

Sense and Sensibilities of the Sufis of Karor L'al Eason, Layyah

Safia Rahim Farooq

University of the Punjab

ABSTRACT

One of the core issues of our times is, the socio-political culture has changed dramatically causing tolerance level to drop significantly. To address this concern, work needs to be done at all ends. Wisdom can be drawn from the narratives of the Sufis of the region. Layyah is located strategically, on the eastern bank of River Indus, where Punjab meets Baluchistan and Sindh. This paper attempts to interpret two illustrations from two archaeological sites of the Sufis of Layyah,- the principle one is from Darbār Rājan Shāh, and the other is from Mandir Ghafhaw La'l Ji. The interpretations of the imagery spotlight the sense and sensibilities of these saints, and their contribution to humanity for the peaceful coexistence of all.

KEY WORDS: Sufi, imagery, interpretation, service, peace.

Introduction

This paper brings to light the sense and sensibilities of the Sūfis of Karor L'al Eason ('Aysīn)¹, Layyah, especially with reference to two illustrations from two archeological sites that are in close proximity. The principle illustration under study is from the Darbār (tomb) of a Muslim Sufi, Sā'īn Sayyid Muḥammad 'Ali Rājan Shāh Bukhāri, and the other illustration is from a Hindu Mandir (temple), dedicated to Shiri Ghafhaw L'al Ji. The images depict the mystical powers of these saints, who followed their respective religions to the core, yet one served at the Darbār of the other, out of reverence, and as an act of service to humanity.

District Layyah is situated in Southern Punjab, Pakistan, on the eastern bank of River Sindh (River Indus), which runs from north to south (fig.1). Its topography comprises sand dunes that are sparingly dotted with wild bushes. Owing to scanty rainfall the vast expanse of land remains largely uncultivated, but the banks of the river are lined with forest and vegetation. Some areas have been made cultivatable by means of canals and tube wells.

Modern day historians are of the view that Old Layyah was inhabited as far back as prehistoric times, when the first men inhabited earth. Rashīd Akhtar Nadavi, a Pakistani historian, acclaimed in his book, *Arḍ-i Pakistan Ki Tārikh* that scholars are indebted to the Yale Cambridge India Expedition 1935, for excavating and having found traces of the inhabitation before the Aryans, near the south-western mountain range (Nadavi,2009),- close to Sulaiman Range. According to the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* the foundation of the present day city was laid around 1550 by Kamāl Khān, a Mirāni Baloch. Over the years, Layyah fell into the hands of various tribes that came to occupy it. This resulted in administrative changes, followed by changes in the status of the city. Layyah remained the headquarters of its adjacent area for periods of time during the Sikh and British rule, while many families migrated and settled here, giving it, its eclectic nature. *Imperial Gazetteer 2 of India* provides information on Leiah Town, an excerpt:

In 1794 Humāyūn Shāh, the rival claimant to the throne of Kābul, was captured near Leiah² and brought into the town, where his eyes were put out by order of Zamān Shāh. Under the Sikh government the town once more became the centre of administration for the neighbouring tract, and on the British occupation in 1849 it was for a time the headquarters of a District. In 1861, however, the District was broken up, and Leiah became a part of Dera Ismail Khān, but in 1901 was transferred to the new District of Miānwāli. The municipality was created in 1875 (n.d.,p. 165).

City Layyah is well planned and most of its roads run parallel, crossing at right angles. Life runs at a slow pace. The indigenous vernacular is Sarāiki, however Urdu is also spoken. There are schools, colleges and private academies in the city. It has the potential of growing and progressing, but social reforms are the need of the hour.

Many Sufis and men of faith came to District Layyah and settled there; of these Rājan Shāh was one of the earliest. He was the son of Sayyid Hāmid al-Ḥaṣṣan al-Bukhāri al-Hindi, whose lineage is traced with Hadrat ‘Ali, the nephew cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muḥammad (*saw*). Perceivably, because of his wisdom and peace-loving nature, Rājan Shāh converted many Non-Muslims to Islam. Rājan Shāh was an *‘ālam-idīn* (religious scholar) and a *mujtahid* (certified religious legislator). My guide, Sayyid Dhūlqarnain³ Shāh, a local of Karor La’l Eason, Layyah, introduced me to Sajjid Malik, a teacher at a local college, who is carrying out research on the Sūfis of Layyah. According to the information provided to me by Sajjid Malik, the family tree of Rājan Shāh is as under:

1. Hadraimam ‘Ali Naqi
2. Hadrat Sayyidaja ‘far as-Thani al-Tawwab
3. Hadrat Sayyid ‘Ali al-Asghar

4. Hadrat Sayyid ‘AbdAllah
5. Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Yusaf
6. Hadrat Sayyid Mahmud Asghar
7. Hadrat Sayyid Mahmud Abud al-Fatha
8. Hadrat Sayyid ja‘far
9. Hadrat Sayyid Abu al-Mu‘id ‘Ali.
10. Hadrat Sayyid Jalal ad-Din Surkhpush Bukhari
11. Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Kabir Bukhari.
12. Hadrat Sayyid Jalal al-Din Jahani Jahan Gashat
13. Hadrat Sayyid Nasir al-Din Mahmud Bukhari
14. Hadrat Sayyid Hamid Kabir Bukhari
15. Hadrat Sayyid Rukn al-Din Bukhari
16. Hadrat Sayyid Kimia Nazar Bukhari.
17. Hadrat Sayyid Hamid Kabir Thani Bukhari.
18. Hadrat Sayyid Muhammad ‘Ali Rajan Bukhari

As the mausoleum of Rājan Shāh is located in Karor La‘l Eason, it is befitting to give a brief account whereby this city got its designated name. The city, Karor La‘l Eason is named after a Sūfi, Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Yūsuf, who was a *murīd* (student) of Rājan Shāh. It is generally understood, but not fully confirmed that La‘l ‘Asyīn was a distant descendant, a grandson of Ḥaḍrat Baha’ al-Dīn Zakariyya of Multan, who was born in Karor La‘l Eason. The tomb of Baha’ al-Dīn Zakariyya’s mother is next to the Mazār of L‘al ‘Asyīn, in Karor L‘al Eason, Layyah (fig. 2). She was the sister of Ḥaḍrat ‘Isa of Bilot Sharīf, her name was Bibi Fātima, but she was better known as Ama.

Dhūlqarnain, informed me that the word “Karor” is derived from the Urdu numeral “crore”, meaning “ten million”, the importance of which is that Muḥammad Yūsuf performed *chilla* (solitary worship of intense nature), by standing in the waters of river Sindh, reciting Sūra *YaSīn*, the thirty sixth Sūra of the Qur’an, ten million times, for which he was given the epithet “Karor”; and the words “Eason, or ‘Aysīn” is a derivative of the word “*YaSīn*”.

The Mazār of L‘al Eason (fig.3) is built on the same style as that of his ancestors. Constructed in brick and mortar, the façade of the upper portion of the tomb is densely laid in blue mosaic and tile work. Its entrance faces east. The pillars that support the veranda are in fresco. The ceiling of the veranda is exquisitely crafted and painted in woodwork (fig.4) and the frame of the entrance door is carved in fine filigree (fig.5). The soffits of the arches are decorated in

vegetal pattern and medallions (fig.6). The surface of the walls is divided into segmental frames that are ornamented with vegetal patterns rendered in flat (fig.7) with calligraphy in glazed tile (fig.8). Inside of the tomb along with the *qabr* (grave) of La‘l Eason there are other graves of the Sufis and the ruling elite of the area (fig.9).

From our point of view, Darbār of Rājan Shāh is of greater significance, because it is the monument on which the principle illustration under study is adorned. Even though the locals hold it in high esteem, yet it is a relatively unknown monument among scholars, as such not much information is available on it. Unfortunately, most information that is available is passed on by word of mouth. Though the monument is listed in the special issue, of the *Pakistan Archaeology*, edited by Niaz Rasool, but no dates have been given in it either; neither of the life or death of Rājan Shāh, nor of the construction or renovation of the Darbār. This catalogue only provides a brief introductory note along with a photograph of the general view of the Darbār, Plate XIII, B (1994-1996, 29, pp. 129, 131, 134). However, the outer wall of the entrance to the tomb has a plaque under the arch, this panel is in fresco (fig.14), according to which the construction work of the *Chajja* commenced on 20th Maḥarram 1325 AH [1907 AD] and was completed in 1333 AH [1915 AD], by the donation of Sayyed Allāh Bakhsh Shāh, of Basti Nūrpur, Tehsil Layyah, Ḍillah Muzaffargarh, by *Mistri* (mason) Ranjhaand then *aqqāshi* of the *chajja* is by Aḥmed Bakhsh Naqqāsh.

In order to assess the time period of Rājan Shāh, it is taken into account that La‘l Eason was the *murīd* of Rājan Shāh; as such Rājan Shāh would have been older than La‘l Eason, who was the grandson or of Baha‘al-Dīn Zakariyya (though a distant one). The date of birth of Baha‘al-Dīn Zakariyya is calculated as 1017. It follows, that the time period of Rājan Shāh is likely to be around two hundred years after that of Baha‘al-Dīn Zakariyya, making the period of Rājan Shāh, the turn of the sixteenth century.

Darbār Rājan Shāh is situated in Karor La‘l Eason, Layyah, some twenty eight kilometers northwest of city Layyah. As one approaches the Darbār, one is taken by surprise because its overall appearance is after the tomb of Shāh Rukn-i-‘Ālam and Baha‘al-Dīn Zakariyya of Multan, though it is smaller in scale and grandeur. In 2011, when I went to visit the Darbār, renovation work was in progress, but I was greatly disappointed because parts of the façade were being lined with thick brick facing, causing the beautiful mosaic and tile work to be buried underneath (fig. 21). At places the tile-work (fig. 30) and the fresco (fig. 31) were either being whitewashed or else were being faced with modern tiles, sadly, like it has already been done in the interior of the Darbār (fig. 18).

The Darbār is built on a slightly higher ground on an octagonal plan (fig.10-11). This mausoleum is constructed of brick and mortar, but the craftsmanship of the embellishment is less refined than the tomb of Shāh Rukn-i-‘Ālam. The drum or upper portion of the dome is ornamented. The entrance of the Darbār faces east (fig.12). The tomb is approached through an arcaded veranda, which has an

ornamental *chajja* (canopy), the ceiling and filigree of which is carved intricately (fig.13). The multi foil pilasters that flank the sides of the entrance to the tomb have a pointed arch, set in a rectangular frame (fig.14). The wooden ceiling of the veranda (fig.15) and the walls of the veranda are painted in segments. The top-most row of the walls of the veranda, where the walls meet the ceiling bears the *naqshā* (plan) of important religious sites of the Muslims. These include the *Masjid-iNabavi* (fig.16) and *Bayt al-Maqdis* or Dome of the Rock (fig.17) and the *Mazār of Imām Ḥuṣain*. The exterior of the *gunbad* (dome) is in white marble, with a decorative band of tile-work at its base. The interior of the dome is decorated at the apex and base, underneath which is the *qabr* (grave) of RājanShāh that is crowned with a wooden *chatri*, (crown canopy) which is scripted with calligraphy. The chamber has many graves of the relatives of RājanShāhand of men with *ṣūfi* tendencies, while some graves are of the ruling elite of the region (fig.18).

The façade of the Darbār is embellished strikingly (fig.19, 25 - 26). The ornamentation is in blue *kashīkāri* (mosaic tile-work) (fig.22) and glaze tile-work in relief (fig.23); rendered in geometric and arabesque patterns. Small calligraphic *Qit'a* executed in tile, are set in panels that run all along the walls and buttresses of the façade (fig.11,19) which support the eight corners of the walls of its octagonal structure. Interspaced, built-in pigeon holes (fig. 19) animate the structure because of which pigeons roost peacefully, displaying a drama of their own (fig. 24). All these features blend beautifully with the whole structure of the Darbār, neither these look over ornamented nor too bland, striking a rhythmic balance of the parts with the whole.

Coming back to the narratives of the saints, as it is told and retold. In the same vein, it was narrated to me. I was taken up the steep flight of the wall-stair of the dome (fig.20) which opens onto the narrow passage around the base of the dome that overlooks the vast expanse of land on the south-western front (fig.21); with the view to witness and appreciate for myself, that even when flood hits the area, as it did in 2010, the shrine is not inundated. The locals believe this is due to of the piety of the saint. Such miracles are often associated with the shrines of saints.

At the shrine of RājanShāh, I interviewed, aid 'Ali Malik, a *mujāwar* (one who serves at the shrine without wages), he told me that he wears a metal ring around his ankle, as a sign that he is the *Malang* (ascetic) of Sā'in Rājan Shāh. Zaid takes pride in the fact that he has been serving at the shrine for thirty five years, sweeping, lighting the oil lamps, serving water to the visitors and doing other menial chores. He reported that the piety and spiritual power of Rājan Shāh was such that when he used to ride his horse, a peacock used to fly over him in order to provide shade. It must be pointed out that Layyah is a semi-desert where temperatures soar up to Celsius 50-53 and where there is scarcity of water, hence the importance of shade is the difference between life and death. The credibility of the story is questionable, but the fact that the narrative is associated with Rājan Shāh is somewhat confirmed by a very fascinating illustration executed on the lowest band of embellishment that runs along the façade of the mausoleum of

Rājan Shāh(fig.11,19,25). It is set on the fourth-foil of the right-side pilaster that flanks the blind arch (fig.26-27)of its southern façade, though the left side four-foils are decorated in arabesque vegetal pattern. The illustration is of a *Horse and Peacock* (fig.28). It is the principle illustration that is under study for the paper.

The image is rendered in blue, executed on white glazed tile, on which fine cracks have appeared over time. The illustration is composed in a rectangular frame that is vertically up, bounded by a thin blue line. It is a simple graphic silhouette image painted in flowing brush strokes. On the top of the panel is the image of a horse, harnessed and saddled, painted in side-view, as though trotting forward, but curiously, there is no rider on the horse? Underneath the image of the horse is the image of the peacock. The background, over which the horse and peacock have been painted, is ornamented with the motif of a flowering plant rendered in symmetrical pattern, used as a filler of space, yet optically it supports the peacock. This stylized vegetal and floral motif is treated in a manner typical of Multani pottery. The Persian and Arabic influence is dominant. There is no illusion of the third dimension or depth. The image is flat, the surface of which is unbroken, beyond which there is no trespassing, which is a Persian characteristic of its art. The images of the horse and the peacock are a bit rudimentary, and the head of the horse is larger as compared to its body. The shape of the horse and peacock is like a cutout, though softness is lent to it by the uneven brush strokes, which at places are opaque and at others thin out.

If form has to follow function, according to the narrative which this illustrates purportedly depicts, the image of the peacock should have been painted above the image of the horse, i.e. flying over it, - and not above it, as is the case. The reason for this could be that the horse is revered over the peacock for many reasons. The Qur'ānicconcept is that the horse is a treasure, by which Allāh swears, "Oh, the charges that run panting, sparks of fire striking, rushing to assault morn, thereby raising clouds of dust, thereby storming [blindly] into any host" (100:1-5 Asad)!

Interpreting the illustration from the perspective of Shiite Muslim, it appears that the reverence for the horse could be because RājanShāh was a Shiite and so are most of his followers. The Shiites associate the horse with Dhūljīnāh (Murtaǰiz), the horse of ImāmḤusainibn 'Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muḥammad (*saw*). Every year in the month of Muḥarram, Shiite '*azādār*(mourner) carry out imposing ritualistic processions, as they parade with the Dhūljīnāh, and beat their chest and back with knives, in rhythmic movement. This they do to keep the memory alive of the epic tragedy of Karbala, when ImāmḤusain and his family were martyred by the cruel rulers in cold blooded murder.

A fact that further establishes the argument that the horse could be Dhūljīnāh, is the absence of the rider on the horse, because no one is allowed to ride the Dhūljīnāh. This is reiterated by two round stone tablets that are displayed in the south-eastern side of the courtyard of the Darbār Rājan Shāh. One tablet is white and the other black, reminiscent of the *Yin Yang* symbol; these stones bear the

incised imprint of the hoof of the horse, one on each tablet. It is claimed that the imprints are that of Rājan Shāh's horse (fig.29).

Another plausible explanation for the absence of the rider on the horse could be that the Muslims of the area refrained from portraying human figures on tombs, as was generally the case elsewhere in the Muslim world. Facts get muddled with myths, but it is understandable that the artist has placed the horse according to reverence rather than position. Probably, the image depicts both narratives, that of Rājan Shāh, and that of Imām Ḥuṣain, which makes it more meaningful and thought-provoking.

Worth noting, however, is the saddle of the horse, shown in white on the body of the horse painted in blue, as though it were the shadow of the feathers of the peacock in the dancing position, falling on the rider. The peacock is not perched on anything, rather its feet are suspended in the air, and its body is positioned at a slight angle, its back slanting upwards, in a manner that it appears as though it were flying, but the stem of a plant painted underneath, acts as a rest for its body. The feathers of the peacock's tail fan out tilted forwards, touching its neck. The feathers of its body have been treated cleverly, like the scales of a fish, though it is painted blue on white, yet it gives the illusion of appearing white on blue; adding an interesting dimension to the aesthetics of the illustration, which is on the whole graphic. The head of the peacock is large and its beak is somewhat long, in which it holds a subjugated snake, whose head is not visible, appearing as if the peacock were swallowing the snake.

The question arises as to what is the significance, if any, of the image of the *Horse and Peacock*, especially considering that the entire façade of the monument has no other illustration embellishment on it? Stranger still is the fact that the image is not supported by another illustration on the opposite left side of the pilaster of the door, which if it had an illustration on it, would have formed its *jawāb*, that is- its complementing feature. This is not in keeping with the rules of Muslim architecture which follows symmetry, rather strictly?

The peacock is a common bird of the Indian Subcontinent. It is found roaming the grounds near the shrines of saints. Scholars have traced the imagery of the peacock in various religions and traditions. The symbol of the peacock has been used extensively, in Hinduism it is used as the symbol of god of war. In Chinese art it is associated with power and wealth. In the west, it was in use before the advent of Christianity, as a symbol of immortality, having found its way into Christian imagery, where it is associated with the Resurrection of Christ; probably because it became the sign of renewal, since annually it sheds off its feathers naturally. The image and symbol of peacock gained ground because of its beauty and because of its extraordinary capability to eat snakes and yet manage to stay alive. Hence, it came to symbolize Christ's miracle to cure the fatally ill; and to depict Christ's Second Coming. Here, in the illustration the image of the peacock swallowing the snake could have been used for both ends; because most Muslims believe in the Second Coming of Jesus, the son of Mary, whereby he would kill

Dajjāl(Anti-Christ).SaḥīḥBukhāri, chapter No: 45, Ḥadīth, 666, Narrated, Abu Huraira, “Allah’s Apostal (*saw*) said, “The Hour will not be established until the son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends amongst you as a just ruler, he will break the cross, kill the pigs, and abolish the Jizya tax. Money will be in abundance so that nobody will accept it (as charitable gifts) Relevance: 4.8647”(http://www.islamicity.com).

Writing on the imagery of Persian poetry in her book, *A Two-Colored Brocade* Schimmel has traced the imagery of the peacock, whereby the peacock guard the gate of Paradise until, “According to a popular tradition the serpent...entered Paradise...by means of a trick: carried in the Peacock’s beak, it managed to reach the presence of Adam and Eve” (p. 84).

An incredible story associated with a snake was narrated by Zaid, the *mujāwar* at Darbār Rājān Shāh, who said, till twenty five years ago, a cobra used to visit Darbār Rājān Shāh at night, but no one killed it. Probably, the illustration depicts that due to the *ṣūfī* tendencies of RājānShāh even evil forces could not cause harm, rather they were overpowered.

The background of the image of the *Horse and Peacock* is decorated with a floral motif of the plant render in symmetry. Branches shoot from its main stem, six on the right side and five on the left side, making eleven stems, while the twelfth stem is the main stem that shoots upwards, beyond and above the figure of the peacock. Number twelve has a special significance for the *Shiite*, it is associated with the twelfth Imam, ImāmMandhi, who they believe is alive, but is invisible. Worth noting is the fact that the name of ImāmMandhi is scripted in Urdu, on the tile of the left pilaster, that flank the entrance door of the boundary wall of the Darbār, and reappears on the inner door (fig.12).Though, these tiles are new, being replacements of the original tiles or wood-work that probably once adorned the pilasters, nonetheless, it is clear that the *murīd* of RājānShāh, the keepers and patrons of the Darbār believe in ImāmMandhi. Since the time the concept of ImāmMandhi surfaced, because of the mystery attached to the narrative, it has been debated extensively. There are many schools of thought on the matter, some negate the concept completely, while other sembrace it passionately, yet others are indifferent about it.

Approaching the concept of ImāmMandhi etymologically, -Mandhi means “to guide aright”, that is “a leader a guide” (Platts, 1884). Though there is no direct reference of ImāmMandhi in the Qur’an, yet there is an authentic Ḥadīth that is often cited. It states, the Ḥadīth is narrated by almost all reliable sources which points to a leader from the line of Prophet Muḥammad (*saw*), “Ḥaḍhrat‘AbdAllāh bin Mas’ud reports from the Prophet (*saw*), who said: “The world will not come to pass until a man from among my family, whose name will be my name, rules over the Arabs” (TirmidhiSaḥīḥ, 9,p. 74; Abu Dawud, Saḥīḥ, 5, p. 207). Justifiably, since there is such a strong Ḥadīth to support the belief, it is no wonder that the imagery found a symbolic place in Muslim literature, art and architecture.

Yet, exaggeration and hyperbole cannot be ruled out because it is a favorite technique of the poets of Arabia, Persia and the Indian-Subcontinent as I observed in my PhD Dissertation(2011), “Chughtai’s Concept of Maya: A Critical Analysis of his Narrative Imagery”, that this technique was adopted by the artists of the region. This characteristic feature is also seen in the *naqsha* (plan) painted on the wall of DārbarRājanShāh of *Masjid-iNabavi*, Medina (fig.16), which is the most revered mosque of Muslims, wherein the compound Prophet Muḥammad (*saw*) is laid to rest. The visualization of the image of the *naqsha* of *Masjid-iNabavi* is childlike. It is likely that the artist painted the image from imagination; following his own fervour that of his patron, rather than having represented factual realities. This image is an amalgam of Masjid-iNabavi and *Khāna-iKā’ba*. The five minarets and the *Minbar* (pulpit on which the Imam sits to give the sermon) are the features of Masjid-i Nabvi. While the arched colonnaded boundary wall, drawn in perspective, appears to be like the surrounding walls of *KhānaKā’ba*, which was built by the Turks. More astonishing, is the horse-shoe shape low wall painted in this *naqsha*, the opening of which faces the Masjid. It is similar to the “U” shape Maqām-ilbrāhīmi of *KhānaKā’ba* that marks off the area where Prophet Ibrāhīm and subsequently Prophet Muḥammad prayed. The artist has taken liberty (though undue), by combining features of *KhānaKā’ba* with Masjid-iNabavi. But there is no other feature in the imagery that tantamount to *shirk*, or could imply that the Prophet or his grave was or is venerated to the point of being worshiped. Probably, the artist was carried away by his dazzling love of Prophet Muḥammad (*saw*) and has attempted to illustrate that Muḥammad (*saw*) is from the progeny of Prophet Ibrāhīm.

Olega Garbar points out a similar approach by an artist of India in his book, *Dome of the Rock*. In this book he has published an Indian popular postcard of the Dome of the Rock on which he comments, that the image features a total transformation of the space in which the Dome is located for a more powerful presentation of the shrine (2006, p. 87). According to this observation it can be said, popular artists painted according to imagination and ethos, conceiving the picture following free will, rather than represent factual features.

The second important illustration selected for this paper is from MandirShiriGhaḥhawLa’lJi, Karor La’IEason, Layyah(fig.32). Approaching from Layyah, this Mandir is located some two to three kilometer short of Darbār Rājan Shāh. The Mandir is a simple structure, comprising a single square room for worship, with a *ṣaḥm*(courtyard) on three sides, the north, east and west, bounded by a low wall, with a door placed in the centre that is higher in height than the boundary walls. The walls of the temple are trapezoidal, the surface of its exterior walls, is divided into rectangular segments by bands in low relief, which are now bare but could have been ornamented with fresco. Its arched doorway faces east. A marble plaque is placed under the arch of this door, bearing the name of the Mandir in Urdu, painted in back (fig.33). The interior of the temple gets its character from the arched walls and round ceiling. The pilaster, soffit of the arch

(fig.34), pendentive(fig.35) and ceiling are ornamented in arabesque pattern in fresco. The low altar is blackened due to smoke from oil lamps, but the statue is missing. The Mandir is abandoned. Surprisingly, the panoramic band of imagery on the circular band of its ceiling, is intact (fig.36), which is embellished with figurative motifs that relate to the religious beliefs and ideologies of Hindus.

Dhūlqarnain, informed me that the Mandir of ShiriGhaḥhawLa‘lJi is commonly referred to as *ChichakwālaMandir* (MandirChickenpox), because the Mandir has an image of a figure with chickenpox. According to the people of that area the relevance of the image is associated with the miracle, with which ShiriGhaḥhawLa‘lJi was bestowed,- that when chickenpox broke in the area, the patients suffering from the disease were healed because of the prayers of ShiriGhaḥhawLa‘lJi. Though this claim defies logic, yet it cannot be totally dismissed because, since time immemorial prophets and selected saints have been blessed with such fascinating miracles.

According to Dhūlqarnain, Shiri Ghaḥhaw La‘l Ji was a great humanist, who used to fill water in containers at Darbār Rājan Shāh for visitors. The importance of serving water to travelers in a semi-desert area tantamount to saving lives. Perhaps, because of ShiriGhaḥhawLa‘l’s peace-loving nature and service to mankind, God bestowed him with the miraculous power of prayer.

Intriguing as it may appear, the continuous imagery on the panel illustrates the claim. In this imagery there is a hybrid creature with the face of a wolf and the body of a man. The creature is wearing a head gear with two horns, the kind worn in battle in olden days. The being is wearing a *dhoti* (loin cloth)that has been pulled up for free movement. Its bare limbs and body are painted light blue with dark brown spots on it. The creature is holds a sword in its left hand, and a shield in its right hand. It is engaged in fighting with another hybrid creature, whose body is that of a man and tail of a loin, on its dark blue body there are softer spots in darker blue as though the spots are flaking away. It holds a spear in its right hand, and a shield in its left. Arrows fly all around the figures, as though there is mayhem created by evil forces, fighting one another. In Hinduism, blue symbolizes spirituality and truth; and in particular the throat *chakra*, “The Throat Chakra is associated with the color sky blue (Desy, about.com),symbolizes the wheel representing psychic-energy, the Muslims too have a similar concept, according to which, Allāh is closer than the jugular vein, “We are closer to him than the neck vein” (50:16Asad).

The circular panel of the Mandir has other images that also suit our present purpose. Of these is the figure of a multi-faced and multi-limbed King wearing a crown, who fights evil forces in the air, in every direction (fig.36). While decapitated heads, amputated limbs, including spotted hand and leg, litter the ground (fig.37). Worth noting, is yet another important image in the panel, of a basket full of fruit, with a peacock positioned on both sides of the basket (fig.38). As mentioned earlier, traditionally the imagery of the peacocks guarding the gates of paradise is a derivative from literary. Wilbur too refers to this metaphor, “Early

belief held that the gates of paradise are guarded by a pair of peacocks” (<http://the-meaning-of-symbols>). There is another connotation to the imagery, which Schimmel points out, “...and in Rumi the bird is usually associated with spring and radiant gardens” (1992, p. 396.). The interpretation suggests that disease and evil are cast away by prayers and by the struggle put up by the good forces, in the pursuing fight between right and wrong, in which the good forces are victorious in the end, both in this life and in the Hereafter.

Analyzing the illustrations that have been discussed above, especially in the light of the narratives associated with these images, it is observed the illustration of the *Horse and Peacock* is conceived and positioned intelligently. It is neither placed too importantly, so as to be imposing on the viewer, nor is it placed too far away from the viewer, so as to miss being noticed. It is positioned just above the eye level, on the first ring of ornamental bands of the façade, the one that meets the pilaster of the blind door, closest to the viewer. This position makes it conspicuous enough for those for whom it is meant, firstly for those who believe in the miracle of the peacock flying over the Sufi. Secondly for those who understand its symbolism and empathize with its imagery. This makes the illustration intriguing, like a chronogram, though not in words representing numerals, yet in imagery- of a bygone tale and a foretold event.

The treatment of the imagery is distinctive, it is neither graphic nor tonal, but gives the effect of being both, making it unique. The proportion of the head of the horse and the peacock show, the skill of the artist was not refined in depicting representational form, because he was trained to follow the tradition of two dimensional forms rendered in the Multani pottery style, with its bases in Persian percepts and practices.

Further it is observed that the lack of awareness and apathy for preserving the monuments, its mosaic and fresco work, by those who are responsible for protecting it, is a matter of great concern. It is understandable that because of deficiency of resources and unavailability of expertise, heritage cannot be restored in its original form. Still, it is stressed, whenever and wherever possible, means must be sought to preserve the heritage for posterity by skilled craftsmen carried under the supervision of experts, for the enjoyment of all.

Finally, the imagery of the Dārbar and the Mandir depict, these saints of Layyah were genuine Sufis, whose mystical power and wisdom was phenomenal. More importantly, following the percept that art and architecture mirror the sense and sensibilities of the people living in a certain area and era, it can be said about District Layyah, Punjab, Pakistan, that in the times of these saints, the Hindus and Muslims lived together in harmony as good neighbors. Even though, they practiced their respective religions ardently, yet they served humanity selflessly, for coexistence and for the larger interest of all. Perhaps, because of the tradition left by the saints of Layyah, the people of the area are generally peace-loving. Much can be learnt from the glorious examples of the art, architecture and the lives of the Sufis for furthering the cause of peace and prosperity.

Notes

1. The word ‘Aysīn is transliteration as such; but to avoid ambiguity, hereafter it is spelt as Eason, with the view to retain the official spelling of the city,- as it is used by the Government of Pakistan.
2. Leiah is the old spelling of Layyah.
3. Dhūlqarnain writes his name as Zulqarnain, but it has been transliterated in the paper.

Figures

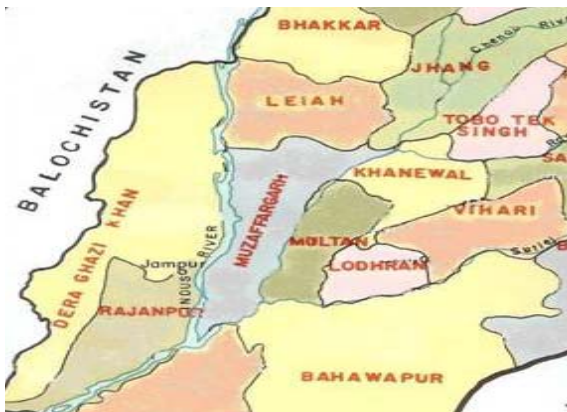


Fig.1.Map, District Layyah, South Punjab, Pakistan.
(Pamir Tours Scenic Adventures).





Fig.3.Mazār Karor La'leason, Karor La'leason, Layyah, Punjab, Pakistan.

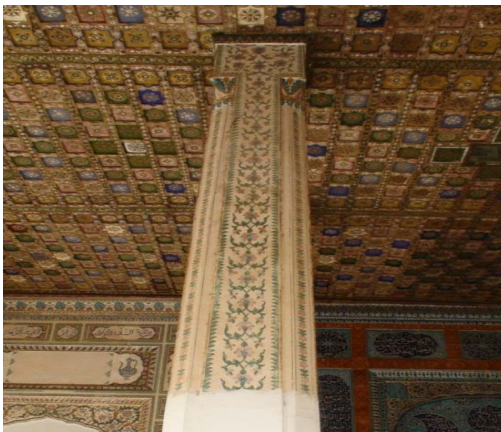


Fig.4.Pillar and ceiling of veranda, Fig.5. Filigree, entrance frame door,

MazārKarorLa‘Eason, Layyah. MazārKarorLa‘Eason, Layyah.



Fig.7. Veranda wall, fresco,
MazārKarorLa‘Eason, Layyah.



Fig.8. Calligraphic panel, tile work,
MazārLa‘Eason, Layyah.



Fig.9. Grave with canopy, MazārKarorLa‘Ieason, KarorLa‘IeasonLayyah, Punjab, Pakistan.



Fig.10.DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa‘Ieason, Layyah, Punjab, Pakistan.



Fig.11.Upper portion DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa'IEason, Layyah.



Fig.12.Entrance door boundary wall, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa'IEason, Layyah.



Fig.13. Veranda, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa'leason, Layyah.



Fig.14. Entrance door, multi-foil pilaster, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa'leason, Layyah.



Fig. 15. Wooden ceiling, veranda, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa‘lEason, Layyah.

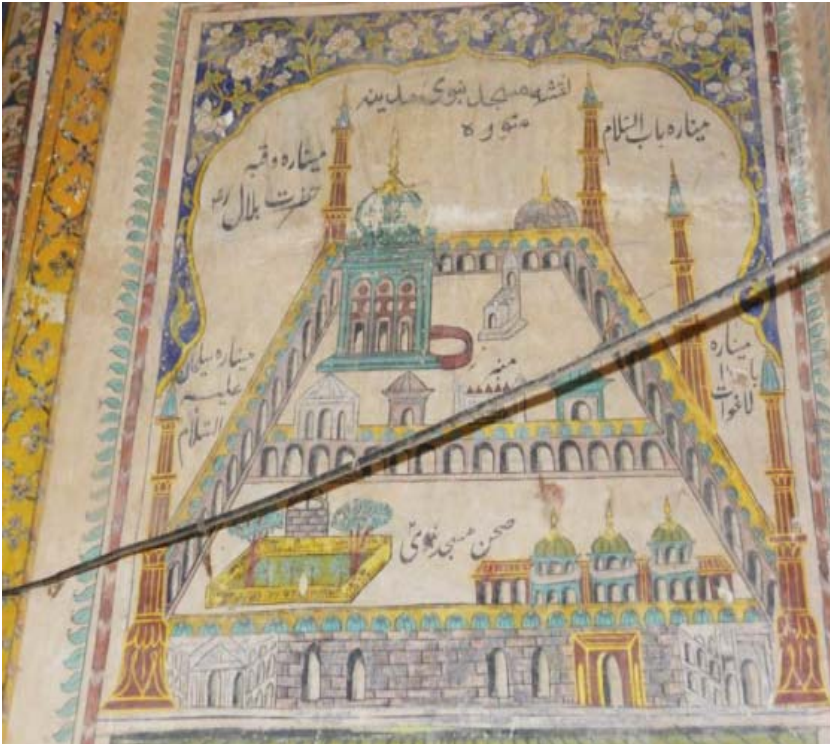


Fig. 16. *Naqsha* Masjid-iNabavi, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa‘lEason, Layyah. (<http://www.google.com.pk.Layyah/pk/first>).



Fig.17. *Dome of the Rock*. Darbār Rājan Shāh, Karor La‘Eason, Layyah.



Fig.18. Grave, Rājan Shāh, Darbār Rājan Shāh, Karor La‘Eason, Layyah.

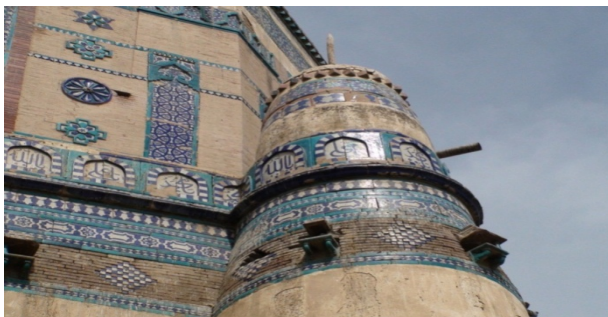


Fig.19. Buttness, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa‘l Eason, Layyah.

Fig.20. Wall-stair, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa‘l Eason, Layyah.



Fig.21. Brick wall built around buttness, DarbārRājanShāh. KarorLa‘l Eason, Layyah.



Fig.22. Kashīkāri, façade buttness, Layyah.

DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa‘l Eason,



Fig.23.Painted relief tile work, façade DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa'IEason, KarorLa'IEason, Layyah. Layyah.

Fig.24.Calligraphy, DarbārRājanShāh,



Fig.25.South-western façade, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa'IEason, Layyah.

Fig.26. Close up, South-western façade, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa'IEason, Layyah.



Fig.27. Ornamental band, right-side of the four-foil pilaster, Southern façade, glazed tile, Darbār Rājan Shāh, Karor La'leason, Layyah.



Fig.28. *Horse and Peacock*, four-foil pilaster, Darbār Rājan Shāh, Karor La' Eason, Layyah, Punjab, Pakistan.



Fig.29. Impression of horse shoe on stone, Darbār Rājan Shāh, Karor La' Eason, Layyah.



Fig.30. Glazed tile-work being white washed, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa‘lEason, Layyah.



Fig.31. Fresco work being white washed, DarbārRājanShāh, KarorLa‘lEason, Layyah.



Fig.32. Mandir Shiri GhafrhawLa'IlJi (southern view),Karor La'IEason, Layyah, Punjab, Pakistan.



Fig.33. Plaque, entrance Mandir ShiriGhafrhawLa'IlJi, KarorLa'IEason, Layyah.



Fig.34. Arch, Interior entrance, Layyah. KarorLa'Eason, Layyah.



Fig.35. Pendentive, Mandir GhafhawMandir, GhafhawLa'IJi, La'IJi, KarorLa'Eason,



Fig.36. Circular fresco, interior MandirShiriGhafhawLa'IJi, KarorLa'Eason, Layyah.



Fig.37. Amputated legs, portion from the circular fresco, MandirShiriGhafhawLa'1, KarorLa'1Eason, Layyah.



Fig.38. Basket of fruit with Peacock, fresco, MandirShiriGhafhawLa'1Ji, KarorLa'1Eason, Layyah.

References

- Ahadith.com.uk.* (n.d.). Retrieved July 12, 2012, from <http://ahadith.co.uk/searchresults.php?q=second+coming+of+Jesus>
- Archaeological Sites and Monuments in Punjab.(1994-1996). *Pakistan Archaeology.* Karachi: Department of Archaeology.ed.NiazRasool.29, 130-134.
- Bird Symbols and Spirituality.(n.d.). *Squidoo.*Retrieved July 8, 2012, from <http://www.squidoo.com/divine-birds>
- Desy, Phyaameana Lila.(2006, March 24). All About the Throat Chakra. *About.com. Holistic Healing.*<http://healing.about.com/cs/chakras/a/chakra5.htm>
- Farooq, Safia Rahim. (2011). Chughtai's Concept of Maya: A Critical Analysis of His Narrative Imagery. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, submitted to the University of the Punjab.
- Garbar, Oleg.(2006). *Dome of the Rock.*Massachusetts: The Belknap Press.*Islamicity.com.* (n.d.).RetrievedJuly 8, 2012, from<http://www.islamicity.com/QuranSearch/>
- Leiah Town. (n.d.). *ImperialGazetteer2 of India.*16.p. 159. doi:DS404.1.134_V16_165.gif
- Nadavi, RashīdAkhṭar. (2009). *Arḍ-e Pakistan Ki Tarykh.* Lahore: Sang-e Meel.
- Platts,John D. (1884). *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English.* London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company.
- Punjab District Maps, Pakistan.*(n.d.). Pamir Tours Scenic Adventures.Retrieved July 19, 2012, from <http://pamir.tours.pk/maps/punjab%20districts%20map.htm>
- Qur'ān.*Tr. Muḥammad Asad.
- Schimmel, Annemarie. (1992). *A Two-Coloured Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry.* (reprint2004). Lahore: Sang-e Meel.
- TirmidhiSahīḥ, 9.p. 74. Abu Dawud, Sahih, 5, p. 207. Retrieved July 25, 2012,from *Sunni Forum.*<http://www.sunniforum.com/forum/showthread.php?3072-Sahih-Hadith-confirming-the-advent-of-Imam-Mahdi-a-s>
- Wilbur, Gregory. (2009, March 3).*The Meaning of Symbolism,* Retrievedfrom <http://the.meaningofsymbols.Blog.spot.com/2009/03/peacock-symbolism.html>

Biographical Note

Dr. Safia Rahim Farooq is Assistant Professor at University College of Art and Design, University of the Punjab, Lahore
