Political Sufism in Contemporary Kashmir: A Study of Shrine-State Relations

Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of the degree of

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DECLARATION

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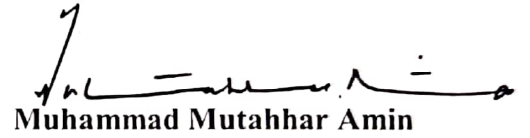

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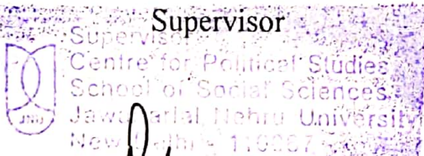

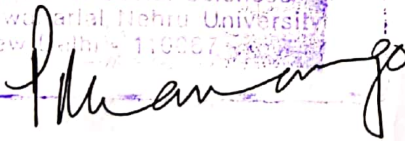

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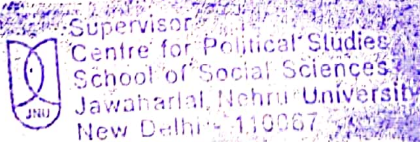

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Dedicated to my Paternal Grandfather, *Toath*, and,

my Maternal Grandmother, *Bo'abe*

both of whom left us early, but whose lives continued to inspire us.

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(Allah! We do not worship You as You deserve We do not know You as You deserve

We do not recite Your Name as You deserve We do not thank You as You deserve)

-Sayyid Ali Hamdani, *Awrad-e-Fattiyah*

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Mutahhar

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Introduction

On a very sombre evening, after another instance of violence in the 'troubled' region of Kashmir, my birthplace, my family and I were sitting in the room where we usually sit in our home. I was discussing the violence that had just occurred in the evening with my family which includes my father, mother and sister. Such discussions, in the perceived safety of our homes, are arguably the bread and butter Kashmiris have with their afternoon tea. A ritual repeated repeatedly over the years, these are attempts to make sense of the 'inexplicable' situation we find ourselves in. These discussions, and the resultant predictions we make, possibly help us, to prepare for the unexpected and unforeseen circumstances, in the unforeseeable future; as a family, as a generation and as a *qaum* (community).On that day, as with our other discussions, the subject did not limit itself to the event just occurred, but veered to become a discussion about the general nature of politics, resistance, and religion. In the ensuing discussion of that day, I could discern a slight differentiation in the understanding of Kashmiri politics, the reasons for its current predicament and the possible solutions between my father and my mother. Both had religious justifications for their viewpoints, and both derived their reasoning from one *pir* (saint) or the other. Slowly but steadily, a pattern emerged that became quite explicit in their reasoning. Consequently, I could precisely trace back their political beliefs to their Sufi beliefs, which objectively relate to the different *tariqa* or *silsila* (Sufi order or lineage) that my father and my mother, respectively, adhere to. This theological difference, consciously or unconsciously, was evidently translating into political differences.

This character of Sufism, as a doctrine influencing the political beliefs of its adherents, contradicted what I had experienced academically, including while reading literature on Kashmiri Sufism. Unfortunately, or perhaps unsurprisingly, the literature on Kashmir mainly deals with the dispute of Kashmir, its contours, reasons and possible futures. Most of this literary corpus evince a similar trajectory of Kashmiri politics, highlighting the decline of tolerant and quietistic Sufism and the rise of fundamentalist and orthodox Political Islam. The movement towards this perceived fundamentalism is coterminous with the decrease in (popular) support for the Indian rule in Kashmir and the simultaneous increase in resistance to it. As a participant in the everyday reality of Kashmir, these correlations seem unfounded. A case in point is the 1971 elections held in Kashmir. During this election, Sheikh Mohammad

Abdullah and the Plebiscite Front,[1] considered closer to the Sufi thought system, were banned from contesting, while Jamaat-e-Islami, an organisation espousing Islamist beliefs, contested.

Nonetheless, it was not about the faulty correlation of one theological discourse with one political stand but the very construction of Sufism as theologically distant from politics, which seemed the bigger obfuscation. Subsequently, I realised that this obfuscation is a global phenomenon, at least at the dominant and popular levels. Thus, began the journey of this research.

Political Sufism, Political Islam and the Nature of the Political

This PhD challenges the evacuation of the 'political' from Sufi Islam, and re-ascribes 'political' with Sufism. The sanitised and, supposedly, 'apolitical' version is promoted as a desired alternative for Muslim subjectivity over one emerging from radical Islamic fundamentalism or the discursive tradition of Political Islam. I have employed the concept of Political Sufism as a lever to study the Sufi theological doctrine, the space of the 'Sufi shrine' and its 'rituals', evaluating the role of Sufi epistemology and its practices in shaping political conceptions' of the Kashmiri population.

This research portrays the political implications of different practical, scholarly and embodied forms of knowledges that are specific to the Sufi tradition. The study emphasises that Sufi values are not inherently 'apolitical,' while maintaining their constitutive difference from the overt political vocabulary and methods emanating from Political Islam. Political Islam is (usually) understood "as a modern phenomenon that seeks to use religion to shape the political system."[2] It "imposes a normative framework on society in a blatant attempt to make society fit into its mould."[3] Political Islam is, therefore, directed towards the system, the capture of that system to reorganise the society in consonance with its interpretation of Islamic theology. It is, therefore, a top-down approach that employs a minimal understanding of politics, limited to the state and its apparatus. On the other hand, in addition to the direct relation to the political

[1] Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was a political leader in 20th century Kashmir, condifered by some to be the tallest leader of Kashmiris in that century. Plebescite Front was an organisation founded by the loyalists of Sheikh Abdullah in 1955 after Abdullah was dismissed from the government and imprisoned by the Indian State. For details, see the seventh chapter of this thesis.
[2] Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Introduction," in *Routledge Handbook of Political Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh, (New York: 2021), 1.
[3] Akbarzadeh, "Introduction," 1.

structure, the political interventions of Sufism, I contend, are also of a 'diffused' and 'subtle' nature, actualised through the inculcation of virtues through individual participation in Sufi rituals.

Such a project, however, necessitates that politics should be defined in a broader sense. In its procedural and structural aspects, 'politics' relates to the matters of government and policy making. However, in its broader definition, politics is linked to the creation of self, identity and a sense of community.[4] This aspect of human life is also 'political' because it necessarily engages with power and is essential to how individuals make sense of the broader environment in which they exist. This further guides its actions and responses to the environment around it, consequently constructing its agency. In this formulation, 'agency' is not conceptualised "simply as a synonym to resistance to relations of domination but as a capacity of action that specific relations of subordination create and enable."[5]

Accepting such a proposition of 'agency' and 'politics' opens up the field of religion and its role in the constitution of an individual because since there are "multiple ways in which one inhibits norms,"[6] including agentival capacity, then, sacred spaces and shrines are also important means to achieve such inculcation. Hence, the research understood different rituals and practices associated with Sufi shrines, "as a means of teleological self–formation."[7] Concurrently, I also attempted to interrogate how Sufism, a particular religious discourse, creates and employs the category of the political in doctrinal corpus.. During this research, I investigate various methods, mechanisms and means that religious authority uses to construct the category, concerns and, ultimately, understanding of the 'political' within an individual. The study inquired the ways in which political agency of an individual or a group is constructed, by inculcating different norms, values, ethics and morality, through everyday interaction with the doctrinal canon, especially within the confines of a sacred space.

While this remains one dimension of the study, the other dimension deals with means through which sacred spaces intervene in the regular 'procedural' politics of a society. Sacred spaces have been, historically and contemporarily, used as sites of political mobilisation and garnering

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[4] There are different ways in which politics and political is understood in the contemporary political theory. For an exhaustive overview on the subject see, Adrian Leftwich ed., *What is Politics? The Activity and its Study*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2004).
[5] Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 17.
[6] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 17.
[7] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety,* 128.

political support. Due to the sheer number of daily participants (which increases during special occasions), these spaces are essential sites to promote political (counter)agendas and initiate political (counter)movements. In addition to interrogating overt means and occasions of performing such tasks, this study attempts to find a link between the everyday and ordinary practices prevalent in a sacred space and the propensity to adhere to or support a particular ideology. The study also tries to uncover the link, if any, between such ideological or political support to theological principles or interpretations a particular sacred space ascribes to.

Thus, Political Sufism encapsulates all these diverse meanings and aspects of politics in a community. It is, as opposed to Political Islam, a hybrid approach, containing both top-down and bottom-up approaches, to construct political conceptions and effect political change. It is procedural and substantive. It signifies the use of space for mobilisation as well as the transformation of the self of an adherent. From history to contemporary, it affects every phase of community life in every respect. It is, therefore, a broad concept emanating from a broader conception of politics.

Objectives and Research Questions

The objective of this research was to understand the character and function of Sufism and shrines (sacred sphere) in the political discourse of Kashmir, with respect to the constitutive status of the modern State (political sphere) in determining the extent of the religious sphere. This constitutive status is bestowed upon the 'State' by the twin theories of secularisation and modernisation. Modernity is essentially premised on secularisation as it has been argued that "for a society to be modern, it had to be secular and to be secular it had to relegate religion to non–political spaces because that arrangement is essential to modern society."[8] However, secularisation, both as a historical process and an analytical category, evolved in a particular historical and cultural context, and at a particular historical time. Although "all historical processes are dynamically interrelated and mutually constituted,"[9] there are still specific differences between different societies based on their respective histories and traditions.

Thus, the category of secularisation "becomes problematic once it is generalised as a universal process of societal development and once it is transferred to other world religions and other

[8] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 182

[9] José Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective." In *Religion, Globalization, and Culture*, 101-120, (Brill, 2007), 11.

civilisational areas with very different dynamics of structuration of the relations and tensions between religion and world, or between cosmological transcendence and worldly immanence."[10] As Sufism emerged, discursively speaking, outside the western context of secularisation and modernity, it is unfair to colour Sufism and its efficacy within those terms. Therefore, it is vital to engage with Sufism in a specific context of its existence. To do so, it is important to challenge the singular and monolithic conceptualisation of Sufism by bringing forth the plural doctrinal and practical nature of Sufi thought. This objective was operationalised through questions around each aspect of Sufi thought, including its history, institutionalisation and practice, which are crucial in evaluating its political nature. This thesis, thus, revolves around the broader question which is: what is the role and scope of the Sufi shrines in shaping the political life and trajectory of Kashmir in relation to the institution of the State?

The most important and commonly associated aspect of Sufism is its values, ethics, rituals and practices, which form its core fundamentals. Their fundamental nature to the tradition of Sufism makes their study imperative for any research claiming to advocate a specific consequence of the overall doctrine. Consequently, this research engages with them at multiple levels. First, by evaluating the different notions of different Sufi saints across its global history that influence and shape the interaction of their adherents with their socio-political realm. This research brings forth the plurality of ideas and practices, preached or employed, by Sufi saints of some popular Sufi orders of Kashmir, on engagement with the political realm, and their resultant effect on the political concepts of their successors and on their adherents. This aspect of the research answers what are the means and methods espoused by prominent Sufi saints with respect to interaction with the political structure and its associated personalities?

This research, subsequently, also engages with the moral and discursive aspects of Sufi thought, by analysing how have Sufi practices, rituals, and ethical discourses crystallised conceptions of self, identity, and community. Concisely, what is the role of discursive traditions and moral doctrine emanating from Sufism in imbibing political sensibilities within its adherents? Further, it brings forth the role of Sufi saints in the lives of their adherents in addition to spiritual enhancement or religious training, and how do these interventions by Sufi saints in culture, language and history of a region, shape the conceptions of an adherent regarding his identity and community?

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[10] Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization," 12.

The other commonly associated aspect of Sufism are its institutions, the shrines that are either built in memory of a Sufi or have a saint entombed in it. This research brings forth the meaning of these shrines in the everyday life of a community, beyond a space of gathering. The research argues that for Kashmiris, religious rituals, architectural confines and even commemorative events are a means to understand its past, present and future. Essentially it reveals the efficacy of Sufi shrines to the history of a community, its conceptions of itself and its survival as a group.

With the rise of popular politics, shrines have also emerged as a space to mobilise people, build movements and effect change. However, since shrines is not just an ordinary space or site of mobilisation but also a site of divine presence and reverence, how does that affect the evolution of (socio-political) movements and their subsequent results? Shrines cannot be understood as a usual 'public sphere; where people interact to put forth political demands. Shrines are spaces that have a meaning of their own, while adherents are not autonomous, free individuals congregating at a neutral space. Building on these aspects, the research argues that the movements emerging from the space of a shrine, especially a prominent one, is fundamentally different, both in the nature of the emergence as well as its effect on the socio-political realm of a region. It is fairly evident by the political consequences of the movements that emerged from the 'sacred' precincts of shrines in Kashmir.

Furthermore, shrines do not exist in a political vacuum but are under the administrative and legal structure of the 'modern' state. Consequently, the nature of State-control over the management of these shrines, both administratively and legally, reflect the authority of Sufism and its institutions within the politics of the region. Resultantly, in the context of Kashmir, it evokes the question as to how has the legal and administrative structure of the State interacted with and enabled the political role of shrines within the valley?

Finally, Sufism as a social phenomenon also involves different set of actors, such as the successors of the saint or political leaders who employ Sufism for their political goals. Each of these has a direct influence on the way Sufism is conceived by the general public. Sufis and their successors exert considerable influence on the local population and have, historically, been quite interactive with the political structure across history. Conversely, political leaders have also used Sufism as a discursive tradition, and through the space of a shrine, to project and promote their political ideology. This research uncovers this political aspect of Sufism by

bringing forth the contours of the interaction between Sufism and the political structure of the valley across the spectrum of Kashmiri history.

Methodology

This research was undertaken employing a qualitative methodology, using different methods of analysis. Due to the prevailing situation in Kashmir during my fieldwork, first on account of the abrogation of article 370 of the Indian constitution, which granted limited administrative autonomy to the region of Jammu and Kashmir, and the subsequent military lockdown imposed on the population on 5th August 2019. While this lockdown was in place, Kashmir, along with the rest of the world, was put under administrative lockdown owing to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. On account of these political and situational realities, the methodology of this research had to be significantly restructured. Field visits were only possible for a limited period in 2020 and 2021. During this available time, I visited ten shrines of the valley, which are *Dargah-Hazratbal*¸ *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya*, *Dastageer Sahib* and *Makhdoom Sahib* in Srinagar; *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* in Tral; Ziyarat *Nur ud-Dīn Wali* at Chrar; *Ziyarat Zainuddin Wali* in Aishmuqam; *Ziyarat Baba Nasibuddin Ghazi* at Bijbehara; and *Baba Reshi* at Tangmarg. Due to the paucity of time, extended engagement was undertaken with *Dargah-Hazratbal*¸ *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* and *Ziyarat Nooruddin Wali* or *Chrar-i-Sharief*. This engagement consisted of regular visits to these shrines and interactions with devotees and people associated with thsee shrines, including *sajjada-nishins* (successors), *khadims* (workers), *awqaf* (management) officials and shopkeepers around these shrines.

Visiting archives and libraries, necessary for the qualitative part of this research, was also possible only for a limited time, due to the aforementioned reasons. During that time, I visited the Jammu and Kashmir Government Archives in Srinagar, the Public Information Bureau Newspaper Archives in Lal Chowk, Srinagar, the University of Kashmir Archives in Allama Iqbal Library at Hazratbal Campus of the varsity, and the Nehru Memorial Library and Museum archives in New Delhi. Reviewing government records and intelligence documents on shrines and other associated aspects was undertaken in the Jammu and Kashmir Government Archives. There were also documents related to *waqf*(management) bodies of these shrines. In the Public Information Bureau archives and the University of Kashmir archives, local newspaper archives. especially from 1965 to 2000. At Nehru Memorial Museum and Library,

governmental records and newspaper archives were reviewed as well. I also visited the office of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir Board for Muslim Specified Waqfs and Specified Waqf Propeties, which has since been reconstituted under the Central Waqf Act 1995, as the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board. During my visit to its office, I collected legal documents about the history of the board and interacted with a few officials. Subsequently, these historical documents and archives were analysed that brought forth interesting aspects the importance of Sufism in contemporary Kashmir, in general, and that of shrines in particular.

The research also included an engagement with many secondary literature and historical works on the socio-political history of Kashmir. These included *Rajatarangini* of Jonaraja, a 13th-century chronicle, *Bahristan-e-Shahi*, a 15th-century treatise, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, a 17th-century work of Mulla Deedmar and *Tareek-e-Sayyid Ali*, an 18th-century history written by Sayyid Ali. I also consulted two autobiographies, *Kashmakash* and *Aatish-e-Chinar*, belonging to two prominent leaders of Kashmiri politics, Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas and Sheikh Abdullah, respectively. Although the literature on Sufism, particularly in Kashmir, is still very much historical or hagiographical, there are works on Sufism in societies like Pakistan, Malaysia and Lebanon and on aspects of Sufism which have mostly been neglected, such as Sufi rituals and its management, that have provided crucial insights to my study.

Lastly, the research consisted of an extensive survey of the literature on the subject of religion and politics. The work derives its broad theoretical framework from the works of Edward Said,[11] Jose Casanova,[12] and Talal Asad.[13] Said is known for his seminal idea of 'orientalism,' Casanova for his concept of 'deprivatisation of religion' and Asad for his investigation of the idea of 'religion.' These three have pioneered a rethink of the categories employed to understand concepts of the modern society, including the role of religion in our public life. The sustained engagement with these texts has helped the me to better understand my observations and experiences of Sufi thought and practice in Kashmir.

This study encountered significant limitations and contextual challenges. During the course of this research, Kashmir underwent fundamental political changes, which have invariably affected this research. The revocation of article 370 has been mentioned above. In conjunction

[11] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994),

[12] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

[13] Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*: *Disciplines and Reason of Power in Christianity and Islam*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993).

with the revocation, New Delhi also bifurcated the erstwhile state of J&K and downgraded the remnant Jammu and Kashmir into a Union Territory, directly under the control of the Indian government. In order to successfully implement their program and stifle dissent, the Indian government jailed numerous Kashmiris, including children, while enforcing a communication blockade on the region, resulting in lack of high-speed internet for almost eighteen months.

These actions perpetuated a fear psychosis within the Kashmiri population, which made many of my potential participants hesitant or reluctant to engage or speak overtly about politics. Consequently, in-depth interviews had to be substituted by interactions, both formal and informal, as a methodologic tool to interact with the population. This difficult situation was further compounded by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, which locked up people in their homes. It resulted in travel becoming extremely difficult, affecting the field visits for this research.

In addition to limiting these important dimensions of this research, the 'double-lockdown' in Kashmir also impacted other qualitative aspects of this study as the archives, museums and libraries remained closed for a considerable period. Even after the gradual reopening of these places, accessing these places remained difficult owing to the continuation of some restrictions. The situation is further exacerbated in Kashmir, where archives are considerably worse due to the neglect of successive regime. Due to the situation in Kashmir, crucial information is censored as the ambit of ‘sensitive’ information is considerably large than in any other place, in India or elsewhere. Given these factors, conducting this research became extremely difficult, even frustrating, at times.

Before advancing further, I want to clarify the meaning of a few terms I used during this thesis. Firstly, the meaning of the word ‘contemporary’. ‘Contemporary’ is used, in continuation of the spirit of this thesis, in a broad sense. It is used to denote the period characterised by a particular development in the politics of the region. These refer to two historical junctures in the history of the region. Structurally, it refers to the establishment of a ‘modern’ state structure in the region. Effectively, this establishment can be considered to have occurred in 1947, when Kashmir came under the Indian rule. More importantly, it refers to the emergence of popular politics in the region. The popular revolution against the Dogra regime in 1931 is considered the starting point of popular mobilisation by a dominant section of the population.[14] However,

[14] This popular revolution which started on 13th July 1931 was officially celebrated in Kashmir until 2019. This revolution and its aftermath would be discussed in detail in the seventh chapter.

such conception discredit the movements, which predated this popular uprising, especially the Kashmir Weavers' Agitation of 1865. Hence, in the latter aspect, contemporary denotes the emergence of popular consciousness, roughly coterminous with the despotic Dogra rule of the region, which has continued ever since. Thus, the term 'contemporary Kashmir' denotes a more extensive historical period than the literal meaning of the term would suggest.

The second is the term 'Sufi shrine'. This study employs three parameters to decide whether a shrine can be studied as a part of the Sufi cosmos or be characterised as a Sufi shrine. The first is whether a shrine is associated with any Sufi personality. This includes a shrine constructed by saint, constructed in the memory of one, or shrine constructed over a *maqbara* (tomb) of a saint. Second, it is a consecrated space possessing a relic, displayed in a ritualistic ceremony and on special occasions. Third, the shrine organises Sufi rituals associated with Sufi tradition, such as *urs* (anniversary celebrations), *khatam* (invocatory prayers), or other such rituals.[15] For this research, I categorise any site fulfilling two of these three requirements as a shrine, and as a part of the Sufi tradition.

Third, the term 'Kashmir'. For this research, 'Kashmir' primarily refers to the geographical valley of Kashmir. The research engages with the nature and role of Sufism within the valley. However, in some contexts, such as when used in conjunction with 'dispute' or while undertaking a historical study, it refers to the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, parts of which are held by Pakistan and India. This disputed region, at present, is administratively divided into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in India, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan. Further, while undertaking the legal study of *waqf* and its laws, Kashmir refers to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, under the Indian control, as it existed on 4th of August 2019, before the abrogation of article 370.

Chapters

The thesis consists of seven chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion, broadly categorised around one of the research questions mentioned above. The chapters are as follows:

Chapter I: Dominant Perspectives and Understanding of Sufism: A Survey of Literature

This chapter lays out a detailed overview of the history of Sufism and the literature on it. Building on the work of Talal Asad and Edward Said, the chapter would bring forth that the understanding of Sufism has historically emerged from a very Eurocentric and colonial

[15] These rituals and the meaning of these terms is detailed in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

worldview, which led to the misrepresentation of 'oriental' traditions. This tendency has usually manifested in characterising Sufism as 'extra-Islamic' or 'proto-Islamic' at best, reducing it to the image of a whirling *dervish* or an antinomian *faqir*. Although the work of scholars like Reynold Nicholson, Le Massignon, and A. J. Arberry has concussively proved the Islamic origins of Sufism, the Eurocentric notions of Sufism continue to exist. The latter include the conceptualisation of Sufism as "quietistic", which has influenced approaches to study religion and politics of different Muslim societies, including Kashmir. This chapter would situate the Sufi doctrine within the larger theological purview of Islam and the theoretical canon of secularisation. In doing so, it will begin by providing an extensive review of the works on Sufism in the subcontinent, which include works of Richard Eaton, Yoginder Sikand, Muzaffar Alam, Nile Green and others. With respect to Kashmir, it engages with the works of Mridu Rai, Chitrelekha Zutshi, Mohammad Ishaq Khan, and Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqui, among others.

Chapter II: Doctrines and Practices of Sufism: Sufi Saints, Sufi Orders, and their Political Consequences in Kashmir

This chapter attempts to challenge the singular and monolithic construction of the Sufi doctrine, as argued in the previous chapter. The chapter argues that, since its inception, Sufism consisted of diverse personalities propounding different values and thought systems, including on the nature or manner of political engagement. Further, it brings forth, through life histories of different Sufi personalities and their respective orders, the diverse conceptualisation and roles of different Sufi saints concerning the political realm. This includes the manner in which Sufis themselves or their respective moral worldviews intervened with the political sphere, their role as patron saints or mediators, and finally, as challengers to political authority and/or political events.

Chapter III: Construction of Community and Culture in Kashmir: Sayyid Ali Hamdani and Nund Reshi

This chapter highlights the role of two prominent Sufi mystics, Sayyid Ali Hamdani (or Shah-e-Hamdan) and Sheikh Nur ud-Din (or Nund Reshi), in influencing the contours of Kashmiri politics, through their rituals, values and norms, and through their indelible impact on the culture, language and history of the valley. It also highlights how the institutionalisation of certain rituals evokes or strengthens feelings of a particular form of identity or community, which then has political repercussions. In doing so, its brings forth the effect of the recitation

of *Awrad-e-Fattiyah*, or vegetarianism by Nund Reshi, on the notions of community, commonality and brotherhood. It further highlights the socio-political consequence of the introduction of arts and crafts by Sayyid Ali Hamdani. With respect to Nund Reshi, the chapter reveals his part in strengthening the indigenous culture of the region and helping it survive the onslaught of the Persian and Islamic cultures. Lastly, the chapter evinces the correlations between these projects of Ali Hamdani and Nund Reshi and the contemporary political situation of Kashmir.

Chapter IV: Sites of Memory: History and Practices of Kashmiri Shrines

This chapter focuses on the socio-cultural role of shrines in the everyday life of a common Kashmiri. The chapter achieves this objective by bringing forth commemorative and everyday practices at these shrines, and arguing about their social and cultural efficacy. Further, by explicating the respective history, religious significance and rituals of these shrines, this chapter brings forth the centrality of these shrines to the Islamic worldview of the population. Consequently, on account of this centrality, the chapter underscores the effect of these on the crystallisation of communitarian and identitarian perceptions of Kashmiris.

Chapter V: Sites of Political (Re)Construction: Shrines in Contemporary Politics of Kashmir

This chapter, continuing the discussion from the previous one, brings forth the moments during the history of Kashmir, when shrines, as primary spaces of political mobilisation and protest, effected a significant political restructuring of the region. Continuing the discussion from the previous chapter, this chapter then traces the political efficacy of these shrines by enumerating their role in the foundational political movements in the recent history of Kashmir. The chapter argues that the reason for the success of these movements lies in the centrality of the shrine within the Kashmiri society.

Chapter VI: Politics of Shrine Management and Control: The Political Awqaf in Kashmir

This chapter brings forth the history and trajectory of the institutionalisation of *waqf*[16] in the region of Kashmir, which significantly differs, both from India and the larger Islamic world. The chapter argues that this deviation has allowed the space of the shrine to be fundamentally political within Kashmir. As mentioned in the previous chapters, most Sufi shrines have played a foundational part in different political struggles over the past century by being spaces of

[16] *Waqf* can be generally translated as endowments, and genially shrines are also governed by the laws made to regulate these waqf.

mobilisation or sites of legitimacy. This chapter argues that such centrality of shrines is a consequence of the way *waqf* institutionalisation was intimately connected to resistance and popular politics from the ground up, as opposed to a top-down legislative program, which characterises most other cases of *waqf*-institutionalisation. It is because of this unique trajectory the chapter elucidates, that the development of Sufism in Kashmir, particularly its spatial aspect, as distinctively political.

Chapter VII: Sufism as Political Conduit: Families, Leadership and Politics in Kashmir

This chapter is an exposition of the 'instrumental' use of Sufism within the larger political history of Kashmir. The chapter focusses on the prominent Sufi families, imbibed with a certain 'inherited charisma', and delineates their role in the politics of the region. In doing so, it emphasizes on their role during the crystallisation of popular politics in the valley, starting from the second decade of the twentieth century. The chapter also underscores how Sufism was used by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, widely considered as the most prominent leader of the Kashmiri population in the twentieth century, in constructing his political personality as well as his political ideology, including the commonly used identitarian term '*Kashmiriyat'*.

Conclusion

The 'conclusion' briefly summarises all the main arguments, observations and findings of the research. It also raises some specific issues that still remain unsolved and can be the basis of any future research on this topic.

Hence, this study, Political Sufism in Kashmir, exists within these numerous intersectionalities, possibilities, and a considerable literature gap. This study would further our understanding of Sufi Islam and help us to evaluate its role in influencing political perceptions in Kashmir. From historical to sociological to legal, this study brings forth the engagement of Sufism in the political life of its adherents in Kashmir in an encompassing sense. It also enriches the vocabulary available to Islamic politics and challenges the instinctive and automatic ascription of fundamentalism on different resistance and political movements situated in the Islamic belief system or deriving from Islamic history and practice. This research, moreover, would also enhance our knowledge about the strategies and methods of religious traditions to negotiate or respond to the power and control of various state institutions.

Chapter I

Dominant Perspectives and Understanding of Sufism: A Survey of Literature

The word *Sufism* or *Sufi* has achieved considerable currency in numerous languages and popular discursive traditions around the globe, be it English, Hindi, Malay, Urdu, French, German or Spanish. This is in addition to the languages of the regions around which Sufism emerged, predominantly Arabic and Persian. Unfortunately, this diversity of regions does not translate into diverse conceptualisations about the practice as such. If one googles the word Sufism, the dominant image is that of the *whirling dervish* associated with the Melvi *tariqa* of Sufism. This image is ubiquitous around the discourses of capitalism and represents the reduction of the doctrine, which has continued to exercise influence for more than a millennium.

In addition to the image of the *whirling dervish*, another generic association with the conception of Sufism is the image of the founder of the *Melvi tariqa*¸ Mevlana (hence Melvi order) Jalaluddin Muhammad Balki, famous by his pen-name Rumi. Rumi is considered the quintessential Sufi. His poetry, which for many epitomises the feeling of love, aptly reflecting its deeper meanings and experiences, is popular worldwide. From Bollywood movies to Western Music artists, Rumi is touted as an inspiration by many. However, this image of Rumi, characterised by a reduction of a folk or mystic figure, invoked in songs and movies, by jilted lovers in social media posts or participants in cultural gatherings, is a gross ill-representation (if not complete misrepresentation) of the thought, meaning and corpus of the poetry of Rumi.

In an insightful piece published in *The New Yorker*, titled "The Erasure of Islam from The Poetry of Rumi," Rozina Ali traces the history of Rumi in the Western 'cultural' world. Ali claims that there was a deliberate (if not malicious) attempt by Western translators to erase traces of Islam, including the direct verses of the Quran used by Rumi in his poetry, to project Rumi as a poet outside the Islamic tradition.[1] This is unfair, both to Rumi and the larger Islamic

[1] Rozina Ali, "The Erasure of Islam from the Poetry of Rumi," *The New Yorker*, January 5th 2017.

tradition, as it misrepresents the thought of Rumi. It also removes an essential aspect of Islamic tradition, which can oppose the fundamentalist understanding of Islam and its practices.

Unfortunately, this erasure is not limited to the personality or thought of Rumi only. It extends to the whole corpus of Sufism. The very presence of the suffix –ism is reflective of the western origins of the term. It emerges and is characterised by the powerful need of western *weltanschauung* to codify, homogenise and finally perpetuate a singular and universal meaning of concepts, categories and phenomena, eliminating diversities and deviances. The corpus of Sufism underwent the same plight. The category was codified as a mystical, other-worldly, *extra-Islamic*, with a neat evacuation of the political aspect from it. The wandering mystics, devotional Islam, and mystical Islam are different concepts associated with Sufism. Sufism is all that, but it is much more than just this. A theological structure that has been present since the 9th century A.D., Sufism or *tasawwuf*, as it is known in the Islamic parlance, is a complicated set of ideas, thoughts and practices which has shaped the religious, social, cultural and most importantly, the political milieu of the Islamic history.

This chapter traces the history of Sufism and its understanding emerging from different literary and academic sources. The attempt is to bring forth the different themes and notions under which the study of Sufi thought and practice has been undertaken, that has invariably shaped the popular and scholarly viewpoints about Sufism in contemporary times. The chapter will enumerate gaps and shortcomings within these pursuits, situating this research and its objectives within the space left out or neglected by the corpus of Sufi studies. This chapter will put forth the literary structure around which the subsequent chapters are formulated. Finally, the chapter will also provide a contextual review of literature on Sufism, in South Asia generally, and in Kashmir particularly, to understand the way in which Sufism and Sufi places have been made sense of within the social, cultural, religious and political history of the field of this research.

Orientalism, Religion and Deprivatisation: The Reduction of Sufism

In his seminal work, Genealogies of Religion, Talal Asad argues that “there cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relations are

historically specific, but because the definition is itself a product of discursive processes."[2] For him, the definition of religion, as it is used today, emanates from a post-Reformation history in conjunction with the development of capitalism. In his later work, *Formations of The Secular*, he claims that the construction of religion as a universal category and the essentialisation of the concept of sacred is "connected with the encounters of the European world with non-Europeans."[3] This encounter involved "constructing religion in the world (not in mind) through definitional discourses, interpreting true meanings, excluding some utterances and practices, and including others."[4] Religion becomes a "distinctive space of human practice and belief which cannot be reduced to any other. From this, it seems to follow that the essence of religion is not to be confused with, say, the essence of politics, although in many societies, the two may overlap and be intertwined."[5] However, he says that "yet this separation of religion from power is a modern western norm, the product of a unique post-Reformation history."[6]

Thus, he suggests that although religion "is integral to modern western history, there are dangers in using it as a normalising concept while translating Islamic traditions."[7] These assertions of Asad about the general concept of religion holds good for the category of Sufism as well, which has come about through such a process of inclusion and exclusion and has been employed as a universal and singular category. While conscious of the dangers that Asad mentions, the widespread usage makes it imperative to use Sufism, just as he engages with religion, to bring about internal contradictions and diversities within this monolithic category. To bring out the very construction of the term Sufism was a part of a larger project of the western world, to understand eastern cultures but at the same time to gain means to subjugate them. This process has been called *Orientalism* by Edward Said.

Orientalism is an overarching concept of the construction of the Orient in the Occident, starting from the eighteenth century. This process, according to Said, means three broad things. One, academic which refers to "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient—and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist—either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is

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[2] Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*: *Disciplines and Reason of Power in Christianity and Islam*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 29.
[3] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular*: *Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 35.
[4] Asad, *Genealogies*, p. 44
[5] Asad, *Genealogies*, p. 27.
[6] Asad, *Genealogies*, p. 28.
[7] Asad, *Genealogies*, p. 7.

Orientalism."[8] Second is what he terms as the imaginative meaning of orientalism "based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'."[9] This involves the accepted "basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on."[10] This does not mean that both these geographical spaces are equal in their relation to each other, but "the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony."[11] Consequently, Orientalism is also analysed as a "corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[12]

While Asad, in his work, focuses specifically on the concept of religion constructed by the West through the universalisation of liberal rationality, capitalism and colonialism, the conceptualisation of *Orientalism* encompasses a plethora of academic categories and social phenomena, intimately connected to the western project of imperialism. It is, in this sense, essentially a political narrative. However, the political is understood in a broad sense by Said while defining Orientalism, which is reproduced as follows:

"Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" imperialist plot to hold down the "Oriental" world. It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with

[8] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 2
[9] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 2.
[10] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 2-3.
[11] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 5.
[12] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 3.

reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do). Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is—and does not simply represent—a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such, has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world."[13]

Said, hence, provides a broader platform to engage with notions of different religious traditions constructed by employing contextually specific western concepts serving western interests. Further, Said brings forth the inherent dangers of understanding non-western concepts through the Oriental lens, namely "distortion and inaccuracy, or rather the kind of inaccuracy produced by too dogmatic a generality and too positivistic a localised focus."[14] Such platforms, provided by Asad and Said, allows one to engage with the discourse of Sufism critically. This is because Sufism as a category assumes importance during the early eighteenth century. This is the period which marks the beginning of Orientalism, according to Said, and is the pinnacle of post-Reformation history, according to Asad. This period is also considered the pinnacle of colonialism.

In addition to these critical insights that shape the study of religion and, consequently, Sufism, the western idea of religion and its role in politics itself fell under strain during the last decades of the twentieth century. The idea of *secularisation*, considered a necessary corollary of modernity and modernisation, began to be vociferously questioned. According to Jose Casanova, who wrote the influential *Public Religions in the Modern World*, refers to three separate theses of secularisation doctrine. One, the decline of religious beliefs and practices. Two, privatisation of religion and three, differentiation of the secular spheres. Casanova believes that "the core and the central thesis of the theory of secularisation is the conceptualisation of the process of societal modernisation as a process of functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres - primarily the state, the economy, and science from the religious sphere and the concomitant differentiation and specialisation of religion within its own newly found religious sphere."[15] Casanova's concept of deprivatisation which against the modernist conception of privatisation of religion has been influential in further studies of religion and politics. Casanova argues that religions continue to exert

[13] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 12.
[14] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 8.
[15] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 19.

influence in the political sphere and have not entirely conceded the public sphere to secular spheres.

On the other hand, Alfred Stepan, looking at the role of Christianity in many western Europe democracies, argues for twin toleration, which implies that "minimal boundaries of freedom of action that must somehow be crafted for political institutions vis-a-vis religious authorities, and for religious individuals and groups vis-a-vis political institutions."[16] Stepan says that "democratic institutions must be free, within the bounds of the constitution and human rights, to generate policies. Religious institutions should not have constitutionally privileged prerogatives that allow them to mandate public policy to democratically elected governments."[17] The crucial observation of Stepan is the continued hold of religious authorities in influencing political decisions, even in advanced democracies of the western sphere, challenging the assumptions of modernisation, secularism and secularisation. He extends this argument to Islam, India, the Far East and the Eastern Orthodox church.

Hence, the notion of a religion-politics dichotomy has been called into question. The more interesting part is that it is not the Orient which has led to a change of belief in the values of secularisation, but the very centre of the Occident that has forced scholars and academics to change their notions about the same. However, as Asad rightly points out, these preferences are still limited to a few enlightened societies only, where it is acceptable for religion to play a role in the politics of a community. For example, Christianity in Poland playing a role in politics is acceptable, but Islam in Iran does not. Islam and politics are only allowed to conjoin as a threat and aberration, such as in Political Islam, which is then characterised as fundamentalism and orthodoxy, and incompatible with the modern way of life.[18]

Sufism exists within these interesting intersectionalities. In its popular iteration, it is part and parcel of Orientalism, constructed by colonial administrators. Although there have been significant contestations over this colonial, mystical and monolithic understanding of Sufism in recent times (to be discussed subsequently), the oriental idea still retains sway over popular imaginations and policy structures, especially as a 'viable and acceptable' alternative to Political Islam. Second, this conceptualisation limits the role Sufism can play in the lives of its

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[16] Alfred C. Stepan, "Religion, Democracy, and the "Twin Tolerations"," *Journal of democracy* (11, no. 4, 2000): 37-57, p. 37.
[17] Stepan, "Religion, Democracy, and the Twin Tolerations"," p. 39.
[18] Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*: *Political Islam and the World Order*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, 2002).

adherents or society as a whole, mainly as a vehicle or platform of toleration and secularism. This is ironic because that thought is the root of other-worldly and quietistic conceptions of Sufism. Third, this limited construction of Sufism is also affected by the construction of religion within western epistemology. This singular notion of Sufism has not only constricted Sufism as a political epistemology but also neglects the diversity of thought and practice, even during the beginning phase of Sufism.

However, it is important to delineate that western interaction with Sufism and the larger Islamic world was not always from a position of power and authority. Before the initiation of the project of colonialism, there was a constant interaction between the western and the Islamic world, especially mediated through the Ottoman empire, which at its pinnacle rule a large part of contemporary Europe. The conception of Islam, Sufism and its associated practices that emerge from these interactions help us to contextualise the colonial understanding the colonial understanding of Sufism that emerges later. It also provides us a genealogy of the colonial understanding of Sufism and the basis on which it was later created.

Pre-Colonial Conceptions of Sufism: West and the Ottoman Empire

The earliest evidence of Sufi influence in the current Occident comes from Spain or Al Andalus, as it was called under the Muslim rule. It was Ramon Llull (d. 1315), a Spanish Christian philosopher and mystic whose writings reflect the influence that Sufism had upon him. It is also important to note that during the life of Llull, parts of Spain were still under Muslim rule, and ibn Arabi, the famous Sufi mystic, born in Spain as well, had died less than a century ago. Born in Mallorca, just years after its return to Christian hands after three centuries of Muslim rule, Llull's environment was significantly shaped by Muslim culture and thought. Although a devout Christian committed to converting Muslims, Llull read Muslim religious and philosophical texts, studied Arabic and even wrote some books in the language, which have prompted his understanding and thought to be labelled as "Christian Sufism."[19] His integration of Christian theology with Neoplatonism and Sufism would prove instrumental during the emergence of Renaissance in 15th-century Florence.[20]

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[19] Carl W. Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1997), p. 122.

[20] Meena Sharif, *Contemporary Sufism: Piety, Politics, and Popular Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 4.

Another important Sufi link of Europe and the Islamic world of this time is that of George of Hungary. A Dominican, George was captured by the Ottomans during their conquest of Transylvania and subsequently sold into slavery in Turkey. During this time, he became a Sufi practitioner for over a decade before returning to Europe, which has arguably led to the assertion that he is "the first Western Sufi who is known by name."[21] This assertion is problematic because it negates the Muslim past of Spain and the existence of Sufism there, which is unquestionably part of the West or the Occident. George is considered the author of an anonymous Latin work written in 1480 titled *Treatise on Customs, Conditions, and Wickedness of the Turks*, which also contains "the earliest known discussion of Sufis and *dervishes*, a term used for mendicant Sufis. It also includes the first translation of Sufi poetry,"[22] in a European language.

In opposition to the later Oriental discourse, this treatise was written during the ascendency of the Ottoman empire and, hence, does not possess the language of superiority characteristic to the Oriental discourse. Instead, George praised the Ottoman empire for its military and political achievements and was attracted to the sophistication of the elite Ottoman culture.[23] He praised the Sufis, calling them "so exemplary in all their words and actions and display so much piety in their manners and movements that they seemed to be not men but angels."[24] However, this praise of *dervishes* was put forth by George while mentioning "Satan's ability to appear as an angel of light,"[25] reflecting his overall goal of writing this treatise to help fellow Christians to escape the lure of converting to Islam on account of expanding Ottoman influence. George also introduced the idea that Sufis, as opposed to the *ulema*, do not adhere to the Islamic law in totality and they do not "observe the ceremonies of the law in prayers and ablutions and the like,"[26] which would go on to become an essential principle of the Western understanding of Sufism.

The Ottomans were also responsible for the exposure of Islamic traditions and law to the French. This interaction, although developed through the alliance between the French and Ottoman against the Hapsburg, would allow the French to take a pioneering study of Sufism and Islam. The earliest writings of the French, such as of knight Antoine Geuffroy (d. 1556)

[21] Mark Sedgwick, *Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 71.
[22] Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, p. 71.
[23] Sedgwick, *Western* Sufism, p. 75.
[24] Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, p. 75.
[25] Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, p. 75.
[26] Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, p. 76.

and diplomat Pierre Belon (d. 1564), emphasised similarity and equality between Sufism, Orient and Occident rather than categorical difference and inferiority. Further, in the 17th century, royal geographer Nicolas de Nicolay (d. 1583) propounded the notion that the Sufis were lawless spiritualists. Arabist François Pétis de la Croix (d. 1713) would link Sufism to "mystical theology," which would be elaborated upon later in the century by another French Arabist, Barthélemy d'Herbelot (d. 1695), in his encyclopaedic work the *Bibliothèque Orientale*.[27] In this work, he suggests that Sufi mystical theology is "the intimate union with the Divine in the heart of man detached from love for things of the earth, and transported beyond himself."[28] These conceptions would form the basis on which the edifice of colonial and oriental notions of Sufism would be later built.

<u>Sufism and its Construction by the Colonial Masters: The Erasure of Islam and Politics</u>

The advent of colonialism changed the power structure towards the western world, which initiated the enumeration and categorisation of different beliefs and practices of their colonies, mainly through colonial administrators. In India, the pioneering personality in this regard is William Jones, whose personality is considered the coming together of the "various strands of Orientalism, including its imperial affiliations and more dialogical manifestations."[29] Jones was appointed as a judge for the East India Company, which were the *de-facto* rulers of the Indian subcontinent at the time, in 1784. This greatly facilitated his access to Sanskrit and Persian worlds.

Jones's influence on Oriental studies is such that it is claimed that it is "nearly impossible to overemphasise the importance of Sir William Jones in transmitting Oriental history and literature to the West."[30] He also produced ground-breaking work in philology highlighting patterns of connection among Latin, Greek, Persian and Sanskrit, discovering the Indo-European language family. His journals and collected works introduced the Persian and Indian worlds to the people of the West. While he is considered a genuine admirer of the culture of

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[27] Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, p. 79-84.
[28] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 64.
[29] Meena Sharify-Funk, William Rory Dickson, and Merin Shobhana Xavier, *Contemporary Sufism: Piety, Politics, and Popular Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 6.
[30] Mehdi Aminrazavi, "Introduction," in *Sufism and American Literary Masters*, ed. Mehdi Aminrazavi (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2014), 1-11, p. 3.

South Asia,[31] he is also looked at as one who sought to "gather in, to rope off, to domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European learning."[32]

Jones, intellectually, was an essential part of the western philosophical tradition of perennialism, which suggested that underlying the various philosophies and religions of the world was a singular, perennial wisdom.[33] Perennialism would prove to be an attractive framework for the comparative religion project of which Jones was such an important part. In the philosophy of the Persian Sufi poets and the scriptures of India, Jones saw shared patterns with Plato in the West and even came to believe that the fountainhead of Western philosophy drew his ideas from the East, writing that "Plato drew many of his notions (through Egypt, where he resided for some time) from the sages of Hindustan."[34] He saw as the goal of much of his work "to recommend universal toleration by showing that all nations, even those deemed most idolatrous, agree in the essentials of religion."[35] Jones developed his understanding of Sufism from a Sufi treatise by an unknown author titled *Dabistan-i-Madhahib* (School of Sects). This text claimed that "the Sufi is by no necessity bound by creed; no faith nor religion fetters his choice; he befriends the idol and the temple of the idol, and is no stranger to the mosque."[36] Hence, Jones saw Sufism as a "quintessential expression of perennialism,"[37] which also influenced other English authors and administrators.

Among those who were influenced by Jones were Sir John Malcolm, a brigadier general in the British Colonial Army, and his subordinate Lieutenant James William Graham. Malcolm wrote the History of Persia, putting forth a negative perception of Sufism and perceiving "Sufi transcendence as the outward religious forms of Islam."[38] On the other hand, Graham wrote the first English work devoted solely to Sufism, *A Treatise on Sufism, or Mahomedan Mysticism* (1819). Graham continued to entrench the idea that Sufis rejected the law and rituals of Islam. He also asserted that Sufism bore a distinct affinity to Neoplatonic and Hindu thought

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[31] Sharify-Funk et al., *Contemporary Sufism*, p. 7.
[32] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 78.
[33] Charles B. Schmitt, "Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, (24, no. 4, 1966), p. 505.
[34] Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, p. 107.
[35] Michael J. Franklin, *Orientalist Jones: Sir William Jones, Poet, Lawyer, and Linguist 1746–1794* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. ix.
[36] Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, p. 109.
[37] Sharify-Funk et al., *Contemporary Sufism*, p. 8.
[38] Sharify-Funk et al., *Contemporary Sufism*, p. 8.

and that “a person of any religion or sect, may be a Sufi.”[39] This idea of extra-Islamic sources and non-conformity to Islamic structures by the Sufis became the dominating view of Sufism.

There were some minute deviating arguments, however, to this thought. German theologian Friedrich August Tholuk (d. 1877), primarily using Persian sources alongside some Arabic and Turkish sources, provided a more nuanced and extensive account of Sufism through his Latin work *Sufismus, Sive Theosophia Persarum Pantheistica*. Written when he was just 22 years old, Tholuk rejected the idea claiming Greek or Indian roots of Sufism. However, he claimed Sufism to be a pantheistic doctrine, falling outside the boundaries of traditionally monotheistic Islam proper. For him, Sufism remained a “foreign plant in the sandy soil of Islam.”[40]

Racial theories of the nineteenth century further extended the notion that Sufism is somewhat separate from Islam. Renan believed that Semitic people, including Muslims, were “racially incapable of producing sophisticated philosophy and mysticism, being mired instead in dogmatism and legalism,” and hence, genuine mysticism was Aryan in origin, “whether Indian, Persian or Greek.”[41] British imperial agent and Orientalist Edward H. Palmer (d. 1882) suggested “that Sufism was a development of the “primeval religion of the Aryan race.” Dutch scholar Reinhart Dozy (d. 1883), on the other hand, wrote that the Qur’an was a moral and practical text, but failed to offer principles of spiritual development and even proved an “obstacle to mysticism.”[42] These conceptions reflect the ways and means through which colonial structure, employing its power over collection, categorisation and publication, entirely constructed Sufism in a different light from its history. It was only in the twentieth century that subtle changes emerged in this conception, which proved very consequential for the future trajectory of Sufism.

The advent of the twentieth century brought certain changes in the conception of western scholars, especially concerning the views held in the preceding century. An Islamic scholar from Hungary, Ignaz Goldziher (d. 1921), challenged the negative conception of Renan about the Semitic people. “bemoaning the extent to which European intellectuals had fallen for the ‘scientific dogma’ of race.”[43] Goldziher propounded a complex picture of Islam, bringing forth

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[39] Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, p. 111.
[40] Annemarie Schimmel, “Foreword,” to *In the Garden of Myrtles: Studies in Early Islamic Mysticism*, ed. Tor Andre, tr. and Birgitta Sharpe, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. viii.
[41] Sharify-Funk et al., *Contemporary Sufism*, p. 8-9.
[42] Atif Khalil and Shiraz Sheikh, “Sufism in Western Historiography: A Brief Overview,” *Philosophy East and West*, (66: no. 1, 2016), p. 198.
[43] Sharify-Funk et al., *Contemporary Sufism*, p. 9.

philosophical, imaginative and cultural dimensions of the Islamic world. However, he continued to hold on to the view about Sufism being extra-Islamic, claiming that Sufis did not derive from the spiritual richness of the Quran but used it as a pre-text upon which they imposed their own non-Quranic worldview.[44] However, this positive evaluation of Islam was a precursor to the works of British Orientalist Reynold Alleyne Nicholson and his student Arthur J Arberry, who conclusively demonstrated the Islamic origins and character of Sufism.

Nicholson, a scholar of Persian and Arabic, held Chairs of these subjects between the University of Cambridge and University College London. He translated several Sufi texts, which included the *Mathnawi* of Rumi. In his essay "A Historical Enquiry Concerning the Origin and Development of Sufism", Nicholson argued that Sufism was "the native product of Islam itself,"[45] putting to rest the Aryan origin of Sufism theory. Nicholson defined Sufism as "the religious philosophy of Islam" and argued that it could not be understood in isolation from the "outward and inward development of Islam."[46] *The Mystics of Islam*, a scholarly introduction to Sufism written by Nicholson, also supports the Islamic origin of Sufism by claiming that "even if Islam had been miraculously shut off from contact with foreign religions and philosophies, some form of mysticism would have arisen from it, for the seeds were already there."[47] Nonetheless, it is argued that even though Nicholson accepted the Islamic origins of Sufism, he continued to maintain the view that "Sufism as a whole was not an organic outgrowth of 'pure' Islam" primarily because of the stereotype held at the time that Islam was mainly a legalistic tradition."[48]

A. J Arberry went further from his teacher Nicholson. Arberry occupied the Chair of Persian and Arabic at the School of Oriental and Asian Studies in London, later encouraging the establishment of a Middle East Centre at Cambridge University, for the dissemination of academic as well as cultural knowledge of West Asia. Arberry was a prolific writer and has published numerous books, monographs and articles on Islam and Sufism. He is known for his translation of the Quran,[49] *Sufism*,[50] and translations of many of Rumi's works, such as the *The*

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[44] Khalil and Sheikh, "Sufism in Western Historiography," p. 200.
[45] Reynold A. Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry Concerning the Origin and Development of Sufism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, (April 1906), p. 305.
[46] Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1914), p. 1-3.
[47] Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 20.
[48] Khalil and Sheikh, "Sufism in Western Historiography," p. 201.
[49] A.J. Arberry tr., *The Koran Interpreted*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955).
[50] A. J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, 2008 ed., (New York: Routledge, 1950).

Romance of the Rubaiyatt[51] (1949) and *Discourses of Rumi*.[52] Arberry believed Sufism to be the "mystical tradition of an uncompromising monotheism,"[53] a direct reference to Islam. However, he argued that the classic age of Sufism and its mystical virtuosity had passed, "with contemporary Sufism a shadow of its former self, vaguely suggesting past glories."[54]

The defining blow to the extra-Islamic nature of Sufism was provided by the famous French scholar Luis Massignon, whom Said calls "the most renowned and influential of modern French Orientalists."[55] Massignon became one of the most accomplished scholars of the century on Sufism through his extensive work on the subject. He wrote the authoritative biography of Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922), the 10th-century mystic of Baghdad, undertaking archaeological work outside of Ottoman Baghdad, and for which he drew "effortlessly on the entire corpus of Islamic literature."[56] Massignon's relationship with al-Hallaj is considered more than a scholarly connection but "a spiritually seminal, intimately personal and life-altering encounter that pertains more to the realm of living relationships than to that of archival study."[57]

In his seminal work, *Essai sur les origines de la lexique technique de la mystique musalmane*, Massignon argued, much more forcefully, "that Sufism developed out of Islam's ascetic tradition, and convincingly demonstrated the role of the Qur'an in shaping Sufi terminology."[58] It has been suggested that "the Islamic roots of early Sufism were expounded for the first time."[59] He explicitly stood against the racial and biased notions of his contemporaries for suggesting that "Semitic peoples absolutely lack the aptitude for the arts and sciences, concluding that there is an 'Aryan' origin of mysticism in the so-called Semitic religions."[60] This intervention would prove to be a defining shift, in conjunction with the works of Nicholson and Arberry, where Sufism would be studied as a distinctively Islamic phenomenon.

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[51] Mevlana Jalal ud-Din Rumi, *The Romance of the Rubaiyat*, 2016 ed., tr. A. J. Arberry, (Oxon: Routledge, 1959).
[52] Mevlana Jalal ud-Din Rumi, *Discourses of Rumi*, tr. A. J. Arberry, (Iowa: Omphaloskepsis, 1961).
[53] Arberry, *Sufism*, p. 1.
[54] Sharify-Funk et al., *Contemporary Sufism*, p. 10.
[55] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 104.
[56] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 266.
[57] Patrick Laude, *Pathways to an Inner Islam: Massignon, Corbin, Guenon, and Schuon* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010), p. 1–2.
[58] Sharify-Funk et al., *Contemporary Sufism*, p. 11.
[59] Schimmel, "Foreword," p. ix.
[60] Leonard Lewisohn, "Persian Sufism in the Contemporary West: Reflections on the Mi'matu'llahi diaspora," in *Sufism in the West*, eds. Jamal Malik and John Hinnells (New York: Routledge, 2006), 49-70, p. 60.

Sufism in the Twentieth Century: The Emergence of the Context

The twentieth century also saw the rise of western scholars who developed a close, deep and personal relationship with Sufism, in contrast with scholars such as Arberry and Nicholson, who remained removed from their field of study. It is argued that "following World War II, scholars in the West began a major reconceptualisation of the disciplines and methods to be used for the study of non-western societies."[61] It led to the notion that "time spent in the region one studies was an integral means of gaining knowledge of the said area."[62] It effected a change from earlier armchair Orientalists, who may have never visited an Islamic land, to people who increasingly spent time in the area of their research. Massignon can be considered the fountainhead of such a development due to his intimate bond with Hallaj. Generally, French studies of Islam, as opposed to their counterparts in Germany or England, were more focused on what is referred to as the inner dimensions of Islam, such as Sunni or Shi'a esotericism.[63]

Henry Corbin, one of Massignon's foremost students and even his successor of sorts, would continue this tradition of a personal connection to Sufism, proving to be an inspired and passionate analyser of Sufism. Corbin studied in Turkey, took a professorship in Tehran, and continued to spend half of the year in Thran even after he succeeded his mentor at École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris. Corbin read widely, and just as Massignon, integrated his diverse areas of interest, such as psychology, philosophy and metaphysics into the study of Sufism. Corbin immersed himself in the study of Shihab ud-Din al Suhrawardi, the progenitor of the School of Illumination and Ibn Arabi, writing *The Man of the Light in Iranian Sufism* on the former and *Alone with the Alone* on the latter.[64]

Another highly influential teacher-student duo of Sufi studies is Annamarie Schimmel and Carl W. Ernst. Annamarie Schimmel is arguably the most influential Sufi scholar of the twentieth century, earning her first doctorate by the age of nineteen and writing more than eighty books. Schimmel was the epitome of the shift to area studies mentioned above, being a wide traveller,

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[61] John O. Voll, "Changing Western Approaches to Islamic Studies," in *Observing the Observer: The State of Islamic Studies in American Universities*, eds. Mumtaz Ahmad, Zahid Bukhari, and Sulayman Nyang. (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2012), 28–52, p. 31.
[62] Sharify-Funk et al., *Contemporary Sufism*, p. 16.
[63] Laude, *Pathways to an Inner Islam*, p. 1-2.
[64] Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone*: *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn "Arabi*, tr. Ralph Manheim, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), and Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, 1994 ed., tr. Nancy Pearson, (New York: Omega Publications, 1971).

making Pakistan almost a second home. Her books on Sufism, including the seminal and definitive, *The Mystical Dimension of Islam*,[65] provide a deep, involved and exhaustive understanding of Sufism, its different schools and personalities. This intimate involvement and cultural exchange are also reflected in the works of William C Chittick on Sufism, Ibn ‘Arabi and Rumi,[66] and that of his wife, Sachiko Murata, who through her work *The Tao of Islam* studied the interrelationships between Sufism and Far Eastern thought and practice.[67]

Carl W. Ernst further continued her tradition of deep involvement focusing his work on South Asia and Iran. However, he forged his own way of understanding Sufism by taking a critical socio-political approach.[68] While this work of Carl Ernst is considerably exhaustive, he limits his work, in the political aspect, to the institutional relationship of Sufism and power, that too in a specific historical context. In this respect, politics has a very limited meaning and ignores the fundamental position of the general public in the modern political system. The meaning and scope of politics cannot remain the same in medieval and modern times, howsoever problematic these terms may be. The studies on Sufism have focussed more on the historical relationship between the rulers and the Sufis, with hardly any focus on the impact of Sufi practices and rituals on the contemporary politics of different regions. Theoretically, this is the gap this research attempts to fill.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, the focus shifted to area studies, to Sufi orders and finally, to Sufi rituals, within the overarching theoretical construct of modernisation and secularisation. Sufism was considered akin to other forms of “folk,” “local,” or “popular” religion and “would dissipate in the light of modern processes of rationalisation and industrialisation.”[69] Either the Sufi orders were associated with “the ignorant masses,”[70] or it was suggested, that Muslims are abandoning saints in favour of urban intellectuals offering a scripture-based, rationalised form of Islam.[71]

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[65] Annamarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).
[66] William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi*, (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2005), and William C. Chittick, *Ibn ‘Arabi*: *Heir to the Prophets*, (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005).
[67] Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam*: *A Sourcebook of Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).
[68] Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden*: *Mysticism, History and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Centre*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).
[69] Sharify-Funk et al., *Contemporary Sufism*, p. 20.
[70] Arberry, *Sufism*, p. 122.
[71] Julia Day Howell and Martin van Bruinessen, eds., *Sufism and the “Modern” in Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), p. 8.

However, Sufi orders continued to survive. James Trimingham provided the first insightful analysis of the history of Sufi orders, claiming three stages of their development.[72] On the other hand, Michael Gilsenan highlighted the expansion of the Hamidiyya-Shadhiliyya order in Egypt, helping revise the ongoing theory of the decline of Sufism.[73] He suggested that some Sufi orders could adapt and thrive in modern urban centres, even if this was somewhat exceptional. Valerie Hoffman also revealed that several Sufi orders were actually expanding, mostly in low economic groups but also within some urban elites.[74] These works have led to a decline in the belief of an inevitable decline of Sufism, forcing people to understand the ways in which Sufism has negotiated modern sensibilities. These led to studies of local networks across nationalities, cultures and borders that different *turuq* have created, transforming the rituals, theologies, and philosophies associated with Sufism.[75]

The Global and the Local: Recent Trends in Sufi Studies

The field of contemporary Sufism also engages critically with everyday Sufi practices and rituals, unpacking them within the sensibilities of the modern era. The book *Sufi Ritual: The Parallel Universe,* written by Ian Richard Netton, can be considered the principal research of this field. Although this work has mostly understood rituals through texts written by different scholars and Sufi saints, later studies took a more regional and anthropological approach to study rituals and practices. South Asia and South-East Asia seems to be the preferred field for these studies. These include the works of Carl Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence, who investigates the Sufi rituals as they developed in India, particularly within the *Chistiyya tariqa*.[76] *Robert* Rozehnal, who tries to understand the rituals of the *Chisti-Sabri* order in Pakistan[77] and Anna Bigelow, who investigates community construction at the shrine at Malerkotla.[78] Carla

[72] J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).
[73] Michael Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*: *An Essay in the Sociology of Religion*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).
[74] Valarie Hoffman, *Sufism,Mystics and Saints in Modern Egypt*: *Studies in Comparative Religion*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995).
[75] Marcus Dressler, Ron Geaves, and Grit Klinkhammer, ed., *Sufis in Western Society*: *Global Networking and Locality*, (London: Routledge, 2009), and Catharina Raudvere and Leif Stenberg, *Sufism Today: Heritage and Tradition in a Global Community*, (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2009).
[76] Carl W. Ernst, and Bruce b. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*: *Chisti Sufism in South Asia and Beyond*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
[77] Robert Rozehnal, *Islamic Sufism Unbound: Politics and Piety in Twenty- First Century Pakistan*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
[78] Anna Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred*: *Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Bellamy, Afsar Mohammad, and Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger have also investigated rituals of healing, music and anniversaries in different shrines in South Asia.[79]

Earlier, a vivid picture was given by historians such as P.M. Currie and Richard Eaton of the festivals at Ajmer and Pak-Pattan respectively.[80] An edited volume compiled by Christian Troll brings forth extensive coverage of Sufi rituals, practices and discourses at different Sufi shrines across South Asia.[81] Recently, Claudia Liebeskind, Shahid Amin, Susan Bayly, and Yoginder Sikand have also provided insightful insights into shrines across different areas of the region, from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu.[82]

There have also been studies on South Asian Sufi orders and their practices, which have settled or expanded to western countries. Pnina Werbner and Ron Geaves focussed on the structure and values of Sufism in Britain, with a special focus on South Asian Sufism. Others, such as Marcia Hermansen, Gisela Webb, and Patrick Hamilton, have tried to understand the development of Sufism in the American context.[83] These trends of trying to understand Sufism in a global context have also led to the works of Nile Green and Mark Sedgwick. Green and Sedgwick have respectively made an exhaustive study of history and intellectual legacy of

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[79] Carla Bellamy, *The Powerful Ephemeral*: *Everyday Healing in an Ambiguously Islamic Place*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), Afsar Mohammad, *Evening with a Sufi*: *Selected Poems*, tr. Afsar Mohammad and Shamala Gallagher, (New Delhi: Red River, 2022), and Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger, *In Amma's Healing Room*: *Gender and Islam in South Asia*, (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2006).
[80] P. M. Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'in al-din Chisti of Ajmer*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), and Richard Eaton, "The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Bābā Farīd," in *Moral Conduct and Authority*: *The Place of Adab in South Asia Islam*, ed. Barbara Day Metcalf, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984), 333-356.
[81] Christian W. Troll, ed., *Muslim Shrines in India*: *Their Character, History and Significance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[82] Claudia Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees*: *Three Sufi Traditions in South Asia in Modern Times*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), Shahid Amin, *Conquest and Community*: *The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan*, (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2015), Susan Bayly, *Saints, Godesses and Kings*: *Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society*, *1700-1900*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and Yoginder Sikand, *Sacred Spaces*: *Exploring Traditions of Shared Faith in India*, (New Delhi: Penguin India, 2003).
[83] Marcia K. Hermansen, "Hybrid Identity Formations in Muslim America: The Case of American Sufi Movements," *Muslim World*, 90, (2000): 158-197, Gisela Webb, "Tradition and Innovation ij Contemporary American Islamic Spirituality: The Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship," in *Muslim Communities in North America*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith, (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), and Patrick Hamilton, "Changes in Sufism in American Context," *Denison Journal of Religion*, 7, (2007): 33-46.

Sufism, from pre-modern to contemporary times, across different time periods, from West to East."[84]

Within the Sufi legacy of South Asia, Nile Green is also a part of a scholarly tradition that studies Sufism in its socio-historical context and relationship with the ruling structure of the times. *The Sufis of Bijapur*[85], written by Richard Eaton, was, arguably, the path-breaking study of this area. Nile Green has, through his work, shed light on the developments in Sufism in the twilight of the Mughal empire, particularly in Aurangabad.[86] Muzaffar Alam looks at the relationship of Sufis with the Mughal Empire and the conceptual vocabulary that the *Chistiyya* order provided them to deal with the diversity of their empire.[87] Raziuddin Aquil had undertaken a similar project for the Afghan rule that preceded the Mughals.[88] Simon Digby also provided a general overview of the relationship between Sufis and sultans in medieval India.[89] A. Azfar Moin conducts an inter-empire study of the Mughals, Safavids and Timurid empires of Central Asia to argue the use of embodied spiritual practices by rulers of these dynasties to establish sovereignty.[90]

Conversely, the influence of the state structure on the practices, rituals and concepts of Sufism, particularly under colonial rule, has also been a site of acute academic interest. Usha Sanyal (1996) traces the connections between Ahmad Shah Barelwi, the founder of the Barelwi movement and the colonial State.[91] Similar work is done by Sarah Ansari (1994) with respect to the relationship between Pir Pagaro, the most powerful saint in Sindh and the colonial State.[92] Katherine Ewing (1997), on her part, brings forth the effect of modernity and State on

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[84] Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History*, (Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), and Mark Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*.

[85] Richard Eaton, *The Sufis of Bijapur*, *1300-1700*: *Social Role of Sufis in Medieval India*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[86] Nile Green, *Indian Sufism Since the Seveteenth Century*: *Saints, Books, and Empires in the Muslim Decccan*, (London: Routledge, 2006), and Nile Green, *Making Space*: *Sufis and Settlers in Early Modern India*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[87] Muzaffar Alam, *The Mughal and The Sufis*: *Islam and Political Imagination in India, 1500-1750*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2021).

[88] Raziuddin Aquil, *Sufism, Culture and Politics*: *Afghans and Islam in Medieval India*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[89] Simon Digby, "The Sufi Shaykh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India," *Journal of British Institute of Persian Studies*, 28, no.1, (1990): 71-81.

[90] A Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*: *Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

[91] Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India*: *Ahmad Reza Khan Barelwi and His Movement, 1870-1920*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[92] Sarah F. D. Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power*: *The Pirs of Sind, 1843-1947*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

both pre-colonial and post-colonial South Asian Islam, particularly in Pakistan.[93] Yogesh Snehi also reflects upon the effect of British colonialism on the identity and space of Sufi shrines.[94] However, a comprehensive study on the effect of the Indian state structure on Sufism and shrines in India has not been done.

The other important aspect of the colonial effect on Sufi shrines was through the legislation on the control and management of shrines undertaken under the auspices of the colonial state. Termed *waqf* (endowments) legislations, these laws were fundamental in defining the contours of religiosity and the role of a Sufi shrine. The work of Gregory C. Kozlowski titled *Muslim Endowments and Society in British India*,[95] is considered foundational on *waqf* studies, not only in South Asia but worldwide. Kozlowski tried to understand the way in which *waqf* legislation impacted the identity formation of Muslims and their conceptualisation of religion.

The work on *waqf* proliferated in the new millennium. These include works on Turkey and Malaysia by Murat Cizacka, on Cyprus by Reyhan Sabri, and Lebanon by Nada Moumtaz.[96] These works investigated architectural, societal, political and economic aspects of *waqf*. Among all these aspects, the economic aspect of *waqf* has evoked considerable interest, particularly its relation to the modern capitalist system and its property regime. It is also evident from the fact that a separate two-volume work has recently come up on the socio-economic aspects of *waqf*.[97]

Unfortunately, in South Asia, *waqf* studies remained confined to its legal aspects or socio-legal history. *Wakf Administration in India: A Socio-Legal Study* by Syed Khalid Rashid is one of the earliest works in this field.[98] *Waqf Laws in India* by S.I. Jafri[99] and *Waqfs in India: A Study*

[93] Katherine Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood*: *Modernity, Psycoanalysis*, *and Islam*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).
[94] Yogesh Snehi, *Spatializing Popular Sufi Shrines in Punjab*: *Dreams, Memories and Territoriality,* (New Delhi, Routledge, 2016).
[95] Gregory C. Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments and Society in British India*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[96] Murat Çizakça, "From Destruction to Restoration," *Endowment Studies*, 2, no.2 (2018): 83-106, Reyhan Sabri, *The Imperial Politics of Architectural Conservation: The Case of Waqf in Cyprus*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), Nada Moumtaz, *God's Property: Islam, Charity, and the Modern State*, (California: University of California Press, 2021),
[97] Khalifa Mohamed Ali et al., eds., *Revitalization of Waqf for Socio-Economic Development*, 2 vols., (Switzerland: Springer, 2019).
[98] Khalid Rashid, *Wakf Administration in India*: *A Socio-Legal Study*, (New Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1978).
[99] S. I. Jafri, *Waqf Laws in India*, (New Delhi: Law Publishers India, 1985).

of Administrative and Legislative Control by Mohammad Ahmad Qureshi[100] were important works. The latest additions to this corpus include *The Law of Waqf in India* by Kahkashan Y. Danyal[101] and *Muslim Endowments, Waqf Law and Judicial Response in India* by P.S. Munawar Hussain.[102] All these works deal with the legal analysis of different *waqf* laws and judicial pronouncements enacted in India, starting from colonial times. There is hardly any analysis of the effect of these laws on the nature of Sufi shrines and the community's use of its space. Even in Pakistan, *waqf* laws have been studied in socio-economic terms.[103] Recently, a book titled *Sufi Shrines and the Pakistani State: The End of Religious Pluralism*[104] tried to fill this gap by arguing that *waqf* laws in Pakistan were used to negate religious plurality of these shrines by imposing a state-driven uniform and unitary idea of Islam. However, the book still leaves many questions about identity formation, its consequent effect on politics and the nature of Sufi space unanswered. This research will address these concerns within the context of Kashmir.

Sufism and Kashmir: Mysticism within a Political Conflict.

Kashmir and Sufism, both in popular[105] and academic senses,[106] are inseparable. Consequently, one expects that there will be an enormous corpus of literature available and research conducted on the different aspects of Sufism in Kashmir. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The research on Kashmiri Sufism, one may say even Kashmiri history, is relatively limited, insufficient and, mainly, unidimensional. Most of the works on Kashmiri Sufism have limited scope, generally focussing on the historical aspects of Sufism. The research can still be categorised under few rubrics, on the basis of their principal aim.

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[100] Mohammad Ahmad Qureshi, *Waqfs in India*: *A Study of Administrative and Legislative Control*, (New Delhi: Gian Publication House, 1990).
[101] Kahkashan Y. Danyal, *The Law of Waqfs in India*, (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 2015).
[102] P. S. Munawar Hussain, *Muslim Endowments, Waqf Law and Judicial Endowments in India*, (Oxon, Routledge, 2021).
[103] S. Jamal Malik, "Waqf in Pakistan: Change in Traditional Institutions," *Die Welt Des Islams*, 30, no. 1/4, (1990): 63-97.
[104] Umer Bin Ibad, *Sufi Shrines and the Pakistani State*: *The End of Religious Pluralism*, (London: I.B. Taurus, 2019).
[105] Sanjay Sapru, "Resurgence of "Kashmiriyat / Sufism" Only Way Forward for Naya Kashmir," *Rising Kashmir*, (10th November, 2022). http://risingkashmir.com/resurgence-of-kashmiriyat-sufism-only-way-forward-for-naya-kashmir.
[106] Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: Antimonies of Nationalism," *Asian Survey*, 31, no. 11, (1991): 997-1019.

The first important category of Sufi literature consists of early manuscripts and other archival sources that form the bases of several works on Sufism in Kashmir. These include *Rajtarangini* of Jonaraja, written in the 15th century,[107] *Tarikh-e-Kashmir* written by Saiyid Ali in the 16th century;[108] *Bahristan-i-Shahi*, the most famous *tarikh* of Kashmir, written by an unknown author in the 17th century,[109] *Waqiat-e-Kashmir* written by Khawaja Muhammad Azam Koul Deedmari in the 18th century,[110] and *Tarikh-e-Hassan* by Peer Hassan Shah Khoyihami in the 19th century.[111] These works give a detailed account of the events and personalities of their times and the ones preceding them. Interestingly, most of these works do not only talk about kings and the elite but also give sufficient importance and space to Sufi personalities, reflecting the centrality of Sufis in the history and politics of Kashmir since the very advent of Islam. The *Valley of Kashmir,* written by British officer Walter Lawrence in the 18th century, can also be added to this list.[112] The book gives a detailed list of the Kashmiri people and society, including the religious practices, shrines and other beliefs held by the population.

The second important category is historical works written by scholars, particularly in the latter part of the twentieth century. While these works were primarily historical, since these works were derived heavily from the sources mentioned above, these works also contain sufficient information regarding saints and Sufis of Kashmiri history. The most influential in this category are *Kashir,* written by GMD Sufi,[113] *Culture and Political History of Kashmir,* written by PNK Bamzai[114] and *Kashmir Under the Sultans,* written by Mohib-ul-Hasan.[115] These works provide essential information about the role of Sufis within the political structure of the region, from one dynasty to another.

Books detailing the history, theology and practices of different Sufi orders are one specific category of Sufi literature emanating from the region. *Kashmiri Sufism* by Shafi Ahmad

[107] Jonaraja, *Rajtaringini*, tr. Jogesh Chunder Butt, (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2012).
[108] Saiyid Ali, *Tarikh-i-Sayyed Ali*, tr. Zubaida Jan, (Srinagar: Jay Kay Books, 2009)
[109] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, tr. K. N. Pandit, (Calcutta, Firma KLM Private Limited, 1988).
[110] Khawaja Muhammad Azam Koul Deedmari, *Waaqiyat-e-Kashmir*, tr. Khawaja Hamid Yazdani, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1998).
[111] Peer Ghulam Hassan Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Hassan*, 1997 ed. (Jammu: Ranbir Government Press, 1887).
[112] Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1985).
[113] G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir*: *A History of Kashmir*, 2 vols, (Lahore: University of Panjab, 1948).
[114] P.M.K. Bamzai, *Culture and Political History of Kashmir*, 3 vols., (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 1994).
[115] Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1959).

Qadri,[116] *Sufi Saints of Kashmir*: *Sufi Orders in Kashmir* by Saiyid Ashraf Shah[117] and *Islam in Kashmir* by Muhammad Ashraf Wani[118] are a few examples. Among this subset of literature, *Sufism in Kashmir: From Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century* by Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqui deserves special mention.[119] Rafiqui not only provides the historical overview but also engages, critically with the sources and assumptions taken for granted within the historiography of Kashmir. From the legitimacy of *Khat-e-Irshad*[120] to the number of visits of a particular Sufi to the region, Rafiqui brings novel insights and challenges acceptable notions. Notwithstanding the factual accuracy of these claims, it provides a breath of fresh air to otherwise monotonous Kashmiri historiography.

The primary criticism of Rafiqui was directed towards his colleague at the Department of History at the University of Kashmir, Muhammad Ishaq Khan. Ishaq Khan has written one of the most famous and influential works in the annals of Kashmiri history, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century*.[121] This work focuses on the Rishi order of Kashmir and its role in transforming Kashmir into a Muslim-majority region. While this works breaks important methodological ground with respect to dealing with myths and miracles as archival sources, on the subject matter itself, one does find deference exhibited by the author. In this respect, I consider this work as a part of the hagiographical corpus on Kashmiri Sufism, which, unsurprisingly, is the biggest corpus on the subject. However, even though this corpus of literature talks about it with reverence, there is still a trove of information that can be extracted. These works provide important insights into the socio-political effect of Sufi personalities and orders. This is partly because most of these works, as opposed to the previous corpus, focus on one single order or personality, detailing its impact on the economic, social and political reality of contemporary Kashmir. The works of Ghulam Nabi Gauhar,[122]

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[116] Shafi Ahmad Qadri, *Kashmiri Sufism*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003).
[117] Saiyid Ashraf Shah, *Sufi Saints of Kashmir: Sufi Orders of Kashmir*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2017).
[118] Muhammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir*: *From Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century*, (Srinagar: Oriental Publishing House, 2004).
[119] Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2015).
[120] *Khat-e-Irshad* is a document considered to be written by the Persian Sufi Mir Muhammad Hamdani, initiating the local Sufi, Nund Reshi into his Sufi order. See chapter 2 of this thesis for details.
[121] Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*: *The Role of Muslim Rishis* (*Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century*), (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1994).
[122] Ghulam Nabi Muqeem Gauhar, *Shayar-e-Irfan*: *Fikr-o-Fan*, (Srinagar: Sheikh Mohammad Usman and Sons, 2016).

Abu Naeem ul-lah,[123] Master Ghulam Ali,[124] Nazeer Naqshbandi[125] and Ghulam Muhammad Shaad[126] fall under this category.

Lastly, the works of Mridu Rai and Chitralekha Zutshi assume critical importance within the historiography of Kashmir in general and to this research in particular. Rai[127] and Zutshi[128] brought forth the use of Sufi shrines as sites of political mobilisations and contestations during the Dogra rule. Later, Zutshi also investigated the role of Sufism in 'vernacularising' Persian[129] and shrines as sites of community identity.[130] However, neither Zutshi nor Rai deeply engages with rituals or other aspects of community building affected by Sufism other than language. Also, as with other works, these works remain historical with little emphasis on the contemporary period.

Hence, even contextually, with respect to Kashmir, there are many gaps in the study of Sufism, some of which this research tries to address. Sufism is primarily studied as a historical phenomenon, without any emphasis on the contemporary period. Even these historical studies, barring a few exceptions, are devoid of any critical analysis. Further, there is hardly any analysis of the rituals and practices of these shrines and their effect on the conceptions of the adherents. The existing literature on Sufism in Kashmir is inexplicably silent on this facet of Sufi Islam. Finally, the effect of the legal structure, through laws and acts, on the nature of Sufi shrines and Sufism has not been studied at all. Thus, this body of literature has also failed to utilise the possibilities that the context of Kashmir provides for a study of religion, particularly Sufism.

Thus, this work interrogates these gaps in the existing literature on Kashmir. The research brings into focus different Sufi practices such as *zikr* (recitation), interrogating their role in

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[123] Abu Naeem ul-Lah, *Hazrat Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani se Shaykh ul-Alam Tak*, (Srinagar: Sheikh Mohammad Usman and Sons, 2012).
[124] Master Ghulam Ali, *Succession of Muslim Rishism in Kashmit*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2016).
[125] Nazir Naqshbandi, *Murabbiy-e-Kashmir Shah-i-Hamadan*, (Srinagar: Ashraf Book Centre, 2016).
[126] Ghulam Nabi Shaad, *Hazrat Mir Sayyid Hamdani Aur Kashmir*: *Kashmir Tehzeeb Aur Saqafat Ki Nazar Mein*, (Srinagar: Ashraf Book Centre, 2021).
[127] Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*: *Islam*, *Rights, and the History of Kashmir*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2004).
[128] Chitrelekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*: *Islam*, *Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir*, (Ranikhet, Permanent Black, 2003).
[129] Chitrelekha Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts*: *Narratives, Sacred Geographies, and the Historical Imagination*, epub ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[130] Chitrelekha Zutshi, "Contesting Urban Space: Shrine Culture and the Discourse on Kashmiri Muslim Identities and Protest in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, ed. Chitrelekha Zutshi, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018).

informing the political sensibilities of Kashmiris by affecting their notions of the 'self' and identity. The project elucidates the historical role of shrines in the political arena of Kashmir and the response of the state towards the space of the shrine through laws and other state instruments. Thus, the study also uncovers the degree of 'autonomy' possessed by Sufi institutions to intervene in the political life of Kashmiri people, negotiating State power and control.

Conclusion

Hence, it is clear that the literature on Sufism as an academic or analytical category emerged out of western misconceptions, biases and goals, termed Orientalism. The western idea of 'religion' and the tools of categorising moulded the study of Sufism in a particular way, emphasising some aspects and obscuring others. The reduction of Islam to a legalistic tradition forced the conceptualisation of Sufism as an extra-Islamic tradition. This was in consonance with the political goals of the colonial masters to reform these primitive societies and practices. These misconceptions form the foundation for the western scholarly tradition of Sufism.

There was course correction in this approach, through the works of Massignon, Nicholson and Arberry, which situated Sufism squarely in the Islamic tradition. However, they continued to view it as a 'mystical' and 'other-worldly' tradition, reflected in the whirling *dervishes* or other *antinomian Sufis.* The subsequent works entrenched these notions about Sufism, squarely positioning it within the social and cultural realm, away from the politics of a community. This is evident from the works undertaken on Sufism in the latter part of the twentieth century, which focus on the theological, cultural or social aspects of the Sufi discourse, studying rituals, festivals and other such aspects of Sufi practice.

Over the last few decades, there has been a realisation of the immense role Sufism plays in the lives of the community, with studies on Sufism branching out to different spheres of human activity, including politics. However, the studies trying to understand the political aspects of Sufism primarily undertake such a study in a historical context rather than the contemporary period. Studies have revealed the relationship between Sufis and rulers of Muslim dynasties from across the globe and the historical time. These include Abbasid, Mongol, Ottoman, Safavids, Afghan and Mughals. While they provide important insights, the contemporary period, which is based on the idea of 'popular politics', seems completely different from the context in which these studies work. Also, such a reduction of politics to structural relations

between political elites and religious personalities grossly neglects the scope and effect of Sufism on community life. There is also never been a sustained effort to understand the political influence of Sufism beyond these relations or the theological and historical precedents that guide these relations.

These misconceptions, biases and reductions are also found in the literature on Kashmiri Sufism. There is hardly any critical study of the sources and other archival material. Most of the literature on Sufism written in Kashmir can be termed as hagiographical. Many resources espouse the values and feats of saints and their respective orders, but they also provide crucial information regarding the socio-political impact of these Sufi orders. On the other hand, old histories, colonial documents and other such resources also throw some light on the topic. All these, nonetheless, picture Sufism at the centre of the socio-political life of Kashmir, albeit in the same reductionist and limited way as done by studies undertaken on other contexts. Kashmir lacks a focused work, cutting across different *turuq*, while bringing out the theological precedents that guide these actions and the consequent impact of these political conceptions or relationships on the Kashmiri society.

This research attempts to fulfil these vital gaps within Sufi studies and Sufism in Kashmir. On the general level, the attempt would be to bring forth different facets of interaction between Sufism and politics, both at the structural and popular levels. The arguments would be corroborated by the contextual reality of Sufism in Kashmir and the role of Sufism in political succession, identity formation and cultural construction. The research would evince the socio-political importance of shrines as markers of history, identity and memory, bringing forth their foundational role in the politics of the region. Lastly, the study would carefully analyse the legal structure to argue that the political aspect of Sufism in Kashmir is also evident from the legal structure that evolved to govern and manage the shrines. Thus, this research attempts to provide an extensive sketch of the myriad ways in which Sufism interacts with the political realm of Kashmir, challenging the mystical and quietistic understanding of Sufism.

Chapter II

Doctrines and Practices of Sufism: Sufi Saints, Sufi Orders, and their Political Consequences in Kashmir

Fazlul Rahman, son of a scholar from Deoband and a faculty of Islamic studies at McGill university in the United States, coined the term neo-Sufism, to differentiate a particular activist and political strand of Sufism from traditional Sufism. Traditional Sufism, for him, "had stressed primarily the individual and not the society."[1] Neo-Sufism, on the other hand, distinguished itself by sound intellectual processes and puritanical thought and action, inculcating an activist and this worldly attitude and recognising that Sufi practices had social and political utility,"[2] represented by Sufi movements such as the North African Sunusi order. Rahman traces the beginning of neo-Sufism to ibn Taimiyyah and his student ibn Qayyim al Jawaziyyah, Islamic scholars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries under the Mamluk Sultanate. His student Nurcholish Majdid continued this classification, characterising old-Sufism as "passive and anti- worldly …asceticism" and an "isolating spiritualism" that rendered people "weak and egotistical."[3] Neo- Sufism possesses a "moral motif and a positive attitude toward the world, or a Sufism engaged in political and social activism."[4]

This conceptualisation of Rahman and Majdid that seem to promote an action-driven Sufism, actually emerged from a sustained American strategy to project pacifist Sufism as an alternative to radical Islam.[5] It started as a project funded by private American foundations, which aided the promotion of Sufism "as an indigenous, pacifist form of Islam that contrasted favourably with ostensibly Arab imported Salafism of the Islamists."[6] Therefore, the construction of

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[1] Verena Meyer, "From *Taṣawwuf* Modern to Neo- Sufism: Nurcholish Madjid, Fazlur Rahman, and the Development of an Idea," in *Modern Sufis and the State*¸ ed. Katherine Pratt Ewing and Rosemary R. Corbett, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 40-56, p. 50.
[2] Meyer, "From *Taṣawwuf* Modern," p. 53.
[3] Meyer, "From *Taṣawwuf* Modern," p. 53
[4] Meyer, "From *Taṣawwuf* Modern," p. 53.
[5] Stephen Schwartz, *The Other Islam*: *Sufism and the Road to Global Harmony*, (New York: Doubleday, 2008).
[6] Rosemary R. Corbett, "Anti- Colonial Militants or Liberal Peace Activists? The Role of Private Foundations in Producing Pacifist Sufis During the Cold War," in *Modern Sufis and the State*¸ ed. Katherine Pratt Ewing and Rosemary R. Corbett, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 27-39, p. 38.

Sufism as 'apolitical' and 'other-wordly' was a political construction of Sufi identity meant to serve political interests, conveniently borrowing colonial and Orientalist tropes. This project then, as Mahmood Mamdani argues, constructed Sufi identity as a monolithic whole, ignoring the cumulative nature of identities.[7]

This chapter challenges both of these notions. One, the construction of Sufism as a singular identity, with specified meaning and values. Second, the conceptualisation of Sufism as old and neo, with the former individual and inward-looking while the latter action-driven and societal. The chapter attempts to do this by bringing forth the history of different Sufi personalities and later Sufi orders, arguing that across Sufi history and ascriptions, Sufi saints have interacted and engaged with the political and social aspects of community life in different ways. The focus is on Sufi saints belonging to the earlier phase of Sufism and belonging to Sufi orders that have a presence in Kashmir. The chapter brings forth plurality of ideas emanating from the Sufi doctrine, including political. The chapter starts with the discussion of early Sufi saints, and later follows with five Sufi orders present in Kashmir. These are the *Suhrawardiyya*, *Kubraviyya*, *Nurbakshiyya*, *Qadiriyya*, *Naqshbandiyya*, and the *Rishi* order. The earlier five have originated outside the valley of Kashmir, while the *Rishi* order is considered indigenous to Kashmir.

Sufi Saints as Prophetic Heirs: The Conceptualisation of Sufi Charisma

The existence of Sufism at the centre of Muslim life bestowed it with a considerable degree of influence over the elite and the common populations of the society. Even during the earlier phase of Sufism, when it primarily consisted of ascetic mystics who embodied the virtues of abandonment of worldly pleasures, it is argued that Sufi saints were an essential aspect of Muslim social life. Since the ninth century, Muslims have considered Sufi *pirs* (master) as "heirs of the Prophet (S.A.W.)," and "expected to perform similar (if not prophetic) mediatory functions, for example, between God and humans, between individuals and between factions."[8] Thus, the mediatory role of Sufi saints was not limited to the spiritual realm, but diffused into other spheres of social activity. This responsibility of these saints was intimately connected to the political structure of their surroundings, and was greatly affected by the political changes

[7] Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*: *America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror*, (New York: Doubleday, 2003), p. 35.
[8] Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*: *The Indian Naqshbandiya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh*, (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), p. 11

within their societies. However, "overtime the Sufi *shaykh* continually adapted to the religious and socio-political interstices, until he functioned as a religious and socio-political facilitator or social lubricant."[9]

This function was also a corollary of the authority enjoyed by the saint, both on his devotees and the larger public. The personality of the saint, his presumed authority and his charisma is considered to have a hypnotic effect on his devotees.[10] As an instrument, charisma has been employed by Sufis to "rally both communities and individuals, capitalising on the production of didactic works and hagiographies that enhance the experience of ritual gathering."[11] Hence, values, notions and morals espoused by the saint become instructions and guidelines to follow, influencing social and political practice of its adherents. The advent of the Sufi orders (*tariqa*; pl. *turuq*) institutionalised this charisma of *shaykhs*. These orders, although associated with or stated by a prominent individual Sufi, had clear and codified rules. These rules included rules of *bai'yah* (oath of allegiance), *amr* (conduct), *zikr* (recitation), and, most importantly, *wilayat* (succession), all of which has the sufi saint at its centre. As the person who is the centre of the oath, leads recitation, codifies rules of conduct and, finally chooses a successor, a Sufi saint possessed considerable degree of power within this institutional structure. Consequently, the Sufi *shaykh* commanded loyalty through this "institutionalised charisma," permeating "all walks of life."[12]

The concept of *tariqa* becomes increasingly important in the context of Kashmir. The proper advent of Islam in Kashmir, began in the fourteenth century. Until then, Sufism had developed into a structure of "continuative teaching schools of mysticism: *silsila:tariqa*, deriving from an illuminate."[13] Thus, the interaction of Kashmiri society with Islam and Sufism happened through Sufi orders and their respective *shaykhs* (leaders). By the beginning of the fifteenth century, which was the most dominant phase of the Sufi movement in Kashmir, global Sufism had become a popular movement and had moved on the *ta'ifa* stage, "branching into numerous "corporations" or "orders" fully incorporated with the saint cult."[14] Thus, Sufism is Kashmir,

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[9] Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, p. 12
[10] For a detailed exposition on the subject, see Pnina Werbner and Herlene Basu (ed.): *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality and the Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*, (New York: Routledge, 1998).
[11] Milad Milani, *Sufi Political Thought*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), p. 73.
[12] Pnina Werbner, and Herlene Basu, "The Embodiment of Charisma," in *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality and the Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*, ed. Pnina Werbner, and Herlene Basu, (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 13
[13] J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 103.
[14] Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders*, p. 103.

since its inception, revolved around orders and Sufi saints, whose rules, notions and conduct became the template around which Kashmiris constructed themselves and their society.

Thus, in order to understand the political efficacy of Sufism in Kashmir, it is essential to enumerate the history of the *turuq* present in Kashmir and the life of its prominent saints. A Kashmiri, learning about Islam and Sufism from a particular *tariqa* in Kashmir would have been necessarily influenced by the doctrines or notions espoused by the patron and prominent Sufis of the *tariqa*, even if the person may have never met these Sufis, or indeed they might not have even visited Kashmir. In addition to the institutional norms and practices, this would have been instrumental in shaping its understanding, interaction and reaction to the politics of Kashmir during its time. However, the enumeration of political and social notions of different prominent Sufis across historical, contextual or theological differentiations, also helps us challenge the aforementioned division of old and new Sufism, demonstrating the Sufism has maintained an interaction with social and political realities across its existence. The earlier five have a global presence, having origins outside the valley of Kashmir, while the *Rishi tariqa* is considered the indigenous Sufi order of Kashmir.

From Intoxication to Sobriety: The Beginnings of Sufism

The beginnings of Sufism as a structured system of thought and practice are veiled. Even the Arabic words, *Sufi* and *tasawwuf,* do not find any mention in the *Quran*. Its use, however, was quite widespread in the Islamic world by the tenth century A.D. It can be gauged from the fact that Ali Hujwiri tries to provide a philological explanation of the etymology of the word *Sufi*. Hujwiri tries to provide different etymologies of the word, each reflecting a specific aspect of Sufism.

The first explanation given by Hujwiri traces the root of Sufism to the Arabic word '*suf*', meaning wool. It points to the coarse dress made of wool worn by ascetics, signifying their distaste for worldly pleasures and a proclivity to simple living.[15] He also traces the word to the Arabic word *saff-e-awwal,* meaning people of the first rank, "which brings to mind the believers hurrying to be in the first row of believers at congregational prayers."[16] He also links it to *suffa* or purity, an important aspect of the Sufi worldview, and *ashab-e-suffa* (People of

[15] Lyold Ridgeon, "Introduction," in *Routledge Handbook of Sufism*, ed. Lyold Ridgeon, (Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 3-16, p. 4.
[16] Lyold Ridgeon, "Introduction," p. 4.

the Bench).[17] The *ashab-ul-suffa* were "poor and pious members "of the community who lived in the mosque of Medina."[18]

Abu Hashim as-Sufi, a mystic from Kufa, was the first person to be called a *Sufi*.[19] However, he was not the only one whom late writers such as Hujwiri or Farid-ud-din Attar would mention in the list of the early Sufis. These later mystics included personalities like Hasan al-Basri, a famous theologian, Ibrahim Adham, a prince of Balkh who chose the ascetic path over royalty, Sufiyan al-Thawri and ibn-Hanbal, *hadith* scholars, Fudayl bin Iyad, a thief turned mystic and Jafar as-Sadiq, the sixth Shia imam. Most of these personalities occupy important positions in different Sufi *silsila* (lineages), which trace the connection of Sufis and Sufi orders back to the Prophet (S.A.W).[20]

A strand of early Sufi mystics espoused strong notions of love, devotion, longing, and annihilation, some of whom also put themselves under an extreme form of penance. These include Sufis such as Uways Qarni, Tahwban ibn-Ibrahim or Dhun Nun, Rabia al Adawiyya, and Abu Yazid (Beyazid) Bistami. Uways al-Qarni was a contemporary of the Prophet from Yemen, and even though he never met the Prophet, was "guided by divine grace, knowing Prophet without any outward connection."[21] Qarni is known for his extreme devotion to the Prophet. It is a contested belief that he removed all his teeth after the Prophet (S.A.W) lost one of his in the Battle of Uhad (625 A.D), since he did not know which one did the Prophet lose.[22] Uways al-Qarni has since become an exemplar of the love for the Prophet, and for mystics who claim to attain mystical illumination outside the regular mystical structure, and without the guidance of any *shaykh*.[23]

Rabia al-Adawiyya is arguably the most famous female mystic of the Islamic world and history. Born in Basra, she is considered to have "introduced the element of selfless love into the austere teachings of the early ascetics and gave Sufism the hue of true mysticism."[24] She professed a single-minded devotion to God, decreeing the concept of fear. Her views on love becomes clear from her famous saying in which she claims that "I have not worshipped Him from fear of His

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[17] Lyold Ridgeon, "Introduction," p. 5.
[18] Annamarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 28.
[19] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 31.
[20] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 23-41.
[21] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 28.
[22] Abu Tariq Hizaji, "Owais Qarni and his love for Prophet," *Arab News*, (28th May, 2018).
[23] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 28.
[24] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 38.

!re, nor for love of His garden, so that I should be like a lowly hireling; rather, I have worshipped Him for love of Him and longing for Him."[25] Once, walking through the streets of Basra, with a torch in one hand and ewer in the other, she claimed she was going to burn paradise and extinguish hell "so that two veils disappear, and it becomes clear who worships God out of love, not out of fear of Hell or hope for Paradise."[26]

Dhun Nun al-Misri and Beyazid Bistami are two other saints of this period, who occupy a special place in the annals of Sufi history. Dhu 'l-Nùn is considered to be the first Sufi whose utterances exhibit "the erotic symbolism which afterwards became so prominent in the religious language of the Sufis.''[27] He is also known for introducing the concept of *ma'rifa* (gnosis or intuitive knowledge from God) as opposed to discursive learning and knowledge.[28] Bistami, on the other hand, has emerged as a Sufi symbol, and his "personality looms large on the horizon of early Persian Sufism."[29] Dhun Nun also wrote Arabic poetry filled with romantic praises for the Almighty.[30] Bistami, on the other hand, is known as the proponent of 'intoxicated Sufism' or *sukr*.[31] This form of Sufism is characterised by "unquenchable longing for God, suffering, and annihilation in the Beloved (God) and bewilderment."[32] However, the most famous mystic associated with this kind of Sufi mysticism is Al Hussayn Mansur al-Hallaj.

Popularly called the 'martyr of mystical love,' Hallaj was born in the province of Fars in 858, later moving to Basra as a companion of a Sufi mystic, Sahl al-Tutsari. While in Basra, he became the disciple of Amr al Makki and and Junayd al-Baghdadi.[33] However, he soon forged his own path and became a proponent of the extreme form of asceticism and divine love that overflowed the prevalent Islamic sensibilities. Due to his actions he was publicly rebuked by al-Makki. His father-in-law, a mystic himself, began to consider him a "cunning sorcerer and miserable infidel."[34] Nonetheless, his utterance *An – al – Haqq* (I am the Truth) is one of the

[25] Leonard Lewisohn, "Sufism's Religion of Love, from Rabi'a to Ibn 'Arabi," in *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism*¸ ed. Lyold Ridgeon, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 150-180, p. 152
[26] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 39.
[27] Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History*, (London: Brill, 2000), p. 41.
[28] Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, p. 41.
[29] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 47.
[30] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 45.
[31] Annabel Keeler, "Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī and Discussions about Intoxicated Sufism," in *Routledge Handbook of Sufism*, ed. Lyold Ridgeon, (Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 46-62, p. 46.
[32] Keeler, "Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī," p. 59.
[33] Nile Green, *Sufism*: *A Global History*, (Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 39.
[34] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 66.

most famous, if not the most famous, phrases of Islamic mysticism. While his supporters claim this call as a representative of divine unity, his detractors, propagating an unsound religious claim.

However, there is more to Hallaj than meets the eye. Besides spirituality, he was also deeply interested in the affairs of the society. Contrary to his popular image, Hallaj interacted with the political realm. His spiritual life was intermingled with the political upheavals of his time. He was considered "to be courageous in the presence of sultans, attempting great things and ardently desiring a change of government."[35] In addition to his religious beliefs, it was his political associations and some related political developments that led to his capture and his subsequent execution in 922.[36] However his death, apart from his life, have become the prime example of the extreme form of divine love, propelling Hallaj to the pinnacle of Sufi mystics.

Opposed to these antinomian Sufis lies the personality of Abul Qasim al Junayd al Baghdadi. Nephew and successor of the Sufi Mystic Sari al Saqati, Junayd, is known for promoting the *suhw* (sober) school of Sufi mysticism. He even rejected *fana* (annihilation) as the end goal of a Sufi, which was propounded by Beyazid Bistami. Instead, he argued that there was a succeeding state to *fana*, which he called *baqa* (subsistence in God).[37] Junayd eschewed the types of extravagances of language associated with intoxicated mystics such as Bistami and Ḥallaj. He demonstrated a careful and circumspect conformism in public life, explicitly advising his disciples against challenging civil and religious authorities while viewing political and social activism as "a sign of spiritual and intellectual immaturity and an attempt to rebel against the divine order."[38] This is interesting because, in his conduct and principles, Junayd al Baghdadi was closer to the orthodox current of Sufism, considered political by scholars such as Fazl ul Rehman. The preponderance of Junayd on the Sufi mystical thought after him can be gauged by his honorifics *sayyid al-ṭaifa* (chief of the sect), *ṭaus al-fuqara* (peacock of the dervishes), and *shaykh al-mashayikh* (master of masters),[39] as well as by the fact that many Sufi orders traced their *silsila* to the Prophet through Junayd al Baghdadi.[40]

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[35] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 66.
[36] Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, p. 72-77.
[37] Eric S. Ohlander, "Al Junayd Al Baghdadi: Chief of the Sect," in *Routledge Handbook of Sufism*, ed. Lyold Ridgeon, (Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 32-45, p. 37.
[38] Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, p. 55-56.
[39] Eric S. Ohlander, "Al Junayd Al Baghdadi," p. 37.
[40] Lyold Ridgeon, "Introduction," p. 3.

While Junayd did try to wean away Sufism from the effects of antinomian Sufis such as Bistami and Hallaj, the orthodox current in Islam, represented by the *ulema,* continued to put Sufism under sustained theological, physical and political pressure. It was left to Abu Hamid al Ghazali, an 11th-century mystic and theologian, to put forth a structured rapprochement between the two factions. An exceptionally brilliant scholar, Ghazali was born an orphan at Tus in 1098. He studied under al-Juwayni in Nishapur from 1077-1085, the most celebrated theologian of the Eastern Islamic World of the time.[41] He was also under the guardianship of a Sufi called al-Farmadhi, but his initial life was solely focused on excelling in traditional knowledge. He became quite successful as a theologian and a scholar, evident from his appointment as the head of the famous Nizammiya madrassa in Baghdad at the young age of thirty-three. He wrote numerous treatises on topics ranging from philosophy, ethics, theology and statecraft, and law and political thought, adding to his personal success.[42]

Four years after his ascension to the top of the intellectual ladder, Ghazali underwent a severe crisis which made him give up his post and leave Baghdad, wandering around as an ascetic Sufi. During this phase, he is said to have visited Damascus and the holy cities of Jerusalem, Medina and Mecca.[43] Finally, he returned to his native place and died there in 1111 at a young age of 53. During this phase, he wrote about Sufism, advocating a "natural harmony between Sufism and the Law" and attempting to "unite the path of orthodoxy and Sufism."[44] Two of his most celebrated works on this subject are *Ihya Ulum-ul-Din* (Revivification of the Sciences of Religion) and *Kimaya-e-Saadat* (The Alchemy of Happiness). Ghazali challenged the Hellenistic influences and promoted Sufism based on "sober piety, a mingling of the teachings of Islamic law and the profound inner spirituality of the Sufis."[45] Since he was sceptical of both extreme esoteric or gnostic currents and rigidity of the *ulemas*, he prescribed through his works to "live through the verities of faith and test those verities through the Sufi experimental method."[46]

His asceticism was also social as political questions continued to interest him. It is reflected in his support of the religo-legal role of the Sunni caliphate, which he deemed "as absolutely necessary, seeing it as a secure foundation for the stability and health of the whole

[41] Carole Hillenbrand, "Al-Ghazali: In Praise of Sufism," in *Routledge Handbook of Sufism*, ed. Lyold Ridgeon, (Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 63-74. p. 63.
[42] Hillenbrand, "Al-Ghazali, p. 64.
[43] Hillenbrand, "Al-Ghazali, p. 64.
[44] Hillenbrand, "Al-Ghazali, p. 66.
[45] Hillenbrand, "Al-Ghazali, p. 66.
[46] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 96.

community."[47] This theologically sound Sufism with strict adherence to Islamic law significantly impacted the legitimacy of the Sufi movement, forcing many "orthodox theologians to take the Sufi movement seriously." In contrast, the "moderate Sufi outlook began to colour the life of most average Muslims."[48] These immense contributions of Ghazali have made believers call him the greatest Muslim after Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).

The repudiation of Hellenistic philosophy and the Sufi view of Ghazali became quite prominent within the Islamic world until the challenge emerged from, interestingly, the Western borders of the Islamic world at the time; al Andalusia. The philosophical aspect was challenged by the Andalusian philosopher Abul Walid ibn-Rushd, while the gnostic element returned forcefully through the Sufi mystic ibn Arabi. Ibn Arabi is arguably the most influential and controversial mystic of the Islamic world, with his writings considered "the apex of Sufi mystical theories", while "the orthodox have never ceased attacking him."[49] Born in Murcia, Spain, in 1165, Ibn Arabi went into *khilwat* (spiritual retreat) and had a life-changing mystical experience at fifteen. The fame of his mystical experiences spread wide, forcing many prominent scholars to meet him, including ibn-Rushd.[50] Later, he began his education within the Zawahiri school of law[51] while receiving guidance from two women mystics.[52] In this respect, he was diametrically opposite to Ghazali, receiving mystical experience before formal education. Later, he took Abu Jafar Ahmad al-Uryani as his spiritual preceptor. After the fall of his native place Murcia to the Christian kingdom of Castile, ibn Arabi spent rest of his life in the Mediterranean.[53]

Ibn Arabi is known for the exposition of his doctrine *wahdat-ul-wujud* (although he did not use that phrase) and his magnum opus *Al Futuhat al Makkiyya* (The Meccan Revelations). *Wahdat-ul-wujud* is commonly translated as 'unity of being.' Its popular understanding denotes the permeation of divine beings across the cosmos, which has been quite controversial in the Islamic world.[54] The other controversial ideas of Ibn Arabi include "the idea that man can best contemplate God in the form of a woman"[55] and claiming for himself the seal of the

[47] Hillenbrand, "Al-Ghazali, p. 71.
[48] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 96.
[49] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 263.
[50] Jawad Anwar Qureshi, "Ibn 'Arabi and the Akbari Tradition," in *Routledge Handbook of Sufism*, ed. Lyold Ridgeon, (Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 89-102, p. 89-90.
[51] Qureshi, "Ibn 'Arabi," p. 89.
[52] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 264.
[53] Green, *Sufism*, p. 79.
[54] Green, *Sufism*, p. 79.
[55] Lewisohn, "Sufism's Religion of Love," p. 175.

Muhammadan saints (*khatam al wilaya al Muhammadiyya*).[56] Such elucidations have made scholars, including western ones, claim that ibn Arabi was a pantheist.[57] He is also reviled by orthodox factions of the Islamic world, with his books banned in some Islamic countries even today.[58] While he remains *shaykh al-akfar* (master of infidels) for the latter group, he is still accepted *as shaykh al akhbar* (the greatest master) for a considerable section of the Islamic world.[59] His elucidation of the typology of saints,[60] *wahdat-ul-wujud*, and emphasis on the veneration of the Prophet and religious toleration,[61] still influence many Muslims across the globe, just as it did many Sufi mystics after him.

The death of Ibn Arabi was followed by the end of the Abbassid caliphate in 1258 and the concurrent institutionalisation of Sufism into Sufi *tariqa* (orders). These orders, which include the *Chistiyya*¸ the *Naqshbandiyya*, the *Melvi*¸ the *Shahadilliya*, the *Malamatiyya*, the *Kubrawiyya*, the *Qadriyya* and the *Suhrawardiyya,* among others, sustained the Sufi movement and its different aspects throughout the last millennium. These *turuq* continued to exhibit the vast doctrinal, theological and ritualistic diversity evident from the history mentioned above. The Sufis associated with these *turuq* played a vital role in the socio-political and religious life of the Muslim community from the age of the empires to the colonial period. The Sufi saints of Kashmir, belonging to different Sufi orders, played multifarious roles within the society, from culture to society to politics.

Sectarian Conflict and Political Change: The Suhrawardiyya Tariqa in Kashmir

The first prominent Sufi *shaykh* who visited Kashmir was Shaykh Sharif ud-Din, popularly known as Bulbul Shah. He visited Kashmir in the early fourteenth century and belonged to the *Suhrawardiyya tariqa*, making *Suhrawardiyya* the first Sufi order to arrive in Kashmir. The *Suhrawardiyya tariqa* was established by Shaykh Ziya ud-Din Abu al-Najib Abd al-Qahir Suhrawardi, a Persian Sufi *shaykh*. Najib Suhrawardi is also the author of the famous Sufi treatise *Adabul Muridin*, a guide to Sufi novices. It was, however, Shaykh Shihab-ud-Din Abu Hafs ‘Umar bin Abdullah Suhrawardi, the nephew of Najib Suhrawardi, who institutionalised

[56] Qureshi, “Ibn ‘Arabi,” p. 94.
[57] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 266.
[58] Qureshi, “Ibn ‘Arabi,” p. 101.
[59] Green, *Sufism*, p. 79.
[60] Qureshi, “Ibn ‘Arabi,” p. 94.
[61] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 271-272.

the order and made it popular.[62] ‘Umar Suhrawardi was born in 1145, also in Persia, and succeeded his uncle as the head of the order. He even wrote the *Awarif-ul-Muridin*, a Sufi treatise that has remained an essential Sufi textbook ever since, especially in the Indian subcontinent.[63]

In addition to his theological achievements, ‘Umar Suhrawardi was also politically influential. He actively involved himself in the politics of the Abbasid Caliphate, centred in Baghdad. He put his weight behind the efforts of the Abbasid caliph of his time, Caliph an-Nasir, who was trying to revive Islamic spirituality and unite Islamic rulers against the Mongol threat. ‘Umar Suhrawardi served as the ambassador of the Caliph to different Islamic rulers, while he was also appointed the *shaykh as shuyukh*, the official Sufi master of Baghdad.[64] This intimate relationship between the rulers and the *Shaykh* of the Suhrawardi order installed a template for future Suhrawardi saints who continued to play an essential role in the politics of their respective communities, including in Kashmir.

Bulbul Shah was linked to the *Suhrawardiyya* lineage through his *pir*, Shaykh Niyamatullah Farsi, himself a lesser-known disciple of Umar Suhrawardi.[65] Bulbul Shah was born in modern-day Turkmenistan and travelled to Kashmir on the orders of his preceptor. In Kashmir, he oversaw the conversion of the Buddhist prince of Ladakh, Rinchan Shah, to Islam. Rinchan Shah, after conversion, took on the name of Sultan Sadr-ud-Din, and became the first Muslim *Sultan* of the region. While scholars provide myriad reasons for the conversion of Rinchan Shah, it is generally accepted that the conversion of Rinchan Shah had a cascading effect, and many nobles and high officials accepted the “creed of Bulbul Shah.”[66] In reciprocation and reverence, the *sultan* built the first *khanqah* (hospice) of Kashmir for Bulbul Shah. The compound of the *khanqah* was extensive and the *sultan* built quarters for the devotees, a mess (*langer*), and reserved revenue for its upkeep. The Sultan, on his death, was buried in this very compound, and the shrine remains a site of reverence to the present day, and the conversion is considered to have kick-started the Islamic era of Kashmiri history.

The *Suhrawardiyya silsila* did not have any other prominent name after Bulbul Shah until the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen (1420-1470), also known as *Bud Shah.* During his reign,

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62 Green, *Sufism*, p. 85.
63 Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2015), p. 74.

64 Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 74.
65 Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 74.
66 G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir*: *A History of Kashmir*, vol. 1, (Lahore: University of Panjab, 1948), p. 82

Suhrawardiyya Sufi, Sayyid Muhammad Isfahani, arrived in Kashmir. Sayyid Isfahani was the disciple of Sayyid Jalal ud- Din Bukhari of Uch.[67] Although he was given maintenance by *Bud Shah*, Isfahani retreated to a village and spent the rest of his life in seclusion. Later, Sayyid Ahmad Kirmani, belonging to the chain of Makhdum Jahaniyan of Uch, also visited Kashmir. He and his disciple, Baba Masud, were particularly opposed to the Shi'i sect and opposed its ascendance in Kashmir due to the efforts of a Shi'i Sufi, Shamsuddin Araki. However, the brief visit of the Suhrawardiyya saint, Sayyid Jamal ud-Din Bukhari, a disciple of Shaykh Abdul Wahhab Dehlavi, and through Dehlavi of Makhdum Jahaniyan, proved the most fruitful for the institutionalisation of the *Suhrawardiyya* order of Kashmir. During his stay, he initiated Shaykh Hamza Makhdumi into the *Suhrawardiyya* order, who became the most famous *Suhrawardiyya* saint of Kashmir, fondly called *Mahboob-ul-Alam* (Beloved of the World).

Shaykh Hamza Makhdumi was born in the year 1494 at Tujjar, situated in the district of Baramullah in north Kashmir. He belonged to a royal lineage that settled in Kashmir, and his family were regularly employed in the royal court.[68] Hamza Makhdumi was considered an inquisitive child.[69] His father, Usman Raina, enrolled him in the seminary of Ismail Kubravi at Srinagar. Raina was a "patron of learning and helped in the maintenance of the seminary."[70] During this time, he learnt about fundamental Islamic law, principles and legal theory, personally supervised by Shaykh Fathullah, son of Shaykh Ismail. Mullah Darwesh taught him Quran and its commentary. Later, when Sayyid Jamal ud din Bukhari visited Kashmir, Hamza Makhdumi took his *bayat* (oath of allegiance) and learnt *zikr* (recitation) and other principles of Sufi life from him.[71]

On a purely theological level, Shaykh Hamza Makhdumi had immense contributions to the Sufi milieu of Kashmir. The most prominent was the attempt to reconcile the Rishis and the orthodox Sufi sects of Kashmir.[72] It is crucial because Kashmir witnessed a major inter-order

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[67] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 75.

[68] Peer Ghulam Hassan Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, 1997 ed. (Jammu: Ranbir Government Press, 1887), p. 211-213.

[69] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 212

[70] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 78

[71] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 220.

[72] This he did by showing extreme reverence for Nund Rishi, the Rishi mystic, even going on a regular pilgrimage of his shrine. See Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*: *The Role of Muslim Rishis* (*Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century*), (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1994), p. 145.

rift during his time, especially between the Kubraviya and the Nurbakshiya order.[73] His approach allowed the emergence of a unified Sufi structure, which was nonetheless internally plural, in Kashmir. Another aspect of his theological outlook, which had profound socio-political outcomes, was his strong anti-Shi‘i views. It seems the Suhrawardiyya *tariqa* in Kashmir was strongly anti-Shi‘i since, as mentioned earlier, Shaykh Ahmad Kirmani and Baba Masud were also staunchly against the Shi‘i community. Shaykh Hamza Makhdumi continued to adhere to this doctrinal position, which subsequently had profound political consequences.

There are several instances attributed to him, including dreams and encounters, which bring forth Shaykh Hamza's opposition to the Shi‘i creed. These include supposed encounters, in dreams or reality, with personalities such as timeless prophet al-Khidr,[74] and the four *Rashidun* Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali, who attested to the misguided nature of the Shi‘i people.[75] Hamza Makhdumi became a strong defender of the Sunni creed against the Shi‘i ascendency of the time, and is also believed to have also converted some Shi‘i to the Sunni faith.[76] Even today, many adherents of Hamza Makhdumi continue to hold a negative perception of the Shi‘i community, with an adherent saying "that it is not permitted to share food with them or go to their weddings as anyone who does that would earn the displeasure of Hamza Makhdumi."[77]

This zeal of Hamza Makhdumi as the defender of the Sunni creed, and the challenger of the Shi‘i thought, brought about a reaction from the Chak dynasty, which professed the Shi‘i faith. Sultan Gazi Khan Chak exiled him from the city of Srinagar, and he took residence on the outskirts of the city. Although a disease supposedly afflicted the Sultan due to this act, Hamza Makhdumi refused to return to the city even after being requested by the son of the Sultan, only returning after the death of Gazi Chak.[78]This political entanglement did not end with the Sultan's death but later was pivotal in establishing Mughal rule in Kashmir through the

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[73] Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nurbakshiya Between Medieval and Modern Islam¸* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), p. 212.
[74] Al- Khidr is a figure in Islamic history who is considered the righteous servent of God, assumed by some to be a Prophet and by some as a saint. He is also considered by some as living since the beginning of the mankind and would survive till the end of it, transferring mystical knowledge to people who are worthy. See Irfan A. Omar, *Prophet al-Khidr*: *Between the Qur‘anic Text and Islamic Contexts*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022).
[75] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 217-219.
[76] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 81.
[77] Interaction on 3rd November 2020, with several members of my extended family after I participated in the marriage ceremony of a Shi‘i friend.
[78] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 226.

intervention of different Sufi saints of Kashmir, including the *khalifa* (successor; pl. *khulafa*) of Hamza Makhdumi, Baba Dawood Khaki.

Baba Dawood Khaki was the last prominent *Suhrawardiyya* Sufi of the valley. His wrote numerous treatises on different aspects of Sufism, especially the teachings of his preceptor. These include *Risala-e-Ghusliya*, *Rishi Nama, Qasid-ul-Amiya, Wird-ul-Muridin* and *Dastar-ul-Salikeen*. He also allowed practices of different orders, such as the Naqshbandiyya, including *sama*, which Hamza Makhdumi prohibited.[79] This attempt at the rapprochement between different Sufi orders by Dawood Khaki was mostly directed towards the Rishi order. This focus is evident from his work *Qasida-i Lamiyya*, where he extols the virtue of Hardi Rishi, a Rishi contemporary.[80] While the *Suhrawardiyya tariqa* continued to exist after Dawood Khaki, it could no longer produce a personality like him or his preceptor Shaykh Hamza Makhdumi.

In the annals of Kashmiri history, Baba Dawood Khaki is remembered for his role in overthrowing the Chak dynasty and establishing Mughal rule in 1586. He, along with fellow Suhrawardiyya Sufi, Baba Mehdi Suhrawardi, and two other Sufi saints of other orders, Shaykh Yaqub Sarfi and Baba Ismail Anchari, visited the Mughal emperor Akbar, requesting him to annex Kashmir.[81] The immediate context of this request was the killing of Qazi Musa, the preacher of Jama Masjid, who refused a sectarian change in the religious practice of the mosque, which was tied to the Shiʻi fundamentalism of Yaqub Shah Chak.[82] Being the *khalifa* of Hamza Makhdumi, who was himself targeted by the Chaks and was quite famous among the Sunni masses, endowed the Mughal conquest with some degree of legitimacy, which helped them fight the Chak insurgency, that continued after the conquest of Kashmir by the Mughals in 1586.[83]

The Order of Change: Kubraviyya Tariqa in Kashmir.

The Kubraviyya order has been, socio-politically speaking, one of the two most influential Sufi orders of Kashmir. The *tariqa* was founded by Abul Jannab Ahmad, also known as Najm ud-

[79] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 83-84.
[80] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 149.
[81] Peerzada Muhammad Toiyyib Hussain Naqshbandi Suhrawardi Kashmiri, *Awliya-e-Kashmir*, (Lahore: Nazir Sons Publishers, 1988), p. 39.
[82] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, tr. K. N. Pandit, (Calcutta, Firma KLM Private Limited, 1988), p. 235
[83] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 242.

Din Kubra, a Central Asian mystic. Kubra was born in Khiya, in 1145. Kubra, meaning "the greatest affliction," was a title given to the Sufi for his powerful debating skills. Kubra was a prolific writer and wrote a commentary on the Quran, a book on etiquettes for the disciples, and mystical treatises on the ten stages of the Sufi path for novices, which is widely read and translated across the globe.[84] The most famous work of Kubra is *Fawa'ih al-jamal wa Fawatih al-Jalal*, in which he explained different mystical stages through a well-formulated colour symbolism which has been the distinctive element of the Kubraviyya order.[85] Najm ud-Din Kubra was martyred fighting the Mongols when they attacked and captured the city Khwarazm, the location of his centre, refusing an offer of a safe passage.[86]

In the contours of this research, the next important Sufi in the Kubraviyya order is Rukn ud-Din Abul Makarim, also known as Ala-ud-daula Simnani. Simnani was a scholar of repute who firmly rejected the idea of a Sufi accumulating wealth while not advocating a complete withdrawal or ascetic life. He also was one of the first to contest and question the mystical doctrine, *wahdat-ul-wujud* of Ibn Arabi, endearing him to the later Naqshbandiyya as well.[87] Simnani put immense emphasis on preaching the faith of Islam. According to him, "the duty of a Sufi is to preach his faith."[88] Consequently, this led to his disciples undertaking travels to different regions of the world. The travels of one of his disciples, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani, who was initiated into the Kubraviyya fold by the disciple of Simnani, Shaykh Abul Mali Sharaf ud-Din Mahmud bin Abdullah Muzdaqani, changed the social, cultural and political landscape of the Kashmir valley.

Sayyid Ali Hamdani is, arguably, the most influential Persian Sufi in the annals of Kashmiri Sufism. His arrival to the valley is supposed to have immensely sped up the Islamicization of the valley, while also effecting social, economic, cultural and political changes. While the societal and political impact of Sayyid Ali Hamdani will be dealt in a separate chapter, it is important to state that scholars across the academic spectrum attest that Sayyid Ali Hamdani played a crucial role in bringing the population within the fold of Islam. It is said that before visiting the valley, he sent his two cousins, Sayyid Taj-ud-din and Sayyid Hussain, to explore

[84] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 255.
[85] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 255-256.
[86] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 88.
[87] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 257.
[88] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 88-89.

the atmosphere in the valley.[89] Since he visited the valley himself afterwards, it is fair to assume that the reports sent by them on the atmosphere of Kashmir were conducive.

Sayyid Ali Hamdani set up the skeletal framework of the relationship between the Sufi and the ruling establishment, including in the context of Kashmir. Ali Hamdani believed kings and nobles should keep a close company of Sufis and mystics for their guidance.[90] This closeness to religious people was necessary to run the polity on Islamic principles or the *shari'ah*. He was very particular about conformity towards these principles, and his interaction with the ruler of Kashmir, Sultan Qutb ud-Din (1373-1389), is emblematic of the same. It is believed that on his advent to Kashmir, Ali Hamdani found that Sultan continued to follow non-Islamic practices as a normalised daily routine. This included visiting and praying at temples in the morning, adhering to a dress code contrary to Islamic dictates, and indulging in the forbidden practice of marrying two sisters.[91] Ali Hamdani induced the *sultan* to follow Islamic practices, including the Islamic dress code, and made the Sultan divorce one of the sisters and remarry the other.[92] Despite these concessions, it is believed that the non-implementation of *sharia* for the masses by Qutb ud-Din may have led to Sayyid Ali leaving the valley.[93]

This kind of relationship between the saint and the Sultan was continued by the son of Ali Hamdani, Mir Muhammad Hamdani, when he visited Kashmir after the death of his father. Mir Muhammad Hamdani was initiated into the Kubraviyya order by two disciples of his father, Khawaja Ishaq Khatlani and Moulana Noor-ud-din Badakshi. He visited Kashmir in 1393.[94] His travels were influenced by the instructions of his father, who had left two *wasaya* (wills) in the custody of Khatlani and Badakshi. It is important to note that Mir Muhammad was not the *khalifa* of his father, as Sayyid Ali Hamdani was against Sufi saints appointing their progeny as the *khalifa*. It was another Sufi, Shaykh Ahmad, whom Ali Hamdani chose as his *khalifa* in the valley.[95]

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[89] Sayyid Ashraf Shah, *Sufi Saints of Kashmir: Sufi Orders of Kashmir*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2017), p. 80-85

[90] Sayyid Amir Kabir Ali Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, tr. Muhammad Riyaz Qadri, (Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers. 1998), p. 168. (translation from Urdu mine).

[91] Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1959), p. 56.

[92] R. K Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir: 1320-1819¸* (Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1969), p. 105-106

[93] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 96.

[94]Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 212

[95] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 150.

Nonetheless, Mir Muhammad was responsible for significant theological and political changes in the history of Kashmir. Theologically, it is believed that Mir Muhammad initiated the Rishi mystic, Shaykh Nur ud-Din into the Kubraviyya fold, seemingly combining the indigenous and foreign strands of Sufism in the valley.[96] His efforts bore fruit and fostered a respectable relationship, to the point of intermingling, between different Sufi *turuq* of Kashmir. The respect and reverence of Shaykh Nur ud-Din by Hamza Makhdumi and by his *khalifa* Baba Dawud Khaki is a continuation of this tradition, which has allowed a non-confrontational existence of different *turuq* in Kashmir.

Mir Muhammad Hamadani visited Kashmir during the rule of Sultan Sikander, who, contemporary historians argued, showcased complete deference to Mir Muhammad Hamdani. The reverence of the king towards the Sheikh is also grudgingly accepted by Jonaraja, who mentions that "the King waited on him daily as humble as a servant, took his lessons from him like a student and was attentive to him like a slave."[97] Mir Muhammad Hamdani is also believed to have influenced Sultan Sikander to undertake strong measures, both in his personal life and governmental apparatus, to bring the polity closer to Islamic values. Sultan Sikander is considered the first ruler to "enforce *Shariah* strictly, banning the use of wine and other intoxicants, while prohibiting gambling, dancing of women and music, including playing of the flute, lute and the rubab." [98] He also imposed *jizya* on non-Muslims.[99] He also followed Islamic dictums in his personal life too, not indulging in intoxication and refraining from extra-marital affairs, marrying within the limit prescribed by Islam.[100] Sultan Sikander also constructed the *Khanqah-e-Mo'allah* in memory of Sayyid Ali Hamadani, for which Mir Muhammad Hamdani gifted him a Badakshan ruby (tarikh Sayyid ali). This shrine, as Chitrelekha Zutshi argues, "has been tied from its very inception to the religio-political nexus of the establishment, continuation and definition of Islam in Kashmir."[101] The *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* has since remained central to many other rulers also, with "the destruction and

[96] Ghulam Nabi Shaad, *Hazrat Mir Sayyid Hamdani Aur Kashmir*: *Kashmir Tehzeeb Aur Saqafat Ki Nazar Mein*, (Srinagar: Ashraf Book Centre, 2021), p. 229.
[97] Jonaraja, *The Rajatarangini of Jonaraja*, tr. Jogesh Chunder Butt, (Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1983), p. 57.
[98] Hasan, *Kashmir*, p. 64.
[99] Jonaraja, *The Rajtarangini*, p. 60.
[100] Hasan, *Kashmir*, p. 61.
[101] Chitralekha Zutshi, "Contesting Urban Space: Shrine Culture and the Discourse on Kashmiri Muslim Identities and Protest in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, ed. Chitralekha Zutshi, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 52

rebuilding of this shrine at particular moments has been tied to the descending or ascending political fortunes of several rulers."[102]

After Mir Muhammad, the Kubraviyya *silsila* continued to prosper in the valley, with Shaykh Yaqub Sarfi being the most prominent among the later Kubraviyya mystics. Sarfi, born in 1521 in Srinagar, was inducted into the Kubraviyya fold by Makhdoom Kamal ud-Din Shaykh Hussain at Samarqand, where he went to educate himself. He also studied in the famous seminary of ibn Hajar in Mecca. On his return, his foreign education and prolific writings, some of which survive till today, became a source of fame for Sarfi, granting him access to the Mughal court.[103] The colossal personality and fame of Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi lent heft to his petition to Mughal emperor Akbar, when along with Baba Dawud Khaki and two other Sufi saints, he implored him to conquer Kashmir and to end the Chak rule. As mentioned above, Akbar agreed to send an army to conquer Kashmir. Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi himself "guided the Mughal forces into Kashmir."[104]

<u>Nurbakshiya saints and the Shi'i rule in Kashmir: Shams ud-Din Muhammad Araki and Baba Khalil ul-lah</u>

The *Nurbakshiya* order is a branch of the Kubraviyya order and is named after the title given to its founder by the *khalifa* of Sayyid Ali Hamdani, Khawaja Ishaq Khuttalani. Sayyid Muhammad Nurbaksh was born in a village in Iran called Sawijan in 1392. His father was a follower of Twelver Shi'ism and, according to Nurbaksh, knew the exalted status of his son as the promised *Mahdi* even before he was born.[105] He joined the Kubraviya order after the *khalifa* of Ishaq Khuttalani, Khawaja Ibrahim Khuttlani, proposed it to him. Subsequently, Nurbaksh moved to Khatalan, a city in modern Turkmenistan where the mausoleum of Sayyid Ali Hamdani is situated, to formally become a disciple of Ishaq Khattalani.[106] In 1423, it is claimed,

[102]Chitralekha Zutshi, "Srinagar's Shrines and Kashmiri Politics have been Intertwined for Centuries," *Scroll*, (25th December, 2015), https://scroll.in/article/771618/srinagars-shrines-and-kashmiri-politics-have-been-intertwined-for-centuries
[103] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 177-181.
[104] Sameer Ahmad Sofi, "Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi of Kashmir: A Case Study of his Literary and Political Contributions," *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 6, no. 2, (2016): 257-261, p. 259.
[105] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 42.
[106] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 42.

Ishaq Khattalani called Nurbaksh into his chamber and revealed his status as *Mahdi*, which ultimately led to the division of the *Kubraviyya* order.[107]

Historically in Islam, the title of *Mahdi* is accompanied by an expectation of political struggle.[108] Consequently, Khawaja Khattalani also urged Nurbaksh "to start a rebellion against unjust rulers, as expected of the *Mahdi*."[109] In the context of Khattalani and Nurbaksh, this was directed toward their contemporary Timurid *sultan*, Sultan Shah Rukh. However, Shah Rukh brutally crushed the insurrection against him, led by Nurbaksh in 1424.[110] Shah Rukh even ordered the execution of Ishaq Khatalani. While Nurbaksh was imprisoned, only to be released later, his issues with the Timurid sultanate continued for the next twenty-five years of his life, without much success.[111] Nonetheless, his expectation of yielding the temporal power, since he was destined to as the *Mahdi*, continued to persist as long as he was alive.

However, this intimate coalascence of temporal and spiritual realms, espoused and desired by Nurbaksh, became cardinal principles of the Nurbakshiya *tariqa*, guiding the actions of one of the most successful Nurbakshiya saints, Shams ud-Din Muhammad Araki.[112] Araki was born in a village called Kundala, in the region of Arak, present-day Iran.[113] His year of birth is generally considered to be 1429.[114] His parents were Darvesh Ibrahim and Firuza Khatun, and his father was a disciple of Sayyid Muhammad Nurbaksh.[115] It was only after the death of Nurbaksh that Araki completely immersed himself in the Sufi path, as Nurbaksh had ordered him to take care of his family instead.[116] After training under different Sufi masters, he finally enrolled himself in the services of Shah Qasim Faiz Baksh, who was attached to the ruler of Khurasan, Sultan Husayn Mirza.[117] Sultan Mirza sent Araki to Kashmir on a diplomatic mission to procure some herbs, insisted upon by his spiritual master Faiz Baksh.[118] Araki

[107] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 29, 45
[108] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 1-28.
[109] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 49.
[110] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 48.
[111] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 50.
[112] There is a debate whether his surname is Araki or Iraqi. Recent scholarship has argued that it should be Araki. See Fayaz Ahmad Dar, "Religion and Politics in Medieval Kashmir: 14th to 18th Century," PhD Thesis, (University of Hyderabad: Department of History: University of Hyderabad, 2019), p. 122.
[113] Muhammad Ali Kashmiri, *Tohfatu'l Ahbab* (*A Muslim Missionary in Kashmir*), tr. Kashinath Pandit, (New Delhi: Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum, 2009), p. 1-2.
[114] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 202.
[115] Kashmiri, *Tohfatu'l Ahbab*, p. 2
[116] Kashmiri, *Tohfatu'l Ahbab*, p. 3
[117] Kashmiri, *Tohfatu'l Ahbab*, p. 23-25; p. 49
[118] Kashmiri, *Tohfatu'l Ahbab*, p. 75.

reached Kashmir in 1483 and made deep inroads into the religious and political life of the region, before leaving with the herbs in 1491.

It was, however, his second visit in 1496 that was politically momentous.[119] During his second visit, Araki enrolled rulers and *viziers* "belonging to Raina, Chak and Chadura" as his devotees.[120] Malik Musa Raina, one of the important disciples of Araki, became the *Chief Vizier* of Kashmir in 1501. This increased the political capital of Araki, who influenced Malik Raina to initiate religious measures through the governmental structure, including building a *khanqah* at Zadibal. The religious acts of Malik Musa Raina, under the influence of Araki, were so widespread that the author of *Bahristan-e-Shahi* claims that "after Sultan Sikandar, no one among the Muslims who wielded authority in the land of Kashmir has rendered so much service to Islam as Malik Musa Raina."[121] In addition to Musa Raina, Araki also influenced Chaks, who would go on to ascend the throne of Kashmir in 1552, to undertake religious duties. The most noteworthy direction was the one given to Kazi Chak by Araki to reconstruct the *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*.[122] Araki died in 1526 and was buried in the Zadibal *khanqah* that he constructed on the land offered by Malik Musa Raina.[123]

This period was one of the most unstable periods in Kashmiri history, with different rulers assuming the throne of Kashmir for short periods of time.[124] In such insecure environment, a Sufi *shaykh* constantly played a mediatory role to mitigate political and social disputes, epitomising the role of Sufi saint as a social lubricant. Baba Khalil ul-lah, also called Baba Khalil, was a Sufi mystic of the Shi'i creed. He or his *khanqah* played a crucial role in almost every political negotiation of the Chak rule (1552-1586). His *khanqah*, built by the Chaks in the Nawakadal area of Srinagar, is now known as *Khanqah-e-Sokhta*.[125] The fact that his *khanqah* was built by the Chaks reflects his intimate connection with the dynasty. However, his role as a mediator was also buoyed by the fact that other elites across the sectarian divide, such as the Baihaqi Sayyids, also trusted him.[126]

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[119] Kashmiri, *Tohfatu'l Ahbab*, p. 178

[120] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 222.

[121] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 94.

[122] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 116.

[123] Hakim Ghulam Safdar Hamdani, *Tarikh-e-Shiyan-i-Kashmir*, vol. 1, (Srinagar, Research and Publishing House, 1975), p. 82.

[124] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, p. 222-224, 236-241.

[125] Hamdani, *Tarikh-e-Shiyan-i-Kashmir*, p. 221.

[126] For a detailed overview of Baba Khalil and his role in Kashmiri politics, see Fayaz Ahmad Dar, "Religion and Politics in Medieval Kashmir: 14th to 18th Century," PhD Thesis, (Department of History: University of Hyderabad, 2019), p. 134-144.

The first important role of Baba Khalil emerges during the political confrontation between Hussain Shah Chak (1563-1570) and Ali Shah Chak.[127] After Hussain Shah Chak suffered a stroke, the talk of his successor gained steam. His brother Ali Shah Chak was the prime contender. However, a few nobles, convinced of their loss of prestige, chief among them Ali Koka, Dati Koka and Naji Malik, conspired against the peaceful transfer of power. Sensing trouble, Ali Shah Chak and his military commander proceeded to Sopore on the pretext of hunting, where their military crushed the military of Ali Koka, which had attacked them at night. Convinced of the futility of the confrontation, Hussain Shah Chak sent Baba Khalilullah as a peace broker to Ali Shah Chak, also delivering the royal paraphernalia, the Royal Crown and the Fly-Whisker (*Qutas*) to Ali Shah Chak. Ali Shah Chak finally assumed the throne in 1570.[128]

The death of Ali Shah Chak also precipitated similar circumstances. His death brought his brother Abdal Chak and son, Yousuf Shah Chak, into confrontation. Baba Khalil again tried to mediate between the two factions but was ultimately unsuccessful.[129] However, the first reign of Yousuf Shah, which began in 1578 was very short-lived. A revolt by a noble named Abdal Bhat, who aspired to become the Chief Vizier, brought Yousuf Shah Chak into conflict with Sayyid Mubarak Baihaqi, the trusted commander of his father's forces. The revolting forces had taken refuge in the house of Sayyid Mubarak Baihaqi, and Baihaqi tried to intercede on their behalf through Baba Khalilullah.[130] This attempt failed, and both sides went to war. Yousuf Shah Chak was defeated and asked to move to the mountains, a message delivered by Baba Khalil to the deposed king.[131] Sayyid Mubarak Baihaqi assumed the throne, but after sometime there was a renewal of confrontation between him and Yousuf Shah Chak.. However, this time instead of the battlefield, it was the *Khanqah* of Baba Khalilullah where negotiations took place. Sayyid Mubarak relinquished the throne, and Yousuf Shah Chak assumed it once again.[132] Even after the arrest of Yousuf Shah Chak by the Mughals, Baba Khalil continued his mediatory functions, first under the brief rule of Yaqub Shah Chak and finally for the Mughals,

[127] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 174-176.
[128] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 176.
[129] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 181-182.
[130] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 193.
[131] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 96.
[132] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 203-204.

who realised the control and authority of Baba Khalil over the political elite of the region, and used him to control dissidents and entrench its authority over the region.[133]

The Qadiriyya tariqa and the Sufi Conceptualization of Jehad: The Colossal Personality of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani

The Qadiriyya order is unique as the popularity of this order is squarely based on its founder, Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani, a Hanbali scholar of 12th-century Baghdad. Shaykh Jilani was born in Nayef, in the Persian district of Jilan, in 1077. Although his fame is based on innumerable legends, it hardly fits the historical image of Jilani who lived his life as "the stern, sober representative of contrition and mystical fear."[134] Jilani went to Baghdad to study Islamic *fiqh* (Islamic law), which he studied under Abu Said bin Ali al Muharrami. Muharrami was a famous scholar of the Hanbali school of Islam, and the founder and *Shaykh* of a famous madrassa in Baghdad.[135] Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani also received instructions in Sufi practice from several teachers, but the master he referred to as his *shaykh* was Abu al-Khayr Hammid al-Dabbis, who was known for his incredible dedication towards his students.[136]

After completing his education, Jilani became a famous public preacher and was "attracting large crowds of faithful by his sermons and exhortations, though his works reveal but little of the lofty mystical states of which his contemporaries spoke."[137] In his sermons, he emphasised, "trust in God and compliance with his commands, and interpolates his exhortations with citations from the Quran and *hadith*."[138] In 1133, he succeeded Muharrami as the *Shaykh* of the madrassa, where he spent the rest of his life, passing away in 1166. His son Abdul Wahhab succeeded him as the *shaykh* of the madrassa.

However, it was his son, Abdul Razzaq, who, through his writings revealed the mystical standing of Abdul Qadir Jilani.[139] Over the years, his name came to be associated with sobriquets such as *Muhyi ud din* (reviver of religion), *gauth ul azam* (the greatest help), *qutb* (the highest rank of an *awliya*) and the greatest of the *awliya* (friends of Allah) with "his foot

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[133] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, p. 242.
[134] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 247.
[135] Jami M Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace*: *The Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious Life*¸ (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 87.
[136] Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, p. 87.
[137] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 247.
[138] Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, p. 90.
[139] Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, p. 88.

on the neck of every saint."[140] From a usual religious scholar, he became the eponymous founder of the Qadiriyya *tariqa*, attributed to whom is one of the most famous sayings of Sufism and Islam - "struggles against evil desires of the inner self as *jehad al akbar* (the greatest struggle)."[141]

This conceptualisation of *jehad* as internal, as opposed to a dominant militaristic understanding of *jehad*, has been promoted as a fundamental difference between Sufism and the orthodox Islam.[142] Such internalisation is also crucial to the popular understanding of Sufism as 'inward-looking' and quietistic, in harmony with the popular liberal or secular values. While it is without a doubt that Jilani was considered "an *opposant politique* of the caliphs," celebrating him "as the founder of a tariqa that epitomised the independence of the Sufi tradition from the Caliphal authority,"[143] this imagination emerged out of a political context and its construction is attributed to his son, Abdul Razzak.[144] Abdul Razzak was a contemporary of Umar Suhrawardi, the Suhrawardi mystic who, as mentioned above, supported the efforts of the Caliph, an-Nasir, to reassert religious domination across the Muslim world.[145] Abdul Razzak supposedly set up the foundation of this legend to distinguish his *tariqa* from his contemporary Suhrawardi *tariqa.* Thus, this decision to remain politically averse had political and contextual roots, rather than a theological basis.

Nonetheless, the personality of Abdul Qadir Jilani towers over the Qadiri *tariqa*. This maybe also on account of the weak institutionalisation of the *tariqa.* The institutionalisation of the Qadiriyya order, which was given a definite form by Nur ud-Din Ali al Shattanufi, has a few distinctive features. One, the Qadiriyya order does not have any centralised spiritual leadership nor any fixed set of rules,[146] which gives considerable leeway to individual spiritual masters in deciding practices and conduct. However, in all probability, the lack of any central figure in the *tariqa* after Abdul Qadir Jilani may also be a reason for this weak institutionalisation present in the *Qadiriyya* order. Jilani remains the primary object of reverence for Qadirriya mystics and adherents worldwide, including Kashmir.

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[140] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 247.
[141] Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, p. 90- 91.
[142] M. J, Akbar, *The Shade of Swords*: *Jihad and the Conflict between Islam & Christianity*, (London: Routledge, 2002).
[143] Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, p. 88.
[144] Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, p. 88.
[145] Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, p. 88.
[146] Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities*, p. 96.

The first Qadriyya Sufi to visit Kashmir was Sayyid Nimatullah Shah Qadri, who arrived in Kashmir from Punjab during the rule of the Chaks.[147] Sayyid Nimatullah claimed to be the direct descendent of Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani and initiated Hajji Baba Qadiri and Shaykh Mirak Mir into the Qadiri fold before leaving the valley.[148] Hajji Baba, a merchant, left for pilgrimage after his initiation, while Mirak Mir remained in the valley till his death in 1582. Another important Qadiriyya Sufi to have visited Kashmir was Sayyid Ismail Shami, who also traced his lineage to Abdul Qadir Jilani.[149] His stay was brief, and he is mainly known for the initiation of Mir Nazuk, initially a disciple of Baba Dawood Khaki. It is said that Khaki himself introduced Nazuk to Shami, as he held Shami in great esteem.[150] Mir Nazuk died in 1614, and his *khanqah* remains the centre of the Qadiriyya order in Kashmir, looked after by his descendants. However, the *Urs* celebrated in this *khanqah* is that of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani, demonstrating the continued centrality of Jilani as the object of reverence for the devotees. The order remains a popular order on account of the pervading popularity of Jilani and has played a part in the political sphere of the region, as detailed in the seventh chapter.

While these Sufis did not have much interaction on influence on Kashmiri politics, a *Qadariyya* Sufi living in Kashmir was linked to the politics of Delhi during the Mughal period. Mullah Shah Badakshi, a forgotten figure in Kashmiri Sufi literature, was a disciple of Mian Mir, a Qadiriyya Sufi from Lahore.[151] Badakshi was the spiritual preceptor of Jahan Ara, the elder sister of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir. Dara Shikoh as well was quite influenced by Badakshi. The influence of Badakshi can be gauged from the couplets she wrote a treatise on him, extolling his spiritual competence.[152]

Consequently, the influence of Badakshi on the political ideals of Jahan Ara and, partly through her, on Dara Shikoh cannot be ruled out. In the ensuing confrontation between Shikoh and Alamgir, Ara sided with the former. After the killing of Dara Shikoh, Aurangzeb did not punish Ara, but he asked Mullah Shah Badakshi to leave Kashmir. He settled in Lahore, where he eventually died. Since Badakshi was such a known mystic of his times, his omission from almost all the Sufi texts of Kashmir is appalling, and his erasure from history is possibly because of political reasons. Mullah Shah Badakshi and his fate is a matter of great intrigue

[147] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 190.
[148] Shafi Ahmad Qadri, *Kashmiri Sufism*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2002), p. 246-248.
[149] Shah, *Sufi Saints of Kashmir*, p. 110-111.
[150] Qadri, *Kashmiri Sufism*, p. 250.
[151] Muzaffar Alam, *The Mughals and The Sufis*: *Islam and Political Imagination in India, 1500-1750*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2021), p. 272.
[152] Alam, *The Mughals*, p. 267.

and potential research. Nonetheless, the life of Mullah Shah Badakshi indicates that the distance from politics, as attributed to the *tariqa*, was hardly practised by Qadiriyya Sufi saints themselves.

The Political Tilt of the Naqshbandiya Tariqa: 'Ubaid ul-lah Ahrar and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi

The Naqbandiyya *tariqa* is arguably the most prominent and prevalent of the Sufi orders around the world. While the name Naqshbandiyya is derived from Bah ud-Din Naqshband, a 14th-century Sufi mystic of Central Asia, the order traces its crystallisation to a much earlier group of Sufi mystics called the *Khwajagan*. The founder of the *Khwajagan* was a Sufi Khawaja Abu Yaqub Yusuf Hamadani, who traces his lineage from the Prophet through personalities such as Abu Bakr (the first *Rashidun* Caliph), Salman Farsi (Companion of the Prophet), Bayazid Bistami, and Abu Hassan Kharaqani.[153] Tracing lineage back to the Prophet through Abu Bakr is unique to the Naqshbandiyya order. For most other orders, Ali is the first link after the Prophet. Through this link, The Naqashbandiyya also claim to have inherited the unique form of *zikr*, the *zikr-e-khafi* or the silent *zikr*, which the Prophet gave to Abu Bakr during their hiding in the cave of *Jabal Thawr*.[154] The Naqshbandi *tariqa*, however, has an indirect link to Ali as well, through Jafar al Sidiq, the sixth Imam of Shi 'is, who is invoked as the fifth link after the Prophet by the Naqshbandiyya.

It was the *khalifa* of Hamadani, Khwaja Abdul Khaliq Ghijduvani, who gave a proto-formal organisation to the group by bequeathing "to the subsequent generations of the Naqshbandi *silsila*, a series of eight principles governing their Sufi practice, concisely formulated in Persian and collectively known as *Kalimat-i-Qudsiya* (Sacred Words)."[155] Two principles among these merit special attention and had significant repercussions for the socio-political behaviour of the Naqshbandiyya. One is *safar dar vatan* (journey through the homeland), which emphasises an inward journey within the mystic rather than a journey to different places.[156] Consequently, Naqshbandiyya Sufi saints remain rooted in one area instead of travelling to different parts, as

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153 Hamid Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order: A Preliminary Survey of Its History and Significance," *Studia Islamica*, no. 44, (1976): 123-152, p. 130-131.
154 It was the cave in which Prophet Muhammad (S.A,W) were hiding with Abu Bakr, after migrating from Mecca towards Medina. Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order," p. 129.
155 Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order," p. 133.
156 Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order," p. 134.

observed in other orders. The second is *khilwat dar anjuman* (solitude within society) which argues meditation while engaging with the society instead of removing oneself from it, "implying that the spiritual master should involve himself in the social and political affairs of the community."[157] These principles of Ghijdvani, who in all probability was also the preceptor of the ruler of Kashgar,[158] allowed an unfettered relationship between the Naqshbandiyya Sufis and their immediate political surroundings, resulting in the order attaining immense political heft in Central Asian lands.[159]

Baha ud-Din Naqshband, born in 1318 near Bukhara, finally formalised the order, adding three principles to Ghijdvani's eight,[160] which have since been cardinal to the Naqshbandi practice. Due to his immense spiritual prowess, people recollected his name in the same breath as Abdul Qadir Jilani and called him *Shah-e-Naqshband* (The Ruler of Naqshband),[161] providing immense impetus to the order. His *khulafa* vastly expanded the order to different parts of the world. Maulana Yaqub Charkhi, a second-generation Sufi mystic after Baha ud-Din Naqshband, consolidated Naqshbandiyya's social and political power. Khawaja Nasir ud-Din Ubaidullah Ahrar brought this power to towering heights.

Born in Samarkand, Khawaja Ahrar "was not only considered a spiritual preceptor (*pir*), but also a kind of paramount political patron for his disciples."[162] Khawaja Ahrar is believed to have said, "to serve the world, it is necessary to exercise political power."[163] The political and social prestige of Khawaja Ahrar can be gauged from the fact that he "was possibly the biggest landowner of Central Asia of his time," which was "critical for the system of protection and patronage that Ahrar developed."[164] Khawaja Ahrar "employed the practice of *suhba* (accompanying the master) to rally his followers around him."[165] These disciples consisted of "a large number of Timurid rulers and their nobles of Central Asia", which "included Zahir ud-Din Muhammad Babar, the founder of the Mughal dynasty in India.[166]

[157] Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya,*" p. 1
[158] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 365.
[159] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 367.
[160] Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order," p. 133.
[161] Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order," p. 136.
[162] Alam, *The Mughal*, p. 57.
[163] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 365.
[164] Alam, *The Mughal*, p. 59.
[165] Itzchak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p. 1.
[166] Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya,*" p. 57, 61-62.

Although Mughal emperor Akbar moved away from the Naqshbadiyya, moving closer to the Chistiyya order and constructing an 'Akbari dispensation' incorporating the ideal of the Chisti Sufis,[167] the Naqshbandiyya order continued to remain present in Mughal India. While it was Khawaja Razi ud-Din Muhammad Baqi Billah who was the first Naqshbandiyya to arrive in India, his disciple Shaykh Ahmad Faruqui Sirhindi was pivotal in shaping the contours of Naqshbandiyya order, both in India and elsewhere. His influence has been so foundational that most surviving Naqshbandi groups call themselves Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi, a branch of Naqshbandiyya descended from him.[168] His fame rests on two broad aspects of his work. One, it can be "safely accepted" that Sirhindi "defended Islamic orthodoxy against the heterodoxy of Akbar and his imitators, the leader whose descendants supported Aurangzeb against his mystically inclined brother Dara Shikoh."[169] Second, he propounded the theory of *wahdat-ul-shuhud* (unity of vision) as opposed to *wahdat-ul-wajud* (unity of being) propounded by 13th-century mystic Muhyi-ud-din Ibn Arabi.[170] The conceptions of Sirhindi were the first potent challenge to the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujud*. It made Sirhindi immensely influential as *wahdat-ul-wujud* is considered heretical and opposed to sharia by many orthodox Islamic jurists. Thus, Sirhindi, through his doctrine, was able to reconcile the *sharia* and *tariqa* to a large extent.

Although the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa* is generally considered the most 'political' of the Sufi orders,[171] its trajectory in Kashmir significantly differed from such a conceptualisation. The order was introduced by Syed Hilal, who came to Kashmir in the reign of Sultan Sikander (1389-1413). As opposed to the general Naqshbandiyya practice, he retreated to a village called Asham in north Kashmir and lived a quiet life there.[172] He only left one disciple, Mir Sayyid Amin, who was the adopted son of Baihaqi Begum, wife of Sultan Zain ul Abideen.[173] It shows that the order had some currency with the ruling elite. Amin led a reclusive life like his preceptor and was killed after a political intrigue against his family, the Baihaqi Sayyids, in 1484.[174] The *tariqa* was later revived by Khawaja Khawand Mahmud, who claimed descent from Khawaja Ala ud-Din Attar, a *khalifa* of Khawaja Baha ud-Din Naqshband. It is his

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167 Alam, *The Mughal*, p. 74-84.
168 Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order," p. 143.
169 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 368.
170 Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order," p. 144.
171 Alam, *The Mughal*, p. 59.
172 Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 185.
173 Kashmiri, *Awliya-e-Kashmir*, p. 71.
174 Shah, *Sufi Saints of Kashmir*, p. 108.

khanqah in Srinagar, a hugely revered site, that has been immensely relevant in the socio-political arena of Kashmir.

The Political Values of the Ascetics: The Rishi Tariqa of Kashmir

Rishi is considered the indigenous Sufi *tariqa* of Kashmir. This term certainly has Sanskrit roots, referring to "a singer of hymns, an inspired poet or sage."[175] In pre-Islamic Kashmir and the rest of South Asia, Rishi was commonly used to refer to individuals living an ascetic or mendicant life, away from society or habitation. However, it assumed increased significance in Kashmir when a Sufi *tariqa* of the name emerged within the valley in the late 14th and early 15th century. In addition to being indigenous, this order was also predominantly prevalent in the non-urban areas of Kashmir, a marked difference from the other Sufi orders that made their way to Kashmir. This spatial location gave the order a massive geographical reach and a colossal number of adherents. It also imbibed it with values, notions and motifs intimately connected to rural life. Consequently, Rishism has become a bedrock of a particular cultural, social and political view prevalent in the region.

A considerable part of the influence of the Rishi *tariqa* is the towering personality of its progenitor, Shaykh Nur ud-Din or Nund Rishi. Nund Rishi was a contemporary of Mir Muhammad Hamdani. He is considered *Alamdar-e-Kashmir* (Standard-bearer of Kashmir), the patron saint of the valley. Through his *shruks*, small poems in common Kashmiri delivering a concise didactic message, Nund Rishi constructed an elaborate socio-religious and cultural edifice of Kashmir that still stands. A large population of Kashmir, Hindus and Muslims alike, revere him. He is also a central figure in the political edifice that imagines an autonomous existence of Kashmiri Islam and Kashmiri polity. The next chapter will provide a detailed analysis of his foundational role in the socio-political realm of Kashmir.

The *tariqa* that emerged out of the life of Nund Rishi is considered indigenous both in its leadership and doctrinal history. Theologically speaking, its practices are believed to assimilate *Nathpratha* (serpent worship), Buddhism, Saivism and Islamic influences. Even the initial phase of Nur ud-Din's mystical journey is characterised by extreme asceticism and distance from, during which Shavaite philosophy and actions of earlier indigenous mystics of Kashmir

[175] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 36.

profoundly influenced him.[176] However, even though influenced by these indigenous practices, Nund Rishi squarely situates the *silsila* (lineage) of the Rishi *tariqa* within the Islamic tradition. He elucidates the lineage of the order in one of his *shruks* as such:

The first Rishi was Prophet Muhammad;

The second in the order was Hazrat Uways;

The third Rishi was Zulka Rishi;

The fourth in the order was Hazrat Pilas;

The fifth was Rum Rishi;

The sixth in the order was Hazrat Miran Rishi;

The seventh (me) is called a Rishi by mistake;

Who am I to be called a Rishi? What is my name?[177]

Hence, the silsila (lineage) of the order was unique, with the Prophet (S.A.W) as its fountainhead and the presence of indigenous mystics within it. However, Shaykh, staying true to the common *tariqa* practice, traces the lineage to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), establishing the distinctive Islamic nature of the *tariqa*. He traces this lineage through Uways Qarni, a Sufi contemporary of the Prophet, rather than the usual route of Ali or Abu-Bakr. The other four, Zulka Rishi, Plasman Rishi, Ruma Rishi and Miran Rishi, are considered to be indigenous Kashmiris. There is very little information available about their life, but some believe that all four lived were historical personalities from Kashmir, while others believe them to be of mythical origins. [178]

After Nund Rishi, the Rishi *silsila* was carried forward by his five prominent disciples: Bam ud-Din Rishi, Zain ud-Din Rishi, Latief ud_Din Rishi, Qiyam ud-Din Rishi and Nasr ud-Din Rishi. Bam ud-Din Rishi was a respected Hindu priest, Bhuma Sidh, before coming in contact with Nund Rishi. He used to live at Bamzu, where Nund Rishi visited him and successfully converted him to Islam. Even before his conversion, Bam ud-Din was known for his ascetic prowess. After entering the Rishi fold, Bam ud-Din is said to have followed an intense form of

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[176] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 100-104.

[177] Abu Naeemullah, *Nur Nama Yani Kulyat-i-Shaykh ul-Alam*, (Srinagar: Sheikh Mohammad Usman and Sons, 2017), p. 310. (translation from Urdu mine).

[178] Master Ghulam Ali, *Succession of Muslim Rishism in Kashmit*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2016), p.43-45.

asceticism, with some claiming his food to be only water and crushed stones, dying in the reign of Zain ul-Abideen (1420-1470). [179]

One of the most distinguished disciples of Nund Rishi is Zain ud-Din Rishi. It is generally believed that Zain ud-Din belonged to the royal family of Kishtwar. Zain ud-Din came under the influence of Nund Rishi and accepted Islam after Nund Rishi supposedly cured him of an ailment, troubling him for some time.[180] After living with his preceptor, Zain ud-Din settled at a hamlet in south Kashmir called Aishmuqam, where his shrine stands today. During this time, a lot of miraculous feats are attributed to him.[181] His spiritual prowess was even acknowledged by his preceptor, who said

My Zaina is a fountain of the water of immortality

Such is his devotion to the Almighty that he excels his guide[182]

Zain ud-Din Rishi is also credited with the introduction of a unique dress for the Rishis.[183] His death is as much shrouded in mystery as his life, with his corpse vanishing from the *tabut* (coffin).[184]

Latief ud-Din was a wealthy merchant who became the disciple of Nund Rishi after the saint made him realise the futility of worldly possessions.[185] He gave up his wealth, adopting the austere life of a Rishi. He finally moved to a village called Poskar, spending the rest of his life there. Qiyam ud-Din, on the other hand, was a person without formal education. However, since the early stages of his life he was associated with spiritual persons. After coming in contact with Nund Rishi, he modelled his life according to the tenets espoused by Nund Rishi. On the direction of his preceptor, he moved to the village of Manzgam, spending the rest of his life in a cell near a spring called Dodh-Pokar.[186]

Nasr ud-Din Rishi was the closest companion of Nund Rishi throughout his life. He also came under the influence of Nund Rishi after he supposedly cured Nasr of a disease as well.[187] Since bidding farewell to his family, Nasr ud-Din constantly remained at the side of Nund Rishi.

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[179] Ali, *Succession of Muslim Rishism*, p. 85.
[180] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 131-132.
[181] Ali, *Succession of Muslim Rishism*, p. 95.
[182] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 184.
[183] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 134.
[184] Kashmiri, *Awliya-e-Kashmir*, p. 54.
[185] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 137.
[186] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 140.
[187] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 208.

Nund Rishi, on his part, entrusted important responsibilities to him, even addressing some of his *shruks* to him. Nasr ud-Din was entrusted with the care of other disciples while Nund Rishi was alive.[188] He is even supposed to have carried Nund Rishi during his travels across Kashmir after Nund Rishi became too weak to walk. After his death, Nasr ud-Din succeeded Nund Rishi as his principal *khalifa* at his shrine.[189]

The picture that emerges from these details of the Rishi order conforms to the dominant perspective of Sufis, which is mystical, mendicant, reclusive and hardly concerned with this world, let alone politics. Even stories from their lives transmitted to the present strengthen such conceptualisation. One of the most famous and oft-repeated is the story of the interaction between Sultan Ali Shah and Bam ud-Din, which is recollected as follows

> It is said when Sultan Ali Shah (1413-1420), desired to call on him (Bam ud-Din), Bam ud-Din informed the Sultan that if the visit was really necessary, he should not come in his royal robes. The Sultan visited the saint in the dress of a peasant. He asked, as was the custom of the age, for the saint's advice; the reply was: "You have taken off the dress of a king, but you have not taken your mind from the cares of your kingdom. You refuse to remove the cotton wool of heedlessness from your ears; so what use would my company and advice be to you? The nature of rulers is like fire and the counsel and advice of the saints like air; the fire flares up in the air." Again the Sultan asked if he could do anything for him, Bam ud-Din replied: "Do not come to see me again and do not mention my name in your court." The Sulatn retorted: "What deep enmity you show for worldly people." The reply was: "Only because I am enemy of worldliness." When the Sultan left, Bam ud-Din threw the mat, on which the Sultan had been sitting, in the river.[190]

This story brings forth the distaste of Rishis towards worldly attributes, especially royal power. However, if one looks closely, one also finds a preference for the peasant and the peasant way of life in this story. This action was more than just a mere theological or spiritual preference but had important material reasons. Rishism developed during a tumultuous period in Kashmiri history, with older forms of religion, culture and even politics being dismantled by the advent of Islam, Sufi saints, and crafts from central Asia. In this context, Rishism emerged "not as a quiestistic mystical order but as a popular religo-political movement," posing a political

[188] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 138.
[189] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p. 138-139.
[190] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 225-226

challenge to the Sultanate revolving "around the actual condition of the peasantry, not merely matters advanced by the *shariah*."[191]

Rishism also emerged "at the same time as the interpretation of a strong regional, even proto-nationalist, sentiment in Kashmir,"[192] which developed due to the external influence of Central Asian Sufis as well as external political threats such as the Mughals. In this scenario, "the political legitimacy of the Persianate Sufis in Kashmir was being challenged by the rise of a vernacular order of Kashmiri Sufism,"[193] which took a diametrically opposite position to the one taken the Persianate Sufis. In the political development of Sufis such as Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi and Baba Dawud Khaki petitioning Akbar to conquer Kashmir, it is believed that Rishis "had emphasised solidarity through local governance, and warned of the consequence of foreign rule."[194]

Thus, Rishi *tariqa* had a complex relationship with the political structure where it attempted to project through its actions the material and sociological concerns of their base, the ordinary Kashmiri peasants, while also helping to crystallise a nationalist communitarian ethic. While this will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter, it is important to mention two events that reflect the complex relationship of Rishism with the political structure of the region. One was the exile of Zain ud-Din Rishi by Sultan Zain ul-Abideen, who is considered the most tolerant and Sufi-minded ruler of Kashmir.[195] The other was the arrest of Nund Rishi by a neo-convert, Suha Bhatta, during the reign of Sultan Sikander.[196] These events portray that the relationship between Rishis and politics was not of neglect and ignorance but of sustained and proactive engagement, which forced the political structure to intervene. Further, the fact of Nund Reshi's arrest is zealously guarded and its veracity ferociously challenged, even though there is clear historical evidence of the same. This reflects that the conceptualisation of Rishi saints and their supposedly quiestistic nature is efficacious to the contemporary socio-political structure. Any

[191] Abir Bazaz, "The Negative Theology of Nund Rishi (1378-1440): Poetry and Politics in Medieval Kashmir," PhD Thesis, (University of Minnesota, 2016), p. 23.
[192] Bazaz, "The Negative Theology," p. 23.
[193] Abir Bazaz, "Vernacular Apocalypse in Medieval Kashmir: The Mystical Poetry of Nund Rishi (1378–1440)," *Jornal of South Asian Studies*, 44, no. 4, (2021): 617-633, p. 620.
[194] Charles M. Ramsey, "Rishīwaer: Kashmir, the Garden of the Saints," in *South Asian Sufis*: *Devotion, Deviation, and Destiny*, (London: Continuum, 2012), ed. Clinton Bennet and Charles M. Ramsey, 197-210, p. 200-201.
[195] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 98.
[196] Bazaz, "Vernacular Apocalypse," p. 633, (footnote 67).

change in such conceptualisation may seriously hamper their ideological project of constructing and projecting a specific form of Kashmiri history.

Conclusion

Thus, this chapter elucidated that Sufism as a doctrine cannot be imagined as a singular or monolithic category. Sufism encompasses a plethora of personalities and orders ascribing to divergent views on every aspect of human life. Sufi saints have propounded varied understandings of social life, moral action and political understanding, which have become the template for their successors and adherents to follow. Such diversity, especially concerning principles of political engagement and activism, has been present within Sufism since its beginning. As opposed to the conceptualisation of scholars such as Fazlul Rehman, this is not a recent or contextual phenomena but exists across the spatial and temporal history of Sufism.

In the pre-institutionalisation phase of Sufism, Sufi saints such as Mansur al Hallaj, Junayd al Baghdadi and even al Ghazzali have reflected upon the nature of politics. The case of Mansur al Hallaj is essential because he epitomises the mystical and other-worldly aspect of Sufism, the antinomian Sufi saints, who are considered to be rarely concerned with worldly affairs. Junayd al Baghdadi, on the other hand, although being closer to the orthodox position, preached a distance from the political sphere.

These tendencies are also visible after the advent of Sufi *turuq*. Almost every Sufi *tariqa* discussed above has had a Sufi present within its institutional ranks that was intimately connected with the politics of his time, either by words or by action. In the case of the Suhrawardiyya, it was the towering personality of Umar Suhrawardi. Umar Suhrawardi was openly associated with the attempt of the Abbasid caliph al-Nasr in his attempt to reinvigorate the caliphate. The Qadirriya, on the other hand, even preached separation from politics, but that emerged out of the specific context of Umar Suhrawardi lending support to al-Nasr. Its progenitor Abdul Qadir Jilani was a prominent part of the elite circles of Baghdad during his time. Jilani reconceptualised the meaning of *jehad*, which has been central to Sufi discourse ever since. The Naqshbandiyya *tariqa* has possibly been the most political. From Ubaid-ul-lah Ahrar to Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, numerous scholars of the Naqshbandiyya order have openly advocated political interference. The progenitor of Kubraviyya *tariqa* was refuse safe passage and was martyred while fighting the Mongols.

Even within Kashmir, there are several examples of such a conduct. Sheikh Hamza Makhdumi and his anti-Shi'i crusade had profound political effects. He had a protracted struggle with the ruling Chak dynasty, which professed the Shi'i creed. While he did not take up arms, his notions influenced the political trajectory of Kashmir. His successor, Baba Dawud Khaki, went as an ambassador to petition the Mughal emperor Akbar to conquer Kashmir from the Chaks. In his efforts, he was supported by Shaykh Yaqub Sarfi, who was a Kubraviya saint. The Rishi Sufi saints, on their part, advised and struggled against such foreign invasion. All these examples reflect the diversity of thought and action between different Sufi orders.

On the other hand, some Sufi saints had intimate connections with the ruling establishment and instituted socio-political changes through this association. Some acted as patron-saints and, as preceptors of the ruler or a powerful elite, exercised significant control over the state policy. Mir Muhammad Hamdani and Sham ud-Din Araki are examples of this kind. Hamdani exercised considerable influence on the Shahmiri ruler, Sultan Sikander, and many believe Hamdani was the influence behind the iconoclastic policies of the ruler and his minister Suha Bhat. Shams ud-Din Araki, a Nurbakshiya Sufi, an offshoot of the Kubraviyya order of Hamdani, exercised a similar influence on Malik Musa Raina, the topmost minister of Kashmir, during his stay in the valley. Baba Khalil represented the other aspect of Sufi engagement with the political structure through his role as a mediator during different political events and succession issues under the Chak rule.

Thus, Sufi saints have historically engaged with the political sphere of their respective societies in a divergent but sustained manner. From advisors to rulers to mediators to challengers, Sufi have fulfilled a plethora of political functions. However, this is one aspect of their engagement with politics. Some Sufi saints influenced politics by directly engaging with the political structure. Others, by propounding governance structures, social relations and community building. Cumulatively, Sufism influences politics by effecting fundamental social, cultural and political change in the lives of their adherents, derived from the authority and doctrines of the saint and their *turuq*. In the context of Kashmir, Sayyid Ali Hamdani and Nund Rishi belong to such category, whose ideas, values, notions and rituals continue to impact the socio-political reality of Kashmir. Their life and role will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter III

Construction of Community and Culture in Kashmir: Sayyid Ali Hamdani and Nund Rishi

The political influence of Sufis through Sufi orders within the history of Islam was, according to Milad Milani, twofold, "direct and indirect."[1] Indirectly, "the order perpetuated an experiential Islam, both diffused throughout the region and infused with local, popular and emotive cultural insights. As a direct force, some orders physically engaged in military battles against Christendom."[2] Consequently, Milani posits two definitions of Political Sufism. The first one, which he terms the broader one, "concerns the spontaneous role of Muslim agency in Islamic polity, that is to underline the synaptic links between religion and politics in everyday Muslim life as hitherto outlined."[3] Second, in a narrower sense, "political Sufism, like Political Islam, denotes the use of religion, or in this case mysticism, to shape the political system."[4]

I cannot entirely agree with Milani on his coalescence of Political Sufism and Political Islam, even in the narrower sense of the term. Political Islam is, as a category and a project, a modern one emerging within the confines of the nation-state, while Political Sufism is, as I have shown in the previous chapter, a historical reality. Second, there are fundamental differences in the methodological aspects too. To begin with, Political Islam is fundamentally based on a particular study of the scripture, and hence, the scripture enjoys a prominent centrality in the discourse. In Sufism, on the other hand, while the scripture is important, it is highly mediated through the personality and charisma of the saint. The power of charisma is not lost on Milani as well as he concedes that "charisma is one key instrument by which Sufi orders rally communities and individuals, capitalising on the production of didactic works and hagiographies that advance the experience of ritual gathering."[5] This "social and political reach demonstrates the ability to call on large numbers to build community, garner substantial

[1] Milad Milani, *Sufi Political Thought*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), p. 12.
[2] Milani, *Sufi Political Thought*, p. 12.
[3] Milani, *Sufi Political Thought*, p. 65.
[4] Milani, *Sufi Political Thought*, p. 65.
[5] Milani, *Sufi Political Thought*, p. 73.

funding, and enact strong development in their efforts to intervene in both the political and social arenas."[6]

Milani's work, is still important through the conceptualisation of the indirect political impact of Sufism which he calls the broader definition of Political Sufism. The impact of Sufism in constructing Muslim agency through experiential Islam and reorienting values of community and culture breaks crucial ground in Sufi studies. The idea of Sufism as "a system of self-transformation"[7] through the inculcation of rituals and other practices is a powerful tool for understanding the full role of Sufism in the lives of its adherent. The idea of Milani that this is impacted by the manner "Sufis presented themselves to society through their attire, the way they behaved, and the way they spoke"[8] needs to be extended. It needs to include the manner in which Sufi saints spoke about the culture, the history, the polity and the very tenets of Islam they were preaching. It also needs to include the extra-Islamic activities of the Sufi saints, which profoundly impacted how ordinary people understood their culture, community and identity.

This chapter is squarely concerned with these two aspects. One is that the personality of the saint profoundly impacts any Sufi intervention in society, and his conceptualisation of values, morals and ethics, is foundational in crystallising the notions about themselves and their realities within their adherents. It involves political and social ideas contained in the works of Sufi saints that become fundamental to their adherents. The second would follow from the first, which is to understand the ways and means, through rituals and other activities, influence the notions of community, polity and history of adherents. The chapter will undertake this project through an in-depth analysis of the role of two prominent Sufi mystics, Sayyid Ali Hamdani or Shah-e-Hamdan and Sheikh Nur ud-Din or Nund Rishi in the religious, political and social contours of Kashmir. Both these Sufi saints were pivotal in the Islamic transformation of Kashmir, albeit in their specific ways. Both also influenced the contours of Kashmiri politics through their indelible impact on the culture, language and history of the valley. The study would also reflect on the rituals and concepts introduced by these two, which have shaped the perceptions of a common Kashmiri about its surrounding, community and even itself. In all, I try to portray the covert and overt impact of Sufi rituals and morals, through their practices and doctrine, on the political sphere, especially within the Kashmiri society.

[6] Milani, *Sufi Political Thought*, p. 73.
[7] Milani, *Sufi Political Thought*, p. 143.
[8] Milani, *Sufi Political Thought*, p. 143.

Ethics, Morals, and Culture: Action as a Means of Belonging

Within its tradition and doctrine, "Sufism, both intellectual discipline and social institution, offers a multi-variant vision of morality that includes both moral character (*Khulq* pl. *akhlaq*) and fraternal etiquette (*adab* pl. *adaab*)."[9] Michel Foucault, the seminal French philosopher, posits the relationship between morals and ethics as one of thought and action. According to him, morals are a "set of norms, values and action."[10] Ethics are, one, "practices, techniques and discourses through which a subject transforms herself in order to achieve a particular state of happiness, being or truth," and two, "modality of power that permits individuals to effect by their own means or help of others, a certain amount of operations on their own bodies and souls through conduct and being in order to transform themselves into a willing subject of a particular moral discourse."[11] This makes us aware about the power of ethical practices to construct or alter the perceptions of an individual about its being, self and identity.[12] Since these Sufis command loyalty through an "institutionalised charisma", which "permeates all walks of life."[13] It, then, becomes an "initial force which underlies man's existence, a force located at the centre of society." This powerful charisma allows the values, notions and even prejudices of these Sufis to get institutionalised, evoking moral or ethical practices among their followers.

However, in Islamic parlance, morality and ethics share a much more intimate relationship than a separation between the two espoused by Foucault. It is because morality in Islam "is morality of action" since "right action is presumptive of inward virtue." [14] Since Sufism is a part of Islamic theology, it is also bound by this 'morality of action.' Hence, the moral objective of "character formation (*akhlaq*) as the fruit of the refinement of one's soul (*tazkiyat-al-nafs*)" is also "meant to bring about the ethical reinvigoration of the material realm of the Muslim

[9] Paul Heck. "Mysticism as Morality: The Case of Sufism," *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 34, no. 2, (2006): 253-286, p. footnote 1.
[10] Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*: *The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 28.
[11] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, p. 28.
[12] However, Foucault does not believe in voluntaristic conception of morals and ethics but believes they are mediated by structural precepts and power. For an exposition of Foucauldian position, see Saba Mahmood (2004), *Politics of Piety*: *The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 28.
[13] Pnina Werbner and Herlene Basu, "The Embodiment of Charisma," in *Embodying Charisma*: *Modernity, Locality and the Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*, ed. Pnina Werbner and Herlene Basu, (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 13.
[14] Paul R. Powers, "Interiors, Intentions, and the "Spirituality" of Islamic Ritual Practice," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 72, no. 2, (2004): 425-459, p. 426.

society."[15] This reinvigoration is achieved through the combination of individual moral acts. Subsequently, through the effect produced in the social field by these individual acts, ethical practices evoke a particular political agency, which Saba Mahmood deems "contingent and unanticipated."[16] However, I believe that this political agency "necessarily" flows from the precise way these practices are curated and employed. This effect is fairly visible in some rituals and practices introduced by some Sufis in Kashmiri society.

In addition to this internal reorientation of individual identity and self, Sufism also reorients the external environment of an individual or a community. Sufism is considered "a distinctive discursive formation which shapes the very cultural habitus it invades, while being authoritatively constituted by its everyday familiars."[17] As Clifford Geertz mentions that culture is "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitude towards life,"[18] any change in it significantly alters their knowledge about their surroundings and, consequently, themselves. Sufism, through the diffusion of its values or adherents in different areas and arenas of society, institutionally bound to the ways of the *tariqa*, affect many aspects of society, from art to languages to history and geographical imagination. Imperatively then, these changes affect the very conception of the community, about its past, present and future. Thus, the combination of the values espoused by a Sufi *shaykh* and his charisma to enforce and inculcate those values, institutionalised and propagated through *turuq,* are powerful tools to shape conceptions of communities and individuals. These values and practices then have political repercussions, even if they may not appear political as such.

The Establishment of *Sharia*: The Early Life and Travels of Sayyid Ali Hamdani

Mir Sayyid Ali was born in 1314 A.D. in the city of Hamadan in Iran. Hence, Hamdani (from Hamadan or resident of Hamdan) is suffixed with his name. He is also referred to as *Shah-e-Hamdan* (the ruler of Hamdan) and *Amir-e- Kabir* (the Great leader). The earlier epithet is probably bestowed upon him because his father, Sayyid Shihab ud-Din, was the governor of

[15] Paul Heck, "Introduction," in *Sufism and Politics*: *The Power of Spirituality*, ed. Paul Heck, (Princeton: Markus Weiner Publishers, 2011), 1-22, p. 14.
[16] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, p. 35.
[17] Pnina Werbner, *Pilgrims of Love*: *The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult*, (London: Hurst&Company, 2003), p. 82.
[18] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*: *Selected Essays*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 89.

the city. He is also a direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), both matrilineal and patrilineal. His father descended from the line of Iman Hussain, the younger grandson of the Prophet, while his mother is the descendent of the elder grandson Imam Hussain.[19] This distinctive lineage adds to the charisma of Ali Hamdani. Although he was born into nobility, he gravitated towards the Sufi life through the early influence of his maternal uncle, Ala ud-Duala. After his earlier Islamic education under his uncle, he was enrolled in the discipleship of Sheikh Muzdaqani, who initiated Hamdani into the Kubraviyya order. He is also believed to have received guidance from Ala ud-Duala Simnani as well,[20] who was the preceptor of Sheikh Muzdaqani. In addition to his preceptors, he was substantially influenced by the thought of Ibn Arabi and his philosophy of *wahdat ul-wujud*, even writing *Risala-i-Wujuddiya* (The treatise on the philosophy of *wujud*) in its defence.[21] In this respect, he had a different viewpoint from his master Simnani, who was a strong challenger of this philosophy.[22]

Nonetheless, he was an ardent follower of the dictate of his preceptor Simnani in two matters. One emphasises an engagement with the society for its betterment and, two, propagation of Islam as a principal duty of a Sufi mystic. Sayyid Ali Hamdani undertook extensive travels across the Islamic world and its peripheries to fulfil the latter. Sayyid Ali Hamdani's travels were mainly around the modern regions of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, India, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. He is even said to have performed the *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) twelve times.[23]

There is a debate between historians about the number of times Ali Hamdani visited Kashmir. He is said to have visited the valley thrice, even though some authors do not agree with such a claim.[24] Some, such as G.M.D Sufi, Mohib-ul-Hasan and Mohammad Ishaq Khan, believe that Ali Hamdani visited Kashmir three times in 1372, 1379 and 1383. This assertion is based on the accounts of early historians such as Hasan and Miskin. While the first such visit is supposed to have occurred during the reign of Sultan Shihab ud-Din (1354-1373), the latter two are supposed to have happened while Kashmir was ruled by Sultan Qutb ud-Din (1373-1389).

[19] Peer Ghulam Hassan Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Hassan*, 1997 ed., (Jammu: Ranbir Government Press, 1887), p. 11. (translation from Persian by Abrar Qasmi).
[20] Ala ud-Duala Simnani and Ala ud Duala, Hamdani' uncle, are two different personalities.
[21] Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, "Syed Ali Hamdani (RA): The Architect of Islamic Identity in Kashmir," in *Islam in Kashmir*: *A Study of Prominent Sufis and Rishis*, ed. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, (Srinagar: Book Palace, 2015), 53-77, p. 59.
[22] Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*: *A Short History*, (London: Brill, 2010), p. 237.
[23] Nazir Naqshbandi, *Murabbiy-e-Kashmir Shah-i-Hamadan*, (Srinagar: Ashraf Book Centre, 2016), p. 22.
[24] Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2015), p. 93-95.

Some other scholars, led by Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi, basing their argument on earlier historians such as Abul Fazl, Mirza Haider and the unknown author of Bahristan-i-Shahi, claim that Ali Hamdani only visited Kashmir once in 1381. While the contours of the debate are beyond the scope of this work, scholars from both schools of thought agree that Sayyid Ali Hamdani played a crucial role in bringing the population within the fold of Islam.

During his extensive travels within the areas mentioned above, Sayyid Ali Hamdani came in contact with many rulers and dynasties across the Muslim world. As opposed to the typical image of a wandering Sufi, Sayyid Ali did not maintain a distance from them. Instead, Sayyid Hamdani took a deep interest in the political affairs of Muslim societies. Hamdani was very much concerned with the working of the government in Muslim communities as it directly linked to the performance of Islam as a religion. To ensure a correct dispensation, he cultivated a close relationship with the rulers of the time, arguing that kings and nobles should keep a close company of Sufis and mystics for their guidance.[25] In his interactions with these rulers, which are available to us through the collection of his letters to different rulers,[26] a clear picture of the preferred political society for Sayyid Ali Hamdani emerges. So does his extreme loyalty to such a vision.

Simply put, the political vision of Ali Hamdani is an Islamic polity run squarely on the principles of *shariah*¸ In his collection of letters, there is a significant number of letters addressed to rulers and princes extolling them to implement and follow the *sharia* in letter and spirit. In a letter, apparently written to a ruler in Herat, Sayyid Ali Hamdani exhorts him to fulfil his duty under the divine law, failing which the ruler would be subjected to an immense amount of divine wrath on the Day of Judgement. He writes:

"You must also know that Almighty Allah has assigned you the duty, in your capacity as His vicegerent, to establish order in the chaotic lives of the people. He has granted you power and authority so that you dedicate yourself to the welfare of your subjects. For your guidance, He deputed the prophets and the 'ulama so that you would discharge your duties in a balanced manner based on reason and laws of religion (*Shari'a*) and direct your subjects on the right path. If His commandments are observed in totality, then both the ruler and the ruled will be saved from the fierceness of the divine wrath. Otherwise, on the Day (of Judgement) when all hidden things will be manifested and when everyone

[25] Sayyid Amir Kabir Ali Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, tr. Muhammad Riyaz Qadri, (Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers. 1998), p. 168. (translation from Urdu mine).
[26] Sayyid Ali Hamdani, *Letters of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamdani*, tr. A. Q. Rafiqui, (Sringar: Gulshan Books, 2007).

(of your subjects) will (be free to) complain against you (your wrong actions) and those rulers (who will be found guilty) will be punished for their negligence. Allah is Great."[27]

Thus, the most severe emphasis of Ali Hamdani is on enforcing the laws of religion. In another letter to Sultan Ala ud-Daula, he asks him to "leave no stone unturned to implement the *sharia*", arguing that "those who have been graced with authority and power to govern the people (the servants of God) will be answerable for their conduct and deeds (on the Day of Judgement)."[28] The implementation of *shari'a* is crucial for Sayyid Ali Hamdani "so that truth and righteousness shall prevail everywhere".[29] Further, Sayyid Ali considers the ruler or the government bound by the *sharia* (the Islamic law) and, hence, the ruler not absolute in his powers.[30] This view is apparent from his usage of the term vicegerent for the ruler. Consequently, the ruler enjoys limited sovereignty. This view makes the position of a ruler, theologically, very difficult as he is bound by the Islamic laws as applicable to his common subjects but also has additional duties to fulfil as the '*person in charge.'*

Thus, in addition to the juridical implementation of the divine law, Sayyid Ali also expects the ruler to make structural provisions to inculcate Islamic religious and moral values within the subject population. Thus, a king in the political structure of Hamdani is also tasked with propagating the Islamic faith and making necessary arrangements to observe religion successfully. For example, in one of his letters to Shaykh Muhammad Shah, a prince of Balkh, he says:

"Dear friend! It is incumbent on you to look into the affairs of Muslims personally. Do not pass on to others what has been entrusted to you. Be compassionate and kindly in governance, talk softly to the weak, command your subjects to do what is lawful, and ask them to refrain from what is forbidden.

As you appoint a person to collect the taxes from every village, likewise, you should appoint someone who can guide the people in religious matters, teach them about Islam and iman (faith), establish congregational prayers, and dispel darkness and ignorance and innovate practices from the Muslims. In matters of religion, do not consider anything frivolous as frivolity would render a deed inconsequential."[31]

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[27] Hamdani, *Letters*, p. 51-52.
[28] Hamdani, *Letters*, p. 60.
[29] Hamdani, *Letters*, p. 87.
[30] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 164.
[31] Hamdani, *Letters*, p. 87.

In addition to these remarks on the polity, Hamdani also has notions about the virtues of a ruler, and he makes them amply evident in his letters. These include his conduct and the conduct towards his subjects and their affairs. In the matter of personal conduct, Hamdani expects the ruler to seek personal nearness to God through his actions. He instructs a ruler:

"Dear friend! On whosoever, authority is bestowed, and a kingship assigned is put to a test. His existence is placed between eternal prosperity and good fortune on the one hand and eternal misfortune on the other, and his temporary rule over the country is made a touchstone for his courage. If, despite all his worldly engagements, he strives to fulfil the obligations as a servant (of God), then this ephemeral prosperity will be a preparation for eternal prosperity. On the contrary, if he obeys his sensual desires (rather than the commandments of God) and covers the entangled sun of the everlasting riches with the mud of his pride, then he will get badly involved in both the worlds. Hence, it is essential for a sensible ruler not to remain unmindful of the hazards of government, be always conscious of the grace bestowed on him by God, and follow the path of justice and piety as a means of achieving nearness to God."[32]

Sayyid Ali Hamdani does not leave these instructions at a general level but specifies particular duties and responsibilities of the ruler towards his subjects that he expects the ruler to fulfil. In the letter mentioned above, addressed to Shaykh Muhammad Shah, Hamdani extols the addressee:

"If you expect to be pardoned and forgiven on that Day (Day of Judgement), treat your subjects with justice and kindness. Be like a son to the old; brother to the young; father to the children; helpful to the oppressed; hard to the cruel; compassionate to the wicked who repent. Be trustworthy, true to promise, patient in misfortune, honest and sincere in deeds, and affable despite possessing authority. A king is a guardian and trustee of God's treasures. It is, therefore, obligatory on your part not to spend God's treasure on personal desires and diabolic pursuits. Whatever you take from it, take it legally and spend it on deserving so that you are not in torment of the Day of Judgement."[33]

It is also important to note that Sayyid Ali Hamdani is quite serious about these stipulations, and neglect or failure to conform to these invites strong admonishment for the concerned ruler from Hamdani. Hence, in a letter to an unnamed ruler, Ali Hamdani reprimands him by saying that he has "pleased all the heretics and those gone astray; and have turned God along with his Prophets and angels into your bitter enemies."[34] Hamdani takes up such a position even at a

[32] Hamdani, *Letters*, p. 58-59.
[33] Hamdani, *Letters*, p. 86-87.
[34] Hamdani, *Letters*, p. 47.

tremendous personal cost which is apparent from his letter to Tughan Shah, a noble from Central Asia. In the letter, Hamdani states:

> "Though I have experienced much in this direction and have suffered much. Yet I have entered into a covenant with Allah that even if all the inhabitants of the earth turn against me and swords will burst from the sky, I will never conceal the truth and will not sell religion for worldly benefits and convenience."[35]

The letter suggests that Ali Hamdani had stood his ground and, as a result, had to leave the region under the rule of Tughan Shah. Even the ruler of Kashmir, Qutb ud-Din, was at the receiving end of Ali Hamdani's castigation. In a letter addressed to him, he laments on the sorry state of *din-dari* (religiousness) of Muslims, in all probability of Kashmir, cautioning the ruler that "one who does not learn from the example of others, himself becomes an example of others."[36] Such strong words were in response to the non-implementation of *sharia* by Qutb ud-Din, which is considered the reason Ali Hamdani left the Valley.[37]

The Political Treatise of a Sufi: Zakhirat ul Muluk and Sayyid Ali Hamdani.

Sayyid Ali Hamdani also has the distinction of writing an overtly political treatise, *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*, which makes Hamdani unique among the galaxy of Sufi scholars.[38] *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk* has been translated into numerous languages[39] and is, arguably, the most famous work of Ali Hamdani. It is written as a guide to kings and rulers and does not contain any theoretical or epistemological view on politics or the nature of it by Sayyid Ali Hamdani. However, it is not merely confined to governance matters but encapsulates commentary on ethical and social issues as well. These include the rights of prayer rights and duties towards family (chapter 4), the beauty of morals (chapter 3) and the benefits and reality of patience (chapter 9). Among the ten book chapters, only one explicitly relates to the government, titled 'rights of public and the government' (chapter five). Thus, Ali Hamdani considers politics as a part of the general

[35] Hamdani, *Letters*, p. 56.
[36] Hamdani, *Letters*, p. 80.
[37] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 96.
[38] Z.U. Malik, "A Critique of Political Views of Saiyid Ali Hamedani (1314-1384)," in *Shah-i-Hamedan*: *His Life and Works*, ed. S. M. Waseem, (Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2003),17-25. p. 17.
[39] S. M. Azizuddin Husain, "Introduction: Shah-i-Hamedan Mir Saiyid Ali Hamedani: His Life and Works," in *Shah-i-Hamedan*: *His Life and Works*, ed. S. M. Waseem, (Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2003),1-5, p. 3.

ethical outlook of a Muslim community, which may be an outcome of Greek or Aristitalean influence on his thought.

In this book, Hamdani employs the qiyas (analogy) method to build norms and values for the society based on sayings from the Quran and, predominantly, from the Sunnah and the *ahadis* (sayings of the Prophet). *Qiyas* is a prominent methodological tool employed within Islamic history, in addition to "*ijma* (consensus), *istihsan* (juristic preference), *istishab* (continuity) and *urf* (custom)."[40] All the chapters of the book follow the same pattern, including the one dealing with the governmental and political structure of a Muslim state.

In the chapter squarely dedicated to politics, Sayyid Ali discusses the expected duties and conduct of the rulers and the rights of the subjects in detail. The expected duties and responsibilities are a detailed exposition of those mentioned in his letter, which has been discussed above. He also elaborates on the expected conduct of the rulers, which he categorises as ten conditions for a ruler, detailing aspects ranging from the source of authority, proper conduct with people and conduct with the learned men of the society.[41] The critical takeaway from this portion is that Hamdani considered kingship as a 'divine grace' rather than a 'divine right,' instructing the ruler to be mindful that "to be a leader or a ruler is among the blessings from the Almighty."[42]

Among the plethora of ethical and moral viewpoints in *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, this idea of conditional sovereignty of the ruler, envisaged by Hamdani, is possibly the most politically significant value. It is because the conceptualisation of kingship as 'grace' rather than 'right' opens up the possibility of action against the ruler by the common public. Sayyid Ali Hamdani is aware of this fact and makes it clear through his idea of *jehad*, which still informs the conceptions of his followers, especially in Kashmir.

Sayyid Ali differs from the exhortation of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani, as mentioned in the previous chapter, that "struggles against evil desires of the inner self as *jehad al akbar* (the greatest struggle)."[43] Referring to a *hadith*, Sayyid Ali considers the "best form of *jehad* is to speak truth to a tyrant."[44] Quoting a *hadith*, Hamdani projects the status of a person who speaks

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[40] Muhammad Zubair Abbasi, "The Classical Islamic Law of Waqf: A Concise Introduction," *Arab Law Quaterly*, 26, no.2, (2012): 124-125.

[41] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 181-186

[42] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 183

[43] Jami M Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace*: *The Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious Life*¸ (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 90-91.

[44] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 233.

truth to the tyrant as the greatest among the *Shuhada* (martyrs of Islam). The *hadith* he quotes is:

"Abi Ubaidah Bin Al-Jarah reports that he asked the Prophet of Allah (S.A.W.), O! Prophet of Allah, who would be the most prominent among the martyrs of Islam in the eyes of Allah? The Prophet (S.A.W.) replied: A person who speaks the truth in the face of a tyrant ruler, brings him towards prayer, makes him aware of the torment of the Day of Judgement, and saves the ruler from tyranny and wrongdoing. If that tyrant kills him, he becomes the first among the martyrs. Moreover, even if he is not killed and whatsoever be his lifetime, the angels do not record his deeds."[45]

Elaborating on a different *hadith*, Hamdani says:

"If a devotee of Allah is busy in propagating *deen* (faith) and stops devotees from evil and wrongdoing, and if *'ulema* and rulers are supportive of his work, then they will partake in his reward. If they impede his actions or are unhappy with them, then it is obligatory to discredit him."[46]

Thus, *jehad* is the most significant act of worship, an obligatory act in certain situation, greater than any other form of worship. The enormity of *jehad* as an act is revealed from a *hadith* which, according to Sayyid Ali, mentions, "in comparison, all other acts of worship are like water droplets, while *jehad* is like a sea."[47] Sayyid Ali cautions that even if you undertake every other form of worship and ignore your duty to stop evil, you are still doomed.[48] These conceptions seem more important when read in conjunction with another idea of Ali Hamdani, that on political rebellions.

Unlike other theologians, Sayyid Ali does not overtly prohibit rebellion in *zakhrat-ul-muluk*. Scholars such as Ibn-Taimiyah, Firdausi or Al Barani prohibit revolt against a ruler even if a ruler is tyrannical or despotic.[49] On the other hand, Sayyid Ali believes that a ruler who cannot perform his duties is "an enemy of Allah."[50] Due to such categorisation, it is safe to argue that Sayyid Ali did not intend to provide any safeguards to a despotic ruler in case they do not function according to the decided principles and this may even be a covert call to fight against a cruel ruler. This conception of *jehad*, then, provides justification to revolutionary acts of

[45] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 230-231.
[46] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 233.
[47] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 228.
[48] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 228-230.
[49] S. M. Azizuddin Husain, "The Sufi Concept of Monarchy and Government, with Special Reference to Mir Saiyid Ali Hamdani." In *Shah-e-Hamedan Mir Saiyid Ali Hamedani: His Life and Works*, ed. S. M. Waseem, (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2003), 63-82, p. 63-68.
[50] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 167.

oppressed population, as fight against tyranny is not against a group, culture or community, it is for oneself.

Thus, in addition to being different from the one ascribed to Jilani, this conceptualisation of *jehad* also differs from the modern dominant interpretation of *jehad*, which understands it as a fight between believers and non-believers.[51] According to Sayyid Ali Hamdani's description, *jehad* is a fight against tyranny and injustice rather than *kufr* and Islam. This conceptualisation become extremely important during the contemporary period, as fight against injustice emanating from Islamic societies is necessarily linked to fundamentalism and orthodoxy, and *jehad* is reduced to the precise and fundamental reading, mentioned above. Hamdani's idea of *jehad* as an obligatory act against tyranny, therefore, provides a Sufi justification for movements across the Islamic world that are based on Islamic identity or notions of Islamic culture, enriching the political vocabulary available to Muslims and Islamic politics.

Further in *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*, Hamdani also mentions twenty rights of the subjects that the ruler should honour. These rights include the right to equality before the law (fourth right), right to privacy (fifth right), right to equitable treatment (sixth right), and right to safety and protection of means of transport (seventeenth right).[52] Importantly, there is no right to freedom of religion. Although these rights have been mentioned for his Muslim subjects, there is no clarity from Sayyid Ali Hamdani whether such rights extend to non-Muslims. He does mention that the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims are different,[53] but he only states the conditions which should be put on non-Muslims by a Muslim ruler.[54] However, he does mention that once these conditions are applied, it becomes the duty of the ruler to guard the life and property of the non-Muslims.[55] While he does not explicitly extend the rights mentioned for Muslims to non-Muslims, it is possibly left by Sayyid Ali to the ruler to interpret the extension of the rights of Muslim subjects to non-Muslims as well. Nonetheless, these stipulations have undoubtedly been made in a particular historical and political context and may not entirely apply to the modern context. However, these still throw light on the nature, at least the expected nature, of the relationship between the rulers and the ruled and the rights available to the general population.

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[51] M. J, Akbar, *The Shade of Swords*: *Jihad and the Conflict between Islam & Christianity*, (London: Routledge, 2002).
[52] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 186-195.
[53] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 184.
[54] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 195.
[55] Hamdani, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk*, p. 195.

Hence, as a Sufi, Sayyid Ali Hamdani conceptualised a complete picture and structure on which a just and equitable society should be formed. The list of rights that he accrues to the population is quite exhaustive. However, he does not accrue the right to freedom of religion to the population, and these rights are, on the face of it, just extended to Muslims. Nonetheless, the scope and extent of these rights indicate that Hamdani preferred a bounded monarchy, both through the primacy of the divine law and the rights of the subject population. The political context of his time, which was characterised by the despotic rule of the Timurid dynasty, might have informed these conceptualisations of Ali Hamdani.[56] Despite their obvious limitations, these notions of Ali Hamdani are efficacious in the modern society, especially with respect to political action and nature of state control.

The influence of Sayyid Ali Hamdani's political concepts is reasonably visible in Kashmir, even in old, non-lettered masses. The concept of *jehad* frequently emerged during my interactions at different shrines associated with Ali Hamdani. It mostly came in consonance with the idea of *zulm* (tyranny). A shopkeeper who trades his goods around Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah in Tral characterised the struggle of Kashmir as a struggle against tyranny rather than a particular community.[57] To corroborate his point, he pointed out that before the emergence of armed insurgency in Kashmir, the Pandits of the Tral used to provide the cloth (*jama*) wrapping the staff (*asa*) of Sayyid Ali Hamdani in the *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah*. Since, during my field visit, *jehad* was not mentioned in sermons within the shrine of Ali Hamdani; it is entirely plausible to assume that these concepts of Sayyid Ali Hamdani have entrenched through the dissemination of his ideas through anecdotal sayings and references, passing from one generation to another, This centrality and emphasis on *jehad* by Sayyid Ali Hamdani might also be a reason for his shrine's centrality in the political life of Kashmir, especially in contemporary times.[58]

[56] There are also reports of his personal issues with Timur, and his *khalfa* Ishaq Khattani organised a rebellion against the successor of Timur, Shah Rukh, in collaboration with Muhammad Nurbaksh. This has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Some scholars, however, do not believe in the personal enmity between Timur and Ali Hamdani. See Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 92-93.

[57] Interview of a shopkeeper, who also lives adjacent to the shrine of *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* in Tral, taken on 13th July 2022.

[58] This would be dealt in detail in the fifth chapter of the thesis.

The Rerouting of Kashmiri Cultural Consciousness: Crafts, Language and the Construction of Community

In addition to these notions and values that emerge from his doctrinal and theological positions, Sayyid Ali Hamdani is also considered the responsible for rerouting and altering the socio-cultural imagination of Kashmiris about their community, history and self. Sayyid Ali Hamdani is believed to have brought about seven hundred *sadaat* (reputed people) to Kashmir.[59] These people then made Kashmir their home and settled in various parts of the valley. Since Ali Hamdani was against surviving on grants on patronage for a living, himself stitching prayer caps to earn income,[60] all these *sadaats* were adept in different forms of arts and crafts. Sayyid Ali Hamdani, on his part, encouraged such transmission of knowledge, invoking the concept of *ummah* (Muslim brotherhood). Using a *hadith* (Prophetic saying) which stipulates that "individual Muslims are like the bricks giving essential support to the Muslim society," he says exhorts that people need to "help each other for the fulfilment of their works and their success."[61] Consequently, these *sadaat* introduced these arts and crafts within the Kashmiri society, resulting in a cultural revolution.

The crafts introduced or reformed by these *sadaats* include *shawl-bafi*, *khatamband*, *namdasazi*, *hamam dari*. *hareesa pazi*, *qalamdan sazi*, *sozan kari* among others. The introduction of these crafts transformed the economic landscape, which has consequential effects on the cultural landscape as well. Since there is an intimate connection between the change in culture and the knowledge of a community and individual about self, which was mentioned with reference to Clifford Geertz earlier, this revolution in the arts and crafts industry also revolutionised the conception of self, history and geography of a Kashmiri and the Kashmiri society. Thus, this cultural change had necessary repercussions on the identitarian conceptions of the Kashmiri population.

According to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, any kind of social order, culture being one such kind of order, "exists *only* as a product of human activity."[62] Further, according to Richard Jenkins, identity comes into being when "people come to see themselves as *belonging* together

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[59] Ghulam Nabi Shaad, *Hazrat Mir Sayyid Hamdani Aur Kashmir*: *Kashmir Tehzeeb Aur Saqafat Ki Nazar Mein*, (Srinagar: Ashraf Book Centre, 2021), p. 11.
[60] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Hassan*, p. 15
[61] Rafiabadi, "Syed Ali Hamdani (RA): The Architect," p. 61.
[62] Peter L. Burger, and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in Sociology of Knowledge,* USA: Penguin, 1967), p. 70.

– coming from a common background – as a consequence of *acting* together.[63] Therefore, the interaction between the *sadaat* and common Kashmiris, through the development of shared arts and crafts, evoked a sense of *belonging*, over a period of time, between these two communities. This led to the construction of an identity which was "ecologically"[64] moored towards Central Asia and the larger Islamic world, linking Kashmir strongly to the larger Muslim *ummah*. Due to these interactions, the cultural landscape of Kashmir became highly influenced and subsequently dominated by Central Asian, Arabic and Persian symbols and notions.

The significant consequence of this identity construction was also felt on the Kashmir language, which adopted Persian and Arabic words, bringing Kashmir closer to the Islamic *weltanschauung*. The Kashmiri language belongs to the Dardic family of languages. Although a subset of the larger Indo-Persian group of languages, it has unique grammatical and phonetic aspects. Until the advent of the *sadaat*, Kashmiri was heavily influenced by Sanskrit. It has undergone a significant shift since then, as contemporary Kashmiri language has a significant Arabiac and Persian influence.[65] There are many Kashmiri words which have been replaced by Persian and Arabic substitutes. The most commonly used substitutions are words such as *naar* (fire), *aasmaan* (sky), *aaftaab* (sun), *aab* (water) and *kalam* (pen). In addition, the script of the Kashmiri language, which was earlier the *Sharada* script, was transformed into one similar to Persian and Urdu. The change in the script made it easier to read and understand Persian and Arabic, making the literary corpus of these languages available, which was inaccessible earlier due to the dominance of the Sanskrit language and *Sharada* script. This change resulted in the inculcation of Persian and Islamic narratives within the Kashmiri linguistic and cultural space.

The introduction of a new script also increased the contestation over different physical, cultural, and historical symbols, as did the amalgamation of local history and concepts into the Persian corpus through different narratives. These narratives were effective in increasingly vernacularising Persian because "they were produced in Sufi hospices, and not in the court, the texts enjoyed wide circulation within Kashmir among literate and non-literate alike- in courtly society, shrines, and the countryside, where wandering *pirs* and other religious figures

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[63] Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, 2nd ed., (London: Sage, 2008), p. 10.
[64] The term ecology is used the way Fredrich Barth uses in his seminal work *Ethnic Groups and Cultural Boundaries* (1969), which symbolizes the socio-economic and political context that surround a population. See Fredrik Barth, "Introduction", in Fredrik Barth, (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference.* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), p. 12 – 13.
[65] Naqshbandi, *Murabbiy-e-Kashmir*, p. 35.

disseminated stories about them."[66] Thus, "by the late sixteenth century, although the composition of Sanskrit narratives continued, the use of Persian had become increasingly vernacularised in the Kashmiri context. Thus these narratives, while not in the regional vernacular—Kashmiri—embodied the characteristics of vernacular texts in that they actively sought to present a 'new aesthetic of Place' that nonetheless drew on a more universal, Islamic imagination. Persian, therefore, "became a vernacular language in Kashmir and was critical to defining the idea of Kashmir as an Islamic space."[67]

One such example is the incorporation of Islamic figures into Kashmiri folklore, the most prominent among them being the Islamic prophets Suleiman, Haroon and Isa (A.S). According to the famous legends prevalent today, Isa (A.S) and Haroon (A.S) are said to have died in the valley, with people claiming their burial sites to be present at Srinagar and Harwan in the Valley.[68] On the other hand, Suleiman (A.S) is said to have visited the valley, which due to its beauty, began to be called *Bagh-e-Suleiman* (The Garden of Solomon).[69] Subsequently, in the valley, these conceptions came to be strongly associated with specific identity construction, those of Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims. This contestation can be most prominently visible in the contestation between these communities over a hill located in the heart of Srinagar, adjacent to the Dal lake. While the Hindus call it the *Hari Parbat* (the hill of *Hari*), the Muslims refer to it as *Koh-e-Suleiman* (the hill of Solomon).

So, this inculcation of Persian narratives led to the emergence of composite narratives and contestations on different symbols and places of importance simultaneously. This process, consequently, affected the history, identity and notions of a community within the common Kashmiris. Thus, in addition to inculcating Islamic conceptualisation through theological and religious means, Sayyid Ali Hamdani brought about a significant reorientation within the cultural realm of Kashmir. Consequently, this reorientation influenced how common Kashmiris understood their spatial and temporal existence, affecting their sense of identity and belonging. This development, in turn, necessarily informed their political conceptualisations.

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[66] Chitrelekha Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts*: *Narratives, Sacred Geographies, and the Historical Imagination*, epub ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 44.
[67] Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts*, p. 44.
[68] "Hazrat Maseeh ki Rehlat Kashmir Main," *Roshni*, (25th December, 1953), p. 1; "Hazrat Haroon (A.S) Aur Hazrat Mehraz Gul Ke Maqbare Harwan Mein: Kashmir Main Bani Israeel Zamana-e-Qabl-az-Maseeh Se Hi Aabaad Tha," *Roshni*, (11th January, 1955), p. 4-5.
[69] Shabnam Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh-o-Tehreek-i-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, (Srinagar: Ali Muhammad and Sons Publishers, 2015), p. 27.

The Morning Ritual and the Community: Awrad-e-Fattiyah and the Cohesion of Kashmiri Muslims

The crystallisation and solidification of the Kashmiri Muslim identity was also aided by the introduction of a ritual by Sayyid Ali Hamdani. Ali Hamdani introduced the communal recitation of his compilation, *Awrad-e-Fattiyah*, loudly, in the mosques of Kashmir. *Awrad-e-Fattiyah* is a litany of prayers and invocations which Ali Hamdani had collected from different Sufis during his travels. The investiture of a loud *zikr* by Ali Hamdani is interesting because the Najm ud-Din Kubra, prescribed silence as an important principle for his adherents.[70] However, in doing so, Hamdani, might have been guided by Ala ud-Duala Simnani, who is considered to have adopted zikr practices of the *Yogis*, in contravention of his usual orthodox behaviour.[71] In Kashmir, it is generally recited after the completion of the *fajr namaz* (morning prayers). It is read as a group, generally led by the *imam* himself, and continues almost until sunrise. As it is recited loudly, during such time, the environment gets filled with a harmonious chorus of reciting the *awrad.* Even a Hindu chronicler praises the recitation of *awrad* by saying: "it was here that the *yavanas* (Muslims) chanted mantras and looked graceful, like the thousand lotuses with humming bees."[72]

It is important to note that Ali Hamdani allowed the recitation of *awrad* at the same time that Kashmir Pandits recited their *bhajans* (prayers) in their temples. Scholars claim that this was because *Awrad* and its loud recitation was a substitute for *bhajans* for neo-Muslim converts.[73] Hence, according to them, its introduction "demonstrated a keen sense of practical wisdom and judgement in laying a firm foundation for the gradual assimilation of the folk in Islam."[74] However, the possibility of Ali Hamdani allowing a ritual akin to Hindus, just as an instrumental act, seems implausible. As mentioned above, Sayyid Ali Hamdani put immense emphasis on *sharia* in his religious and socio-political thought. Also, the fact that Ali Hamdani admonished the ruler of the time for following Hindu customs, including his sartorial choices,[75] clearly indicates his devotion to Islamic practices. In light of his firm and persistent demand of

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[70] Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, p. 236

[71] J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 58

[72] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 69.

[73] Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, "The Spiritual Legacy of *Awrad-i-Fatihya* Syed Ali Hamdani," in *Islam in Kashmir*: *A Study of Prominent Sufis and Rishis*, ed. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, (Srinagar: Book Palace, 2015), 105-131, p. 124.

[74] Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*: *The Role of Muslim Rishis* (*Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century*), (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1994), p. 4.

[75] Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1959), p. 56.

conforming to the *shari'a,* it is difficult to accept, and it seems highly improbable, that he would institute a ritual for the new converts of Kashmir on account of its similarity with their earlier practices.

I argue that Ali Hamdani instead had a deeper motive in his institutionalising *awrad* recitation. It was possibly installed a means to achieve community and identity conceptualisation among the new converts to Islam. The communal recitation of *awrad* is an *act* done together and hence, as mentioned earlier, evokes a sense of *belonging*. Since it was introduced during a transitory phase of Kashmiri history, such recitation can be termed as, borrowing from Victor Turner, a "liminal phenomenon."[76] While reciting *awarad-e-fattiyah*, neo-Muslim converts who had abandoned their faith, came together as a sort of *communitas*, which is depicted as a blend of "lowliness and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship."[77] The ritual then reveals to these converts, existing in this liminal phase, "however fleetingly, some recognition of a generalised social bond."[78]

The other aspect of the recitation of *awrad* was *othering*, which also forms an essential component of identity construction.[79] Since *awrad* was recited at the same time as *bhajans*, a community was forged through its recitation, as opposed to and in contestation to those who recited *bhajans.* During my interactions with devotees and people associated with the shrines of Sayyid Ali Hamdani, this aspect of *awrad* recitation was reasonably common. A devotee, almost sixty-five years of age, who has always lived around the vicinity of the shrine claimed that such loud recitation was allowed by Ali Hamdani because during that initial phase, "it was impossible to recite it in silence due to the loud *bhajans* emanating from temples, which was mostly directed towards the Muslims." He further stated that such recitation became a source of spiritual strength, imparted a sense of community within those reciting it, and continues to do so. [80]

Thus, through the recitation of *Awrad*, a subtle process of community construction is fairly perceptible. The loud recitation, in contravention to the principle of his own Sufi order, was an attempt by Sayyid Ali Hamdani to ferment and sustain the Islamic identity of Kashmiris,

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[76] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*: *Structure and Anti-Structure*, (Ithaca, Cornell Univrsity Press, 1969), p. 96.
[77] Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p. 96.
[78] Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p. 96.
[79] Burger, and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, p. 118.
[80] Interaction with a devotee, a retired government employee, on 17th October 2021, at *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah*, Tral.

through a combined process of self-perception and differentiation from the other. Thus, this ritual formed a vital part of the Islamic transition of the Kashmiri community while simultaneously having commensurate effects on the politics of the region through the construction of a distinctive identity conceptualisation. The impact of this ritual is even accepted by certain historical and religious narratives, which claim that "it was owing to *awrad-e-fattiyah* that Islam was understood by the common man in Kashmir."[81] Since the *awrad* is a mix of Persian and Arabic, it was unlikely that unlettered masses of Kashmir understood theological or religious principles of Islam from it. It is more likely that it made them conscious of the Islamic value of *ikhwa* (brotherhood), helping them to consolidate as a community and visualise themselves as a part of the larger Islamic *ummah* (community of believers).

Thus, the personality of Sayyid Ali Hamdani has influenced the socio-political landscape and the identity of Kashmiris in two ways. One was the reorientation of the cultural and geographical 'relatedness' of Kashmir, situating it within the 'political geography' of the Islamic world. Such has been the impact of this reorientation that Kashmir has earned the epithet of *Iran-e-Saghir* (Little Persia). The most prominent usage of this term has been by the poet-philosopher Allama Sir Muhammad Iqbal in a poem dedicated to Sayyid Ali Hamdani, elucidating his transformative effects on the Kashmir valley. Allama Iqbal calls Hamdani *mymaar-e-taqdeer-e-ummam* (the builder of the community's fate), specifically mentioning the cultural revolution brought about by him.[82]

Such geographical and cultural reorientation has become the bedrock of politics that envisages the fate of Kashmir connected to the Islamic world. Thus, it is not surprising that the part of Kashmir under Pakistan's control has historically invested in the memorialisation of the personality of Sayyid Ali Hamdani. An important example of which was the organisation of conferences, in his name and commemorating places associated with him.[83] In a Shah-i-Hamdan conference held in 1987, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, the then President of Pakistan argued that without men like Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, "we would have had not Pakistan today nor Azad Jammu and Kashmir." He further states, "…today when we are free and independent, and we

[81] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 69.
[82] Naqshbandi, *Murabbiy-e-Kashmir*, p. 119-120.
[83] Shah-i-Hamadan Conference was a yearly regular feature in the late 80's, where intellectuals from both side of the Line of Control used to participate. See, Shaad, *Hazrat Mir Sayyid Hamdani*, p. i

hold our head high…it is primarily due to the wonderful achievements of great men like Shah-e-Hamadan."[84]

Thus, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani is a crucial Sufi saint, both in the context of Sufism and Kashmiri political history. He was a strong proponent of constant engagement with royalty in his quest to establish a just government based on Islamic principles. He is, in all probability, one of the few Sufi saints that have written a political treatise through which he puts forth his socio-political ideals. These ideals continue to influence his adherents and ordinary people who have faith in his personality, guiding their daily lives and activities, including politics.

With respect to Kashmir, the personality of Sayyid Ali Hamdani has been an essential part of its socio-political and cultural landscape. From Islamicization to culture, to identity to politics, Sayyid Ali Hamdani has been the influential initiator of the transformative project of the Kashmiri society. The magnitude of this transformation has been so phenomenal that its repercussions are still quite visible in Kashmiri society, and its contribution is still fresh in the minds of the Kashmiri population. The reverence of Sayyid Ali Hamdani is still quite widespread, evident from the enormous corpus of Kashmiri literature written in his praise. This magnitude of the influence and popularity of Sayyid Ali Hamdani is only matched by the progenitor of the indigenous Rishi *tariqa*, Shaykh Nur ud-Din, also known as Nund Rishi.

The Destined Path: Early Life of Nund Rishi

Nund Rishi, also known as Sheikh Nur ud-Din, was born in 1378 A.D. at Kaimoh, in the south Kashmir district of Kulgam. Nund Rishi was a second-generation Muslim born to Salar Ganz. Many scholars believe that Salar Ganz converted to Islam on the behest of Sayyid Hussain Simnani, cousin of Sayyid Ali Hamdani.[85] Others believe that this is just a mere concoction devised to link Kubraviyya *tariqa* to the personality of Nund Rishi.[86] Like any other prominent Sufi figure, Nund Rishi is supposed to have presented glimpses of his exalted spiritual nature from his birth itself. Popular folklore links Nund Rishi with Lal Ded, a wandering 14th-century Shaivite mystic[87] when Nund Rishi was just a toddler, claiming that Lalla Ded took spiritual

[84] Abir Bazaz, "The Negative Theology of Nund Rishi (1378-1440): Poetry and Politics in Medieval Kashmir," PhD Thesis, (University of Minnesota, 2016), p. 7.
[85] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Hassan*, p. 120-121.
[86] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 198.
[87] The life of Lalla Ded is shrouded in mystery. She is believed to be a wandering Shaivite mystic, while many claim Islamic influence on her. There are many legends attributed to her, which reveal a deep

charge of the young Nur ud-Din.[88] Later in his life, Nund Rishi acknowledged the spiritual prowess and guidance of Lalla Ded, dedicating the following *shruk* in her praise:

That Lalla of Padmanpur

Who had drunk the nectar

She is the Avatar, and Yogini

O God, bestow the same (spiritual power) on me.[89]

The life of Nund Rishi underwent a change after the death of his father. It brought about abject poverty in his family, forcing him and his two elder brothers to take on a life of robbery.[90] However, Nund Rishi proved to be an incompetent thief, forcing his brothers to remove him from the job. Nund Rishi himself reflects on his life as a thief in one of his *shruks*,[91] reflecting how the bark of a dog when he was stealing a cow forced him to realise the cost of stealing in the afterlife, which made him free the cow:

The dog is calling from the courtyard,

My brothers pay heed to (what he says)

He who sows here shall reap there

The dog is urging sow, or sow.[92]

Afterwards, Nund Rishi tried his hand at weaving, but even there, the instruments alluded to the fruitlessness of life and the need to work towards the betterment of the afterlife. Once again, he mentions this incident in a *shruk* where he says:

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anti-ritualistic and anti-Brahaminical tenor. She was herself a poet, writing didactic poems, called *vakhs*. These were directed against the social and cultural ills of the Kashmiri society. Her attack on these religious and social practices is believed to have stemmed from her own life, which was quite troublesome. She is believed to have born in a well to do family and married to a Brahman boy. She faced immense difficulties and trouble from her in laws, including her mother-in-law, which forced her to give up familial life and wander in a semi-nude state. Her conceptions of self-denial, purity, asceticism, and poetry are considered to be initial and important source of inspiration for Nund Rishi. See Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 194-220.

[88] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 70.

[89] Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, p. 206-207.

[90] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Hassan*, p. 118.

[91] The poems of Nur ud-Din are called *shruks*. For detailed analysis of the term and its significance see, Abir Bazaz, "The Negative Theology of Nund Rishi (1378-1440): Poetry and Politics in Medieval Kashmir," PhD Thesis, (University of Minnesota, 2016), p. 16-19.

[92] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 98.

One instrument holds my rapt attention.

The other teaches me to renounce the world;

The paddle points down to the grave;

This is the craft to which my parents have apprenticed me.[93]

Finally, at thirty, Nund Rishi retired to a cave in his native village of Kaimoh, giving up familial and worldly ties.[94] Thus, began the initial phase of his ascetic career which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was characterised by extreme asceticism and distance from society. However, this phase of extreme asceticism was supposedly transformed after he met Mir Muhammad Hamdani.[95] In addition to Nund Reshi, this meeting had immense significance for the Sufi discourse within Kashmir. One, it is claimed that Nund Rishi accepted Mir Muhammad Hamdani as his preceptor during this meeting, formally entering into the Kubraviyya fold. Second, in the *khat-e-irshad* (the letter of initiation) written by Mir Muhammad Hamdani in favour of Nund Rishi, Hamdani validates the practice of retreat, an essential component of Rishi worldview.[96] Thus, it signalled a coming together of two divergent Sufi strands of the valley without the extinction of either. It is also believed that it was after this meeting that Nund Rishi took on the missionary zeal to propagate Islam by making it intelligible to the local masses through his *shruks*, written in the local Kashmiri language. He even condemned his earlier practice of complete detachment from society in one of his *shruks*.

Nasr Baba, it did not behove me to retire to the jungle

Although it was a significant act of worship

Lo! It was ignominy

Truth was revealed only after introspection.[97]

After a life of ascetic and missionary activities, Nund Rishi died in 1439 and was buried in Chrar, which has since become a site of pilgrimage for Kashmiris.[98]

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[93] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 98.
[94] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Hassan*, p. 120.
[95] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Hassan*, p. 125.
[96] Khoyihami, *Tarikh-e-Hassan*, p. 125.
[97] Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, "The Enduring Legacy of Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani," in *Islam in Kashmir*: *A Study of Prominent Sufis and Rishis*, ed. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, (Srinagar: Book Palace, 2015), 267-348, p. 299.
[98] Shafi Ahmad Qadri, *Kashmiri Sufism*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2002), p. 232.

The Protector of Indigeneity: Nund Rishi as *Alamdar-e-Kashmir*

The influence of Nund Rishi in the social, cultural and religious realms of the Kashmir society is revealed through titles such as *Shaykh ul-Alam* (Leader/Teacher of the world) and *Alamdar-e-Kashmir* (Standard-Bearer of Kashmir), bestowed upon him. His personality and teaching permeate almost every sphere of Kashmiri society, from politics to culture, from literature to environment. Nund Rishi is a crucial component of what has been termed as "Kashmiri narrative public"[99] and has been a subject of extensive "cultural memorialisation within Kashmiri institutions."[100] Many institutions, from educational centres in the University of Kashmir to the Srinagar International Airport, are named after the saint. This fact reflects the centrality of his personality and his values in contemporary Kashmiri society.

To begin with, scholars claim that "there is a direct and fundamental relationship between the evolution of Sheikh Nur ud-Din's religious character and gradual development of what may be called the Kashmiri Muslim identity.[101] Nund Rishi is considered the fountainhead of particular conceptions that form the basis of a unique form of Kashmiri self-definition. Since, an identity can take different forms "depending on which culturally shared items are mobilised by individuals in their quest for meaningful self-definition,"[102] these specific historical, cultural, theological notions emanating from the thought of Nund Reshi, form the basis of a specific construction of Kashmiri identity.[103] In order to understand the broad contours of this identity, it is important to delineate the unique ideas and notions of Shaykh Nur ud-Din.

The first prominent field of impact of Nund Rishi is felt in the conceptualisation of Kashmiri history. Historical conceptions form an essential part of cultural imagination and can significantly affect the contours of an identity,[104] and Nur ud-Din propounds a unique sense of

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[99] Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts*, p. 12.

[100] Abir Bazaz, "Vernacular Apocalypse in Medieval Kashmir: The Mystical Poetry of Nund Rishi (1378–1440)," *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 44, no. 4, (2021): 617-633, p. 620.

[101] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 95.

[102] P. Eid, *Being Arab*: *Ethnic and Religious Identity Building among Second Generation in Montreal*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), p. 22.

[103] In modern times, this identity has been popularised as *Kashmiriyat*. However, as I will discuss in this later in this chapter, and in more detail in the seventh chapter of this thesis, this is a political and problematic construction of the Kashmiri identity. Thus, instead of given a term for the kind of identity emanating from the thought of Nur ud-Din, I discuss without any specific term.

[104] Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh*
Tradition, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press), 1994, p. 305 – 306.

Kashmiri identity. This is evident from his stated *silsila* of his *tariqa*, as mentioned in the previous chapter. It is believed that the inculcation of indigenous Rishi saints in his Sufi lineage and even “in choosing a Sanskrit word for Hindu ascetics as the name of his Islamic Sufi order, Nund Rishi stressed the continuities between Kashmir’s past and present.”[105] This gave significant heft to indigenous popular traditions, which were under pressure during his life on account of the notions of Persian or Arabic superiority that may have arrived with the Sayyids migrating from these lands to Kashmir. This would have been quite powerful in safeguarding these values when these conceptions faced an increasing threat from the migration of peoples and values from the Islamic lands. The reverence shown by Nund Rishi for saints such as Plasman Rishi, Zulka Rishi, Ruma Rishi, Miran Rishi and Lalla Ded, whose Islamic connection is doubtful, helped in the continuing reverence of these figures in Kashmir. Additionally, the association of Nund Rishi, and his disciples, with pre-Islamic cults such as the *Nagas* (serpents), significantly assisted the acceptability of these notions by his believers and the general public.

This aspect is fairly evident in the historical conceptions of the devotees of *Char-i-Sharief.*[106] The devotees usually, and uncritically, accept myths emanating from Hindu mythology on the history of Rishi *tariqa*, as well as Kashmir. One of the interviewees, a 60-year-old male, even called the mythological sage of Hindu tradition, Kashyap Rishi,[107] a part of the Rishi order. In Hindu mythology, Kashyap Rishi is credited with draining the water out of the *Satisar* lake, which gave rise to the Kashmir Valley. The interviewees also had deep reverence and belief in the ancient cults of Kashmir, especially the *Nagas.* For most devotees, the interaction of Nund Rishi and his disciples with *Nagas* forms the basis of their belief in this serpent tradition. A devotee praised *Nagas* and claimed that they “have anthropomorphic capabilities and that *Nagas* guard most lakes and springs of the valley.”[108]

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[105] Bazaz, “Vernacular Apocalypse,” p. 618.
[106] Interactions conducted on 14th October 2020, 12th February 2021, 7th March 2021, 22nd March 2021, and 3rd October 2021, 12th February 2021, 7th March 2021 and 22nd March 2021, at *Chrar-i-Sharief* in Budgam district of the Kashmir valley.
[107] Kashyap Rishi is the mythological sage of the Hindu tradition who supposedly cleared the valley, which was a lake, of water and made it habitable. See G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashīr: A History of Kashmir*, vol. 1, (Lahore: University of Panjab Press, 1944), p. 9-11.
[108] Interaction on 12th February 2021 with a 55-year-old man, who belongs to the adjacent town of Kakapora, and visits the shrine regularly.

The Construction of Kashmir: The Influence of Shaykh Nur ud –Din on Language and Place

The other contribution of Nund Rishi to the construction of the specific Kashmiri identity is his role in preserving and promoting the use of the Kashmiri language. As mentioned earlier, the Kashmiri language was immensely influenced by Persian and Arabic during the life of Nund Rishi. These influences are even evident in the Kashmiri language used by Rishi. While his earlier poetry is still heavily Sanskratised, his later poems have markedly Persian and Arabic influence.[109] Nonetheless, by choosing this language as his means of propagation, Nund Rishi bestowed it with heft which has allowed its survival through challenging circumstances. It is pertinent to note that the Kashmiri language has never been a state language, hence bereft of any state patronage that is crucial for the development of any language, especially its literature. The Kashmiri language owes both, its survival and literary development, to Nund Rishi. Even a significant number of Kashmiri sayings are attributed to Nund Rishi.[110] However, it was his poetry, received through works compiled by his successors, called the *Nur-Namas*, that form the literary base on which the edifice of Kashmiri language and literature was built. Even the *vakhs* of Lalla Ded, who was herself a poet and senior contemporary to Nund Rishi, have been preserved in these *Nur-Namas* only. Over the years, the work of Nund Rishi has become the skeletal framework around which later poets have built their work. Many of these later poets, such as Ahad Raz, Shamas Faqir, and Wahab Khar, were Rishi saints in their own right.

Language, which forms an important component of identity. By choosing the Kashmiri language to propagate his ideas, Nund Rishi made the Kashmiri language diffuse into different spheres of societal activity. The poetry of Nund Reshi comprises of a cast range of topics, which include religious, societal and cultural, and political.[111] This allowed Kashmiri to survive because, it became an important medium for the common masses to understand socio-political and religious issues, including Islamic values and practices. Nund Rishi is also credited with formalising the language, evoking a sense of commonality between different regions of Kashmir. Nund Rishi combined three distinct usages of Kashmiri in the regions of Kamraaz (North Kashmir), Maraaz (South Kashmir) and Kishtwar into a single language across the

[109] Ghulam Nabi Muqeem Gauhar, *Shayar-e-Irfan*: *Fikr-o-Fan*, (Srinagar: Sheikh Mohamamd Usman and Sons, 2016), p. 16.
[110] Gauhar, *Shayar-e-Irfan*, p. 13.
[111] Abu Naeemullah, *Nur Nama Yani Kulyat-i-Shaykh ul-Alam*, (Srinagar: Sheikh Mohammad Usman and Sons, 2017),

region, incorporating words from each region, without which "the unity between these three regions of Kashmir would not have been possible."[112]

This made Kashmiri language efficacious to the nascent Islamic politico-religious structure, which impacted the survival of the language in the longer run. Although he could not keep Kashmiri completely immune from the influences of Persian and Arabic, the adaptation of Nund Rishi to changed literary scenarios proved pivotal in its eventual survival. Also, Nund Reshi's methods, of using indigenous means to propagate socio-cultural and religious values, became very influential. The effectiveness of these methods be gauged from the fact that many of them adopted were adopted by later Sufi saints as well. One of such Sufis is Baba Nasib ud-Din, a Sufi saint of the 17th century, who used popular folk methods based on the Kashmiri language, such as the *bhaand* (a performative folk dance) to propagate the message of Islam.[113] The impact of Nund Rishi on Nasib ud-Din is also discernible from the fact that he wrote a *Nur-Nama*, extolling the virtues of Nund Rishi

Brotherhood and Tolerance: The Social Impact of Nund Rishi

Nund Rishi also tries to construct unity between different communities of the region. This was attempted by entrenching a cross-community sense of belonging through his poetry, installing particular rituals and other such practices. The most consequential of these was giving ritualistic status to the practice of vegetarianism. Vegetarianism is a commonly held belief and practice among Rishis, including many devotees. As a ritual, it is practiced in different areas of Kashmir and involves, usually for a specific period in a year, giving up food items, including non-vegetarian items, onion, garlic, and other such delicacies or spices. These are practices similar to the ones undertaken by the Hindu or the Jain community, across South Asia. However, most devotees do not practice it regularly, and those who do mostly do it to "escape divine wrath in case of deviation, and derive any worldly benefits from such practice, by pleasing the saint or generally as a pious act."[114] This is in stark contrast to the reason Rishis adopted vegetarianism, which had more to do with self-control, through giving up worldly

[112] Gauhar, *Shayar-e-Irfan*, p. 10.
[113] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 155-156.
[114] This is a common belief in the adherents of the Rishi order which I interviewed as well as people of different localities where there is Rishi presence, such as Bijbehara, Anantnag, and Batamaloo. I have had formal and informal interactions with people of these places who keep these 'fasts' over different time periods which is called *parakh* or *paal* in different places.

desires, including good food. Nonetheless, entrenching these values and practices has significant social and political effects.

Identifying with practices and conceptions emanating from a different religious community allows the development of 'relatedness' with that community, which is considered a powerful tool of group identity.[115] Such communities do not become "dichotomised."[116] Instead, it allows a feeling of togetherness or belonging between said groups. This value is quite evident in the worldview of devotees of Nund Rishi and the Rishi order. While the footfall of Pandit devotees has seen a significant drop due to prevailing circumstances, devotees still fondly recall their visits and association with these shrines, including asserting stronger filial bonds with Pandit as opposed to their coreligionists elsewhere.[117]

Such feelings of brotherhood are also a result of Nund Rishi's own teaching. There are several *shruks* of Nund Rishi where he discusses ideas of mutual harmony and brotherhood. Just like any other proponent of mutual harmony, he reminds Muslim and Hindus of their common lineage:

Among the brothers of the same parents

Why did you create a barrier?

Muslim and Hindus are one

When will God be kind to his servants?[118]

Nund Rishi does not limit these communities to a common lineage but also preaches a common destination for these groups, to which they have to proceed together:

What qualities have you found in the world?

To allow your body free, loose rope?

The Muslim and Hindu sail in the same boat

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[115] Fergus Neville and Stephen Reicher, "The Experience of Collective Participation: Shared Identity, Relatedness and Emotionality," *Journal of the Academy of Social Sciences*, 6, no. 3, (2011): 377-396, p. 377-378.
[116] Barth, "Introduction", p. 10.
[117] In an interaction on 13th October 2020, a 50-year-old woman, fondly remembered visiting shrine with her Pandit friends as a young woman. This sentiment of longing was found across the spectrum, be it age, gender or location.
[118] Gauhar, *Shayar-e-Irfan*, p. 221. (translation from Urdu mine).

Have thy ply and let us go home.[119]

INund Rishi extends this call for harmony to the doctrinal level, espousing a mutual harmony between the doctrines of each community. He says:

Nirguna manifest thyself unto me

Thy name (alone) have I been chanting

Lord! Help me to reach the acme of my spiritual desires

I do remember (with gratitude) how kind You are

You removed all veils between yourself and the Prophet (S.A.W)

And You revealed the Quran unto him

Lord, the one (Prophet) who remains steadfast in your way

I do remember (with gratitude) how kind You are.[120]

This sense of mutual harmony between different Kashmiri communities forms the bedrock of the pluralist ethos of the valley. Although standardised through the modern conception of *Kashmiriyat*, a problematic political construction (to be dealt in detail in the last chapter), *Kashmiriyat* permeates the thought of an ordinary devotee at Chrar. Everyone I encountered invoked this word to justify a unique sense of identity, characterised by inter-communal harmony and a unique sense of belonging and possessiveness with respect to the geographical space of Kashmir.[121] However, this uniqueness further drives a distinct sense of nationalism, marked by a decisive difference from any other cultural or geographical entity of neighbouring South Asia.[122] Many operational words reflect such conceptualisation. These include *Rishi-Vaer* (the Garden of the Rishis), *Rishi-Vatika* (abode of the Rishis) or, more commonly used, *Mulk-e-Kashmir* (the nation of Kashmir). During the course of these interactions, the repeated emphasis on these terms, especially the last one, reflected a deep sense of an autonomous 'nationalistic' conception of Kashmir. The title of *Almadar-i-Kashmir*, used to refer to Nund

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[119] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 104.
[120] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 104.
[121] Riyaz Punjabi, "Kashmiriyat: The Mystique of an Ethnicity," *India International Centre Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (1990): 100-16.
[122] In an interview taken on 3rd October. 2020, of a 65-year-old man, who repeatedly used the term *mulk* (nation) as opposed to *riyasat* (state) for Kashmir. In another interview of a 70-year-old man, who used to work on the shrine, the notion of Kashmir as a *mulk* is intimately related to the notion of Nund Rishi as *Alamdar* (Standard-bearer) of Kashmir.

Rishi, further entrenches this unique notion of the Kashmiri community. This title, by its investiture, presupposes Kashmiris as a different *qaum* (community), who will gather under the leadership of Nund Rishi on the Day of Judgement.[123]

While these aspects of Nund Rishi and his doctrine adhere to the dominant perspective of toleration associated with him, the resulting political conceptualisations that emerge from it make his categorisation as quietistic highly problematic.[124] The fact that Nund Rishi can in no way be called "quietistic", is also reflected by different *shruks* of the saint, which signal his involvement in uncomfortable social and political realities of the Kashmiri society. Take, for example, his views on caste in his following *shruks*:

Adam is the progenitor of the human race,

Mother Eve has the same primordiality,

(So) from where have the 'low castes' descended?

How can a 'high born' deride his ancestry?[125]

In a second *shruk*, using theological arguments, Nund Rishi says:

One who harps proudly upon one's caste,

Is bereft of reason and wisdom,

Here the good alone can claim noble descent;

In the Hereafter, 'caste' will be extinct,

Were you to imbibe the essence of Islam,

Then no one would be purer than you?[126]

However, caste for him does not only are theological repercussions. He is equally aware of the practical problems that caste system poses for the well-being of society. He says:

The distinguished ancestry will not ennoble and unite (people);

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[123] This is the day in the Islamic eschatology, when humans will stand in front of Allah and will give an account of their deeds, leading to either Paradise or Hell.
[124] Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: Antimonies of Nationalism," *Asian Survey*, 31, no. 11, (1991): 997-1019, p. 999.
[125] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 125.
[126] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 126.

The nobility of birth is not decreed.

(Beware), lest he thought of noble ancestry should stupefy you;

Conform to righteousness: nay, noble descent is a sham.[127]

This *shruk* makes it clear that Nund Rishi is not only worried about otherworldly issues or concerns that might emerge in the Hereafter. He is very concerned with the worldly effects of disunity and disharmony that caste can be a reason for in a society. Thus, his Sufi worldview also encompasses social considerations. His call to righteousness exceeds usual Islamic or religious values and possess a deep desire for social change, harmony between different members of the society, and upliftment of the downtrodden.

The Passion of Love: The Political Aspects of Shaykh Nur ud-Din

However, these temporal considerations of Nund Rishi are not limited to the social sphere only. His *shruks* bring forth an acute understanding of the political issues and questions confronted by the Kashmiri society during his lifetime. The Shaykh also provides the answer to these problems through these *shruks* only. To begin with, he makes the leadership class a subject of stringent critique, reflected in his following *shruks*:

You! A fresh spring lost among the boulders

A saint among the thieves

Caged, you have lost your way

You are a swan among the crows.[128]

Although these *shruks* may be considered to be aimed at some other form of elites, the following *shruk* makes the target amply clear:

The useless riding the carriage

While the wise man shouldering it

A learned is setting up clothes of the unlearned

[127] Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 126.
[128] Gauhar, *Shayar-e-Irfan*, p. 193. (translation from Urdu mine).

As a loyal servant to destiny.

Blind, incompetent sit on the throne

Without any means or competence

The learned struggle for food

As a loyal servant to destiny[129]

Thus, it is clear that Nund Rishi was not only involved in the social issues of the society, but was clearly interested in its political issues. In addition to the social message of his *shruks*, he made use of his poetry to put forth a political message as well, putting to criticism the nature and ability of the rulers of his time. This message would have been quite effective, as we have documentary evidence of his arrest on the orders of the reigning monarchy at the time, the Shahmiri dynasty.[130] His *shruks* continue to be used for political messaging, and form an important part of the public vocabulary of the contemporary populace in articulating their political grievances. This is especially true for his following *shruk*:

Nasr, listen to your teacher's words

The peacock's crown shall be on the head of a pig

The rivers shall dry up, but gutters will overflow

It will be the time of the rule of the beasts.[131]

The last line of the above translation remains a preferred phrase for Kashmiris in the face of political odds. Its original iteration, '*Suha mali aasi vandar raj'* is an essential component of contemporary "Kashmiri cultural memory and continues to be hurled against existing political structures."[132] This apocalyptic nature of the world in the poetry of Nund Reshi and, "the local spiritual practices of self-transformation" proposed by him have also been understood to contain political connotations. These values of Nur ud-Din have been seenas , by Abir Bazaz, "as the source of an ethic of non-violent political struggle."[133] calling "for a passive struggle to correct political injustice."[134]

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[129] Gauhar, *Shayar-e-Irfan*, p. 193. (translation from Urdu mine).
[130] Bazaz, "Vernacular Apocalypse," p. 629.
[131] Bazaz, "Vernacular Apocalypse," p. 631.
[132] Bazaz, "Vernacular Apocalypse," p. 627.
[133] Bazaz, "Vernacular Apocalypse," p. 632.
[134] Bazaz, "Vernacular Apocalypse," p. 632

However, I argue that the political efficacy of Nund Rishi and his doctrine cannot be limited to passive resistance, as he also advocates the masses to be prepared for an active struggle against injustice. This is reflected in some of his *shruks* as well. For example, he says

The One who brought us to life and fed us

Put your faith in him only

The One who gave us means of travel

Be Ready to take up the role of Ghazi (fighter)

To die in His name, is what is acceptable

For the One, the reason for our body and well-being.[135]

Further, Nur ud-Din even uses the concept of *Ishq* (Love), a quintessential Sufi trope, to bring forth this point.

Love is to lead in the act of war

Not giving up in the face of an adversary

Love is putting your head on a dagger

The emerge from this act is success

Love is putting on a bloodied cloak

To fight with a lover's craze.[136]

Thus, Nund Rishi propounds an active as well as a passive form of struggle against injustice. By inculcating values of piety and righteousness, he wants the masses to fight against individual desires for a reward in the afterlife as well as struggle against the prevalent social ills and political oppression. The doctrines of piety can give rise to, contingently or in an unanticipated manner, to political agency through the effect that practices produce "in the social field."[137] Consequently, as actors possessing political agency, devotees can understand, reflect and take action on political developments of their surroundings, in this case Kashmir.

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[135] Gauhar, *Shayar-e-Irfan*, p. 266. (translation from Urdu mine).
[136] Naeemullah, *Nur Nama*, p. 209-210. (translation from Urdu mine).
[137]Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 35.

Nund Rishi, thus, through his ethical practices, and messages through his *shruks*, attempts to produce beings which are not only morally but politically conscious.

These possibilities are clearly discernible in the contemporary devotees of the saint. Although, the devotees I encountered at Chrar generally considered *jehad* to be 'primarily against one's own *nafs* (desires), they did have a strong sense of *insaf* (justice) and *imaan* or *tawakkul* (faith or belief) in the Almighty and the saint to rectify any *nainsafi* (injustice). The oft-repeated phrase to bring forth this feeling was *zulmas gase naash* (oppression will perish). Most of them were also fairly clear that Rishi doctrine does not stipulate a distance from the political field, with one making an interesting distinction that "even if there is a prohibition, it is meant for the one who officially becomes a part of the *tariqa*, not the common masses."[138] However, they also claimed that "it is actually Nund Rishi himself who spiritually holds the reigns of Kashmir, because of which whosoever is in power in Kashmir comes to pay his obeisance to the saint."[139] Thus, even the personality of Nund Rishi remains deeply connected to the political structure of the state, even if it has spiritual connatations, within the conceptions of his devotees.

Hence, the personality of Nund Rishi has multi-dimensional significance in Kashmir. The impact of Nund Rishi and is thought, is ubiquitous across different aspects of Kashmiri society. This influence can be found in politics, culture, language, arts, literature and religion. He is the foremost poet of the Kashmiri language, the patron-saint of the Kashmiris and his doctrine is base of inter-communal harmony within the Kashmiri society. His contribution to the survival of the Kashmiri language in a changing cultural and religious context also remains crucial. Nund Rishi played a significant part in making Islamic values discernible to common Kashmiri folk, immensely speeding up the process of Islamicization of the Valley. Simultaneously he also initiated the cultural process, which helped in the survival and continuation of several indigenous practices and values. Thus, it contributed to an indigenous and autonomous conceptualisation of Kashmir society and polity, effecting a harmonious and tolerant view of Kashmiri geography and identity. Consequently, it has had an indelible impact on Kashmiri politics. Looking at his contribution to Kashmiri society, it would not be improbable to claim that, arguably, Nund Rishi is the most impactful and popular Kashmiri of the last millennium.

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[138] A 68-year-old weaver, vehemently opposed the idea of Nund Rishi was against politics. He said that it was just that it was below him to engage in politics but he was very much interested in what becomes of Kashmir, and even predicted it through his *shruks*. And since he holds the reins of Kashmir, spiritually speaking, he hoped that he would soon help Kashmir to get *insaf* (justice). Interaction on 3rd October 2021.

[139] Multiple interactions on 14th October 2020, 22nd March 2021 and 3rd October 2021.

Conclusion

Thus, this chapter elucidated the political role the Sufi saints can play over and above intimate engagement with the political establishment of their time. It was done by studying two influential Sufi saints within the political history of Kashmir, Sayyid Ali Hamdani and Shaykh Nur ud-Din or Nund Rishi. I argued that there are three broad aspects on which these Sufi saints interacted with the political conceptualisation of their times, which continue to affect the Kashmir society. The first is through the propagation of their doctrine, which has overt social and political moorings. With respect to Sayyid Ali Hamdani, it was his political treatise, *Zakhirat ul-Muluk,* which provided a blueprint of the political society envisaged by him, which is also corroborated through his letters. In the case of Nund Rishi, it is his poetry, written in Kashmiri and called *shruks*¸ which Shaykh employed for multiple uses. He used it to propagate the message of Islam, to give the message of peace, equality and brotherhood, to critique political establishment, and to call for change.

The second aspect was the institutionalisation of certain rituals that evoke or strengthen the feeling of a particular identity or community, which then has political repercussions. One such example is the recitation of *Awrad-e-Fattiyah* after morning prayers in Kashmir on the advice of Sayyid Ali Hamdani. It allowed the neo-converts of Islam to strengthen the bonds of community by common recitation as a group. This practice has continued to be an important marker of Kashmiri Muslim identity, both theologically and practically, even now. Another example is the practice of vegetarianism prevalent in Rishi orders, legitimated by their progenitor, Shaykh Nur ud-Din. This practice, a continuation of pre-Islamic Rishis of Kashmir, has evoked a sense of unity and togetherness between different religious communities through a construction of commonality. This practice has been a bedrock of the nationalistic perspective prevalent in Kashmiri politics.

The third aspect was the transformation or strengthening of culture by different Sufi orders through various means. It involved the introduction of arts and crafts by Sayyid Ali Hamdani, which moored the cultural landscape of the Kashmir valley towards the Persian and Islamic world. This establishment of Kashmir in the cultural and political geography of the Persianate and the Islam word was also strengthened by the impact of Sufi orders on the lexicon and script of the Kashmiri language. Shaykh Nur ud-Din, on his part, strengthened the indigenous culture of the region and made it survive the onslaught of the Persian and Islamic cultures. Over the

years, these trends have led to the Kashmir culture we know today, characterised by a unique blend of external and internal influences. However, there remains an undercurrent of differences that give way to a divergent political notion emerging out of each Sufi tradition, particularly of the current dispute of Kashmir.

Thus, these Sufis and their impact bring out the ‘political’ nature of Sufi thought and practices, which are not merely limited to leadership or the use of shrines as mobilisational or legitimising spaces. It does not mean that mobilisation, legitimisation or leadership are not an important component of Political Sufism. It is, but I argue that Political Sufism goes way beyond that. It affects the fundamental conceptions of adherents, which then translate to political conceptions and actions. Nonetheless, it needs to be said that shrines remain an important aspect of Sufism, including the political role that Sufism plays in the overall society. However, shrines, especially their rituals and practices, have not received significant attention within the literary corpus on Kashmir. The following few chapters of this thesis try to address this gap.

Chapter IV

Sites of Memory: History and Practices of Kashmiri Shrines

Across Kashmir, the ritualistic festivities start considerably before the actual day of the *urs* (anniversary of a saint). The number of days that such celebration takes place is usually the date of the *urs* in the Islamic calendar. For example, the number of days for the *urs* of Makhdoom Sahib is thirteen, since his *urs* falls on the 13th of the second month of the Islamic calendar. Similarly, it goes on for eleven days for Dastageer Sahib, six days for Shah-e-Hamdan and so on, all corresponding to their death anniversaries. These festivities involve multifarious activities. These include a communal recitation of *khatam* (prayer invoking the help of the saint) and *manqabat* (recitation of devotional litanies during a specific period of time). The festivities pick up on the penultimate day of the *urs* when *shab* (night prayer) is organized, followed by a full day of invocatory prayers.

During this whole process of celebration, a devotee of the shrine undergoes numerous rituals. It listens to a *khutba* (sermon), generally extolling the virtues of the saint and enumerating his message. It takes part in the *khatam*, where it invokes help of the saint in a group with other devotees. It listens to *manqabat*, and if the shrine consists of a grave, also undertakes circumambulation. On the other hand, if there is a relic, the devotee partakes in *nishandehi* (the showcasing of relics). The devotee is also given some share of the devotional offerings, consecrated during the process of *khatam*. Thus, a devotee undergoes numerous discursive and ritualistic modes of engagement with Sufism, while participating in practices associated with a shrine.

In addition to these commemorative functions, shrines and the personality associated with them, are also 'called upon' during times of distress. For example, in 2015, the then Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, visited the *Dargah* and prayed for

weather conditions to improve in the valley.[1] There were numerous congregations of propitiation prayers across different mosques and shrines of Srinagar when there were chances of flood in April 2015.[2] Furthermore, shrines have economic functions. People depend on the shrine for their livelihood. Shopkeepers who trade in the vicinities of the shrines depend on it for the footfall of their business. Usually, shops in the close vicinity of the shrine are *waqf*[3] property, which is rented out to locals to run their businesses. Hawkers put up stalls on special occasions such as *urs*, when a large number of people descend on a shrine. Lastly but primarily, these shrines are places of spiritual enhancements, and *ibada* (ritualistic prayers).

These are the different roles Sufi shrines play in the lives of ordinary devotee, including in Kashmir. These functions are not specific to Kashmir or Islam either, but religious spaces have essential theological and spiritual functions in almost all major world religions, across all communities. Each community revers its shrines and approaches them for praying, fulfilling obligatory religious duties, spiritual contentment and fulfilment of a desire or need. Such perception of the presence of Divine authority within that space ascribes it with a degree of 'centrality' within the life of the community. However, this centrality, and the associated rituals, are not merely theological but also have sociological and political efficacy. This spiritual centrality translates into other spheres of community life. With respect to Kashmir, this aspect is highlighted by Chitralekha Zutshi as she argues that in Kashmir "shrines of Sufi and other holy figures were more than merely spiritual retreats; they were instead powerful institutions that deeply influenced the course of politics, society and culture."[4]

While the overt political aspects of the shrines in Kashmir will be dealt in the subsequent chapter, this chapter is an exposition of the different ways in which Sufi shrines, as a space, intervene in the life of a common Kashmiri, historically, socially and culturally. These shrines have, since their inception, provided spiritual relief to the tormented, financial relief to the destitute, education to students, and have been arenas of cultural and economic exchange.

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[1] "Mufti at Dargah, Prays for Fair Weather," *Kashmir Observer*, 1st April 2015. https://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/jaya-s-demise-revives-memories-of-sheikh-abdullah-s-death-in-kashmir-116120600284_1.html

[2] "Special Prayers in Srinagar to Avoid Floods," *The New Indian Express*, 1st April 2015. https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2015/apr/01/Special-Prayers-in-Srinagar-to-Avoid-Floods-736662.html

[3] *Waqf* is a term used for Islamic endowment. For details, see sixth chapter of this thesis.

[4] Chitrelekha Zutshi, "Contesting Urban Space: Shrine Culture and the Discourse on Kashmiri Muslim Identities and Protest in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, ed. Chitrelekha Zutshi, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 51.

Since, as mentioned in the previous chapter, historical, cultural or ritualistic conceptions have important role in determining the identity of a community, these shrines become important spaces for the community and its imagination of itself. While Sufi saints provide the socio-cultural template in the form of rituals and culture, shrines are a site to participate in and inculcate that moral, historical and cultural system. In this project, different aspects of a shrine play different roles. The history of the shrine provides the community with a sense of the past, while rituals help foster bonds of togetherness and belonging, and the architectural space provides it with a space for gathering as a community. Thus, shrines are foundational in the everyday life of a community, both theologically and sociologically.

The landscape of Kashmir is dotted with shrines. Every one of these shrines enjoys a certain degree of centrality in their local community. Mapping these shrines and their roles is a gargantuan task, requiring more than one monograph. Consequently, this chapter focuses on three prominent shrines of the Kashmir valley, which have been foundational to the religious and political aspects of the region, to bring out their larger role in the Kashmiri community. These are *Dargah-Hazratbat*, *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, and *Chrar-i-Sharief*. Additionally, *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* is also discussed to clearly bring out the rituals and practices of shrines associated with Sayyid Ali Hamdani. The former two are Srinagar-based shrines. On the other hand, *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* is situated in Tral situated in the Pulwama district of the valley, while *Chrar-i-Sharief* is situated at Chrar, a hamlet in the Budgam district of the valley. The chapter explicates history, religious significance and rituals of each shrine, showcasing how these aspects are related to the conception of history, identity and belonging in the local community of Kashmir.

Shrines in Islamic Context: Saint, Institutional Charisma and Cultural Memory

Islamic shrines are known by various names in different cultural and social contexts. The most commonly used word is the *dargah*, which is of Persian origin. The other words used are the Persian *khanqah* and the Arabic *zawiya* (hospice). *Ziyarat*, from the Arabic word *zara,* meaning "to see," and is a common work for shrines in Kashmir. Turkish *tekke*, and *mazar* or *maqbara* (grave) are also used. In addition, Kashmiris also use the word *astana* (hospice), which is of

Sanskrit provenance. Earlier, a term such as *dargah* or *khanqah* was used to refer to a place where a Sufi lived; it was later shifted to the place "where a Sufi master was buried."[5]

According to Nile Green, the institutionalization of Sufi through a shrine is crucial for his sanctification. For Green, 'blessed man' refers to a living Sufi set apart from ordinary men by his possession of *barakat* (blessing power) which he was able to deploy at the service of his followers.[6] On the other hand, 'saint' "refers to a dead Sufi whose status has been sanctified through the cultural investment of shrine architecture, hagiographical commemoration, and ritual veneration."[7] However, these shrines are not only a site of access to the saint but perform a broader religious role. These places become important spaces through which "the Book (*Quran)* was conveyed" to the common masses, and these shrines "displayed, theatre-style and in microcosm, the moral order of Islamic macrocosm."[8]

Shrines made Islamic values accessible to these masses through rituals, making "Islam accessible to non-lettered masses, providing them with vivid and concrete manifestations of the divine order, and integrating them into its ritualized drama both as participants and as sponsors."[9] These rituals are generally of two types: ordinary and festive. The former relates to the common and daily observances and practices of different devotees at a shrine, and the latter refers to ceremonial rituals associated with an occasion or ceremonial event.[10] Thus, shrines are central to disseminating Islamic values and practices within the larger community. This forms the primary function of a shrines, its *raison d'etre*, but it is not the complete picture. In addition to religious functions, shrines have possessed "economic, political and social ties with the masses,"[11] which can be reflected through a number of ways.

[5] Michel Boivin, "Authority, Shrines and Spaces: Scrutinizing Devotional Islam from South Asia," in *Devotional Islam in Contemporary South Asia*, ed. Michel Boivin and Rémy Delage, (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 1-15, p. 3.
[6] Nile Green, *Making Space*: *Sufi and Settlers in Early Modern India*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. xiii-xiv.
[7] Green, *Making Space*, p. xiii.
[8] Richard M. Eaton, "The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Bābā Farīd," in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*," ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 333-356, p. 334.
[9] Eaton, "The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Bābā Farīd," p. 334.
[10] Marc Gaborieau, "Introduction," to *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character History and Significance*," New Hardback ed., ed. Christian W. Troll, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), v-xxi, p. v.
[11] Eaton, "The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Bābā Farīd," p. 334.

Nile Green argues that shrines are spaces "where the past was not only recounted in narrative but also rendered visible in architecture and ritual."[12] The construction of a shrine "through narratives and rituals rendered the body of the blessed man as the permanent locus of collective memory."[13] Thus, "by substantiating and spatializing 'religion' as a resource providing narratives, rituals, and spaces of belonging, we can conceive these peoples as being communities of memory as much as religious communities."[14] Through his enshrinement, the saint becomes the "architectural embodiment of collective memory—served to bridge the past and present time of his followers, so creating the Muslim communities of memory."[15] Shrines "presented their communities of memory with a tangible continuity with their past: the same gateways, prayer rooms, and books; preserved clothing, possessions, and etiquette; even the same embodied blessing in the saint's living descendants, the *sajjada nashins*."[16] Therefore, shrines are more than just everyday community spaces. They are *lieux de memoir*. As conceived by Pierre Nora, *lieux de memoir* is referred to 'any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community."[17] These are spaces of memorialization used to "mark anniversaries and pronounce eulogies."[18]

Thus, "even down to the present day, for the communities of memory who gather around them, shrines act as repositories of history passed on in the oral tales and written texts, commemorative rituals, and saintly dynasties, preserved around the graves of the blessed dead."[19] In addition to their functions as repositories of collective history, the architectural splendour of many Indian shrines is testament to the fact that the power of the Sufis was more than merely religious or symbolic. Styles of shrine architecture seem always to have mirrored the fashions of the court."[20] Such architectural style reflects that in its very constitution, Sufi institutionalization through shrines and *turuq* was not meant to escape the religious but to mirror it. It is even evident in the organization and nomenclature of the shrine: the shrine of the

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[12] Green, *Making Space*, p. xv.
[13] Green, *Making Space*, p. xiv.
[14] Green, *Making Space*, p. xv.
[15] Green, *Making Space*, p. 3.
[16] Green, *Making Space*, p. xv.
[17] Pierre Nora, Lawrence D. Kritzman (ed.), Arthur Goldhammer (tr.), *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, (Volume 1: Conflicts and Divisions), (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. xvii.
[18] Nora et.al, *Realms of Memory*, p. 45.
[19] Green, *Making Space*, p. xv.
[20] Green, *Making Space*, p. 21.

Sufi saint was itself termed as a royal court (*dargah*), while the saint himself was titled as a king (*shah*) and was surrounded by a retinue of servants (*khuddam*) who served him at a tomb.[21] The fact that this was not a one-way street is evident in the example of Mughal emperors wherein, "at least the reign of Akbar; the Mughal emperors termed themselves as Sufi masters (*murshid*) with their courtiers in turn designated as the Emperor's disciples (*murid*).[22]

In Kashmir too, shrines follow the same architectural schema, and ritualistic pattern, and consequently, carry out similar functions within the Kashmiri community. Such a function is accentuated by the centrality of these three shrines, and their associated personalities, in the society of Kashmir. These shrines are *Dargah-Hazratbal*, *khanqah-e-Mo'alla* and *Char-e-Sharief.* In addition, the chapter also discusses *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* in Tral, which is also associated with Mir Saiyyid Ali Hamdani.

The Good Fortune of Kashmiris: The History of Asaar-i-Sharief Dargah-Hazratbal

The *Asaar-i-Sharief Dargah Hazratbal*, hitherto *Hazratbal* (image 1), is a shrine dedicated to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). The shrine houses the holy strand of the Prophet's hair, called the *moi-muqaddas*, which arrived in Kashmir during the 17th century under the rule of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707). The name *Hazratbal* is a combination of two words, *Hazrat*, an Arabic word of respect alluding to the Prophet (S.A.W.) and *Bal*, which is a Kashmiri word meaning strength, vigour or power. In another iteration it also means ferry, a bathing place on a river or a locality developed on the bank of a river, lake or the side of a spring.[23] Since *Hazratbal* is located on the banks of the Dal lake, the term means locality developed on the lakeside in the memory of Prophet Muhammad.

The construction of the shrine and the arrival of the Prophet's hair strand to Kashmir, have become important events in the annals of Kashmiri history. The holy hair strand was in possession of an Arabic immigrant and descendent of the Prophet, Sayyid Abdullah, who settled in the kingdom of Bijapur, in the Deccan, after fleeing from Medina due to an inter-personal dispute.[24] Being the direct descendent of the Prophet and custodian of the holy relics,

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[21] Green, *Making Space*, p. 26.
[22] Green, *Making Space*, p. 26.
[23] G.N Gauhar, *Hazratbal: The Central Stage of Kashmiri Politics*, (New Delhi: Virgo Publication, 1998), p. 15.
[24] Dr Pirzada Mohammad Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine: In Historical Perspective*, (New Delhi: GrassrootsIndia Publishers, 2001), p. 12-13.

the Adil Shahi ruler, Sultan Muhammad, granted him a *jagir* (fief).[25] This connection to the Adil Shahi dynasty proved dear to the family once Aurangzeb conquered Bijapur in 1686. The family was stripped of its *jagir*, and Sayyid Hamid, the son of Sayyid Abdullah, went to Delhi to petition the Emperor. Although his *jagir* was restored, he amassed immense financial debt during his five years in Shahjahanabad, as Delhi was known then.[26]

Under these testing circumstances, Khawaja Noor-ud-din Ashwari, a trader based in Shahjahanabad, offered to help Sayyid Hamid. In lieu of his help, and after a divine intervention,[27] Ashwari acquired the *moi-muqaddas*, intending to install it in Kashmir. On the way to Kashmir, Emperor Aurangzeb seized the relic in Lahore, wanting to establish it in Ajmer, in the *dargah* of Khawaja Muinuddin Chisti. However, Aurangzeb had a dream in which the Prophet was unhappy at the seizure of the relic and its forcible installation. Repentant, Aurangzeb allowed the further journey of the relic to Kashmir. Since Ashwari had died during this period, apparently on account of grief caused due to the seizure, the relic was brought to Kashmir by his servant, Maydanish.[28]

The arrival of *moi-muqaddas* created a reverential atmosphere in Kashmir. The euphoria was such that "several learned men, scholars, *ulema*, Muslim dignitaries and mass of commoners, under the leadership of Shaykh Radho Chisti, reached Hirapora[29] to welcome and receive the sacred hair."[30] The relic was first housed at the *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya* in Srinagar. The fact that Aurangzeb had a soft corner for the Naqshbandiyya order may have played a role in this decision. The enthusiasm of Kashmiris was reflected by huge crowds that "flooded the streets and *bazaars* of Srinagar,"[31] to have a glimpse of the relic Mirza Qalander Baigh, a contemporary poet, espoused the enthusiasm in verse as

For the distressed at the time of need

Your one sacred hair provides the succour, O Prophet of Arabia

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[25] It is said that Saiyid Abdullah possessed three relics. One was the holy hair strand, two was the holy turban of Caliph Ali and three the saddle of *Zul-Jalal*, the horse of Caliph Ali, see Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine*, p. 13.
[26] Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine*, p. 21.
[27] It is believed that Sayyid Hamid had a dream where the Prophet himself asked him to give his hair to the Khawaja Ashbari, see Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 28.
[28] Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 30.
[29] Hirapora was a place in an area which currently falls under District Shopian of Jammu and Kashmir
[30] Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine*, p. 25.
[31] Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine*, p. 26.

On the day of descent, a hidden voice proclaimed

Kashmir has become Medina due to the sacred hair of the Prophet (S.A.W)[32]

The display of the relic by Shaykh Radho Chisti, a prominent saint and the first *nishandeh* (person who displays the relics) of the relic,[33] around *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya* led to a stampede, "wherein dozens reportedly lost their lives."[34] The stampede forced the then Governor of Kashmir, Mir Fazil Khan, to convene a meeting "to which several *mashaikh*, *ulema*, and other respectable citizens were invited to take a unanimous decision to select the suitable place for housing the sacred hair given the paucity of land around the shrine of Naqshband Sahib."[35] It was decided in this congregation to acquire *Bagh-e-Sadiq Khan* (Garden of Sadiq Khan), a garden on the western shore of Dal lake, where an edifice was constructed during the reign of emperor Shah Jahan. While staying in *Bagh-e-Sadiq Khan* in 1633, Shah Jahan was enamoured by its beauty and ordered its conversion into a mosque. This act of Shah Jahan was considered to be divinely ordained as the mosque became the final resting place of *moi-muqaddas*.[36] After Chisti, the son-in-law of Ashwari, Bulaqi Banday, was made the *mutawalli* (caretaker) and *nishandeh*.[37] His descendants continue to perform these functions even today.

The mosque built during the era of Shah Jahan survived till the latter half of the twentieth century when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the head of the governing body of the shrine *Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia* (Department of Islamic Awqaf), decided to reconstruct the structure as a national project. Scholars have argued that this reconstruction, and the loss of the original structure, was a result of "Abdullah's megalomaniac desire to immortalize his political links with the dargah of *Hazratbal*."[38] This *dargah* made by donations of the people, especially that of Srinagar,[39] was completed in 1979 and remains in use today.

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[32] Muhammad Ishaq Khan, "The Significance of the Dargah of Hazratbal in the Socio-Religious and Political Life of Kashmiri Muslim," in *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character, History, and Significance*, New Hardback ed., ed. Christian W. Troll, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 269-286, p. 175, translation of the Persian couplet done by Abrar Qasmi.
[33] Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 31.
[34] Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine*, p. 31.
[35] Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine*, p. 31.
[36] Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine* p. 17.
[37] Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 54.
[38] Khan, "The Significance," p. 186.
[39] Khan, "The Significance," p. 186.

There are important changes in the architectural schematic of the new shrine as compared to the older one. The most glaring is the use of the *gumbad* (dome) as opposed to the *minar* (spire, *breng* in Kashmiri). The *minar* is characteristic of the Kashmiri Muslim architecture and adorns most of the shrines of the valley. The design of the new *Hazratbal*, conceptualized by an architect from Hyderabad, is considered an attempt to project focus on the Islamic aspect of the shrine. This decision is understandable, considering Sheikh Abdullah was challenging the authority of the Indian State over Kashmir during this period.[40]

The Harbinger of Islam in Kashmir: History of Khanqah-e-Mo'alla and other Shrines associated with Sayyid Ali Hamdani

The *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, henceforth *Khanqah* (image 2), is a shrine dedicated to the 14th-century Iranian Sufi mystic of the Kubraviyya Sufi order, Sayyid Ali Hamdani. It is located on the banks of river Jhelum, between the Fateh Kadal and Zaina Kadal, two oldest bridges on the river. It was first commissioned by Sultan Sikander, the Shahmiri dynast, who ruled from 1389 to 1413, to commemorate the Sufi mentioned above. The construction commenced in 1395 on the platform from where Sayyid Ali Hamdani used to preach, during his stay in Kashmir. It was constructed at the behest and under the supervision of Ali Hamdani's son, Mir Muhammad Hamdani. Mir Muhammad Hamdani was also the spiritual preceptor of the Sultan. On the completion of the shrine, Mir Muhammad Hamdani presented Sultan Sikander a ruby from Badakshan, while Sultan earmarked the revenue of three villages for the upkeep and maintenance of the shrine.[41]

At the outset, the *Khanqah* was a modest structure, a single-story building within a very congested space.[42] The shrine was later renovated substantially by Malik Qazi Raina, a Kashmiri noble, under the direction of Shia Sufi mystic Shamsuddin Araki. The *Khanqah* is made of wood, with a giant hall where prayers are undertaken. It also has several small rooms adjacent to the hall for meditation, especially for *Aiteqaf* (performed during the last ten days of fasting in the holy month of Ramadan) (image 6). On the right-hand corner, beside the front wall of the structure towards the *qibla* (direction of the Muslim prayer, towards the *Kaaba*), is a room which encloses the space where Sayyid Ali Hamdani is believed to have originally

[40] This will be discussed in the last chapter of the thesis.
[41] For details, see the sixth chapter of the thesis.
[42] *Bahristan-e-Shahi*, p. 46.

spent his time praying and meditating (image 7). The room also has some other relics associated with Hamdani, and is not accessible to the general public. The shrine is situated at the bank of the Jhelum river within one of the most congested areas of the old Srinagar city. As an architectural specimen, the shrine remains one of the most important sites of the Kashmir valley. All the following hospices were influenced by the *Khanqah*, some of which were dedicated to Sayyid Ali Hamdani himself, such as the *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* in Tral (image 3).

The destruction of *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* in an mysterious fire incident has been one of the most tragic events of the past century in Kashmir. The shrine had not had any major repairs since it was constructed in the 16th century as opposed to *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla,* which has been reconstructed several times. As such, it was a rare specimen of old Kashmiri architecture. In a documentary, in personal possession of this author, titled *Kashmir ki Qadeem Khanqahein*,[43] the architectural marvel of the shrine was clearly showcased. The architectural scheme of this *khanqah* was similar to the one at Srinagar. It was a single-story, wooden shrine, made without any cement or even iron nails, for that matter. The relic of the shrine, which is the *asa* (staff) of Sayyid Ali Hamdani, was kept in the attic, only accessible through a small staircase. Like *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, it also had small chambers for people observing *Aitekaf*, or students undertaking mediation in seclusion, while its walls were adorned with *awrad-e-fattiyah.*

Since the *khanqah* was made entirely of wood, nothing could survice the fire, except the relic, the *asa* (staff) of Ali Hamdani. The relic were shifted to the upper story of the *Hamam*,[44] situated outside the shrine, at the northeast corner, until the new shrine was constructed. The new shrine is architecturally constructed more as a mosque than a hospice, with the *minar* remaining the only remnant of the earlier architectural scheme. The shrine is now a two-storied structure, with the relics deposited in a safe on the east side of the second floor of the shrine. The shrine built-up area has also been considerably extended from the earlier complex (image 8). The shrine is still incomplete, almost quarter a century after the tragic incident (image 3).

[43] This documentary was shot in 1991.

[44] *Hamam* is a special room with floor made up of a special kind of stone, which is hollow underneath. During winters the room is heated up by burning wood under the rocks.

Image 1. The shrine of *Dargah-Hazratbal* in Srinagar ©Flickr.com

Image 2: Frontal View of *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, Srinagar. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin

Image 3: Frontal View of *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah*, Tral. © Syed Gowhar Andrabi

Image 4: Ziyarat Shaykh Nur ud-Din Rishi at Chrar. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin

Chrar-e- Sharief and its History: The Pole of Kashmir

Located in Charar, a remote hamlet in Budgam district, Chrar-e-Sharief shrine is the final abode of the progenitor of the indigenous Rishi order, Shaykh Nur ud-Din. Just like the two *khanqah* mentioned above, this shrine is built in classic Kashmiri architecture, which uses a spire instead of a dome. The shrine was built immediately after the passing away of the saint by Sultan Zain ul-Abideen.[45] Later, the ruler from Chak dynasty, Hassan Shah Chak renovated the shrine. Sultan Ali Shah Chak constructed a verandah of carved wooden pillars around the shrine, while Sultan Yaqub Shah Chak constructed a completely new *khanqah* of premium deodar wood after demolishing the old one.[46] He also enlarged the mosque constructed by Nund Reshi himself. This shrine constructed by Yaqub Shah Chak was also destroyed by fire. Later, the Afghan ruler, Atta Mohammad Khan, constructed the *Khanqah* in 1809.[47] This shrine stood, despite some extensive repairs in the late 19th and early twentieth century, till 1995.

The shrine was gutted in the 1995 military operation of the Indian army to neutralise Pakistani militants, ironically codenamed Operation Shanti.[48] The shrine was reduced to ashes after the culmination of the operation. It was later rebuilt by the Muslim community of the valley.[49] While the new shrine is architecturally based on Kashmiri tradition, it is made of concrete rather than wood. The shrine consists of a large *khanqah* built around the tomb of Nund Reshi. The tomb is ensconced in a cubicle made of wood and glass (image 9). The wood part of the cubicle has the traditional *khatamband* and has poetry *shruks* of Nund Reshi engraved on it (image 10). A large mosque is constructed outside, which is the place for the daily prayers of the community. The most unfortunate consequence of the tragedy of 1995 has been the loss of ten relics which were also burnt to ashes in the fire.[50]

The newly constructed shrine at Chrar was built with the donations of the public and retained the overall traditional architectural style. The shrine still uses the spire (*minbar*) instead of the dome. However, the use of wood is limited in the outer precincts of the shrine. The new shrine is mainly built from modern materials, such as cement and mortar. In view of the 1995 incident, the compound of the shrine is pretty extended, with residential houses at a fair distance from

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[45] G. N Gauhar and Shahwar Gowhar, *Military Operation in Kashmir: Insurgency at Chrar-i-Sharief*, (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2001), p. 18.
[46] Gauhar and Gowhar, *Military Operation in Kashmir*, p. 19.
[47] Gauhar and Gowhar, *Military Operation in Kashmir*, p. 22.
[48] Ramesh Vinayak, "Kashmir: Despite Killing of Key Militants at Chrar Shrine, India Loses a Battle," *India Today*, 31st May 1995.
[49] For details, see sixth chapter of this thesis.
[50] Gauhar and Gowhar, *Military Operation in Kashmir*, p. 210-212.

the shrine. There are shops at the north, south and west precincts of the shrine. On the east, a large mosque is constructed for the daily Islamic prayers, which is within the compound of the shrine.

Thus, the history of these shrines is filled with constructions and reconstructions, both out of reverence and need. Incidents of fire have been a constant issue that has affected wooden shrines of the valley, these four being no exception. However, the immediate reconstructions of these shrines are evidence of the importance that these shrines possess in the everyday lives of Kashmiris. The centrality of these spaces is reflected chiefly through the daily visitations or commemorative occasions, during which the devotees undergo numerous general or special rituals to attain spiritual, personal or material benefit through the *baraka* of the saint. The daily rituals at most of these shrines follow a similar pattern. A devotee visits these shrines, especially around one of the five obligatory prayers a Muslim offers, to seek blessing for his spiritual awakening or remedy for his temporal wants. On the occasion of commemorative events, the shrine becomes a site of special reverence, with people flocking to it from far and wide to participate in these ceremonies.

The Commemoration of the Prophet: Milad at Hazratbal

In *Hazratbal*, the *hujr-e-khaas* (sanctum sanctorum) consists of the room which houses the *moi-muqaddas.* The room is heavily guarded, and very few people have access to the inside of the sanctum. Males can enter the inner room of the shrine, which consists of the sanctum and undertake prayers and supplications. The shrine extends to the right and left of this inner room, which is kept for offering *namaz* (obligatory prayers) and other supplications. The *hujr-e-khaas* is on the west side of this room. In *Hazratbal*, the *qibla* and the *hujr-e-khaas* are on the same side of the inner room. Consequently, when one stands towards the sanctum, it is also facing in the direction towards the *Kaaba*. However, since the room is situated on a particular side of the room, circumambulation is not possible. Men usually kiss the outer wall of the *hujr-e-khas*. This ritualistic kiss is called *bosa*. There is also a custom of tying a thread,[51] which men can undertake within this inner room (image 12). The women are not allowed inside and undertake their rituals in the outer precincts of the shrine.

[51] The thread is knotted at any place of the shrine with a specific wish and if the wish is granted, the knot is untied.

In all the shrines mentioned above, except *Hazratbal*, these commemorative events are celebrated on the *urs* of the primary saint. The literal meaning of *urs* is marriage, which is generally celebrated on the death anniversary of the saint as it symbolizes the union of the saint with the Almighty.[52] In the case of the Prophet (S.A.W.), their birth and death anniversaries are considered the same, i.e. 12th Rabi ul Awwal (third month of the Islamic calendar), which is celebrated as *milad* or *mawlid* (birth of the Prophet).

The celebration of *milad* is the biggest event of the Kashmiri Muslim calendar, except for two *Eid* festivals. The commemorative rituals start on the 1st Rabi ul Awwal and continue till the *milad* festivities on the 12th. From the 1st to the 10th, the dominant ritual usually consists of communal prayers, which consist of *khatam* (invocatory prayers), *naat khwani* (poems in praise of the Prophet) and *durood khwani* (salutations to the Prophet). These rituals are usually held between two obligatory prayers, generally *asr* (late afternoon prayers) and *maghrib* (evening prayers). While performing *khatam* (image 11), a pure rectangular cloth, generally white, is laid in front of the *hujr-e-khaas*. The *ulema*, *khadims*, *imams*, and other religious personalities sit around three sides of the cloth facing the sanctum. Different types of offerings at put on the cloth, which include *khujoor* (dates), *girdah* or *kulcha* (Kashmiri bakery items), *naabad* or *shirin* (small, condensed pieces of sugar), toffees, chocolates, a jug of water, or any other such offering. The leading priests in charge of the ceremony start reciting *khatam*, beginning from some verses of the Quran, followed by *mawlood* of the Prophet. This ceremony is later followed by *khatam* dedicated to other prominent Sufi saints, such as Sayyid Ali Hamdani, Shaykh Bahauddin Naqashband, Shaykh Hamza Makhdumi and Shaykh Nur ud-Din. Later, the offerings on the cloth, which is periodically blown on by the lead priests and, hence thought to be blessed, is distributed among the devotees as *tabarruk* (blessed offerings).

The night of the 12th of Rabbi ul Awwal[53] is observed as the *shab* (night-long prayers), wherein the devotees remain awake the whole night, supplicating and praying. The rituals are more or less the same as performed on the other ten days, with the noticeable change being that of the *waiz* (preacher), gives a *waaz* (sermon), mainly on the life and virtues of the Prophet (S.A.W.). The congregation offers the *fajr* (morning prayers) together, after which the public makes the first *deedar* (vision) of the *moi-muqaddas* (image 13). The *nishandeh* carries the *moi-muqaddas* and moves across the periphery of the shrine, displaying it at every edge, where a special

[52] Green, *Making Space*, p. 33-34.
[53] In Islamic worldview, the date changes from the evening rather than midnight. Hence, the night corresponding to a date is the one preceding the daytime of the said date.

booth[54] is constructed for the purpose. The *moi-muqaddas* is also shown after the *zuhr* (noon) and *asr* (afternoon) prayers. The display of the relic after the *asr* prayers culminates the commemoration of *milad.*

The special position of *Hazratbal* is also evident from the fact that the display of *moi-muqaddas* is not only done on the day of *milad*. It is also done on the next Friday after the *urs.* It is also done in commemoration of the *miraj* (journey to heaven) of the Prophet, as well on the *urs* of four *Rashidun* (rightful) *khalifas* of the Muslim community after the Prophet (S.A.W.). These are Abu Bakr, Umar ibn Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Talib (PBUT). Only the *deedar* ceremony after different prayers is performed during the *urs* of the four khalifas. On the occasion of *miraj* (the commemoration of the Prophet's journey to heaven), the night-long supplication is performed in addition to the *deedar*. The 11-day commemoration preceding the *milad* does not take place during these occasions.

Remembering the Founder: Urs of Sayyid Ali Hamdani

The *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* is a hospice without any tombs, and in the everyday life of Kashmiris, it behaves as a mosque to offer prayers. However, earlier, the *Khanqah* was also a shrine where religious teaching used to take place, with a *langar* and other facilities provided to the adherents.[55] The interior of the *Khanqah* consists of a large hall supported on wooden columns, with inscriptions calligraphically written on its walls. This hall is only accessible to the males, and there is a separate room for the females, accessible from the west end of the shrine. A few pictures are hanging around the room, supposedly used by Sayyid Ali Hamdani, depicting his mausoleum and grave at Khattalon in Tajikistan. The *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* in Tral also consists of a big room supported by cement columns, but it does not have any small rooms and has two floors, just like a typical Kashmiri mosque.

[54] In Kashmiri it is called a *dabbe* (box), and resembles a balcony.
[55] Hakim Sameer Hamdani, *The Syncretic Traditions of Islamic Religious Architecture of Kashmir*: *Early 14th–18th Century*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2021), p. 67.

Image 5: Inside *Dargah-Hazratbal*. © Flickr.com

Image 6: The interior wall of *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*. The small doors in the picture open up to small chambers used for meditation and religious practices. © Scroll.in

Image 7: The Interior of *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*. The area lit up at the right corner is the door to the enclosure that is considered to be used by Ali Hamdani himself. © Twitter.com

Image 8: The Interior of *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* at Tral. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin.

Image 9: The Mausoleum of Shaykh Nur ud-Din. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin.

Image 10: The *shruks* of Nur ud-Din adorn the wall of his mausoleum. ©Muhammad Mutahhar Amin.

The *urs* of *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* is observed on the 6th of Dhull Hajj (the 12th month of the Islamic calendar), which is the death anniversary of Sayyid Ali Hamdani. The festivities start on the 1st of the month, five days before the actual day of the *urs*. These preceding five days mostly mirror the rituals of the other places, with a necessary emphasis on the *Kubaraviyya silsila* and Sayyid Ali Hamdani. The emphasis is also on the recitation of *Awqad-e-Fattiya*. In *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, the *bosa* is usually done by the male devotees on the outer wall of the room, enclosing the place used by Sayyid Ali Hamdani. They can also tie the thread on the outer wall of the room itself. Similar to *Hazratbal*, the night of the 6th Dhul Hajj is spent in prayers and supplications by the devotees, with the *waaz* delivered by Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani, the traditional preachers of the shrine. Despite possessing certain relics, there is no *deedar* of these in the *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, and the *urs* is mainly celebrated by performing the rituals, in a more elaborate and continuous manner, done since the 1st Dhul Hajj. However, there are other *khanqah* dedicated to Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani, where the display of relics takes place. In *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* in Tral, the display of the *asa-e-sharief* of Hamdani takes place after *fajr*, *zuhr* and *asr* prayers.

The *nishandehi* of *asa*, at *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah*, follows the same pattern as that at *Hazratbal*. The *nishandehi* of the relics (image14) is done after the *fajr* (morning), *zuhr* (noon) and *asr* (afternoon) prayers. The *nishandeh* removes the *asa-e-sharief* from the safe and first displays it at the designated space at the east end. This is followed by the *deedar* at the north end and, finally, at the south end of the *khanqah.* Interestingly, while displaying the relic, the *durood* in praise of the Prophet is recited as opposed to any *manqabat* in praise of Sayyid Ali Hamdani. The exact process is repeated during each *nishandehi*. Later, the staff is dipped in water, and this consecrated water is distributed among the devotees. It is important to mention that this is only received by a select few who have access through the caretakers or managers of the shrine and is not distributed to the general public. Also, while the display of the relic at *Hazratbal* happens on several occasions, it happens only once at Tral.

The Repository of Kashmir: Urs of Shaykh ul-Alam

In shrines built around a tomb, such as *Chrar-i-Sharief*, the tomb functions as the *hujr-e-khas* of the shrine. It is also, architecturally, the centre of the shrine itself. The devotee sits in front of the *hujr-e-khaas*, praying for worldly or spiritual benefits. The devotee also undertakes circumambulation of the sanctum in the clockwise direction. It is important to note that this

access to *hujr-e-khaas* is provided exclusively to males, while female devotess are kept at a distance from it. At *Chrar-i-Sharief*, there is a separate room for them, from which the sanctum is visible. The male devotees carry out the ritual of the *bosa* (peck) on the walls of the sanctum sanctorum, while women carry out the ritual on the walls or the outer precincts of the shrine. The males can also tie the thread around the sanctum, while females do it in their designated room or any other place accessible to them, such as the outer wall of the shrine or one of its windows. Women can also give the thread to a *khadim* (managers) to tie it at the sanctum in lieu of a *nazrana*.[56]

In *Chrar-i-Sharief*, the *urs* is celebrated on the 26th of Safar (the second month of the Islamic calendar). The shrine follows similar rituals, where people sit around the sanctum and recite litanies such as *durood*, *manqabat*, *naat* and *khatmat*. As with other shrines, litanies of different Sufis belonging to different orders are also recited, with a particular focus on Shaykh Nur ud-Din. A distinctive ritual of the shrine is the ceremony of *poshak bandi* (Dress Change), during which the *chaddar* and other clothing covering the tomb of Shaykh Nur ud-Din is replaced with a new one. This ceremony usually carried out a day before the *shab* (night prayers) are undertaken as part of the *urs*. This is a very prominent ritual, and people from across the valley come and participate in it with fervour.

However, there has been a significant change in the rituals undertaken in this shrine after the incident of 1995. As mentioned earlier, all ten relics of the shrine were lost in the blaze of 1995. Before the loss of the *tabarukat*, these used to be exhibited at the shrine in the same manner as in other shrines. There was a special booth in the old shrine where the *nishadeh* used to display these relics. Just like the other shrines, this was a popuar and well attended event. However, since all of the *tabarukat* were lost in the blaze, the new shrine does not have any such provision of a room or booth in its architectural schema.

However, some traditional rituals have survived. The most notable and distinctive among them has been women-folk singing *wanwun* (folk songs) in praise of the saint during the *urs* at Chrar. The singing starts a few days before the actual *urs*, culminating on the day of the *urs*. This ritual is, unfortunately, on a decline, for reasons beyond the scope of this research. The ritual consisted of women singing in praise of the saint, just as women sing for a groom during a marriage ceremony. Since Shaykh Nur ud-Din is also the principal poet of the Kashmiri

[56] *Nazrana* is the offering given to traditional authorities by devotees, and range from cash, to other amenities such as rice, chickens or even a lamb.

language as well as closely associated with the hinterland, this ritual is an ode to the foundational part he has played in the Kashmiri society. In a situation where most rituals are undertaken under the supervision of men, this ritual is empowering for women, who use it to elucidate their devotion towards Nur ud-Din. This is reflected from the couplet generally sung by women which is:

Nuras cheinis eis heiz gai maeiti

Latiye aese vyan dedar hav

(Your divine light (nur)[57] has turned us ecstatic

Oh beloved, show us a glimpse of yours)[58]

In addition to this ritual led by the women, the other traditional rituals associated with the celebration of *urs* of other shrines are also performed here. However, the vital distinction at *Chrar* is the social profile of the devotees. While in the Srinagar-based shrines, devotees are mostly city-based and of non-peasant background, *Chrar* mostly has village folk and peasant class as its devotees. This social difference is also reflected in the market outside, where one finds traditional dry foods, traditional instruments, and other traditional arts, which have slowly vanished from city markets (image 15, 16, 17 and 18). As Shaykh Nur ud-Din himself is essential to the cultural consciousness of the Kashmiri folk, his shrine is playing the institutional role of providing space to local rituals, folk songs, cuisine and crafts to survive in this hugely globalised age. This distinction makes *Chrar-i-Sharief*, its rituals and traditions, crucial to the survival of a distinctive Kashmiri society.

The Interaction of the Temporal and the Spiritual: Rituals and the Socio-Political Efficacy

These rituals, in their very construction reflect a deeper purpose than mere theological or spiritual function. Architecturally speaking, the very display of these relics has political aspects attached to them. The very mode and process of the display is akin to *jharoka darshan*, a practice of pre-Islamic origins, continued by the Mughal emperors of India. During *jharoka*

[57] The literal meaning of *nur* is divine light, but in this case it also alludes to the saint, Shaykh Nur ud-Din.

[58] Gousia Khan, "Muslim Life and Rituals: A Case Study of Major Shrines of Kashmir," PhD thesis, (Department of History: University of Kashmir, 2007), p. 86.

darshan, the Mughal emperor used to appear before his common subjects on a balcony (*jharoka*). This practice sought to build a connection with the common subjects and was "also a way of abating rumours of sickness, fragility, coups, and deaths."[59] The display of relics in Kashmir is similarly enmeshed with royal imagery. The display takes place on a balcony, with the common masses below behaving as subjects with their hands folded or spread out in supplication. (image 13) The dress of a *nishandeh* (image 14) is akin to a royal robe, with a turban akin to the crown. Therefore, the ceremony reflects the spiritual and temporal authority of the saint through the relic associated with him, performed similarly to a political event.

Participation in these rituals also constructs a relation to the saint, his life, his actions and his historical role. For example, during the *urs* of Sayyid Ali Hamdani, his epithet of *Amir-e-Kabir* (The Great Commander) is frequently invoked both by the preachers and the adherents. Both these terms are political in their construction. *Amir*, as a term, has been historically used in the Islamic world to refer to individuals considered leaders of the community. The most famous use of this term is as *Amir-ul-Momineen* (Commander of the Faithful), which has been used to denote the highest spiritual and temporal authority of the Muslims, and was earlier used exclusively for the Caliph of Islam. In the case of Sayyid Ali Hamdani, this title is an apparent reference to his perceived role in the Islamization of Kashmir, as *Bani-e-Islami fil Kashmir* (the founder of Islam within Kashmir), another epithet that is frequently invoked in these ceremonies. The *Khanqah-e-Mo'allah* is fundamentally connected to the Islamic faith in Kashmir, considered to have "ushered the light of the Divine in the valley and a special site for a continuous connection to it."[60] *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* is central to the conception of Kashmir as a Muslim society, with it being the fountainhead of Islam in the region.

A similar phenomenon is observed in *Chrar-i-Sharief*, where the epithet of Shaykh Nur ud-Din, *Alamdar-e-Kashmir* (Flag-bearer of Kashmir), the 'pole' around which the community of Kashmir revolves, is regularly invoked. So is the frequent invocation of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) as the last messenger of Allah (*Khatim un Nabieen*), the grace for the entire world (*Rehmatal lil Aalemeen*). These two shrines also have historical and sociological functions, exceeding their theological efficacy. The shrine of *Chrar-i-Sharief*, and the personality of Shaykh Nur ud-Din entombed in it, functions as the principle pole around which the unique

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[59] Anjana Singh, "Connected by Emotions and Experiences Monarchs, Merchants, Mercenaries, and Migrants in the Early Modern World," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the World*, ed. Felipe Fernández-Armesto, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 306-338, p. 322.
[60] Nazir Naqshbandi, *Murabbi Shah-e-*Hamdan, (Srinagar: Ashraf Book Centre, 2016), p. 96.

Image 11: The Ritual of *Khatam* at *Chrar-i-Sharief*. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin.

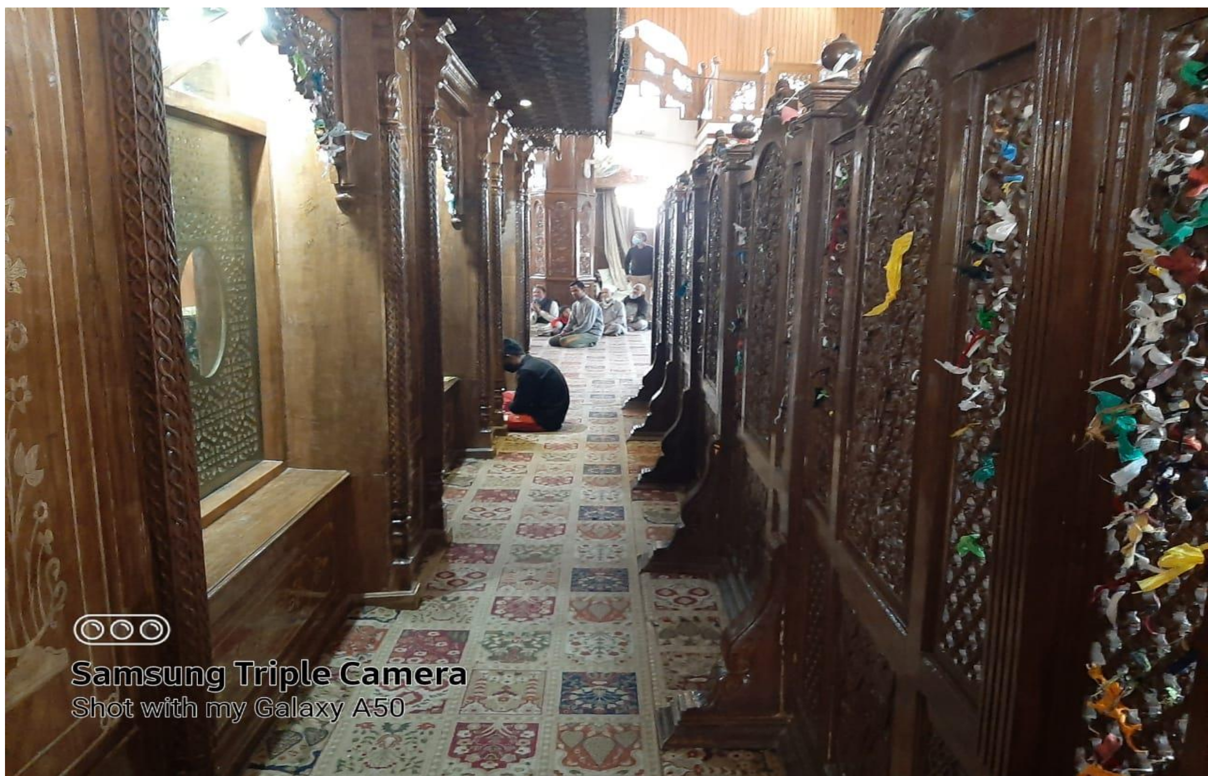

Image 12: Threads tied on the wooden partition seeking divine intervention at *Chrar-i-Sharief*. The right side of the partition in earmarked for ladies visiting the shrine. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin.

Image 13: The *Nishandehi* of *Moi-Muqaddas* at *Dargah-Hazratbal*. © Wikipedia.org

Image 14: The *Nishandehi* of the *Asa* of Ali Hamdani at *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* Tral. © Srinagar Mail.com

Image 15: A shop selling traditional food and other items outside the shrine at Chrar. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin.

Image 16: Traditional bakery items outside the shrine at Chrar. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin.

Image 17: Traditional food items sold outside the shrine at Chrar. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin.

Image 18: Traditional utensils and other items sold outside the shrine at Chrar. © Muhammad Mutahhar Amin.

cultural and social edifice of Kashmir and Kashmiris is constructed. The *Hazratbal*, on the other hand, is the fundamental 'physical' link to the personality of the Prophet and, through him, to Islamic history and outlook. It is also a pre-eminent social possession and the paramount spiritual asset of Kashmir. Thus, these shrines are not only religious spaces but also the architectural embodiments, signifying history, memory and identity of the people. Therefore, partaking in rituals at these shrines is more than a spiritual act. Through these rituals, a consistent recollection of the history of the community, its identity, and its sense of geographical, theological and political belonging. In addition to creating a personal connection, the invocations such as *myani Nabbiya* (O, my Prophet), *myani Ameerah* (O, my Commander), or *Myani Alamdare* (O, my Standar-Bearer) situate the adherent in a particular spatial, temporal and geographical setup, which condition its sense of self, its situatedness in history, and its hopes for the future based on that situatedness.

Further, participation in these rituals is also "an effective source of cohesion."[61] Such potential for cohesion is increased in Kashmir due to the coalescence of different Sufi orders across Kashmir. This coalescence is reflected in the supplication to almost all the prominent Sufi figures of Kashmir, through their respective *khatmat*, in almost every *urs* of the valley. As mentioned earlier, the *durood* is recited while relics are displayed in different shrines. During the commemoration of the *urs* in each of the aforementioned shrines, litanies of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani¸ Shaykh Bahuddin Naqshaband, Shaykh Hamza Makhdumi are recited, in addition to the litanies of Prophet (S.A.W.), Sayyid Ali Hamdani and Shaykh Nur ud-Din. This reality reflects that different Sufi orders have attained a harmonious coexistence, a significant departure from the competitive existence during the medieval times.[62] This harmony also reflects the success of a conscious effort of those Sufi saints who worked for inter-order harmony in Kashmir, as mentioned in a previous chapter.

While it has allowed a cross-*turuq* respect of saints and construction of a consolidated Sufi community, this has also made the Sufi doctrine of Kashmir susceptible to monolithic and singular construction. Such construction is subsequently used to obfuscate the doctrinal,

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[61] Daniel B. Lee, "Making it Look Right: Ritual as a Form of Communication," in *Understanding Religious Ritual: Theoretical Approaches and Innovations*, ed. John P Hoffman, (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 115-135, p. 126.

[62] Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nurbakshiya Between Medieval and Modern Islam*¸ (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), p. 212.

theological and political plurality within Sufism, employing this constructed singularity for political objectives. This facet will be dealt in a subsequent chapter.

Conclusion

The spaces of shrines fulfil various purposes within Kashmiri society. As a link to the saint entombed or an architectural embodiment of history, culture and memory of people, these shrines occupy a central position in the society of Kashmir. These three prominent shrines, *Hazratbal*, *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, and *Chrar-i-Sharief,* have been the axis around which the society of Kashmir has made sense of itself and continues to do so. The architectural history of each of these shrines is closely linked with the political conditions of the region, with emperors, administrators and even popular leaders undertaking the reconstruction of these shrines, to cement their connection to the shrine. In addition to attaining spiritual favour, this is also done to evoke popular support for the political leader.

This popular support is a function of the extreme reverence in which the people of Kashmir hold these shrines. In his book on Kashmir written in 1895, Walter Lawrence, a British tax official, considered *Dargah*, *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* and *Chrar-i-Sharief* as the first, second and fourth most revered shrines of the valley, respectively.[63] The reverence reflects the importance of these shrines in the Kashmir valley.

Each of these shrines possesses something fundamentally important to the people and society of Kashmir. The *Hazratbal* possesses the *moi-muqaddas*, the holy hair strand of the Prophet (S.A.W.), which makes *Dargah* the most sacred shrine of the valley. *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* is crucial to the Islamic imagination of the valley. Lastly, *Chrar-i-Sharief* is built around the tomb of Shaykh Nur ud-Din, the Sufi mystic called the "national saint of Kashmir." The famed values of brotherhood, tolerance and mutual respect, that are associated with Kashmir, principally emanate from his thought. Hence, he is foundational to the unique identity of Kashmiris across religions. Consequent to the reverence for each of these shrines, there is always a significant amount of people visiting these shrines. This number attains colossal proportions during special commemorative events like the *milad* or *urs*. These functions are marked by special rituals, which allow the people to imagine themselves as one community, continuing the link with the past and a journey towards the future together.

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[63] Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 292.

For these reasons, events and mobilizations, particularly political, associated with these shrines are not 'ordinary' but can potentially effect profound changes in the existing structure. The unique connection and communication between the divine and the mundane present within these shrines, bestows special force to political movements and strong legitimacy to political actors or ideologies. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the majority of structure-altering events or discursive reconstruction of political discourse in the political historiography of Kashmir over the last century, especially since the rise of popular politics, is linked to either one of these shrines. The most prominent of these events, mentioned in the next chapter, shaped political contours long after the culmination of each event, with specific consequences stretching to the present. This phenomenon will be detailed in the next chapter.

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Chapter V

Sites of Political (Re)Construction: Shrines in Contemporary Politics of Kashmir

The previous chapter elucidated the socio-cultural role of different prominent shrines in constructing and sustaining the communitarian and religious identity of ordinary Kashmiris. From history to culture to architecture to religion, these shrines fulfil the role of a repository of memory for common people, which lend substance to their notions of self and belonging. While it is efficacious as an analytical tool to separate socio-cultural from the political, in practice, these matters are intertwined, as exhibited in the political effect of cultural conceptions espoused by Sufi saints, discussed in a previous chapter. Similarly, shrines have fulfilled political roles, which are a necessary corollary to their socio-cultural and religious importance. Many incidents point to such political role of shrines in Kashmir.

On the 18th of July, 2021, the Mayor of Srinagar Municipal Corporation visited the *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*. As he was leaving, a woman openly sloganeered against the mayor in front of his entourage, which included security officials, castigating the mayor for his anti-Islam credentials. These charges were directed towards him for his pro-India stance, especially after the abrogation of article 370 by the Indian government, stripping the region of its special status, which allowed residential, occupational and electoral rights to non-locals for the first time since the accession of the region to the Indian Union. The woman also raised pro-freedom slogans, evoking the Islamic and religious nature of the *Khanqah*.[1]

Earlier, in 2018, Farooq Abdullah, son of Sheikh Abdullah, former Chief Minister and the President of the National Conference, was heckled by the devotees at the *Dargah-Hazratbal*, when the congregation had gathered to perform Eid prayers. The devotees became agitated as

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[1] Umar Butt, "Women got Angry after Mayor of Srinagar Junaid Azim Mattu visited Khanqah-e-Moula," 18th July, Facebook, (18th July, 2021), https://m.facebook.com/UmarButt22/videos/-woman-got-angry-after-mayor-of-srinagar-junaid-azim-mattu-visited-khanqah-e-mou/790975611782165/. (accessed 18th August, 2022)

Farooq Abdullah entered the premises and stood in the front row to offer his prayers.[2] The immediate context of this demonstration was the "chanting of Bharat Mata ki Jai (Hail Mother India) and Jai Hind (Hail India)" by Farooq Abdullah.[3] The former chant is considered to be un-Islamic by some, claiming the anthropomorphic nature of the chant as *shirk* (idolatry). The latter is purely political but unacceptable to a significant pro-freedom sentiment in the region. The people waved footwear at Farooq Abdullah, shouted "throw Farooq out," and raised pro-freedom slogans. Heckled, Farooq Abdullah had to leave without offering the prayers.[4]

Thus, shrines have been used in Kashmir as a space to make political points. This chapter, continuing the discussion from the previous one, brings out the moments during the history of Kashmir when shrines have been the primary spaces of political mobilisation and protest, which led to a significant political restructuring of the region. It projects shrines as more than just localised religious spaces or 'spiritual retreats,' as mentioned in the previous chapter. While the previous chapter focussed on the social and cultural projects that emerged out of the shrines, this chapter deals with the political role of these spaces. It brings forth specific instances from the contemporary political history of the valley, where shrines became cradles for foundational movements in the region. The success of these movements was influenced by the religious and sacred nature of these spaces, bestowing them with potency that shook the establishment.

The Centre of the Universe: Shrines as Axis Mundi

Shrines, more so in Kashmir, have fulfilled political roles, which are a necessary corollary to their socio-cultural and religious importance. Shrines have been a "means to assert both political and religious legitimacy," and through the control over its management, a way to exercise "control over the Muslim community itself."[5] As a space of mobilisation and protest, these are not like any other 'secular' space, since events associated seem to evince a more

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[2] M Saleem Pandit, "Heckled Farooq Abdullah forced to leave Eid namaz," *The Times of India*, (23rd August, 2018). https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/heckled-farooq-abdullah-forced-to-leave-eid-namaaz/articleshow/65508333.cms.
[3] "Booeed, Shammed, Dr Farooq Leaves Dargah Quickly After Nimaz" *Kashmir Life*, 22nd August 2018. https://kashmirlife.net/booed-shammed-dr-farooq-leaves-dargah-quickly-after-nimaaz-184011/
[4] Pandit, "Heckled Farooq," (23rd August, 2018).
[5] Chitralekha Zutshi, "Contesting Urban Space: Shrine Culture and the Discourse on Kashmiri Muslim Identities and Protest in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, ed. Chitralekha Zutshi, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 52.

robust response or protest than any other public space. A public space has been thought of as "a discursive space in which individual and groups associate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgement about."[6] In its liberal, bourgeoisie and ideal nature, it is "made up of private people gathered together as a public as a public and articulating the needs of a society with a state,"[7] and remains the source of that public opinion which must legitimate authority in any real democracy."[8] Thus, public sphere is a place of congregation without a meaning of its own. Also, its usual function is to legitimise the State. However, in Kashmir, shrines have been used to protest the very legitimacy of the state, as is discussed below. Also, a shrine is not an empty space. It is a consecrated space, with its own architectural, structural, theological and historical meaning, beyond a site for gathering. It is a site of reverence, divine communications, spiritual and material redressal, and hope among despair. As mentioned in the previous chapter, shrines are the "architectural embodiment of collective memory—served to bridge the past and present time of his followers, so creating the Muslim communities of memory."[9]

Thus, Sufi shrines are not a normal 'space' and their function in a society cannot be fully grasped within the notion of public sphere. Shrines are the 'centre' around which a community makes sense of itself. Their function is close to the function of, what Mircea Eliade calls, *axis mundi*. The Latin phrase *axis mundi* is used by Eliade to portray "the theme of heaven and earth connecting, a path of communication between the people and the divine, a place where the sacred enters the profane while maintaining a transcendent quality."[10] It, therefore, does not apply to every sacred space but those which are crucial to the understanding and conceptualisation of a community of itself. A shrine "which is more sacred than all others"[11] There are shrines which act for the community as the centre of the world, "a pivot around which the world turns."[12]These are special shrines "consecrated to connect the people with the

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[6] Gerard A. Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Sphere*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), p. 61.
[7] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*: *An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeoisie Society*, tr. Thomas Burger, (Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1991), p. 176.
[8] Paul Rutherford, *Endless Propaganda*: *The Advertising of Public Goods*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 18.
[9] Nile Green, *Making Space*: *Sufi and Settlers in Early Modern India*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. xiii-xiv
[10] Hannah Stoltenberg, "Sacred Movement: Connecting with the Divine Kathak as Axis Mundi." *DHARM* 1, (2019), 303–312, p. 303.
[11] Frank J Korom, "Of Navels and Mountains: A Further Enquiry into the History of an Idea,"*Asian Folklore Studies*, 1992, 51, no. 1 (1992), 103-125, p. 107.
[12] Anna Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 21.

Divine" and "manifest diverse symbolism and fulfil parallel functions."[13] Consequently, these shrines are "the spiritual and physical centres of their constituent communities, providing orientation in both literal and metaphysical sense."[14]

While Eliade based the conceptualisation of *axis mundi* on the shrine of Barabadur, a massive Buddhist monument located in Indonesia that contains over twelve hundred bas-relief images of the Buddha, it has over the years been used for understanding different aspects related to the Divine, from architecture to mythical personalities, from Sufi shrines to Kathak dance form. In its primary usage, however, it used to denote geographically fixed locations where communication takes place between the sacred and the profane realms. In Abrahamic faiths, it generally denotes places such as Jerusalem, Medina or Mecca where God directly communicated with his Prophet. Nonetheless, Eliade believed in the "multiplicity of centres"[15] in a given communitarian context.

In this conceptual scheme of *axis mundi*, the valley of Kashmir is an exciting area of interest. Since the population of Kashmir predominantly adheres to the Islamic faith, it is intimately connected to the Islamic 'centres' of Jerusalem, Medina and Mecca. However, the population has also elevated certain Sufi shrines to a status of cardinal importance in the communal life of the region *a la axis mundi*. The first possible reason for this is the nature of the advent of Islam in the valley. Islam did not arrive in the valley directly through the Arab world but was highly mediated by the Persian world and the consequent Sufi influence. While the concept of *tauhid* (oneness) and the personality of the Prophet is still highly significant, these concepts were affected by Sufi terminology and the reverence of other Sufi figures. Secondly, the physical and geographical distance from these Islamic centres, which was significantly accentuated by the lack of modern modes of transportation earlier, may have evoked the need for substitute centres for the Islamic community in the valley.

For these reasons, events and mobilisations, particularly political, associated with these shrines are not 'normal' but have effected profound changes in the existing political structure of the region. The unique connection and communication between the divine and the mundane within these shrines bestow a special nature to political movements and provide unique legitimacy to political actors or ideologies. It is, therefore, unsurprising that several structure-altering events or discursive reconstruction of political discourse in the political historiography of Kashmir

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[13] Stoltenberg, "Sacred Movement," p. 305.
[14] Anna Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred*, p. 21.
[15] Korom, "Of Navels and Mountains," p. 109.

over the last century, especially since the rise of popular politics emerged from one of these shrines. The events emanating from either *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, *Dargah-Hazratbal* or *Chrar-i-Sharief*, shaped political contours long after the culmination of each event.

Shrines as Sites of Divine Consecration and Memorialisation: *Khanqah-e-Mo'allah, Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya* and the 1931 Movement

Khanqah-e-Mo'allah has "been tied from its very inception to the religio-political nexus of the establishment, continuation and definition of Islam in Kashmir."[16] Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah called the *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* the religious and political centre" of Kashmiris,[17] while scholars have also called it the "seminary of the movement for freedom of Kashmir."[18] Almost every significant event during the early phases of the struggle against the Dogra monarchy was connected to the *Khanqah*. *Khanqah* was the centre of a secret meeting called to challenge the open letter written in favour of the Dogra ruler by some elite Kashmiri Muslims after the open criticism of his policies by Sir Albion Banerjee in 1929, an earlier Prime Minister of the state, in the Punjab press.[19] It was also *Khanqah*, where people raised black flags and banners against the discriminatory treatment meted out to Kashmiri Muslims at the hand of the Dogra state, when Lord Reading, the then Viceroy of India, visited Kashmir. During this protest, the Viceroy was also presented a memorandum detailing the abject conditions of Muslims by some prominent Muslims of the valley.[20]

However, the meeting that took place in June of 1931 at the Khanqah became particularly important in the annals of Kashmiri history. On this day, a massive gathering of Muslims converged in the *Khanqah*. The congregation was supposed to decide on the members of the Muslim delegation from Kashmir, which was supposed to meet the ruler. This delegation was then supposed to discuss the tense issues of desecration of the Quran and other communal acts committed by the Dogra state machinery in the early months of that year.[21] The meeting, in its composition and consequence, went far ahead of the objectives it was called for. One, it was for the first time that Moulvi Yusuf Shah had visited the *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*. As mentioned

[16] Zutshi, "Contesting Urban Space," p. 52.
[17] Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar* (Srinagar: Ali Mohammad and Sons, 1986), p. 242.
[18] Rasheed Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Kashmir*, vol. 1, (Srinagar: Muhafiz Publications, 1968), p. 92.
[19] Shabnam Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh-o-Tehreek-i-Hurriyat*, vol. 2, (Srinagar: Ali Muhammad and Sons Publishers, 2015), p. 13.
[20] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, p. 7-9.
[21] Taseer, *Tehreek*, p. 95.

earlier, *Khanqah* was the primary seat of the Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani, a traditional rival of the family of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. The rivalry among these two branches of the Mirwaiz family had been a reason for internal strife among the Muslim community of the region. Thus, the visit of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah to the *Khanqah* and his warm welcome by the Mirwaiz Hamdani, Moulvi Ahmad-ul-lah Hamdani, signalled a sense of unity among the Muslim community.[22] This unity, although short-lived, allowed the Muslim community of the valley to coalesce and decide on a common political path, which resulted in the formation of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1932.

The more meaningful event of that day of June 1931 happened after the conclusion of the meeting to finalise the delegation. It so happened that Pathan rose to give an extempore speech, exhorting the Kashmiri masses to rise against the autocratic rule of the Dogras, break the shackles of slavery and, pointing towards the imperial palace, "raze it to the ground, with plenty of stones and brickbats."[23] Abdul Qadeer, who worked for an English officer posted in Kashmir, was immediately arrested and charged with treason under the Ranbir Penal Code. Kashmiris erupted in support of Qadeer. Wary of such widespread support, evident by the gatherings outside the Court, his trial was shifted to the Central Jail premises where Qadeer was lodged. This step, however, did not deter Kashmiris from showing up on the next day of his trial, July 13th, 1931.

The large gathering outside the Central Jail premises wanted to witness the trial of Qadeer. The magistrate, however, disallowed any such participation. The gathering refused to disperse and camped outside the jail premises. As the time of noon prayer (*zuhr*) approached, the gathering converged to offer prayers. It was during this convergence that the governor ordered his troops to open fire on the protestors. While there are contrasting perceptions on what transpired, ranging from protestors being shot while giving out *azaan* (Muslim call for prayer)[24] to protestors indulging in stone pelting, even those who prefer the latter interpretation agree that bullets were fired without any proper warning.[25] Twenty-two Kashmiris lost their life, immortalised as martyrs ever since. The death of these martyrs brought into motion an organised resistance against the Dogra monarchy. Their martyrdom ignited the ordinary Kashmiris to rise against the life of penury they found themselves in due to the communal

[22] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, p. 33-34.
[23] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, p. 34.
[24] Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, p. 89.
[25] Prem Nath Bazaz, *The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003), p. 146.

policies of the Dogra regime. The martyrdom became a rallying point for Kashmiris and is generally considered the beginning of the freedom movement in Kashmir. Thus, it was the *Khanqah* where the foundations of the Kashmiri freedom movement, both institutional and organic, were laid down.

Naturally, the *Khanqah* remained associated with the struggle it helped ignite. In addition to the use of this Khanqah by Sheikh Abdullah, discussed in the last chapter of this thesis, the shrine remained a platform for numerous political activities throughout the movement. From speeches on arrests and detentions of leaders[26] to protest of the demotion of a Muslim superintendent of police because of his association with the Muslim Conference[27] to being the centre of the war council, a guerrilla movement started by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad,[28] the space of the *Khanqah* remained inseparable from the popular politics. Even the civil disobedience movement started by the Muslim Conference in 1934 was run from the annals of the *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*.[29] The stage of *Khanqah* continued to remain political even after 1947, as evident from the intelligence reports submitted by the local police in the valley to the authorities that mention the use of the *Khanqah* for political purposes, including political speeches on its platform.[30]

Thus, it was the *Khanqah* that ignited the desire for freedom in ordinary Kashmiris. The mobilisations emerging out of its sacred precincts laid the ground for substantial change in the political structure of the valley. The personalities and parties that emerged from the movements, especially that of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the National Conference, continued to exert influence over the political contours of the region. The precincts of the *Khanqah* accrued to the movement an aspect of 'sacrality' which imbibed the movement with religious fervour and added a layer of divine persuasion to undertake the movement for the general population.[31]

While *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* was the birthplace of the 1931 movement, *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya* became the everlasting memorial of the same. The burial of the 1931 martyrs who fell to the Dogra bullets was done in the precincts of the *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya.* This

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[26] Taseer, *Tehreek*, p. 170-171.
[27] Taseer, *Tehreek*, p. 300.
[28] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, p. 180-188.
[29] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, p. 174-177.
[30] Intelligence Diary, (September, 1952), IS-76-A/52, Reg 8 (111), Box no, 55. Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.
[31] Nazir Naqshbandi, *Murabbiy-e-Kashmir Shah-i-Hamadan*, (Srinagar: Ashraf Book Centre, 2016), p. 29-30.

was done on the advice of Khawaja Noor Shah Naqshbandi,[32] who was an eminent personality and an important part of the movement. This act made the *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya* pivotal to the political history of the region. 13th July became an added day of commemoration, where people from all walks of life would descend on the shrine commemorating these martyrs. Thus, *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiya* became a quintessential *lieux de memoir*, a subject of periodic commemoration and memorialisation.

After gaining power through the region's accession with India, Sheikh Abdullah, a product of the 1931 movement, carefully crafted the region's history to his benefit, including the events of 13th July. The day was 'officially' declared as Martyrs' day. It was consecrated as a public holiday, with senior functionaries of the government supposed to lay floral tributes and the police presenting a guard of honour. This event was a means for Abdullah to evoke a 'political' genealogy with the martyrs and, since Sheikh Abdullah was in power, a celebration of the fulfilment of their goals. The continuation of this celebration, even after Abdullah was deposed and incarcerated in 1953, portrays that the efficacy of this event transcended the personal goals of Abdullah. It became a means to justify a particular strand of political opinion that supported the 'limited' accession of Kashmir to India under the 'guaranteed' autonomy. The celebrations also involved huge processions from different parts of the city, converging on the shrine. This 'popular' commemoration only continued until 1975.[33] Over the years, the public aspect of celebration became difficult as the widespread resentment against Indian rule became more pronounced. This development forced the celebrations to become a closely guarded event, fairly removed from public involvement.

This structure continued till 2019. After the abrogation of article 370 and the bifurcation of the region into two centrally-governed Union Territories, the administration removed 13th July from the list of holidays and rescinded the official commemoration. In 2022, the administration announced a public holiday on the birthday of Hari Singh, the Dogra ruler, whose administration was responsible for killing these martyrs.[34] This change is seen as an attempt to

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[32] Dr Ashraf Zain-ul-Abideen, "July 13, 1931: A History of Martyrs' Day," *Kashmir Reader*, (17th July, 2020). https://kashmirreader.com/2020/07/17/july-13-1931-a-history-of-martyrs-day/

[33] Ipsita Chakravarty, "Who Owns the Memories of July 13, 1931? In J&K, it is a Divisive Question," *Scroll*, (14th July, 2015). https://scroll.in/article/741013/who-owns-the-memories-of-july-13-1931-in-j-k-it-is-a-divisive-question

[34] Peerzada Ashiq, "Dogra Monarch Maharaja Hari Singh's Birthday Celebrated with Fervour in Jammu," *The Hindu*, (23rd September, 2022). https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/celebrations-in-jammu-as-jk-observes-holiday-on-dogra-monarchs-anniversary-after-75-years/article65926345.ece

rewrite history and impose Hindutva's perspective on the history of Kashmir, the ideological project of the current dispensation in power in India. However, the administration had to lock down the *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiya* on 13th July in all the subsequent years since 2019, disallowing any commemoration, which shows that these martyrs still hold importance in the popular imagination of Kashmir.

***Dargah-Hazratbal* as the site of divine retribution: The Holy Relic Agitation**

The *Dargah-Hazratbal,* on the other hand, became the cradle for foundational political movements after 1947 that profoundly impacted the politics of the region. While the *Dargah-Hazratbal* has remained a central axis of widespread reverence and social community since its inception, it is the events occurring in the latter half of the twentieth century that evince the profound political potential that events associated with this shrine have. The first event occurred in 1963 when the *moi-e-muqaddas* (holy strand) was reportedly stolen from the Hazratbal Srinagar shrine. The relic, considered the holiest possession of Kashmir, was stolen from its repository at the shrine of *Dargah-Hazratbal*, during the intervening night of 26 and 27 December, 1963. The wooden box that contained the relic was found out of its regular shelf, which had been forcefully opened. The relic was last seen at the *deedar*, which was held on the 20th of December 1963, after which Abdul Rahim Banday, the *mutawalli* (a senior custodian of the shrine), had put the relic back in its place.[35]

The news about the theft of *moi-muqaddas* spread across the Kashmir valley like wildfire. Although this time is considered the peak winter season of the valley, during which temperatures hardly reach the positive side of a Celsius scale, large crowds started collecting at the shrine in the early morning of 27th December.[36] The valley observed spontaneous *hartal* (strike), and by the afternoon, thousands of people were seen marching on the streets of Srinagar, protesting against the theft of the relic and its immediate restoration. It was evident that the sentiments of the population of Kashmir "had been deeply hurt due to the sacrilege committed in respect of something, which they held to be highly sacred and dearer than even their lives."[37]

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[35] B. N. Mullick, *Kashmir: My Years with Nehru*, (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1971), p. 119.
[36] Inder Malhotra, "Hanging by a Hair," *The Indian Express*, 09 August 2010.
[37] Mullick, *Kashmir*, p. 120.

The *hartal* and the protests intensified the next day, i.e. 28th December 1963. All business, commercial and governmental establishments were closed, with people marching in different parts of the city and other areas of Kashmir, raising slogans and waving black flags. This *jaloos* (procession) started to converge towards the city centre, Lal Chowk, where the ruling elite felt the extent of anger. At the Residency road, near Lal Chowk, the *jaloos* (march) was intercepted by Bakshi Abdul Rashid. Bakshi Abdul Rashid was the General Secretary of the ruling National Conference government and the cousin of the former Prime Minister of the state, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. He arrived on the scene in his blue Chevrolet, asking the protesters to disperse and not create any trouble. However, his act proved counter-productive, with the crowd directing their ire towards Bakshi Abdul Rashid. The protestors started throwing *kangris* (portable fire pots used to keep warm in the Kashmiri winter) at him while overturning and, later, burning his car. Although he escaped the scene, this spark galvanised the public against the Bakshi family, which ruled the region and were considered immensely corrupt.[38] The family was termed responsible for the theft and became the subject of popular anger, which included burning down two movie theatres, Amreesh and Regal, owned by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's brother, Bakshi Abdul Majeed.[39]

The ire was also directed to the institution represented by the Bakshi family, the Indian State and its establishments. The protesters tried to attack the All India Radio Station in Srinagar, which was prevented by the intervention of the police.[40] The station was generally seen as an instrument of false propaganda and, thus, an object of public ire.[41] The attack on the station may have been spontaneous, but it could be suggestive of an emerging consciousness among the protestors that the local state, at the behest of the powers in India, may have carried out the theft. In the opinion of an officer, the excited crowd carried out the attack because, according to them, the station did not give a correct account of the previous evening's happenings.[42]

The *hartal* continued unabated over the next few days. Multiple gatherings of protestors, including from other parts of the valley, started converging at *Hazratbal*, demanding the recovery of the *moi-e-muqaddas*. The protests also exhibited communal harmony, with Pandits

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[38] Sanaullah Bhat, *Kashmir: 1947 Se 1977 Tak*, (Srinagar, Ali Mohammad and Sons, 2014), p. 89.
[39] Praveen Swami, 2007. India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad: The Covert War in Kashmir, 1947-2004. (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 42.
[40] Mullick, *Kashmir*, p. 122.
[41] Bhat, *Kashmir*, p. 89.
[42] Mullick, *Kashmir*, p. 122.

and Sikhs also out on the roads to provide moral support to the Muslim protestors.[43] State also tried to repress the protests with "the Armed Police reinforcements firing at protestors at three places around the Lal Chowk area, killing a few people and injuring a dozen more."[44] The Indian state was concerned that "the entire Kashmir valley was breaking up and something had to be done within a week; otherwise, there was every danger of a conflagration with Pakistan over this." Pakistan Radio, on its part, was loudly accusing the Indian government of having engineered the theft to suppress the Muslims of the valley, which concerned the Indian State, as "there were people in Kashmir who were moved by this form of propaganda."[45] The extent of the protests can be gauged from the following account:

> Everything was closed: offices, schools, shops, cinemas, restaurants. Langars (eating places) had been set up at various places in the town. Large crowds were coming from villages carrying food, bedding and even fuel for warming their bodies. All the main roads were blocked by thousands of people. The smallest procession was at least a mile long covering the entire width of the road including the footpaths. The temperature was ranging at night to several degrees below the freezing point. The sun never came out and it was raining and snowing all the time. All play grounds and other places of meetings were frozen with several inches of solid ice on the surface, yet three public meetings had collected between fifty to seventy thousand people. The Ministers were virtual prisoners confined to their houses with police guards protecting them. All public institutions and offices were guarded by armed police. A vehicle, to be able to come out on the public roads, had to carry a black flag. Most of the [government] staff were also amongst the [protesting] crowd. Small periods were regulated when groceries and vegetable shops could be opened for the convenience of the people. Every wall of the city was full of posters, and every house had a black flag.[46]

The situation was extremely worrisome for the Indian State, as the local executive arm, led by the Prime Minister of Kashmir, Khawaja Shams ud-Din, was completely paralysed and unable to play any role in mitigating the crisis. The Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, deputed Lal Bahadur Shastri, a Union Minister without any portfolio to Kashmir, to take care of the situation. The administrative officers of the state also started reporting to the Home Secretary of India, Mr Viswanathan.[47] The religious sphere had decisively affected the political sphere.

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[43] G.N Gauhar, *Hazratbal: The Central Stage of Kashmiri Politics*, (New Delhi: Virgo Publication, 1998), p. 94.
[44] Idrees Kanth, "The Social and Political Life of a Relic: The Episode of the Moi-e-Muqaddas Theft in Kashmir, 1963-1964," *Himalaya*, 38, no. 2 (2018), p. 67.
[45] Mullick, *Kashmir*, p. 123.
[46] Mullick, *Kashmir*, p. 129.
[47] Bhat, *Kashmir*, p. 91-92.

The contours of this issue underwent a decisive shift on 4th January 1964, when in a short announcement broadcasted at 6:15 pm by Radio Kashmir, it was declared that the *moi-muqaddas* had been recovered. The announcement was concise: "Today, in the afternoon of 4 January, the *moi-e-mubarak* was found inside the Hazratbal mosque. Its authenticity has been attested by the concerned individuals. Further investigation is on in the matter."[48] This message was also broadcasted repeatedly by All India Radio. However, the manner and events of the recovery were shrouded in mystery and continue to remain so.[49] The nature of the recovery led to doubts about the authenticity of the relic, resulting in agitation and protests continuing as usual.[50] Although initially, the government tried to side-step the question and refused to submit the relic to a test of authentication, it had to relent following vociferous public demand. Finally, a group of religious individuals, led by Sufi saint Syed Meerak Shah, authenticated the relic under a controlled and managed atmosphere.[51]

Even after the said authentication, the protests did not fizzle out but continued due to the aforementioned doubts and covertness of the recovery. Even during the earlier phase of the movement, when the relic was still missing, the protestors simultaneously shouted slogans reiterating political demands. Interestingly, the protestors of the *moi-muqaddas* movement are credited with the coinage of a famous slogan which has since been prominent within Kashmir:

Yeh mulk hamara hai

Iska faisla hum karenge

[This is our mulk;

we shall decide its future][52]

The centrality of this movement, and consequently that of *Hazratbal,* can be gauged by the fact that Bhartiya Jana Sangh, the former version of the current ruling party of India, the Bharatiya

[48] Kanth, "The Social and Political Life," p. 68.
[49] Muhammad Ishaq Khan, "The Significance of the Dargah of Hazratbal in the Socio-Religious and Political Life of Kashmiri Muslim," in *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character, History, and Significance*, New Hardback ed., ed. Christian W. Troll, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 185.
[50] Bhat, *Kashmir*, p. 95.
[51] Kanth, "The Social and Political Life," p. 68-71.
[52] Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 96.

Janata Party (BJP), used the holy relic agitation and its mismanagement to criticise the state government and propagate its political message.[53]

The metamorphosis of a religious issue into a political one even made the Indian state rethink its political approach in the region. The Indian government, especially Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, were deeply perplexed by the extent and strength of the movement. In an address to the Emergency Cabinet Committee, Nehru stated:

> "even after fifteen years of association, if Kashmir still remained in such an unstable state that even on a simple issue like the moi-e-muqaddas, the people could be so provoked as to rise in the defiance of the government, then a new approach had to be made, and a radical change in our thinking about Kashmir was called for."[54]

Thus, a law and order issue concerning a religious place forced the political establishment to enforce changes. The first consequence of this new approach suggested by Nehru was the removal of Khawaja Shams ud-Din as the Prime Minister of the region with Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq. The removal of Shams ud-Din was more targeted towards his patron, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, who had used Shams ud-Din to keep his grip on power after his removal through the Kamraj plan. At the same meeting, Pandit Nehru suggested the release of Sheikh Abdullah, who was incarcerated in the Kashmir Conspiracy Case since 1958, as he believed Abdullah "still had a strong hold on the valley."[55]

The decision to release Sheikh Abdullah was partly also the result of the demand for his release by the Action Committee that was set up to coordinate the protests.[56] The Committee was a union of otherwise oppositional figures: Farooq Abdullah and Maulana Masoodi, the supporters of Sheikh Abdullah, Mirwaiz Farooq, the eminent religious cleric and Ghulam Mohiuddin Karra, who were pro-Pakistan, the Shia leader Abbas Ansari, and even Peer Saad ud-Din Tarbali, the state President of the Jamat-i-Islami, all of whom apparently advocated a popular referendum as a means to resolve the impending political issue of Kashmir. This rare demonstration of unity following the theft of the relic only reveals the significance of the relic and its authority to bring together different leaders and sections of the community under a

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[53] Vadiye Kashmir Mein Bharatiya Jan Sangh ki Sargarmiyan Aur Andeshaye Dur Daraz: Firka Parasti Ke Badshah Secularism Ka Behroop Bhar Kar Vadiye Kashmir Ki Fiza Masmoom Karna Chahte hain," *Aaeena*, (1st July, 1964), p. 8.
[54] Mullick, *Kashmir*, p. 172.
[55] Mullick, *Kashmir*, p. 172.
[56] Khan, "The Significance," p. 184.

single platform.[57] It was the first time that such kind of unity was witnessed among the Muslims of the region since the show of unity at the *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla i*n 1931. However, it was just as short-lived. Mirwaiz Farooq, who was chosen to lead the Action Committee after enhancing his stature and political hold over the masses, chose to take a different route. He formed the Awami Action Committee, a political organisation to work for the settlement of the Kashmiri dispute. This party is now headed by his son Moulvi Umar Farooq.

The release of Sheikh Abdullah was also politically momentous. After his release, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad returned the control of the *Idara Awqaf Islamia* to him. Consequently, it had a pronounced impact on the popularity of the Plebiscite Front, the party founded and run by Abdullah loyalists after his removal from the government and the National Conference. The Front used the resources of the *Awqaf*, allegedly even taking a share from the donations meant for the reconstruction of *Hazratbal*, to promote and propagate its political objectives. This connection with the shrine management substantially increased the popularity of the Front, and the party became an eyesore for the Central government. The enormity of the concern is reflected in the fact that the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, herself, had to write to the Chief Minister of the state in 1971 asking him to check the use of the *Awqaf* property by the Plebiscite Front.[58] Eventually, just before the state elections, in all probability due to the popularity of the Plebiscite Front, the Indian government banned the organisation and arrested its leaders, while Sheikh Abdullah was exiled from the region.[59] However, within a few years, Sheikh Abdullah made peace with the Indian leadership and returned to power through the Indira-Abdullah accord of 1975. A consequence of this treaty was the dismantling of the Plebiscite Front.

Nonetheless, the events reflect the centrality of *Hazratbal* in the everyday life of common Kashmiris, whether religious, social or political. A law and order situation effectively turned into a movement against the State, reconstructing the political landscape of the region. The powerful, Bakshis and the National Conference were thrown into disarray and oblivion, while Sheikh Abdullah and Plebiscite Front came back into the limelight. Many new political leaders also came to the forefront. For the local population, however, these ground-breaking changes were a result of the divine wrath that had befallen on the powerful for desecrating the most

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[57] David E. Lockwood, "Sheikh Abdullah and the Politics of Kashmir." *Asian Survey*, 9, no.5, (1969): 382-396, p. 387.

[58] Letter of Indira Gandhi to G. M. Sadiq, (16th October, 1970), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.

[59] Bhat, *Kashmir*, p. 169.

sacred shrine of the valley. For example, the death of Nehru, in July 1964 was attributed to the desecration of the Holy Relic, with the ordinary mind "convinced about his involvement."[60] The phrase that was popular on his death in Kashmir was:

Kedes Dargahan Tsend (The *Dargah* has eliminated him.)[61]

This phrase reflects the belief of the common masses in the power of intercession the divine possesses, even in the political realm. In this instance, it was the divine retribution on the political elite, actualised either through death, in the case of Nehru, or through the loss of status, in the case of Bakshis. Therefore, religion and politics are intertwined in the popular psyche, with the former holding sway over the latter.

Shrines as Spaces of Political Legitimacy: Sieges of *Hazratbal* and *Chrar-i-Sharief*

The emergence and entrenchment of the All Parties *Hurriyat* Conference as a political force within Kashmir is closely linked to the military siege of the *Hazratbal* in 1993 and the siege of the entire Chrar town, built around the shrine of Nund Reshi. Although the siege of *Hazratbal* and *Chrar* had divergent outcomes, with the shrine of *Chrar* being destroyed, both became politically charged instances with profound political outcomes. Due to the immense reverence that the people of Kashmir have for these shrines, their siege became a reason for genuine public concern and outcry. The All Parties *Hurriyat* Conference employed this political mobilisation emerging out of this public anger to construct legitimacy and nullify dissent over its role and functioning, strengthening its political position.

The siege of *Hazratbal* started during the intervening night of the 15th and 16th of October in 1993. The Border Security Forces first undertook the cordon of the shrine complex, but later, the control was transferred to the Army.[62] The cordon was laid due to the presence of militants in the shrine. However, many civilians were also trapped within the shrine premises. Considering the aftermath of the 1963 Holy Relic agitation and Operation Blue Star at the Golden Temple in 1984, the State trod cautiously. Mediation was attempted under the leadership of the then Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir, Wajahat Habibullah. The

[60] Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 104.
[61] Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 104.
[62] "Hazratbal Area ka Muhasara: Fauj Ne Muqadds Ziyarat ko Ghere Mein Le Liya," *Srinagar Times*, (16th October, 1993), p. 1.

negotiations went on for almost a month, ending in the resolution of the siege on the 16th of November.

The All Party *Hurriyat* Conference (APHC), also called just *Hurriyat*, an amalgamation of different pro-independence political and religious parties, was formed just a few months before the *Hazratbal* siege on 31st July 1993. It was a political platform to provide a unified platform to the resistance leadership under the chairmanship of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, then the 19-year-old chief cleric of the Jamia Masjid. The public space at that moment was occupied mainly by militant groups fighting an armed struggle against Indian rule. The *Hurriyat* Conference sought to capture the political space left open and work as a platform, mediator and custodian of the freedom movement. The *Hazratbal* siege, in effect, was the first significant challenge it faced to put its organisational objectives into practice.

Immediately after the siege, the *Hurriyat* Conference came into action, calling for protests and marches against the government.[63] Later, at the end of October, two prominent leaders of the *Hurriyat* Conference, through two of its leaders, Moulvi Abbas Ansari and Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat agreed to act as mediators to convince the militants to surrender and vacate the shrine. As per one report, they did it as "people's representatives."[64] However, during this phase, it was clear that the *Hurriyat* Conference did not have unquestioned authority or legitimacy and was not internally cohesive. While Prof. Bhat and Moulvi Ansari were supporting mediation, two of their colleagues, Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Abdul Gani Lone, were arrested and tortured in custody.[65] Also, there were daily news briefings of militant leaders and other political groups criticising the conduct of the Conference and asking it to be more proactive. While Al-Barq called on the *Hurriyat* Conference to give "a more effective programme,"[66] Jamiat ul-Tulba cautioned that the platform of Hurriyat Conference should be used in the right way."[67] *Tehreek-*

[63] "Hazratbak ka Muhasara Jaari, Baat Cheet Main Tatul Barkarar: Protest Jalse Jaari," *Srinagar Times*, (18th October, 1993), p. 1.
[64] "Hurriyat Conference Ne Salasi Ki Wajoohat Bayan Ki: Hum Awam Ke Numaende Ki Tor Par Ye Farz Nibha Rahe Hain," *Srinagar Times*, (30th October, 1993), p. 1.
[65] "Abdul Gani Lone Aur Geelani Sahab Azaab Mein Mubtala: Tihar Jail Mein Unko Azeeyatein Pahunchayi Jaati Hain," *Srinagar Times*, (7th November, 1993), p. 3.
[66] Kashmir ke Ulema Dargah Ke Mamle Main Apni Zimmadari Nibhayein: Hurriyat Conference Awam ko Muassar Program De," *Srinagar Times*, (7th November, 1993). P. 1.
[67] "Hurriyat Conference ka Platform Saheeh Tor pe Istimaal Kiya Jaana Chahiye: Jamiat ul –Talba," *Srinagar Times*, (7th November, 1993), p.1.

e-Mujahideen suggested that the Conference should "understand the conspiracy of the State properly and move with caution."[68]

There were messages of support for the Hurriyat Conference during this phase, but they were just a few, coming from religious organisations such as Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam.[69] Huriyyat Conference was flayed for inaction, with internal squabbles coming to the fore.[70] It was claimed that the decision to act as mediators was an individual choice of Prof. Bhat and Moulvi Ansari, which they arrived at without taking into confidence the leaders of the Hurriyat Conference.[71] Finally, under considerable pressure from public and the militant groups, Hurriyat leaders withdrew from these negotiations.[72] The sequence of these events reflect that the leadership status of the Hurriyat Conference was not unquestioned, and it still had significant internal fissures.

However, close to the end of the siege, there was a considerable enhancement in the support, legitimacy and preparedness of the *Hurriyat* Conference. It started with the endorsement of the decision taken by the *Hurriyat* Conference to distance itself from the mediation process by the largest guerrilla group of Kashmir-the *Hizb-ul-Mujahideen*.[73] This endorsement by the Hizb ul- Mujahideen seems to have soured up support for the Hurriyat Conference. This is evident from the subsequent support received by it by different organisations, including from guerrilla organisations. Organisations proclaimed that the foundation of the *Hurriyat* Conference is "beneficial to the movement,"[74] and even when some other organisations appealed for course correction from the *Hurriyat*, it was accompanied by recognising the "positive role played by the *Hurriyat* Conference during the siege."[75]

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[68] "Dargah Sharief Ka Taweel Muhasara Ek Badi Saazish Hai: Hurriyat Conference Ke Leader Ehtiyat Se Kaam Lein," *Srinagar Times*, (11th November 1993), p. 1.
[69] "Hurriyat Conference to Tawun Dein: Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam ka Bayaan" *Srinagar Times*, (9th November, 1993), p. 1.
[70] "Ek Moad, Ek Muqaam," *Srinagar Times*, (7th November, 1993), p. 2.
[71] "Ek Moad, Ek Muqaam," p. 2.
[72] "Hurriyat Conference La-Hasil Muzakarat Mein Waqt Zaya Nahi Karna Chahti: DG Police Sabharwal Ka Kehan Hai ki Militenton Ke Saath Baat Cheet Ke Darwaze Barabar Khule Hain," *Srinagar Times*, (12th November, 1993), p. 1.
[73] "Hurriyat Conference ka Salisi ka Role Taraq Karne Ka Faisla Mustehsin, Awam Is Ki Hidayaton Pe Sakthi se Amal Kare: Hizb ul-Mujahideen," *Srinagar Times*, 13th November 1993, p.1.
[74] "Kul Jamati Hurriyat Conference ka Wujood Tehreek ke Mafaad Mein: Taki Koi Farooq Kar Ya Najeeb Paida Na Ho," *Srinagar Times*, (24th November, 1993), p. 1.
[75] "Hurriyat Conference Operation Hijrat ki Call Wapis Lein: World Kashmir Freedom Movement ke Sadr Doctor ki Appeal," *Srinagar Times*, (28th November, 1993), p. 1.

The extension of the restrictions imposed by the authorities on the movement and prayers in the shrine complex, even after the militants had surrendered, proved helpful for the *Hurriyat*. It gave enough time to the *Hurriyat* Conference to establish its space in the public memory, by supervising the resumption of religious activities at the shrine, reflecting a neat coalescence of religion and politics in its practice. The *Hurriyat* Conference proclaimed that any prayers would not be undertaken in the shrine unless army bunkers were not withdrawn from the shrine complex and the shrine was ritualistically cleaned.[76] The very next day, the Muslim Auqaf Trust[77] echoed the same demand almost verbatim, demanding that the pre-siege position be restored in the complex.[78] This step by the Trust enhanced the authority of the *Hurriyat* Conference, providing it with institutional legitimacy to its demand. The *Hurriyat* Conference also used the issue of the purification of the shrine to bolster its legitimacy within the Kashmiri political structure, which it also organised in collaboration with the Muslim Auqaf Trust.[79] This stage played a much more significant role in the acceptance of the *Hurriyat* Conference, with different opinions siding with it. Different social, religious, and guerrilla actors put their weight behind *Hurriyat*, accruing to it specific degree of legitimacy which seemed to escape it at the beginning of the siege. [80] This was buoyed by the fact that *Dargah-Hazratbal* is the pre-eminent shrine of the valley, a site of deep reverence of its people. At the end of 1993, Hurriyat Conference had strengthened its place as a representative of the popular voice, with militant outfits asking it to "ensure participation of Kashmiris in the proposed dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir."[81] This statement indicates that the *Hurriyat* Conference had emerged as a pole of the separatist politics, effecting a significant restructuring of the local political structure.

This restructuring of Kashmiri politics is also reflected upon by Wajahat Habibullah, the bureaucrat who was the representative of the administration during the mediation process, but

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[76] "Bankuron Ko Hatane Ki Surat Mein Hi Dargah Mein Namz Padhi Jayegi: Kul Jamati Hurriyat Conference ka Elan, Metal Detectors Ki Tanseeb par Awami Haqon Mein Hairat," *Srinagar Times*, (19th November, 1993), p. 1.
[77] The Muslim Auqaf Trust was an autonomous Trust that managed prominent shrines in the valley. Its history is discussed in detail in the next chapter.
[78] "Hazratbal Mein Muhasare ke Pehle Ke Halaat Bahaal Kiye Jayein: Bunkaron Ke Hataye Jane Tak Dargah Mein koi Mazhabi Taqreeb Nai Hogi," *Srinagar Times*, (20th November, 1993, p. 1.
[79] Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 192.
[80] "7 December ki Hazratbal Call ko Kamyab Banao: Gharon ko Taale Laga Kar Kafan Bar-Dosh Dargah Pahunch Jao, Al-Umar Mujahideen," *Srinagar Times*, (5th December, 1993), p. 1.
[81] "Kashmiri Awam ke Bagair Mujwaza Baat Cheet Be-Mani Hogi: Hurriyat Conference is Bare Main Apna Kirdar Ada Kare," *Srinagar Times*, (2nd December, 1993), p. 1 and 3.

had to give up the role following a serious accident.[82] Habibullah claims that after the siege, "large sections of Kashmiri youth, particularly the educated and the politically vocal, withdrew their support of violence as the means of redress, and turned towards political agitation,"[83] in a veiled reference towards the *Hurriyat* Conference. Thus, the All Party *Hurriyat* Conference was able to use the siege of Hazratbal as a stepping stone in projecting *Hurriyat* as the pro-independence pole in the region.

While the siege of *Dargah-Hazratbal* was a stepping stone in the emergence of *Hurriyat*, the tragedy of *Chrar* in 1995 provided *Hurriyat* Conference with a much needed impetus during a tumultuous phase of Kashmiri politics. The incident at *Chrar-i-Sharief* was a tragedy. The siege was put around the whole township of *Chrar-i-Sharief* on the 8th of March in 1995 and went on for more than two months, with the destruction of the area taking place between the 9th and 11th of May. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this siege ended up in the complete destruction of the shrine of Sheikh Nur ud-Din, including the relics and manuscripts present in it. The siege also resulted in the gutting down of around a thousand residential houses and business establishments around the shrine, causing immense mental, emotional, economic, and spiritual loss to the civilian population. The siege was laid around the town to apprehend Major Mast Gul, a foreign militant operating in the area. Although the whole town was reduced to ruins, Mast Gul could escape and cross back to Pakistan, resulting in the operation being a massive disaster.

As opposed to their response to the *Hazratbal* siege, the response of the *Hurriyat* Conference was much more systematic and robust throughout the Chrar tragedy. They immediately announced the call for a strike on the 9th of March 1995.[84] They also attempted, multiple times, to send food and other essentials to the besieged people of Chrar.[85] Mirwaiz Umar Farooq also requested the population, during a sermon at Jamia Masjid, to help towards the relief of the people at Chrar, by contributing to the *Almadar* fund set up by the Hurriyat. [86]The leaders of the *Hurriyat* Conference also visited the shrine complex on the 18th of March, with their

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[82] "Dargah-Hazratbal ke Bohraan pe Muhsareen se Baat Cheet Karne Wale Do Markazi Kirdar Sadak Hadse ke Shikar: Wajahat Habibullah ki Haalat Naazuk, General Zaki Khatre se Bahar," *Srinagar Times*, (5th November, 1993), p. 1 and 3.
[83] Wajahat Habibullah, "Siege: Hazratbal, Kashmir," 1993. *India Review*, 1:3, 73-98, p. 96.
[84] "Chrar-i-Sharief Under Seige," *Kashmir Times*, (9th March, 1995), p. 2.
[85] "APHC team with Ration Denied Entry into Char-e-Sharief," *Kashmir Times*, 6th April 1995, p.1 and 6; "Hundereds Protest Seige: Polics dis-allows Kashmiri Leaders to take Food, Medicine to Besieged Chrar-i-Sharief," *Greater Kashmir*, (6th April, 1995), p. 1.
[86] "Hurriet asks People to Donate for Chrar-i-Sharief people," *Greater Kashmir*, (9th May, 1995), p. 1.

photographs published across local newspapers in the region. In these photographs, they can be seen interacting with the locals and the guerrillas, including Major Mast Gul, projecting themselves as close to these militants.[87] At the same time, they also received support and suggestions from different militant outfits such as the *Al Umar* and *Harkat ul-Ansar*.[88]

The destruction of the shrine on the auspicious occasion of *Eid ul-Adha*,[89] which coincidentally is also the birthday of the Shaykh Nur ud-Din, engulfed the valley in despair and anger. There were simultaneous protests across the valley, with causalities reported from several places.[90] The nature of restrictions was such that local print media could only publish a report on the 16th or 17th of May, a whole week after the tragedy had struck. The headlines of the paper brought forth the profound shock people felt at the gutting of the shrine, with Greater Kashmir stating, "Heavens have Fallen: Chrar-i-Sharief Destroyed."[91] Kashmir Times called it "a shameful disaster."[92]

However, it was after the destruction of the shrine that the *Hurriyat* Conference was able to assert its dominance within the Kashmiri movement. It did so by playing a central role in the reconstruction of the shrine of the Rishi saint. The Indian State was on a back foot as the operation had ended in a disaster, with India Today calling the Chrar siege "a lost battle."[93] The position of the *Hurriyat* Conference was further legitimised by the Muslim Auqaf Trust, when it associated itself with the Alamdar Fund. The appeal for donations by The Muslim Auqaf Trust, which was the autonomous governing body, had specific mention that the fund had been set up under the leadership of the *Hurriyat* Conference.[94] This association increased the legitimacy in the eyes of the population and came at a crucial political juncture for the *Hurriyat*. It was a time when *Hurriyat* was facing criticism from the JKLF, which had laid down their arms in 1994, and were now competing with Hurriyat for the pole position in the

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[87] "Shabir Shah visits Defence Pickets: APHC vists Chrar-i-Sharief," *Greater Kashmir*, (18th March, 1995), p. 1.
[88] "Harkat-ul-Ansar Appeals for Unity," *Greater Kashmir*, 22nd March, 1995), p. 2; "Government Deceiving People, says Al-Umar," *Greater Kashmir*, (22nd March, 1995), p. 2.
[89] This Eid is celebrated on 10th Dhul Hajj, the last month of the Islamic calendar, and is celebrated by sacrificing animals across the Islamic world.
[90] "Shrine of Almadar-e-Kashmir Torched to Ashes: Five Demonstrators Killed, Hundreds Injured in Forces' Firing," *Greater Kashmir*, (17th May, 1995), p. 1.
[91] "Heavens have Fallen: Chrar-i-Sharief Destroyed," *Greater Kashmir*, (17th May, 1995), p. 1.
[92] Nikhil Chakravarty, "Chrar-i-Sharief: A Shameful Disaster," *Kashmir Times*, (16th May 1995), p. 4.
[93] Ramesh Vinayak, "Kashmir: Despite killing of Key Militants at Chrar shrine, India loses a Battle," *India Today*, (31st May 1995). https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/19950531-kashmir-despite-killing-of-key-militants-at-charar-shrine-india-loses-a-battle-807323-1995-05-30
[94] "Alamdar Fund," *Greater Kashmir*, 27th May 1995, p. 4.

popular arena of Kashmir politics. [95] At the same time, Hurriyat was being lured by the state to contest the forthcoming elections,[96] which it was not willing to contest."[97] Additionally, the socio-political clout of the *Hurriyat* Conference was bolstered by different successful marches that it led against the siege, mobilising thousands of individuals, especially the one to Chrar-i-Sharief on May 22, 1995.[98]

The *Chrar-i-Sharief* incident helped the *Hurriyat* Conference to enhance its role in Kashmiri politics domestically and internationally. Thus, Chrar-i-Sharief provided a robust platform for the *Hurriyat* Conference to re-project itself as the central organisation in the independence movement. It is also evident in the comment of an editor who says that the issue in Chrar-i-Sharief "has given a renewed lever to the APHC handle."[99] Over the years, it is this socio-political clout, built on shrine spaces and shrine politics, that the APHC would become the principal proponent of resistance politics, having a significant influence over the popular opinion in the valley. This hold would allow the other political actors, including the Indian and the Pakistani State, to consider them representatives of the people and enter into a dialogue with them. It is important to repeat that *Hurriyat* did not achieve or play any political role in resolving or mitigating either of the sieges. While it withdrew from mediation in the case of *Hazratbal*¸, whatever role it attempted to play in the *Chrar* fiasco was a complete failure, as the shrine ended up being completely destroyed. It was, therefore, not a political obligation that a political organisation is expected to fulfil but a religious or sacred obligation that a political organisation accrued to itself that bestowed the organisation with political legitimacy. This was aided by the centrality of these shrines in the social, cultural and religious milieu of Kashmir, which bestowed a significantly higher value to the actions of the *Hurriyat* Conference, helping it to entrench its position within the political structure of Kashmir.

Conclusion

As a site for ritualistic and spiritual gathering, shrines usually attract large crowds of devotees. Such gatherings allow political actors to employ these spaces for political mobilisations.

[95] "JKLF Leaders Lash Out at Hurriyat Conference," *Kashmir Times*, (20th March, 1995), p. 1.
[96] "Governor Invites APHC to Join Process of Democratic Revival," *Greater Kashmir*, (12th March, 1993), p. 1.
[97] "APHC Rejects Elections," *Greater Kashmir*, (15th March, 1995), p. 1.
[98] "Leaders Express Solidarity with Chrar Inhabitants: Thousands Led by APHC Leaders March to Chrar-i-Sharief," *Greater Kashmir*, 23rd March 1993, p. 1.
[99] "APHC, State Administration on the Horns of Dilemma," *Greater Kashmir*, (16th March, 1995), p. 1.

However, on account of the deep reverence of the people and the intimate connection of these prominent shrines in the social, cultural and historical matrix of the region, these mobilisations are different in scope and effect than mobilisations that emerge from any other space. It is this 'centrality' of these shrines that imparts the mobilisations undertaken at the shrines a degree of power and authority, capable of inducing noteworthy changes in the political structure of the region.

Thus, these Sufi spaces of shrines have been efficacious in political structuring and restructuring in the valley. Across the contemporary era of popular politics, these four shrines have made themselves available to organise, mobilise, memorialise and propagate narratives, as they provide a popular base and can also be used to stir emotions or as a tool of legitimation by political actors. Even issues squarely concerning these shrines have usually turned political in Kashmir, effecting structural changes and challenging the politically established norm. These include the Holy Relic Agitation, reconstruction of *Chrar-i-Sharief* shrine or renewal of religious ceremonies in the *Dargah Hazratbal* after the siege in 1993. These facets are evident from the cardinal part *Khanqah-e-Mo'allah, Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiya*, *Hazratbal, and Chrar-i-Sharief* shrine have played in the history and trajectory of political parties such as the Muslim Conference, National Conference, Plebiscite Front or the *Hurriyat* Conference.

An important aspect that emerged from these events is the unique role of the *Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia* and its successor, the Muslim Auqaf Trust, the organisation responsible for the management of the shrines. This organisations, emerging out of political and communitarian context of 1930s, played a distinctively political role during these movements mentioned above. This structure accrued a fair degree of autonomy to these shrines, aiding and abetting the political nature of these shrines. This unique nature of *waqf* management, and its legal and political history of shrine management in Kashmir, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter VI

Politics of Shrine Management and Control: The Political *Awqaf* in Kashmir

On August 16th 2022, the Jammu and Kashmir *Waqf* Board initiated a ban on the collection of offerings (*niyaz*) by the *pirs*, *khuddams* and other traditional authorities. The *mutawalli* and *sajjada-nishin*, usually sitting on windows of a shrine or other designated places, used to receive money or any other kind of offering from devotees seeking divine intercession in their affairs. Interestingly, these windows and spaces at doors were earmarked for certain families, transferring from one generation to another as an inheritance. The order of the ban termed the practice "unethical," claiming that such practices severely limited "the ability of the *Waqf* Board to perform basic duties of charity and carry out activities for the upliftment of the poor and disadvantaged groups of the society, and also limit the ability of *Waqf* to provide different facilities to the *zaireen* (devotees) and carry out infrastructural improvements at the shrines."[1]

The order created a significant uproar, with political parties joining these traditional authorities in criticizing the step. It was considered an affront to the religious practices of the masses and belittling the centuries-old tradition of Sufi Islam in Kashmir. The spokesperson of the Apni Party termed the decision taken "in a haste," while the National Conference argued that "it is not for the government to decide the state of affairs in the shrines. Government must, albeit with great care and sensitivity, tread this path to ensure people's beliefs are not abridged."[2] Other social and religious groups also criticized the order and its implementation, claiming that traditional authorities are "being threatened, intimidated, and the symbols associated with the shrine are being forcibly removed."[3] It was further asserted that such an action did not even

[1] "Waqf Board Imposes Ban on Receiving of Donations Forcibly at Ziyarats," *Greater Kashmir*¸18th August, 2022. https://www.greaterkashmir.com/kashmir/waqf-board-imposes-ban-on-receiving-of-donations-forcibly-at-ziyarats

[2] "Ban on Collection of Donations in Kashmir Shrines Triggers Row", *The New Indian Express*, 22nd August, 2022. https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2022/aug/22/ban-on-collection-of-donations-in-kashmir-shrines-triggers-row-2490099.html

[3] "Waqf Board Order Very Harsh: Peer Sahiban of Ziarat-i–Makhdoom Sahib (RA)," *Greater Kashmir*, 19th August, 2022. https://www.greaterkashmir.com/kashmir/waqf-board-order-very-harsh-peer-sahiban-of-ziarat-imakhdoom-sahib-ra

occur during the despotic “Sikh and the Dogra rule.”[4] The outpouring of discontent, conveyed in political terms on account of an administrative decision, is quite evocative. This discontent assumes further significance considering that most Islamic countries have enacted such measures concerning shrines' maintenance and income.

The chapter argues that such uproar is a consequence of the history and trajectory of the institutionalization of *waqf* in the region, which significantly differs, both from India and the larger Islamic world. This deviation has allowed the space of the shrine to be fundamentally political within Kashmir. As mentioned in the previous chapters, most Sufi shrines have played a foundational part in different political struggles over the past century by being spaces of mobilization or sites for assuming legitimacy, for different political actors. Different shrines are closely linked to the construction of political discourses and political conceptions, something that is rarely seen within any other geographical space, within India or beyond.

This chapter is a historical and comparative analysis of the *waqf* structure in Kashmir. Historically, it traces the origins of the *waqf* system in Kashmir from pre-colonial to colonial times, comparing it with the development of *waqf* in the rest of South Asia. The development of *waqf* in Kashmir, particularly in its institutional form in the 20th century, I argue, is distinctively political. It originates from a political movement demanding control of religious spaces, rather than through legislative enactments as in other places of the Islamic world. Further, the chapter argues that due to such nature of its emergence, *waqf* institutions were intimately connected to the political trajectory of the region. This allowed Sufi shrines to enjoy considerable degree of autonomy from the state. Lastly, the chapter undertakes a comparative study of the legislative enactments in Kashmir and in India, bringing forth the differences within them. The laws reflected the contextual realities of Kashmir, and hence were significantly different in scope and means from their Indian counterparts. The chapter traces the relentless curtailment of this difference, culminating in the actions taken in 2019.

[4] “Waqf Board Order Very Harsh,” 19th August.

<u>Conceptions of *Waqf* Throughout the Islamic World: Religion. State and Transformation of the Shrine</u>

At the outset, it is important to clarify the theological and historical conception of *waqf* and how Sufi shrines are connected to or categorized as *waqf* (pl. *awqaf*). The word waqf[5] is etymologically derived from the Arabic root verb "*waqfan* or *w'qf*' which means 'to stop' or 'to hold.' It essentially means to limit any change or transfer in the nature or corpus of the property, removing it from the 'market' and stopping any sale or division of the property so dedicated. The declaration of a property as *waqf* entails that the *Waqif* (Settler), through a declaration or a deed (*waqfnama)*, reserves the property and delineates the usufruct received to be employed for charitable or any other specified purpose for perpetuity.[6] The waqf is supposed to be religiously governed and managed by the terms set out in the deed, and any sale, transfer or change in nature or use from the one specified at the time of declaration or through a deed, is prohibited.[7]

A *waqf* consists of four principal groups of people associated with it. These are the *waqif* (founder), *mutawalli* (caretaker or administrator), *muwquf 'alayh* (beneficiaries) and the *qadi* (judge).[8] Amongst these, the mutawalli assumed critical importance, both legally and politically, as the scale and, consequently, the importance of the institution of *waqf* increased. The *mutawalli* is the officer in charge of a specific waqf property at the level of the waqf itself. The *mutawalli* is an official initially appointed by the *waqif* to look after the waqf and manage it according to the principles or objectives delineated by the *waqif* in his declaration or deed. The Wakif usually also specifies the general rules of succession for the office of *mutawalli*. Due to this, and in most cases, a *mutawalli* is a close family member or the progeny of the

[5] There are quite a few iterations of English spelling of the word waqf. Even different legislative acts use different spelling for the term. While discussing a particular act, I have tried to use the spelling used by the act itself to maintain continuity. Otherwise the spelling waqf is used.
[6] Beauty Banday, *Administration of Wakfs*: *Law and Practice in Kashmir*, (New Delhi: Dilpreet Publishing House, 2011), p. 1-2
[7]There are certain fundamental conditions that are generally accepted as cardinal with regard to the waqf. They are perpetuity, irrevocability, unconditionality and inalienability. Perpetuity refers to waqf is founded on the notion that it exists for all time. It, therefore, cannot be revoked, is not conditional on any external factors except conditions mentioned in the deed, and cannot be gifted, sold or inherited by the beneficiaries or heirs of the founder. Only the Maliki school allows alienation on account of certain specific conditions are confronted by the waqf. For the other schools, specifically the Hanafi, the perpetuity emanates from the fact that, being an object of charity, the ownership of the property is transferred to God. Hence, any change in it is not permitted. See Muhammad Zubair Abbasi, "The Classical Islamic Law of Waqf: A Concise Introduction," *Arab Law Quaterly*, 26, no.2, (2012): 121-153.
[8] Abbasi, "The Classical Islamic Law," p. 124.

Wakif. The *mutawalli* enjoyed special economic, social and political privileges due to his association with and control of a *waqf*.

The critical aspect is that "while the act of creating an endowment was that of a private individual, the beneficiaries of the endowment were always located in the public sphere."[9] By creating a *waqf,* "the individual participated in the formation of the public sphere, thus expressing his sense of belonging to the community of believers and his identification with its values."[10] In the beginning, the creation of a *waqf* was "used as the principal channel of support for the Muslim fighters for the Faith, in fact, for the entire early Muslim brotherhood, it was *habs fi sabili' llahi* (a gift in the way of God)."[11] In the early phases of the Islamic expansion, conquest "brought more wealth into Muslim hands," and "endowments played a role in managing them."[12] Over the years, the exponential growth of the Islamic empire was accompanied by an exponential rise of the *awqaf*. The enormity of this institution can be gauged by the fact that in the Ottoman Empire, "between one-half and two-thirds of the landed property was held by *awqaf.* At the same time, one-half of the land in Algeria and one-third in Tunisia was made waqf. A similar percentage of real estate was also vested in *awqaf* in Egypt."[13] This exponential growth was abetted by different categories of *waqf* that came into existence.

The creation of a *waqf* by a ruler "in the Islamic cultural arena established a much more significant bond of shared norms and moral values between rulers and their subjects."[14] Additionally, a single *waqf*, through its charitable demeanour, "succeeded in drawing into its orbit of influence a large number of clients,"[15] making *waqf* an "important integrative institution holding together the society and its rulers."[16] The institution of *waqf* has, over the course of Islamic history, "sustained places of worship, established schools and hospitals, supported scholars and preachers, provided paupers with graves and supplied weapons to warriors fighting in the cause of the faith. On account of being places of worship, Sufi shrines

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[9] Miriam Hoexeter, "The Waqf and the Public Sphere," in *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*, ed. Miriam Hoexeter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Ehemia Levtzion, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 119-138, p. 121

[10] Hoexeter, "The Waqf,", p. 121

[11] Moshe Gill, "The Earliest Waqf Foundations," *Jornal of Near Eastern Studies*, 57, no. 2, (1998), 125-140, p. 125

[12] George C. Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments and Society in British India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 11.

[13] Abbasi, "The Classical Islamic Law," p. 123.

[14] Hoexeter, "The Waqf,", p. 130.

[15] Hoexeter, "The Waqf,", p. 129.

[16] Hoexeter, "The Waqf,", p. 135.

have also been intimately connected to the legal institution of the *waqf*. Being intimately connected to the political structure of their times, as discussed in the previous chapters, Sufi personalities or *turuq* received endowments from different rulers across different times and different empires. Rulers built hospices and granted land for their upkeep and maintenance of the shrines, a prime example of which is the construction of *Khanqah-e-Mo'allah* in Kashmir. It was either done as a mark of reverence to the preceptor but also bestowed the ruler with some sought of legitimacy in return. On the other hand, rulers also used *waqf* endowments to Sufi saints and Sufi *silsilas* to entrench their rule in the newly annexed parts of their kingdom. The use of Sufi and Sufi orders by the Ottoman rulers to entrench their rule over the Balkans is an apt example.[17]

Nonetheless, Sufi shrines became intimately and institutionally dependent on the legal institution of *waqf*. Hence, when the Islamic lands came under European control, starting from the 18th-century conquest of India, the legal institution of *waqf* underwent a significant metamorphosis. This was because of the different conceptions of property and trusts, of economic and social values, that the colonial powers adhered to. These ideas, which emanated from the processes of Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment, coupled with the 'modern' institutions of state or economics, had an enduring impact on the conceptualization of *waqf* across the Muslim world. The most impactful of these European notions was that of *secularization*.

Secularization, Modernization and *Waqf* Administration: The Economy of Control

In his seminal work, Jose Casanova argues that "the core and the central thesis of the theory of secularization is the conceptualization of the process of societal modernization as a process of functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres-primarily the state, the economy, and science-from the religious sphere and the concomitant differentiation and specialization of religion within its own newly found religious sphere."[18] However, for Casanova, these spheres do not exist on equal footing. Casanova believes that the "emerging modern absolutist state and the emerging capitalist economy, were more lawful and more

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[17] Riza Yildirim, "Dervishes, Waqfs, and Conquest: Notes on Early Ottoman Expansion in Thrace," in *Held in Trust: Waqf in the Islamic World*, ed. Pascale Ghazaleh, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2011), p. 23-40.

[18] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 19.

autonomous that the others."[19] It was "their differentiation from one another, their mutual dependence and their clashes, that more than anything else dictated the dynamics of the whole process," claiming that "actually, these two secular spheres, states and markets, now tended to dictate the very principles of classification which served to structure the new modern system."[20] Hence, the religious sphere became just another sphere, structured around its own autonomous internal axis but falling under the gravitational force of the two main axes."[21]

The separation of religion and the state has "involved the coercive universalization of modern morality, knowledge, law and nation-statehood."[22] Hence, the separation of religion and politics is a single event but a constant "rise of the question about the separation of spheres and the need to restrict (privatized) religion from encroaching on various other (public) spheres that are particular to secularism as a mode of modern power."[23] However, this "constant attempt to separate religion from politics and privatize it, especially through the law, always creates more reasons for the state to interfere (because of the indeterminacy of the law), to legislate and to entrench sovereignty."[24] The laws especially are enacted "not simply to command obedience and to maintain justice, but to enable or disable its population" and are "strategies for destroying the old options and creating new ones."[25] Thus, "the modern state is also a *modernising* state, a network of secular powers that assume the task of remodelling the material and moral conditions of its subjects in accordance with the Enlightenment principles (emphasis in original)."[26]

In the Islamic world, the "construction of modern states has involved the forcible reconstruction of the religious law (the *sharia*) since about the middle of the nineteenth century. Those parts of the *sharia* that were now defined as "commercial law" and "criminal law" were dropped, and European-based codes substituted for them."[27] *Waqf* came under the purview of the commercial legal structure, and the growing economic heft of the European powers

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[19] Casanova, *Public Religions*, p. 21.
[20] Casanova, *Public Religions*, p. 21.
[21] Casanova, *Public Religions*, p. 21.
[22] Casanova, *Public Religions*, p. 16.
[23] Nada Moumtaz, *God's Property: Islam, Charity, and the Modern State*, (California: University of California Press, 2021), p. 4-5.
[24] Moumtaz, *God's Property*, p. 5.
[25] Talal Asad, "Conscripts of Western Civilization." In *Dialectical Anthropology: Essays in Honor of Stanley Diamond*, ed. Christine W. Gailey, (Tallahassee: University of Florida Press, 1993), 333–51, p. 335.
[26] Talal Asad, "Religion and Politics: An Introduction," *Social Research*, 59, no. 1, (1992) 3-16, p. 15.
[27] Asad, "Religion and Politics," p. 16.

influenced this transition. The colonial powers saw the inalienability of *waqf* as a severe impediment to their designs and sought to change to status through legal force or economic coercion. The former was done in its colonies, such as Malaysia and India, and later in mandated areas after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, while the latter option was exercised on the Ottoman empire to force changes in its *waqf* regime.

When the Ottoman empire requested the French and the British for loans during the Crimean War in the 1850s, the abolition of the *waqf* system was put as a precondition.[28] The Ottoman empire had already "attempted a set of reforms, termed 'Tanziamat' (1831-1876), ultimately aimed at strengthening the Empire's central authority by modernising the organizational and legislative structure in line with Western practices."[29] The *waqf* structure was a part of this *modernising* project. Different *awqaf*, which enjoined a certain degree of autonomy in their functioning, were brought under the *Imperial Evkaf Ministry.* Through this step, the Ottomans brought "a fundamental change in the life of the historical waqfs: the endowment deeds were no longer the basis for decisions regarding the waqf properties, the expenditure was now centrally controlled."[30] It was done partly to gather "all the surplus revenue within the state treasury and redirecting them to other state institutions with poor financial resources" and partly to control "the religious authorities, the *ulema* who had gained the power through the economically strong waqf that they controlled."[31] This reconceptualization of *waqf* as an economic asset aligned with the broad change that accompanied capitalism, where "land became a financial asset and real estate wealth that needed to be grown to the benefit of nation's economy.[32]

Such economic and nationalist logic even pervaded many anti-colonial, post-colonial and nationalist forces, which sought to reform the institution of *awqaf* to make it in tune with modern sensibilities and requirements. Nationalists in Egypt, for example, sought to alter the way *waqf* functioned in their society. Some wanted it because they thought it to be regressive because of its mere association with Islam. For some, it was to deny an economic base for clerics resisting their agenda of modernisation, while other reformers "were convinced that a

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[28] Murat Çizakça, "From Destruction to Restoration," *Endowment Studies*, 2, no.2 (2018): 83-106, p. 86.
[29] Reyhan Sabri, *The Imperial Politics of Architectural Conservation: The Case of Waqf in Cyprus*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 21
[30] Sabri, *The Imperial Politics*, p. 22
[31] Sabri, *The Imperial Politics*, p. 22
[32] Moumtaz, *God's Property*, p. 3.

reformed waqf system could contribute to economic development."[33] In Lebanon, "waqfs became conceptualized as objects of administration, part of nation's wealth, its "economy" having its own patterns, distinct from the sum total of individual acts that made up the economy."[34] Modern *waqf* laws of different countries such as Egypt, Turkey, Morocco and Iran show considerable divergence from the earlier models of the *waqf*, bringing it closer to modern economic principles.[35] This transformation has reduced *waqf* spaces from 'integrative social units' to primarily an economical category.

In addition to these economic considerations, there can also be political considerations for a modern state to install a particular nature of *waqf* administration. The *waqf* legislation in Pakistan is an important case in point. Sharing the colonial history of the *waqf* administration with the rest of the sub-continent, independent Pakistan used the institutionalization of *waqf* as a means to project its idea of a singular Islam as a legitimation of its existence as a homeland of Muslims. The institutionalization of *waqf* through legislation "reduced the pluralistic traditions at Muslim shrines and turned them into a space representing singular Islam."[36] The Department of Awqaf in Pakistan aided such "ideological regulation and suppression by the leaders of Sunni, orthodox Islam in Pakistan"[37] Subsequently, this has allowed the reduction of these spaces to culture[38] or heritage sites.[39]

Thus, the modern state and its *waqf* administration overhaul the very nature of *waqf* and its role in the larger society. The nature and trajectory of *waqf* legislation have significant consequences for the way shrines, mosques and other spaces interact with the community and are employed by it. Hence, the current state of shrines and other *waqf* properties in Kashmir and India is intimately related to the nature of *waqf* legislation prevalent in Kashmir and India, respectively. It also depends on the different historical trajectories of the waqf administration within these two places. The content and context of these laws are crucial to how shrines have been conceptualized within each society.

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[33] Timur Kuran, "The Provision of Public Goods under Islamic Law: Origins, Impact, and Limitations of the Waqf System," *Law and Society Review*, 35, no. 4, (2001), 841-898, p. 888.
[34] Moumtaz, *God's Property*, p. 14.
[35] Kuran, "The Provision of Public Goods," p. 890.
[36] Umar Bin Ibad, *Sufi Shrines and The Pakistani State: The End of Religious Pluralism*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019), p. 6.
[37] Irfan M. Khan, "Recentering the Sufi Shrine: A Metaphysics of Presence. PhD thesis, (Graduate School of Arts & Sciences: Harvard University, 2019), p. 1.
[38] Ibad, *Sufi Shrines*, p. 130-138.
[39] Ibad, *Sufi Shrines*, p. 165.

Pre-Colonial Waqf Administration in Kashmir: Rulers, Patronage and the Shrines

The socio-political and legal history of the *waqf* administration in Jammu and Kashmir is specifically unique. This uniqueness is with respect to both the trajectory of *waqf* laws in other Muslim societies as well as in India. Kashmir did not encounter the colonial structure in its full might and hence, escaped the rationalising and modernising that *waqf* institutions faced across the world. Until its accession with the Indian Union on 27th October 1947, Kashmir was ruled by the despotic Dogra regime. Even though the regime was under the suzerainty of the British crown, it enjoyed considerable autonomy in its internal affairs. The policies of the regime were distinctly influenced by its communal outlook, which allowed *waqf* properties to become a central character in the politico-social affairs of the region. The role of Sufi shrines and mosques in the political sphere of the region has already been elucidated in the previous chapters. This chapter delineates the manner in which this unique historical and socio-legal trajectory of *waqf* administration in Kashmir helped sustain the 'political' role of these spaces in Kashmiri politics.

The *waqf* system of Kashmir is closely linked to the Sufi history of the region. The first *khanqah* of the region was constructed by Sultan Sadruddin, the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir, for his preceptor Bulbul Shah. The Sultan also built a mosque for Friday prayers and congregations, attended prayers at the *khanqah*, and made grants to feed the mendicants, devotees and other visitors.[40] The Sultan was also buried in the compound of the *khanqah*, near the mausoleum of his preceptor.

The construction of *Khanqah-e-Mo'allah* by Sultan Sikander for Saiyid Ali Hamdani is arguably the most significant with respect to the history of the *waqf* administration in Kashmir. This shrine provides the first instance of a recorded *waqf-nama* in Kashmir, written by Mir Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani. A copy of this *waqf-nama* is still preserved in the shrine. This *waqf-nama* follows the general template of *waqf-nama* prevalent across the Islamic world at the time. It stipulates general conditions of control and management of the *Khanqah*. The *waqf-nama* appointed one Maulana Sayeed as the caretaker of the shrine and enabled him "to collect revenues of the assigned villages and distribute it among the deserving persons."[41] Such funds were to be collected with the objective "to provide sustenance to the needy, the pious, the penitents and the truthful."[42] A part of the funds was also kept for the sustenance of people

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[40] *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, tr. K. N. Pandit, (Calcutta, Firma KLM Private Limited, 1988), p. 26
[41] Saiyid Ali, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, tr. Zubaida Jan, (Srinagar: Jay Kay Books, 2009), p. 47-48.
[42] Ali, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, p. 47.

who had dedicated their lives to the worship of the Almighty, living in seclusion "so that they might meditate with devotion without having to worry for their livelihood."[43] A part of the revenue was also reserved "to meet the expenses of the burial of the poor and the destitute", and another was to be "spent for purchasing medicines for sick people so that people residing in the vicinity of the holy place need not have to go to other places for help."[44] The deed also appointed Malik Devi Ganai to supervise the work of Maulana Sayeed to ensure that no part of the revenue was embezzled or misused by the greedy people and to ensure "that no difference was made in the quality of meals served to rich and the poor."[45]

The *waqf-nama* also made a clear exposition in favour of the autonomy and independence from the ruler, demanding "non-interference from the ruler in the management of the shrine."[46] However, in consonance with the general theological principles of *waqf* principles in Islam, Sultan Sikander had a well-institutionalized ecclesiastical department to look after the shrines and religious spaces under his domain. The department was headed by *Sheikh-ul-Islam*, a post created by Sultan Sikander himself.[47] The office of *Sheikh ul Islam* had diverse functions as the head of the department of religion. He was the principal advisor to the ruler on religious matters, read the *khutba* (sermon) in the Jamia Masjid of Srinagar, and even was entrusted with *Tajposhi*, *Datstarbandi*, or coronation of the ruler, which used to happen in the Jamia Masjid.[48] The *Sheikh ul Islam* was assisted in his religious functions by a vast array of people designated as *Qazi* and *Mufti*. Thus, the ruler maintained a close oversight over the management of shrines through these officials, and it continued even after a change in dynasty. For example, during the rule of Chaks in the 16th century, the office of *Qazi-ul-Qazzat* assumed the role and significance that *Sheikh ul-Islam* had under the Shahmiri dynasty.[49]

This structure of *waqf* administration continued under Muslim rule, with the *mutawalli* of a shrine managing the internal affairs of the property autonomously, with general oversight of the governmental structure. This included the dynasties of Chak, Mughals, and Afghans. This

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[43] Ali, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, p. 47.
[44] Ali, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, p. 48.
[45] Ali, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, p. 48.
[46] Chitrelekha Zutshi, "Contesting Urban Space: Shrine Culture and the Discourse on Kashmiri Muslim Identities and Protest in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, ed. Chitrelekha Zutshi, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 52
[47] Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1959), p. 65.
[48] Mohammad Khalil Kanth, *The Grand Mosque of Kashmir-Jamia Masjid*, (Srinagar: Funkar Cultural Organisation, 2013), p. 114.
[49] Fayaz Ahmad Dar, "Religion and Politics in Medieval Kashmir: 14th to 18th Century," PhD Thesis, (Department of History: University of Hyderabad, 2019), p. 198-199.

institutional autonomy translated into a socio-political power that these authorities assumed in the region of Kashmir. This has been sufficiently described in the next chapter, which enumerates the role different families in charge of prominent shrines played in the socio-political history of the valley. The loss of Muslim rule did affect the economic prospects of these families, but they continued to exercise authority over the local population through their association with these shrines.

The Sikhs were the first non-Muslim dynasty to rule Kashmir. The Sikhs had a dualistic nature while dealing with Islam and Muslims in Kashmir. On the one hand, the Sikhs provided active patronage to the shrines of the region, with Sikh monarch Ranjit Singh himself proclaiming that the "Kashmiris are worshippers of the universal Almighty and their prayer shall bring the Maharaja and his kingdom prosperity and felicity."[50] The Sikhs also allowed expenditure from the Sikh Dharmarth department to the tune of two lakh rupees annually "on the shrines, saints, learned men, religious festivals, alms and other such charitable purposes in Kashmir."[51] This conduct of the Sikhs also made clear the importance of these properties for the political elite of the region. However, at the same time, the Sikhs were also ruthless in curbing Islamic practices and defiling Muslim religious places. The Sikhs closed down the Jama Masjid of Srinagar and banned the Azaan- the Muslim call for prayer. They also converted the Pathar Masjid into a granary. More appallingly, they almost blew up the *Khanqah-e-Mo'allah* with canon fire.[52]

Thus, with the advent of non-Muslim rule, the *waqf* system in Kashmir entered a perilous position. While there was some patronage of certain shrines, there were also religious contestations over different places of worship, while some were utterly neglected. Nonetheless, the *waqf* structure of the valley largely remained coterminous with the broader South-Asian region. At this stage, this was generally characterised by a degree of autonomy to the *mutawalli* and, hence, the existence of the shrine or any other sacred space within the confines of its immediate community. However, this structure would undergo a fundamental change with the onset of British colonialism in the sub-continent, which had two broad effects on the *waqf* administration. One, it signalled the introduction of the state as a *modernising* force, characterised by the intervention and codification of socio-religious norms by the colonial state

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[50] Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*: *Islam*, *Rights, and the History of Kashmir*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2004), p. 103.
[51] Rai, *Hindu Rulers*, p. 103.
[52] G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashīr: A History of Kashmir*, vol. 2, (Lahore: University of Panjab Press, 1944), p. 726.

of its subject population. Second, it also marks the beginning of the divergent route taken by the *waqf* administration in Kashmir from the route taken by the *waqf* administration in South Asia.

Colonial Administration of the Waqf: The British in South Asia and the Dogras in Kashmir

The British entered India as merchants during the reign of the Mughal emperor Jehangir in 1608. They continued to engage purely in trade, under the rubric of the British East India Company, for almost one hundred and fifty years. It was only in 1757, when the British won the Battle of Plassey in 1757, that they emerged as a potent political force in the region. The victory in the Battle of Buxar in 1764 endowed them with *diwani* (revenue collection) rights of Bengal *suba* (province) of Mughal India, which included modern Bangladesh and the states of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha of India. Since *waqf* properties were a significant part of the society and its revenue, these properties fell under the purview of the British. The British East India Company continued with their political interference in local politics for a century, which ended with the direct rule of the British over the territories acquired by the Company, and the proclamation of Queen Victoria as the Empress of India in 1857.

The historical region of Jammu and Kashmir, which comprises the contemporary Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh under Indian control, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Northern Areas under Pakistani control, was won by the East India Company after the culmination of the First Anglo-Sikh war in 1846. However, instead of bringing the region under their control, the British transferred the region, in lieu of money, to the ruler of Jammu, Gulab Singh, under the treaty of Amritsar in 1846. Gulab Singh was a vassal of the Sikh empire but had helped the British in their war efforts against the Sikhs. Thus, Jammu and Kashmir was kept under the rule of a despotic monarchical regime, under British suzerainty, as many other such princely states within British India.

This difference within the political structure spilled over a manner in which *waqf* administration developed in these two regions. While in broader South Asia, a state-driven *modernising* project, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed the continuation of administration from the Sikh rule. While the Dogras were under British suzerainty and were egged by them to undertake reforms, there remained a distinctive difference between the two regions regarding

the *waqf* administration. I argue that this difference directly impacted the kind of politics that emerged around these spaces in these two regions.

In its initial phase, the Company focussed exclusively on maximising profit with minimal interference and effort on themselves.[53] This approach proved futile, and the Company was forced to bring a certain degree of legal structure overlooking these properties, both with Hindus and Muslims. While the juridical structure of the Mughals was continued,[54] the passing of *diwani* to the English meant that they had to oversee issues pertaining to *waqf* properties, as *qadi* came under their jurisdiction.[55] Finally, after the appointment of Warren Hastings as the Governor General of India, he promulgated the Regulations of 1772, which stipulated that "the Company officials would apply the laws of Hindus and Muslims in all matters pertaining to inheritance, marriage, caste and other religious institutions."[56]

This view slowly changed, and the Company started to play a more active part in the affairs of the *awqaf*, particularly after realizing their economic potential. The Company, through different regulations, such as the Regulation XIX of the Bengal Code (1810) and the Regulation VII of the Madras Code (1817), allowed "for the due appropriation of the rents and produce of lands granted for the support of Mosques, Hindu Temples, Colleges and other purposes; for the maintenance and repair of Bridges, Sarais, Kattras, and other public buildings; and for the custody and disposal of Nazul Property or Escheats."[57] The Regulation XIX of 1810 also "gave officials the power to guarantee the good management of any "trust" of a "public nature"."[58] The Company used these regulations to appoint officials to collect land revenue, rent, the appointment of tenants and utilization of funds. These regulations also allowed more interference from the Company into the management of the *awqaf*, including changing the nature and character of a *waqf*.[59]

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[53] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 106.
[54] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 107.
[55] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 106.
[56] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 107.
[57] The Religious Endowments Act, (1960), Preamble.
[58] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 39.
[59] One of the most prominent cases which involved such gross intervention relates to the establishment of the modern day Hooghly Mohsin College, situated in West Bengal. This College was set up in 1836, using the provisions of the Regulation XIX of 1810, by converting a madrassa which was run by the income generated by a waqf property of Mohammad Mohsin, which was declared as such in 1806. The income was supposed to finance the local Imambara and the associated religious function, while also maintaining a small school for religious education. The British intervened in the working of the waqf after alleging misappropriation on account of the mutawalli, declared expenditure on education as the primary objective of the waqf, and converted the local madrassa into a college where western education

The Indian rebellion of 1857, which, among other things, also had religious reasons for its eruption,[60] forced the colonial power to change its policy on Indian religions. The Queen and her government, which directly took over the affairs of India, opined that "it is not called upon to provide especially for their (religious institutions) management or superintendence by its (the Government) own officers. It appears, then, to her Majesty's government that the repeal of the regulations in question, or such parts of them as relate to the management of religious endowments should no longer be delayed."[61] Within seven years after taking over, the British government enacted the Religious Endowments Act of 1863, which took a significantly different position from the earlier regulations of 1810 and 1817. The Religious Endowments Act of 1863 entrusted the management and affairs of the endowments to the trustees of the endowments making it abundantly clear that "except as provided in this Act, it shall not be lawful for the Central Government or any State Government, or for any officer of any Government in his official character, to undertake or resume the superintendence of any land or other property granted for the support of, or otherwise belonging to, any mosque, temple or other religious establishment, or to take any part in the management or, appropriation of any endowment made for the maintenance of any such mosque, temple or other establishment, or to nominate or appoint any trustee, manager or superintendent thereof, or to be in any way concerned therewith."[62]

As evident, the Act took a clear position with respect to the control of the *waqf* and the limit of 'administrative' interference that colonial authorities can undertake. On the other hand, however, it strongly enhanced the authority of the courts with respect to the management of the *awqaf* and adjudication of its affairs. The Act empowered the Civil Court with considerable powers, which let the Court to fill a vacancy in case of nonfulfillment by election.[63] The courts also "may direct the specific performance of an act, may decree damages and costs, and may also direct the removal of such trustee, manager, superintendent or member of a committee."[64] This emboldening of the juridical hold over *waqf* properties had significant social, legal and political consequences.

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was imparted and "in which Hindus far outnumbered Muslims in both the faculty and student body." See, Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 133.

[60] Bipan Chandra, et al., *India's Struggle for Freedom*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 33-34

[61] Banday, *Administration of Wakfs*, p. 78.

[62] The Religious Endowments Act, No. XX, (1960), sec. 22.

[63] The Religious Endowments Act, (1960), sec. 10

[64] The Religious Endowments Act, (1960), sec. 14.

The turning point in the history of *waqf* administration in India was the invalidation of *waqf al aulad* or *waqf-i-ahli*[65] by the Privy Council through its ruling in the famous case of *Abdul Fata Mahommed Ishak (and others) v. Russomoy Dhur Chowdhry (and others)* in 1894.[66] This invalidation of *waqf al-aulad* was not merely an outcome of a legal doctrine but had clear economic objectives as well. The British society, which was dominated by the *lassaiz-faire* model of economics at the time, had discomfort with the feature of permanence of *waqf* and its consequent removal from the market. This notion of perpetuity seemed ingenuous and detrimental to the proper economic management of a property.[67] The economic consideration being at the heart of this verdict is also emboldened by the fact that Lord Hobhouse was, for similar reasons, against the institution of trust in England as well.[68]

However, the invalidation of *waqf al aulad* did have the unintended consequence of coalescing the Muslim elite in action. Since *waqf al aulad* was used mainly by the propertied class to prevent fragmentation of their assets, this prohibition directly impacted their interests. From the educationist, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to Indian Jurist and the first Indian member of the Privy Council, Ameer Ali, lobbied against this verdict. So did certain prominent Muslim scholars, such as Shubli Numani, who organised a meeting against the invalidation and published a *fatwa* (legal opinion) on the matter in 1910. Simultaneously, many leaders sought a directive on the issue from Islamic scholars based in other parts of the world, particularly Egypt, which housed the famous Islamic University, the Al Azhar.[69] However, it soon dawned upon the community, especially Ameer Ali, who was himself a part of the legal fraternity, that overturning the Privy Council's precedent through legal means would be very difficult, pushing him to seek a remedy through political means.

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[65] There are four broad categories of *waqf* that emerged out of the Islamic history, and were accepted by the jurists (*fuquha* or *ulema*). The *waqf khayri* (charitable waqf), the *waqf ahli* or *waqf al aulad* (family waqf), the *waqf musytarak* (joint waqf) and the *waqf Haramayn* (waqf for two holy shrines in Mecca and Medina). The *waqf khayri* was completely charitable in its orientation and its proceeds were to be spent as dictated in the waqf deed by the founder. The *waqf ahli* was reserved for the family members of the founder and its usufruct was divided between the descendants of the founder as stipulated in his deed. The *waqf musytarak* was one which combined the functions of *waqf khayri* and *waqf ahli*. On the other hand, if the there is no descendants left of the founder, in some places,[65] the income from the waqf was dedicated to the maintenance of the two holy shrines in Mecca and Medina. Since, these two places are also called *haramayn*, hence the term *waqf haramayn*. Nonetheless, there was a consensus among prominent scholars that an intention of charity or public welfare, even if only as an ultimate goal, is necessary for the creation of a *waqf*. See, Sabri, *The Imperial Politics*, p. 18.

[66] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 145-150.

[67] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 148.

[68] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 150.

[69] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 172.

It is important to note that the political arena of the times was significantly different and reasonably limited. It began to sprout during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth. This nascent political arena consisted of several 'associations,' arranged mostly on communal, educational, regional and occupational lines.[70] The British, while introducing a political reform to include native Indians, limited such opportunity to the upper strata of the society in terms of caste, class and educational qualifications. These reforms, therefore, granted a small section access to these spaces, giving prominence to issues that mattered the most to them. Further, the politics of the time depended heavily on these elite classes for patronage since it had not assumed the 'popular' dimension it came to about later. Consequently, the key personalities of the demand were primarily rich, aristocratic Muslims.

This issue finally culminated in the introduction and passage of the Mussalman Waqf Validating Act of 1913 in the Governor General's Council. It was made possible by the Indian Councils Act of 1909, also called the Morley-Minto reforms, which had allowed the election of Indians to the Governor-General's Council. However, the franchise was awarded based on the criterion of wealth and education, allowing only elite classes of society, including Muslims, to enter the governmental structure. The law was precise in its intention, stating that it is "an Act to declare the rights of Mussalmans to make settlements of property by way of "wakf" in favour of their families, children and descendants."[71] The law received strong support from the aggrieved class of Muslims, some of whom were members or had close confidants as members of the Council. The bill was unanimously passed in 1913 and was a victory for Muslims in the new structure of British governance.

The legislative victory, however, was a double-edged sword. While the forum was used to address the grievance of *waqf al aulad*, it did bestow the legislature a degree of legitimacy to intervene in the functions of the *awqaf*. It removed the institution of *waqf* from the religious sphere and firmly situated it under the purview of the state. The British government had historically, through the Regulations XIX of 1810 in Bengal and Regulation VII of 1817 in Madras, sought to intervene forcefully in the workings of the *awqaf* but had to retract post the 1857 rebellion, which it did through the Religious Endowments Act of 1863. The use of the legislature by the Muslim elite to assuage their grievance with respect to *waqf al aulad* allowed it another opportunity to reattempt the reconfiguration of *waqf* in economic terms. Thus, this was part of the *modernising* effort of the British empire, where the secular sphere intervenes to

[70] Chandra et al., *India's Struggle*, p. 75-121.
[71] The Mussalman Wakf Validating Act, no. VI, (1913), Preamble.

remodel the religious sphere, reconfiguring a religious endowment in specific economic terms. In doing so, they also crystallized and codified the *shariah* into a monolithic legal doctrine and held it to be “a system of law similar in some ways to that of the British,” even “remodelling the perceptions of Muslims themselves.”[72]

The British government started enacting laws to manage waqf in the second decade of the twentieth century. The important difference in these laws was that while the effect of the *Abdul Fata* judgement was limited to *waqf al-aulad*, the laws were extended to every form of *awqaf*, including shrines and mosques. The British introduced the Mussalman Wakf Act in 1923, which conceptualised *waqf* primarily in economic terms. The Act made furnishing details of the finances of *awqaf* a legal obligation on the *mutawalli*.[73] Failing to do so was made punishable.[74] In case of such dereliction of duty, the stipulated punishment was limited to a fine, which was increased significantly in case of a repeated offence. There was also a provision to audit these accounts by an officer appointed by the court. Further, any ordinary person could access and audit the records after taking the court's permission and paying a prescribed fee.[75] Thus, this Act removed the *waqf* from the exclusive control of the religious authorities and subsequently allowed the British to create grounds for the eventual takeover of the *awqaf* by the State structure.

Another vital Act passed under British rule was the Bengal Wakf Act of 1935. The Bengal Act had important firsts. This Act established a Board[76] and Commissioner of Wakfs[77] for general superintendence over waqfs in an area. The Commissioner could also revise inoperative provisions of the *waqf*.[78] The enrolment of every *waqf* was made mandatory.[79] The Act also tightened the control of the state over the *mutawallis*. The failure to produce financial records or any other dereliction of duty from a *mutawalli* was now punishable with imprisonment, and there was, for the first time, a provision for the removal of *mutawallis*.[80] This provision was a severe dent in the power of the *mutawallis* to manage the *waqf*. It also, in all probability, limited their autonomy to use the *waqf* space, which included a mosque, *dargahs* and other such

[72] Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments*, p. 123, 131.
[73] The Mussalman Wakf Act, no. XLII, (1923), sec. 3.
[74] The Mussalman Wakf Act, (1923), sec. 10.
[75] The Mussalman Wakf Act, (1923), sec. 9.
[76] The Bengal Wakf Act, no. XIII, (1935), sec. 7.
[77] The Bengal Wakf Act, (1935), sec. 16.
[78] The Bengal Wakf Act, (1935), sec. 28.
[79] The Bengal Wakf Act, (1935), sec. 44.
[8080] The Bengal Wakf Act, (1935), sec. 58.

religious institutions, for purposes that could have been looked at adversely by the state. This *modernising* project, thus, severely remodelled the manner of existence of a shrine within the lives of its adherents.

This *modernising* project of the *waqf* administration was mostly absent from Kashmir. The Dogra dynasty continued the monarchical ways of administration and was squarely communal regarding their socio-religious affairs.[81] Even when prodded on by the British to enact changes concerning religious affairs, the British, the Dogras actively promoted the propagation of their own Hindu faith over other faiths while claiming to adhere to a policy of non-interference. The Dogra rulers established the Dharmamath Trust, a private Trust of the Maharajas, to 'ensure the advancement of the sacred religion of the Hindus."[82] Even when "by the end of the century, the trust had been made into a government department, the upkeep of Muslim shrines remained excluded from its liability."[83]

In the later part of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th, the British promoted archaeological study and conservation, both in British India and the princely states. However, even this administrative action was undertaken through a communal lens. The Dogras, under the direction of the British, resolved to set up an Archaeological and Research Department in 1904. The aims and practices of this department, however, were openly communal. While actively promoting the preservation of Hindu religious monuments, they grossly neglected Muslim monuments. They even kept most of the Muslim shrines out of the purview of the state archaeology department and hardly provided any sum for the repair, upkeep or maintenance of these monuments. This is corroborated by the report of the British Resident in Kashmir, "who provoked colonial dismay when he reported that the durbar plainly did not care to throw away money on Muhammadans or the restoration of their mosques or tombs."[84] The resident even trashed the claim of the Dogra rulers of being short of funds, arguing it is "hardly corroborated by its generous disbursal of money at around the same time for maintaining Hindu places of worship."[85]

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[81] Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*, p. 174-182.

[82] Mridu Rai, "To 'Tear the Mask off the Face of the Past':Archaeology and Politics in Jammu and Kashmir," in *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, ed. Chitrelekha Zutshi, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 33

[83] Rai, "To Tear the Mask," p. 33

[84] Rai, "To Tear the Mask," p. 37

[85] Rai, "To Tear the Mask," p. 37

The Dogras, nonetheless, tried to incorporate some changes into the administration of the *awqaf* through some enactments. The first is the Sri Pratap Laws Consolidation Act of 1920, which stipulated that:

"in question regarding succession, inheritance, special property of females, betrothals, marriage, divorce, dower, adoption, guardianship, minority bastardy, family relations, wills, legacies, gifts, *waqf*, partitions, castes or any religious usage or institution, the rules of decision is and shall be— the Mohammedan Law in cases where the parties are Mohammedans and the Hindu Law in cases where the parties are Hindus, except in so far as such law has been, by this or any other enactment, altered or abolished or has been modified by any custom applicable to the parties concerned which is not contrary to justice, equity and good conscience and has not been, by this or any other enactment, altered or abolished, and has not been declared to be void by any competent authority."[86] (emphasis mine)

This law allowed the continuation of religious law but with an important caveat. It legitimised customary alteration or amendment to the religious canon. Further, later the same year, the Dogra government enacted The Religious Endowments Act, which allowed:

Any person or persons interested in any mosque, temple or religious establishment, or in the provenance of the worship or of the service thereof, or the trusts relating thereto, may, without joining as plaintiff any of the other persons interested therein, sue before the Civil Court the Trustee, manager or superintendent of such mosque, temple or religious establishment, for any misfeasance, breach of trust or neglect of duty, committed by such trustee, manager or superintendent in respect of the trusts vested in, or confined to them respectively ;

and the Civil Court may direct the specific performance of any act by such trustee, manager or superintendent, and may decree damages and costs against such trustee, manager or superintendent."[87]

Hence, while the earlier Act allowed a continuation of the customary laws, this Act allowed the interference of the government, through its courts, in matters of the *awqaf*. This mirrored, in a way, the route taken by the colonial British to entrench its control over the *awqaf*. The Dogra establishment augmented this provision by codifying customary laws through the Code of Tribal Custom in Kashmir, published in 1930.[88] While the consequence of this codification on identity construction in Kashmir is dealt in detail elsewhere,[89] the *Code* stipulated that:

[86] Sri Pratap Jammu and Kashmir Laws Consolidation Act, no. IV, (Samvat 1977 [1920]), sec. 4, sub sec. 1, cl. d
[87] The Religious Endowments Act, no. L (Samvat 1977 [1920]), sec. 2
[88] Zutshi, "Contesting Urban Space," p. 63.
[89] Zutshi, "Contesting Urban Space," p. 63-64.

"If a Mutawalli embezzles the property of the ziarat, the Qazi-ul-Waqt [judge of the time] is authorized to dismiss the Mutawalli. In default of the Qazi-ul-Waqt, the majority of the respectable Muhammadans can dismiss him."[90]

This provision of the religious law, coupled with the other enactments, was an attempt by the Dogras to entrench their control over the religious spaces by bringing these disputes under the purview of the courts. In part, they were successful too. The fight between Mirwaiz-i-Hamdani (Chief Preacher at Khanqah-e-Mo'alla) and Mirwaiz-i-Jama Masjid (Chief Preacher at Jama Masjid) over rights to preach at different mosques and to collect *nazranas* (offerings) thereof, allowed the Dogra ruler to intervene in the religious affairs of the Muslims. The ruler divided the mosques among these two groups to prevent law and order problems.[91] However, the gross communal bias in the state policy against the Muslim religious sites mentioned above made the Muslim community more conscious of the need to take care of their monuments. This stance was also promoted by the expat Kashmiri population, mainly in Indian Punjab, through newspaper and journal publications.[92] It proved to be a decisive turn in the politics of the region and the nature of its *awqaf* management. Even before the enactment of these laws, a decision regarding the Pathar Masjid of Srinagar led to a decisive turn towards communitarian politics within the region.

The Emergence of *Waqf* Institutionalisation in Kashmir: The Community and the Politics

Pathar Masjid is a Mughal-era mosque built by Noor Jehan, the wife of Emperor Jehangir. The interesting fact about the Masjid is that it was hardly ever used for prayer and was in disuse for centuries before it became a cause of political agitation against the Dogras. The reasons for such disuse are varied. While some believe it was not used as a mosque as a woman commissioned it, there is also an apocryphal saying which links such use to the arrogance of Noor Jehan. It is claimed that when asked about the amount she spent on the construction of the mosque, she pointed towards her shoe, alluding that the amount was equal to the worth of the jewel embedded in it. This prompted the *ulema* of those times to rule it unfit for prayer.[93] Over the centuries, it was used either as a military godown or, during the Sikh rule, as a granary.

[90] Zutshi, "Contesting Urban Space," p. 65.
[91] Rai, *Hindu Rulers*, p. 238-39.
[92] Rai, "To Tear the Mask," p. 35-36.
[93] Rai, "To Tear the Mask," p. 46, footnote no. 48.

All this history became immaterial when the Muslims rallied to take back the mosque from the Dogra regime, setting in motion events far exceeding the issue of control over the mosque.

Ranbir Singh, the Dogra ruler of the time, decreed the conversion of the Pathar Masjid into an orphanage in the name of the Hindu Deity Sri Gadhadharji (Hanuman) in 1911. Even though the mosque had not been a site of prayer for centuries, the Muslim population of the region rose in protest. The expat population in Punjab wrote articles in newspapers using the example of Pathar Masjid to put forth the case of Muslim discrimination and oppression under the Dogra regime.[94] Even the Revenue Minister of the region, who was a Muslim, wrote against such a proposal.[95] Although the ruler stuck to his ground initially, he finally relented and transferred the shrine to the archaeological department. By then, however, Muslims were asking for the control of the Masjid and other shrines and religious spaces and to be allowed to offer prayers in its precincts.[96]

Slowly but steadily, shrines and mosques became sites of contestation between the rulers and the population, with people demanding more control as a community over their places of worship. This demand received a fillip when the Commission formed, under the Chairmanship of B.J Glancy, to investigate the events that led to the 13th July massacre of 1931 agreed with this demand of the Muslims of the valley. Thus, "by recommending the return to the Muslim community of almost all the shrines they had demanded, barring those too dangerously dilapidated, the Commission had certainly strengthened the Muslim position vis-a-vis the durbar."[97]

Hence, while in British India, the *waqf* administration was being transformed through legislative and legal structure, in Kashmir, different *waqfs* became sites of contestation and mobilization against a communal and oppressive regime. *Awqaf* properties around the region became a coalescing force for the Muslim community. The Pathar masjid agitation was the spark that ignited the Muslim community and made it work towards a common objective. After 1931, Pathar Masjid became the site of formed to fight for the rights of the oppressed Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir. The importance of shrines and other religious spaces in this political project is reflected from the Presidential Address of the first session of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1932, given by Sheikh Abdullah. In addition to demands for

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[94] Rai, *Hindu Rulers*, p. 213.
[95] Rai, *Hindu Rulers*, p. 212.
[96] Rai, "To Tear the Mask," p. 40.
[97] Rai, "To Tear the Mask," p. 40-41.

press freedoms and other rights, Sheikh Abdullah, while acknowledging control over few shrines and other religious sites, raises the demand to transfer control of religious spaces to the Muslim community. He says:

"Our demand was that all mosques, graveyards, and other holy places, and concerned properties attached to them which are under the control of the government or have been transferred by the government to any unrelated person, should be returned to us. The king, in principle, accepted our demand and passed the necessary orders. As a result, Pather Masjid, *Khanqah-e-Sokhta*, *Khanqah-e-Bulbul Shah*, *Khanah-e-Dara Shikoh*, Shahi Bagh Mosque, *Khaqah-e-Sofi Shah*¸ Eidgah Srinagar and other places have come under the control of Muslims. And further, it has been proclaimed that all such spaces would be handed over to Muslims, and if such transfer requires any compensation to any person, the government will pay it."[98]

Hence, the *modernising* tendencies that the British government introduced in the *waqf* administration in the rest of the Indian sub-continent were missing from Kashmir. While, in the rest of the subcontinent, state institutions were playing an increasing role in the control and management of *awqaf*, the Kashmiri population was fighting to altogether remove them from the control of the governmental structure. The management of these spaces was increasingly turning 'communitarian' and 'political' compared to legal and juridical in the rest of the subcontinent. In the rest of the sub-continent, the state and its institutions reconfigured the *waqf* spaces. In Kashmir, the community and popular politicians remodelled the *waqf* spaces as sites of popular mobilization. Even the institutionalization of the *waqf* administration was done outside the purview of the State, with the formation of *Idara-i-Awqaf-e-Islamia* in 1942.

The Autonomous Department of Waqf Administration: The Trajectory of Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia

The *Idara-e-Awqaf Islamia Kashmir* (Department of Auqaf Kashmir) was an outcome of a meeting which took place under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah on 24th January 1940 to decide upon the management of the shrine at *Hazratbal*. This was a culmination of a political fight between Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah and Sheikh Abdullah for control over the affairs of the shrine.[99] It was decided in the meeting to set up an *Idara Awqaf-e-Asaar-i-Sharief Hazratbal*

[98] Mirza Shafiq Hussain, *Kashmiri Musalmanun ki Siyasi Jaddujahad*, (Srinagar, Sheikh Muhammad Usman and Sons, 2015), p. 249-250 (Translation from Urdu mine).
[99] This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter

(Department of *Awqaf* of *Hazratbal*), and Sheikh Abdullah was chosen to lead the organization.[100] The *Idara* took over the responsibility of looking after the shrine. This organization soon metamorphosized into *Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Kashmir,* with Sheikh Abdullah actively and aggressively working to bring different shrines under its ambit. Within a few years, all the significant shrines were taken over, and the *Idara* became an inalienable part of the political programme of Sheikh Abdullah. The *Idara* continued to exist after the accession of the region with the Union of India in 1947. Sheikh Abdullah continued to remain its President while also serving as the Prime Minister of the region, neatly coalescing the religious and political functions.

Even though the logic of economics of the *waqf* was central to the foundation of *awqaf*, it was communitarian rather than statist. This is reflected in the constitution of the *Idara,* which imagined a participatory and autonomous *waqf* management structure. The constitution of the *Idara* adopted on 21st May 1970[101] brings forth the fundamental features in the nature of the waqf administration espoused by the *Idara*.[102] The constitution constitutes *Idara* as a body to look after "the preservation and supervision of wakf properties, to ensure their development, to strive for their proper and effective management and, subject to the assets and resources of the waqf, endeavour for the economic, educational and social development of the nation."[103] The *Idara* consisted of a President (which Sheikh Abdullah was designated for life), a Governing Council (*Majlis-e-Uzma*), a Managing Council (*Majlis-e-Intezamia*), and different committees, such as the standing committee, sub-*awqaf* committee or any other such body formed by the Governing or the Managing Council.[104]

The Governing Council was conceptualized as the most powerful body of the *Idara,* which had both general and constitutional functions. It was responsible for looking after the *Idara*, to amend the constitution, approve the annual budget, approving a transfer of any transfer of more than one lakh from one heading to another, formulating rights and duties of the officials of the *Idara*, and hearing and adjudicating a no-confidence motion against the President.[105] It also

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[100] G.N Gauhar, *Hazratbal: The Central Stage of Kashmiri Politics*, (New Delhi: Virgo Publication,1998), p. 255.
[101] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia ka Aaeen, (24th May, 1970), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar. (Translation of provisiosn from Urdu mine).
[102] This constitution of the *idara* mentions an earlier constitution and, in probability, there was an earlier one too. However, both the documents seem to be lost.
[103] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 2, sec. 1.
[104] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 3, sec. 1
[105] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 5, cl. 1-5.

had to frame guidelines and rules for administration for different *awqaf*,[106] set up educational institutions to promote objectives of the *Idara*[107] or set up orphanages, hostels, boarding houses, guest houses and schools wherever required, and provide scholarships to deserving candidates.[108] Thus the directive principles of the *Idara* were concise and clearly spelt out. Also, the President had to nominate the members of the Managing Council from the members Governing Council.[109]

The Managing Council, on the other hand, was responsible for the legal and economic aspects of the *Idara*. It had the right to file a suit or defend any against the *Idara*,[110] to sell the produce of any orchard or any other agricultural land under the *Idara*,[111] and finally, to sell or buy any immovable property on behalf of the *Idara*.[112] Thus, the Managing Council has considerable authority and autonomy over its action, including the aforementioned power of alienation. However, the Constitution puts a check on the authority of the Managing Council by allowing the Governing Council to amend such an act by the Managing Council, if it considers it contrary to the interests of the *Awqaf*.[113]

Members of the Governing Council were to be elected from each shrine or *waqf* property associated with the *Idara*,[114] with the number dependent on the income of a particular *waqf*.[115] The number of members from a particular endowment could range from one to twenty. Crucially, however, every affiliated *waqf* had to be represented in the Governing Council.[116] Thus, the *Idara* was participatory and representative in its character, with each *waqf* having a presence in the decision-making process. This influence of customary authorities on the *Idara* was a significant impediment to any centralization, and provided them with considerable autonomy to manage the affairs of their respective shrines. The constitution accrues no power over appointment, removal or power to assign duties to any *mutawalli, sajjada-nishin* or *nishandeh* to the *Idara*. Also, on paper, the qualifications required to become a member were not stringent to disallow anyone on political or legal grounds. These qualifications include

[106] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 7, sec. 2, sub sec. 1.
[107] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 7, sec. 2, sub sec. 2.
[108] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 7, sec. 2, sub sec. 3.
[109] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 6, sec. 1, sub sec. 1.
[110] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 7, sec. 3, sub sec. 2.
[111] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 7, sec. 3, sub sec. 6.
[112] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 7, sec. 2, sub sec. 6.
[113] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 7, sec. 2, sub sec. 5 and 6.
[114] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 4, sec. 1, sub sec. 1
[115] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 4, sec. 1, sub sec. 2, cl. 2 sub cl. 1-3.
[116] Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 4, sec. 1, sub sec. 2, cl. 1.

believing in the purpose and goals of the *Idara*, paying the annual fee of the *Idara* and being mentally sound.[117] The only negative qualification is the non-involvement in any anti-Islam movements, implicitly recognizing political involvement of any kind. There was a ban on employees' political involvement, but that was hardly enforced considering the political nature of the *Idara* itself.

The *Idara* derived its political heft from its immense socio-religious heft due to its control over different shrines of the valley. This aspect fed into the charisma of its President, Sheikh Abdullah, whose continued association with it gave the *Idara* a distinctively political hue. From its formation till the death of Sheikh Abdullah, the *Idara* was led by him, except for eleven years between his imprisonment in 1953 to his first release in 1964. During this time, *Idara* was led by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, the then Prime Minister of the region. Due to his long association, Sheikh Abdullah enjoyed considerable control over the *Idara*. The religious standing of Sheikh Abdullah was considerably buoyed by his role in the reconstruction of the *Dargah-Hazratbal* mosque, which was completed in 1979, during which Sheikh had involved the entire population of the valley by asking for donations for the construction. However, much before the completion of the construction, he spearheaded a drastic change in the nature of the *Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia*.

The *Idara* was transformed into a Trust at a public gathering at *Dargah-Hazratbal* on 31st August 1973 and subsequently registered and renamed as All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Auqaf Trust.[118] This change had an important legal repercussion since, to set up the Trust, the society was registered under the Registration of Societies Act.[119] Thus, the working of the *awqaf* was brought under the purview of the state, albeit tangentially, for the first time. There were also important administrative changes between the structure of the *Idara* and the Trust. However, Sheikh Abdullah, after his death, his son Farooq Abdullah, was appointed Trustee and Chairman for life.

It was the representative character of the *Idara* that was curtailed the most. The *Majlis-e-Uzma*, a representative body, was replaced by a Board of Trustees elected from the Governing Council containing members of the Trust. However, the trustees had the right to allow people to become members of the Trust, save the only condition that the member should be a permanent resident

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117 Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia Ka Aaeen, ar. 8, sec. 1.

118 Trust Deed: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Auqaf Trust, (Srinagar: New Kashmir Press, 1983), p. 1-2.

119 Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 257.

of the state and a Muslim. All the financial, administrative and legal duties were put under the purview of the Board. Even within the Board, the Chairman and the Managing Trustee (a post reserved for Sheikh Abdullah, and after his death for his son Farooq Abdullah, for life) had sweeping powers. The Chairman had the exclusive power "to nominate two additional trustees,"[120] "to nominate Vice-Chairman, Secretary and any other office-bearer of the Trust,"[121] "to frame rules and regulation for the administration of the Trust fund, income of the property and for regulation and conduct of meetings from time to time,"[122] and "to nominate his successors as the Chairman and as Managing Trustee."[123] Additionally, "the Board of Trustees, may, whenever necessary, delegate such of its powers to the Managing Trustee as they may [deem] necessary, for efficient working of the affairs of the Trust."[124] It led to further control over the *awqaf* of some individuals politically close to Sheikh Abdullah in general and entrenched control of him and his family in particular.

While the Trust maintained autonomy, the uniqueness of the structure of *Idara* was severely dented. The *Idara* had emerged out of political circumstances as a representative and communitarian body, a unique form of *waqf* administration. The loss of this institution was not only the loss of the Kashmiri society but also of the larger Islamic world, as *Idara*, as a structure, provided a different perspective of *waqf* administration than prevalent across the Islamic world. However, even after its reconstruction as a trust, its existence within the Kashmir society still had political ramifications, which will be detailed later in this chapter.

Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia was not the only management authority concerning *awqaf* in the region. Concurrent with the existence of this body, in its different iterations, the State continued to enact laws as a part of its *modernising* project to reconfigure *waqf*. While the trajectory of the *Idara* can also be called the success of that *modernising* project, it was at least delayed in its implementation. This delay allowed the entrenchment of a legacy and a political practice that emanated from the existence of the *Idara* as an independent organisation and its consequent role in politics thereof, which has become hard to shake off. Even the legal enactments of the State of Jammu and Kashmir were aware of this uniqueness and hence, the *waqf* laws had a separate trajectory within Kashmir, than the trajectory of *waqf* laws in India, which controls the region. A comparative analysis reveals that the autonomy and the centrality of these

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[120] Trust Deed, sec. 13.
[121] Trust Deed, sec. 20.
[122] Trust Deed, sec. 28.
[123] Trust Deed, sec. 18.
[124] Trust Deed, sec. 17, sub sec. 2.

religious spaces, and the existence of *Idara*, was a constant shadow on the legislative enactments in Kashmir.

The Post-Colonial Waqf Administration: Initial Waqf Laws in India and Kashmir

Even though India achieved independence in 1947, the politico-legal structure inherited from the British continued, which included the rationality of the modern state and its *modernising* project. Thus, while article 26 of the Indian constitution stipulates that "subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes,[125] this is severely undercut by the Constitution by giving the state to make a law "regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice."[126] By taking over these aspects of religious practice, this 'modern' Indian state continued the process of *modernising* by constructing the definition of 'legitimate' religion and its sphere of activity, devoid of any economic, financial or political aspect.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir was relatively outside this *modernising* arm of the Indian State, as it was granted limited autonomy through article 370 of the Indian constitution. This article was inserted into the Indian constitution because the state had acceded to the Union of India under controversial circumstances on 27th October 1947. This accession was conditional, subject to a plebiscite, promised on the floor of the Indian Parliament.[127] While the contours of this dispute are beyond the scope of this research and are dealt with in detail in several works, this situation allowed Jammu and Kashmir a significant degree of autonomy to the state in legislative and administrative matters. This autonomy extended to the region's legislative enactments, and the Indian enactments did not automatically extend to the state due to article 370. Although there is hardly any doubt that the Indian government did pressurise the state government to mirror the central laws or extend them (to be discussed later), the divergences in these two sets of laws bring forth, clearly, the different, unique and special place and nature of *waqf* spaces in Kashmir.

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[125] Constitution of India, art. 26, cl. a.
[126] Constitution of India, art. 25, cl. 2 sub cl. b.
[127] Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*, (Massachussets: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 38.

The first *waqf* law enacted by the Indian Parliament was the Wakf Act in 1954. The Act was augmented by different amendments such as the Wakf Act Amendment of 1956, the Public Waqfs (Extensions of Limitations) Act of 1959, the Wakf Amendment Act of 1964, the Wakf Amendment Act of 1969 and the Wakf Amendment Act of 1984. On the other hand, the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly enacted the Jammu and Kashmir Wakaf Act in 1959. The regional Act was discernibly modelled on the Central Act, as many provisions are copied *verbatim* from the central legislation.[128] Nonetheless, some important divergences between these laws provide crucial insights regarding the different socio-political importance of these places and their customary authorities.

The first significant change due to the constitutional autonomy of Kashmir was the non-extension of the mandate of the Central Wakf Council to Kashmir. The Central Wakf Council was set up through the Wakf Amendment Act of 1964 as a central agency to look after the management of wakfs and advise the central government "on matters concerning the working of the Boards and the due administration of the wakfs."[129] The Central Wakf Council is a nominated body, with its members appointed by the central government.[130] (section 8, sub-section 2). The Boards mentioned above refer to the Wakf Boards, which were created to institutionalise the management and superintendence of waqf properties across India through the Wakf Act of 1954.

The Act allowed the creation of Waqf boards across the different states and union territories of the country,[131] which were entrusted with broad financial, legal, penal and miscellaneous powers to manage and supervise numerous properties across India. The Wakf Board was supposed to be established by a notification in the Official Gazette, by the State government as "a body corporate having perpetual succession and a common seal with power to acquire and hold property and to transfer any such property subject to such conditions and restrictions as may be prescribed."[132] Further, it was made "lawful for the Board to so re-organise its administrative set-up in the State as to ensure better administration of the wakfs in the State."[133] The Board, was therefore, provided a general authority of superintendence over the wakfs of the state, including to ensure that the wakfs under its superintendence are "properly maintained,

[128] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakaf Act, no. X, (1959) (repealed 1978).
[129] The Wakf Act, no. XXIX, (1959), sec. 8A. sub sec. 1. (repealed 1995).
[130] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 8A, sub sec. 2.
[131] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 9, sub sec. 1.
[132] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 9, sub sec. 2.
[133] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 9, sub sec. 3.

controlled and administered and the income thereof is duly applied to the objects and for the purposes for which such wakfs were created or intended."[134] The Board is also the sole authorityin the Act which can allow alienation of land by the manner of gift, sale, exchange and hypothecation, provided "at least two-thirds of the members of the Board vote in favour of such transaction."[135] This discretion could be employed with a mere satisfaction that such an act is (i) necessary or beneficial to the wakf; (ii) consistent with the objects to the wakf; and (iii) the consideration thereof is reasonable and adequate.[136] This provision eschews the view of Islamic theology, which considers that once a property is declared as *waqf*, it is perpetual in its nature, and a change in its character cannot occur.

In continuation of its power to alienate property, the Board could transfer the right to the State government to take over the management of an urban property if it has a potential for the development of such land for land uses, such as the establishment of any shopping centre or market or for the construction of residential flats or any other commercial uses.[137] Further, the Act also provides that the Board can take over management of a *waqf* directly, if it is of the opinion, which is to be recorded by it in writing, "that the filling up of the vacancy in the offence of a *mutawalli* is prejudicial to the interests of the wakf."[138] The Board could also remove *mutawalli* for several reasons, including "willfully and persistently disobey the lawful orders made by the Central Government, State Government, Board or Wakf Commissioner under any provision of this Act or rule or order made thereunder."[139] Even if a *mutawalli* approaches a Tribunal against such an action and an enquiry is ordered, the Board can still "if it is of the opinion that it is necessary to do so in the interests of the wakf, by an order suspend such *mutawalli* until the conclusion of the inquiry."[140] The penalties prescribed for the dereliction of duty by a *mutawalli* were also severe, ranging from a mere fine to imprisonment.[141]

Even after providing such extensive powers to the Board, which essentially was a nominated body of the State, the Act accrues discretionary power directly to the governmental structure. The central government reserved the right to regulate the secular activities of the Wakfs by

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[134] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 15, sub sec. 1.
[135] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 15, sub sec. 2, cl. j.
[136] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 36-A, sub sec. 2.
[137] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 15-A, sub sec. 1.
[138] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 43-A, sub sec. 1.
[139] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 41, sub sec. 1, cl. i.
[140] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 43-A, sub sec. 4-B.
[141] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 41, sub sec. 1.

laying down "general principles and policies of wakfs administration is so for as they relate to the secular activities of the wakfs."[142] It can also call for the "review of the secular activities of wakfs generally"[143] and call for reports and issue directions to the Board or the Wakf Commissioner,[144] which "the Board and the Wakf Commissioners shall comply with."[145] The state government also "from time to time, give to the Board such general or special directions as the state government thinks fit and in the performance of its functions, the Board shall comply with any such directions."[146] The state government also holds the final authority over the budget of the Wakf board,[147] the power to appoint mutawalli if the wakf deed delegates this power to the Board,[148] and the general power of audit.[149] The Act also allows the state government to supersede the Board based on its subjective "opinion that the Board is unable to, or has persistently made default in the performance of its duty, has exceeded or abused its powers or has willfully and without sufficient cause failed to comply with any direction issued by the central government under Section 62 or the state government under Section 63."[150] Such an action can also be taken if the state government decides based on any annual report of an inspection, "that the Board's continuance is likely to be injurious to the interests of the wakfs in the State."[151]

All these provisions, from the control over economics, personnel and activities, reduce the wakf space, such as shrines and mosques, as a space for community interaction. The Act made the position of the *mutawalli* and any other customary authority increasingly vulnerable and completely dependent on the pleasure of the State. This would have made these customary authorities wary of allowing the use of *waqf* property for any purpose to which the State may

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[142] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 62, sub sec. 1, cl. a.
[143] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 62, sub sec. 2, cl. b.
[144] The Wakf Commissioner substituted the position of secretary of the Board, through section 17 of the Wakf Amendment Act, 1984. The Wakf Commissioner was granted powers of considerable range, which included powers to make appointments to inspect "or causing the making of inspection of, wakf properties, accounts, records or deeds or documents", to audit accounts and "doing, generally, all such acts as may be necessary for the due control, maintenance and administration of wakfs." The Commissioner was also authorized to refuse implementation of orders of the Board if it is of the opinion, among other provisions, that such action "is not beneficial to the Board or in any wakf or to wakfs generally". Considering that the Wakf Commissioner was an appointee of the State government and enjoys office at their pleasure, this amounted to scuttling of powers of the Board affecting its functioning. See The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 21.
[145] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 6, sub sec. 2.
[146] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 63.
[147] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 49, sub sec. 3.
[148] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 43-B.
[149] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 33, sub sec. 3; and sec. 51.
[150] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 64, sub sec. 1.
[151] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 64, sub sec. 1.

have objected to, vastly reducing the social and political efficacy of these shrines and spaces in the lives of Muslims. Thus, in addition to limiting the hold of *mutawalli* over the shrine, it was made increasingly prejudicial to their interest to allow the space of the shrine for any political or social cause, particularly those of dissent. This constricted the autonomy of the shrine as a space to project the interest of the community.

The Jammu and Kashmir Wakaf Act mostly follows the template of the Wakf Act of the Indian government. It also sets up a Committee of the Wakfs, which had jurisdiction over an area specified in the notification.[152] This Committee had powers similar to the Board instituted through the Indian Act. However, certain important distinctions remained. To begin with, the Act prevented any alienation of wakaf land, stating that "no transfer of any immovable property of wakaf by way of sale or gift shall be valid."[153] The Act empowered the Committee of Wakafs to "sanction leases of property for a term not exceeding 20 years."[154] The Act also curtailed the power of the State government to intervene in the matters of the Committee. The State did not have the final say in the formation of the Budget of the committee. Instead, it was the responsibility of the committee to "settle its own budget and budget of all the wakfs within jurisdiction."[155] The Act also codified the use of the Wakf fund and made the committee its administrator,[156] as opposed to the Indian Act of 1954, which allowed the state government to form rules for its control.[157] Although the state government retained the power to supersede the committee in case of abuse or non-performance of function, it limits such supersession to just six months, which was incorporated into Indian *waqf* laws only in 2013.

On the issue of *mutawalli* and other customary authorities as well, the JK Act differed from its Indian counterpart. The Act entrusted the *mutawalli* with only two duties. One, "every *mutawalli* would carry out all directions which may from time to time be issued to him by the Committee in respect of the wakaf of which he is the *mutawalli*,[158] and second, "the *mutawalli* of every wakaf shall offer every reasonable facility for the inspection of documents and the property of such wakaf and shall render every assistance in inquiries, when called upon to do so."[159] Even then, no provision stipulates any penalty or inquiry that can be initiated against *a*

[152] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakaf Act, (1959), sec. 7, sub sec. 1.
[153] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakaf Act, (1959), sec. 41, sub sec. 1.
[154] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakaf Act, (1959), sec. 13, sub sec. 2, cl. j.
[155] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakaf Act, (1959), sec. 13, sub sec. 2, cl. f.
[156] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakaf Act, (1959), sec. 13, sub sec. 2, cl. k.
[157] The Wakf Act, (1959), sec. 64, sub sec. 2, cls. t and h.
[158] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakaf Act, (1959), sec. 24.
[159] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakaf Act, (1959), sec. 25.

mutawalli in case of dereliction of duty. A *mutawalli* can only be appointed or stopped from continuing in case of disqualification under section 26 of the Act, all of which are well-defined provisions based on financial, moral or religious reasons. An interesting qualification for a *mutawalli* is that a person should not be a government servant, which may have, unwittingly only, allowed for a more autonomous administration of a wakaf.

Further, the Act did not have any provision allowing the central government to regulate secular activities of the *wakf* or any provisions allowing directions from the state government. Thus, this Act endowed a considerable degree of autonomy and independence to both committees of wakafs and the customary authorities in charge of specific works to manage and control these endowments. It points out that *mutawalli* and other authorities enjoyed a considerable degree of importance and power over the socio-political life of the valley, which the state was wary of challenging or may have been using for its benefit. The other indication that this Act did not attempt any drastic change from the structure of the wakaf administration existing before it in Kashmir is evident in section 57 of the Act, which allows other "committees of wakafs existing at present to continue to function as long as a committee of wakafs for that area is established in accordance with the provisions of this Act." This last provision provided a legal basis for the *Idara* to continue.

Also, it is beyond doubt that, as far as administration and control over shrines is concerned, *Idara* held sway in the valley. The government project of *bureaucratizing* and *modernising* the *waqf* administration under the Jammu and Kashmir Wakaf Act, 1959, failed to garner any traction. In a letter addressed to the Officer on Special Duty (O.S.D), Ministry of Law, Government of India, dated 24th July 1971, an official of the State government that the survey envisaged in the Wakaf Act in 1959 is yet to be undertaken in majority of places in the state, particularly the valley.[160] This is twelve years after the enactment of the act. The officer also admits that the establishment of provincial Boards as stipulated in the Act is still under consideration by the government. Even the committees were formed in just a handful of places, most outside the valley of Kashmir. It points to the fact that the control of the State over these properties in the State was minimal. In the letter addressed to the O.S.D mentioned above, the state authorities also concede that it has no "financial or administrative control over the Idara

[160] Home Secretary J&K to O.S.D Wakaf, (19th July, 1971), "IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.

Auqaf-i-Islamia."[161] Also, a considerable number of shrines, some of them politically and culturally important such as the *Dargah-Hazrabal* and *Chrar-i-Sharief*, remained under the control of the *Idara*, with no control of the State as the "State Wakaf Act has so far not been enforced to the Wakaf properties and shrines under Idara's control."[162]

The rapprochement between Sheikh Abdullah and the Centre, effected through an accord signed between his representative and of Indira Gandhi, was momentous for the region. It affected every aspect of political life in Kashmir, and the *waqf* administration could not remain untouched either. In the very text of the Indira-Sheikh accord, the Centre accrues freedom to the State to legislate upon matters "like welfare measures, cultural matters, social security, personal law and procedural laws, in a matter suited to the special conditions of the State" (clause 4, Indira-Sheikh Accord). Since *waqf* comes under the purview of Muslim personal law, it was deemed to be under the jurisdiction of the State only. Sheikh Abdullah, who already controlled the *Idara* and had transformed it into the Muslim Auqaf Trust, further consolidated his control over the *awqaf* of the State by enacting the Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act 1978.[163]

Even though the Act revoked the Wakaf Act of 1959, it was mostly a copy of that act with few important changes. Most importantly, it envisaged setting up a Board of Wakafs for superintendence over all the Tehsil Waqf Committees in the region.[164] The Tehsil Wakaf Committees was a rechristening of the area-specific committee of wakafs stipulated in the previous Act; only now was the area earmarked as a Tehsil. Interestingly, two-thirds of the members of the Board were to be elected by and from the Tehsil Committees,[165] while the two third members of the Tehsil Committee were elected by different local and state bodies.[166] The rest one-third members of the Board, as well as the Committee, were to be nominated by the Government. The Government also replaced the Civil Court as the court of appeal against any

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[161] Home Secretary J&K to O.S.D Wakaf, (19th July, 1971), "IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.
[162] Home Secretary J&K to O.S.D Wakaf, (19th July, 1971), "IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.
[163] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, no. XI, (1978) (repealed 2001).
[164] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 7, sub sec. 1.
[165] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 25.
[166] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 8, sub sec. 2.

decision of the Tehsil[167] or with regard to the survey of waqf.[168] It also made a *mutawalli* accountable to act according "to duties imposed on him by or under this act,"[169] and one could be removed in case the person "has exceeded or abused his powers under the provision of this Act."[170] The fact that this disqualification was to be done by the Tehsil Committee,[171] a representative body, and that removal of a *mutawalli* did not "affect his personal right, if any, in respect of the Wakaf property either as a beneficiary or in any other capacity if specifically provided in any document, deed or *sanad* creating the Wakaf,"[172] did not constrict the political function an office of a *mutawalli* could undertake.

However, the Act enabled the Muslim Auqaf Trust to continue functioning as an independent body. Section 10 of the Act expressly relieved the Trust from the application of crucial provisions of the Act, including survey, terms of Office, rules for Disqualification of a member, Removal of Chairman, Appointment of Staff and the overriding provision of the law. It allowed any managing committee of any wakaf, which may have come into force by any trust deed, to assume the powers of the Tehsil committee, established by this law as a replacement for the Wakf committee provided in the Wakaf Act of 1959, for such wakaf.[173] It also makes it lawful for any such Tehsil Committees "to affiliate any Wakaf with the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Auqaf Trust" instead of the Wakaf Board established by this Act in each province[174] and "thereupon the provisions of this Act such apply to such Wakaf in the same manner as they apply to any other Wakaf covered by such Trust."[175]

Thus, this era was characterised by the entrenchment of the *dual* system of the *waqf* administration in Kashmir. It also marked the transformation of the *Idara* into a Trust with curtailed participatory nature and increased control of Sheikh Abdullah on its affairs. The Trust, however, continued to remain significantly autonomous, aided by the provisions of the 1978 Act. However, as Sheikh Abdullah led the government and the Trust, there was again a synergy between the two institutions. The conversion of the *Idara* to a Trust also played a role in this synergy. However, the structure was still dualistic in construction and action, and the control

[167] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 24, sub sec. 2.
[168] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 6, sub sec. 2.
[169] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 28, cl. ix.
[170] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 28, cl. ix.
[171] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 29.
[172] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 7, sub sec. 2.
[173] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 7, sub sec. 2.
[174] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 25.
[175] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (1978), sec. 7, sub sec. 3.

of the State was minimal and mediated through Sheikh Abdullah. Thus, this period is characterized by the emergence of a 'feeble State control' over a 'dualistic' and a 'community-centric' model of waqf administration.

The Transformation of Waqf Structure in Kashmir: The Enactment of Waqf Laws at the Turn of the Millennium

After the illegal demolition of the Babri Masjid on the 6th of December 1992, there was renewed pressure on the Central government and different State governments to protect and preserve different places of worship of the Muslim community. The Parliament had already passed the Places of Worship Act in 1991, which prohibited "conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August 1947" (preamble of the act), save Babri Masjid as the title suit regarding it was subjudice at that time. The wanton destruction of the Babri Masjid pushed the government to bolster wakf laws further. The Parliament enacted a new waqf law in 1995,[176] which streamlined the provisions of the earlier law and addressed its shortcomings and concerns it had aroused in the general Muslim community. The law was substantially amended in 2013 and remains in force in India.

On the other hand, the catastrophic destruction of *Chrar* played the role of a necessary catalyst for such a change. The discomfort of the Indian state with the autonomy of the *waqf* administration during the earlier period has been mentioned above. In the context of the *Chrar* fiasco, this discomfort attained a sense of urgency. The governmental structure believed that the "situation in the troubled state would have been less worrisome if the administration was armed with powers to prevent the misuse of religious places" and called for "an urgent enactment and effective enforcement of a law to keep religious places beyond the access and operation of different quarters."[177]

The biggest emphasis in the central waqf law in its current form is prohibiting the alienation of waqf property. The principal Act allowed the alienation of property with the prior sanction of the Board, with certain safeguards such as that "no mosque, dargah, khanqah, graveyard, or

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[176] The Waqf Act, no. XLVII, (1995).
[177] "Religious Places in J&K: Early Enactment likely to prevent Misuse," *Kashmir Times*, (16th May, 1995), p.1 and 6.

imambara shall be leased."[178] However, through the amendment in 2013, this provision was changed, and it is stipulated that "no person shall sell, gift, exchange, mortgage or transfer any movable or immovable property which is a waqf property to any other person."[179] Further, any such act would be "void *ab initio*,[180] even in contravention of any *waqf* deed. The Act, however, does allow the acquisition of waqf land but provides that "a) the acquisition shall not be in contravention of the Places of Public Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991; (b) the purpose for which the land is being acquired shall be undisputedly for a public purpose; (c) no alternative land is available which shall be considered as more or less suitable for that purpose; and (d) to safeguard adequately the interest and objective of the waqf, the compensation shall be at the prevailing market value or a suitable land with reasonable solatium in lieu of the acquired property."[181] The Act also sets out provision for the "restoration of waqf properties in occupation of Government agencies to waqf Board,"[182] and penalties for alienation of waqf property without the sanction of the Board, "both temporarily or permanently."[183] It can be safely said that, in principle, the Act is quite stringent in preventing any abuse of waqf property.

The Act, however, further constricts customary authorities' role and authority in managing their respective *waqf*. The powers of the Board concerning the management of the *awqaf* and *mutawalli* are left unchanged, even bolstered in some cases. For example, in a decision regarding the development of an urban waqf property, the concurrence of the *mutawalli* is completely removed. However, he has to be compensated annually,[184] and after the expenses incurred in developing the property are recouped, "the developed properties shall be handed over to *mutawalli* of the concerned waqf."[185] The assumption of direct management of certain *awqaf* by the Board is also made easier by allowing such takeover "if the board has evidence to prove that the management of the waqf has contravened the provisions of the Act."[186] Even the State government has been authorised to make rules regarding "the qualifications required to be fulfilled by a person to be appointed as a *mutawalli*."[187] Other provisions, such as framing

[178] P.S. Munawar Hussain, *Muslim Endowments, Waqf Law and Judicial Response in India*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2021), p. 170.
[179] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 51, sub sec. 1.
[180] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 51, sub sec. 1-A.
[181] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 51, sub sec. 1-A.
[182] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 104-B.
[183] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 52-A.
[184] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 32, sub sec. 5.
[185] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 32, sub sec. 6.
[186] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 65, sub sec. 5.
[187] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 109, sub sec. 2, cl. i.

the rules of management, superseding any management committee, inspecting records and having the power to appoint or remove *mutawalli*, remain enforced. This Act has, thus, bolstered administrative and statist control of the *awqaf*, consequently diminishing the role of customary authority and community in the management of a religious place.

Additionally, the Act further augmented the process of centralization and governmental control of the awqaf through different provisions. One, even though the enlisting process of election of the members of the Waqf Board, it reserves the right of the State government to nominate members of any category if it is satisfied that "it is not reasonably practicable to constitute an electoral college for any of the categories mentioned."[188] The State government also reserves the right to give general or special directions "as it may deem fit, and the Board has to comply with such directions."[189] The State government also has the power to frame rules for various aspects of the Board, including having the final say in the budget of the Board.

The Central government, on its part, continued to have the power to "regulate the secular activities of the awqaf."[190] The Central Wakf Council is also made powerful and can now advise the State government and the Boards.[191] It can also demand information from the State government or the Board "on the performance of Waqf Boards in the State, particularly on their financial performance, survey, maintenance of waqf deeds, revenue records, encroachment of waqf properties, annual reports and audit reports in the manner and time as may be specified by the Council."[192] It also has the power to issue a directive "if it is satisfied that there was *prima facie* evidence of irregularity of violation of the provisions of the Act, which have to be complied with by the State government or the Board."[193] In case of a dispute in the provision mentioned above, the power of adjudication also rests with the Centre.[194]

Thus, while the Act tries to address some immediate issues arising out of particular contexts, it continues with the skeletal framework of the earlier Act. While the provisions of the Act make alienation of waqf property difficult, the Act continues the tradition of centralization of waqf properties, which has characterized the history of waqf administration in India. The stripping of religious spaces of any communitarian efficacy, by tightening control over

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[188] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 14, sub sec. 3.
[189] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 97.
[190] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 96.
[191] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 9, sub sec. 1.
[192] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 9, sub sec. 4.
[193] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 51, sub sec. 4.
[194] The Waqf Act, (1995), sec. 51, sub sec. 5.

managers and other customary authorities, is the continuation of the *modernising* project that was started by the colonial British in the eighteenth century. With the turn of the millennium, this project infiltrated quite firmly into the *waqf* structure of Kashmir.

Since the accession of Jammu and Kashmir with the Union of India, and the establishment of a modern state structure, the state had slowly but steadily chiselled away the degree of autonomy that the religious institutions and spaces exercised in Kashmir. The advent of militancy and the use of shrines and spaces to mobilize and disseminate ideas for the resistance movement added the aspect of 'national security' to the need for regulating Sufi shrines and other such religious spaces. The catastrophic destruction of *Chrar* played the role of a necessary catalyst for such a change. These concerns were addressed in the enactments during the early years of the new millennium. The new enactments 'emboldened' the control of the state and chipped away substantial powers and features of the *awqaf* administration in the valley. The state Government of Jammu and Kashmir passed the Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act in 2001[195] , which significantly altered the way in which waqf properties were looked after in Kashmir.

The Act sets up a single State Wakafs Council, replacing the earlier provision of a provisional Wakaf Board.[196] This body resembles the Central Waqf Council in its constitution; its powers and functions are similar to the Central Waqf Council. The functions consist of the power to "reorganise its administrative set up in the State as to ensure better administration of the Wakafs in the State,"[197] to "give directions for the administration of Wakafs,"[198] "prepare the schemes for the management of Wakaf,"[199] and "do all such acts as may be necessary, for the maintenance and administration of Wakafs."[200] These powers far exceed the authority and mandate of the previous provisional wakaf boards.

Similarly, the Act also invests a considerable degree of authority in the office of the Chairman from what it had in the previous enactments. This is done in conjunction with the complete overhaul of the nature of a Tehsil Wakaf Committee from an elected one to a nominated one.[201] Although, this nomination has to be done by elected members of local bodies such as the

[195] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, no. III, (2001) (repealed 2019).
[196] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 7, sub sec. 1.
[197] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 9, sub sec. 2.
[198] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 11, cl. c.
[199] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 11, cl. f.
[200] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 11, cl. o.
[201] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 21, sub sec. 2.

Municipal Committee, Notified Area Committee, Town Area Committees and the panchayats. The State legislature can also nominate the members. The Chairman is elected from these nominated members. The Chairman, on his own, after determining misuse of funds by a person in charge of a Wakf through a biannual inspection, can "make an order directing such person to make payment of the amount so determined from his personal funds, or to restore the property aforesaid to the Wakaf within such time not exceeding fifteen days as may be specified in the order and in case he fails to deposit or refuses to make the payment, the Chairman shall recover the same as an arrear of land revenue from that person."[202] The chairman can also "frame schemes for the administration of the Wakf,"[203] and "appoint, remove and transfer the Imams, Khatib etc. of Mosque, Dargah or Khankah."[204] This investiture of power in a single person, who is effectively nominated, is more troublesome when one considers that the corresponding central act vastly reduced the authority of the Wakf Commissioner, who was a nominated entity as well. The Act also emboldens the authority of the institutional bodies, with the Tehsil committee empowered to "propose to the Council appointment and removal of Manager" of a wakf.[205] The Council, on its part, is empowered to frame regulation for the appointment and removal of these managers[206] "with the objective of administering, supervising and managing the Wakaf, according to the provisions of the Act and tenets of Islam."[207]

Consequently, in a complete break with previous enactments, the 2001 Act divests the office of the *mutawalli* of very authority accrued to him through customary or legal enactments. Instead, it starts appointing 'managers' in their place. The Act clearly states that "any person or body of persons appointed orally or under the instrument or deed by which Wakaf has been created as *mutawalli*, *sajjada-nishin*, *mujawir*, *mohtimim*, or by whatever name called, shall cease to be so with the commencement of the Act, and he/they shall have no right whatsoever in the administration and management of the Wakafs unless appointed under this Act."[208] (section 3, clause g). The Act abolishes all rights of these officials "to solicit donations, Hediya, Khairat or any other benefit in any Dargah, Khanaqah, Maqbara, Rauza, Graveyard,

[202] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 35, sub sec. 3.
[203] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 37, cl. c.
[204] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 37, cl. e.
[205] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 26, cl. f.
[206] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 11, cl. h.
[207] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 3, cl. g.
[208] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 3, cl. g, (explanation).

Mausuolem, Takia etc."[209] Therefore, the Act takes upon a project to upend the existing structure of managing religious endowments, bringing these under State control. This project is further reflected by incorporating the provision for the first time in a JK Wakaf Act to allow the government to "regulate the secular activity of the Wakaf."[210] Nonetheless, there is still no provision for the assumption of direct management of a wakaf, stringent provisions against alienation, and the Act allows the Muslim Auqaf Trust to continue its functions, including the right of Tehsil committees to affiliate with the Trust.[211]

However, this limited autonomous existence of the Muslim Auqaf Trust was also short-lived. The continuing direct influence of the National Conference on the affairs and assets of the Trust was seen as an undue political influence. The government formed by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Indian National Congress in 2002 sought to change this status quo. The government enacted The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakafs and Muslin Specified Wakaf Properties (Management and Regulation) Act 2004,[212] amended in 2005. This Act applied to specified wakaf properties affiliated with the Muslim Auqaf Trust. The Trust was restructured as the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakaf Board. While the Act ended the monopoly of the National Conference and its leaders over the *awqaf* of Kashmir, it also extinguished the participatory nature of the Trust completely.

The administrative structure of the Trust was revamped entirely, setting up a Board of Directors at the top of the administrative pyramid. The Board had general powers of "supervision, control and management of the Wakafs and Properties and the Endowment fund,"[213] and the Chief Minister, in case the office was occupied by a Muslim or anyone else an eminent Muslim appointed from the Council of Ministers, was made its chairman.[214] The Chairman then nominates the rest of the members, keeping in view a few broad qualifications.[215] The members then elect a Vice Chairman among themselves[216] and appoint a Chief Executive Officer to look after the administration of the Wakaf properties.[217] The induction of representatives from different shrines and religious endowments was wholly done away with, bringing the Board

[209] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 60.
[210] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 84.
[211] The Jammu and Kashmir Wakafs Act, (2001), sec. 20, sub sec. 3 and 4.
[212] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakafs and Specified Wakaf Properties (Management and Regulation) Act, no. VIII, (2004), (repealed 2019).
[213] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 5, sub sec. 1.
[214] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 6, sub sec. 2.
[215] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 6, sub sec. 2, cl. i-iv.
[216] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 9, sub sec. 1.
[217] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 18, sub sec. 1.

under the government's control. However, the government did not completely extinguish the institution and continued the dualistic administrative setup for *awqaf* in Kashmir under its own watch.

Thus, even though the Trust was remoulded as a Board, it could not completely break away from the legal structure it had built over the years. Many provisions of this new Act reflected the uniqueness of the Trust and its history, with powers and duties of the Board closely relating to those of the Trust and enumerated in its deed.[218] The Act categorically prohibits land alienation stating that any transfer of wakaf property "by way of sale, gift, exchange and mortgage, other than simple mortgage without possession in favour of any Bank or Financial Institution, or any alienation of such properties by an act of parties, or a decree or order of a court or of a Revenue Officer shall be void *ab initio*."[219] It also limits lease of a property to a maximum of forty years, that too "unless the previous permission of the Board has been obtained in writing."[220] This limit is substantially reduced to one year for agricultural property and a maximum of ten years for commercial purposes (ibid) while also prohibiting any sub-lease or transfer of possession.[221] The Act also retains the economic right of customary authorities to perform religious functions and to collect Nazrana or offerings at any specified Wakaf.[222] However, this right was subject to the person establishing his title to do so, which has to be accepted by the Vice-Chairman[223] to be confirmed by the Board.[224] (section 15 and section 18 of the Bye-laws).

Nonetheless, this Act does allow customary authorities to retain a certain degree of control which was taken entirely away for *awqaf* not affiliated with the Wakaf Board by the 2001 Act. This signifies a significant degree of power that the shrine associated with this erstwhile Trust, which included *Dargah-Hazratbal*, *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, *Chrar-i-Sharief*, and *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiya*. This new structure, however, did try to attack the political nature of the shrine, with the bye-laws stating that "the Specified Wakafs & Specific Wakaf Properties shall not be allowed to be used as a political platform by any individual or group."[225]

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[218] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 11.
[219] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 22-C, sub sec. 1.
[220] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 22-D, sub sec. 1.
[221] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 22-D, sub sec. 2.
[222] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Specified Wakaf Act, (2004), sec. 20, sub sec. 1, cl. b.
[223] The J&K Board for Specified Wakafs and Specified Wakaf Properties, "Bye-Laws" No. 5, Anex. A, (2004), sec. 15.
[224] The J&K Board, "Bye Laws," sec. 18.
[225] The J&K Board, "Bye Laws," sec. 12.

Barring these provisions, this act marked a new beginning of the *waqf* administration in Kashmir. Although continuing with the dualistic structure, the State, for the first time, was directly involved in both. The Muslim Awqaf Trust was restructured into the government-controlled Muslim Wakaf Board, snatching away its erstwhile participatory nature. Legally, however, the Board continued to possess certain distinctiveness as many provisions of the Trust were *mutas mutandis* incorporated into the Specified Wakaf Act. This resulted in affiliated wakafs having certain privileges over those run by the State Wakaf Council. The continuation of a dualistic structure was preferred over a complete integration of all wakafs under one legal framework, reflecting the complex socio-political position of these shrines that merit special care. Continuing a two-fold structure, the significance of certain central and important shrines over others was also fairly evident.

The *waqf* administration in Kashmir remained constitutionally and practically different from other administrations of *awqaf* in India or the rest of the world. The *awqaf* spaces were conceptualized as community spaces, principally distanced from the state structure. Even the legislation on the *waqf* administration seemed to be aware of this reality. While, subsequently, there was a persistent progression of the nature and amount of state control over the matters of *awqaf*, the delay and the 'feeble' nature of this state control allowed it to escape the full force of the *modernising* intent of the modern state structure and its reconfiguring tendencies. The legal and juridical apparatus, through which the modern state remodelled the nature of *waqf* administration and the socio-political role of shrines and other *waqf* spaces, was not implemented for a significant period within Kashmir. This allowed the *waqf* management bodies to emerge in a specific political context and play a distinctively political role in the society of Kashmir. Such an autonomous institution also affected the severity of state laws on *awqaf*, which were slightly less interventionist or controlling than its counterparts in India or rest of the world. Consequently, it allowed the continuation of shrines and mosques to be central to the political movements of the region, which have been discussed in the previous chapter.

Waqf Bodies as Independent Political Actors: Politics and Waqf Management in Kashmir

In continuation of arguments made earlier in the chapter, it is clear that this management of *waqf* spaces through these laws is not just an administrative exercise but can potentially alter the very role these spaces play in the larger socio-political community. It is a continuation of

the attempt of the ‘modern’ state to construct and constrict the role of religion and religious spaces in society, using religion for its own means. The examples of the Ottoman, Egypt, Lebanon and Pakistan have already been mentioned. However, in Kashmir, the *waqf* administration emerged from a different historical and political context, accruing a distinctive character and structure to it. While this, as mentioned above, limited the control of the State and allowed shrines to play a central role in society, the bodies of *waqf* management bodies were themselves deeply involved in and part of the politics in the region.

The *Idara-i-Awqaf-e-Islamia* or its successor, the Muslim Auqaf Trust, were institutions that had emerged from the political struggle and were closely associated with an ideology or a political project throughout their existence. Initially, it was closely associated with the personality and politics of Sheikh Abdullah till he was deposed in a coup in 1953. Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad took over the mantle from him, both as the Prime Minister of the state and the head of the *Idara*. However, his control over it was not as powerful as that of Abdullah. This is reflected by the fact that Bakshi handed over the reins of the *awqaf* back to Abdullah soon after he was released in 1964.[226] The Holy Relic movement that preceded the release of Abdullah may have also played a part in this handover. Since, at the time of this handover, Abdullah was still outside the region's governmental and power structures, actively involved in opposing the actions of the Indian state, *Idara* became a part of such opposition.

During this time, the activities of the *Idara* became were intimately connected to the Plebiscite Front. The loyalists of Sheikh Abdullah formed the Plebiscite Front after he was dismissed. The Front primarily espoused the resolution of the Kashmir dispute by a plebiscite, held according to the United Nations resolutions on the issue. The *Idara* played a significant part in promoting and entrenching the Front in Kashmiri politics, providing it with economic, logistical and administrative support. These acts, that signal a political and administrative autonomy of the *Idara*, are divulged from no less source than the letter of the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, written on 16th October 1970 to the Chief Minister of the state, G.M. Sadiq. The letter states that the Indian governmental agencies “have been receiving reports about the Plebiscite Front making improper use of the resources of the *Idara*,” advising the

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[226] Letter of G. M Sadiq to Indira Gandhi (27th October, 1970), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.

Chief Minister to "put matters right."[227] In addition to conceding that the state government has no "financial or administrative control over the Idara Auqaf-i-Islamia," mentioned earlier, the communication reveals interesting insights about the relation between the *Idara* and the Front. The state government conceded that the *Idara* rents Mujahid Manzil, a property under the Idara which served as the headquarters of National Conference, to the Front "for a sum almost one-sixth of the amount it used to charge the State government."[228] It was also revealed in these conversations that the *Idara* allows the use of its press to publish political literature of the Front and employs some members of the Plebiscite Front on salaried positions."[229] The *Idara* also provided the dependents of arrested Front members with financial support.[230]

In the letter of Indira Gandhi to G.M. Sadiq mentioned above, Gandhi advises Sadiq to take over the resources of the *awqaf*, stating that "if it can be made clear by the State Government that they wish to control the affairs of the *awqaf* for the benefit of the Muslim population and the promotion of the legitimate objectives of the *awqaf*, there should be no scope for criticism that the action was designed to interfere with religious activity."[231] Even the leaders of Bharatiya Jana Sangh, protested the non-application of Central Wakf Acts to Jammu and Kashmir, arguing that such non-application is allowing Sheikh Abdullah to "auqaf properties for his political aims."[232] In a detailed response to this letter written by the Chief Secretary of the region to the Home Ministry of India, it is stated that the state government is working towards the implementation of the Waqf Act in the state, after which the *Idara* "will cease to have any powers of co-ordination or control over the waqfs."[233] It acknowledged that there is

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[227] Letter of Indira Gandhi to G. M. Sadiq, (16th October, 1970), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.
[228] Letter of G. M Sadiq to Indira Gandhi (27th October, 1970), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.
[229] Affairs of Idara Auqaf-e-Islamia, (16th October, 1970), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.
[230] Information Provided by the State CID, (27th February, 1971), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.
[231] Letter of Indira Gandhi to G. M. Sadiq, (16th October, 1970), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.
[232] "Awqaf Bill is not being Implemented in Kashmir, Parliament passes the Bill," *Roznama Aftab*, 26th November 1969, p. 1.
[233] Letter, (18th February, 1971), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.

going "to be some resistance on the political and religious plane," but it claims that the government is ready to face it.[234]

The *Idara* survived, reflecting its hold and of its leaders, over the politico-religious structure of the region. There can be a plausible supposition that the conversion of *Idara* into a Trust might be the result of this pressure and a middle ground acceptable to both parties. However, even after it was converted into a Trust by Sheikh Abdullah, it continued its connection with the politics of the region. The nature of political positioning taken up by the Muslim Auqaf Trust would be unthinkable for any other nominated *waqf* body set up under the modern legal structure. There are a couple of examples where the Trust took a position wholly opposed to the interests of the state.

The siege of *Dargah-Hazratbal* is one such example. During the siege of the shrine by the Indian armed forces, The Muslim Auqaf Trust took it upon itself to arrange food and other necessities for the besieged persons. It even filed a petition in the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir to be allowed to undertake that task.[235] It further worked together with the Jammu and Kashmir Bar Council and *Hurriyat* Conference during the course of other petitions on the issue in the High Court.[236] Finally, after the siege was over, the Trust organized the ablution of the dargah with the caretakers and the leaders of Hurriyat Conference, which, as mentioned in earlier chapters, is a pro-*Azadi* (freedom) political conglomerate.[237]

The ability to attach itself to anti-state narratives is more evident from the actions of the Trust after the gutting down of the Chrar-i-Sharief shrine in 1995, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The efforts to reconstruct this revered shrine of Kashmir started no sooner was the blaze over. Since the shrine is affiliated with the Muslim Auqaf Trust, the agency became the principal body to coordinate and conduct such reconstruction. The Trust started to publish an advertisement in leading newspapers of the valley, asking for contributions and donations to rebuild the shrine. The interesting aspect, however, is the way the Trust advertised and sought to project legitimacy for being the coordinating agency. The body sought donation to the Alamdar Fund, which it said "had been instituted at the behest of All Parties Hurriyat Conference," and hence, "will naturally receive that patronage and cooperation of the

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[234] Letter, (18th February, 1971), IS-176-A/70, Reg 7 (V), Box no. 94, Administration of Adara Awqaf Islamia in the J&K State, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.
[235] "Muslim Auqaf Trust Files a Petition in the High Court," *Srinagar Times*, 21st October 1993, p. 1.
[236] Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 167-168.
[237] Gauhar, *Hazratbal*, p. 192.

Conference."[238] It also claimed in the same advertisement notice that "the Trust would not accept any funds or any type of assistance from any government or anti-movement agency/persons, which has already been announced."[239] It also put the blame squarely on the Indian armed forces for burning down the shrine with other 2500 houses and shops. In the Press Release published immediately after the torching of the shrine, the Trust accused the Indian forces "are adamant to eliminate the whole Muslim population" while claiming that the action is a "black spot on the face of Indian so-called secularism" and "will prove disastrous for the government."[240] In the same release, the Trust claimed danger to another prominent shrine of the valley, the shrine of Baba Reshi in Tangmarg, as the forces "forcibly occupied the shrine block and Zareen Nivas, and have established their camp in the shrine area."[241]

This public association with a pro-freedom political outfit reflects a degree of autonomy that the Trust continued to exert with respect to the State. The functionaries of the Trust associated themselves with the programs and objectives of organizations which were against, even detrimental to, the state interest. In addition, the continued use of the Trust to publicly criticize the government and its functionaries alludes to the fact that the members of the Trust considered it, and the shrines under its control, as political entities. The Trust considered itself accountable to the community rather than the State and hence, had to ally with the emotions and perspectives of the community instead of state directions. Thus, despite being under the administrative overview of the State as a Trust, the Muslim Auqaf Trust enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy and conducted itself as a socio-political organization instead of a cultural or administrative department.

However, over the years, the state has made a serious and persistent effort to control the 'secular' and 'political' activities of these sites. The increased bureaucratisation and statist control of these *waqf* bodies, after the new enactments in 2001 and 2004, respectively, made possible the stringent control of shrines and mosques. An employee of the Muslim Wakf Board, on the condition of anonymity, said that 'there are specific instructions to employees of the Board working in different shrines under its control that the use of the shrine for anti-state

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[238] "Alamdar Fund," *Greater Kashmir*, 27th May 1995, p. 4.
[239] "Alamdar Fund," *Greater Kashmir*, 27th May 1995, p. 4.
[240] "Press Release," *Greater Kashmir*, 17th May 1995, p. 4.
[241] "Press Release," *Greater Kashmir*, 17th May 1995, p. 4.

activities be disallowed by any means, including cutting off the electricity supply of the shrine to make microphones and speakers non-functional.'[242]

Despite state's strong push to undertake control of the Wakafs, the provisions of both these laws, The JK Wakaf Act 2001 and Specified Wakaf Act 2004, were still muted when compared to the laws enacted by the Central government. The control of the state was enhanced compared to previous laws, but it was limited to the State government only. The Central government had no role in the management of the wakafs. There was also no supervision of the Central Waqf Council over wakaf properties in Jammu and Kashmir; neither was any contribution made from the state wakafs to the Central Waqf Fund.

Also, enacting these laws has not led to the complete exhaustion of community intervention within these shrines. The continuing community control is demonstrated by an incident in Khankah-e-Faiz Panah in Tral, where a preacher was removed after one of his political comments did not go well with the community.[243] Over the years, whenever a significant political movement emerges out of the valley, many shrines and mosques become centres of these movements, which have continued as late as the 2016 uprising. During the 2008, 2010 and 2016 uprisings, the separatists had given a call for a march to different shrines and *waqf* areas, with a call to march to *Hazrtabal* mosque (*Dargah Chalo*) in 2016 was foiled by the authorities by severe restrictions on movement. This reflects that these areas are still very much central to the political lives of the common Kashmiris.

Also, many *waqf* properties were not directly under the control of the State Wakaf Council or the Muslim Wakaf Board, which has played a part in maintaining certain autonomy of these spaces. These shrines or mosques were managed by locals and traditional authorities bereft of any intervention, earlier or today. The most prominent among these is the Jamia Masjid of Srinagar, maintained independently by the local *awqaf* management. It is also important to note that none of the waqf acts enacted earlier in Kashmir applied to Shia *waqfs* in the region. These *waqfs* were completely under the control of Shia religious authorities and had no control of the state whatsoever, making them even more central to the religious, social and political life of the Shia community.

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[242] Interview taken on 12th November 2020, in the office of the J&K Board of Muslim Specified Wakafs and Specified Wakaf Properties, Srinagar.
[243] This fact came out of my interaction with the managers, and other people associated with the shrine, during my visit in July 2022.

These aspects are in stark contrast to India, where these laws have severely affected the way shrines and other *waqf* spaces interact with the community. As in other countries, Indian laws, right from colonial times, have resulted in a significant reduction in the power and prestige of *mutawallis*, *sajjada-nishins*, and other trustees of shrines or other waqf properties. The fate of a *mutawalli* is increasingly at the mercy of the state and its appointed bodies. Even if a traditional *mutawalli* has been able to maintain succession, these laws have seriously constricted the value of the concurrence or acceptance of any state action by the *mutawalli*. Conversely, it has shaped how these traditional authorities conduct their affairs or engage with the burning issues of the community. Their vulnerabilities have made these sacred spaces out of reach for Muslim masses to ferment public opinion or use it to put forth their dissent.

The protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 is an apt case to put forth in this respect. The Citizenship Amendment Act was passed in Parliament to provide expedited citizenship to ‘persecuted religious minorities’ of the neighbouring countries of India. These included Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. According to this Act, the Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, Jains and Christians who have arrived from these countries before 2014 will be given citizenship. For the first time, religion was used as an overt category for citizenship in India. The government refused any communal bias. It was clear that Muslims were purposefully excluded from the Act. While the government argues that these countries are Muslim-majority and, therefore, Muslims cannot be persecuted. However, it failed to explain the reason for including Afghanistan, which does not share a *de facto* border with India and excluding countries which share the border and have persecuted Muslim minorities, such as China, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

Naturally, the people of India, including Muslims, arose in protest. From Shaheen Bagh in Delhi to Azad Maidan in Mumbai, people came together to protest against the Act, indulging in the Gandhian strategy of *chakka-jam* (obstructing road crossings). It brought international attention to the movement. Curiously, during these protests, sites of religious significance did not become a part of the movement. One can argue that this might be a thought-out choice. However, two instances portray how these institutions and their management have become cogs in the wheel of the state structure. One refers to the Jama Masjid in Delhi, the biggest mosque in India, while the other is the Dargah of Muin-ud-din Chisti in Ajmer, arguably the most popular Sufi shrine in India.

Both these sites have critical importance in the socio-religious lives of Muslims. The Jama Masjid has been central to political discourse during colonial times, with Mahatma Gandhi addressing a massive crowd from its pulpit. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad used it to assuage Muslim fleeing Delhi after partition in 1947. The mosque is headed by Imam Bukhari, who traces his lineage to the Imam brought to Delhi by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to lead prayer in this grand mosque constructed by him. Thus, Imam Bukhari has enjoined social prestige over centuries. In the Citizenship Amendment Act case, Imam Bukhari attempted to use this leverage to defend the controversial act. He also denounced the protests around the mosque as they did not happen in "consensus with local leadership."[244]

Similarly, the *diwan* (spiritual head) of the shrine in Ajmer supported the Act and even praised the government for it, much to the consternation of his own employees (Times Now Digital, 2020). However, no shrine or religious space extended its open support across the movement or became a centre of protest. This is even though most of these spaces, such as Nizamuddin Dargah, Haji Ali Dargah, Jama Masjid or Ajmer Sharif, are present in cities with massive protests. This suggests that either the managers of these spaces ensured the distance from the movement or the population itself does not see these spaces as 'political.' In both scenarios, it reflects the power of the state structure in conditioning and remodelling the practice and spaces of religion through its administrative and legal structures.

Thus, the specific history, evolution and nature of *waqf* laws and administration in India resulted in the constriction of religious spaces as cultural spaces, reducing their efficacy in the lives of ordinary Muslims. This aligns with the broad changes undertaken worldwide due to the modernising project of the modern-nation state to remodel the sphere of religion under its domain. In the context of Kashmir, this project was delayed, which allowed a distinct *waqf* structure to emerge. Under such structure, religious places, such as shrines, *dargah*, and mosques, played an overtly political role within the society. This political role was assisted by the political nature and positioning of the *waqf* management bodies, which had minimal state interference for the last century. However, things began to change at the turn of the century, with more state involvement and control over these organisations, and through them, over the shrines. The events of 2008, 2010 and 2016 have shown that even after these, these spaces

[244] Abhinav Rajput, "Shahi Imam Bukhari: There was no permission fro protests,"*The Indian Express*, (15th January, 2022).

possess a certain autonomy and still are imagined by the public and political leaders alike, as spaces of community action, including politics.

Changes in Waqf Structure of Kashmir: The Consequences of Article 370 Abrogation

The abrogation of article 370 in 2019 upended the established legal structure of Jammu and Kashmir. The legal structure had a relatively autonomous development owing to the said provision of the Indian constitution. Such a momentous overhaul necessarily affected the *waqf* administration of the region as well. The Indian government repealed numerous laws and acts that were enacted since 1947. The Jammu and Kashmir Wakaf Act of 2001 and the 2004 Muslim Specified Wakfs Act were also repealed.[245] The *waqfs* of Kashmir were, for the first time, under the direct management of the Indian government, under the Central Waqf Act of 1995. This reflects a massive change in the structure that was hitherto present.

Keeping in view the unique historical and political role of the *awqaf* and *waqf* administration in Kashmir, the administration of the region requested necessary modifications within the central act before its effective implementation in the region. The Indian government did not accept this request and went on unilaterally dismantling the old structure, replacing it with a new one. It reconstituted the new Wakf board under the 1995 Act and nominated three members to it in March 2022.[246] The new administration went on to make crucial changes in the management of shrines in the valley. The order to stop the traditional authorities from collecting donations, mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, was one of the first. The other is a survey of Shia *awqaf* which suggests an attempt to institutionalize Shia *awqaf*[247] and other local *awqaf* bodies that existed independently.[248]

[245] Delimitation Commission, *Delimited Landscape of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir*, (New Delhi: Election Commission of India, 2022), p. 45, 48

[246] "Centre appoints Waqf Board members for J-K," *Kashmir Walla*, 1st March, 2022. https://thekashmirwalla.com/centre-appoints-waqf-board-members-for-j-k/

[247] Zaid Bin Shabir, "J&K Admin Seeks Details of Shia Waqf Properties," *Kashmir Observer*, 19th April, 2022. https://kashmirobserver.net/2022/04/19/jk-admin-seeks-details-of-shia-waqf-properties/

[248] "Local 'self-styled' Auqaf Committees will have no legal standing in J-K now," *Kashmir Walla*, 19th December, 2022. https://thekashmirwalla.com/local-self-styled-auqaf-committees-will-have-no-legal-standing-in-j-k-now/

Even this new administration is conscious of the political nature of the *waqf* spaces in the valley. However, it has taken an open critical position of these tendencies.[249] The chairperson has criticised the involvement of politics in the shines and mosques of the valley, claiming that these spaces are merely religious, cultural and spiritual. Even though the administration has begun the process, this is an immense challenge. Partly because of the role these shrines have played, entrenched in the societal mind, but partly also because the State tried to curtail these tendencies through the laws enacted in the region in 2001 and 2004. The project did not achieve much success.

Nonetheless, it can be argued that the *waqf* structure of the Kashmir valley is finally facing the full might of the modern state. The exercise to completely *modernise* the *waqf* administration of the valley, remodelling its nature and purpose in Kashmiri society, has begun. This new attempt is more focused, has the complete machinery of the state at its disposal, and has the complete backing of the Indian state. The Indian state would attempt to reduce these shrines and mosques to their cultural or religious dimension, stripping them of any political or social role, which it has been attempting for almost fifty years. The goal would be to remake the shrines in the image of Sufi shrines and other *waqf* properties in India or elsewhere in the Islamic world, which primarily exist as cultural arenas and remain at an arms distance from any politics as such. It is important to note that such reconfiguration of Kashmiri shrines was gradually underway over the past decades; the abrogation of article 370 speeds up the process. Going by the historical precedent, these developments can significantly affect the socio-political reality of Jammu and Kashmir.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter tried to understand the legal structure of *waqf* administration, its theological and historical antecedents, the effect of colonial and modern ideas and institutions on the conceptualization and construction of *waqf* and *waqf* administration and, finally, the trajectories of *waqf* administration in India and Kashmir. The endeavour was to compare the history and bring forth the differences in *waqf* administration between India and Kashmir,

[249] Aaquib Javeed, "Waqf Board Ends Dastaar Bandi Practice In Jammu & Kashmir," *Kashmir Observer*, 19th September, 2022. https://kashmirobserver.net/2022/09/19/jk-waqf-board-bans-dastaar-bandi-of-politicians-at-mosques-shrines/

arguing that these differences were responsible for divergent understanding and use of Sufi shrines and other *waqf* spaces in these two regions.

The chapter started by bringing forth the Islamic conceptions of the waqf, which include Sufi shrines, to understand their theological nature. The chapter then tried to show the modern and colonial reconstruction of waqf, from an integrative social category to an economic asset, which profoundly affected the nature and scope of *waqf* properties across the Islamic world. The successful attempt of British colonial rule to remodel the institution of the *waqf* is an example of the *modernising* project of the modern state apparatus. The conceptualization of *waqf* that emanated from colonial times continued to inform different waqf laws enacted after 1947. These Acts continued the gradual takeover and disempowerment of the traditional authorities while significantly increasing the hold of the state over them

The Wakf Act of 1954 started as a compact act to provide a unified mechanism for *waqf* administration in the country but was systematically emboldened with amendments. After its last amendment in 1984, the Act had transformed into a comprehensive legal framework to control each and every aspect of *waqf* administration in the country. The *mutawallis*, who were the traditional authorities, were reduced to mere agents of the state instead of deriving their place from the *waqf* deed. They were entrusted with duties, and removing them or bypassing their jurisdiction was successively made easier. Further, alienation of *waqf* property was made easy, with such power vested in the Waqf Board. The state did not limit its project to the mere weakening of *mutawallis* but actively pursued the bureaucratization of *awqaf*. By the end, the office of the Wakf Commissioner, a bureaucrat appointed by the state government, could even refuse to implement decisions of the Board, indirectly giving control of the *awqaf* to the state.

Some of these issues were addressed by the 1995 Waqf Act, which removed the Wakf Commissioner's office and made alienation considerably difficult. It, however, did entrench control of the government on the *waqf* at the cost of customary officials, which were further pushed to irrelevance. This loss of autonomy of these officials, and consequently of a religious place like a shrine, has constricted the role of these places in the socio-political life of the Muslim community. These spaces have been reduced to cultural, spiritual and religious meaning, with politics firmly removed from their confines.

The reduction is partly an outcome of the political decisions taken by the 'leaders' of the Muslim community, especially during colonial times. Looking at *waqf* as a legislative issue and seeking temporary legal remedies instead of challenging the impositions of colonial legal

notions on the *waqf* in India paved the way for the gradual constriction of a *waqf* space as a legal category rather than a political and social one. This 'history' of limiting *waqf* to a legislative domain carried on after the partition, whereas the state can use it for political objectives. However, it has become increasingly difficult, almost impossible, for ordinary citizens to use it as a political platform in India.

Contrastingly, the *waqf* management in Kashmir has played a significant role in allowing, accentuating and sustaining the political and social role that Sufi shrines and mosques play in Kashmiri society. The different political and historical trajectory that Kashmir took from the rest of the country is considerably responsible for such divergence. Jammu and Kashmir was not under direct colonial rule and, consequently, did not feel the full impact of the modern state structure that the British colonial regime installed in British India. Instead, Kashmir was ruled by the Dogra monarchy, who were grossly communal in their policies, even a policy such as architectural conservation. The dilapidated conditions of mosques and shrines made the Kashmiri community demand restoration of community control over shrines and mosques under the control of the government. This movement turned distinctively political after the Pathar Masjid agitation, which started after the Dogra regime called for its conversion into an orphanage dedicated to a Hindu deity. The agitation did not end at the issue of the Pathar masjid. It soon spiralled into a movement for control of different shrines and mosques across Kashmir. This agitation for mosques and shrines also set up the platform from which the popular political struggle against the Dogra rule was launched in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Since then, shrines and religious spaces have been central to the political discourse of the region. Each shrine or mosque became intimately associated with a political ideology or practice. Organizations were formed, with political inclinations or by political parties themselves, to manage shrines and other such spaces. The most prominent among them was the *Idara Auqaf-i-Islamia*, set up in 1940 under the Chairmanship of Sheikh Abdullah. This *Idara* became the most prominent waqf institution and controlled numerous shrines across Kashmir. This organization continued post-1947, restructured into the Jammu Kashmir Muslim Auqaf Trust in 1973 until it was brought entirely under the government control as the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Waqf Board in 2004. This does not change the fact that the entrenched presence of shrines in a political discourse made them central to communities and their political assertion.

This fact was not lost to the Indian State. It is because of this reason that ever since the accession of the region with India, the State tried to take over the management of these shrines to limit their political use. The State tried to direct the regional government, most of whom were hand-maidens of the Union, to bring in *waqf* laws emulating the laws enacted by the Centre, which have grossly curtailed the role of shrines in the life of Indian Muslims. Even though such laws were enacted, the state government could not implement these provisions, reflecting that it is difficult to dislodge these places from the political life of ordinary Kashmiris.

However, over the years, the state has been able to increasingly control the working of *waqf* spaces, particularly its effect and use in the political life of the society. The State has tried to do it with the active participation of the political elite of the region. These elites have either succumbed to the pressures of the Union or played such a part for personal gains. Nonetheless, this has done immense damage to the autonomous structure of the *awqaf* in the region. Be it Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad or Sheikh Abdullah, who, despite being the founding chairman of the *Idara* and deeply aware of the political role of the shrines, or later Farooq Abdullah, these people as the head of their governments enacted laws which allowed the state structure to intercede in the workings of the awqaf increasingly. Finally, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed completely extinguished the autonomy of the Muslim Auqaf Trust by reducing it to an administrative department of the State.

However, after the abrogation of article 370 and the downgrading of the state into a union territory, the State laws have entirely been done away with. The Central Waqf Act of 1995, as amended in 2013, is now applicable in Kashmir. This change amounts to a complete overhaul of the administrative and economic aspects of the *awqaf* in Kashmir. One of the crucial repercussions would be on the Shia community, which would have to accept governmental oversight of their waqf endowments for the first time. The region would now face the full effect of the *modernising* forces it had been able to avoid until now. Going by historical precedence and example from other Islamic geographies, this is bound to have a cataclysmic effect on the political and social nature of Sufi shrines in the valley. Till recently, even though the autonomous nature of the *waqf* administration had diminished, these spaces still were the centre of political movements, including those challenging the legitimacy and authority of the Indian state. The earlier legal structure sustained the 'political Sufism' of the region. The effect of the new structure will test the resoluteness of these shrines and the Sufi discourse of the valley. Any outcome would be fundamental to the politics of the region and the overall nature of the Kashmir dispute.

Chapter VII

Sufism as Political Conduit: Families, Leadership, and Politics in Kashmir

The shrine of the Afghan mystic saint Syed Rasool Shah Mashadi, popularly known as Naanga Baji Sahab, located in the Bandipora district of North Kashmir, was featured in a national newspaper, enquiring the reasons for a good number of politicians visiting the shrine. A leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) visited the shrine with his entourage, including politicians and party workers.[1] The grandson of the saint said that such visits of politically influential personalities were a feature during the life of the saint himself, claiming that "the last Dogra monarch Hari Singh accompanied the Viceroy of India Lord Mountbatten to seek Baji Sahab's blessing before 1947."[2] Congress leader Ambika Soni, former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and Bharatiya Janata Party leader Nirmal Singh also visited the shrine. The saint was particularly known for his prophecies. It is said that he predicted the downfall of the British rule during his meeting with Mountbatten.[3] He had also predicted the fall of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, the first elected Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and the rise of Abdullah's deputy Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to power.[4] Unsurprisingly, Bakshi became a regular visitor of the shrine.

Mian Altaf, a senior leader of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, is the great-grandson of Baba Ji Sahab Larvi and grandson of Mian Nizam ud-Din Larvi, who are two renowned saints of the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa* in the valley. His father, Mian Bashir Ahmad, was also closely associated with the electoral politics of the region as a prominent member of

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[1] "Usman Majid pays obeisance at Hazrat Nanga Baji(RA) Shrine," *Kashmir News Network*, 2nd August 2022, http://www.knskashmir.com/usman-majid-pays-obeisance-at-hazrat-nanga-baji(ra)-shrine-160089

[2] Peerzada Ashiq, "Why politicians queue up at Afghan Sufi Saint's shrine in Kashmir's Bandipora," *The Hindu*, 12th August 2022, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/why-politicians-queue-up-at-afghan-sufi-saints-shrine-in-kashmirs-bandipora/article65761132.ece

[3] Ashiq, "Why Politicians Queue," 12th August 2022.

[4] Ashiq, "Why Politicians Queue," 12th August 2022.

the National Conference. Both these leaders have, famously, never lost an election. The religious influence they have over their followers, especially those from the Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes, as a result of their religious and Sufi background, is a significant factor in their success. It is pertinent to note that Mian Bashir Ahmad continued to remain the *sajjada-nishin* of the shrine while being involved in the electoral politics of the region. Mian Altaf, after succeeding his father as the *sajjada-nishin*, continues to play the dual role of a political and a religious leader.

In another instance, when Sayyid Meerak Shah Kashani, a Qadiriya saint and arguably the most revered Sufi mystic of the 20th century Kashmir, laid the foundation stone of the University of Jammu and Kashmir, it had more than just an social act. It was also a legitimising tool for the newly established administration of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, which had played a cardinal role in the accession of the region to the Dominion of India. Over the years, Kashmiri politicians of different ideologies have used Sufi institutions, personalities and spaces to promote, propagate and legitimise their political ideology and decisions. In addition to seeking personal blessing, political leaders employ the space of the shrine, and people or events associated with it, for different political purposes. These purposes range from mobilising support through political rallies to appropriating the saint, through their successors and descendants, within their political project. The increased visits of political leaders and media coverage of the *urs* of Naang Baji may also be due to the reservation of assembly seats in the Bandipora district for the tribal population, who are generally devotees of the shrine.[5]

These three instances portray the two aspects of the 'instrumental' efficacy of the doctrine of Sufism in the political sphere of Kashmir. The first is the direct involvement of Sufi families and their descendants in the political arena of the region. The inherited lineage provides them with sufficient social, cultural and religious charisma, which translates into political support or their emergence as a prominent voice of the community of devotees. The second is the appropriation of Sufi personalities and spaces by politicians, by co-opting the families and descendants or employing shrines as spaces of mobilisation and propagation.

This chapter is an exposition of these two trends within the contemporary political history of Kashmir. After a brief theoretical outline, the chapter focusses on the prominent Sufi families of Kashmir, endowed with a certain 'inherited charisma', in an attempt to delineate their role

[5] Muhammad Mutahhar Amin, "Delimitation of J&K: Regional Disparity and Disproportionate Representation," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 57, no. 28, (2022): 32-38.

in the politics of the region. The emphasis is on the role played during the crystallisation of popular politics in the valley, starting from the second decade of the twentieth century. Finally, the chapter deals with the appropriation of Sufism by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, widely considered the most prominent leader of the Kashmiri population in the twentieth century, in constructing his political personality as well as his political ideology, including the commonly used identitarian term, *Kashmiriyat*.

Shrines, Successors, and Political Leaders: Institutional Charisma and the Instrumental Use of Sufism

The advent of the *tariqa*, or Sufi orders, led to the development of structural edifices such as the *khanqah* (hospice), *dargah* (shrine) and *mazaar* (mausoleums) of different saints and their successors. Since every *tariqa* was closely linked to a particular founder-saint, it became important to conserve the heritage of that saint by building a mausoleum or hospice in his name. It is, therefore, interesting that the tombs of earlier non-*tariqa* Sufis, such as Dhun Nun al Misri, Bayazid Bistrami, Rabia Basri or Uways Qarni, are mostly non-extant nor sites of any grand mausoleums. On the other hand, the later *tariqa* Sufis, especially the founders or prominent figures, are linked to grand hospices or mausoleums on their graves. This emergence of *khanqah*, *dargah* or *mazaar* led to a further entrenchment of Sufism and Sufi orders in the socio-political life of Islamic society as spaces of deference or social congregation of the faithful.

The consequence of this institutionalisation was the development of a dedicated group of followers of each *tariqa*. The followers of a Sufi included “an inner circle of initiates whom he rigorously directed and a much larger outer circle of people who came for assistance in more mundane concerns.”[6] Once established, the *khanqah* and the *tariqa* continued through the continuation of rules and procedures, under the oversight of the *khalifa* or the *sajjada-nishin*, both, at the first instance, chosen by the Sufi himself. These were chosen from the inner circle of disciples, trained in these rules and often were the descendent or close family members of the Sufi. On the one hand, the tomb of a saint, or the *khanqah*, became a site of reverence for the larger body of followers. It allowed “their successors to offer the same mediatory religious

[6] Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*: *The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), p. 12.

leadership to subsequent generations of *murids*."[7] As the charisma associated with the "saint 'declined' into institutional permanence, support for his successors came to be founded less on belief in an extraordinary power and mission and more on belief in spiritual authority sanctified by tradition."[8] This tradition endows the successor with a degree of charisma, which in its some aspects is close to what Max Weber has described as "lineage charisma" which is a "routinised and permanent form of pure charisma."[9] The charisma of the saint, discussed in the second and third chapters of this thesis, is accessible to the successor by their birth and their succession to the office once occupied by the saint. "As a descendent," the successor is supposed to be "the inheritor of saint's *baraka*, which placed him in a line of direct access to the moral authority derived from saint's proximity to God."[10]

This "inherited charisma was used more and more to legitimise 'acquired rights' in terms of wealth, and social position and gradually many *pirs* gained an almost regal power."[11] The *khanqah* or *dargah*, which "functioned as a potent source of mediation in a society of continually shifting power structures,"[12] became the fulcrum of the religious, economic and political power these successors possessed. These shrines are supported by *waqf*,[13]which include lands, buildings and institutions. It allowed a special category social class, called *ayan*, to emerge who, through these endowments, "succeeded in drawing into the orbit of their influence a large number of clients, thus, ensuring the longevity of the family influence in the town" and "emerging as an autonomous leadership that could and often did speak for the local population."[14]

This autonomy of action was not absolute, and "the successful exercise of the popular authority of the *sajjada-nishin*, however, also depended on his ability to operate effectively in local

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[7] Sarah F. D. Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power*: *Pirs of Sindh, 1843-1947*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 23.
[8] Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power*, p. 23.
[9] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (ed.), (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 1135-1141.
[10] David Gilmartin, "Shrines, Succession, Sources of Moral Authority," in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*," ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 221-240, p. 223.
[11] Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power*, p. 23.
[12] Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, p. 46.
[13] *Waqf* is an Islamic endowment, made by an individual for religious purposes. For detailed exposition on the same see the preceding chapter of this thesis.
[14] Miriam Hoexeter, "The Waqf and the Public Sphere," in *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*, ed. Miriam Hoexeter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Ehemia Levtzion, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 129.

politics."[15] The power over people and the dependency on grants or endowments made these individuals or families conducive to administrative or political use. Over the course of Islamic history, Sufis and Sufi families have prospered "more than any other time of personal authority because their mediatory skills were required for the smooth functioning of an agrarian nomadic economy with a decentralised form of government."[16] The Mughal empire of the Indian subcontinent "legitimised themselves by employing urban *ulema* and rural shrine families as mediators with the populace."[17] The value of these individuals and families was also not lost to the colonial British empire, "that sought very early on to draw *pir* families, along with other landed interests, into its system of imperial control."[18]

In addition to state structures, individual leaders, both inside and outside the governmental structure, have used Sufism or Sufi institutions for their political goals. Sufi institutions include Sufi families and Sufi shrines. Hasan al Banna is the prime example of an individual employing Sufi methods for a socio-political movement. Banna was the famous Egyptian Islamic revivalist of the 20th century who formed the Muslim Brotherhood, "the most influential Muslim organisation of the 20th century."[19] Although considered a fundamentalist, Banna came "from a background of strong connections with Sufi orders", and "it was from the Sufis that he learned his methods of channelling the enthusiasm of people into religious activities."[20] In Pakistan, leaders like Ayub Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto "chose to identify themselves with the doctrines of Sufism in order to create for themselves a link with religious authority."[21] It was a symbol these secularist leaders "chose to represent their position and to legitimate their position as the leaders of a Muslim community."[22]

Thus, Sufism, both as a doctrine and an institutional structure, imparts social and cultural capital to people associated with it. While the successors and descendants of Sufi saints 'inherited' such capital, political leaders employ such institutional capital for results in the political arena. As with other Muslim communities, the region of Kashmir also exhibits such examples where families and individuals have been able to wield power and amass wealth and,

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[15] Gilmartin, "Shrines, Succession, Sources of Moral Authority," p. 223.
[16] Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, p. 14.
[17] Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, p. 211.
[18] Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power*, p. 128.
[19] Ahmad Nafiu Arikewuyo, "Appraising Sufism in the thought of Ibn Taymiyyah and Hasan Al Banna: A Comparative Perspective," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies*, 6, no. 3, (2021): 1-13, p. 4.
[20] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 404.
[21] Katherine Ewing, "The Politics of Sufism: Redefining the Saints of Pakistan." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 42, no. 2, (1983), 251-268, p. 253.
[22] Ewing, "The Politics of Sufism," p. 253.

subsequently, engage in or influence politics, as a result of their association with a particular shrine. This has also seen in the use of Sufism as a legitimising tool by political leaders to construct their political personality and further their political interests. The families of Naqshbandis, Banday and Mirwaiz are the most prominent and influential Sufi families, while Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah is the most consequential political leader to employ Sufism throughout his political journey.

<u>The Ayan of Kashmir: The Naqshbandis and the Bandays</u>

Naqshbandis overlook the *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiya* located in the heart of Srinagar. The shrine is dedicated to Khwaja Bahuddin Naqashband, the founder of the Naqshbandiyya order. However, it is Khawaja Moinuddin Naqshbandi, a 17th century Naqshbandiyya mystic, who is buried here. As mentioned in the second chapter, the Naqshbandiyya order is regarded as the most inclined Sufi order to temporal power and authority. In the later years of the Mughal empire, the order was closely associated with the Mughal court, with emperor Aurangzeb inclined towards the order.[23] This connection resulted in a significant political and economic heft to the order and its leaders, such as Khawaja Moinuddin. This material and political prosperity seem percolated to their descendants as well. In the Dogra era, when the ordinary Kashmiri Muslims lived a life, which Walter Lawrence calls "worse than that of Tiers Etat before the French Revolution,"[24] the Naqshbandiyya family enjoyed *jagirs* and governmental positions bestowed by the ruler. However, this material prominence allowed them to emerge as, what Hoexter argues, an "autonomous leadership" speaking on behalf of the common Kashmiris. Two individuals from the family were part of the delegation that presented a memorandum detailing the abject conditions of the Kashmiri Muslims to Viceroy Reading when he was visiting Kashmir in 1928.[25] Khawaja Hassan Shah Naqshbandi and Khawaja Noor Shah Naqshbandi were signatories to the memorandum delivered to the Viceroy, which infuriated the ruler Hari Singh. He confiscated the *jagir* of Hassan Shah Naqshbandi.[26] while

[23] Muzaffar Alam, *The Mughals and The Sufis*: *Islam and Political Imagination in India*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2021), p. 285.
[24] Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1895), p. 2.
[25] Rasheed Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Kashmir*, vol. 1, (Srinagar: Muhafiz Publications, 1968), p. 71.
[26] Shabnam Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh-o-Tehreek-i-Hurriyat*, vol. 2, (Srinagar: Ali Muhammad and Sons Publishers, 2015), p. 7.

exiling Noor Shah Naqshbandi from the state.[27] However, both individuals continued to exercise influence on the politics of Kashmir.

The Banday family, on the other hand, are the caretakers of *Dargah Hazratbal*, housing the holy hair strand of the Prophet (S.A.W.). This shrine is renowned as the holiest shrine in the valley.[28] Before being housed in the present location, the holy relic was kept in the *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya*, mentioned above, when it was brought into the valley in 1700 A.D.[29] The Banday family are the descendants of Khawaja Noor-ud-din Ashawari, who bought this relic from an Arab settled in Bijapur.[30] As the caretakers of this shrine, the family was granted three villages as an endowment (*fief*) by emperor Aurangzeb for the upkeep of the shrine, enhancing their socio-economic prestige. Although this endowment was taken away during the Sikh rule in 1820,[31] it did not affect the prominence of the family within Kashmir to a large extent.

The family began to dabble in politics relatively early on. After wresting the valley from the Mughals in 1752, the Afghans appointed Sukh Jeevan Mal as the *nazim* (administrator) of the region, leaving the valley under his custody. Abul Hassan Banday, the heir-apparent to the post of custodian during that time, was appointed the chief adviser to the *Nazim*.[32] Abul Hassan Banday supported Sukh Jeevan Mal in his declaration of independence from Afghan control and served as an able administrator, helping Sukh Jeevan Mal to deal with the onset of famine during his rule. This camaraderie could not continue for long, and Sukh Jeevan Mal drove Banday to Poonch and "wreaked vengeance on his family."[33] However, Sukh Jeevan Mal was defeated and killed in 1762, bringing back Afghan suzerainty over Kashmir.

Even after the treatment meted out to Abul Hassan Banday, the family continued to control the *Hazratbal* shrine. Thus, when popular politics began to simmer in the region, the Banday family had also played a part, not always positively though. Abdul Rahim Banday, being a prominent member of the Kashmiri society, was used by the government to ask other personalities to detest from indulging in political activities; prominent among them was

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[27] Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, p. 71.
[28] Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 245.
[29] Dr Pirzada Mohammad Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine: In Historical Perspective*, (New Delhi: GrassrootsIndia Publishers, 2001), p. 31.
[30] Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine*, p. 22.
[31] Amin, *Hazratbal Shrine*, p. 33.
[32] G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashīr: A History of Kashmir*, vol. 1, (Lahore: University of Panjab Press, 1944), p. 309.
[33] Sufi, *Kashīr*, p. 310.

Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah.[34] However, Abdul Rahim Banday later became involved in the politics of the region with the Mirwaiz himself, even delivering the inaugural address of the Azad Muslim Conference in December 1933.[35] Abdul Rahim Banday continued to remain the caretaker of the shrine until the Holy relic agitation of 1963. He was charged with the theft of the relic and removed from the post. Noor ud-Din Banday took over the shrine after this incident. However, he was never convicted of the offence. Nonetheless, the family continued to retain hold over the shrine, which allowed it to remain relevant in the politics of Kashmir.

Political Preachers from the Pulpit: The Two Mirwaiz of Kashmir

The nomenclature and authority of a Mirwaiz are unique to the valley of Kashmir. It refers to the institution of the preacher, primarily associated with two families – Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir and Mirwaiz-e-Hamadani.[36] The two families shared their ancestors but had developed into warring factions over the right to preach within various shrines and mosques in the valley.[37] These contestations even led to violence, prompting the government to intervene and divide different religious places among these two families.[38] The rivalry between these two sections of preachers also had an element of Sufism. Miwaiz-e-Hamdani and his supporters were proponents of saints and shrines, while the other Mirwaiz group bent more on the Salafi-Wahabi doctrine.[39] Even though the Jamia Masjid Mirwaiz proclaimed Sufis as *bidda* (innovation) and hence reprehensible, they continued to preach in different shrines and mosques within the valley. This divide was also a reason for resentment against them in a section of the religious elite in the valley led by Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani.

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[34] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, vol. 2, p. 31.

[35] Mirza Shafiq Hussain, *Kashmiri Musalmanun ki Siyasi Jaddujahad*, (Srinagar, Sheikh Muhammad Usman and Sons, 2015), p. 272.

[36] It is important to justify the use of these two families within this chapter, considering these are not successors of the Sufi saints and are merely preachers. The case of Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani is easier as he is directly related to a Sufi shrine i.e. *Khanqah-e-Mo'allah*. Hence, he derives his prestige and charisma from his association with the shrine and hence is qualified to be studies as a Sufi family. On the other hand, it is important to understand that the primary seat of the other branch is the Jamia Masjid of Srinagar, but it used to, and continues to, give sermons in different shrines of the valley. Incidentally, the Mirwaiz used to preach at the *Dargah-Hazratbal* and continues to preach at *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya*. Hence, being in the position of power and control within these Sufi spaces, they inherit the same reverence or charisma that successors or *sajjada-nishins* do.

[37] Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, (Srinagar: Ali Mohammad and Sons, 1986), p. 177-178.

[38] Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*: *Islam*, *Rights, and the History of Kashmir*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2004), p. 238-239.

[39] Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers*, p. 208.

The propensity of their followers to indulge in violence on behalf of their preacher demonstrates emotional hold these families have over their band of followers, making them politically relevant. It is not surprising, then, that the memorandum submitted to the Viceroy Reading mentioned above was signed by both Mirwaiz of that time, who incidentally were also namesakes-Mirwaiz Ahmadullah Shah and Mirwaiz Ahmadullah Hamadani. While the former was left untouched after a stern warning, the latter was removed from his position in the *darbar*.[40]

Mir Ahmadullah Hamadani continued to influence the region's political trajectory further since. As the caretaker of the *Khanqah*, he allowed it to become the centre of the political struggle against the Dogras. *Khanqah-e-Mo' allah* became the cradle from which the popular movement emerged. Molvi Ahmadullah openly defied government orders not to allow the stage of *Khanqah-e-Moullah* for political purposes. Instead, he himself took the stage and gave a speech against the government at a very advanced age in 1934.[41] Because of these actions, people also referred to him as '*Mujahid-e-Millat.*' By 1934, the Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani strongly supported Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah against the other branch of the Mirwaiz family, renewing the old rivalry, which was put behind for a brief period during the earlier phase of the struggle. The Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani continued to wield political influence even after 1947. Mirwaiz Yasin Hamdani became an important member of the Plebiscite Front and was also chosen as the President of the Muslim United Front[42] to deal with the political issues arising from an inter-faith marriage in 1967.[43]

The other branch of the Mirwaiz family played a much more significant role in the socio-political milieu of the region. The founder of that branch Moulvi Ghulam Rasool Shah, was the first person to acquire the title of Mirwaiz. His grandson, also named Ghulam Rasul Shah, had an important role in the socio-political emancipation of the Muslims in the valley. Mirwaiz Rasul Shah, also called the Sir Syed of Kashmir, set up the Anjuman Nasratul Islam in 1899 to promote religious and secular education among Kashmiri Muslims. Most, if not all, Kashmiri Muslim political leaders, including Sheikh Abdullah, benefited from the organisation in one

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[40] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, vol. 2, p. 7.
[41] Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, p. 301.
[42] This is not the Muslim United Front that contested the elections as a conglomerate in 1987.
[43] Khalid Bashir Ahmad, *Kashmir: Exposing the Myth Behind the Narrative*, (New Delhi: Sage, 2017), p. 180-181.

way or the other. It was, however, the grandson of Mirwaiz Ghulam Rasul Shah, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, who cemented the position of the Mirwaiz as a politico-religious leader.

Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah had studied at the Deoband seminary in the United Provinces of British India. He was there during the Khilafat agitation of 1921, which significantly influenced his thought. After returning to Kashmir, he started to deliver sermons with political and religious content. During the early unrest in 1931, he received support from the presiding Mirwaiz, Moulvi Atiqullah, who was ill, to use Jamia Masjid as a political platform. Having received this assent, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah actively took part in the political sphere of the valley. He also played an essential part in the formation of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and attended the first session of the organisation held under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah. Later, Mirwaiz started his own party, the Azad Muslim Conference, after his fallout with Sheikh Abdullah. Later, Mirwaiz started his own party, the Azad Muslim Conference, after his fallout with Sheikh Abdullah. Mirwaiz even accused Abdullah of conspiring to propagate the Ahmadiyya faith in Kashmir through his political activities during a sermon in Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiyya on 30th January 1933.[44] After the rechristening of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference in 1939, he and other disgruntled leaders revived the Muslim Conference. In 1947, he migrated to Pakistan to work towards the region's accession to Pakistan. However, he could not return to the valley due to the course of events which saw Kashmir accede to the Indian Union. He remained politically active in Pakistan and was twice chosen as the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the part of Jammu and Kashmir state held by Pakistan, dying there in 1968.

The exile of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah limited the role of the Mirwaiz family in the political affairs of the region to some extent. However, the Holy Relic agitation of 1963 brought the family back into the political limelight through Mirwaiz Moulvi Muhammad Farooq, the nephew of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. Despite his young age, the Mirwaiz was chosen to lead the *Awami* (People's) Action Committee formed to coordinate the protests against the theft of the relic from the shrine. The committee was later turned into a political party by the Mirwaiz. Within a few months of the movement, his political stature rose so much that the press began to compare him with Sheikh Abdullah, a veteran of politics by that time.[45] He continued to exert political influence for almost twenty-five years before falling to the bullets of his assassins in

[44] Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, p. 269.
[45] "Muerka Farooq-o-Abdullah: Tareekhi Pasi Manzer," *Aaeena*, (1st July, 1964), p. 7.

1990. His son, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, succeeded him as the Mirwaiz at the young age of 19 years and is the current Mirwaiz of Kashmir.

Even though young at the time of his ascension, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq played a significant role in the politics of the state by becoming the founder-chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, an amalgam of pro-independence political parties in 1992. In an interview given to a website Rediff in 1997, he asserted that his role as a Mirwaiz is both religious and political, with the political aspect as the more important. He further claims that "all along, the political role has been present in the institution of the Mirwaiz," and as far his "religion and politics are concerned, they are one and the same"[46]. Thus, it can be said that the institution of Mirwaiz-i-Kashmir, both for its occupants and the people, is an overtly political office. It is pretty evident from the activities of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq throughout the last two decades. He has been at the forefront of several political movements from 1993 to 2016, easily conjoining his duties as a preacher and a political leader.

Thus, families and successors have enjoyed a considerable influence on the politics of the region. The charisma of a Sufi saint or the inherited one of his descendants and successors enables their hold over a large section of the population, by evoking respect or reverence. It provides them with means and opportunities to intervene in the political sphere under different roles. The continuous exercise of these functions by such people has allowed the entrenchment of the Sufi creed and space within the larger politics of Kashmir. Religious figures and religious spaces have played a central role in the politics of Kashmir over centuries. This importance of Sufism and Sufi spaces in every aspect of ordinary Kashmiri life has forced many leaders to construct their ideology and political programme around Sufism and Sufi spaces. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was the most successful in executing such a project.

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah: Early Life and Political Career

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is, arguably, the most prominent, influential and popular leader of Kashmiris in the twentieth century.[47] His control and sway over the masses for nearly half a century since the 1930s is possibly unparalleled in the contemporary annals of Kashmiri history. Although there was a steady decline in his popularity during the twilight of his life, he

[46] " 'The people are desperate. They need a solution fast'," *Rediff*, (1997), https://www.rediff.com/news/aug/26mirwai.htm

[47] Sheikh Abdullah started his popular career in 1931 and died in 1982.

still commanded a considerable following among the Kashmiri masses at the time of his death, evident from the scale of attendance at his funeral.[48] Emerging as an upcoming leader in the late twenties of the previous century, he became the unquestioned mass leader during the thirties and assumed the role of the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947. However, he was dismissed by the Indian government in 1953, on suspicion of his collusion with foreign interests to realise an independent Kashmir, and spent the next two decades in and out of detention or exile. During this phase, he became an ardent supporter of a plebiscite for the region. After the defeat of Pakistan in the 1971 war, Abdullah compromised with the Indian government under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, signing the famous Indira-Sheikh accord in 1975. He assumed the truncated position of Chief Minister and died while in office in 1982.

During this tumultuous but illustrious political career, the categories of religion, Islam and Sufism, were a constant in Sheikh Abdullah's life. He was the first President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, formed in 1932 to safeguard the rights of Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir. He rechristened it in 1939 as the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. Even after this change, Sheikh continued to use Quranic quotes and verses in his speeches. He was also involved, pre and post-1947, in the maintenance and control of shrines and other religious spaces in the valley, allowing him to employ these spaces to construct his own political image and that of his party. In books written about him, his life and political history are interwoven with religion and religious imagery, especially his autobiography and other works deeply sympathetic to him.[49]

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was born in Soura, an adjoining area of Srinagar city, in 1905. Sheikh was the last child of his family; his father passed away a couple of weeks before his birth. In his autobiography, Sheikh Abdullah mentions that the family enjoyed a middle-class status in society. He also mentions that he was brought up in a very religious environment, claiming he possessed a religious bent of mind and concern for the underpriviledged since his childhood.[50] As per the customs of the time, Abdullah was enrolled in a local madrassa to learn

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[48] IANS, "Jaya's Death Revives Memories of Sheikh Abdullah's Death in Kashmir," *Business Standard*, 6th December 2016, https://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/jaya-s-demise-revives-memories-of-sheikh-abdullah-s-death-in-kashmir-116120600284_1.html

[49] This autobiography is compiled by Mohammad Yousuf Teng on the basis of narration done by Sheikh Abdullah. See Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, (Srinagar: Ali Mohammad and Sons, 1986). Other works include S. Ghulam Mohammad, *Hayat Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah*, (Srinagar, Kashmir Valley Book Depot, 2012), 211-214, and Nyla Ali Khan, *Sheikh Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[50] Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, p. 1-14.

the Quran under the tutelage of Akhoon Mubarak, who, according to Abdullah, was a Sufi and considerably influenced his life as a teacher.[51] After finishing his customary education, which included learning Arabic and Persian, Abdullah was enrolled in a primary school that worked under the supervision of Nusrat ul Islam, the institution set up by Mirwaiz Rusul Shah. Apparently, he could not continue his education there due to mismanagement by the authorities, against which Sheikh Abdullah claims he protested.[52]

After schooling, Sheikh Abdullah finished his F.S.C exam from Sri Pratap College Srinagar, after which he went to Lahore for further studies. He enrolled himself in Islamia College Lahore, completing his Bachelor of Science from there. Later, Abdullah enrolled in the Aligarh Muslim University for his Masters in Botany. It is this phase of his life, spent outside the valley, Abdullah considers the most influential with respect to his subsequent politics.[53] It is important to note that this period was characterised by broader contestations within the Muslim community of British India, with Ahrars and Ahmadis in Punjab and Deobandis and Barelwis in the United Provinces competing with the broader body politic of Indian Muslims. After completing his studies, Sheikh Abdullah returned to the valley and was appointed as a science teacher in a government school. Because of this, in the initial phase of his political life, he was called 'Master Abdullah.'

Being a member of a tiny group of educated Kashmiri Muslims, Abdullah had access to the elite circles of society. Even during the earlier phase of his political career, one finds an acute understanding in Abdullah about the efficacy of religion, religious leaders and religious spaces in shaping the political trajectory of the region. During this phase, which preceded his meteoric rise post the massacre of July 13th 1991, Abdullah stayed around religiously significant people, which helped his political career. Two important events he mentions as the earliest instance of public contact involve religious personalities or spaces.[54] That first is his invitation to a meeting called by the Srinagar elites to deliberate on the reception that they were planning for the ruler in the event of the birth of his heir. Sheikh was invited to this meeting by Muhammad Maqbool Geelani, the *sajjada-nishin* of the Khanyar shrine in Srinagar. The second instance relates to the death of Mirwaiz Ahmadullah Shah, the presiding Mirwaiz of the Jamia Masjid at the

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[51] Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, p. 8-9.
[52] Sheikh claims that this was his first protest, which seems an exaggeration considering he mentions the year of this incident to be 1911 and hence, he would have been almost six years old at this time. Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, p. 10.
[53] Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, p. 32-43.
[54] Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, p. 61-64.

shrine. Abdullah claims to have played an essential part in his funeral proceedings and made a speech at the ascension ceremony of the succeeding Mirwaiz, Moulvi Atiqullah. This involvement, he claims, increased his public interaction and was the stepping stone for his eventual acceptance as a leader of the Kashmiri masses.

Stepping Stones for Political Prominence: Shrines and Religious Spaces in Politics of Sheikh Abdullah

This close association of Sheikh Abdullah with religious leaders and religious spaces was instrumental in his rise as a political leader. It was Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah who introduced Sheikh Abdullah to the masses from the stage of Jamia Masjid and asked them to follow him as their leader.[55] Subsequently, Abdullah remained conscious of the power of these spaces in shaping public opinion and used them systematically for his interests. Across his political career, one finds instances where he used religious spaces for propagation, religious leaders to embolden his support base and Sufism as a discursive tool to build his political narrative. Some believe his frequenting of mosques and shrines. "reaped him significant support from labourers and peasants."[56]

The centrality of shrines in the politics of Sheikh Abdullah, and in the politics of Kashmir is aevident from the demand for the return of the control of these shrines made by Sheikh Abdullah in his speech as the President of the first Muslim Conference session held in 1932, detailed in the previous chapter as well. However, within this general centrality of religious spaces and shrines within the politics of Kashmir, a few shrines were particularly associated with the politics of Sheikh Abdullah. In the early phase, the sacred space that became central to Abdullah and his politics was that of the *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*. It was at *Khanqah* that he announced his resignation from the government service and received the title of *Sher-e-Kashmir*. [57] From 1931-1939, Abdullah or his party launched numerous movements, with *Khanqah* serving as the focal point of these movements. *Khanqah* was also crucial for Abdullah as the support of the presiding Mirwaiz of the shrine, Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani, was pivotal for the continuance of his political career, especially after his fallout with the other branch of Mirwaiz led by Moulvi Yusuf Shah. As mentioned earlier, the two branches of the Mirwaiz were rivals

[55] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, vol. 2, p. 31.
[56] Amar Sohal, "Kashmiri Secularism: Religious Politics in the Age of Democracy," *Global Intellectual History*, 7, no.6, (2022), 994-1015, p. 997.
[57] Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, p. 94.

in any case. Thus, when Sheikh Abdullah had a fallout with Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani put their weight behind him against the political ascendance of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah.[58] Hence, there was a symbiotic relationship between the caretakers of the *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* and Sheikh Abdullah. Sheikh Abdullah immensely benefitted from this support. *Khanqah* remained the centre of his politics till the emergence of differences over the transformation of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference, between him and Mirwaiz Ghulam Nabi Hamdani, the Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani in 1939.[59]

During the growing distance between the Mirwaiz-e-Hamdani and Sheikh Abdullah, Abdullah was given an opportunity to take *Dargah-Hazratbal* under his control. In 1773, the *mutawalli* of the shrine, Bulaqi Banday, formulated a *waqfnama* stipulating the conditions for succession to the office of the *mutawalli* and the division of income acquired from the properties of the shrine between the whole family.[60] However, by the twentieth century, internal quarrels began to ferment within the family over this arrangement. Two individuals, Abdul Rahim Banday and Noor ud-Din Banday, fought over the control of the shrine. Abdul Rahim Banday was close to Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, and was associated with the Azad Muslim Conference set up by the Mirwaiz. Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, hence, intervened and tried to settle the matter in favour of Abdul Rahim Banday. Mirwaiz even set up an *Awqaf* committee to look after the shrine and its management, which increased his political and social standing.[61]

The loss of the *Dargah* would have exacerbated the difficulty of Sheikh Abdullah, as the shrine was located in the vicinity of his hometown. He was given an opportunity to intervene when Noor ud-Din Banday approached Abdullah for help. Sheikh advised Noor ud-Din Banday to publish financial records of the *waqf*, which he did, projecting gross mismanagement of the *awqaf*.[62] Subsequently, a large group of people, who Abdullah claims were the people disgruntled with the mismanagement of the shrine,[63] while others believed belonged to the party of Abdullah,[64] protested around the shrine and refused to allow Mirwaiz to enter the shrine. Sheikh Abdullah even claims that the *Awqaf* committee looking after the shrine decided

[58] Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, p. 152-153.
[59] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, vol. 2, p. 263.
[60] G.N Gauhar, *Hazratbal: The Central Stage of Kashmiri Politics*, (New Delhi: Virgo Publication,1998), p. 63-64.
[61] Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, p. 228.
[62] Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, p. 228.
[63] Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, p. 278.
[64] Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, p. 229.

to disallow Mirwaiz to preach from the pulpit of the shrine.[65] Later, on the day when Mirwaiz was barred from entering the shrine, as soon as Abdul Rahim Banday was about to display the relic, he was forced by three National Conference leaders, Moulana Mohammad Sayeed Masoodi, Ghulam Mohi ud-Din Karra and Sula Galadar, to publicly accept Sheikh Abdullah as his leader.[66]

Sheikh took control of the shrine and was elected President of the management body of the shrine, which was later transformed into *Idara Auqaf-i-Islamia* (Department of Islamic Awqaf) under the leadership of Abdullah. Over the years, *Idara* brought almost all the prominent shrines of the valley under his control. As a result, these spaces became intimately connected to the politics of Sheikh Abdullah.[67] *Dargah* remained the principal site of action and public engagement. In his own words, Sheikh says that he visited *Dargah* every Friday and for every commemorative ceremony.[68] *Dargah Hazratbal* became his religious citadel and a site for his numerous political speeches, and Sheikh Abdullah became a political and religious leader, neatly combining the two roles in his politics.

The Citadel of Resistance: The Use of Dargah-Hazratbal by Sheikh Abdullah

Sheikh Abdullah assumed the position of the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in 1948. He was the first Muslim in centuries to occupy that post. He played an important part in the accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India and had close personal connections with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India. In 1948, in front of the United Nations, Sheikh Abdullah gave a speech that "religion has no role place in politics" and that "Kashmir and the people of Kashmir have lawfully and constitutionally acceded to the Dominion of India."[69] However, religion continued to remain crucial to his politics within the region. The importance of religion to Sheikh Abdullah is perceptible through the fact that one of the acts of Sheikh Abdullah after becoming the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir was to formulate a policy to look after the awqaf outside the valley of Kashmir. While Sheikh continued to head the *Idara*, its was limited to Kashmir. Hence, Sheikh Abdullah, in an order

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[65] Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, p. 278.
[66] Taseer, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat*, vol. 1, p. 230.
[67] The history of the *Idara* and *awqaf* legislation in Kashmir is detailed in the previous chapter.
[68] Abdullah, *Aatish-e-Chinar*, p. 278.
[69] "Sheikh's UN Speech, *Kashmir Life*, (2nd February, 2021). https://kashmirlife.net/sheikhs-un-speech-259182/

dated 28th March 1948, with order number 12 J.C. of 1948, appointed Syed Noor Shah as custodian of waqf properties in Jammu and entrusted him with preparing a 'list of the properties' and 'arrange for its protection."[70] This action was also done in the aftermath of the Jammu massacre, in which a substantial population of Muslims in the region were either killed or forced to migrate. This act, aided and abetted by the Dogra state, changed the demographic composition of the division.[71] The initiation of *awqaf* during this time helped protect the *waqf* properties, but it also extended the religo-political nature of Abdullah's personality outside the confines of the valley.

Hence, Sheikh Abdullah continued to function as a political and religious leader, using the platform of shrines to further his politics. He continued to deliver speeches and messages from the shrines, including *Dargah-Hazratbal*. After his issues with the Indian leadership, Sheikh Abdullah, in a speech at *Hazratbal*, in the presence of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Central Education minister, indirectly challenged the Indian government. He asserted that "he will not rest until he secures the right of self-determination and independence for the *qaum*."[72] Shortly after, he and his government were dismissed and put behind bars on the 9th of August 1953.

Sheikh Abdullah was released in January 1958. On reaching Srinagar, he gave a speech in the Dargah Hazratbal, showcasing his reliance on religion to connect a chord with the masses. His speech called for following the tenets of Islam and obliquely referred to his retractors, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and his allies, while discussing the issue of fake Prophets that emerged during and after the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)."[73] He even referred to the anecdotes of Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jeelani, the founder of the Qadirriya order, while narrating his ordeal during his incarceration.[74] This religious symbolism was neatly amalgamated with the overt political demand of plebiscite and the call for the continuation of the struggle for the same.[75] Until his re-arrest in April of that year, he made as many as six speeches at *Dargah-Hazratbal*. His speeches were overtly Islamic and overtly political, espousing an anti-government position. Among all his speeches of this time, one stands out. It is the speech made on 21st February 1958.

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[70] Order no, 12 J.C. of 1948 (29th March, 1948), P.B. 1542/48 Reg. 7 (V), Box no. 84, Restoration of Property to Muslims at Jammu Province, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar.

[71] Christopher Snedden, *Kashmir: The Unwritten Story*, (New Delhi: HarperCollins), 2013.

[72] Qayoom, *Mufassil Tarīkh*, vol. 2, p. 313-314.

[73] S. Ghulam Mohammad, *Hayat Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah*, (Srinagar, Kashmir Valley Book Depot, 2012), 211-214. (translation from Urdu by the author).

[74] Mohammad, *Hayat Sher-e-Kashmir*, p. 215-216.

[75] Mohammad, *Hayat Sher-e-Kashmir*, p. 223-229.

This speech is important because it brings forth the manner in which Sheikh Abdullah used religious spaces to construct political legitimacy and enlist support for his political programme. After participating in a religious proceeding (*dastaarbandi*), Sheikh Abdullah put forth a resolution in front of the congregation assembled there. He said:

"Today I am putting forth a resolution in front of you, and if you agree with the same, then with the pure- heart, *considering God as your witness*, raise your hand" (emphasis mine).[76]

Then he spelt out the resolution, which read:

This august congregation of Kashmiri people, which comprises more than 150000 people, men and women from every part of the state, believing in the truthfulness of the below-mentioned statements, proclaim:

a) Until a final resolution regarding the future of the state of Jammu and Kashmir is not decided upon, there is no possibility of the people of the state being relieved of the political uncertainty, economic ruin, mental agony, emotional turmoil and other such difficulties in front of them.

b) The tense relations between India and Pakistan are not only the source of a significant danger to the stability of Asia but are also the reason for the destruction of Jammu and Kashmir, and the biggest reason for this tense relationship is the dispute of Kashmir.

c) The final decision regarding the future relations of the state of Jammu and Kashmir is the sole right of the people of the state. The condition for the decision is that the people of the state should be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination under an unbiased, under the supervision of an international organisation, and in a robust democratic way, which has been agreed upon by the constituents of the dispute or any other way which is acceptable to the constituents.[77]

The contents of this resolution make clear the political role Dargah Hazratbal played in the politics of Sheikh Abdullah. The resolution was supposedly endorsed by the overwhelming majority[78] and, hence, provided religious and popular legitimacy for the political project of Sheikh Abdullah. Sheikh Abdullah, however, did not stop here but made the congregation take an oath, affirming their support to the movement, denouncing the dismissal of Sheikh from power and criticising the rule of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. The text of the oath read as follows:

[76] Mohammad, *Hayat Sher-e-Kashmir*, p. 338.
[77] Mohammad, *Hayat Sher-e-Kashmir*, p. 338-339.
[78] Mohammad, *Hayat Sher-e-Kashmir*, p. 338.

This august congregation of the people of Kashmir, on this auspicious day and on the holy premises of Asaar-e-Sharief Hazratbal, reaffirms the oath to sacrifice in the way of freedom and independence and to continue the struggle for independence, an oath that was taken 27 years ago in the lawn of

Khanqah-e-Mo'alla. And proclaims the reality that the final decision regarding the accession of Jammu and Kashmir has not taken place, and the people who claim that they have successfully completed accession through the Assembly[79] are exceeding their limit by committing false speech. We proclaim that the result of the coup of 9th August 1953 that was put into action, the state of Jammu and Kashmir is not left with any assembly that enjoys the confidence of the majority of the population. If an unrepresentative assembly, surviving through the help of the police, has given a view on the matter on accession or is pushing down a constitution upon people, we consider it in contravention of the principle of democracy, and it does not merit any importance in the scales of morality. We profess this belief and faith that the final decision of the accession would be the one which would be enacted by the people of Jammu and Kashmir through the exercise of their right of self-determination, without any internal or external pressure. We take this oath that to accomplish this demand of the people, we will continue our peaceful and continuous struggle in an organised way, and we will not shy away from every possible sacrifice in its way.[80]

This nature of the resolution, the use of the space to approve the resolution and to take a political oath, clearly shows that neither *Dargah* nor *Khanqah-e-Mo'allah* is merely a cultural or religious space. They are deeply political. During these four months of freedom from incarceration, Sheikh Abdullah also gave speeches in other religious spaces, including Jamia Masjid, *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* and Eidgah. In all of these speeches, one finds a neat use of Quranic verses, couplets, and anecdotes by Sheikh Abdullah to obliquely criticise his opponents while constructing his own political image and capital.[81] His religio-political personality was also strengthened by his project to reconstruct the *Dargah-Hazratbal*. He started this project in 1969 but could only complete it in 1979. Sheikh made the construction a mass movement, collecting donations from every area of the valley. The Plebiscite Front, formed by the loyalist of Sheikh Abdullah, after he was ousted from the government and his party, the National Conference, played an active role, shoring up its support base. His control

[79] The Assembly mentioned here is the Constituent Assembly, whose elections took place in 1952, and Sheikh Abdullah and his party virtually won uncontested. After Sheikh was deposed, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad became the leader and this Assembly promulgated the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir in 1956.

[80] Mohammad, *Hayat Sher-e-Kashmir*, p. 340-341.

[81] Mohammad, *Hayat Sher-e-Kashmir*, p. 152-276.

over sacred spaces and shrines was further strengthened after he received back the control of *Idara-e-Awqaf-e-Islamia* from Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad in 1964.

In addition, Sheikh Abdullah undertook several religious acts which, deliberately or unconsciously, solidified his religious profile. He went into *Aitiqaf*, a religious practice in which a Muslim stays inside a mosque or a shrine during the last ten days of Ramadan.[82] During this phase, his personality also had a distinctive Sufi element, and his followers imagined him as a *dervish* (mystic).[83] The importance of Sufism in the construction of his personality, even after his death, is also evident from the photo his supporters often use. This photo shows him distributing *tabarruk* to the devotees from the window of a shrine, similar to a Sufi saint or his *sajjada-nisihin*.[84] The photo also depicts people accepting *tabarruk* from him, indicating that people also saw Sheikh Abdullah as more than just a political leader.

Thus, the politics of Sheikh Abdullah was squarely based on personality constructed by combining both religious and political functions. The political positions of Sheikh Abdullah underwent drastic changes since his initial advent in 1931, but he did not abandon the religious sphere. Instead, he used it to legitimise his political trajectory. He employed Sufi shrines and other religious spaces for his goals, ranging from Muslim emancipation to accession to India. He continued to employ religious categories and use religious spaces after his fallout with the Indian state and his subsequent call for a plebiscite. The complete turnabout on this demand, after his accord with Indira Gandhi and the subsequent dissolution of the Plebiscite Front and the revival of the National Conference under him, did not diminish his control over these spaces or their place in his political ideology.

In the aftermath of the accord, he gave a speech at *Dargah* on 26th July 1976, where he finally proclaimed the *Dargah Hazratbal* as the religious centre of the Kashmiri Muslims and the *Mujahid Manzil* (headquarters of the National Conference) as the political centre. He said:

> There are two important centres for the Muslims of the state. One religious (*dini*) and the other, worldly (*dunyawi*). *Dargah Hazratbal* is the religious centre, and the association and faith of people in it is such

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[82] "Sheikh Sahab ne Goshaye Ibadat Saja Liya: Ziyarat Sayyid Sahab Mein Gosha-e-Aitikaf," *Aaeena*, (December, 1964), p. 2.

[83] Muhammad Ishaq Khan, "The Significance of the Dargah of Hazratbal in the Socio-Religious and Political Life of Kashmiri Muslim," in *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character, History, and Significance*, New Hardback ed., ed. Christian W. Troll, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 175.

[84] Nyla Ali Khan, *Sheikh Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), Cover.

an asset, in front of which the whole wealth and power of the world are worthless. And, the centre that relates to their worldly and political affairs and that centre is the Mujahid Manzil. . . . . The way you have performed exemplary sacrifices for the *Dargah*, you should also perform similar sacrifices to keep alive your political centre.[85]

Thus, he claims that these centres should exist in harmony, and people should not look at them separately. Further, people should take decisions and act on them, keeping in mind the interests of both these centres, which he links to the development of the Kashmiri society as a whole. As the head of the Muslim Auqaf Trust, which looked after the shrines and religious spaces of the region, and the President of the National Conference at that moment, he positioned himself as leading both the centres and, thus, the singular leader of the Kashmiris. He also reminded the people of the oath Sheikh and the people had taken in the precincts of the *Dargah* and exhorted them to follow the same and support Sheikh Abdullah even if some policy decisions of his government were unpopular and made life difficult for them. He claimed:

"I cannot forget that I made an oath in the precincts of this *Dargah* and on the lawns of *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, and I still stand by it, that until I ensure the dignity and respect of the poor population of this state, I will not sit in peace. You people also made an oath to me, and I want to remind you of that oath. You people swore that you would stand by me in my quest to take the people forward. And you will stand as a wall against the hypocritical (*munafiqana*) acts of the enemy. I want you to always remember this oath, and instead of paying heed to the rumours circulated by the opponents, scrutinise them on the basis of conduct and character (of the opponents)."[86]

Hence, Sheikh Abdullah used the space of the *Dargah* and the emotional and religious association of the people with the place, and that of *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, to construct legitimacy for his political actions and seek consent for his governmental policies. This act of employing shrines to gauge public opinion and give speeches, especially after the Indira-Abdullah accord, was also taken up by other close associates of Abdullah. This included his son Farooq Abdullah and son-in-law Ghulam Muhammad Shah, who visited many *dargahs* and mosques to understand the mood of the population.[87]

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[85] "Main ne Is Dargah Main jo Aapse Wada Kiya Hai, Main us par Qayam Hoon aur Qayam Rahoon Ga: Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah," *Aaeena*, (27th July, 1976), p.1, (translation from Urdu mine).
[86] "Sheikh Abdullah ki Taqreer,"*Aaeena*, (27th July, 1976), p. 4, (translation from Urdu mine).
[87] 1953 ka Narga Phir Dohraya Ja Sakta Hai: Shahi Masjid Main Dr. Farooq Abdullah ki Taqreer," Aaeena, 4th October 1975, p. 1; "National Conference ki Taqdeer Awam Raqam Karenge: Chrar-e-Sharief Main Shah Sahab ki Taqreer," *Aaeena*, (5th October, 1975), p. 1.

However, Sheikh did only use Sufism merely to mobilise support and gauge public opinion. In the aftermath of the Indira-Abdullah accord, he used Sufism to construct a political identity which legitimised his political actions. Sheikh Abdullah set out to use Sufism to construct a discursive framework around which subsequent Kashmiri politics has continued to revolve. It is the idea of *Kashmiriyat*, which has been occupying a preeminent position in the political discourse of Kashmir ever since.

The Political Use of Sufi Brotherhood: Kashmiriyat as a Monolithic and Legitimising Tool

Kashmiriyat has been employed as a discursive and ideological plank, both for the politics of Sheikh Abdullah and the Indian State. There is a constant debate over the actual meaning of the term, which is used to signify different things in different contexts.[88] However, few markers are essentially ascribed to it. These include a sense of unique history, culture and religious practices, as well as a tradition of tolerance and mutual brotherhood. Hence, in a broader sense, Kashmiriyat has been defined as "that self-proclaimed and externally endowed superiority of socio-religious, spatial, and cultural institutions of a small community of Kashmiris of all religious shades that originally inhabited Kashmir. It is this superiority that has overwhelmed and assimilated the social and religo-cultural traditions and traits of greater cultures surrounding Kashmir."[89] The basis of this cultural tradition is credited to the "intellectual and spiritual labour of [these] Rishis."[90]

After coming to power, Sheikh Abdullah used institutional agencies to promote and propagate the values of Rishis, especially Shaykh Nur ud-Din and Lalla Ded, to promote a regionally situated history, culture and religious practices. The primary arm of his actions was the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Language (Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy at that time). Sheikh Abdullah lent full support to the Cultural Academy to "debate and define the concept in a specific historical and cultural context."[91] The Cultural Academy-affiliated

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[88] Rattan Lal Hangloo, "Kashmiriyat: The Voice of the Past Misconstrued," in *The Parchment of Kashmir: History, Society and Polity*, ed. Nyla Ali Khan, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 37-68, p. 37-40.
[89] Hangloo, "Kashmiriyat," p. 45.
[90] M. H. Zaffar, "Kashmiriyat: World View," in *Approaches to Kashmir Studies*, ed. G. M Khawaja and Gulshan Majeed, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2011), 65-72, p. 66.
[91] Mohammad Ishaq Khan, "The Rishi Tradition and the Construction of Kashmiriyat," in *Kashmiriyat: Through the Ages*, ed. Fida Mohammad Hassanain, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2011), 106-127, p. 108.

Kashmir Council of Research organised a seminar on Sheikh Nur ud-Din in 1978,[92] besides J&K Cultural Academy itself organised a seminar on Sheikh Nooruddin in 1979 and on Lal Ded in 1980 (Silver Jubilee Volume 1. Srinagar: J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, 1985). The J&K Cultural Academy also published a translated collection of the poetry of Shaykh Nur ud-Din, which came out in 1984.[93]

His goal of using Shaykh Nur ud-Din is clear from the message he gave to members of the Academy for the seminar and is present in the subsequent publication of the proceedings. The later use of Sheikh ul-Alam and his Rishi movement as a link with the Indian state is evident from this message, reducing the national icon of Kashmir to a link between different cultural constituents of India. In it, Sheikh Abdullah claims:

> Sheikh Noor-ud-din deserves to get his place side by side with the greatest benefactors and leading lights. We, in Kashmir, celebrated his Hexa centenary celebrations and our researchers discovered new dimensions of his personality, sayings and influence. But it was rather a rude shock for us, when we suggested to the Union Ministry of Communications to issue a commemorative postal stamp in his honour; they replied that he is not known in India as widely as to justify such a gesture. Though the realisation was painful, the Ministry had a point. It also highlighted how the bonds which could contribute to the greatest emotional and idealistic unity between various cultural constituents of India have been allowed to remain dormant."[94]

So why did Sheikh Abdullah need to construct such an identitarian discourse? The term itself was alien and "may not be claimed to be a native sense of perception. It is an artificially produced clone of punjabiyat."[95] The answer lies in the change in political conditions emanating from the political surrender of Sheikh Abdullah to the Indian state in 1975. As mentioned above, Abdullah actively used religion to challenge the Indian State and demand a plebiscite. On the other hand, political organisations such as the Jamia'at Islami and political events such as the Iranian revolution triggered Pan-Islamic feelings within the population of Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah and the Plebiscite Front actively used Islamic symbols to sour up its support base. Thus, once Abdullah took over the reins of power, it became vital for him to

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[92] M. Amin Pandit ed., *Alamdar-i-Kashmir*: *Standard – Bearer Patron Saint of Kashmir*, (Srianagar: Gulshan Publishers, 1997), p. 119.
[93] B. L. Parimoo ed., *Unity in Diversity*, (Srinagar: J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, 1984).
[94] Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, "Message," in M. Amin Pandit ed., *Alamdar-i-Kashmir*: *Standard – Bearer Patron Saint of Kashmir*, (Srianagar: Gulshan Publishers, 1997), 97-99, p. 98.
[95] T. N. Madan, "Meaning of Kashmiriyat: Cultural Means and Political Ends" in *Kashmir: Need for Sub-Continental Political Initiative*, ed. Gull Mohd Wani, (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1995), p. 63.

create a discursive ideal which challenges such development within the Kashmiri society. Sheikh Abdullah also used the media to entrench the idea of Kashmiriyat. Post the signing of the Indira-Abdullah accord, "the concept of Kashmiriyat was a recurrent theme in the local Urdu dailies of Kashmir."[96] Abdullah also undertook a well-publicised personal visit to the grave of Yusuf Shah Chak and his son Yaqub Shah Chak in Biswak, Bihar, to commemorate the last 'independent' king of Kashmir.[97] Hence, the construction of Kashmiriyat served the political project to characterise the religion and identity within the geographical contours of South Asia, as a continuation of Indic traditions and, consequently, a constituent part of it.

Does that mean that the characteristics mentioned as constituents of Kashmiriyat are entirely superficial, devoid of any empirical reality? I do not argue that. The Kashmiri society has a history of tolerance, interactions and continuations of thought, but that, for one, is not a specifically Kashmiri trait. There are other regions, both in broader South Asia and other regions of the world, where such kind of interaction between faiths, a continuation of thought and a social value of toleration exists. The issue is solidifying those disparate social ideals into a monolithic category of Kashmiriyat, emphasising politically desirable characteristics of a particular thought, and concealing the undesirable ones, to promote a political and ideological stance. After the signing of the Indira-Abdullah accord, Kashmiriyat was used by the Indian press "to establish the ideological credentials of the Indian state's sovereignty in the Muslim-dominated state as against the two-nation theory."[98] It is promoted as a constitutional link as "Kashmir is indigenously secular and a natural part of secular India."[99] It involved a project "to define Kashmir culture on the foundations of *unitary* concepts of cultural identity originating not merely in the rich cultural heritage of the Rishis but also, in the relationship between culture and politics that marks the ideology of the Indian state" (emphasis mine).[100] The Sufi tradition of Kashmir, which has remained political all through its history and practice, has been characterised as "quietist."[101]

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[96] Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Publications, 1983), p. 22.

[97] The Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy came out with a publication on this tour of Sheikh Abdullah. See Toru Tak, "The Term Kashmiriyat: Kashmiri Nationalism of the 1970s," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48, no. 16. (2013): 28-32.

[98] Khan, "The Rishi Tradition," p. 108.

[99] Tak, "The Term Kashmiriyat," p. 30.

[100] Khan, "The Rishi Tradition," p. 109.

[101] Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: Antinomies of Nationalism," *Asian Survey*, 31, no. 11, 997-1019, p. 999.

This construction, in essence, is the same singular and monolithic reduction of Sufism undertaken by the colonial regime as a doctrine devoid of politics. This reduction of Kashmiri Sufism to a singular project was similarly a political project, as Kashmiriyat has become a successful ideological tool to justify political action and control. After the emergence of militancy in 1990, the 'loss of Kashmiriyat' has become the dominant political currency in Kashmiri politics. The need to revive the lost Sufi Kashmiriyat has been a powerful legitimising instrument for the state.[102]

This assertion is based on a fragile footing. As specified above and in the previous chapter, Sufism in Kashmir was, historically and practically, discursively and spatially, political. The sufi tradition of Kashmir has always, across *tariqa*, been intimately connected with the political practices of the region. Even the use of Sufism by political actors is evident in the political history of Sheikh Abdullah. From being sites of political mobilisation to locations for celebrating political outcomes,[103] politics in the state has revolved around the space of a shrine and the discourse of Sufism. Sheikh Abdullah was, arguably, the most adept in employing it to propagate and push his political ideology. He used the famous shrines of the valley to propel his politics and employed the discursive tradition of Sufism to create a political identity in consonance with his political trajectory. In an era when secularism and secularisation were the dominant currency, Sheikh Abdullah neatly ensconced the political and religious role within his singular personality. This coalescence, in all probability, was one of the main reasons for his profound success as a political leader.

Conclusion

Thus, Sufism has been a conduit for various political actions across the recent history of Kashmir. The immortalisation of Sufi personalities through shrines, *khanqah* and *dargah,* helped institutionalise their political role by providing space as well as through families and individuals overlooking those shrines, such as the *mutawallis* or *sajjada-nishins* These individuals or families enjoyed immense prestige and authority owing to their control over shrines as well as due to the fact that most of them were also the direct descendants of the Sufi mystic. This social prestige emanated from an 'inherited charisma' and, consequently, brought

[102] Sanjay Sapru, "Resurgence of "Kashmiriyat / Sufism" Only Way Forward for Naya Kashmir," *Rising Kashmir*, (10th November, 2022). http://risingkashmir.com/resurgence-of-kashmiriyat-sufism-only-way-forward-for-naya-kashmir.
[103] "Photograph," *Aaeena*, (1st July, 1966), p. 1.

political prestige as well. Historically, many descendants of Sufi families have played essential roles in politics of their time, including Abul Hassan Banday, the *mutawalli* of *Dargah* who led a revolt against Afghan rule in the eighteenth century.

The advent of popular politics allowed the Sufi institutions to become cradles for political restructuring or revolutions, allowing people to associate it with enhanced roles. People associated with these shrines led the movement against the despotic rule of the Dogra monarchy. Political leaders realised the significance of these spaces and employed them profusely to realise their political aims. The most successful use of the shrine to promote political agenda was done by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. Sheikh Abdullah was a political leader who assumed the position of religious leader after setting up the *Idara Auqaf-i-Islamia*, a department under his control to manage shrines and other religious places. It does not mean that the religious leaders lost their political capital. Many political leaders still present in Kashmir derive their political heft from their religious position. These include the Mirwaiz, Ansaris, Mehdis and Mians.

Hence, Sufism has always made itself available to the political requirements of the Kashmiri society. Sufi families and other institutions have maintained a sustained relationship with the political realm. Many Sufi actors have dabbled in politics, and many political actors have used Sufism to further their ideas and goals. The political structure has also viewed Sufism differently, which has translated into a unique relationship between the two. This relationship has shaped the very conceptualisation of Sufism and the nature of politics within Kashmir. Sufi shrines are not merely sites of communal and religious significance but have been the epicentre of foundational and transformational politics of the region. Therefore, in many facets and aspects, Sufism has been distinctively 'political' in Kashmir.

Conclusion

This study attempted to reorient and revisit Sufi Islam and uncover historical, contextual, doctrinal and socio-political complexities within it. Sufism, as it is popularly understood today, as a quietist and mystical form of Islam, is an unfair reduction. The thesis argues that such construction has emanates from historical and contemporary political necessities, attempting to appropriate or promote Sufism as a means to achieve political ends. Historically, this was the project of colonialism. Under that colonial project, Sufi Islam was conceptualised as *extra-Islamic* or *proto-Islamic*, stripping it of its Islamic history and genesis. Although there has been a considerable challenge to this conceptualisation over the past century, it still permeates the larger public sphere. Popualalry speaking, Sufism is still associated with the *whirling dervish*, *qawwali* or the mystical world, and a general disinterest in the temporal world.

In contemporary times, continuing with the aforementioned tradition, Sufism has been employed as a preferred alternative of Islamic identity and practice, as opposed to Islamism or Political Islam. This is a result of a conscious effort by the west, through governmental and private support, and employed as a justificatory tool for its political and military actions. While Sufi Islam has certain unique facets and aspects that differentiate it from other value systems that emerge from Islam, it does not take away the biased nature of such a project. Further, it also indulges in a singular construction of Sufi Islam, a continuation of the colonial bias.

The study challenged these conceptions about Sufi Islam. The mystical and quietistic conceptualisation was challenged by bringing forth historical and doctrinal realities present with the Sufi corpus, which are in an intimate relation with the political realm. This, I argue, alsodoes not take into consideration various Sufi saints who see politics as an essential component of the Muslim community life. The challenge to this notion about Sufism was also undertaken by criticising the monolithic conception of Sufism, and bringing forth the diversity of thought and action that is present within Sufism.

The research undertakes such conceptual exercise within the contextual reality of Kashmir, bringing forth the political nature of Sufism, saints and shrines in the life of the Kashmiris. The context of Kashmir was chosen due to the aptness of the region to this study. Kashmir has been intimately linked to Sufism for a long time. Locally, it is called *Rishi-Vaer* (Garden of Rishis) or *Peer-Vaer* (Garden of Pirs), which reflects the importance of Sufism in the very

conceptualisation of Kashmir as a geographical entity. This conceptualisation has also permeated outside, which sees Sufism as an important part of Kashmiri history and its identity. The latter is manifested in the popular identitarian construct of *Kashmiriyat*, employed locally and otherwise, to project a singular and monothic vision of Kashmir history, its societal nature, and its political future.

To begin with, the thesis challenges this monolithic construction of Sufism, at an epietomological level, by bringing forth plurality within the Sufi cosmos. For example, it was brought forth that Mansur al Hallaj, considered the epitome of antinomian Sufism, is also a part of the Sufi pantheon, and so is Junayd al Baghdadi, who promoted a *sharia*-compliant nature of Sufi thought. Interestingly, and in complete opposition to modern conceptions, Baghdadi promoted a distance from politics, but Hallaj was intimately involved in the politics of his times. In the latter times, Umar al Suhrawardi became closely associated with the political project of the Abbasid Caliph, al Nasr, even acting as his ambassador to different rulers. On the other hand, Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani, who belonged to the Hanbalite school of thought, considered the most orthodox of the four *madhabs* (schools of Islamic jurisprudence), provided the understanding of *jehad* as an internal struggle. This understanding of *jihad* has become central to the popular understanding of Sufism. Further, from Abbasids to Fatimids, Mongols to Mughals, and Ottomans to Seljuks, several studies have shown that almost every Sufi *tariqa* has been involved with politics at one time or the other, in one way or the other.

Within the context of Kashmir, the reseach brought forth different roles played by Sufi saints, and their consequent socio-political effects. Shaykh Hamza Makhdum and his anti-Shi'i crusade, on account of the mistreatment of Sunnis by the Chak rulers, had a crucial role in bringing down this dynasty of Kashmir. His *khalifa* Baba Dawud Khaki, and a Kubraviyya saint, Shaykh Yaqub Sarfi, went as ambassadors to the Mughal emperor Akbar, petitioning him to conquer Kashmir. Before that, Sufi saints, such as Mir Muhammad Hamdani and Shams ud-Din Araki, enjoyed considerable influence over state policy as patron saints of rulers and elites of the region. Baba Khalil ul-lah repeatedly undertook the role of a mediator between the political elites of the region. Even Rishi saints, who are socially recluse, took a political position during the Mughal conquest of Kashmir. This signifies that across the spectrum of Sufi thought, Sufi saints are not entirely ignorant or even disinterested in the socio-political reality of their societies. In fact, socio-political change is an important component of their larger spiritual goals.

This aspect was highlighted by the research through a study of two Sufi saints, who have had a colossal impact on the social, cultural, religious, and political life of Kashmir. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamdani, a Persian Kubraviyya saint, and Shaykh Nur ud-Din, the progenitor of the indigenous Rishi *tariqa*. Saiyid Ali Hamdani is a paragon of a Sufi saint deeply concerned with the politics of his community. A ferocious writer, his corpus contains letters written to different rules of his time advising on matters of governance and polity. He also occupies a unique space within the galaxy of Sufi scholars as he has written a political treatise called *Zakhirat ul Muluk*, which provides a detailed overview of the socio-political imagination of Saiyid Ali Hamdani.On the other hand, Nur ud-Din espouses his socio-political imagination through his poetry, called *shruks*. This includes values of toleration, brotherhood and peace. However, his poetry also espouses social reform, puts the ruling dispensation to a scathing criticism, and calls for passive and active struggle against tyranny.

Additionally, the thesis reflectd on the tremendous effect these personalities had on the Kashmiri identity, even through extra-spiritual means. The first is the institutionalisation of certain ritualistic practices that have shaped the identity of adherents. The recitation of *Awrad-e-Fattiya* after the morning prayers in Kashmir, initiated by Hamdani, arouses a sense of togetherness and community. The prevalence of vegetarianism in the Rishi order evokes a sense of belonging across the religious divide through this continuation of a pre-Islamic practice. Further, Hamdani is also associated with the cultural reorientation of Kashmir towards the larger Islamic world. Hamdani was adamant about instituting an Islamic way of life, including how people dressed. He is also considered to have introduced many Persian crafts to the land, bringing economic growth. However, such introduction also resulting in Kashmir reorienting itself towards Islamic *weltanschauung*. Subsequently, this change also affected the local Kashmiri language, as it incorporated more Persian and Arabic terminology.

Nur ud-Din played a crucial role in ensuring this cultural reorientation did not completely extinguish the Kashmiri culture. His poetry was instrumental in the survival of Kashmiri literary tradition as well as the Kashmiri language. Through his poetry, he also constructed the geographical contours of Kashmir as an entity. His followers are also credited with ensuring the survival of many indigenous Kashmiri art forms. Both these cultural projects have political consequences. The project of Hamdani crystallised the Muslim identity of the population and, through it, of the place. Nur ud-Din and his conceptions form the basis of the national, unique, and indigenous identity of Kashmiris and Kashmir. These principles, therefore, become

cardinal in fermenting the political ideals of the Kashmiris, both generally and particularly concerning the ongoing conflict of Kashmir.

Although these conceptualisations permeate the society of Kashmir, the research highlighted how shrines are important spatial entities to institutionalise, sustain and propagate these values. Shrines are a means to institutionalise the 'charisma' of the saint and bestow it with a certain degree of permanence. In the case of Sufi personalities that are fundamental to the socio-political understanding of a community, their shrines achieve significantly higher importance in the lives of a community. Through congregation and partaking in rituals, these spaces are sites of crystallisation of identity and togetherness, allowing the memorialisation of a past and hope for the future. In Kashmir, the shrine of *Hazratbal*, *Khanqah-e-Mo'alla*, *Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah* and *Chrar-e-Sharief* embody the religious, communitarian, and political notions of the population. *Hazratbal*, the most revered shrine of Kashmir, signifies the crucial spatial link to the personality of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). *Khanqah* signifies the link to the Islamic turn of Kashmir. *Chrar-e-Sharief* is the epitome of national identity and the values of brotherhood.

This centrality, the research argued, is also reflected in the central position of *Hazrtabal, Khanqah-e-Mo'alla* and *Chrar-i-Sharief* these shrines in the politics of the region. These shrines, in addition to the *Khanqah-e-Naqshbandiya*, have provided space for crucial political movements in the region. The fight against the Dogra tyranny emanated from the sacred precinct of the *Khanqah*, giving it a unique divine colour. It remained a major mobilisation and strategic centre across that movement, providing logistical and spiritual support. This centrality has continued since. The *Khanqah-e-Naqshabandiya* is the burial site of the 1931 martyrs who were gunned down by the Dogra regime. Their martyrdom is considered the moment when the movement against the Dogra regime entered a popular phase. The yearly commemoration of these martyrs, which continued until 2019, accrued a special political significance to the *Khnaqah-e-Naqshbandiya*, as the repository of political memory.

Hazratbal has been central to two foundational transformations in contemporary Kashmiri politics. One in early 1964, when Kashmir erupted in protests after the theft of relic during the last days of 1963, which shook the established structure to the core. The Indian state was forced to make certain changes that brought about considerable change in the politics of the region. Second, in 1993, when it was under the siege of the Indian military, it provided an opportunity for upcoming political actors to entrench themselves within the political structure of the valley.

The siege of *Chrar-e-Sharief* in 1995, which ended with the destruction of the shrine, also played a similar role in establishing political actors.

Thus, these shrines have been the epicentre of movements that have led to fundamental changes in the political structure of the region. These movements continued to influence politics much after the initial event of mobilisation, with effects discernible even today. This reflects that these shrines are not ordinary spaces of mobilisation like any other but, by being central to the very existence of Kashmiris, politics emanating out of it has been found to be powerful, influential, and course-altering. Hence, these shrines are deeply political spaces on account of their importance in socio-cultural imagination, and as sites of strong reverence on account of being spiritual and religious places of worship.

This political centrality of these shrines has led to, historically, the development of a unique structure of shrine management, which in turn has allowed the continued use of the shrines as political spaces. As opposed to the rest of India, the subcontinent or even the larger Muslim world, the system of *awqaf* has been strongly associated with the community and popular politics. It emerged from the movement against the Dogra rule, as Kashmiris demanded the return of their places of worship from the regime. This movement led to the foundation of *Idara Awqaf-e-Islamia,* which was later transformed into the Muslim Auqaf Trust. This autonomous nature of the *waqf* administration continued for the most part of the previous century, which meant that the waqf administration in Kashmir mostly remained outside the direct purview and intervention of the state. Even the state legislations of these matters accepted this reality and allowed the continuation of this structure. Thus, the religious sphere of Kashmir did not confront the *modernising* force of the modern state in its full force, which has reduced shrines across the Islamic world as spaces of culture or spirituality. This unique nature of *waqf* laws allowed a significant degree of autonomy to the shrines of Kashmir, which emboldened their influence on the lives of the community and, consequently, on its politics. Lately, there have been significant changes in this structure, but the political nature of the shrines still holds on.

This political nature of the shrines was also efficacious to the political and religious elites, who instrumentally used the political power of these shrines to achieve personal and political goals. Sufi successors and descendants possess a certain ‘inherited charisma’ from the saint, which has bestowed them with a degree of socio-cultural power across the Islamic world, including in Kashmir. More often than not, this socio-political power transforms into political power as

well, with families and individuals playing an instrumental role in the politics of the place on account of their lineage. Kashmir also has numerous examples of individuals, belonging to prominent families associated with shrines and other religious spaces, who have become leaders and important personalities within the politics of the region. The Naqshabandis, Bandays, and the Mirwaiz families have, and continue to exercise, significant political clout within the region.

Alternatively, the popular devotion to these shrines was used by political leaders to employ them within their political projects. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was arguably the most adept in this regard. From his advent into politics in 1931 to his death in 1982, he used different shrines, particularly *Hazratbal* and *Khanqah*, to construct his political personality and derive political legitimacy. He employed these shrines across his political career for different and even divergent means. From establishing his control over the Muslim Conference to garnering support for his acquiescence to the accession of the region to the Indian union. From using it as a platform of resistance against the Indian rule once he was deposed in 1953, to employing the same stage to justify his rapprochement with the Indian government in 1975. However, his most significant use of Sufism was to construct the identitarian conception of *Kashmiriyat*. He utilised this conception to sustain his political vision, employing and promoting a singular and monolithic version of Sufism, and through it, a singular and monolithic version of Kashmiri history.

Thus, this work brought into focus the extensive and exhaustive relationship of Sufism with politics. It encompasses the different types of relationships between different Sufi saints and the political establishment. It includes Sufi saints occupying positions of power as patron saints and ambassadors, or as mediators between different disputes. This relationship is also reflected at a doctrinal level, with Sufi saints propounding concepts and ideas that have, overtly and covertly, political consequences. It also brought into focus the non-religious interventions of Sufi saints, through culture and language, in effecting political change and constructing political identity. This is in addition to the role of rituals in achieving a sense of community and belongingness.

Further, it elucidated the political role of shrines, which form an inalienable part of the Sufi cosmos. These spaces enjoy a considerable degree of political potential as repositories of cultural memory and sites of foundational political changes. In Kashmir, this was further accentuated by the autonomous nature of the *awqaf*, which has sustained a dominant role of

shrines in the politics of the region. Finally, the instrumental use of Sufi doctrine and shrines by Sufi successors and political leadership in constructing, propagating and entrenching their personal and political motives.

However, a considerable amount of work can still be done on the subject, particularly in Kashmir. As mentioned in the first chapter, there is a lack of critical studies on Sufism in Kashmir, both theologically and historically. This is true even in the broader context of South Asia. Such a lack of study is particularly true for the rituals and practices that the adherents undertake at different shrines. An ethnographic study of Sufi rituals and practices and their effect on individual believers is critical. It is more so in Kashmir because many rituals practised in the region are unique, and there are hardly any comparable Sufi rituals in other areas of the world. So is the analysis of numerous manuscripts and archival materials that remain unpublished. Some of them are present in Britain and other western countries, making it extremely difficult to access them, especially for local scholar undertaking research. These studies can further enlighten the discourse and tradition of Sufism and its history in Kashmir.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier, the abrogation of article 370, and the consequent loss of administrative autonomy, is a momentous change in the political structure of the region. This change would invariably affect the religious sphere as well. The event took place when I had already begun my research. Hence, my research was close to the event to make sense of the changes. However, as I sat down to write the thesis, some changes took place which would profoundly affect the nature of shrines in the region, and it is important to discuss them briefly. The most prominent was the restructuring of the Muslim Waqf Board under the Central Waqf Act, promulgated by the Indian Parliament in 1995. For the first time, the administration of shrines is controlled by the Indian state directly through its nominated members on the Board. The Board has already taken some crucial decisions, including stripping the traditional authorities of their economic rights at the shrine and disallowing the use of the shrine platform without the permission of the Board. The chairman of the board has categorically gone on record denouncing the 'political' role of the shrines, claiming they are only 'spiritual' abodes. These changes are unlikely to have an effect on the political nature of Sufism on a doctrinal level or within the perceptions of the population. However, it can significantly affect how the space of the shrine is employed politically within the valley. The resultant effect of such a strong ideological project on this aspect of the political nature of Sufism in Kashmir would be an interesting area of research in the near future.

Thus, as a study, Political Sufism in Contemporary Kashmir, challenges the singular idea of Sufism, and opens up the political possibilities of the doctrine and to provide a diverse political vocabulary to the people, especially of Kashmir, in their fight for peace and justice. It also brings forth the foundational role that Sufism plays through its rituals, doctrines, institutions and personalities in shaping the political trajectory of a population. The thesis challenged the evacuation of the 'political' from the category of Sufism, even at a discursive or doctrinal level. It argued that Sufism has been political at its inception, has remained political throughout its history, and continues to fulfil a political role in the life of adherents that follow the path across the globe. In addition to the Sufi epistemology, Sufi shrines and spaces, such as the dargah, khanqah, astan or mazar, do not act as simply religious or spiritual spaces but fulfil political functions within their respective societies. Hence, this study brought forth an exhaustive sketch of the political efficacy of Sufism, to enrich political vocabulary and challenge western reduction of Sufism.

Glossary

Adab (pl. Adaab): fraternal etiquettes.

Alamdar: literally, flag bearer or standard bearer; respectable title used for Nund Rishi. The full title is Alamdar-e-Kashmir, the flagbearer of Kashmir.

Amir: literally 'commander,' or 'leader.'

Astaan: Kashmiri word for a shrine, of Sanskrit provenance.

Azaan: Muslim call to prayer generally given in a Masjid. The person calling the Muslims for prayers is known as Muezzin.

Bosa: literally peck, ritual of kissing the precincts of a shrine or its sanctum sanctorum (*hujre-khaas*)

Budshah: literally meaning the 'Great King', title used for Sultan Zain ul Abidin of Kashmir, who ruled from 1420-70 C.E.

Chak: The second Muslim dynasty to rule Kashmir for a brief time after the fall of the Shahmirs. Ruled from c. 1551 to 1586 C.E.

Dargah: literally 'in presence of' or 'court,' used for shrines of Sufi saints.

Durood: salutations in the praise of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

Hadith: the sayings and doings of the Prophet of Islam, collected very meticulously by his companions to be followed by the Muslims world over. Six authentic of these compiled are referred to as Siha al Sitta (the authentic six).

Hujr-e-Khaas: the sanctum sanctorum of a shrine.

Hurriyat: literal meaning Freedom. Short form for the political conglomerate called All Parties Hurriyat Conference, political groups generally referred to as 'separatists' in Kashmir.

Jamia Masjid: The congregational mosque/masjid, especially used for the Friday congregational mid-day prayers and or Eid prayers.

Jehad: literally 'the struggle,' has been given different interpretations by different people.

Kashmiriyat: a term coined in the second half of 20th century, referring to an uninterrupted harmonious social order and understanding among various religious communities of Kashmir since times immemorial.

Khalifa: literally 'vice-regent,' historically used for the temporal successors of the Prophet as *khalifa-e-Islam*, but also used for spiritual successors of a saint.

Khanqah: Sufi hospice, the accommodation/residential structure in which a Sufi generally lived. Mainly constructed for spiritual training but a public kitchen and other facilities were attached to it.

Khatam: Invocatory prayers during the *urs* celebration.

Khulq (pl. Akhlaq): moral character.

Khutba: A special sermon delivered by Imam on Fridays, wherein the name of the contemporary Muslim ruler is mentioned indicating his political sovereignty over that area or region.

Langar: hospice built for feeding free food to the poor and destitute.

Manqabat: litanies in the praise of Sufi saints.

Mazaar: literally 'grave,' also used for Sufi shrines.

Milad: the anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.).

Mirwaiz: Head cleric. A respectable religious title associated with the head preacher of the Jamia Masjid of Srinagar.

Moi-e-Muqaddas: Hair relic of the Prophet of Islam, kept at the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar, Kashmir.

Murid: in Sufi terms, a follower of a Sufi master on the spiritual path.

Murshid: in Sufi vocabulary a spiritual master

Mutawalli: a person appointed by a person creating an Islamic endowment (waqf) to look after the affairs of such endowment.

Namaaz: the obligatory five-day prayers that all faithful Muslims must offer, singly or in congregation.

Nishandeh: a person who displays the relics.

Nishandehi: the display of relics in a shrine.

Niyaz: offerings given by devotees at a shrine.

Pir: literally ‘master,’ used for Sufi saints.

Qaum: community.

Qibla: the direction of Kaaba, in Makkah, present day Saudi Arabia, facing which all Muslims offer their five-day daily prayers.

Rishi: in the context of Kashmir, the term is used for the local mystics who follow a meditative and reclusive way to Islam.

Rouza/Rauza: mausoleum

Sadaat: respectable collective term used for the Sayyids and Muslim Sufi missionaries who came to Kashmir and settled in various parts of the valley. The local Muslim mystics of Kashmir are referred to as Rishis, a sort of an internal differentiation.

Sajjada-nishins: successor of a Sufi saint, in charge of a shrine.

Shahmiri: the first Muslim Sultanate dynasty to rule Kashmir (c. 1329 to 1551 C.E.). named after its founder Sultan Shamsuddin Shahmir.

Shaykh: literally ‘teacher,’ a term used for Sufi saints.

Shruk: the verses of Nund Rishi or Shaikh Nooruddin composed in the local Kashmiri language.

Silsila: Sufi order or line; in the Sufi vocabulary it connotes the spiritual continuity of spiritual descent which proceeds from a Sufi master to the Prophet of Islam, generally by way of his son-in-law Ali.

Tariqa (pl. Turuq): another word for silsila.

Tarikh: literally meaning History; technically the term used for the tradition of history writing in Persian language.

Ulema: the learned and theologically trained scholars among the Muslims.

Urs: literally 'marriage,' name given to the celebration of a saint's anniversary, usually death anniversary.

Vaakh: the poetical sayings of Lal Ded or Lalleshwari in Kashmiri language.

Waaz: Muslim religious sermon.

Wali (pl. Awliya): literally 'friend of Allah,' used for Sufi saints.

Waqf (pl. Awqaf): Muslim religious endowment grants given in the form of property or revenue grants to religious scholars or to some prominent religious bodies or shrines.

Waqf-nama: Endowment deed/document.

Waqif: a person who institutes a *waqf*.

Wilayat: demarcated spiritual realm later used by the ruling political groups in Muslim lands for designating political jurisdiction.

Zikr: remembrance of God by the repetition of sacred terms or some religious formulae.

Ziyarat: literally meaning a sight or vision of someone/something. In Sufi terms refers to a tomb or mausoleum built over the final resting place of a saint. Also denotes a visit to such shrine. In Kashmir the term is also used to refer to a glimpse of the relics of the Sufis by visitors on special occasions.

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