

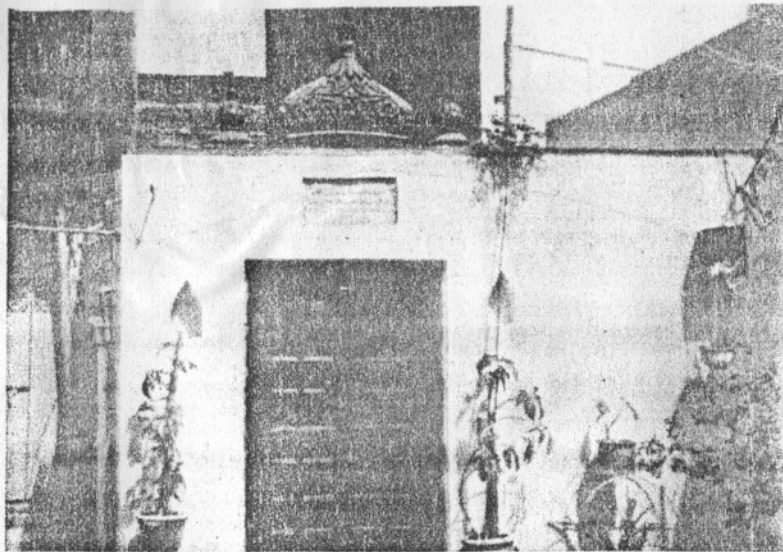
he Muslim New Year of, 1423 AH, has begun. Today is the 9th of Muharram-ul Haram, the first month of the year that the Muslims follow in religious matters.

Historically, Muharram was one of the three consecutive months of peace and security along with Ziqaad and Zilhajj. The latter was the month of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca since ancient times, hence it became a custom, in the Arabian society, to suspend all feuds for a month before and after Zilhajj. The custom continued even after the advent of Islam. Nevertheless, it is a pity that some serious violation of the rule, in the early days of Islam, has had a lasting impression on its adherents. It was the tenth of Muharram when Hazrat Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was martyred in Karbala on the banks of the Euphrates when he and his followers were outnumbered and slain by the forces of Yazeed.

These days the history of the tragic event of Karbala is being recounted at gatherings or Majalis in the City of Lahore at different places. These Majalis are addressed by learned speakers invited from all over the country. Their lectures are full of logic, devoid of any heresy.

Monday March 25, and the tenth day of Muharram will mark the conclusion of the days of recalling and remembering the event. The concluding act in this remembrance will be, as it has happened since long, the moving of a procession of mourners, young and old, from the Walled City to a place next to the Central Model School outside the Bhatee Darwaaza, known as the Karbala Gamey Shah.

The procession, lead by a steed representing Duldul or Zuljinnah, the war horse that carried Hazrat Imam Hussain to the battle-field of Karbala, leaves the Nisar Havelee of the Qizilbashes, a place between the Chowk Nawab Sahib in the Mochee Darwaaza precinct and the



Darbar-e-Alia in Bazaar-e-Hakeemah

Accompanying the Zuljinnah

SAJID ABBAS walks along the route of the procession of Zuljinnah to see what places of interest exist along the way

Masjid Wazeer Khan, around midnight between the ninth and the morning of the tenth Muharram. Readers may be interested to note that the Majalis of Muharram in Lahore and the procession following, are amongst the best attended and most orderly in the entire country.

The procession of mourners, young, old, demonstrative and doleful, accompanied by groups of 'Marsia khawns' chanting requiem and dirges snakes its way through the streets of Mochee Darwaaza and emerges forth sometime around nine or ten o' clock the next morning on the main street of the City, the East-West axis, at the Northwest corner of Wazeer Khans Mosque, then it proceeds slowly towards the Kashmiri Bazaar and beyond, skirts the Sonehri Masjid on to Kinaree Bazaar, from whence it meanders towards Langey Mandi, then past the old grain market of Lahore named after Raja Heera Singh and where the professional dancers

dancers of Lahore used to live, later. It then turns left towards Tehsil Bazaar and passing by the locality where the elite used to live once upon a time, makes its exit from the Bhatee Darwaaza and finally, by the close of the day, ends up in Karbala Gamey Shah.

Though, the entire City of Lahore is rich in history, the stretch between Tehseel Bazaar and the Bhatee Darwaaza is, perhaps, the richest and the most significant of the past. The part of the City where it is situated, was next to the historic power centre, or the area around the Citadel. It was this place where all the essential establishments were located. Here were the revenue administration, the mint, the residences of ministers and top civil servants and functionaries of the Court. Besides, it was the fashionable and diplomatic quarter of the City of the days of yore. The stretch bore and still has the name of Bazar-e-Hakiman, for

Physicians lived there as did other physicians and surgeons.

In not in too distant a past, the elite of Lahore, including knights of those days, lived there. It was only in the early part of the twentieth century that they started moving out to the suburbs. Allama Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the poet of the east, revered so much by other than by us, once lived near Mohalla Jalotian of Bhatee Darwaaza. Sir Abdul Qadir, a former judge of the High Court, later member of the Legislative Council and then member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, a top littérateur and founder of Makhzan a literary journal, too, lived in that mohalla, so did Sir Shahabuddin, a former speaker of the Punjab Assembly and a poet of the Punjabi Language in his own right. Sir Maratab Ali had his Havelee in that area. Amongst other men of letters were Agha Hashar, the renowned playwright and Syed Nazir

Hussain, the well known composer of Marsias.

It is a pity that none of the descendants of celebrities of those days are known to be living there nowadays, except some members of the Fakir Family. Fakir Syed Saifuddin is one of them. He is fifth in the line of descent from Fakir Syed Nooruddin, the Physician Royal of Ranjeet Singh and one of his most trusted ministers. Fakir Syed Saifuddin lives in the old havelee which is now known as 'The Fakirkhana Museum'. It houses relics and antiques belonging to the collection founded by Faqeer Syed Noor-ud-Din.

Apart from the exhibits in the Faqirkhana Museum there are relics belonging to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his family that are in the family collection, housed at a different location. These relics have travelled a circuitous route from Medina to Lahore via



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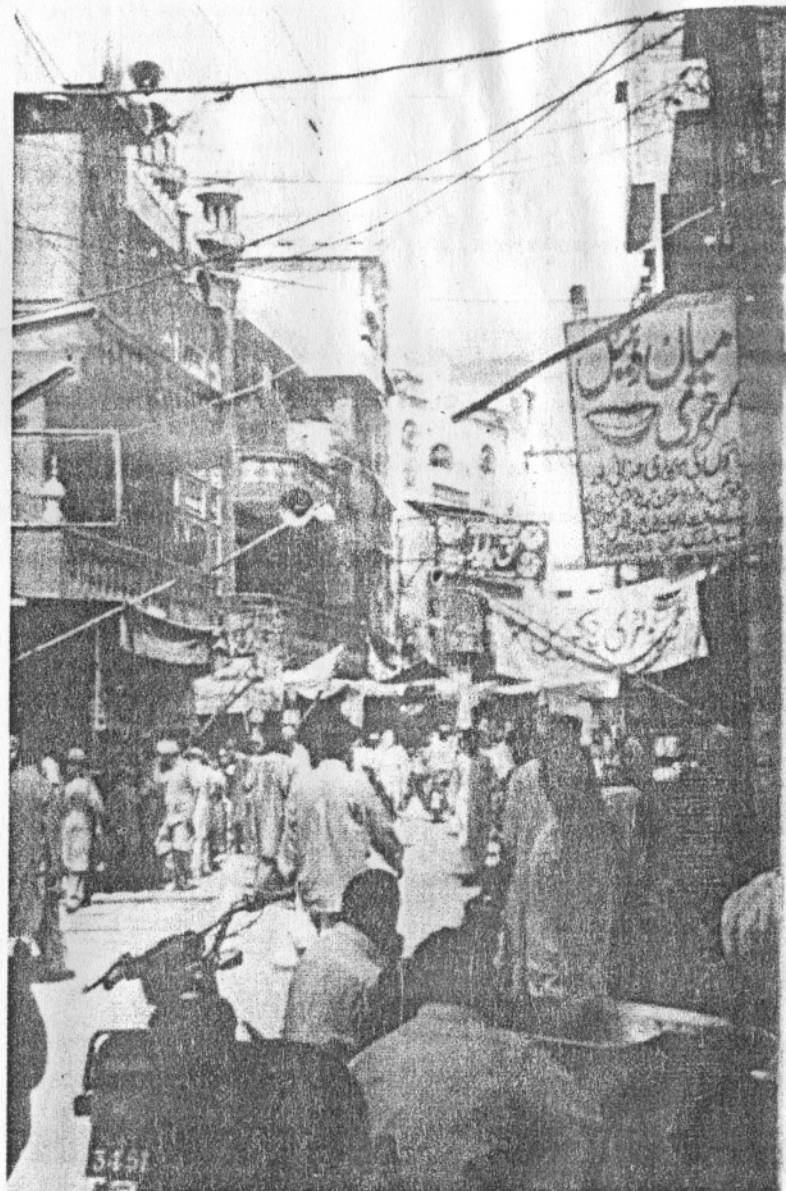
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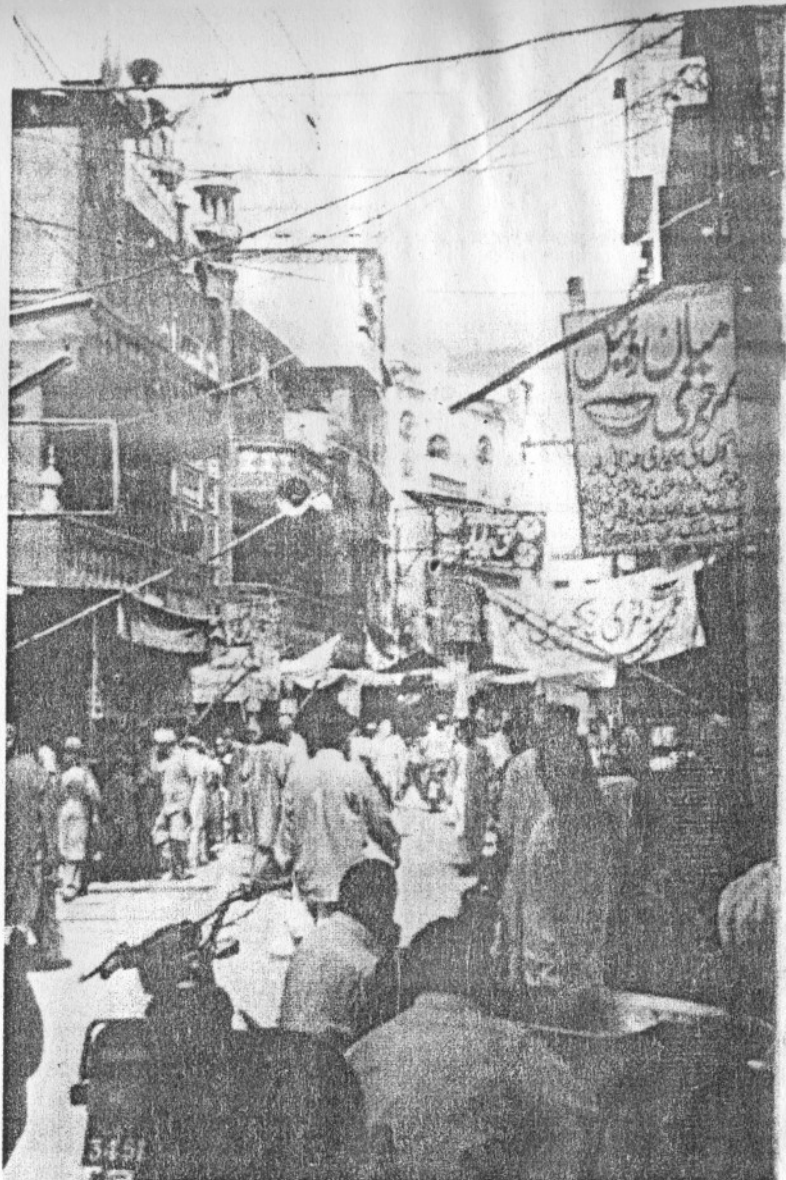


Oonchi Masjid in Bhatee Darwaaza

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Faqir Syed Nooruddin to be housed in a special building, the Darbar-e-Aalia, in Bazaar-e-Hakeeman.

The procession passes the Darbar-e-Alia and the Fakirkhana Museum, but before that it passes the Naqsh Gallery on its way. This is another edifice of the place that has been renovated by Syed Babar Ali, but he does not live there. Passing the Oonchi Masjid or Uchchi Maseet the procession finally proceeds to the Bhathi Darwaaza to make for Garhey Shah. ■



Oonchi Masjid in Bhattee Darwaaza

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