

The Churches, Temples, and Shrines of Karachi

This study was initiated by Arif Hasan in 1987 and was carried out until 2010. The research work was conducted by Architect Aqsa Mumtaz. She was assisted by an engineer, Abdul Hakim, from Arif Hasan's office. Subsequently, the study was added to and edited by Architect Nurjehan Marwat Khan. The final editing and formatting has been done by Hamza Arif.

Literature consulted for the study includes Muhammad Usman Damohi's 'Karachi in the Mirror of History', A.A. Brohi's 'Tombs can Speak', a text of the Tazkira-e-Auliya genre, and Tohfatul-Karam by Mir Ali Sher Qania.

The text also includes information gathered from discussions with the caretakers of the Churches and Temples. The section on Shrines borrows heavily from the work of Muhammad Usman Damohi.

Contents

CHURCHES.....	3
ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL (1881).....	3
St. Christopher Church, Hajj Terminal.....	4
Christ the King, Catholic Colony 2	6
St. Johns Church, Drigh colony.....	6
St. Francis Church, Pilgrim Rd.....	8
Sacred Heart Church, Kemari.....	9
Christ the King Seminary/ Franciscan Portiuncala.....	10
Our Lady of Fatima Shrine, Randle Road	11
St. Anthony's Church, Cantt.....	12
St. Anthony, Manora	13
Christ Church, Mission Road	14
St. Lawrence church, Soldier bazaar	15
Methodist Church of Pakistan, Drigh Road.....	15
Assembly of God Church, Drigh Colony	17
Brooks Memorial Church, Garden Road.....	18
Central Baptist Church, PECHS.....	19
St. George Church, Kemari	21
THE TRINITY CHURCH (1855).....	22
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH (1868).....	24
St. Pauls, Manora.....	27
HINDU TEMPLES AND GURDWARAS IN KARACHI.....	29
Shri Shivibai Shivalaya Mandir.....	29
Punjmukhi Hahuman Maharaj Mandir, Soldier bazar.....	30
Shri Mari Mata Mandir, Soldier Bazaar no. 1	31
Mari Mata Mandir, Doli Kahta.....	33
Ganesh Mut Mandir, Doli Kahta	33
Hanuman Mandir Doli Kahta	34
Narainpura, KMC Quarters, Ranchor Lines	35
Shitala Mata Mandir, Bhimpura	36
Jagganath Akhra Mandir, Bhimpura	37
Unknown Temples, Bhimpura.....	38
Bhagnari Shiv Mandir, near Kakri ground	38
Shri Hanuman Mandir, Frere Rd.	40

Disused Gurdwara, near Preedy Street Police Station.....	41
Unknown Mandirs near Temple street	42
Ram Mandir, Arambagh	43
Gurdwara	43
Shri Swami Narayan Mandir, Light House	44
Lakshmi Narayan Mandir, Native Jetty.....	45
Darya Lal Sankat Mochan Mandir, near Custom house.....	46
Devi Mandir, Mithadar	47
Old City Mandirs	47
Rat Nageshwar Mahadev Mandir, Clifton.....	48
Krishna Mandir (Former Hanuman mandir), Manora Isl.	49
Gurdwaras at Manora	51
Karachi Shrines.....	52
Hazrat Syed Noor Ali Shah	52
Hazrat Yusuf Shah Ghazi	52
Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi	54
Hazrat Pir Hasan Shah Ghazi	57
Hazrat Haji Sakhi Sultan Manghopir.....	57
Hazrat Qutb Alam Syed Alim Shah Bukhari.....	60
Hazrat Mewa Shah.....	62
Hazrat Sain Abdul Ghani.....	64
Hazrat Syed Ismail Shah Ghazi	65
Hazrat Pir Syed Haji Ghaib Shah	66
Hazrat Baba Imam Shah Bukhari	67
Hazrat Pir Bachal Shah Al-Marroof Mastan Shah.....	68
Hazrat Meeran Pir.....	68
Hazrat Syed Haji Pir	69
Hazrat Zinda Shah	70

CHURCHES

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL (1881)

The St. Patrick's Cathedral was built on the site of an earlier Catholic chapel built in 1845 as the first Roman Catholic church in Sindh. The small chapel had been built at a cost of Rs. 5,930 to which Napier and his staff had contributed Rs. 180 whereas the rest had been collected from the town's Catholic community.

With the extension of the railroad to Karachi, the Catholic community of Karachi considerably grew in size with a large educated Goanese catholic community taking up residence in the city. This necessitated the construction of a larger house of worship.

The St. Patrick's Cathedral in Karachi was conceived by three members of the Society of Jesus: the pastors Father Wagner, Brother Kluver, and Brother Lau. This large Indo-gothic cathedral was built out of Gizri sandstone and upon completion, became the largest church in Karachi with space for 1,500 worshippers. The built dimensions of this cathedral cover an area of 170 ft by 70 ft in the plan¹. After the construction of the cathedral, the earlier church on the location was acquired by the St. Joseph's Convent school and rebuilt into its academic buildings.

Architecturally, the cathedral is impressive in scale and has a considerable presence at the axis of Clerk Street. The design seems to be inspired by medieval gothic cathedrals of England, with tall pointed windows and twin front spires that reinforce the feeling of loftiness in this building. The elegant facade is utilitarian and simple with little ornamentation, whereas the interior is lavish with impressive vaulting, stained glass windows, marble paving, and life-sized statues. (referenced from Lari, 1996)

In 1931, a grand marble monument was erected in front of the cathedral commemorating the memory of the Jesuit Mission in Sindh (1858-1935) and dedicated to Christ, the King. It is inscribed with the words: "Thou art Peter, and upon that rock, I will build my church".

¹ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'Places of Worship in the British Raj'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.



St. Christopher Church

This beautiful single storey church lies on the main road right in front of the old airport terminal building. This colonial building shares many features architecturally with the Flagstaff House in Saddar. It has recently been renovated by the Civil Aviation Authority under whose jurisdiction the church's land falls. The renovation brought the Church to focus since it replaced the unsightly compound wall with a grill at the front façade, which was part of the original design. The church's interior has also been refurbished with a very contemporary feel. The original pitched roof is unreadable on the inside due to the installation of a false ceiling. The altar area also has a very minimal modern language with concealed openings for indirect natural light illuminating the cross.



Christ the King, Catholic Colony 2

Established in 1937 through donations of the community, this Catholic Church is a subsidiary of Christ the King School for girls. It got nationalized in 1971 and was then restored to the church in the 1990s. The church itself is on the ground floor of the eastern wing. The interior is decorated with rubble stone veneer in a novel taste. The walls are adorned with huge posters of biblical episodes. The altar space has a triangular central window that illuminates the statue of Christ the king.



St. Johns Church, Drigh colony

The head of the parish of St. John, this Catholic Church has changed location thrice before finally establishing itself a few years before the partition of 1947 on the current site. Its complex houses a convent for girls, a parish, a boy's school, and an old home.



St. Francis Church, Pilgrim Rd.

This church is a part of the St Francis School and therefore very small. The original church was in the old building on the second floor but was later shifted to the ground floor location to make it more accessible.



Sacred Heart Church, Kemari

Also known as the port Chapel, this church is the only Catholic church in the port area. Its bell could once be heard in the entire Kemari area. It is also reputed to be one of the city's oldest churches. Built around 1875, it had lodgings for seamen and a school. Although the school still functions the lodgings are now only used as offices of the church. The Church building sustained two major fires, the first in 1971 which erupted due to a short circuit and second when a fanatic mob set it on fire in 1992 in the reaction of the Babri Mosque Demolition riots. During the attack, the mob also broke the statue of Mary in the compound grotto, which has since been replaced by a simple cross. After this fire, which ruined the wooden roof and a mezzanine balcony in the nave, the renovation was carried out replacing the old roof with a concrete ceiling finished with fiberboard. The compound wall which was originally a metal grill was all replaced with a high masonry wall, screening the church from the adjacent road.



Christ the King Seminary/ Franciscan Portiuncala

When Dutch Franciscan missionaries came to Karachi in 1934 the site they bought was a farm on the banks of Lyari. By 1940 they had built the Portiuncala building within the farm for the training of friars. The design of the seminary was laid out by Brother Hillary. The structure was a combination of load bearing and concrete structure, with the arched openings which were later painted over to give it its current face. There is a private chapel on the ground floor accommodating 150 people providing service on Sundays only. It is the largest seminary among seven major cities of Pakistan for the training of friars. The subsequent buildings were added over time. The most important among them is The Catholic Institute of Theology designed by the Italian architect Rizzoli. There is also a vocational centre for children with learning disabilities and the seminary of Christ the King. An adjacent high school, St. Philip's was built around the year 2000. The institution falls under the parish of St. Philip's Catholic Church.



Our Lady of Fatima Shrine, Randle Road

In 1950, on the occasion of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima's first visit to Karachi, the Catholics vowed that the next Church to be erected would be dedicated to Lady of Fatima. On the 22nd August 1953, the Most Rev. Alcuin Van Miltenburg (the late Archbishop of Karachi) set the boundaries of the new parish. On the 13th of July 1962, the foundation Stone was blessed and laid by H. E. Mgr. Xavier Zupie, the Vatican Internuncio. On the 8th Sep 1963, the Church was blessed and dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima.



St. Anthony's Church, Cantt

Built in 1937 as a small church for the cantonment area under Father Hillary of Holland, St Anthony is one of the last churches to be built of this scale. Initially housed in a shed, a proper building was given to it in 1960 which was later expanded in 1990. At the same time, special permission was acquired from the then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to construct a school on the premises. This school which was previously run in the parish house is now graced with a four storey building. The church building's architecture is a modern interpretation of gothic language and can hold up to 400 people. The new renovation and addition of an aisle to the north in 1990 was done under the designs of Ken Lobo. Even after this expansion space was insufficient for the worshippers who had grown steadily in numbers over the years. Up to 7 services are held on Sundays to cater to the total demand. Beside common Christian holidays every year a mela is held in June to raise funds for a school under construction in Shireen Jinnah Colony. Father Robert De Silva has been heading the church since 1987 and has been responsible for several additions particularly a girls school down the street.



St. Anthony, Manora

Established in 1921 this small church caters to the relatively small Christian community on the island of about 72 Catholic families. Initially intended to serve the British serviceman, it today bears the look of a building maintained under limited funds but with great affection. The harsh sand-laden winds have damaged many of the structures on the coast and the church needs constant maintenance. The original timber roof of the church was also replaced with that of concrete and the stone masonry walls were painted with weather resistant paint. The architecture is a basic chapel with a sacristy to the south of the altar. The church is hard to spot on approach due to its height and the location amongst houses of the same height.



Christ Church, Mission Road

Christ Church, mission road, also known as CMS church was built in 1843 under the royal chief of army staff of Great Britain. The addition of transept and sacristy was carried out in 1936. The bell tower that was originally constructed to the right of the entrance was at some point changed to the left. Recently a new marble floor was laid to replace the original rough Gizri stone. The architecture of the church is Neo-gothic but the scale is low. Much of the original flavor of the church still exists.



St. Lawrence church, Soldier bazaar

Foundation Stone laid in 1931. This one of the more peculiar churches of Karachi is actually a combination of colonial and mogul architectural elements built in the same spirit as the KMC building on M A Jinnah road. It has co-ed schools attached for both English and Urdu medium of instruction. Some 3220 worshipers frequent the church from this parish. The primarily gothic architecture has one of the most elaborate altarpieces of any church in the city. Because of its location, it is less known to the citizens as well. This church has the distinction of being visited by the Pope in 1981.



Methodist Church of Pakistan, Drigh Road

The headquarters of Church of Pakistan, this Methodist church sits right next to the PAF Base Faisal. Its compound houses a secondary school and the residence of the priest. It was built in 1936 on the designs of James Anderson. Although largely community-funded some parts of the church and associated structures were overtime donated by influential community members. The church was renovated recently when the wooden roof was replaced by a concrete one.



Assembly of God Church, Drigh Colony

Built around 1988 this protestant church was constructed with a communal contribution. It started off with an area of 150 sq.yds. The chapel grew over time to add 2 similar adjacent buildings in this oddly planned church. The L-shaped plan houses two mezzanines in the respective wings which are used for seating of the families. The ground level houses the choir and general public seating. Architecturally the church is unremarkable in the traditional sense. Quite on the contrary, it looks like any other residence in the neighborhood with only the banner at the gate announcing its true function.



Brooks Memorial Church, Garden Road

This church like many other Protestant churches was brought under Church of Pakistan. It is located on the main garden road in walking proximity of St. Andrews. The compound contains residences of the Pastor of St. Andrews church, a Parish and a Sunday School building. The structure is a small chapel-like construction in colonial style. A renovation work in 1988 replaced the old wooden roof with an RCC one. The design of the new roof structure was modeled on the earlier wooden structure.

The overseers of the church describe its history as follows:

Among the British soldiers in the colorful old 56th Regiment which marched in Karachi in 1873 were 36 men who had been converted at Poona under the vigorous ministry of American Missionary William Taylor. He later was elected one of the first missionary Bishops of India. Accompanying the troops was another young man enthusiastic American D. O. Fox who laid the groundwork for Methodist mission work in Karachi and appointed Sgt. Thomas Seal, "a very earnest local preacher" as the first Pastor. This infant church rented a small house and began a Sunday School.

In 1874 Rev. Frank Ambrose Goodwin arrived, the first Methodist Minister appointed to Karachi. Aided by two laymen, Harry W. Brooks and Jesse Cummings Goodwin collected every rupee of the 5,159 necessary to construct a "beautiful house of worship" (The present sanctuary) and a small two-room parsonage on the present Church Compound. In 1888 the transepts of the present church were added. In 1894, the Institute Building (our present Sunday School building) was built as a recreational center for British soldiers from funds donated by Dr. John C. Brooks, who gave the money a special thank offering. In 1912 on the suggestion of Rev. Fawette Shaw, the name of the church was changed to 'Brooks Memorial', in honor of the family which had contributed so much to the foundation of the church.

In 1940 however, after 65 years of unbroken service under the Methodist Board of Missions, our church was turned over to the British Methodist Mission because the majority of the congregation at the time was British soldiers. A number of British Methodist Chaplains served Brooks Memorial Church during the intervening years. In 1954, Brooks Memorial Methodist Church was returned to the American Methodist Board under Rev. Robert Maring who served until May 1959. D. A. Garrigus was appointed to succeed him. Rev. Maring returned for the 1964-5 conference year as Pastor of Brooks Memorial. Returning to Pakistan August 1965 Rev Garrigus was re-appointed as Pastor of our congregation.



Central Baptist Church, PECHS

Established in 1962 this church was a personal endeavor of Mr. Charles Coleman. This American expatriate with his wife Elda Coleman spent his entire life for the service of this church trying to bring biblical teachings to locals. He came to India as a soldier in WW2 and then stayed on. He wanted to start preaching in India but after partition India expelled missionaries. So he came to Pakistan.

The church he built in PECHS was designed by him based on his self-taught knowledge of architecture. It is very modern in design defying all conventions of ecclesiastical architecture. The aim was to provide a worship space without attracting any adverse attention from local Muslims. The church acted as a foster home for many orphans who were taught and raised by the Colemans. They were even provided higher education and many managed to get scholarships abroad. The Church and its expenses were funded by different churches in America through charities.

The premises have hostel facilities but they are not in use anymore. Mr. Coleman has maintained a large garden which also contains the essential Baptismal Font for the holy rituals. The ground floor had the dining hall and the sanctuary connected by a verandah. After a recent 2007 expansion of the auditorium (sanctuary) the verandah was reduced and an eave was added to provide shade. Since Baptist Church is a relatively new school of thought in Christianity, therefore, there are no other Baptist churches in the city.





St. George Church, Kemari

Built in 1928 this church served as the main Protestant church of the Port area. The church is built in the simplified colonial gothic style. Today it is a chapel where only Sunday service is held and no activity takes place the rest of the week. The compound is small and has a couple of dwellings in it which are in use by Muslim and Christian families



THE



TRINITY CHURCH (1855)

The Trinity Church was the first major (protestant) church in Karachi and its construction started in 1852 with Bartle Frere (then Commissioner-in-Scinde) laying the foundation stone. The structure was completed and consecrated by 1855². It was located in the prestigious Civil Lines quarter.

The architecture of the Trinity Church was comparatively modest, reflecting the then isolation of provincial Karachi. This garrison church was designed in the Italian style by Capt. John Hill of the Bombay Engineers³. Florentine Renaissance style was given preference in spite of the prevailing Victorian trend of neo-Gothic architecture in the nearby capital of the presidency, Bombay. The original design was somewhat altered during construction by John Brunton, chief engineer of the Scinde railways. The building is simple in character and instead of using elaborate architectural features, relies on the mass of its nave and its extraordinarily tall tower to create an impression. It was built out of local buff colored Gizri sandstone. There is a Romanesque arch at the entry and Venetian single and double windows on the facade with little ornamentation.

Trinity churches were built by the Trinity Board in all 'watering places' along the English coast from the mouth of the Thames to Portsmouth. They also constructed these churches in India. According to Alexander F. Baillie (1890:45), due to a shortage of lighthouses, churches with high towers were provided funds in exchange for the installation of beacons on their summits, thereby doubly functioning as lighthouses. This might have been the motivation for the construction of an exceptionally tall tower for the Trinity Church in Karachi: its height at 150 ft was taller than the length of the nave which was only 115 ft. This unusual piece of architecture was a subject of much amusement in architectural circles. In 1904 however, the upper two stories of the tower were removed for reasons of structural stability. More recently, the church's original timber-framed pitched roof was replaced by a concrete barrel vault in an egg-crate structural system.

The restoration project was executed by ZOR Engineers under Architect Bavington in 1960. Besides replacing the roof the interior lime plaster was also removed to expose the underlying stone masonry. A mezzanine also in concrete egg-crate was added and left fair-faced. Today one can sense the original height of the timber roof by looking at the end gables now without any load. The exquisite stained-glass windows above the altar were cracked recently after a bomb blast right outside the compound of the church.

² Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'Places of Worship in the British Raj'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

³ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'Places of Worship in the British Raj'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH (1868)

The St. Andrew's Church, also known as the Scotch church, was built during 1867-68, with the foundation stone being laid by Robert Napier, commander-in-chief of the Bombay army, on February 1867⁴. The building was completed in December 1868, at a cost of Rs. 56,300 out of which Rs. 25,000 were financed by the government.

It was designed by T. G. Newnham⁵ (a deputy agent of the Indus Flotilla, who also had a Karachi street named after him). The architecture of this church utilizes buttresses and a tall spire, drawing on Romanesque and Venetian Gothic styles for its openings. Its name is a hundred feet long and rises to a height of fifty-six feet at the ridge of the roof. The nave was separated from the aisles by arcades with ten clerestory windows above them on each side. The enclosure provided seating for 400 worshippers. A finely carved rose-window of 18ft diameter is placed at the south end of the hall. The opposite end is adorned by a five-light window with gothic-form geometrical tracery. The entrance of the church is through an octagonal porch towards the south side. Adjacent to this entrance rises the church tower and steeple, which rises to a height of 135 ft. When built, this tower was the second tallest in the city surpassed by the tower of the Trinity Church. However, when the top two stories were taken off of the latter tower in 1904, St. Andrew's tower became the tallest church tower in Karachi



⁴ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'Places of Worship in the British Raj'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

⁵ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'Places of Worship in the British Raj'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.



St. Pauls, Manora

This church was built in Manora beside the Manora Lighthouse. It was erected as a memorial to Sir Charles James Napier, the British general who led forces to conquer Sindh in 1843. Its building was restored in 2008.

When the church was built it was constructed from limestone from the Hands' Hill Quarries (located 3 miles from Karachi and 5 from Kiamari) and the lower-grade but cheaper Manora conglomerate.⁶ It features an Early English architectural style, and consists of a nave, without aisles, a vestry and a small assembly hall. The nave is 43 feet in length and 20 feet wide, with a height up to the tie beam of 20 feet. Despite the church's simple and traditional exterior, the interior features a cathedral style ceiling of wooden trusses.⁷ Further references to a gothic style of architecture include the church's four lancet windows, as well as the three-light stained glass windows at its eastern end. The building was completed within the year and consecrated in the following one (1865). Construction costs totalled 15,000 rupees, of which 4,000 rupees were contributed by the Government.⁸

In the early years of St. Paul's church, the congregation was mostly made up of area residents as well as by the crews of the harbour vessels. It was designed to seat 50 persons with services conducted by one of the Government chaplains of the Karachi station every Sunday.⁹



⁶ James Walker; William Parkes (M.I.C.E.) (1858). *Kurrachee harbour. Second report of J. Walker; and report of the survey of 1857-8, by W. Parkes.* pp. 63–.

⁷ Pakistan Historical Society (1968), *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference, Volumes 1-2*, Pakistan Historical Society., p. 166

⁸ Hughes, Albert William (1876), *A gazetteer of the province of Sindh* (2 ed.), p. 364

⁹ Ibid.



HINDU TEMPLES AND GURDWARAS IN KARACHI

Shri Shivibai Shivalaya Mandir

Origin: 1943

Dedicated to: Shiv Shankar Bhagvan

Secondary worship: Hanuman Deota, Sheranwali Maata, Kali Mata, Ganesh, Jholaylal

Events: Shivratri, Holi, Diwali

The land adjacent to the temple is claimed as part of the temple but was sold off as commercial land by a late deceased Hindu MNA/MPA to a contractor who converted it into a car workshop.



Punjmukhi Hanuman Maharaj Mandir, Soldier bazar

Origin: Claimed to be 1500 yrs old

Dedicated to: Punjmukhi Hanoman

This is a historical temple built on a site considered by Hindus to be sacred since it is where Hanuman is said to have slain five demons by taking the shape of a five-headed creature. Such a temple for Hanuman is a rarity and is therefore much valued by pilgrims coming from Punjab and Sindh. The temple complex is composed of a profane residential courtyard succeeded by the main courtyard of the temple itself. This court faces the main temple and also secondary temples of Ram and Krishna. A new temple for Ram and Sita is also under construction. The current caretaker of the mandir is Shri Ram Naath Maharaj. The temple also prepares langar for the poor on special occasions.

‘Lord Hanuman assumed this form to kill Mahiravana, a powerful rakshasa black-magician and practitioner of the dark arts during the Ramayana war. Mahiravana had taken Lord Rama and Lakshmana captive and the only way to kill him was to extinguish five lamps burning in different directions, all at the same instant. Hanuman assumed His Punjamukhi form and accomplished the task, thus killing the rakshasa, and freeing Rama and Lakshmana.

The five faces of Punjmukhi Hanuman are those of Sri Hayagriva, Sri Narasimha, Sri Garuda, Sri Varaha, and Hanuman Himself. This form of Hanuman is very popular and is also known as **Punjmukhi Anjaneya** and **Punjmukhi Anjaneya**.





Shri Mari Mata Mandir, Soldier Bazaar no. 1

Origin: Claimed to be more than 150 years old and constructed over time with donation money.

Administered by: Madras Hindu Trust

Dedicated to: Mari Mata (Mariamman)

The temple is famous as a place of healing owing to the attribute of the deity who can cure diseases like measles, migraine, jaundice, and chicken pox. The devotees of the Mata include Muslims too. The temple though popular with the people has been in a state of neglect with the current overseer Maharaj Heera Laal M.S. complaining about the indifference of the Government in the matter. Externally the temple is unidentifiable.



Mari Mata Mandir, Doli Kahta

Origin: Claimed to be more than 60 years old.

Dedicated to: Mari Mata

Secondary worship: Kali Ma

The temple started off as a small shrine which is now housed inside a room. The room is the main temple but access to it is through the caretaker's house since the original entrance has been blocked by encroachments. The temple today stands on the banks of a sewerage channel which is extremely hazardous to health. Here the worshippers of Kali Ma sacrifice goats to the goddess too. In view of the increasing demand, the caretakers of the temple are demanding more land and finances for renovation.



Ganesh Mut Mandir, Doli Kahta

Origin: Predates partition

Dedicated to: Ganesh

Secondary worship: Shiva

Major festivals: Ganesh Chaturthi (Birthday of Ganesh) falls typically between 20 Aug and 15 Sep and continues for 10 days. The festival involves a procession of the Ganesh idol being carried around and then immersed in a natural body of water. The procession happens in the temple precinct only.

Major Construction happened in 1945

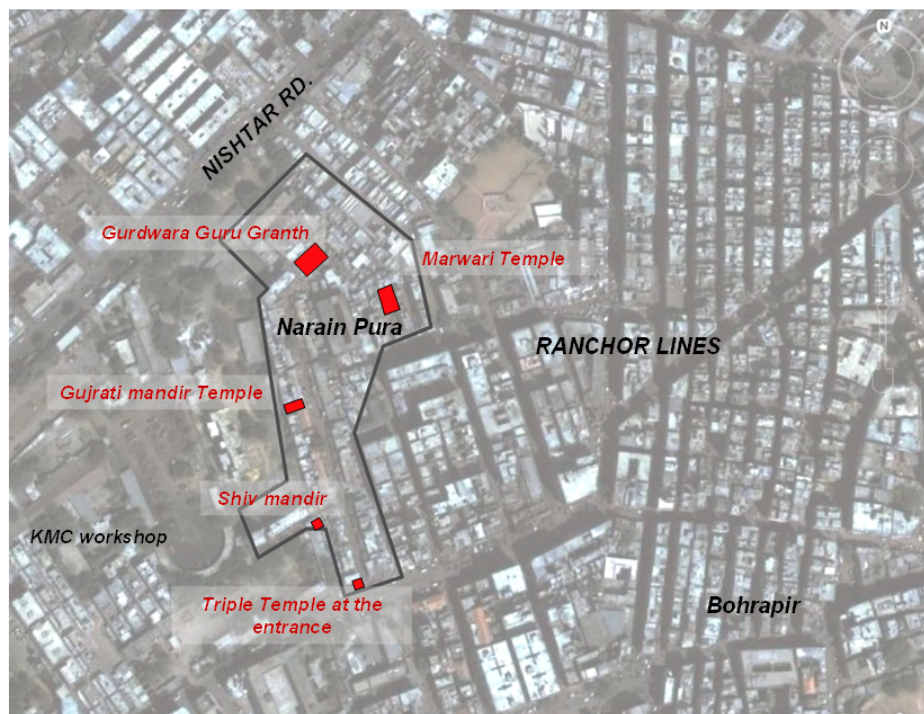
Until a few years ago, the structure was made up of mud hence the name “Mut” (Mud). After a special permit from the cantonment board and the efforts of a lady social worker, renovation work was carried out. The new structure raised is R.C.C with concrete tiles between I-beams as the roof assembly. Since the patrons didn't want any conflict with the image of a mosque, which could have incited some tension, the design was kept modern and cubical rather than the traditional central planned building with a shikara on top. The temple is adjacent and architecturally subservient to the adjoining house of the caretaker. No attempt has been made to express the presence of the temple from the road.

It has been renovated over time. From the exterior it has no visual distinction and resembles an empty plot with a boundary wall and an old tree inside.



Hanuman Mandir Doli Kahta

This small Mandir is in the Hindu neighborhood of Doli Kahta and Hanuman is the primary deity here. The temple is just one rectangular room with an ancient looking red idol of Hanuman set so there is space for circumambulation around it. The structure even though on an old site, has newly been constructed.





Narainpura, KMC Quarters, Ranchor Lines

Claimed to be the largest Hindu community area in Karachi, it houses people from Gujarati, Katiawari, Marwari, Magonsi, Sikh and Christian backgrounds. It is named after Seth Narain Das whose philanthropic work was responsible for several improvements in the compound.

At the entrance to the community is the small mandir divided into three compartments for the worship of Sheranwali Maan, Hanuman, and Jugat Devi respectively. Built in 1972 right outside the entrance on the other side of the boundary wall is an enclosure for cows which are considered holy and are fed by the local people.

The main street of the colony also has two more mandirs and a shrine under a huge tree. An adjacent courtyard has another small Shiv temple. This mandir although located on the site of an older mandir, is totally new in construction. A bigger temple down the lane is managed by the Gujarati community and is called Sri Ram Deo Gujarati Mandir. Its entrance from the street is through a double height portal which is created out of putting a ceiling on top of a narrow lane. This mandir has a proper naos and shikara on top. An adjacent room serves as a communal hall and also houses an additional shrine of Santoshi Mata. The main deities in the temple are Rama Pir and Hanuman.

At the turn of the main street is the Sikh Gurdwara which was established in 1910 and is run by the Karachi Sikh Sangat. This Gurdwara is also used by the Hindu community and has the facility of a community hall where langar is distributed on special occasions. It is the only Gurdwara in operation right now in the city.

The most imposing mandir by far in the community is the Marwari mandir which is accessed by narrow back lanes. This mandir houses several Hindu deities each in a shrine of its own. The central courtyard is approached from the north with temples on the eastern side and a community hall on the southern side. The temple is decorated in the most elaborate fashion which numerous flags crowning its profile.



Shitala Mata Mandir, Bhimpura

Origin: Claimed to be more than 250 years old

Dedicated to: Shitala Mata

Secondary worship: Lakshmi Narain, Shiva, Sain Baba, Gao mata

Festivals: Mata ka Tehvar, Nauratri, Satm Satri, Sawan etc.

One of the oldest temples in the city, it's a complex of several small shrines dedicated to different gods, a community hall, and cowshed all arranged in a loose organization around a courtyard. The overseer of this mandir, Babu Maharaj is known for his knowledge of local history.



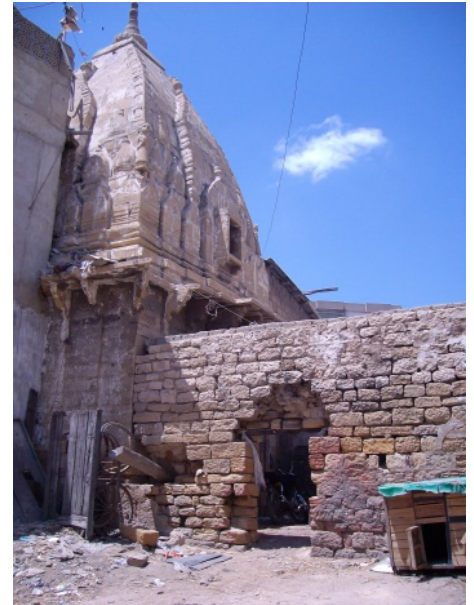
Jagganath Akhra Mandir, Bhimpura

This mandir although not apparent from the street, is in the compound of a Hindu family's residence. The deity present is Hinglaj Mata, it is famous for this region. It is a mandir from where the yatra (pilgrimage) of Hinglaj used to begin. A small shrine marks the temple in a dark corridor.



Unknown Temples, Bhimpura

Naag Naath ka Akhara is an old temple which is now sealed up and its entrance courtyard is used by an adjacent broom manufacturer for storage. The Temple is in Gizri stone and above its main entrance is carved an image of a cobra, giving the temple its title. The temple has been in disuse for a period, longer than any of the locals can recall. A similar temple is found on the same road in the compound of a warehouse about which no information was available. Another old temple is a little distance from Naag Nath. It too is in disuse and within the compound of a warehouse.



Bhagnari Shiv Mandir, near Kakri ground

Origin: 1901

Dedicated to: Shiv

Secondary worship: Hanuman, Ram, Krishna, and Guru Nanak

Major festivals: Birthdays of Shiva, Guru Nanak, and Krishna

The worship of Guru Nanak is combined with the Hindu deities. There is an attached library with the mandir which is run by the Young Hindu Welfare Association called Vidya Sagar Library. Its houses religious texts and other related books in a variety of languages. The temple caretakers claim adjacent properties to be originally a part of the temple too but were sequestered in the years following the partition. The temple is unrecognizable from the approach and the only traditional architectural feature is a simple shikara over one of the three main rooms, perhaps the oldest among them.



Shri Hanuman Mandir, Frere Rd.

Dedicated to Hanuman Ji

Although the site of the temple is much older the shrine that existed here was kucha (Mud construction), a major renovation happened in 1965 and it is now an RCC structure. It is run by the Karachi Hindu Panchayat. The temple was closed after the Babri Masjid incident in India and its local reaction in 1992 and was then reopened in 1999. A hall on the first floor was added after Musharraf's aid package to the minorities was formed. The main event is the birthday of Hanuman that falls in April. The mandir is unreadable from the main Frere road partly because of its design and partly because a lot of the temple's land has been encroached upon by shops of the bicycle market



Disused Gurdwara, near Preedy Street Police Station

This structure is in ruins today and sits in the middle of a college building. The land surrounding was originally part of the Gurdwara showing that it was the largest Sikh worship place in Karachi. Historically it is important for the community since it was here that 250 Sikhs were killed following the partition of 1947. The building is a complete rectangle with a veiled balcony running all around on the first floor. On the ground, an arcade ran all around the building which is now sealed up closing all possible entrances. The building is in the colonial style, having load bearing structure with a pitched wooden roof and the only marks of the religion are the Sikh holy symbols that have been incorporated into the railing design as a dominant motif. The case for the procession of the Gurdwara is still underway against the college authorities.



Unknown Mandirs near Temple street

The temple Street, as named, originally had several temples in it. Today only one is left in a proper state of preservation. Although it is not in use the structure is very impressive in the Nagar style. Other temples in the street are either turned into warehouses and workshops or demolished are reflected. One can see the ruins of mandir structure reflected from the warehouses. This area is known as Rattan Talao which tells that there must have been a water body in this locality which was associated with some temple rituals.



Ram Mandir, Arambagh

This temple is in disuse and the adjacent ground is now used as storage by a carpenter. The exterior stone wall of mandir is painted thus losing its aesthetics. Also, the windows have been blocked & old wooden door has been exchanged by the metal one.



Gurdwara

This Gurdwara has been sealed for a few years now due to the dispute between Hindus and Sikhs over religious rites. Sikhs want to perform all the rites themselves but Hindus also want to administer these rites and the case is still pending in the court.

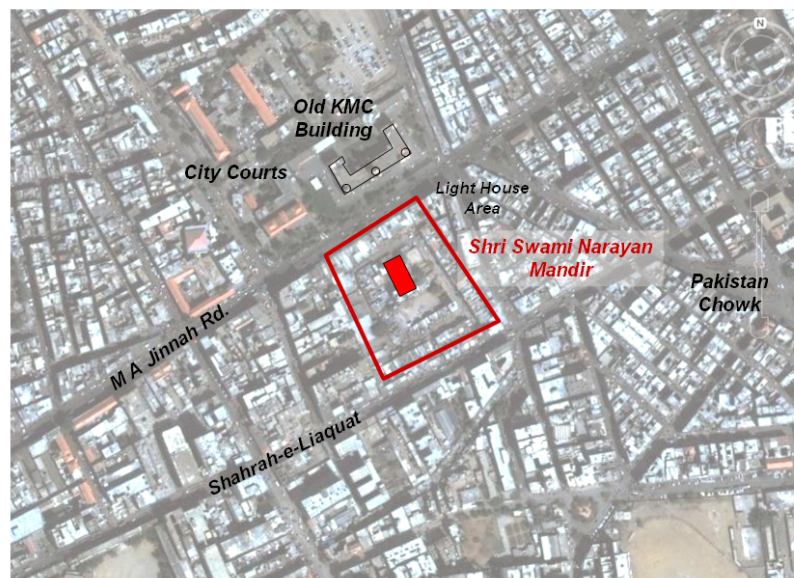


Shri Swami Narayan Mandir, Light House

Origin: 1875

Dedicated to: Swami Narayan

Since it is by far the largest temple in the city, therefore, the pilgrims on route to Hinglaj yatra congregates here first. The mandir has gone through several additions donated by different Hindu families. It is a temple surrounded by a compound of Hindu community in a concentric arrangement.





Lakshmi Narayan Mandir, Native Jetty

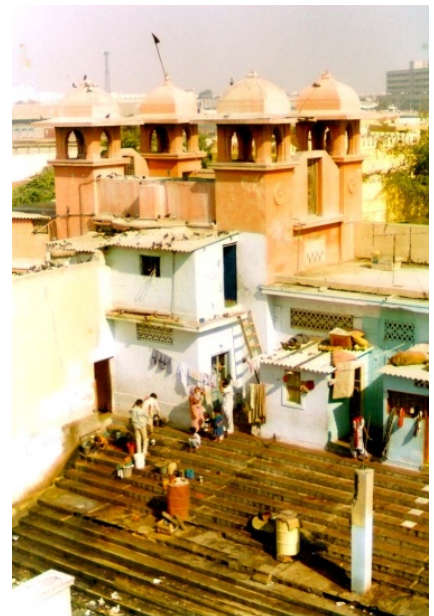
Origin: Claimed to be built long before partition and constructed over time with donation money.

Dedicated to: Lakshmi Mata Bhagwan

Secondary worship: Hanuman and Shankar Bohlaynaat

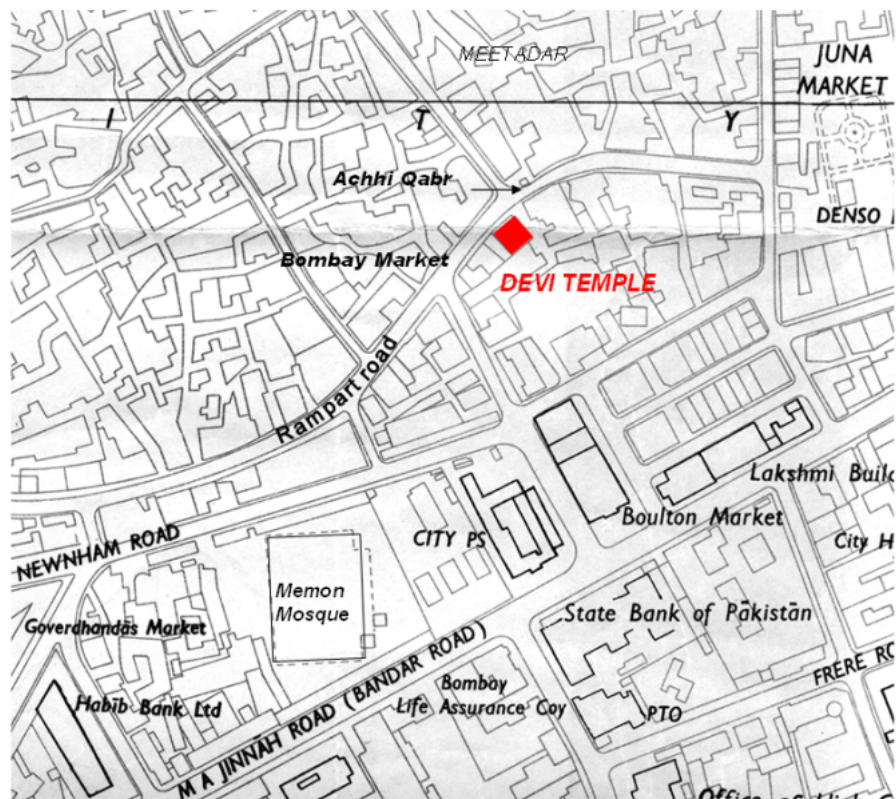
A very important mandir in terms of rituals. The rites of birth, Raksha Bandhan, Ponam Ashti, marriage and death are all performed here. Because of its proximity to the water, some water-related rituals are also performed.

The Maharaj of the mandir complains about the new hotel being constructed right in front of the temple and he believes the activities of the hotel will disturb the temple. A plaque at the main shrine door credits Rukmabai w/o Radhakrishna for renovation work.



Darya Lal Sankat Mochan Mandir, near Custom house

An important mandir historically it was the temple which the local fishermen would visit before embarking on their fishing voyage. It was on approach from the original Kharader (the Salt Water gate) of the old city.



Devi Mandir, Mithadar

Origin: more than a hundred years old

Dedicated to: Sheran walimaan

Festivals: Nauratri

The temple is on the rampart road with a colonial facade near a Mazaar called Achchi Qabar. Every Wednesday langar is distributed among the poor. Entry in the temple restricted for the rest of the week.



Old City Mandirs

In the old city, there were several mandirs at different locations that have been recorded in municipality maps and are also in the memory of several locals. The most prominent of these was Shehr ka Mandir (City Temple) that is now turned into a residential compound although clear traces of the former temple are pretty clear. These remains include elaborately carved doorways in stone, patterned floor finishes and carved ceilings in plaster. The complex originally had multiple temples of which a white smaller shrine is in the most recognizable position today.

Of the other temples in the old city quarter, most have now been demolished and replaced by other contemporary structures. There is hardly any Hindu population left in the area.



Rat Nageshwar Mahadev Mandir, Clifton

Dedicated to: Shiva

Secondary worship: Sheranwali man, Kali, Guru Nanak, etc.

It is a part of the annual Hinglaj pilgrimage. The temple has been mentioned by earlier authors as well, for example, the following excerpt from David Ross's book 'The Land of the Five Rivers and Sindh' (1882) pp15:

‘The cavern is looked upon as a temple sacred to Mahadeo. The legend is that Mahadeo in his journey around the world visited Mecca and so impressed and astonished the faithful that since then they have paid great reverence to this Hindu deity. Another legend is that when Mahadeo visited Mecca after retiring to rest, whenever he turned his feet the meteoric stone in the Kaaba likewise altered its position. This miracle enraged the Mohammedans who demanded an explanation. Mahadeo modestly interpreted it to signify that where his feet pointed there palladium of Mohammedanism would be found’

The original temple in the cave has now expanded to include several other shrines including Guru Nanak.



Krishna Mandir (Former Hanuman mandir), Manora Isl.

Originally dedicated to Hanuman this mandir is going through repair and conservation work and after that, it will be declared as Krishna Mandir. It was also known as Shri Varun Dev Mandir. It was built in 1655 (making it perhaps the oldest temple in the city) and has since gone through several renovations. The donation of glazed tiles in 1937 was probably an attempt to prevent the strong corrosive sea breeze from eating away the stone structure. These tiles are today also broken and misplaced exposing the stone. The only remains of auxiliary structures like shrines, loggings, and kitchen can be found in the broken floors and column bases of the complex. The primary entrance has been sealed up and the mandir though a tourist attraction has not been functioning for several years now.





Gurdwaras at Manora

There are two Gurdwaras at Manora, both of a considerably small size compared to the ones on the mainland. Both are operational but somewhat discreetly. Guru Nanak Sikh Sabha is located among the KPT quarters area. It was built in 1935 and then renovations were carried out in 1991-2. The Gurdwara is primarily a small room with space around it for langar and larger ceremonies. The room has five doors on the concept of admitting people from all directions. Externally the Gurdwara is marked by a Nishan Sahab and few religious motifs.



The other Gurdwara at the island is in the Pakistan Navy's compound. It has a Peepal (Sacred Fig) tree in a courtyard adjacent to a small room with a cupola on top. From the outside, there is just one doorway in the wall of the compound to mark the Gurdwara.

Karachi Shrines

Hazrat Syed Noor Ali Shah

His shrine is located in Tin Hatti and is visited by rich and poor alike. According to the inscription on the shrine, Hazrat Syed Noor Ali Shah came to Sindh from the city of Mashk, at the behest of Caliph Walid Bin Abdul Malik in the year 92 AH or AD 712. He accompanied the forces of Mohammad bin Qasim and died fighting the forces of Raja Dahir. According to the inscription Debal was either modern-day Karachi itself, or it was close to the Karachi of today. Hazrat Syed Noor was a saintly person and even today his shrine is well-attended with a mela held here every Thursday¹⁰.



Hazrat Yusuf Shah Ghazi

The mausoleum of Hazrat Yusuf Shah Ghazi is in Manora. We do not know when and how he came to Karachi and when he was born. But we know that he was a saintly and learned person. Alexander Baillie in his book, Kurrachee: Past, Present, and Future says:

"Every year in the month of April and May the urs of a saintly person are celebrated in Manora. Muslims, not only from Kurrachee but from far and wide, come to the island for the urs. Hindus too revere this holy man. In fact, Hindu shipmasters would stop by the shrine of this holy man both before the ship left the harbor, and once it returned to harbor. They would make offerings to the saint. His devotees are spread all over Sindh. During the urs people from far and wide converge upon Manora. Bullock cart owners, the tramway company and most of all the ferries that ply between Kemari and Manora make good money during this period.

The following incident comes from another book by the name of Tazkarae Auliya:

¹⁰ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

During the 1965 war with India, the Civil Defence authorities would order black-outs throughout the country. Even so, the light bulb by the tomb of Hazrat Yusuf Shah Ghazi would keep burning throughout. The Civil Defence authorities visited his mausoleum and admonished the caretakers. The caretakers assured the officials that they had turned off every light in the shrine but in spite of turning off the switch that one bulb would keep burning. The officers saw for themselves that the caretakers' claim was true. They checked the wiring and found it in order, so they cut the wires. The bulb went off, but soon after they left the light came on again. Soon thereafter Hazrat Yusuf Shah Ghazi appeared in a dream to a senior government official and told him not to worry, for he was looking out for them.

During the 1965 war, people used to say that Indian aircraft, guided by the lone light in Hazrat Yusuf Shah Ghazi's tomb, strafed the area with bombs. But a saintly being would catch the bombs with his bare hands and fling them into the sea. According to the old inhabitants of Karachi, the British also believed in the powers of Hazrat Yusuf Shah Ghani.

The saint's urs are held each year from 16 Rabiul Awal to 18 Rabiul Awal. People from Karachi and the neighboring areas attend the urs in great numbers¹¹.



¹¹ Damohi, M. U. (2013). '*The Sages and Seers of Karachi*', Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.



Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi

His name was Syed Abdullah. He came from the family of Abu Mohammad (kuniyat) and he was called Al-Ashtar. He was the son of Syed Mohammad Nafs Zakiya and the grandson of Hazrat Hasan Sani. His lineage was linked to the house of Hazrat Ali Murtaza and he was the heir to the legacy (najat) of Hazrat Imam Hasan and Hazrat Imam Husein, which is why he was often called Hasani and Husseini.

Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi was born in Medina in 98 AH. He was brought up under the supervision of his father Hazrat Syed Mohammad Nafs Zakiya who is ranked among the Mohaddisin.

This was the time when the Banu Umaiya dynasty was on its last legs. The country was plunged in discord. The dynasty collapsed at the outset of the second century, AH and the Abbasid period began. Hazrat Syed Mohammad Nafs Zakiya rebelled against the Abbasids in 138 AH. He laid claim to the caliphate and started his movement from Madina. Syed Mohammad Aoun Naqvi writes that the movement was supported by Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Abu Malik. The governor of Basra sentenced Imam Abu Malik to be whipped for his role in the movement. To promote his movement, Hazrat Syed Mohammad Nafs Zakiya sent his brother Ibrahim to Basra, and his son, Abdullah Shah Ghazi to Sindh. According to Aoun Naqvi, his son went to Sindh after his father's death. He reached Sindh by way of Iraq. According to Tarik Alkamil, Ibn Asir, and Ibn Khaldun, Abdullah Shah Ghazi came to Sindh as an emissary of his father's khilafat movement. However, according to the account given by Mian Shah Mana Qadri, he was more interested in preaching Islam than popularizing the movement begun by his father. For the next twelve years, Abdullah Shah Ghazi was to preach Islam to the folk of Sindh and bring them into the fold of the faith.

Abdullah Shah Ghazi came to Sindh as a horse trader. The people of Sindh were drawn to this holy man, and soon he gathered a devoted following. Some envious people tried to harm him by informing the Abbasid governor of Sindh, Umar bin Hifz, about his presence in the area. They highlighted the fact that his father had sent him to Sindh as a representative of his movement, but the Governor was so impressed by Abdullah Shah Ghazi that he did not countenance the people who opposed him. During this period his father was assassinated by Abbasid forces in Hejaz.

The caliph, Al-Mansoor ordered the Governor of Sindh to arrest Abdullah Shah Ghazi and extradite him to the court of the Abbasid caliphs.

This was a cause of grave concern to Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi who had been successfully preaching the message of Islam among the people of Sindh. This sentence also caused grave consternation to the Governor of Sindh, who was himself a great admirer of the holy man. The Governor devised a plan whereby Abdullah Shah Ghazi was dispatched to the court of a Hindu raja in the coastal areas of Sindh. This Hindu raja was kindly disposed to the Prophet (PBUH) and his followers. Abdullah Shah Ghazi resumed his proselytizing in this area and converted scores of natives to this new faith.

The Abbasid caliph, Al-Mansoor continued to look upon Abdullah Shah Ghazi's presence in Sindh as a threat to the caliphate. Finally, he dispatched Umar bin Hifz to Africa and sent Hasham bin Umar as governor of Sindh with orders to capture Abdullah Shah Ghazi and send him Baghdad. Some accounts claim that Hasham ignored the caliph's command, but Syed Aoun Naqvi says that he ordered Shah Abdullah Ghazi to be captured dead or alive. Around this time there was a rebellion against the caliphate in a remote area of Sindh. Hasham dispatched his brother Safih to quell the revolt. When Safih and his troops reached the banks of the River Indus, they found a group of armed people engaged in pursuit. It was actually Abdullah Shah Ghazi on a hunting expedition with his disciples. In spite of his men's entreaties to the contrary Safih attacked this band. Abdullah Shah Ghazi was opposed to bloodshed and despised the idea of fighting a fellow Muslim. However, he had no choice and he and his disciples fought valiantly. A dastardly blow from an enemy's sword felled the brave Sufi, who fell off his steed and lay wounded in the battlefield. At that point, the ranks of the enemy fell into disarray. Abdullah Shah Ghazi's disciples gathered around their slain guru. They hid in the undergrowth and soon spied an opportunity to flee into the surrounding forests taking with them the body of their beloved leader. Finally, they buried him on a hillock overlooking the sea. Today the tomb of Shah Ghazi stands to guard the portals of the city of Karachi, perched on a little hill in Clifton. It has now become a landmark of this city.

After the death of Abdullah Shah Ghazi, the Abbasid troops set off in search of his family. They wrested his wife and one of his sons, Syed Abul Hasan Muhammad bin Abdullah, from the kindly raja who had given them refuge and sent them to Baghdad and to the court of Caliph Al-Mansoor. The caliph kept them at his court for a few days, and then as a mark of respect for Abdullah Shah Ghazi he sent them to Madina under the protection of his army. Syed Abul Hasan Muhammad bin Abdullah lived a long life and devoted himself to the cause of Islam.

The miraculous appearance of a freshwater spring is associated with Abdullah Shah Ghazi. After burying their Pir's saintly remains atop the hillock, his disciples chose to stay on the hill to tend to his final resting place. However, they faced severe hardships because of the scarcity of fresh water in the area. One day in a fit of despair the disciples cried out to God and to their saint for a miracle. That night one of the oldest disciples dreamt that Abdullah Shah Ghazi was urging him to seek water at the foot of the hill. Sure enough, when the disciples went looking they found a stream of fresh, cool water flowing from the bottom of the hill¹².

¹² Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.



Hazrat Pir Hasan Shah Ghazi

His shrine is among the oldest shrines of Karachi. According to legend, he is a younger brother of the great saint Abdullah Shah Ghazi. His shrine is located inside Jodia Bazar near the utensil market. His urs is celebrated each year on 26 and 27 Rajab¹³.

Hazrat Haji Sakhi Sultan Manghopir

Hazrat Haji Sakhi Sultan Manghopir's given name was Hafiz Haji Hassan. He was a descendant of Hazrat Ali. From his mother's side, he came from the house of Hazrat Imam Hasan and from his father's side his pedigree can be traced to Hazrat Imam Husain. In addition to being a Hasani and Hussaini, he was also a Chishti by sheer dint of being an emissary of Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar.

He came to the subcontinent from Hejaz in the thirteenth century. At the time all of Arabia was under the thrall of Yelgul, the Tartar. The Tartars were at the time attempting to invade his country. He took part in battles against the invaders, after which he performed Haj. While in Medina he was graced with a vision of the Prophet (PBUH) who appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to proceed to Adhjan (Pakpattan in today's subcontinent) and meet with Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar. Soon he distinguished himself in the group of acolytes and Baba Farid appointed him his emissary and asked him to go to Manghopir. At the time Manghopir was uninhabited, and Haji Sakhi Sultan secluded himself in a cave and began his meditations. Gradually people heard of the holy man and started to pay obeisance to him. Within a relatively short time, Hazrat Haji Sakhi Sultan was able to convince the area's non-Muslim residents to embrace Islam.

Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar (1175 AD- 1265 AD) was very fond of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Hazrat Jalaluddin Bukhari and Hazrat Manghopir. It is said that he spent the last 16 or 24 years of his life in Pakpattan, which is where Hazrat Manghopir came to pay his respects to the holy man.

Mirza Sher Ali Kanae Thathavi in his book *Tohfat Alkaram* (The Gifts of the Holy Ones) says that Hazrat Manghopir was a contemporary of Hazrat Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria Multani. In his book, he refers to the four friends. By this, he alludes to Hazrat Manghopir, Hazrat Makhdoom Jalal Jahanian, Hazrat Sheikh Usman Marwandi, and Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria Multani. These latter three came to Hazrat Manghopir on the eve of his life and asked him to accompany them for the holy pilgrimage of Hajj. Hazrat Manghopir declined to say that he was now ready to leave this world, as he had fulfilled the wishes of his Prophet (PBUH) and his mentor/pir, Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar. He had successfully brought the non-Muslims of the area into the fold of Islam and now he wanted to live the rest of his days among them in his adopted land. Hazrat Manghopir passed away in that very year on 8 Zilhaj.

¹³ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

His urs (feast days) are celebrated in Manghopir to this day on the 8th and 9th of the month of Zilhaj. Like the Muslims of the area, the Hindus also repose great faith in this holy man and call him Lala Jasraj. Hazrat Khakhi Shah Bukhari is the only follower of this holy man that one can find any mention of. After his death, Bukhari carried on the mission of Hazrat Manghopir. It is said that a Hindu princess of a neighboring kingdom became seriously ill. Hazrat Bukhari had a vision of Hazrat Manghopir who instructed him to cure the princess. When the princess was cured of her malady, her father, the Raja was so pleased that he gave her hand in marriage to the noble Hazrat Bukhari.

Mirza Sher Ali Kanae Thathavi in his book Tohfat Alkaram speaks thus of Manghopir and its saint:

"This is Manghopir. The resting place of Haji Mangho, a contemporary of Sheikh Bahauddin Multani. It is a place where people come to pray to saints and holy ones. This hilly area is also known as Tauq Mangh. From the bowels of the hill, there flows a hot water spring. The water from the spring collects in a pool in which lives a crocodile called Mohr. After it dies, its place is taken by another crocodile which is also called Mohr by devotees, who sacrifice sheep and goats by the pool. The sacrificial animal is first offered to Mohr. It's considered to be a good omen if the crocodile accepts the offering. Next, to this pool, there is another spring and in between the two springs, there is a rock. If water from the hot water spring is gathered into a receptacle after it is first poured over the rock it becomes fresh and cool. Water from both the springs gathers in a large pool where there are thousands of crocodiles. There are green fields on either side and amidst the fields, there is a well. The water from the well is cooler and sweeter than the water in both the pools. A crocodile called Hinj lives in the well. Inhabitants refer to the well as the 'lota' of Haji Mingha.

From Haji Mingha's mountain flows a stream called Makhdoom Lal Shahbaz's Kandri or Beragan. There are lush fields on both sides of the mountain.

Ali Ahmed Brohi in his book, 'History of Tombstones in Sindh and Balochistan' writes:

"Hazrat Manghopir came to Mangho from Khorasan in the thirteenth century. His name was Kamaluddin. He was a contemporary of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria. According to local folklore, the barren and arid area of Mangho was transformed into a place fit for human habitation because of the miracles wrought by Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar and Hazrat Bahaddin Zakaria Multani. These two holy men by their miracles made twin hot and cold water springs flow from the mountains."

Even before the Muslim era, Hindus considered Manghopir to be a holy place. They would flock to Manghopir for pilgrimage, and today they continue to make annual pilgrimages to Manghopir to venerate the crocodiles, which they believe are an incarnation of Lala Jasraj. Archaeologists trace the beginnings of civilization in this era to 2000-1700 BC or around the Bronze Age (Kansi) when civilization in Sindh was at its peak.

Isabel Shaw and Hilary Adamson in their book A Traveller's Guide to Pakistan recount a myth about the crocodiles of Manghopir. According to legend Hazrat Manghopir brought the crocodiles to Manghopir when he came here in the thirteenth century. The crocodiles took the guise of head lice and hid among his locks. Soon after he came to Manghopir, twin pools erupted

in the parched desert and the lice turned back into crocodiles and jumped out of his hair and into the pools of water.

The famous writer, Richard Burton recounts a different crocodile legend according to which a holy man created the first crocodile from a flower. However, anthropologists claim that it is likely that a river used to flow by this area when it changed course, the crocodiles were likely stranded in the pools of Manghopir.

Mirza Kazim Baig writes in the daily Jang of 3 July 1987: "Manghopir was once a large and thriving city of Sindh. It was among those civilizations that thrived and peaked and then met with a natural calamity or some disaster only to vanish without a trace." He writes about Hazrat Manghopir's arrival to the subcontinent by saying that the saint came to Manghopir in the era of Salauddin. A saint's tomb was located here and people used to place offerings by it. When Hazrat Manghopir arrived here he was spurned by the caretakers of this mausoleum, who refused to allow him to build a fire in the vicinity even though it was bitterly cold. Hazrat Manghopir cursed these people and their faces were distorted forever into the ugly grimace of a crocodile.

Burton mentions an old Hindu mausoleum on this spot before the arrival of Hazrat Manghopir. The 1927 Gazetteer of Sindh mentions Hazrat Manghopir on page 73:

"Haji Mangho was an Arab who settled in this area in the thirteenth century Hegira. He had four saintly friends (referred to in later accounts as 'char yaar' or four friends) who visited him regularly. These seers included Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. It was because of the miracles wrought by these saintly people that this arid and abandoned area became fit for human habitation. Suddenly a warm water spring started gushing out of the mountains, and groves of date trees appeared in the area. Haji Mangho was buried in the same area when he passed away, and the place became a holy site for both Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus revered him as Raja Jasraj. This is not the only instance of Hindus revering saintly Muslims. In fact, throughout Sindh, we find such instances. For instance, Hindus refer to Lal Shahbaz Qalandar as Raja Bhartari and Hazrat Khwaja Khizar is known to them by the name of Jind Pir."

The well-known writer, Qudratullah Shahab recounts an English army officer's account of the AD 1839 Urs of Hazrat Manghopir. This was the year that the British annexed Sindh.

"There is a festival (mela) in Magar today. It is in memory of Haji Magar (crocodile). There are dancing girls from Karachi. Mud from around the hot water spring is distributed among the participants as an offering. Women apply this over their bodies. There is a sheedi (local people of African origin) dance before the end of the mela. Red, green, and blue flags are placed in a circle. Incense is burned, and the men and women start dancing in haphazard circles as soon as the drums start beating. There are cries of 'Qul, Qul' from the spectators. Men sway and sing while women alternatively sit, or kneel and beat their heads upon the ground."



This was actually the sheedi mela of Manghopir. The mela is held even today but in a more modest manner. Hazrat Manghopir is the most

famous of the Chishti saints of Sindh. His mausoleum is always thronged with devotees¹⁴.



Hazrat Qutb Alam Syed Alam Shah Bukhari

He was known as Qutb Alam, but his real name was Syed Alam Shah Bukhari. He is amongst the earliest saints of Sindh. His mausoleum has been a centre of spiritual learning and instruction since long. The following well-known scholars and saintly people got their spiritual education from this place of learning: Hazrat Maulana Ghulam Rasool Qadri Chishti, Hazrat Shah Abdul Shakoor Malang Baba, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Phulwari, Hazrat Shah Warsi, Hazrat Syed Alhamdulillah Shah Warsi, Hazrat Syed Ismail Shah Ghazi, Hazrat Abdul Rahman Shah Shaheed and Hazrat Qail Shah. According to Hazrat Pir Jameel Ahmed Jamali, “Qutb Alam is one of the foremost spiritual leaders of Karachi. It would not be wrong to call him the ‘Data’ of Karachi.”

Though there is a rich oral tradition about the life and times of this seer, there are no books about the life of this saint. The chief caretaker of his ancient mausoleum, Maulvi Shah Khuda Baksh in his writings called Jamal Alim says:

“In the year AD 1849 (or 1269 AH) the tomb of Hazrat Qutb Alim Syed Alam Shah Bukhari was located in a large orchard of Karachi (today’s Eidgah on Hindu Road). The tomb was located

¹⁴ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *The Sages and Seers of Karachi*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

below ground level and could be approached by way of some stepping stones. There was no roof over the tomb, though there would always be the cool shade of the trees. In the south of the tomb, there was a spring of water. The sick and ailing would partake of the water from the spring. They would call it the water of life. At the time the saint was simply known as Burra Pir (Great Saint) in Karachi. His urs would be held every year on 11 Rabiul Sani. Maulvi Shah Khuda Baksh says that he would go regularly to pay his respects. One day he dreamt of the place and saw a saintly man dressed in pristine robes standing by the tomb. The saintly being addressed him and said, 'This is the tomb of Qutb Alam. When you pay your respects here, be sure to spend some time looking after the upkeep of the mausoleum.' From that day onwards the tomb came to be known as the mausoleum of Hazrat Qutb Alam."

Since Hazrat Shah Sahib was asked to look after the mausoleum he had a room constructed over it out of stones quarried from nearby mountains, a floor was laid down and the top floor of the room was enclosed with a wooden framework (Jafri). He had a large lamp made for the mausoleum, which he would personally light every evening. Moreover, he had a sign made saying that this was the mausoleum of Hazrat Qutb Alam. He had a nearby mosque cleaned and repaired and called it the Bukhari Auliya Masjid. Now, this is known as the old Jama Masjid of Eidgah.

He had the nearby stream cleaned and a small ledge built by the stream. On Thursdays, devotees would also bathe in the stream and this caused the place to become filthy. After some time the stream ran dry of its own accord.

The Mausoleum's first managing committee

For the first time, a committee was appointed to look after the mausoleum. The committee was composed of Hazrat Syed Muhammad Ismail Shah Ghazi, Hazrat Abdullah Dars, Maulana Bashir Ahmed Danapuri and Hazrat Shah Khuda Baksh. Shah Khudabaksh was appointed the tomb's first mutawali and Ghulam Ahmed Baloch was the first caretaker.

Hazrat Syed Mohammad Ismail Shah, who was a follower of Hazrat Mewa Shah Ghazi, was sent here by his Pir and mentor. He spent the rest of his life in the service of the mausoleum. When he died he was buried alongside Hazrat Qutb Alam. Similarly, Hazrat Ismail Shah's disciples, Hazrat Abdul Rahman Shaheed, and Hazrat Qatil Shah were also buried alongside the saint.

Remodeling the mausoleum

In 1956 Khalifa Malik Mohammad Sahib, chairman of the mausoleum committee had the mausoleum and the old Eidgah mosque repaired and renovated. The mausoleum's simple door was replaced with a door made of pure silver. The dome of the mausoleum was decorated with a crescent and star made of pure silver. Domes were made over the tombs of the three holy men buried alongside the saint.

Urs Mubarak (the saint's annual festival)

Hazrat Alam Shah Bukhari was known as the 'Pir (saint) of the eleventh'. This is because his urs would be held on the eleventh of the month of Rabiul Sani. Sometime later he appeared in a

dream to some of his close devotees and instructed them to celebrate his urs on 25 Rabiul Sani. His urs would now be held from 25-29 Rabiul Sani.

Hassanally Effendi, the founder of Sind Madrassatul Islam was a follower of this saint. The Aligarh Muslim University delegation came to Karachi on 16 Rabiulawal 1329 AH to garner support for the Muslim movement. The delegates which included the Raja Sahib of Mehmoodabad were received at the train station by a city judge, Allama Mufti Abdul Karim, Haji Abdullah Haroon, and Sheikh Sadiq Ali, the Prime Minister of Khairpur. The delegation was escorted around the city in a procession. When the procession reached Bunder Road, the delegates were taken to the mausoleum of Qutb Alam where they paid their respects to the saint. The Raja of Mehmoodabad offered a donation of Rs 500 towards feeding the poor who thronged the shrine. The mausoleum is located on Bunder Road next to Jama Cloth Market¹⁵.



Hazrat Mewa

Shah

Hazrat Mewa Shah was born in Kanar, Afghanistan in 1135 AH (AD 1715). His father's name was Hazrat Syed Abbas. He is known as Mewa Shah because his devotees used to bring him offerings of fruit, which he would not partake of himself, but distribute among his disciples.

He was a Bukhari Syed and descended from Syed Jalal Bukhari. His lineage can be traced to the house of Hazrat Ali. His ancestors include a holy man, Hazrat Syed Ali Tarmizi Chishti (Pir Baba) whose mausoleum is located in the city of Bonir. His ancestors were linked to the Qadri Chishtis. Hazrat Mewa Shah was a general in the Afghan army. His family had fruit orchards. His part of the family orchard would always be open to the public. He only requested that the general populace eat their fill in the orchard, but not pick fruits to take outside the orchard. Strangely, if anybody tried to take the fruit outside the orchard it would spoil. A dispute arose between Hazrat Mewa Shah and his relatives over the ownership of the orchard, and it is said that the holy man straddled a mud wall and seated upon this wall of mud he came to Sindh. The fabled wall can still be seen in a house in Chakiwara and the mud from the wall is considered to be an antidote to various ailments. On his arrival in Sindh, he paid his respects at the Mausoleum of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.

¹⁵ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

He decided to stay in Karachi permanently, but he was of a military bent of mind. He would march up and down the streets in his white robes with a rifle slung over his shoulder. He would be followed by a band of devotees. They would stop by wayside restaurants, and Hazrat Mewa Shah would call for a meal for all of his devotees. The owners would never ask for money, but it is said that when they checked their money boxes at the end of the day they would find a handsome amount far exceeding the value of the meal that Hazrat Mewa Shah and his friends had partaken. The story of the Hindu sweetmeat merchant, Asumal is well-known. Every day Mewa Shah with a group of devotees would visit Asumal's shop. Asumal would respectfully move aside and the holy one would command his devotees to help themselves to the sweets by shouting 'loot lo' (grab them). After the devotees had their fill they would move away. At the end of the day, when Asumal opened his strong box, he would find more than the value of the sweets ... and so every day he would wait for the arrival of the holy man and his band of devotees.

He prayed with great fervor. People who had seen him pray would say that he would often disappear and rematerialize before their eyes while he was at prayer. Often he would be drenched while at prayer. When his devotees asked him why he was so wet he would say, "There was a ship in the ocean. It was sinking and I propped it up", or else he'd say I went to the sea for my ablutions.

(This essay was written in collaboration with Mewa Shah's follower, Allama Qari Mumtaz Ahmed Qadri Chishti and Shahid Sahib who is a descendant of Hazrat Sain Abdul Ghani.)¹⁶



Hazrat Sain Abdul Ghani

A true believer, scholar, poet, and Sufi, Hazrat Sain Abdul Ghani was very popular in pre-Partition Karachi, and he is even today revered by the people of Karachi.

Sain was a nickname that he used. He came from the house of Abul Hamid and Abul Rashid. He was born in Karachi in AD 1846. His father, Maulana Munshi Bashir Ahmed Qureshi Danapuri was a great scholar and learned person. He was from the city of Danapur in Bihar, but he migrated to Karachi and worked for the religious and social upliftment of the Muslims of Karachi. His mother, Majida, was also a learned woman. She was the daughter of Kazi Sher Ahmed Nagar Allama Kazi Abdul Karim Qadri.

Sain received his early education from his brother-in-law, Hafiz Ilm al-din Sahib Qadri (the son of Ghulam Rasool Qadri). After his early training, he became interested in spirituality and mysticism. At a tender age, he pledged his spiritual allegiance to Hazrat Syed Mithal Shah Qadri, a famous holy man of Sindh. However, he still felt restless and day by day found himself gravitating further towards meditation and mysticism and at a young age he went into seclusion. He distributed his worldly possessions, even his clothes, among the poor. He dug himself a trench outside the house of a friend, Syed Qasim Ali Kuli, and spent his days in meditation. His father was extremely annoyed when he came to know of this. Unhappy with his father's response, he left home and went straight to Ajmer Sharif, and presented himself before the shrine of Hazrat Khawaja Gharib Nawaz. Here he met a hermit (fakir) Sher Ali Shah who took him to Ahmednagar. He stayed there for sometime busy with his prayer and meditation. Such was his search for truth and righteousness that for twenty-one years he traveled the subcontinent, stopping to pay homage at the shrines of the holy and the righteous. His travels took him among other places to Pakpattan, Mohra, Delhi, Hansi, Hassar, Multan, Baroda and Gujarat among other places. At last, he reached Panipat and presented himself to Hazrat Maulana Hassan Shah Qadri, a disciple of Hazrat Ghous Ali Shah. Maulana Qadri was a great teacher, and from him, Sain learned all that his restless soul wanted to know.

On his return to Karachi, Sain sought out uninhabited areas where he could meditate in seclusion in a trench or a cave. He found a quiet hillock near Kala Pul. He had a trench dug near the hillock where he could meditate in peace. At the time this place was not inhabited by people, but there was a large population of jins in this locality. At last, he built a house in the middle of the Juna Dhobi Ghat (washerman's colony) and established a locality called Halka-e-Zikrallah where he taught eager students about self, spirituality, and God. His doors were open to Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus alike. He established the Silsila-e-Qadria in Karachi, and on the eleventh of each lunar month, there would be a zikr at his school.

He was not only a well-rounded scholar but a great poet and writer. He could write poetry in many different languages. He wrote sixteen books on spirituality and is known as the second Sachal when it comes to poetry (you might want to put a note here). He wrote poetry in several different languages which include Urdu, Hindi, Sindhi, Punjabi, Balochi, Seraiki, Marathi and Persian. His complete poetic works were published under the name of Irfan Ghani. He was a great musician. He would set his poetry to music while playing the yaktara. It was a most moving experience.

His life is an example of virtue and righteousness. He instructed his disciples to follow the truth and conduct themselves with honesty. He treated everybody equally _be they friend or foe, rich or poor, prince or pauper. He respected all religions. He lived simply. He kept a cow and subsisted on its milk for some time. He then kept a few goats, and he would take them out to pasture himself. He did all his own work and would not visit the houses of his disciples for fear of inconveniencing them. He died on 22 May 1938 at the age of 92. The year of his death is mentioned in the ‘Kutb Hind a Sain Ghani’.

His death was not like that of ordinary mortals. He was in perfect health and went about his daily chores. Departing from his daily routine, he bathed in the afternoon and then stood before a window facing a graveyard, and said, "It gives me great satisfaction today to look upon this graveyard. What a fine place it is." He then sat upon his bed. Suddenly he became flushed and his face was beaded in perspiration. He told his followers and his family that the time of judgment was upon him. His disciples marveled at him. His family sought to call a doctor, but he would not let them. He asked for water mixed with honey and managed a few sips of this mixture. He then told his disciples and family to leave so that he could meet his maker. He sat on the floor, with his back to the wall and started to pray and soon lay on his bed and passed away.

His mausoleum is in the Juna Dhobi Ghat graveyard.

Hazrat Syed Ismail Shah Ghazi

Hazrat Baba Syed Ismail Shah Ghazi was a well-respected elder of Sindh. He was a representative of Hazrat Mewa Shah and one of his close disciples. He was born into a Syed family in the year AD 1819 in Karachi’s old neighborhood of Kharadar. He was the son of Karachi’s well-known elder Hazrat Pir Syed Chattan Shah Ghazi who passed away in 1238 AH. His mausoleum still stands in Kharadar. Hazrat Syed Ismail Shah Ghazi was born posthumously, almost three months after the death of his father. He was brought up by his mother Bibi Mai Sahiba. Before he was born his mother had dreamt that she would bear a son who would become a holy man.

His uncle, Karachi’s well-known Sufi, Hazrat Pir Syed Karar Shah taught him the Holy Quran, and he could recite it from memory (hifz) by the age of eleven. Later he acquired knowledge of the hadith and other religious wisdom from a respected elder, Miskin Shah Bukhari. After completing his religious education he became involved in religious meditation and worship.

At the behest of his spiritual leader, Hazrat Mewa Shah, he visited the shrine of Hazrat Ghous Azam Dastgir before leaving for Haj and a pilgrimage to Roza-e-Rasool. On his return, he was

commanded by his spiritual leader to stop at Ajmer Sharif at the shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Muin Al-din Chishti. There Hazrat Ismail Shah experienced a spiritual revelation, and once again at the behest of Mewa Shah, he visited the darbar of Bu Ali Shah Qalandar. He was caught up in prayer and meditation in Panipat at the Darbar-e-Qalandar. One night he had a vision of Bu Ali Shah Qalandar who asked him to return to Karachi and further pay obeisance at the shrine of Syed Alam Shah Bukhari.

In Karachi, he was met by his spiritual guide and mentor, Hazrat Mewa Shah Ghazi who congratulated him on his spiritual enlightenment and on attaining the status of a wali and escorted him to the shrine of Hazrat Alam Shah Bukhari with instructions that he serves the shrine of this holy saint.

In his later days, he would wander the streets of Juna Market, Phool Chowk, New Chali, and Burns Road and visit several mosques and shrines each day. He served the shrine of Hazrat Alam Shah Bukhari right up to his death. He passed away on Tuesday, 26 November 1929 at the age of 110. His funeral was held after Asr prayers. The funeral prayers were led by Maulana Abdul Karim Dars in the presence of thousands of mourners. According to his wish, he was buried alongside Hazrat Alam Shah Bukhari. His urs is held every year from 23-25 Jamadul Sani¹⁷.



Hazrat Pir Syed Haji Ghaib Shah

¹⁷ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

Hazrat Pir Syed Haji Ghaib Shah was a great saint. Miracles have been ascribed to him long after his death. The British attempted to lay a railway track by his shrine. The workers would lay the track each day, and the next day they would find the tracks dug up. This continued for several days until the British gave up this exercise in futility. A huge throng of devotees can be found at his shrine. It is said that he intercedes on behalf of those who seek his help. Some years ago the caretakers of his shrine reported that his grave was heaving and moving as though a living being was breathing under the earth. His shrine is in Keamari, near the police station of the locality. It is in proximity to an ancient mosque. His urs is held each year from 5-8 Rajab¹⁸.



Hazrat Baba Imam Shah Bukhari

Hazrat Baba Imam Shah's shrine is located in the Masjid-e-Khizra in Bhimpura. Several miracles are ascribed to him. Like Syed Ahmed Shah Mashadi he too hails from the Silsila-e-Qadria Banwa. He passed away on 17 Zilhaj 1120 AH. His shrine was established almost three hundred years ago. He passed away during the early period of the Kalhora rule, even before Bhojomal's arrival in Sindh. As such he is one of the earliest saints of Karachi¹⁹.

¹⁸ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

¹⁹ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.



Hazrat Pir Bachal Shah Al-Marroof Mastan Shah

His shrine is located at Gari Khata on Bunder Road, near the Light House bus stop on Hormusji Street. He is supposed to have performed several miracles. According to the inscription on his tomb, he passed away on 1291 AH. His urs are celebrated each year from 26-28 Zilha^{20j}.

Hazrat Meeran Pir

Her name was Junaidi Bibi, but people know her by the name of Meeran maan or Meeran Pir. The book Tazkara-e-Auliya Sindh says that she was a holy woman who came to Karachi from her native city of Larkana with the intention of going on pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. However, she fell seriously ill while in Karachi and passed away. Before her death, she gave instructions that a domed hall is built. She instructed her followers to place her body outside the domed hall after her death and shut the doors leading to the hall. They were to bury her inside the hall only if the doors flung open by themselves. This came to pass and she was buried inside this hall, which is now a shrine and a place of worship. Alexander Baillie in his book "Kurrachee, Past, Present, and Future" (Calcutta, 1890) describes her tomb and the fabulous urs held in her memory each year. Her tomb is near Karachi's Lea Market²¹.

²⁰ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

²¹ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.



Hazrat Syed Haji Pir

Even today this saint performs miracles for those who seek his help. He comes to the aid of those in despair and trouble, and in fact, those who come to the shrine with a problem often find answers to their troubles. His shrine is in the Pirwali lane in Bhimpura. His is are held on 11 Rabi-ul-Awal with great enthusiasm²².



²² Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.

Hazrat Zinda Shah

He is also known as Zahir Shah. His burial place was unmarked and lost, but he appeared in a dream to a kindly soul and showed him the spot where he was buried. The saint instructed this person to clear the place and thus his burial place was revealed on 6 Zilhaj 1362. His shrine is in the Masoom Shah Bukhari mosque in Kharadar²³



²³ Damohi, M. U. (2013). *'The Sages and Seers of Karachi'*, Chapter 11. *Karachi: In the Mirror of History*. Karachi: Raheel Publications.