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## HISTORICAL STUDY OF DARGAHS IN HYDERABAD KARNATAKA REGION

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### ABSTRACT:

Karnataka is one of the most important southern states of India. It has gained prominence politically, socio-economically, philosophically and in many other ways. It is a meeting place of many religious philosophies and a melting point helping to achieve the synthesis of the teaching of many religious reforms. Sufism is a mystic religion. It is an offshoot of Islam. Sufi saints are the followers of ALLAH and the practice of peace, benevolence and tolerance. They promulgated a religion based on the concept of love, the love with the fellow being and the love with the ultimate or the creator. Sufi saints and Sufism are an existing reality in Indian socio-religious fold and it has contributed for a healthy and amicable social order. It has lead to a new social set-up full of values, and discipline. Sufism as a religion of the teaming millions became the practicing system among the people of India as well as Karnataka. This study of Sufi Saints in Karnataka is thus an inspired attempt to portray this religion of the soul and heart. Much emphasis is laid on the concepts and special aspects of Sufism, along with various practices found in it. I was always attracted by its spiritual significance and practical essence and also its profound influence on the general public. Hence, my little attempt to explain the same through the life stories of some of the great Sufi saints in Karnataka.



**KEYWORDS:** prominence politically, socio-economically, philosophically.

### INTRODUCTION :-

There is heavy rush at the makeshift milk shops outside the Dargah-E-Shareef Hazarath Sayed Suleiman Baba at Suleiman Nagar near the Barkas-Pahadi Shareef Road in Rangareddy district on the outskirts of Hyderabad. A symbol of communal amity, 720-year-old Dargah of Hazarat Jahangir Peeran and Hazarat Burhanuddin in Inmulnarva

village of Kothur Mandal in Ranga Reddy district is famous and has earned a unique place in the hearts of all sections of the people. Both the saints had come to this place all the way from Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, to preach Islam and spread the message of love during their lifetime and breathed their last here. Their graves exist even today. One of the most visited dargahs, by Hyderabadis and devotees

from all over the India and countries like Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and many others, it has become one of the busiest pilgrimage centres as people believe their wishes will be fulfilled here! Located 45 km from Hyderabad, off the Hyderabad-Bangalore Highway, it is one dargah which Hindus too visit in large numbers and offer prayers. There are various stories as to why the dargah is deserted at nights. It is said Hazrat Jahangir

Peeran does not like to be disturbed by people at night and wants to live in peace.

Another story goes that tigers visit the dargah at night and sweep the floors with their paws! "Apart from tradition, ages ago tigers used to prowl in the region and hence none dared to stay there after dusk. This trend continues even today even though tigers have vanished. The place is deserted after sunset. None has attempted to stay at night," says Sultan Mohiuddin, Law Officer, Telangana State Wakf Board which manages the dargah. He adds, "Even the staff has to leave the dargah by 9 pm except during the annual Urs. Earlier, the dargah used to be deserted even before sunset. Now it opens around 5 am and closes by 7.30 pm for devotees after the Magrib (Prayer), Fateha and Salam rituals."

People who come to this dargah have immense faith in the two saints and believe their wishes will be fulfilled. Many talk about miracles. The annual Urs of the dargah, held on the first Thursday of "Til Sankranti" in January, attracts thousands of people from all parts of the state and country. From a small dargah and few people living around it, it has grown over the years. The tomb was constructed in 1975. The total area of the dargah was 2 acres and the Wakf Board purchased an additional 25 acres. The annual income has gone up to Rs 1 crore.

The Telangana Wakf Board Chairman and MLC, Mohd Saleem, told this newspaper that as per the desire of the Chief Minister, the board was preparing a blue print for the development of the dargah and its surroundings at a cost of about Rs 60 crore. Among the major proposals are reconstruction of the masjid to accommodate Musallies during Friday prayers and Urs, 20 new Niyaz khana sheds, sandal khana, 3 shopping complexes, guest houses for VIPs and other pilgrims, surveillance and security system, modern slaughter house, drinking water facilities, toilets, drainage system, CC roads, bus shelters, beautification of the dargah and its environs, parking areas, welcome arches at Kothur bypass and Shadnagar road and other amenities for pilgrims.

The Wakf Board has appointed 25 staff to oversee the maintenance of the dargah. The dargah turns into a mela on Sundays when people from far and near come to the place using all means of transport, offer chaddar, flowers, sheep and goats, cook food and return home. "About 300 sheep and goats are slaughtered on Sundays and other important days by devotees. Hence we are planning to have a new slaughter house to ensure hygiene." Mohd Saleem said. It is said the Mughal King Aurangzeb visited the dargah, popularly known as Jahangir Peeran dargah, and offered prayers.

CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao visited the dargah and offered chaddar on fulfillment of the separate Telangana state wish. He announced a grant of Rs 50 crore for development of the place which has been neglected over the years. KCR had earlier visited the dargah when he was a Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha from Mahabubnagar district and prayed for Telangana statehood. Once a secluded place, the dargah and its environs now bustle with life. There are all kinds of shops including sweetmeat, food joints, general stores, cloth shops and other commercial establishments, parking lots, play areas etc.

### **DARGAHS AND TOMBS OF SUFI SAINTS IN BIJAPUR**

The number of dargahs and tombs of Sufi saints in Bijapur vary from large to small in size with almost three hundred. Thousands of pilgrims from all over the Deccan plateau throng to Bijapur and join local devotees in the celebration of urus that have made such dargahs the focus of popular Islam throughout India. (Eaton, 1985: Intro., xxiii-xxiv) A reference to twenty-two famous Sufi saints of Bijapur during the Adil Shahi period are found. (1) Sayyid Chanda Husaini migrated from Arabia to Bidar in the late 15th century and joined the cavalry of King Yusuf Adil Khan and accompanied him to Gogi, seven miles from Shahapur of Gulbarga district. At present his tomb is located in Gogi. (2) Shaikh Shamsal-Din Zinda Dil was the only Sufi saint of the Shattari order, who came from Shiraz (Persia) to Ahmedabad and then to Bijapur during the period of King Ali I. (3) Shah Miranji Shamsal-Ushashaq of the Chisti order came from Mecca. He lived in Bijapur along with his descendants on Shahapur hillock called Manauwarpur (City of Light). Throughout the sixteenth century, when the Adil Shahi kingdom was ruled by Shias and the city of Bijapur remained virtually empty of Sufis, the two persons namely Shah Miranji and his son Burhan al-Din Janam kept Chisti order of Sufism alive at Shahapur hillock. In Shahapur hillock,

How many Dargahs does Hyderabad have? It is easy to remember. There is the Yousufain Dargah, Jehangeer Peer Dargah, Shah Khamoush Dargah, Husain Shah Wali Dargah, Shah Raju Qattal Dargah... And there ends the list for an average citizen of Hyderabad. The list, in fact, is quite substantial.

In an age where religious lines are hardening, the dargahs in India remain comparatively open spaces where the faith of the person is not questioned while entering. The people who come to find solace range from men sitting in corners in a forlorn way to women who come with their families and friends and sit outside, and then there are couples who pray for the intercession of the saints buried in the dargahs. Said dargahs also keep the social and spiritual life thrumming as they become epicentres for local festivals dictated by the lunar calendar. Urs, sama, chiragaan, sandal are few of the events inside dargahs that people living in the area wait for.

Telangana is a confluence of different cultures, religions and beliefs. From the very rustic and rural Bonalu to the newer faiths like Christianity, people in the region have accepted and adopted all streams of beliefs. This book is a tribute to that," says Mamidi Harikrishna, head of the Department of Culture who has edited the booklet called Culture of Amity being distributed free. The booklet lists 51 dargahs scattered across the city. "The list is exhaustive and we have discovered more. We will be listing 81 dargahs in the next edition of the book," says Vasanta Sobha Turaga, an architect, who has edited the book along with Harikrishna.

Without delving into each specific religious space the booklet has information about the dargahs and what goes on in them and how they shape beliefs. "The earliest and the oldest are from the 13th to 14th centuries: the Pahadi Shareef (1266) and Jehangir Peer Baba (1318). And the latest is less than 15 years-old." The booklet also tracks the progression and change in architectural style. "We have looked at the architectural style of the buildings. But we have also tried to look at the rituals and traditions. There is a lot of intermingling of practices and colourful rituals," says Turaga who has plans to expand the work into something more.

Gulbarga, officially known as Kalaburgi, is a city in the vibrant state of Karnataka. This beautiful city features an impressive legacy of Islamic art and is a great example of the diversity of India. There are very few cities that boast of such an eclectic mix of art, culture, and heritage, and Gulbarga is one of them. Gulbarga is 623 km north of the state capital city of Bangalore and 220 km from Hyderabad. Gulbarga is embellished with many enchanting sights with Gulbarga Fort and Gulbarga Dargah being two of the most famous of them.

The history of Gulbarga dates to the 6th century. It has mostly been under the rule of the Chalukyas. The region came under the control of Rashtrakutas, but the Chalukyas regained it after a short period and went on to rule for 200 years. The Kalyani Kalachuris who succeeded them ruled until the 12th century. Around the end of the 12th century, the Yadavas of Devagiri and the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra destroyed the supremacy of the Chalukyas and Kalachuris of Kalyani.

Gulbarga has seen the rise and fall of many dynasties, and each of them has left their distinctive mark on the city. This is Gulbarga for you- a melting pot of different traditions, cultures, and lifestyles. India is known for the great Sufi shrines dotted along the length and breadth of the country. One of the most revered of these shrines is the Dargah of the 14th-century Sufi mystic- Khwaja Bande Nawaz Gesu Daraz. Tucked away in the bylanes of Gulbarga, this shrine is dedicated to Khwaja Bande Nawaz who is credited with introducing Sufism to the south.

Let's take you back in time. It was the 17th of December, 1398. The Central Asian conqueror Timur had just destroyed the Tughlaq armies outside Delhi and was camping at Hauz Khas, eagerly eyeing Delhi and the power this city carried since time immemorial. Sensing impending doom, a large entourage of people drove away from the city, heading as far south as possible. The very next day Timur's army wreaked havoc in Delhi.

One among the thousands who were driven away was a 77-year-old man who was not an alien to the streets of Deccan. He had made the same journey in 1328 CE. Banda Nawaz was born to Syed walShareef Muhammad bin Yousuf AlHussaini in Delhi in 1321. When he was just 7 years old, his family was forced to migrate to Daulatabad because Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, the then Sultan of Delhi, changed his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. 70 years later, this man saw himself undertaking the same journey,

but not as a little boy but as Khwaja Bande Nawaz Gesu Daraz- a Sufi cleric. Little did he or those around him knew that he was going to make history.

Gesu Daraz belonged to the Chishti order of Sufism. The Chishti order of Sufism is a Sufi order which arose from Chisht- a small town near Herat in Western Afghanistan. The Chishti order of Sufism follows the tenets of Sunni Islam and believes in love, peace, and brotherhood. Sufism is one of the mystical orders that grew out of Islam. Classical Sufi scholars define it as a movement that leads to healing of the heart and making it one with nothing else but God. The Chishti order was introduced in South Asia by Sufi Sheikh, Moinuddin Chishti, whose famous Dargah is situated in Ajmer. Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya was one of the most prominent Sufi clerics in the late 13th century India, and his Dargah now stands in Delhi.

Muhammad Hussaini more fondly known as Gesu Daraz was the disciple of the famous Khwaja Nasiruddin Chirag-Dehlavi, who had succeeded Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya to get the distinction of premier Sufi Sheikh of Delhi.

After fleeing Delhi in 1398, following Timur's invasion, Gesu Daraz and his followers made their way to Gwalior, Chanderi, Cambay, and then to Daulatabad, where he wanted to pay respects at his late father's grave. Daulatabad was under the rule of the Bahmani Sultans. When Sultan Firuz Shah Bahmani heard that Gesu Daraz had stepped foot in his kingdom, he went to meet him there and invited him to the Bahmani, the capital of Gulbarga.

Gesu Daraz settled down in Gulbarga where he stayed for the next twenty-three years. Noted historian Richard Eaton, from the University of Arizona who has extensively chronicled the life of Gesu Daraz in his book 'The Social History of Deccan' writes how getting Gesu Daraz to Gulbarga was a political act on the part of the Sultan as he wanted religious sanction for his newly founded kingdom. In just a matter of few months, Gulbarga Gesu Daraz, who was already a well-respected commentator on Sufi philosophy, became a cultural phenomenon. One of his greatest contributions was the introduction of the Dakhani language in the Deccan, which later came to be known as Dakhni Urdu.

In 1422, Gesu Daraz passed away at the ripe age of 101. The Dargah of Gesu Daraz in Gulbarga, more popularly known as Gulbarga Dargah was constructed in the same year and was later expanded and enlarged in the year 1640. By the mid-17th century, this Dargah became one of the most prominent Sufi shrines in the entire country. Since then it has been attracting devotees and believers from all over the country to Gulbarga.

The Dargah is an architectural marvel and a perfect example of the amalgamation of Persian and Deccan architecture. It is venerated by both Muslims and Hindus. The walls and domes of this Dargah are adorned with paintings in Turkish and Persian styles. Some of the old relics of the saint are still preserved in the tomb. In the premises of the Dargah, there is also a library, containing about 10,000 books in Urdu, Persian, and Arabic, on history, philosophy, religion, etc. A mosque, Sarai, and a college built by Emperor Aurangzeb in 1687 AD lie near this tomb.

The Gulbarga Fort encompasses some of the finest aspects of Persian architecture. The fort's design has been heavily inspired by the Great Mosque of Cordoba in Spain. It features arched doorways and has a tinge of Moorish architectural beauty. The gardens, mosques, arches, and palaces inside the fort gives us a great insight into the evolution of Indo-Persian architecture in South India. The structure is quite awe-inspiring and shows us the intelligence and finesse of the artists and architects of those days.

## CONCLUSION

*Dargah* is derived from a Persian word which literally means "portal" or "threshold." Some Sufi and other Muslims believe that dargahs are portals by which they can invoke the deceased saint's intercession and blessing also known as *dawat-e-qaboor* or *Ilm e dawat*). Still others hold a less important view of dargahs, and simply visit as a means of paying their respects to deceased pious individuals or to pray at the sites for perceived spiritual benefits.

However, dargah is originally a core concept in Islamic Sufism and holds great importance for the followers of Sufi saints. Many Muslims believe their wishes are fulfilled after they offer prayer or

service at a dargah of the saint they follow. Devotees tie threads of mannat (hope) at dargahs and contribute for langar and pray at dargahs. Dargahs dotted the landscape of Punjab even before the partition of the Indian Subcontinent.

Over time, musical offerings of dervishes and sheikhs in the presence of the devout at these shrines, usually impromptu or on the occasion of Urs, gave rise to musical genres like Qawwali and Kafi, wherein Sufi poetry is accompanied by music and sung as an offering to a *murshid*, a type of Sufi spiritual instructor. Today they have become a popular form of music and entertainment throughout South Asia, with exponents like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Abida Parveen taking their music to various parts of the world.

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