

TOMB OF LAL SHAHBAZ QALANDAR: DESIGN AND REMODELING

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ABSTRACT

This piece of research is largely related to the history, design, architecture and craft, and especially to the development and construction of Tomb of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar at Sehwan. This paper is based upon the historical perspective of construction of the tomb and re-development of the Dragah in present time. It is a piece of work to explore the trends and clarify themes of the design and construction. The research emphasises upon architectural style of Sindh as an iconography of Sindhri-Jo-Shahbaz Qalandar.

INTRODUCTION

Sehwan-Sharif is one of the most important towns of district Jamshoro of Sindh province; 80 miles north by west from Hyderabad. The Jamshoro district is a long strip of land, flanked on the west by mountain ranges. On the east, the river Indus draws the boundary. It is about 150 miles in length and 60 miles in breadth. The climate is hot in summer and moderate in winter. But it differs considerably in the north and the south. The southern region is more pleasant as compared to the northern region. Sehwan has given to Sindh everything famous; hakims, men of letters, poets and above all Qalandar *Lal* Shahbaz. In Sindh there are cities which had defense citadels; these are also spiritual centers, but Sehwan have always enjoyed eminence among those centers. The Greek writers, Cunningham, Al Idrisi, Ibne-Batuta, McMurdo, Lieutenant A. Burnes, Burton, Qazi Mahmud of Thatta, Syed Abdul Qadir of Naserpur, Mir Muhammad Ma'sum, Mir Ghulam Ali Azad, Hakim Fateh Muhammad Sehwan and many other prominent historians, writers had put light on the importance and history of the Sehwan town (Baloch, 2004:281). The town of Sehwan was capital town in past centuries of Sindh. After the

arrival of Qalandar *Lal* Shahbaz the town has only one identity that it is the town of *Lal*; where he has his last resting place called *Qubo* in the native Sindhi language. Each and every historian, traveler, tourist and reporter have written upon the rituals performance at the *Dargah* and also given the details of design, construction and surface decoration of tomb of *Lal* Shahbaz Qalandar with a level of homage.

“The blue-tiled *Dargah* of patron saint of Sehwan Sindh built over his bones in the heart of the town is the focus and vital centre for its material and its spiritual life. Towards it are turned devout footsteps, in supplication and prayer, fear and hope. To the muffled roar of its brass *naubats* (drums), the people of Sehwan rise, eat, pray, or go to sleep” (Duarte, 1967:7).

It would be difficult to say who built the Qalandar’s tomb, for almost every pious ruler of Sindh has contributed something to it. The tomb was visited by Ibn-e-Batutah in 734 A.H. and it is reported as a most venerated shrine in Sindh. It was evident that the tomb over the shrine was one of the few exquisite example of architectural beauty and workmanship of the artisans of the Sindh. The architectural, floral and decorative craftsmanship of portico front was masterly done. Historians have contradictory point of views upon the construction of the *Dargah*. Few says it was built within seven years of the demise of Qalandar and few have opinion that it was built in 757 A.H. i.e. 107 years after the departure of the Qalandar to the next world (Darbelvi, 2004:157).

DEVELOPMENT OF TOMB

It is to be said that the first dome was built in 754 A.H/1353 A.D. by the order of Sultan Firuz Tughlaq. Ikhtiar-ud-Din Malik, a local governor in the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughlaq built cupolas and domes in 757 A.H/1356 A.D. (Darbelvi, 2004:157). From inscription dated 757 A.H/1356 A.D. the original monument consisted of seven arches and windows, and six domes or cupolas built by Iftkhar-al-Din Malik (Sehwani, 2009:126). The overall structure is placed in the courtyard on the left side. During the visit of Sultan Firuz Tughlaq to Sehwan-Sharif, out of his respect and devotion of Hazrat Qalandar *Lal* Shahbaz; he had distributed

Jagirs amongst the *Khadims* of the shrine for the sole purpose of the up-keep and maintenance of the sacred shrine.

Mirza Jani Beg Turkhan started to construct a huge erection of shrine in 993/1585 to 1000/1591 but he died in the mean time. His son Mirza Ghazi Beg; in the time of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir about 1009/1600 to 1021/1612 took interest in repair, extension and completion of the work of the mausoleum but he also died in the meantime (Sehwani, 2009:126-127). Afterwards in the reign of Jahangir-the Mughal emperor, governor of Sehwan Nawab Syed Dinder Khan Alias Syed Bhoora carried out repairs in 1040/1630 and completed the work. During the reign of Emperor Shah Jehan (1627/1636 A.D.); Nawab Dindar Khan also constructed pavement of the court at the mausoleum in 1041/1631 and a mosque in 1043/1634. He used the Kashi tiles in the courtyard of the shrine. Eventually the large beautiful structure standing up to 1994 was built by a local mason Syed Mohib Shah under the instructions of Mirza Jani Beg. The grave of this mason Syed Mohib Shah is within the precincts of the *Dargah-Sharif* (Mohammad, 1978:57).

Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoru, ruler of Sindh installed an *Alam* (banner attributed to Hazrat Abbas, the martyr of Karbala), at the mausoleum in 1173/1759. He affixed a heavy door with ornamental design, where along the two sides of the door there was an inscription for his devotion praised by Faqir Sabir (Sehwani, 2009:128). Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoru also used a lofty facade glorious with glazed tiles and decorated the surface of shrine with Kashi tiles (Darvelvi, 2004:157).

Mir Karam Ali Khan Talpur, ruler of Sindh carried out repairs and renovation work, installed silver gate and *Katuhra* in 1238/1822. The silver work on four pillars was carried out by Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Talpur in the same period. After few years the *Katuhra* was replaced by new one made by the artisans of Hyderabad sponsored by Syed Wali Mohammad Shah Lakyari and the old one was put at Kaafi of Shah Salah-u-din. The silver ornamentation on the *Katuhra* was donated by Mehboob Ali Khan Waggan, a landlord of Larkana, on 14 Shu'ban 1350 A.H. (Sehwani, 2009:130). Since the construction of the *Dargah-Sharif*, every ruler of the Sehwan *pergana*, Sindh and Pakistan has

contributed a little or more in renovation, tremendous reconstruction and decoration of the shrine.

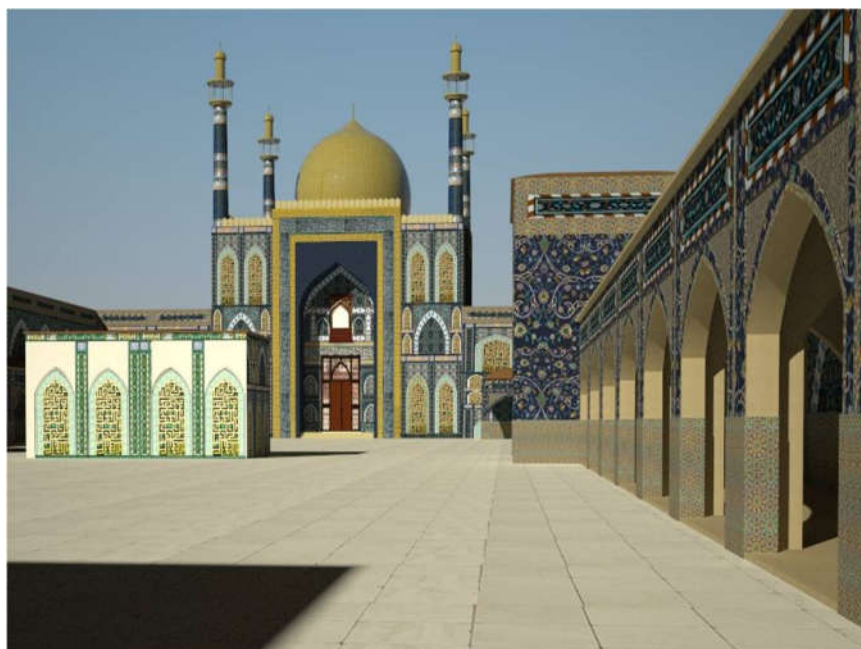
After the partition of subcontinent, the Auqaf Department has taken over the management of *Dargah* as late as in 1960, and has carried out extensive repairs and renovation work. In 1393/1973, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the then Prime Minister, added some new constructions and dismantled few buildings along with a Mosque of Loung Faqir. The construction and re-building of floor of the main *Dargah* with mosaic tiles inside and outside the main tomb; silver plating work of wooden *Katuhra* of the mazar, construction of higher service reservoir of 10 thousand gallons capacity to meet the daily consumption of water at the *Daragh*. The mosque attached to the *Daragh* has been repaired, a *musafirkhana* consisting of 16 suites, widened the road leading to the *Dargah*, and a block of latrines on the western side of *Daragh* was constructed.

The pair of golden doors designed in Iran, were imported by the Pakistan Government as an act of reverence for Hazrat Qalandar *Lal Shahbaz*. A beautiful marble approach entrance connecting it with the main *Dargah* building through a equally beautifully designed marble hall with Hala Tiles and Kashi work, and a superb lighting system and arrangement on the back portion of the shrine have been installed. In the evening when the hall is lighted, words cannot describe the grandeur and beauty that it displays. The Auqaf Department has erected a gold *Neel* upon the dome of the *Daragh*. The said tomb an icon of architectural heritage of Sindh was collapsed on 25 July 1994. In the incident of collapse of the dome of the *Dargah*, six persons demised and many were injured. The Then government directed to dismantle the complete *Dargah* and reconstructed it again with devotion.

DESIGN AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE DARGAH

The re-development work of *Dargah* Qalandar was divided into four phases, in Phase-I the Construction of Shrine including dome with 192 panels covered through gold leaf and roof resting upon girders amounting to Rs.198.476 million. The Phase-II comprised upon Construction of *Dhamal* Court including tombs, Brick work, R.C.C work, Marble, Painting, Electricity, Drainage disposal System etc amounting to Rs.72.649 Million. The Phase-III

is initiated at presently which is comprised of Construction of Parking Area and Shopping Area, Verandah around Alam and Golden Gate, Musafir Khana, Kitchen, Ladies and Gents toilet, Sunni & Shia Mosque, Kafee, External works. The third phase work has been calculated at an amount of Rs.1118.00 millions. In meantime of construction of *Dargah*, many issues related to the design, elevation and surface decoration were raised, therefore Government of Sindh initiated a scheme to resolve the issues rose within the execution of Phase-I & II. The new scheme was approved in the financial year 2011-12 with a total cost of Rs. 312.00 millions of rupees as “Remedial Measures of Main Shrine and Dome Structure”. The work upon the scheme is in progress. The future development program for the *Dargah* includes renovation of Kafis; construction of two side verandahs, reconstruction of mosaic tiles and renovation of old ornamental painting work; replacement of Kashi tiles; repairs to the main tomb of the *Dargah* with glazed colored tiles, incorporation of the calligraphy, establishment of a Museum and library by the side of the *Dargah* for encouraging research of the life and message of *Lal Shahbaz Qalandar* (PC-I of Phase-III: 27).



It is evident that the present structure and elevation of building have no connection with older one and having little resemblance with architectural heritage of Sindh. Therefore it is time to put a professional eye upon the surface decoration and usage of material as the tomb may be read as cultural heritage of Sindh in continuation of the slogan *Sindhri-jo-Shahbaz Qalandar*. The present Government has addressed itself to the essential task of reconstructing and developing spiritual centers, and Sehwan has been given its due importance. A development program is initiated and in progress at *Dargah* wherein it is needed to be monitored by the skilled craftsmen, the renowned intellectuals and the admirers of the heritage of Sindh.



CONCLUSION

The old shrine was unmatched icon of heritage in sub continent and replacement is also remarkable with high level of indigenous aesthetics. Presently the foundation of re-development of shrine has been put into the most important phase of operation and now the outlook of the architectural heritage of Sindh is unveiling its face. The main concept of the development work is to improve the sanctity of the Mazar and to create a relationship with other spiritual shrines of Sindh. The usage of Islamic Calligraphy

and Sindhi aesthetics of surface decoration as an identity of architecture of Sindh at Shrine of the great philosopher Qalandar Shahbaz will make the tomb a universal icon. The concept of development will improve the environment of *Dargah* with new structure and architecture but will also be a conscious act to relate it with the heritage of Sindh and create an identity as *Sindhri-Jo-Shabaz Qalandar* through the readings on the elevations of the architectural iconography. The labor of love, close and effective supervision and inspection at all levels will result in giving shrine a new look as one of the finest re-developed spiritual, historical and heritage place of the world along with cultural aesthetics of the historical heritage of Sindh.

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