

From a Burial to a Settlement: History, Religion and Politics at the Shrine of Mir Daniyal in Dab, Ganderbal

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This paper introduces the Sufi shrine of Mir Daniyal (d. 1549), son of the famous sixteenth-century Nurbhakhshiyya saint Shamsuddin Iraqi (d. 1525), who is often known as the progenitor of the Shia faith in Kashmir. It studies how the saint's burial, at a time of intense political and sectarian tension in the sixteenth century, at a nondescript location in Dab, Ganderbal, gradually grew into a now predominantly Shia settlement. This study offers perspectives on the historical relationship between the growth of new settlements and the variegated practices of Sufism in Kashmir. The shrine is also unique in that the saint was a Sufi of the Nurbhakhshiyya order, and thus offers insight into the convergence of Sufi and Shia thought and practices. In contemporary times, the shrine holds a central place in the religious and social imagination of not only the local population but also those around it, especially among people of the Shia faith. A study of contemporary practices at the shrine, including Muharram and other Shia-specific festivals, could offer perspectives into the transforming nature of the Nurbhakhshiyya beliefs and practices in Kashmir.

Keywords:

Mir Daniyal, Dab, Sufism, Shia, Nurbhakhshiyya, Kashmir

Introduction

In Dab, the shrine of Mir Muhammad Daniyal (d. 1549) is hard to miss for any visitor. It is located atop the plateau in the village amidst scenic natural beauty. It is surrounded by a lake on one side and a river on the other. One of the major shrines in Ganderbal, it belongs to the son of the famous sixteenth-century Sufi saint, Syed Mir Shamsuddin Araki (d. c. 1524). Also famously known as the originator of the Shia faith in Kashmir, Araki is buried in Zadibal in Srinagar, located at a distance of around 20 Kilometres south-east of this village. Living in sixteenth-century Kashmir, the history of the father-son duo was marked by phases of patronage and persecution. In many ways, the fortunes of Mir Daniyal and his shrine were tied to those of his

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father, Araki. Araki was patronised by powerful Shahmiri misters such as Musa Raina (fl. early 16th c.) and later, the Chaks. This followed his persecution under the Mughal governor of Kashmir, Mirza Haider Dughlat (r. 1540-1550). Persecution of the Nūrbakhshiyya order later continued under the Mughals after their takeover of Kashmir under Akbar (r. 1556-1605) in 1586.

Mir Daniyal is remembered by his descendants and followers as the earliest among the leading martyrs of the Shia faith in Kashmir. The saint is remembered to have been betrayed into martyrdom by Dughlat after being invited to return to Kashmir from his spiritual centre in Skardu, Baltistan. Despite the sectarian divisions between Shiites and Sunnis, and the vicissitudes of time and politics, the shrine now enjoys a certain measure of renaissance. It has emerged as a prominent part of Kashmir's rich cultural heritage, and currently serves as the religio-social centre not only in Ganderbal but also in the surrounding areas and beyond. The shrine was recently rebuilt with public and private funds. Attached to the shrine is a Jamia mosque, and male and female pilgrims visit the shrine on various occasions.

Recent works on shrine spaces have demonstrated that shrines can be studied as institutions beyond their traditionally understood roles in Islamization, conversion, and syncretism. These include works such as those by Nile Green in the context of the Deccan and Yogesh Snehi in the context of Punjab. Green's work, *Eternal Garden*, examines shrines from perspectives such as political legitimacy, the formation of hagiographical traditions, and the dynamics of Sufi activity, including political and economic aspects and patronage networks.ⁱ Yogesh Snehi's work, which offers a historically informed social anthropology of popular Sufi shrines and practices, goes beyond the often-repeated themes of Muslim identity, conversion, and conflict.ⁱⁱ As such, it is well known that shrines play a complex role in the everyday lives and ritual cycles of the devotees. They provide a space for social interaction, the expression of piety, or meeting with a living spiritual master. This is in addition to the celebration of festivals at the shrines. For instance, much like other Shia shrines, the shrine of Daniyal is also the site where mourners gather to commemorate the death of the martyrs of Karbala. This includes specifically Shia rituals, such as public mourning, self-flagellation (*doug*), and the procession of Muharram.

2. Mir Daniyal in Modern Scholarship on Kashmir history

Recent works make only a cursory reference to the saint. These include some of the most well-known works on the history of Islam in Kashmir, such as those by Mohibbul Hassan, R.K.

Parmu, Abdul Qayum Rafiqi, Muhammad Ishaq Khan, and Muhammad Ashraf Wani. All of these works mainly focus on the career of Daniyal's father, Shamsuddin Araki, while discussing aspects of Shia history in Kashmir. Mohibul Hassan's *Kashmir under the Sultans* gives a brief description of Daniyal's execution, his burial in Zadibal by his followers, and describes it as a 'grave mistake' by Dughlat.ⁱⁱⁱ R.K. Parmu's *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir* gives a one-sentence reference to Mir Daniyal's execution by Dughlat.^{iv} Abdul Qayum Rafiqi's *Sufism in Kashmir* limits its attention to mentions of some saints who sought to 'stem the growth of Shi'ism in Kashmir', and provides a brief mention of Mir Daniyal's execution by Dughlat, and the subsequent developments.^v Similarly, Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, restricts its discussion of Shia history in Kashmir to Baba Daud Khaki's critique of the Shia and the Chak rulers' policies.^{vi} Muhammad Ashraf Wani's *Islam in Kashmir* provides a brief appraisal of Shamsuddin Araki and his milieu, and also discusses Dughlat's policies towards the Shia. He highlights Araki's various depictions in different Shia and Sunni chronicles, even as he makes no mention of Mir Daniyal.^{vii} Among the more recent works, Zutshi's *Kashmir's Contested Pasts* provides an overview of how various Persian texts between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries addressed questions of sectarian and political identities in Kashmir, including those of the Shia.^{viii}

Several recent works in English and Urdu have sought to engage with aspects of Shia history in Kashmir. Their description of Daniyal is, however, limited to a mention of basic details about the saint. These include Muhsin Hussain Kashmiri's 2011 work *Danish-nama-e Shi'an-i Kashmir*, which reproduces details from *Baharistan-i Shahi* and *Tarikh-i Hassan*.^{ix} Hakim Sameer Hamdani's recent work, *Shi'ism in Kashmir*, makes no prominent mention of the saint except for a few sentences in the context of discussion on Araki and Zadibal, and policies of Dughlat.^x Another recent work, an article by Jaleel Hussain, examines contemporary Shia politics in Kashmir and its relations to political discourses in Pakistan and Iran.^{xi} A few other works, however, do touch upon some aspects of the saint's life. These include Imtiyaz Hussain's *The Shias of Jammu and Kashmir*^{xii}, Ghulam Muhammad Gulzar's *Kashmir aur Shia Muslim*^{xiii}, and Safdar Hamdani's *Tarikh-i Shiyan-i Kashmir*.^{xiv}

The making of Mir Daniyal's burial into a prominent shrine has much to do with the context of sixteenth-century Kashmir. The saint's father, Araki, and his order, the Nurbhakshiyya, were actively involved in Kashmir's politics. However, Sufi involvement in politics was neither

unprecedented in Kashmir's history nor unique within the Nurbakhshiya order. Araki followed an older precedent in Kashmir, wherein Sufi saints would align themselves with influential political persons and institutions under the Shahmiris. The same was the case with the Sufi saints of Araki's order outside Kashmir. Among Araki's contemporaries outside Kashmir, some of the most prominent Nurbakhshiyya saints, including his spiritual master Qasim Fayzbakhsh, maintained a prominent political profile in Safavid Iran.^{xv} In Kashmir, as was the case with other Sufi orders and personalities, these political connections did benefit Araki and the Nurbakhshiyya order. Yet, both were left more vulnerable to changes in political fortunes.

Modern scholarship on the saint is scarce. Works on the general history of Islam in the region do not discuss Mir Daniyal, despite the important positions he held during his lifetime. Contemporary and later sources suggest that after his father died in c. 1525, Daniyal succeeded him as the leader of the Nurbakhshiyya order in Kashmir. They even note that some prominent Sufi saints of the order accepted his leadership. The saint also held the trusteeship of the Khanqah-i Moulla and the Khanqah at Zadibal.^{xvi} As such, even as modern works do not make a prominent mention of the saint, he was an important figure in sixteenth-century Kashmir. Besides textual references about his role in the Nurbakhshiyya order and the positions he held, his stature can also be gauged by the fact that the second Chak ruler, Husayn Shah Chak (r. 1563-70), erected a large structure at his burial place, which also contained an inscription carved on a golden plaque.^{xvii} Not surprisingly, his shrine is at the centre of religious and ritual life in modern-day Ganderbal, specifically among the Shia community.

3. Textual Sources on Mir Daniyal

Among the most prominent historical sources on pre-modern Kashmir, none of the texts presents a detailed life sketch of Mir Daniyal. Most of the sources discuss aspects of Shia faith or practice, and their political affiliation. Others limit their discussion to Daniyal's father, Araki, and his role in promoting the Shia faith in Kashmir.

Baba Daud Khaki's *Dastur al-Salikin*, written in 1555, presents a qualified critique of the Shia. It seeks to delineate a distinction between the Shia and what he calls the *Rawafiz* (lit. the 'rejectors').^{xviii} At the same time, it presents the Suhrawardi saint Shaykh Hamza's critique of the Shia faith and practices.^{xix} Sayyid Ali's *Tarikh i Sayyid Ali*, composed in the 1560s, presents a brief overview of the life and death of Mirza Daniyal. It notes that his killing was preceded by the killing of another prominent saint, Shingli Rishi, and the destruction of Zadibal khanqah in

1549. The text also mentions Daniyal's arrest and execution at the hands of Dughlat, and refers to the subsequent revolts against Dughlat.^{xx} Muhammad Ali Kashmiri's *Tohfat-al Ahabab*, written in the 1570s, has several details about the saint. It mentions the *waqf-nama* of Khanqah-i Moulla, which was composed in favour of Mir Daniyal's taking charge of the khanqah. The text also provides a *Rishi-nama* / *Tareef-nama darweshan* and a *zaicha* (horoscope) composed for Mir Daniyal. It also adds that, along with Baba Ali Najar, the saint led a *chilla* in Zadibal after his father died in 1525.^{xxi} The anonymously composed *Baharistan-i Shahi*, written between 1585 and 1605, contains extensive information about the saint. It presents a generally positive depiction of Shia and Araki in Kashmir, and at times, a certain critique as well. It presents an overall sketch of Daniyal's life; his birth and stepping into spiritual life, his assumption of trusteeship of important shrines such as the Zadibal shrine and Khanqah-i Moulla, and his arrest and subsequent execution by Dughlat.^{xxii} Among the later works, Dyadamari's 1746 text *Waqiat-i Kashmir* presents a sharp delineation of sectarian divisions and a critique of the Shia.^{xxiii} A slightly later work, Saadullah Shahabadi's *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, written in 1778, also talks of the Shia in the same vein as Dyadamari. It notes that Shia and Hindus were the advisors of the oppressive Afghans (r. 1752-1819). It also critiques the religious policies of Shahmiri ruler Sultan Hassan Shah (r. 1472-1484) for allowing Araki to spread Shia faith, and praises Akbar for helping 'rid this land of the Shia'.^{xxiv} Other nineteenth-century works, such as Hargopal Khasta's 1877 *Tawarikh-i Guldast-e Kashmir*, present a census-like division of Shia and Sunni, and also list their clothing style, eating habits, and religious beliefs.^{xxv} Hassan Shah Khuihami's multi-volume *Tarikh-i Hassan*, completed towards the end of the nineteenth century, presents details about the establishment of the Shi'a faith in Kashmir and some prominent Shia saints.^{xxvi}

4. Shrine and the Making of the Settlement in Dab

The village of Dab is located in the Ganderbal district of Central Kashmir. It is situated approximately 12 kilometres from the district headquarters and 30 kilometres from the Srinagar district headquarters. It is bordered by the district of Bandipora to the north, Srinagar to the south, and the district of Baramulla to the west. Among its neighbouring villages are Batapora, Shalhar, Wakura, Khanpora, Rabitar and Shadipora. It is the only Shia-majority village in the Ganderbal district.

The establishment of the village as a settlement is connected to the burial of Mir Daniyal, and there are no prior known historical references to the village. Historical sources indicate that

Dughlat invited Daniyal to Kashmir and murdered him at Asham in Sumbal. Oral traditions recount that the saint was shifted to the present site after he appeared in a dream to one of his disciples, who managed to shift the body unnoticed in the darkness of the night. It is also believed that the saint inspired the disciple to bury him at a high altitude on the banks of the Jhelum River, and that the saint's body was miraculously teleported to this site.

The etymology of the place itself indicates the circumstances surrounding the saint's burial. Instead of referring to the actual place where the saint was buried, his followers would call it *Dabi peth*, literally meaning the 'at the place at a height'. It is located on an elevated *karewa*, locally known as the *wuder*, literally the highland.

Dab offered certain locational advantages. Given the place's high altitude, Dab would soon attract people from neighbouring areas, most notably the flood-prone area of Sonwari. This partly explains the popular perception of the location as reflected in the following saying attributed to the famous fifteenth-century Sufi saint Nuruddin Rishi (d. c 1440):

Dab Dab sone Dab, nai chas lab nai ches rab

Dab, Dab the golden Dab! It has neither walls nor mud.

Besides Sayyids, the village is home to people of different descent, as reflected in their surnames, including Malik, Bhat, Thokar, Hajam, Dar, and Kumar, among others.

5. Festivals and Rituals at the Shrine

The shrine is unique in the sense that it is a Shia-Sufi shrine. It is well known that there is some difference between the Sunni conception of Sufism and the Shia conception of *'irfan*. At the same time, however, we need to remember that there are striking parallels between the two. The conception of a difference is not a modern phenomenon. In some ways, it can be traced back to Mir Daniyal's time.

Mulla Sadra (d. 1640), was a key figure in the intellectual life of medieval Islam, more specifically under the Safavid Shah Abbas I (r. 996–1038 AH/1588–1629 CE). Along with Mir Damad (d. 1632), Sadra represented what has been known as the School of Isfahan, and authored works such as *Kasr-al asnam al jahilliya*, which presented a new presentation of Sufism from within the Shia tradition.^{xxvii} At the same time, his *Iksir al-'arifin* (Elixir of the Gnostics) pays tribute to Sufi poetry and quotes from Rumi (d. 1273) and Shabistari (d. 1340). During the reign

of Shah Abbas I, Mir Damad (d. 1632) and Shaykh Baha'i (d. 1621), known as the founders of the Isfahan school of mysticism, viewed mysticism as a theoretical field of study distinct from practical or popular Sufism. This disapproving attitude of the school of Isfahan towards popular Sufism led to the conceptual distinction between mysticism (*Irfan*) and Sufism (*tasawwuf*). Nevertheless, it has been argued that the distinction between Sunni and Shia Islam is of minor significance in assessing esoteric mysticism, or gnosis (*irfan*). Also, while on the one hand, some aspects of Shia Islam, such as devotion towards the *ahl-i bayat*, are conducive to Sufism, similar conceptions in Sunni Islam, such as the *silsila*, bear resemblance to the Shia concept of the spiritual chain of imams. Given this debate, the life of the Nurbhakhshiyya order in Kashmir becomes an interesting case study. There are interesting historical references to the Nurbhakhshiyya in Kashmir, for instance, the description of Mughal historian Abul Fazl, who refers to them as separate from both the Sunni and Shia.^{xxviii}

The shrine is at the centre of ritual life in the village and its surroundings, and several festivals, gatherings, and rituals are held at the shrine throughout the year. An annual *majlis* (gathering) is consistently held at the shrine, in which Shia people from all over Kashmir participate. Agha Syed Hadi, head of the *Anjuman Sharie Shian* Shariat Abad Yousuf Abad Budgam, and Agha Syed Hassan, head of *Anjuman Sharie Shian* Darul Mustafa Budgam, are the alternative chief guests on the occasion. Also, on the occasion of marriage, the groom from the village and nearby areas visits the shrine, and offers *fatiha* for the enshrined saint. Catchment ceremonies of the marriage, the formal meeting between the bride and groom, also occur at the shrine. Besides, infants are taken to the shrine for *zar kasai* (tonsuring). Besides tonsuring, this occasion includes offering of *niyaz* at the shrine, serving of *kahwa* and distribution of other items such as sweets, dates or a *taher* (cooked rice often mixed with meat).

Festivals celebrated at the shrine include two Eids. Eid al-Fitr is celebrated on the first day of Shawwal, and Eid al-Duha is celebrated on 10 Dhul Hijja. Besides these, festivals such as Eid al-Ghadeer, celebrated on the 18th of Dhul Hijja, and Nowruz, which marks the Persian New Year, are also celebrated at the shrine. During these festivals, people attend the shrine in large numbers, recite the Qur'an, and offer collective prayers. People also distribute *taher*, *babri-tresh* (a sweet drink of chia seeds and milk) and sweets at the shrine on these days. Special prayers are held on Thursday evenings (*shab-i Juma'a*) at the shrine, and include women visitors also.

Notably, the shrine has proper arrangements for women visitors. These include separate gates for entry and exit, a separate chamber for prayers inside the shrine, and separate washrooms.

The months of Rajab and Sha'ban are full of festivities at the shrine. Some of the important festivals celebrated at the shrine in Rajab include 13th Rajab, which is celebrated as the birthday of Imam Ali, the first Shia Imam, and the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. On the occasion of this festival, the shrine is decorated, and occasionally, a *julus* (procession) is taken to the shrine. Celebrations in the month of Rajab usually last till the onset of the month of Shaban. Some of the prominent festivals celebrated at the shrine in Sha'ban include the 15th, which is celebrated as the birth anniversary of Imam Mehdi, the 12th Shi'a Imam. This festival is also celebrated as *Shab-e barat* (the night of *barat*) at the shrine. Besides households, candles are lit at the shrine as well, which symbolises the spreading of light on the arrival of Imam Mehdi according to the Shia belief. This is the largest festival in the month of Sha'ban. On this day, a *julus* (procession) is taken out, which culminates at the shrine. Besides this festival, other important days are also celebrated at the shrine in the month of Sha'ban. These include 3rd Sha'ban, marking the birth anniversary of Imam Hussain, grandson of the Prophet, 4th Sha'ban as the birth anniversary of Hazrat Abbas, brother of Imam Hussain, and 5th Sha'ban, the birth anniversary of Imam Zain al-Abidin, the fourth Shia Imam.

The festivities in Muharram are among the most important events at the shrine. The preparations begin with a flag ceremony on the 1st Muharram, in which people collectively install a black flag at the shrine. On the same day, the premises of the shrine are also decorated with black banners. For the first ten days, special arrangements are made for visitors at the shrine who perform Quranic recitation and *noha-khawani* (collective recitation of dirges). On 10th Muharram, which is also known as the day of Ashura, a grand procession is taken to the shrine. It starts from the *imambada* of Malik *mohalla* of Dab, where collective Zuhr prayers are performed. The procession then passes through the Sadat Mohalla of the village, and reaches the shrine. The procession consists of people with an *alam* (standard) with an attached *panja* (metallic hand). This *alam* symbolises the banner carried on the day of Ashura at Karbala by Hazrat Abbas, Imam Hussain's standard-bearer. A *zuljana* (sacred horse), which symbolises the horse of Imam Hussain at Karbala, is also among the main features of this *julus*. The procession consists of two main *zuljana*, each originating from two major *mohallas* of the village, the Malik *mohalla* and the Sadat *mohalla*. The *zuljana* from Malik *mohalla* is taken to the shrine, while the

one from Sadat *mohalla* is kept in a place locally known as Bargah-e Abbas. Traditionally, the *zuljana* is inaugurated by making a Syed sit on the horse before proceeding with the *julus*.

The procession is organised into *mohalla*-wise groups, each called a *dai'ra* (lit. a circle), each originating from a certain *mohalla*. Each group is led by a leader who recites a *marsiyya*, even as at times different groups merge to form a larger procession. Each *mohalla* chooses a particular *noha* compiled mostly by a local poet, and rehearses it beforehand. Some *nohas* are recited collectively by the whole procession. At the shrine, people collectively recite *ziyārat* Ashura, a prayer that consists of conferring salutations on the martyrs of Karbala. Its text is believed to have been conveyed by Muhammad al-Baqir, the fifth Shia Imam. The recitation is headed by a person belonging to a particular Madani Syed family of the village. Currently, recitations are led by Haji Syed Muhammad Rafiq. It is believed that the ancestor of this family was the first to recite the *ziyārat* Ashura at this shrine. At the shrine, mourners are provided water and *taher*, and the procession returns and culminates separately at the imambadas of the Sadat *mohalla* and Malik *mohallah*. At the end of the procession *dua* and *fatiha* are recited, and the procession concludes.

6. The Shrine, its Surroundings, and Management

The shrine is a modern structure constructed around 2000. It is located to the east of the village of Dab, and a macadamised road leads to the shrine. A flight of stairs leads to the shrine which is located at an elevation above the road. There are four main gates on four directions into the shrine compound, with the one on the western side known as *Bab-i Ali*. The shrine has a large and well-maintained multi-tier compound, which is spread over approximately 15 *kanals* of land. The compound is also the site of a preparatory *majlis* and flag-hoisting ceremony on the eve of Muharam. Within the compound to its south is located a Masjid, while a *musafir-khana* and washrooms are situated to its north. Part of the compound is covered with concrete tiles, while the other part has well-maintained lawns with multiple varieties of flowers and some pine trees, looked after by a gardener. The entire compound has an enclosure of an iron grill, and footpaths outside the shrine are covered with tiles. Outside the main compound, to its north, is located a *langar-khana*, which is currently under construction. Adjacent to the northern wall of the compound of the shrine is the Sarbal lake, while at some distance to the south of the shrine flows the Sindh river. Adjacent to the eastern wall of the compound is a playground and a graveyard.

The shrine has a roundish shape with a squarish entrance extension on the east. It has a base of *diwari* stone, and its façade has walls of brick and cement with a series of windows on all sides. Its roof is covered with CGI sheets, and it has a concrete central dome and three minarets. Its main entrance is on the eastern side. Upon entrance from this gate, the interior is divided into two sections; northern side for females, and the southern side for males. The walls are covered with wooden panelling on the interior. The shrine has a concrete ceiling and a concrete floor, which is covered with wooden panelling. The main chamber has a door from the east. It contains a grave in the middle, which is enclosed in walls of brick and cement, which are covered with wooden panelling on both sides. Perforated *jaali* works provide a view into the interior of the chamber. Towards the north of the main enclosure, in the women's chamber, is a small grave, about which little is known.

The management body has been formally constituted by Agha Syed Hadi, head of *Anjuman Sharie Shian Shariat Abad Yousuf Abad Budgam* and Agha Syed Hassan, head of *Anjuman Sharie Shian Darul Mustafa Budgam*. Over the years, this body has earned strong respect and support from the local population, mainly because the entire development and upkeep of the shrine has been carried out under its guidance and supervision. It is important to add that the charity, donations, offerings, and any form of revenue received at the shrine are managed exclusively by this body. Neither of the two *Anjumans* operating in Budgam has any involvement in the financial matters, assets, or administrative control of the shrine. All funds and properties linked to the shrine remain entirely under the authority of this management body. Every activity related to the shrine—whether it is income and expenditure management, developmental works, new construction, renovation, beautification, or routine maintenance—is overseen directly by the members of this body with complete transparency and accountability. Currently, the body comprises 14 active members, each contributing to smooth and responsible functioning. This structured and community-trusted body continues to ensure that the shrine remains a place of spiritual devotion, proper management, and collective service. The present official positions are as follows:

President: Master Ghulam Mohiudin Dar, General Secretary; Syed Nazir Rizvi, Treasurer; Master Syed Yousuf Shah.

7. Remembering the Saint in Modern Times

A number of hoardings in and around the shrine greet the visitors. In many ways, these hoardings are indicative of the manner in which the saint is remembered in modern Kashmir. One of these is a large hoarding with a dense Urdu text, legible to a common visitor, and it is attached to the interior wall of the shrine. It has three main headings: *shajra-e nasb* Shaheed Mir Daniyal (the genealogical tree of Mir Daniyal the Martyr), his brief life-sketch, and an account of his *shahadat* (martyrdom).

The *shajra* links Mir Daniyal to Safi al-Din Ishaq al-Ardabili (d.1334), who is known as the eponymous founder of the Safawiyya order of Sufism and the founder of the Safavid Dynasty, which ruled Iran from 1501 to 1736. It links Daniyal via al-Ardabili to Imam Musa al-Kazim (d. 799), who is also known as the seventh Shi'a Imam. According to Shahzad Bashir, this modern genealogy of Mir Daniyal reflects the gradual gravitation of the Nurbhakshiyya order in Kashmir towards the Twelver Shi'ism over the course of the seventeenth century.^{xxix}

Following is the Urdu text and the English translation of the *shajra* at the shrine

شجره نسب شهيد مير سيد دانيال

شهيد مير سيد دانيال ابن مير شمس الدين اراكي ابن سيد ابراهيم ابن سلطان خواجه على المشهور به سياه پوش بن شيخ سلطان صدر الدين موسى بن قطب الأفاق بن سلطان شيخ صفى الحق ولحقيقه والدين إسحاق الادبيلي ابن سيد امين الدين جبريل ابن عوض شاه سيد محمد صالح ابن سيد قطب الدين ابن سيد رشيد ابن سيد شمس الدين محمد الحافظ ابن سيد الحضاص ابن سيد فيروز شاه زرين كلان ابن سيد نور الدين محمد ابن سيد شرف شاه ابن سيد سرتاج الدين ابن سيد صدر الدين محمد ابن سيد محمد الدين ابن سيد ناصر الدين ابن سيد فخر الدين احمد ابن سيد محمد اعرابي ابن سيد ابو محمد القاسم ابن ابو القاسم حمزه ابن امام الهمام باب الحواج موسى كاظم

The genealogical tree of Shaheed Mir Syed Daniyal

Shaheed Mir Syed Daniyal ibn Mir Shamsuddin Araki ibn Syed Ibrahim Ibn Sultan Khwaja Ali ala *al-Mashhoor bi siyah-posh* bin Sheikh Sultan Sadr al-Din Musa bin Qutub al-Afaq bin Sultan Shaykh Safi al-Haqq wa al-haqiqah wa al-Din Ishaq al-Ardabili ibn Syed Amin al-Din Jibril ibn Syed Muhammad Saleh ibn Syed Qutb al-Din ibn Syed Saleh al-Din Rashid ibn Syed Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Hafiz ibn Syed Awaz Shah al-Hadas ibn Syed Feroz Shah *zarin-kalan* ibn Syed Nur al-Din Muhammad ibn Syed Sharaf Shah ibn Syed Sartaj al-Din ibn Syed Sadr al-Din Muhammad ibn Syed Muhammad al-Din ibn Syed Nasir al-Din ibn Syed Fakhar al-

Din Ahmad ibn Syed Muhammad A'rabi ibn Syed Abu Muhammad al-Qasim ibn Abu al-Qasim Hamza ibn Imam al-Hamam Bab al-Hawa'ij Musa al-Kazim.

Besides the *shajra* of Mir Daniyal, the hoarding also provides an account of the life and achievements of the saint. It records his date of birth and death, and presents an account of his life, including his education and training under his father, Araki. Interestingly, it describes Mir Daniyal as the distinguished Shi'a figure in Kashmir, only second to his father Araki. Following is the Urdu text and translation of the description on the hoarding:

شہید میر سید دانیال 887 ھ سے 957 ھ تک

کشمیر میں شیعہ مذہب کی تبلیغ و ترویج کے سلسلے میں جن بزرگ تاریخ ساز شخصیتوں نے عظیم قربانیاں دی ہیں ان میں جناب شہید میر سید دانیال رحمۃ اللہ علیہ اپنے پدر بزرگوار میر شمس الدین اراکی کے بعد ایک امتیازی حیثیت کے مالک تھے۔ میر اراکی کے فرزند جناب دانیال کی ذات گرامی ہی تھی جس نے دن رات تبلیغ دین میں بسر کر کے مرزا حیدر کاشغری کے ہاتھوں سے جام شہادت نوش کیا۔ میر اراکی کے بعد جناب دانیال ہی شیعوں کے مزہبی رہنما اور مرکز وحدت تھے۔ میر سید دانیال میر اراکی کے فرزند اکبر تھے۔ آپ کی ولادت کے بارے میں مورخین میں اختلاف کے باوجود مختلف تواریخ سے میر دانیال کی ولادت 887 ہجری بتائی گئی ہے۔ میر دانیال نے اپنے پدر بزرگوار کے سائے میں ہی تعلیم و تربیت پائی اور باپ ہی کے زیر سایہ تعلیم و تربیت علمی مدارج اور سلوک و عرفان کے مراتب طے کر کے باپ کی جیتی جاگتی تصویر بنے۔ 957 ہجری میں شہید ہوئے۔

Shaheed Mir Saeed Daniyal from 887 AH to 957 AH

Among the great historical figures who have made great sacrifices in the propagation of the Shia religion in Kashmir, Shaheed Mir Syed Daniyal (may Allah have mercy on him) holds a distinguished position after his venerable father, Mir Shamsuddin Araki. Mir Araki's son, Mir Daniyal, who spent his days and nights propagating the religion, was martyred at the hands of Mirza Haider Kashgari. After Mir Araki, Daniyal was the religious head and uniting centre of the Shia in Kashmir. Mir Syed Daniyal was the elder son of Mir Araki. Despite the differences among historians about his birth, Mir Daniyal's birth has been given as 887 AH according to different histories. Mir Daniyal received his education and training under his venerable father, and under the shadow of his father, he achieved the levels of knowledge, behaviour, and mysticism, and became a living image of his father. He was martyred in 957 AH.

Towards the end, the hoarding presents an account of the martyrdom of Mir Daniyal. It refers to Dughlat's arrest of the saint and being brought to Kashmir. More importantly, it details the process by which Dughlat prepared for his execution. Besides naming the two judges whose *fatwa* (religious decree) was used for the execution, it also describes the testimony as 'false and slanderous'. It goes on to add further details about the saint's place of execution and the reason for choosing Dab as his burial place.

Following is the Urdu text and English translation of the circumstance of the *shahadat* (martyrdom) of Mir Daniyal

میر دانیال کی شہادت

میرزا حیدر کاشغری میں اپنی حکومت کے دوران میر سید دانیال کو اسکردو میں گرفتار کر کے با مشقت کشمیر آنے پر مجبور کیا اور ایک سال تک قید بامشقت رکھا۔ میر دانیال کے قتل کا جواز مرزا حیدر کاشغری نے دو جھوٹے گواہوں کے ذریعے چند مولویوں کے پاس جھوٹی گواہی دلا کر کیا۔ یہ گواہی کذب و افترا پر تھی۔ قاضی عبدالغفور اور قاضی ابراہیم کے فتوؤں سے ثابت ہونے کے بجائے ثابت کر کے بے بنیاد الزام اور تہمت سے میر دانیال کے قتل کا سامان فراہم کیا تھا۔ اور قتل کا جواز لینے کے بعد عشم سمبل نامی میدان میں میر سید دانیال کو مار ڈالا۔ چونکہ اس پاس کا علاقہ خطرہ سے خالی نہیں تھا۔ اور اگر شیعہ لوگ میر دانیال کو وہی دفن کرتے تو عین ممکن تھا کہ مرزا کاشغری آپ کے جنازے کے ساتھ بھی میر اراکی کے جسد کی طرح بے احترامی کرتا۔ اس لئے انہوں نے رات کی تاریخی میں ان کے جسد کو اٹھا کر موضوع ڈب منتقل کیا۔ اور آپ کو سپرد خاک کیا گیا۔ میر سید دانیال کے بڑے فرزند سید محمد علی جسکا لقب میر شمس الدین ثانی تھا کو کریوہ گرنڈ کلان بڈ گام میں شہید کیا گیا۔ وہاں سے آپ کا جسد تلرزو سونا واری کی طرف نقل کر کے وہاں دفن کیا گیا۔

The martyrdom of Mir Daniyal

During his rule, Mirza Haider arrested Mir Syed Daniyal in Skardu, forced him to come to Kashmir, and kept him in rigorous imprisonment for a year. The justification for the murder of Mir Daniyal was that Mirza Haider Kashgari got two false witnesses to testify in the presence of some clerics. This testimony was false and slanderous. Instead of being proven by the fatwas of Qazi Abdul Ghafoor and Qazi Ibrahim, he had provided the means for the murder of Mir Daniyal through baseless accusations and slander. After getting the justification for the murder, he killed Mir Syed Daniyal in a field known as Asham Sambal. Since the area around was not free from

danger, and if the Shia people had buried Mir Daniyal there, it was quite possible that Mirza Kashgari would have disrespected his funeral as he did with Mir Araki's body. Therefore, in the darkness of the night, they picked up his body and transferred it to the locality of Dab, and he was buried there. Mir Syed Daniyal's elder son, Syed Muhammad Ali, who was also known as Mir Shams al-Din the second, was martyred in Kreeva Grand Kalan Budgam. From there, his body was transferred to Tularzoo Sonawari and buried there.

A number of poems have also been written on Mir Daniyal. These poems may also help understand the image of the saint in modern Kashmir. I have been able to access one of these poems, written in Kashmiri. It is written by Syed Abbas Jauhar, a resident of Dab, Gaderbal, and was written by him on 29 August, 2018.

Following is the Kashmiri text and the English translation of the poem.

<p>حضرت میر سید محمد دانیالؒ سندس یادس منز ”دانیال“</p> <p>وطن تر اوتھ کُرن بے وایہ ہجرت دُنن پرتھ جایہ پیغامِ ہدایت</p> <p>کُرن دینِ خدائیس آبیاری وونن توحید، نبوت بیہ قیامت</p> <p>پُنن گھر بار مُشرن، دراو سَفرس اتی آو پند سوی از راهِ گلگت</p>	<p>In memory of Hazrat Mir Syed Daniyal</p> <p>“Daniyal”</p> <p>Leaving behind his homeland, he migrated unfazed, and spread the message of guidance everywhere.</p> <p>He nurtured the faith of God, and preached monotheism, prophethood and about the Day of Judgment.</p> <p>Leaving behind his household, he set out on a journey, and arrived in the country of Hind via Gilgit.</p>
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<p>دوہس راتس کورن تبلیغ لوکن وونن عدل الہی بیہ امامت</p> <p>بورن ایمان یتہ مشرک دین منز دین دس قرآن، درس ولایت</p> <p>تمس ناراض گئے وقتکی ستمگر اتی الزام دتی ہس بے شہادت</p> <p>مگر حق تروو ما ثمی دانیاں رٹن اد جد امجد سبزن وراثت</p> <p>دوان چہس ناد جوہر یوری پکھنا چہہ از بیہ چانہ تبلیغ ضرورت</p>	<p>He preached among the people day and night, and taught them divine justice and leadership.</p> <p>Here, he filled the polytheists' hearts with faith, and taught the lessons on the Quran and <i>wilayat</i>.</p> <p>The tyrants of the time became angry with him, and accused him without any evidence.</p> <p>But Daniyal did not abandon the truth, then held to the inheritance of his glorious grandfather.</p> <p>Jauhar is calling you out. Come here! Your preaching is needed again now.</p>
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8. Conclusion

The shrine of Mir Daniyal in Dab Ganderbal is among the most popular Shia shrines in modern Kashmir. It is at the centre of spiritual and ritual life of not just the village of Dab, but also the areas surrounding it. The saint buried in the shrine, Mir Daniyal, was a famous Nurbakhshiyya saint of the sixteenth-century Kashmir, who followed his father Shamsuddin Araki as the head of the order. However, the order gradually embraced the mainstream Shia faith. Festivals and rituals held at the shrine in modern Kashmir, some of which have been detailed above, amply

demonstrate this change. While this study has highlighted some aspects of life at the shrine, more detailed studies need to be carried on the life and times of the saint, and life at the shrine in modern times. This is especially important since the shrine is among the few sites connected to a pre-modern Nurbakhshiyya Sufi saint in Kashmir. Importantly, the shrine is connected in popular memory to the establishment of the settlement at the Dab village. However, given the paucity of textual sources on the saint and the settlement, it becomes a challenging task to reconstructing the exact contours of the growth of the shrine and the settlement around it. This is where oral traditions and popular memory could prove helpful. This paper seeks to stimulate further studies on the shrine and the settlement, a project which could prove immensely useful for the understanding the variegated impacts on Sufism on various aspects of Kashmiri history.

Endnotes:

¹Nile Green, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Centre* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992).

² Yogesh Snehi, *Spatializing Popular Sufi Shrines in Punjab: Dreams, Memories, and Territoriality* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

³ Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir under the Sultans* (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1959), 137-138.

⁴ R.K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir: 1320-1819* (Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1969), 228-229.

⁵ Abdul Qayum Rafiqi, *Sufism in Kashmir: From the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century* (Delhi: Bharatiya Publication House, 1976) 218-220.

⁶ Khan describes Khaki's critique as being in a soft tone. He notes that Khaki's modern critique could be understood with reference to his relation with the Rishis, most prominently Baba Harde Rishi. See Muhammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis (Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century)* (New Delhi, Manohar, 1992) 150-151.

⁸ Muhammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir: Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century* (Srinagar: Oriental Publishing House, 2004) 71-72, 130, 242.

⁹ Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts: Narratives, Sacred Geographies, and the Historical Imagination* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁰ Syed Muhsin Hussain Kashmiri, *Danish-nama-e Shi'an-i Kashmir: vol. 1 Tazkira-e Ulema* (Karachi: Markaz-I Ahya-i Aasar-i Bar-i sageer, 2011) 106-108.

¹¹ Hakim Sameer Hamdani, *Shi'ism in Kashmir: A History of Sunni-Shi'i Rivalry and Reconciliation* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023) 22, 30.

¹² Syed Jaleel Hussain, "Sectarianism, or Separatism: Iran, Pakistan, and the Dynamics of Shia Politics in Kashmir", in *The Palgrave Handbook of New Directions in Kashmir Studies*, ed.s Duschinski et.al (Cham: Springer, 2023), 351-365.

¹³ Justice Hakim Imtiyaz Hussain, *The Shia's of Jammu and Kashmir* 2 vol.s (Srinagar: Srinagar: Publishing House, 2017).

¹⁴ Ghulam Muhammad Gulzar, *Kashmir aur Shia Muslim: Kashmir key Tabiyati, Tamaduni aur Maasharati Pasmanzar mein Shia Musلمانon ka Tajziati Tazkira* (Srinagar: Tahfuz Publication, 2022).

¹⁵ Hakim Ghulam Safdar Hamdani, *Tarikh-i Shiyani Kashmir* (Srinagar: Imam Hussain Research and Publishing Centre, 2014)

¹⁶ Shahzad Bashir, 'After the Messiah: The Nurbakhshiyeh in Late Timurid and Early Safavid Times', in Andrew J. Newman (ed.), *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East: Studies on Iran in the Safavid Period*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003, p. 301-04.

¹⁷ Anonymous, *Baharistan-i Shahi*, 92-93.

¹⁸ Anonymous, *Baharistan-i Shahi*, 92-93.

¹⁹ Lit. 'those who refuse'. It is known as a derogatory term historically applied by the Sunnis to describe the Shiis, who refused to accept the early caliphate of Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman as legitimate.

²⁰ Baba Daud Khaki, *Dastur-al Salikin Sharah Wird-ul Muridin* (Srinagar: Sheikh Usman and Sons Tajiran-i Kutb, undated)

²¹ Sayyid Ali, *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, ed, and trans. Zubida Jan (Srinagar: Jay Kay Books, 2009), 34-35, 69-70.

²² Muhammad Ali Kashmiri, *Tohfat-ul Ahabab*, ed. Ghulam Rasool Jan (Srinagar: Centre for Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir, 2006), 22, 26, 36, 51, 67, 119, 411, 415.

²³ Anonymous, *Baharistan-i Shahi*, ed. Akbar Haideri (Budgam: Anjuman-i Shar'i Shi'an, undated), 92-93, 95.

²⁴ Khwaja Muhammad Azam Dyadamari, *Waqiat-i Kashmir* trans. Shamsuddin Ahmad (Srinagar: Islamic Research Centre, 2019), 122-132.

²⁵ Sadullah Shahabadi, *Bagh-I Sulaiman* ed. and trans. by Syed Muzamil Murtaza (Srinagar: TFC Books, 2021).

²⁶ Hargopal Khasta, *Tawarikh-i Guldast-e Kashmir* (Srinagar: Shaheen Book Stall, 1986).

²⁷ Pir Ghulam Hassan Khuihmai, *Tarikh-I Hassan* vol. 1: Dar Bayan Jugrafiyyah Kashmir (Srinagar: Research and Publication Department, 1890), 429-432.

²⁸ Mulla Sadra, *Kasr asnam al-jahiliyya*, trans. M. Dasht Bozorgi & F. Asadi Amjad as *Breaking the Idols of Ignorance*, London: ICAS Press, 2008.

²⁹ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1972, vol.2, 563.

³⁰ Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, 241.

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