

Cultural Harmony in Kashmir: An Overview of Hindu- Muslim Participation in Shrine Festivals

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The unflinching faith in shrines dedicated to various Saints-Saiyids, Rishis and Sufis in Kashmir, together with the sacred relics housed in some of them, play a significant role in religio-spiritual, socio-cultural, political and economic life, thought and work of Kashmir in several ways. It is, as such, absolutely necessary and extremely indispensable to make comprehensive study of the shrines of Kashmir and the observance of rituals particularly fairs and festivals associated with them to have empirical picture of Kashmir and its social ramifications. The growing popularity of the shrines depends upon piety, noble qualities, spiritual excellence, wisdom, outstanding thinking and visionary view possessed by the saints during their lifetime, which developed afterwards and gained greater fame about supernatural powers of the Dargah and emerged as big holy centres of pilgrimage thronged by all the people irrespective of caste, color, creed and religion.

The valley of Kashmir abounds in a fairly large number of Sufi memorials, popularly known as 'peer var', (abode of saints). These (Sufi memorials) exercised considerable influence on masses at large, the reflection of which is that the shrines are so frequently visited addressed and invoked with a sense of gratitude under numerous names and epithets for fulfilment of their material, worldly and spiritual favours like; peace, contentment, longevity of life, good health, protection from ghosts, terrible forces of nature and evil spirits, liquidation of debt, safe and successful journey, good harvest, good mates for girls and their satisfactory conjugal life, eternal happiness, instant recovery from diseases and spiritual bliss. To realize the objectives, strings and threads commonly known in Kashmir as 'dastch' are also bound off with the wall of shrine in the expectation that his/ her wishes and expectations are met with success¹.

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The valley has been subjected to one or the other type of calamity frequently thereby disrupting the society seriously, causing heavy and widespread human, material, environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected society to cope up the dynamics of sufferings within its own limited resources. The frequency and intensity of disasters have repeatedly exposed the pauperizing state of affairs of the communities and their helplessness to withstand the shocks. Their lives, houses, frail structures, herds, lands, crops and other properties were frequently in the grip of and at the mercy of calamities such as floods, fires, winds, earthquakes, famines, droughts and cholera (Waba).² They would offer *salat-i-istisqa* (offering of two rakats of namaz nafl at Idgah Srinagar in congregation) and would also flock to Chrar-i-Sharief in huge numbers and would sit silent on the hills around with a glimpse towards shrine praying penitence from their sins, corrupt practices and begging the saint for forgiveness and pardon during any major untoward incident or catastrophe³.

Under such circumstances, the shrines are looked upon as centres of deliverance by the people enmasse who exhibit ceaseless zeal in invoking the intercession of shrines as effective alternatives and means to get rid of calamities and bring about a cataclysmic change for good of people in the hour of strain and stress. They would make individual and collective sacrifices. The sacrifices of dearest animals in terms of goat, sheep, cows, bull etc were made in the name of shrines popularly known as *Shesh buqa*⁴ and other leading shrines. The people in rural and urban areas would offer *Pirkhirat*, *Bhandhar* and *Susras* in a collective form to avert catastrophe. They would also visit the shrine of Makhdoom Sahib Srinagar during the times of drought with water in earthen pots and dropped the same in the pond in front of the Makhdoom Sahib's Shrine. (The practice is performed till date). Accordingly, the overwhelming impact of the myriad of shrines led to the celebration of fairs and festivals at shrines as a tribute to commemorate the glorious contribution of the saints. "The annual fairs held at the various shrines are red letter days in the dull lives of the Kashmiri people. Thousands crowd together and spend the day eating and buying fairings, such as pretty Kangars, wooden

patterns, glass bangles, necklaces and painted clay toys. Cobblers are hard at work repairing shoes, sweet meet sellers drive a roaring trade, and alms flow into the shrine, where the many attendants (*khadims*) fight vigorously over the offerings".⁵ The devotees make lowly obeisance while approaching the shrine, smear their face, throat and body with the dust of the sacred precincts of the shrine, walk barefooted, gaze at and seek blessing with folded hands.⁶

Kashmir is a place of shrines and religious rituals. And pilgrimage to the local shrines is generally considered important and sacred by the devotees. Infact some devotees equate the pilgrimage to a particular shrine with annual pilgrimage to Ka'aba in Saudi Arabia. Such pilgrimage is often termed as poor man's *Hajj*. The same idea is reinforced by a reputed native Kubravi saint Shaikh Yaqoob Sarfi (RA) who equates the pilgrimage to and circumambulation (*tawaf*) of *Ka'aba* equal with the pilgrimage to and circumambulation of Khanqah-i-Mualla thereby attaching as much spiritual significance to the shrine as to Ka'aba. In this connection, another Sufi poet says that performing pilgrimage in one day on feet to the three spiritually high ranking Rishi shrines namely Bumzoo, Chrar and Muqam would relieve the pilgrim from the hell fire on the day of resurrection.⁷

The people of Kashmir are eagerly looking forward to celebrate the fairs popularly known as 'warus'⁸ at shrines with fervour and zeal. The religious enthusiasm on such occasions is extremely immense and the supreme moment during entire period of 'urs' is the exhibition of holy relic of the deceased saint after every namaz (prayer). The devotees would feel extremely inadequate and unfulfilled without having glimpse (deedar) of relic of extraordinary soul. On this impressive and heart touching occasion, the pilgrims on the one hand are beaming with intense religious joy and excitement and on the other hand would cry out aloud and put forth with passion their requests and petitions and also causes the devotees to perform canonical prayers and recite darud, awrad-i-fathiyah, munajat, nats, litanies etc. in a peculiar and unique way and would also recite dhikr silently. However, a spiritual characteristic on such occasions is the focus on the object of veneration with folded hands, a traditional

religious practice which in fact speaks of local influence on the mode of their prayer as they (people) belong to the same social stock.⁹

The performance of ancestral rituals, social customs became a central thread of mutual respect and communal solidarity. The impact has been so overwhelming and profound that mobilized the entire communities to its active participation and even the lowliest of the low, poorest of the poor etc. celebrate the annual event with the ostentation they can afford. It provided a rare opportunity for the masses living in remote rural areas to come out of their social environment and join fellow Muslims from distant areas on *urs* occasion. It also opened up windows to less accessible women of rural areas in particular who suffered from dependence, isolation and culture of silence in an unequal and male dominated society. Despite various challenges, their active participation in annual mega *melas* at prominent shrines of different *Sufi* orders in Kashmir is worth noticing. The distinctiveness of their (women) participation and involvement manifests in the observation made by Arthur Neve,

“These are the great days to which the people, especially women and children, look keenly forward; for not only is there the display at the shrine, but the opportunity of showing off their best clothes and jewellery, and of seeing the shops of the city and making their frugal purchases. A bundle on the man’s back contains a few days’ rice and condiments, and the wife carries a fat cock as a present to the *moullahs*.”¹⁰

The pilgrimage to shrines was always regarded as sacred act within the indigenous traditions particularly during annual *urs* on a grand scale within ritual framework and in accordance with the traditional interpretation of their ancestors. Kashmiris traditionally fatalist believe that non observance of the festivals at the shrines would bring them indignity, curse and cause catastrophe especially incident of fire to the nearby areas of the shrine¹¹. The mutual observance of exuberant rituals during festive period presented a striking but comprehensive similarity and played a significant role in promoting and strengthening the affinity between Hindus and Muslims. The respective localities, towns and city reverberate with charm and excitement and people of all communities bow in the

greatness of the saint. Thus the occasion of *urs* provides not only a rare chance of intermingling of the people from different communities of Kashmir without class, religion and sectarian consideration but facilitated deeper understanding of togetherness and gain insights into the customs, traditions, culture etc. of other people and have the feeling that man is one in human society.

The religious personality of Kashmir developed since times immemorial in a unique style led Augustine to put it in the heavenly city “while it sojourns on earth, calls citizens out of all nations and gathers together a society of pilgrims in all languages scrupling about diversities, in the manners, laws and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured and maintained— that these diversities of Pandits, Muslims, Sikhs and others in Kashmir are preserved as long as Kashmiris are united in the service of God on these shrines, *tiraths*, mosques, *dargahs* and *a’stans* amidst the environment governed by an absolute spirit”¹². Nowhere else would we find so many festivities, which exerted an enormous influence and activated greater sense of unity. It is generally believed that the peace and harmony stem from the shrines and celebration of their anniversaries. In a plural society shrines and festive occasions fostered universal and eternal values oriented and reoriented towards tolerance, amity and humanitarian values, the most important legacy in history of Kashmir.

Despite several ups and downs and many other striking changes, the deep sense of reverence towards shrines was a common socio-cultural and religio-spiritual bond and served as one of the most powerful integrative mechanisms in preserving the ethos of unity in diversity during the turbulent times between the two communities in Kashmir. They (shrines) also presented a rich oasis of benevolent role and their potential too has been maximised towards communal solidarity through observance of fairs followed by traditions and practices showing strict adherence to humanitarian approach of the saints was always upheld by the people throughout the ages. That is why we find many big cities and towns have sprung up around the shrines and names of different places are adhered to them as the areas are sanctified by the saints.

The growing importance of shrines in humanizing the society bears indelible but significant imprints in our everyday living as an inexhaustible resource and helped in projecting the image of unity and brotherhood of Kashmir at national level in gaining insights and inspirations to dissipate prejudice. It has become a fertile ground for activating these ideas of humane environment for enduring effect. Gandhiji was so impressed and inspired in Kashmir by its traditional ethos which ultimately led him to pronounce “in the darkness engulfing the whole subcontinent the only ray of light came from Kashmir.” Whenever there occurred any communal hatred in Kashmir, the renovation of shrines and temples proved instrumental in diverting the attention of people and plugging the hatred. During the supersensitive and eventful days of 1931, the whole city was wrapped in communal tension by disintegrating communal forces, the leaders in their utter dismay found the reconstruction of dilapidated religious places by raising funds from all the communities, the only way to restore the communal peace¹³. Mahatma Gandhi was probably so inspired by the innovative performance that he experienced the same and employed the repairs as a tool during post 1947 communal rights and got the shrine of Khaja Qutbuddin Bakhtyar renovated by the Hindus and the Sikhs and succeeded in restoring communal peace in Delhi.¹⁴ During the Sikh Regime when Sikhs planned to destroy the Muslim religious places of worship particularly *Khanqah-i-Mualla*, they were stopped from doing so by the intervention of Pandit Birbal Dhar, an influential Hindu from Srinagar. A deputation of Muslims headed by Saiyid Hassan Shah Qadri approached Birbal Dhar and persuaded him to dissuade the Sikhs from the destruction of *Khanqah*, he moved in the matter used his influence and saved the *Khanqah* from vandalism¹⁵.

The interesting dimensions of social scientific approach towards integration have been realized through fulfilment of ritual needs. Thus, the custom of bonfire on the *urs* occasion of Baba Zain-ud-Din Rishi at Aishmuqam has become the occasion of licentious joy among different religious communities particularly Hindus and Muslims. The young boys and girls enter into merry making during the occasion. The people tie together various pieces of wood with a

long wooden pole in the centre known as '*leish*' and bonfire it in the evening is popularly known as '*zool*'.¹⁶ The people of Maraz area (South Kashmir) celebrate the evening by bonfiring the dry paddy grass which is readily available to them. The legend behind the recreation as per traditional interpretation of ancestors says that there was a ferocious demon in the cave, who was accustomed to make the meal of a child everyday. One day, the only grandson of a lonely old woman came under sacrificial turn on the following morning. Bemoaning his fate, she wandered and met a *Sadhu* who is said to have encountered with the *dev* (demon) and killed him one evening and people made a huge bonfire on the remains of the demon. Shaikh Zain-ud-din later on was ordained by his preceptor to settle at Ashmuqam, a place infested with snakes, a constant irritant to the people. Baba Zain-ud-din *Rishi* through his spiritual powers made them (snakes) non-poisonous and were lifted by *the* people in *pujs* and *yets* (big willow baskets used by rural community for carrying various fertilizers to the land) to distant place in the forest and came to be known as *puhr pajan*.

Coincidentally, however, the death anniversary date of the saint is same as the killing of the *dev* (demon) and the celebrating of festival with distinctive lighting of '*zool*' achieved more prominence. The '*zool*' is celebrated as victory of forces of truth over evil. This type of merry making is now being observed on the death anniversary of Baba Zain-ud-Din *Rishi* and when the bonfire is lighted some people venture out to hold their infants near the flames for a few moments, as this is believed to act as security against evil influences. Both the communities celebrate the *urs* with same spirit. The residents of Ashmuqam and its neighbourhood in particular and people of south Kashmir in general didn't eat meat during the death anniversary of the saint. This had become obligatory not only on Muslim but the Hindus also followed the rule. There are so many other shrines of the *Rishi* order where eating of meat during *urs* period is avoided. They continue to practice vegetarianism on festive occasions. Any deviation from this rule is being considered breach of prescribed custom a great sin which results in catastrophe particularly fire. The influence of the sanctity of the shrine was so much on both the

Hindus and the Muslims that *mujavirs* of Ashmuqam were paid cash and kind by the Hindus against the *tabruk* which the *mujavirs* distributed among them. For example, the pandits living in the nearby village of Ashmuqam offered twelve *kharwars* of *shali* (paddy) to the traditional *Rishis* of the shrine.¹⁷

The *Urs* at the shrine of Mian Shah Sahib at Rainawari helped in peaceful coexistence and togetherness of two communities. Both the communities of the Mian Shah area invariably invite their friends and relatives on *wars-e-sal* popularly known as *gad-e-sal* as the fishes are being cooked on this auspicious occasion by both the communities. The members of both the communities indulge in fun and frolic, gave themselves upto jollity and fire work displays, threw snow and snatch caps. What is worth to note is that the iron-safe for raising the funds lodged at the entrance of the shrine bear the names of “Allah” on one side and “Om” in the Hindi script on the other side stands as guiding principle for others to follow in laying the firm foundations of mutual understanding¹⁸.

The shrine of Shaikh Noor-Din Wali at Chrari Sharief (national saint) is held in high esteem¹⁹ and exerted tremendous influence in cementing the bonds between Hindus and Muslims. All the communities attended and celebrated the festival of Shaikh with zest and zeal. The residents in general and hereditary *khadims* threw open the feasts for the pilgrims of different communities coming from far and nearby areas of Kashmir. The dried pear slices are considered auspicious *Tabaruk* by the devotees²⁰. Similarly the shrine of Saiyid Abdul Qadir Jeelani popularly known as *pir-i-dastageer* at Khanyar, Srinagar played a significant role in promoting tolerance. Whenever Kashmiri's are in distress, the Hindus and the Muslims invoked aid and assistance by shouting –*dastageer* and chanting *ya pir dastageer* with great fervour. The word *dastageer* is at the tip of every kashmiri's tongue without any religious distinction. *Dastageer* name is invoked by most of the Kashmiris individually and collectively as per the need especially by the boatmen, as they paddle up stream in the cry ‘*ya peer dastageer*’²¹. The impact of the shrine is so deep that the 11th Rabi-us- Thani, the date of the demise of *pir* was and is still famous among both the communities and they celebrate it with great

enthusiasm. The Hindus had such a firm faith that they accept an oath in his name as a final trust. There are many other shrines which Kashmiri pandits and Muslims respected alike. Pir Pandith Padshah also known as Rishi Pir of Aalikadal is revered equally by both communities. Lala Arifa popularly known as Lal Ded the Savite mystic woman of 14th century is still held in high esteem by both the communities. The Hindus and Muslims claimed Lal Ded as their own and gave her equal respect. Similarly, Wali Shah of village Devsar was respected by all even Maharaja Ranbir Singh was greatly devoted to him.

One may not be astonished to witness the Hindus and the Muslims equally holding with respect the Hindu temples and Muslim *Khanqahs* situated in close proximity or sometimes within the same premises. The noble examples are the Muslim shrines of Shah-i-Hamdan co-existing with the Hindu shrine of Kali Devi sharing the same premises and the Ziarat of Shaikh Hamza Makhdoom near the Hindu temple of Sharika Devi with common boundaries in the lap of fort topped hill of Hariparbat. The shrines at Fatehpur in Verinag and at Waripora in Magam are equally respected by both the communities. The Muslims claim the relics of footprints as *Qadam-i-Rasool* and the Hindus claim them as *Vaishnu Pad*.²² Thus, the inheritance of respect for each others religious places and shrines never gave rise to communal tension in the valley. There has been a peculiar way of disseminating the information regarding observance of *urs* or festive occasion in the neighbourhood of local shrine. Thus Rasool Pir, *Khadim* of the Shrine of Saiyid Ahmad Qureshi, at Litter along with his assistant heralded the much anticipated celebration of festival at Litter by playing bell of the shrine in the nearby villages. They would practice the playing of bell before entering each household in every village and were paid equally in cash and kind by the Hindus and the Muslims.²³ A remarkable feature to promote pilgrimage to celebrate the *urs* at different shrines particularly at Baba Nasib-ud-din Ghazi Bijbehara, Saiyid Janbaz Wali Baramulla, Lal Baba Sahab, Zakura etc. The professional *damali Maet* of Mohripora, Khundru Anantnag, Akingam, Bumai, Panjgam, Chadoora, Gopalpora, Kuailshah Sahab Kulgam, Dreygam etc visited

different areas of Kashmir to herald the commencement of festive occasion at the above said shrines in anticipation by playing *damali* to mobilize and motivate the people of all religions and all communities irrespective of age to achieve their massive participation in the festivals. The dancers from different parts of the valley presented the magnetic performance of *damali* at shrines on anniversaries (*mega mela*) and the devotees feel blessed to watch the *damali*. This tradition has been carried out and handed over from generation to generation and have been true barometers of our thrilling cultural heritage. They passed through different villages consisting of drummers (*dool* players) and dancers dressed in long robes, dance and sing, illustrated the spiritual power of great *sufi* saints through prose and poetry and the *dool* players beat the drums to the accompaniment *damali* of *damali Maet* who are seen completely absorbed in *damali*. The credulous and gullible masses of Kashmir held them in high esteem and are received warmly by the people. They (*damali maet*) played a significant role as transmitters of the values of *Sufis* and *Rishis* in the traditional rural society²⁴. The people bubbled over with emotional excitement and did not resist temptation to dance with the *damali maet* and reflected the joyous expression of children. Their cultural performances of humorous skits, musical evenings entertained the crowds. The *damali maet* would carry *alam sharief* (long spearheaded sticks covered with costly cloths and other decorative material) with them to sanctify the occasion as the same is believed to be blessed with the kind benedictions of the saint whose anniversary the performance observe through *damali*. Not long ago, these dancers would also go from village to village during post harvest season to obtain their sustenance²⁵ and to remind them through their aerobic performances about the historical role of *Rishis* as upholders of human equality and brotherhood.²⁶

The Hazratbal shrine, most revered by all communities is swarmed by huge number of people both men and women across the valley of Kashmir during festive occasions to get blessed with the *deedar* of sacred relic (*Moe- i-Mubarak*) of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS). The whole city reverberates with charm during these occasions.

The impact of *Dargah* Hazratbal is so deep and far reaching in all communities that even Maharaja Hari Singh arranged *khatum khwani* at *Dargah* under the supervision of Hassan Shah Bandy for the birth of a son.²⁷ The *khatum khwans* were served with *wazwan* and each of them was paid one to two rupees. The festival of *Dargah* is celebrated in different areas of the valley which claim one or the other relic of the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS).

A special characteristic of the Kashmiri Muslim social behaviour at such gatherings is the focus on the object of veneration with profound sublimity and devotion, which undoubtedly suggest local influence on their mode of prayers. The disappearance of *Moe-i Mubarak* in 1963 promoted uncertainties and afflicted all the communities. The demonstrations for restoration of the holy relic caused concern of every section of society²⁸. After its restoration, people of all faiths in Kashmir celebrated with jubilation and even the then Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru took a sigh of relief. The upholding of communal harmony in adverse conditions is strikingly unique and praiseworthy for exhibiting steadfastness.

The holy shrine of Amarnath situated amidst snow bound mountains consists of ice-lingam of lord Shiva is thronged by devotees from across the country for spiritual merit. The Muslim brethren have been putting forward their helping hand to the pilgrims during the festive occasion to perform their arduous journey through various rugged tracks to the shrine resting in a cave. Needless to say that the Hindus believe that the sacred cave of *Amarnath* was discovered by a Muslim shepherd and the successors of the shepherd are not only being revered by the Hindus but receive sizeable portion of the income by way of offerings of *Religins* at the shrine. It is noteworthy to mention that heavy snowfall and heavy rains took place during the *yatra* period in 1996 in the whole area of Pahalgam. Many *yatris* lost their lives due to severe cold. However, the local villages of the area namely Ladipora, Chandanwadi, Sadhu Padav, Frislan and Rangwad put forth a unique example of overwhelming help and assistance to the *yatris* in terms of accommodation, food and other requirements. They provided them their own homes for stay and did not let them suffer any more. The scene was covered by print and

electronic media at local, national and international level. This was a unique example of practical demonstration of Hindu Muslim Unity.

Right from times immemorial, the observance of fairs '*urs*' followed by customs and rituals, beliefs and legends by both the communities and the strict adherence to the humanitarian approach of the saints was upheld by the people in letter and spirit and the atmosphere as such remained extremely serene throughout the ages. This has been outcome of the assimilation and influence of various cultures in Kashmir resulted in synthesis of a culture, an uncommon phenomenon with very few parallels in other parts of the world. Kashmir as such has every reason to be proud of its spiritual inheritance and cultural synthesis blessed with communal harmony has helped in promoting national self-confidence.

References and Notes

- ¹ In case the purpose is obtained, the devotee invariably visits the shrine, untie the thread and presents offerings at the same time.
- ² W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, P. 218.
- ³ W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, P 288.
- ⁴ Comparing many answers while intervening the people, I found. that in sanctity and importance of the religious places take the following rank; 1) Hazratbal, 2) Khanqah-i-Muala, 3) Jamia Masjid, 4) Shrine of Nur-ud-din Reshi at Charar-i-Sharief 5) Dastgeer Sahab at Khanyar, 6) Ziarat-i-Makhdoom Sahab at Hariparbat. This was confirmed by an eminent scholar and contemporary of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Maulvi Mohammad Sayid Masoodi in an interview conducted by the author of this article. See also W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, P 292.
- ⁵ W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, P. 289.
- ⁶ W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, P. 286.
- ⁷ Mohammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir* (14th – 16th century). pp 155-156.
- ⁸ Ibid, p 280.
- ⁹ M. Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir Transition to Islam, The Role of Muslim Rishis*, Manohar Publications, 1994, P. 82.
- ¹⁰ Arthur Neve, *Thirty Years in Kashmir*, Landon, 1913 pp 301-2 cf. *Muslim Shrines in India*, edited by Christian W. Troll, Oxford University Press, Bombay, Culcatta, Madras, 1992 p 180.
- ¹¹ W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, PP. 280-289. The shrines are believed to have been credited with the control of the area (territorial-jurisdiction) where they lived and are enshrined.
- ¹² Maqbool Amad, *Geography of Jammu and Kashmir*, P. 185.
- ¹³ G. H. Khan, *Freedom Movement in Kashmir*, Light and Life Publications, New Delhi 1980, PP. 316-320.
- ¹⁴ Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (An Autobiography) Oriental Longman, 1959, Delhi, PP. 238-240.
- ¹⁵ Hassan Khoihami, *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, Vol-II, P 52, G. M. D. Sofi, Kasheer, P. 726.
- ¹⁶ Hassan Khoihami, *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, Vol-III, P. 132.
- ¹⁷ This information was given by Haji Gh. Mohammad alias Muma R/o: Ashmuqam, the receipt of the above noted payments. This interview was conducted in 1987, the Haji was of 80 years age and one of the mujavirs of the shrine.

- 18 *Srinagar Times*, 26th January 1989.
- 19 W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, P. 288.
- 20 Abdul Ahad Dar alias Azad R/o: Chadura has written a Qasida (1344-1348 A.H) which is preserved in the unpublished form in the personal library of Mr. Ghulam Nabi of Chrar-i-sharief. (The practice continues till date).
- 21 W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, P. 292.
- 22 W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, P. 286.
- 23 This practice continued up to recent past.
- 24 M. Ishaq Khan, op. cit, P. 181.
- 25 The villagers paid the Damali performers. The Damali Maet were presented some kharwars of shali and siteen cocks by the sixteen families of the village Zakura. This information was gatherd in the course of an interview with Haji Mohammad Abdullah Wani alias Niama – G. H. Mir – P. 100.
- 26 M. Ishaq Khan, op. cit, P. 181.
- 27 This information was given by M. Amin Farooqi, Naib Imam of the shrine.
- 28 Mirza Kamal-ud-din Shaida, *Khulasat-ul-Tawareek*, PP 307-308.