The second flag hoisted in the order is known as the Sahib minaret flag. It is placed in a palanquin known as the Chettiar palanquin and taken in the procession. It is named so since the expenses incurred in making the palanquin are traditionally contributed by the Chettiar, merchant community of Tamil Nadu.

The third flag to be hoisted is at the Muthubaq minaret, and this will be placed in the Muhammad Ghouse Testa ship model and brought to the dargāh. The expenses incurred in making it are contributed by the descendants of the devotee, by name Md. Ghouse. The fourth flag is known as Ottu minaret flag and brought in a small chariot. Its cost is met by a devotee from Singapore. When he vowed to offer the chariot to the dargāh, he was a resident of Nagapatnam and later migrated to Singapore and subsequently died there. His descendants continue to send the flags, during the annual festival of the saint. The fifth flag, hoisted on the big minaret, is brought for placing it on the Muhammad Gwalior Testa ship model.
Chart No. 6: Offerings made to the Nagore Andavar during the Annual Festival Procession, since its inception as a Dargah (1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of offering</th>
<th>Year of commencement</th>
<th>Initiator</th>
<th>Sponsorers today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Flag</td>
<td>1571</td>
<td>Saint's son, Yusuf Sahib</td>
<td>Muslim Jamath of Nagapatnam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Chandana Koodu</td>
<td>1571</td>
<td>Saint's son, Yusuf Sahib</td>
<td>Muslim Jamath of Nagapatnam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloe-wood cart and musical troupes</td>
<td>1571</td>
<td>Saint son, Yusuf Sahib</td>
<td>Muslim Jamath of Nagapatnam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ist Chadar</td>
<td>1571</td>
<td>Saint son, Yusuf Sahib</td>
<td>Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath and from 1560-1614 A.D. the descendants of the Maratha Royal family, and now the descendants of Palaniandi Pillai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I flag</td>
<td>1647</td>
<td>Ebrahim Khan of Jingi</td>
<td>Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II flag</td>
<td>1692</td>
<td>Nalla Sayyed Maraikkar of Nagapatnam</td>
<td>Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III flag</td>
<td>1702</td>
<td>Peer Nainar of Malaysia</td>
<td>Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV flag</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>Justice Dawood</td>
<td>Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath of Parangi Pettai, Nagapatnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V flag till</td>
<td>1769</td>
<td>Maratha rulers</td>
<td>Descendants of Pratap Simha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V flag today</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath of Thanjavur Simha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Around fifty minor items of offering in the form of models, are made to the saint and they are carried by the devotees in the procession. However only the chandana Koodu Chariot the aloe-wood cart and the musical troupes participate in the procession on the Chandan Koodu day.
Like this, the five flags are five offering models/replicas donated by the devotees and are brought and hoisted on the minarets of the dargāh. The flag hoisting ritual is known as Tuva jaro hanam and an important feature of the annual festival of the saint. On the flag hoisting day tens and thousands of pilgrims assemble at the dargah to get the blessings of the saint. At the time of flag hoisting the dargāh cannons are fired and holy pipes are played. From now onwards, till the completion of the festival, i.e., for fourteen days, daily, from 4.30 a.m. to 10 p.m. the cannon is fired at an interval of half an hour. During the period of annual festival, all these flags are hoisted in the morning by 4.30 and removed in the night by 10. The flags are simultaneously hoisted and removed in all the five minarets. But the flags offered by the devotees as votive objects to the saint, are hoisted on the big minaret by the dargāh Trustees, by 5.30 p.m.

Firing of Crackers

On the 8th day of Jamathal Akhir i.e., 8th day of the 6th Muslim calendar month, the dargāh trust arranges for the firing of crackers, between 8.30 p.m. and 10 p.m. This is a sort of entertainment to the pilgrims, arranged on the open ground near the west gate of the shrine.

Preparation of Sandal Paste

On the 9th day of Jamathal Akhir, i.e., 9th day of 6th
Muslim calendar month in the morning, Muslims of Nagapatnam and the members of the Muslim association, assemble near the shed of the holy car and perform Fatihâh ritual. After this the grinding of sandal paste starts. Later, it is taken to the wooden structure (Usimaram) specially erected to keep in that. The whole thing now is known as Tabooth or Ratham. This is also adorned with flowers and illuminated with electric bulbs.\(^6\) Taking this chariot in a procession along the main streets of Nagapatnam and Nagore is the main attraction on the Chandana Koodu day. The procession which starts at noon that day, continues throughout the night till the dawn of the next day. It moves slowly because it stops at every place to receive offerings from the devotees.

Reception to Faqir Jama

Jama is an Arabic term for a Sufi mendicant group. They are the spiritual descendants or disciples of the saint and come to the dargâh only during the annual festival. They come during this time to receive spiritual instructions from the saint, who is believed to get resurrected on the occasion. There are four such groups attached to the Nagore dargâh and each group consists of one leader Sarguru and one hundred members.\(^7\) They are the grassroot level functionaries of the Sufi tradition and at least once in a week go around the area assigned to them in the society, to spread the message of the saint. It is said that they have been coming to the dargâh, since the year of observance of the Saint's first resurrection.
To attend the annual festival the mendicant groups start arriving at the dargāh from the 1st day of Jamathal Akhir, the 6th Muslim calendar month. The committee of Trustees of the Nagore dargāh welcomes them at the dargāh with all tradition and gaiety. There is a customary order in which they arrive at the dargāh and the first one to arrive is the Banawa, by about 8 a.m. Banawa claims this honour because they belong to the Quadaria order, to which the saint of Nagore himself belongs. They are received by offering garlands, firing cannon and playing holy music. The members of this Jama are also called tonsured (Mutte) Faqīr, since they shave their heads clean.

The next Jama which is received at the dargāh by 12 noon, is Malang. They often grow long hair and hence they are also known as long haired mendicants (Jhata Faqīr). The third group to be received is Mondal Jama, by 3 p.m. Since they play a type of drum when they go for the propagation of the faith, they are also known as Danka Faqīr. The fourth Jama to enter the dargāh at 4 p.m., is Jalali. They are also known as Kombu Faqīr, since they carry a horn with them when they go to discharge their duties. The last Jama which enters the dargāh will be the Rafai Jama, at 5 p.m. They are also known as Gurz (mace) Jama, since they play on a mace instrument when they go for preaching the faith. They also beat themselves with this, on their body and inflict wounds to emotionally arouse the devotees and express their strong belief in the saint.
The mendicants who visit the shrine during the annual festival of the dargāh stay there for 40 days, i.e., till they complete one Chilla. After that they return to their respective geographical area assigned to them, to continue their regular duties of spreading the glory of the saint. They believe that they are the only group who follow the true path shown by the saint. As a part of their duty, they touch all the places which were visited by the saint in their Jurisdiction to spread the message of Allāh.

Installation of a Spiritual Saint

Late in the evening by 10 p.m. on the 9th day of Jamathal Akhir, the 6th Muslim calendar month, a spiritual exercise by a disciple of the saint is arranged. This ritual is known as Pir installation and conducted at the spot where the saint’s mortal body was offered with the last prayer (Janaje-ke-Namaz) and later a structure (Mandapam) was built over that. There is a popular myth connected with the origin of the Pir installation ceremony as told by the leader of the Malang mendicant disciple group. It is as follows:

While the Nagore saint was preaching in North India, two persons namely Moula Ali and Mohsin, got themselves inducted into the human brotherhood (Baiyat) by becoming his disciples (Murīds). Then after the saint went on a pilgrimage to Makkah, on foot. When he returned from Hajj to Hindustan, he came via Southern coast of India and also settled at Nagore.
As a result, he could not visit his native place, Manickpoor, where his two disciples stayed. When they could not meet their teacher for a long time, they developed a great desire to meet him. With this great desire, they set out on a journey to Nagore. On the way Moula Ali died and only Mohsin continued his journey. But his troubles were in vain, because by the time he reached Nagore, his spiritual master was no more. When he met the saint's spiritual Son Yusuf Sahib, who by this time had become the Khalifāh, and expressed his disappointment, the latter told him that he could meet his mentor through meditation (Zikr). Accordingly the disciple undertook meditation at the tomb of the saint and after three days, his wish was fulfilled. As a mark of fulfilment of this wish the disciple started visiting the tomb every year, during the annual festival. After the death of Mohsin this custom was continued by one of his disciples and this is still continued even today. This following, today has grown into a vast group and become known as Malang Faqīr Jama. They continue to visit the saint as a tradition every year to receive the spiritual guidance.

To get their spiritual instructions, the disciples have to revive the saint and this resurrected saint is known as Pir. So they come and start meditation. As a tradition it is believed, on the third day the saint gets resurrected. To play the role of the Pir, a younger member of the Jama is installed in a ceremony as the Pir. He sits at the Pir
Mandapan and undertakes the path of meditation (Tareekath) according to his religious orders of Sufism. From the 9th day of the Jamathal Akhir, the 6th Muslim calendar month he observes a fast for three days. The rules of fasting will be similar to those observed during the Ramazān month. On the third day, in the evening, ritual food is prepared by the members of his Jama. Those involved in cooking this food should cover their nose and mouth lest their breath should defile the food. Great care is also taken to see that it is not ritually polluted by any other means. After the evening prayer, the Fatihah ritual is offered over this sacred food and sanctified. Now it becomes known as Tabroq. This food is offered to the saint who is believed to have got resurrected himself and enter the Pir. With the Pir eating this food it becomes venerated further. Now this sacred food is distributed freely among the descendants of the saint, disciples and pilgrims, who are there at that time.

Later in the evening by 10 the Pir is dressed in the traditional attire by the head man, and both of them say their prayer. After that both visit the dargāh to seek the blessings of the saint. All the dargāh, trustees and lineal desandants of the saint, along with all the Faqir Jamas, assemble near the Pir Mandapam. After the Fatihah ritual the pīr is installed in the Pir Mandapam. The Khalifāh ties his two first toes together with a fine thread which remains intact for three days. During these three
days, the Pir observes fast. He also starts throwing fresh lemons over the assembly. It is believed that the lemon symbolically means the material wealth he has with him and he does so to show that he is not interested in them.

It is believed that the lemons thrown by the Pir have miraculous powers and who-so-ever gets them is believed to have his or her desires fulfilled, by the saint. If a barren woman gets the lemon soon she will be blessed with a child. So, devotees with wishes stand around him, without minding rain and shine, to catch a lemon to get blessed like this. The lemon can be procured for the benefit of oneself or on behalf of the beloved ones. If a person fails to get a lemon, he need not have to be disappointed since later, on personal request, the same can be obtained from the Pir. This shows two things that no devotee will be disappointed after praying to the saint, and secondly, the saint's treasure will not become empty.

During this festival, the five disciple groups who are camping in the dargah premises visit the tomb of the saint twice daily; at 5.30 a.m. and at 6 p.m. This routine changes after the completion of the Pir installation ceremony and then onwards they visit the tomb once in a week, on Thursdays. This goes on till the completion of the 40 days period. After that as mendicants, they go in to the society to spread the saint's message.
Reception of Rowla Sharief Chadar

In the past, the shawl Chadar\textsuperscript{10} used for covering the tomb of the saint, customarily came from the Maratha Kings of Tanjavur. Later, in 1923, a devotee of the saint Paliniandi Pillai, got permission from the king to have this privilege. Since then his descendants have continued to present the shawl (The detailed account of problems faced by Paliniandi Pillai and how he was able to overcome them with the help of the miraculous powers of the saint, are discussed in his autobiography) (See Appendix No.13). On the 10th day of Jamathal Akhir by 7 p.m., the dargāh trustees and the descendants of the saint’s son, visit the family of Pillai to receive the Shawl. On their arrival Sri Pillai’s family members ceremoniously receive them and present the shawl which by now will be displayed in the centre hall of the house. After the \textit{Fatihāh} ritual it is placed on an elephant back and taken to the dargāh. The procession is led the accompaniment of pipe musicians. Pillai family members also accompany them to the tomb and offer their prayer to the saint. They also distribute a few coins as gift (\textit{Nazarana}) to the dargāh attendants. The shawl presented by them is left on the tomb of the saint, for one full year. If the devotees offer the shawls, they do not spread them on the tomb of the saint. But symbolically touch them to the tomb of the saint and after offering \textit{Fatihāh} ritual, they are returned to the devotees, who in turn keep them in their houses as sacred objects and worship them.
The old shawl from the dargāh is claimed as a right by the Pillai family, who in turn preserves them as sacred objects by keeping them in the domestic altar, along with the images of their family god. They do so since the shawl, after its offering to the saint, has become sacred. The devotees also believe that the possession of such shawls symbolically amounts to the presence of the saint with them. So they desire to possess such of them. Knowing this sentiment of the devotees, the dargāh management auctions the old shawls with them in public annually. The amount so collected is spent on the celebration of the annual festival.

**Procession of Sandal Paste Chariot (Chandana Koodu Tabooth)**

This is another important ritual performed during the annual festival of the saint. On the 10th day of Jamathal Akhir, the 6th Muslim calendar month, the Nagapatnam Muslims and the Jamath assemble near the Tabooth, which is specially erected for the purpose. Traditionally the procession starts after completing the Fatihāh ritual over it, by 8.30 p.m. The chariot is pulled by the pilgrims along the specified route; which is more or less the same as the route of the flag procession. In the procession, the aloe-wood cart will be ahead of the holy chariot. A variety of musical instruments such as drum (Tappu), a troupe of horns, double reed (Nadaswaram) and a three-piece western band (Sahinai), form part of the procession. The holy chariot stops in a number of places where devotees offer their gifts and
respects to the saint. The chariot pullers are the customarily fixed people, who are skilled persons. Because the holy chariot moves in narrow lanes of the twin towns of Nagapatnam and Nagore they have to be very careful. They will be paid for their services by the Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath. Here the chariot pullers are also given tea or coffee, to refresh themselves. At the conclusion of the procession, they are given a piece of new cloth or a towel (Thundu) as a gift. Sweetmeats offered to the saint by the devotees, are distributed to the pilgrims who accompany the procession.

The holy chariot concludes its journey at the customary place in the heart of the Nagapatnam town, where a decorated disc (Thotti Pallaq) is also housed. This holy chariot and disc when placed together gives the appearance of a man holding an umbrella. This reflects the Hindu practice of holding umbrella to the god. This is a Hindu custom borrowed by the Nagapatnam Muslims, to honour the saint's chariot, while carrying the Chandana Koodu. This disc is brought out only during this festival and always placed inside the shed. This is a round structure, illuminated with lights and flowers, arranged by the local Hindu devotees of the saint. The expenses incurred on its maintenance are exclusively borne by the Hindu devotees from Nagapatnam and outside.

After visiting Nagapatnam the holy Chariot reaches Nagore town where it is also taken around the streets of
Nagore to sanctify these areas and the people. Finally, around 4.30 a.m. on the 11th day of the festival, it reaches the Southern gate of the dargāh and parked there till the festival is over.

Annointment of Sandal Paste

The sandal paste needed to annoint the tomb of the saint is obtained by grinding the sandal wood. As extracted it is filled into two pots and kept in a holy Chariot specially brought for it. The same is taken around the town in a procession. The entire activity is known as Chandana Koodu. On that day the flags from the five minarets are not removed the way they are done on other days, to show reverence to the chariot. The flags from all the five minarets also flutter, during the entire day of 10th. On the 11th day, when the chariot reaches the South gate of the dargāh, around 4.30 a.m., the Sandal Paste is ceremonially received by the lineal descendants of the saint and is carried on their head, to the tomb chamber.11

Once the lineal descendants are inside the tomb Chamber, its doors are closed. The eldest among them i.e., Khalifāh conducts the annointment rite by saying the Fatihāh to the saint. Later the sandal paste is annointed to the tomb. Over that the shawl presented by the descendants of Pillai is also spread.
Once the rite of anointment of the sandal paste is over, the Khalifāh gets possessed by the saint and he is led out of the tomb Chamber. After this the gates of the dargāh are opened to the public. Pilgrimage to dargāh during this celebration means participating in the sandal anointment ceremony. After the ceremony, the devotees take a portion of the sandal paste from the tomb, as prasadam. It is believed it has power to cure all ailments.

Pir’s Visit to the Shore

On the 12th day of the festival, around 5 p.m., the Khalifāh and dargāh trustees assemble at the Pir Mandapam. After conducting Fatihāh ritual, the thread tied to the toes of the Pir is ceremonially removed by the Khalifāh. Then the Pir along with the headman of his Malang Jama and devotees, proceed to the shore, which is by the side of the Chilladi dargāh. Here he visits the place where the saint had performed the first prayer on arrival at Nagore. Here a ditch is dug on the coastal line. It is believed that the water from this ditch though dug by the side of the sea, will be sweet during the festival. The devotees believe this water will have miraculous power, since it is sanctified by the touch of the Pir. After a Fatihāh ritual, the Pir eats the sweetened rice, mixed with milk (Khir) and break the fast. The left-over food is distributed among the assembled devotees. While returning, the ditch is ceremonially closed.
The Pir after breaking the fast (Rozah), proceeds to the edge of the sea on foot, to greet the Lord of Ocean (Hazarat Khizr). After performing the Fatihah ritual there, he returns to the dargah and this marks the completion of the ritual of the installation of the Pir. Later, he joins his Jama members and he will be treated as one among them and ready to go on tour. Following year once again the rituals will be repeated and these will provide an opportunity to the devotees to come on pilgrimage.

Dismounting of Flags

The ritual of lowering the flags from the minarets marks the closing of the annual festival or in other words the departure of the saint from the dargah. On the 14th day of the festival, around 8.30 p.m., the Trustees of the dargah and the five Faqir Jamas, assemble in the dargah and first conduct the Fatihah ritual. This is followed by the ritual of reciting the genealogy of the saint. By this they show that they have great respect to the saint and his ancestors. Then the flags from the five minarets of the dargah are removed. While lowering the flags cannon is fired to indicate this. During that night the entire Qurān is recited by a group of Muslim brothers. This lasts till about 10 p.m. Finally, the ceremony comes to an end with the offering of prayer to the saint and distribution of sweets to the gathering. This marks the completion of the annual festival.
The ritual performances conducted now-a-days at the dargāh of Nagore are not approved by Islām. But they are practised by a section of devotees who are still the followers of folk Islām i.e. Sufism. These activities are a mixture of Islamic as well as local traditions. The Islamic practices constitute only the rites of recitation of the Qurān, performing of Moulud and Fatihāh at every stage of the dargāh activities. The practices taken from the local tradition are the celebration of the death anniversaries of holy men and women. The flag hoisting and sandal paste annointment rituals arranged during the annual festival, are also local customs. These resemble Hindu customs where taking the gods/goddesses from their abodes are taken out around the locality with music and other attractions and later distribution of Prasadam to the assembly, is a tradition. The fusion of the two ritual tradition is due to the teachings of the saint. Secondly, the earlier local Hindu tradition was so favourable it directly or indirectly encouraged the Sūfī saint cult.

Thridly, the popularity of Sufism also indicates the presence of helplessness, fear, and ignorance on the part of the devotees. In the absence of rational thinking and secular outlook, it has forced them to accept what all that the priests say. Lastly, the persistence of several Hindu ritual objects such as double reed musical instrument, holy water and also material objects such as sacred lamp, flags, sandal paste, sacred foot wear, tank water indicate
that in the past it is not only the devotees of the Sufi saint but also the shrine itself belonged once to a Hindu god. In the past owing to political disturbances and rigid ritual pollution rules, there came a change in the religious and social life of the devotees of Nagore. The Hindu parallels find in rituals, ritual objects, terms used in the address, prove this point. Usually, the Hindu temples are attached with a water source such as a tank since they need water to purify one-self before undertaking any ritual. Though the tank attached to the dargāh is said to be in association with the saint other factors, such as the Hindu kings of Thanjavur sent gifts to the dargāh during their rule and till recently, are a few points to prove that. The offering of a shawl to the saint’s tomb by a Hindu devotee, through generations, is also another point to support this statement. The dargāh is known as the place of Nagore Andavar. But for the people belonging to the local level it does not matter who is the god in it as long as He brings them good and, they are also allowed to visit Him to express their gratitude or to take vow to Him, when in difficulty.

Foot Notes:

1 A cannon is fired in honour to the saint. It is also fired to welcome the disciples of the saint. Nowadays, it is also fired even during the visit of State guests such as Ministers, to the shrine.
2 Urs is an Arabic term which means wedding and is used to refer to the saint's death, because of the Sufi belief that at his death there occurs the union (Wasl) or 'wedding' of his soul with Allah.

3 This procession is a recent addition to the birth day celebration of the Prophet Muhammad, on the Id-Milad day.

4 Customarily the flags should be of the size of 10 x 20 meters. In the centre of the flag there will be Zulfikar i.e., the emblem consisting of one shield and two swords of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law. On the flag the words "O Lord of Nagore, my vows be fulfilled" (Ya Nagore Murade Hassil) will also be embroidered. The flags will be imprinted with sandal paste palm prints of the devotee who gifts the flag. Whoever desires to gift the flag should pay a cash (Kanikai) of Rs. 1001/- to the dargah. Such flags are hoisted daily at 6 p.m. on the big minaret.

5 The saint in the local parlance is known as Meran Sahib. When the saint first arrived at the Nagapatnam town, he stayed in this mosque. Hence, it is named after him as M grāh Palli (mosque).

6 Illumination has no ritual significance except that it adds more colour to the procession and attract devotees to see it. The electric power generators used for the generation of the electricity needed for illumination, are mounted on a vehicle and taken along with the holy car.

7 Totally the number of mendicants comes to 404. That is 4 leaders and 400 followers. The number of mendicants is fixed traditionally since it is believed that many disciples accompanied the saint when he went around to spread the message of God. They belong to four groups by name, Banawa, Malang, Mandal and Jalali. Later the fifth, a local group, Rafai Jama, was added to the original four which are believed to be organised by the spiritual son of the saint.

8 Generally Pir means a spiritual mentor or master. But in the present context Pir denotes a pious spiritual person, who performs spiritual exercises. Pir installation is practised by only the Malang mendicant group, since to this group that the spiritual saint belongs.

9 The belief is that during the meditation period the Pir would not take any food. Neither he goes for nature calls nor moves. It shows that the Pir is possessed by the saint in the revival form. Hence, he can not take food. It is interpreted by us that the saint was revived in the form of a Pir and the disciples wanted to take him to the society. But the lineal descendants do not like to leave the saint off. So, symbolically they tie the toes of the Pir. So, that the devotees will come to the dargah and get blessings which in turn will give a way of living to them.
10 The shawl will be specially woven in Banaras at the behest of the Pillai family. It will be decorated with silver thread and with a lining of cotton thread. The tailor who stitches the lining for the shawl as a rule charges only for the thread and not for his labour; and this serves as his gift of service to the saint. Strict ritual purity is maintained while bringing the shawl and also till it is offered to the dargāh. Unlike in Ajmer at Nagore the tradition of presenting shawls by devotees is not there. Instead the flags are offered to the saint here. This custom is found only in South India. Therefore, the annual festival of the saint is also called the Nagore ke Jhande (flag) festival (Saheb, 1995:4).

11 To control the pilgrims the dargāh management issues entry cards to those who want to go inside the tomb Chamber. Two types of cards white and yellow, are issued. Those with the white card are allowed to go upto the tomb and witness the annointment ritual.

12 During the sandal paste annoint to the Saint’s tomb, the Khalifāh observes silence.

13 The devotees who want to visit the tomb on this day have to pay Rs. 5/- as entry fee. During other days only Rs. 2/- is collected. The money so collected is utilized for dargāh fund.

14 The custom of hoisting and dismounting of religious flags on temple, is a Hindu custom and it is observed even today. This was continued by the dargāh authorities to please the local Muslim devotees who were converts to the new faith and are still not totally Islamised. It is a fact that there is no flag hoisting ritual observed in Classical Islamic tradition and also no where in the Islamic world.
Devotees purchasing pigeons from the Mujawar to fulfil their vows to the saint.
Devotees offering ghee to the saint at the ghee-dan sacred centre, through the Mujawar there.

Devotees performing aloe-wood worship to the saint with the help of Mujawar there.