



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)

A Study of Architectural Elements of the Shrine of Khawaja Mohkam Din Sirani, Bahawalpur

Anum Imtiaz

PhD Scholar, Research Center, College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab,
Lahore

Prof. Dr. Samina Nasim*

Principal, College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab, Lahore

ABSTRACT

The study probes architectural elements of Khanqah Khawaja Mohkam-ud-Din Sirani Darbar, Bahawalpur. The darbar was constructed in 1879 in the era of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan-IV. It comprises decorative techniques like kashikari, sheeshakari, lacquer tarseem bandi and calligraphic inscriptions. The research particularly addresses panels presenting tree of life, Huma-e-Gul in Sirani Darbar. The study aims to analyze the iconography, stylistic features and symbolic meanings of the tree of life motif as depicted in the Sirani Darbar's fresco decoration. Qualitative research methods are adopted for the research. The research is based on visual analysis, theoretical and photographic documentation to study the regional, Mughal and Persian influences.

The paper explores how the tree of life is integrated with floral patterns, color schemes, and compositional arrangements, reflecting local craftsmanship. The study argues that the "Tree of Life" frescoes at Khawaja Mohkam-ud-Din Sirani Darbar serve not only as ornamental elements but also as carriers of layered symbolic meanings, embodying ideas of paradise, divine order, and spiritual continuity. By documenting and interpreting these frescoes, this research contributes to the preservation of Bahawalpur's architectural heritage and highlights the need of its conservation.

Key words: Fresco Painting, Iconography, Tree of Life, Khanqah, Bahawalpur Architecture, Islamic Decorative Elements

INTRODUCTION

The research precedes to the study of the architectural characteristics and decorative elements of the Khanqah Khawaja Mohkam-ud-Din Sirani, Bahawalpur. Khanqah is a Persian term that originated in the Muslim world during ninth to twelfth centuries.¹ The sufi lodges are referred as "khanqahs". Sufi Abu Sayd lived in southern Turkmenistan in the Eleventh century.² The shrine was directed by pir³ who served as spiritual, educational and social guide, playing a pivotal role in spreading Islam, particularly in

¹ Makhmatkulov Ilhom Turdimurodovich, Giyasov Bobosher Djurakulovich, and Eshatov Ikrom Quziyevich, "The Role and Place of the Khanqahs in Spreading the Mysticism and Spiritual Purification to the Peoples of Central Asia," *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research* 9, no. 3 (2020): 561-563.

² G. A. Pugachenkova, "Khanakqah Bakhauddin," *Maskan*, no. 7-8 (1993): 24.

³ In Islam, the term *Wali*, the Arabic term, is used for a sain. Wali is person who is near to God or a friend of God or a friend of God. In Middle East, the title *Shaikh* is give to the sain, *Pir* in South Asia, *Dede* in Turkey, *Ishan* in Central Asia, *Murabit* in North Africa and *Agurram*, in the language of Berbers.



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)

South Asia.⁴ The precise names for the shrine are dargah, darbar, ziyarat, and khanqah, additionally include a mosque, dervish lodgings, a langarkhana and a madrasa in addition to the tomb itself. In a man's social and religious life, the khanqah is accessible to all types of followers.⁵ In this area khanqah and sufi settlements were supported by the nawabs of Bahawalpur. The former princely state of Bahawalpur, initiated in 1748-1947 at South Punjab, Pakistan. The region features a flat alluvial plain that transitions into desert terrain. It is situated between the historically significant cities of Multan and Uch Sharif. The geographical location of the state is latitude 7 to 30-22 North 69-47 to 74-1 East longitude.⁶

Hazrat Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, known as Sahib us Sayr, was a pious saint born in 1723 A.D. near Pakpattan, his forefathers belonged to Gogera-Sahiwal.⁷ Initially his name was Mohammad Abdullah. However, later on he was recognized as Mohkam Din Sirani (R.A).⁸ He was poisoned to death by his own companion Hafiz Koki in 1783 A.D.⁹ The initial burial was conducted at Mai Haleema house.¹⁰ Later on the initial tomb of Hazrat Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani was constructed earlier by Governor of Multan Nawab Muzaffar Khan Sadozai in 1811 A.D., along with ablution area and tri-door small masjid.¹¹ The shrine was reconstructed and decorated in 1897, in the era of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi-IV 1879-1899, festooned with sheeshakhari, kashikari and fresco paintings.¹² Moreover the masjid was also constructed during the period of Nawab Sadiq Khan-IV. The marble embellishments were done under the supervision of Hazrat Imam Bukhsh Khalifa fifth.¹³ The Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan-IV, of Bahawalpur was keenly interested in the sufi connection and financed the shrines and organized a wazifa for the sufis in order to respect their religious teachings. A large portion of the royal grant was devoted to the shrines of Bahawalpur state and various saints of India. These donations were charity to construct mosques and khanqah and their offerings and the expenses were fixed under the supervision of auqaf.¹⁴ According to Shahid, there are two shrines of Hazrat Sahib, one is located in Gujarat, India's Dhoraji District and the other is constructed by the personal interest of Nawab Bahawal Khan-IV.¹⁵

Ground Plan

The darbar is rectangular in plan, comprises shrine, masjid, langar khana, khanqah, graveyard fountain, ablution area and gates on all four sides (figure 1). The main gate is

⁴ Faheem Arshad, "The Khanqah System: An Analytical Study of Its Origins, Development, and Features," MPhil scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, Mohi-ud-Din Islamic University, Nerian Sharif, AJ&K, 1.

⁵ J. W. Frembgen, *Journey to God: Sufis and Dervishes in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 38.

⁶ Malik Muhammad Din, *Gazetteer of Bahawalpur State* (1904), 41.

⁷ Salah Uddin Awaisi, *Sahib us Sayr* (Lahore: Alfaisal Publishers, 2002), 124.

⁸ In his initial age, Khawaja mohkam ud din sirani had an extraordinary interest in religion, as finished his strict training at the age of 12 years, he moved to Delhi with his Cousin Hazrat Khawaja Abdul Khaliq (he was Murshid of Serani Sahab.) Due to poison administered in Dhoraji, Hazrat Khwaja Mohkam Din Serani (R.A) passed away (Kathiawar, India). According to myth, Hafiz Koki gave poison to Hazrat Khawaja Mohkam Din Serani twice, but when he gave it to him a third time, the poison started to take effect. He then gave Hafiz Koki ten rupees (five for Kafan and five for almsgiving) and passed away on the fifth of Rabi-Us-Sani, 1197 Hijri (Islamic calendar), 1776.

⁹ Awaisi, *Sahib us Sayr*, 303.

¹⁰ Mai Haleema was his sworn sister.

¹¹ Awaisi, *Sahib us Sayr*, 311.

¹² Zahid Ali Wasti, *Bahawalpur ki Sarzameen* (Lahore: Beacon Books, 2009), 546.

¹³ Awaisi, *Sahib us Sayr*, 335.

¹⁴ M. Din, *Gazetteer of the Bahawalpur State* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2001), 41.

¹⁵ Shahid Rizvi, *Sher-e-Bimisal* (Bahawalpur: Shahb Delhvi Academy, 2020), 18.



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)

augmented on flight of two steps, through the huge wooden door at north side with faience mosaic embellishment (figure 2). The door is festooned with lattice work and copper inlay door panels embellishment on the walls representing the recent renovations by the current management.¹⁶ The entrance is majestic due to the direct approach to the courtyard. There is langar khana on the eastern side along with ablution area and fountain contribute to the attraction of the visitors. The fountain is festooned with quatrefoil glaze tiles with a tent like rooftop. Behind it, lies the graveyard of Awasi family, covering the backyard of the mosque and shrine. As it's their family graveyard so it is locked by the authorities (figure 3).

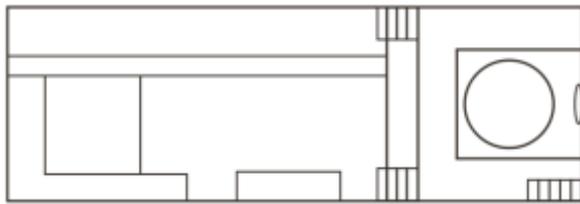


Figure 1. Plan of Shrine of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Designed by author.



Figure 2. Entrance of the Shrine of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.

¹⁶ National Assembly Member (NA-173).



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)



Figure 3. Ablution Area of the Shrine of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897.

Picture

by

author.

Exterior

The shrine is rectangular in structural plan with two minarets constructed on the front view. The parapet of the structure is bedecked with blue kashikari merlons with calligraphic inscription of Ya Allah, Ya Muhammad (ﷺ) and adorned with bell motives in blue kashikari pattern. There is a border of stylized lotus flower fully grown in bud-shape on the cornice projected below the merlons (figure 4).

The structure comprises five entrance doors with two rooms on either side. The rooms are closed from both sides and entirely connected to the chamber and comprise two large wooden window visible from the front façade. The doors are recessed with multi-cusped arches and supported by pilasters. The pilaster is decorated with inverted lotus on the top with a fluted shaft on the heavy base of inverted acanthus leaf.

Moreover, there are five rectangular panels divided by vertical floral kashikari panels. The panels from left to right, each panel has three parts, the upper one is five inches by two feet. The middle panel has the height of one foot four inches by two feet wide and following the color combination of cobalt blue and white calligraphy on it.

The façade comprises two turrets, attached to the shrine adorned with glaze tiles ornamentation (figure 5). They have octagonal shafts, each placed on the octagonal base which is five feet wide and thirty feet high. The octagonal shafts are bedecked with brick masonry and crowned with capula. The octagonal base is two feet high and dado is bedecked in marble. The shaft of minaret is crowned on inverted lotus base. The shaft of minaret is adorned with glaze tile panels in three different sizes counted in thirty-five. There are fourteen square panels adorned with floral twigs, the middle panel represent composition of flowers, buds and leaves. There are ten middle size panels and twelve large size panels of two feet. The capula of the minaret is adorned with band of acanthus leaf along with a band of quatrefoil in cobalt blue and light blue color, again the base of capula are festooned with miniature saru trees. The pilaster of the capula is adorned with bands of light blue and dark blue tiles work. The chajja of the capula is bedecked with acanthus leaf with the chevron pattern on the cornices. The octagonal capula is topped by a ribbed dome and crowned with an inverted lotus and finial.



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)



Figure 4. Façade of Shrine of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.



Figure 5. Attached turrets of the Shrine of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.



Figure 6. Sheesha Kari Pillars of Side Room of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.



Figure 7. Decorated Ceiling Panel of Sirani Darbar of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)



Figure 8. Border of the Ceiling of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.



Figure 9. Kashikari panel of six pointed star Tomb of Bibi Jawindi. Source: pinterest.com.



Interior of the Shrine

The veranda of the chamber is twelve feet wide and twenty-five feet in length. The walls of the veranda are festooned with kashikari embellishment. There is a floral vase ornamented with blue color and tree motif is embellished with attractive color scheme. A symbolic representation of leading people to follow the sufi and reach the paradise the flowers, fruits and shapes are placed symmetrically in the panel with minor dissimilarities manifest the concept of paradise (figure 6).

The ceiling of the veranda is decorated with lacquered tarsembandi decorative technique of geometrical patterns presenting the concept of eight-pointed star along with rays and folds arranged symmetrically with twelve pointed star in the color of red and blue (figure 7).

The border festooned around the decorative panel of the veranda has six pointed star geometrical design interlaced one above another representing the influence from the tomb of Bibi Jawindi but the difference of material is observed as the design inspired by Multani kashikari tile works are converted into wooden tarsembandi ceiling design (figure 8 & 9).

The decorative elements of the Sirani Darbar interior chamber include sheeshakari, stylized fresco panels, mashrabbiya panels, arabesque decorations, lacquered tarsembandi ceiling and lacquered pilasters. However, the research precedes to the study of fresco panels representing tree of life, adopting qualitative research design. The research aims to explore tree of life, floral patterns, color schemes, compositional arrangements as well as the spiritual connection with the divine, symbolic meanings cultural inspirations and analysis of the fresco panels.

The term "fresco" refers to manabbat kari¹⁷ or naqashi art in the subcontinent, referred to mural painting techniques, using favored the fresco-secco method (painting on dry plaster) or a combination of both, possibly due to the climate or the desire for a wider range of pigments not compatible with the high alkalinity of wet lime plaster.

The historical context of fresco painting is found in Swat valley, in Buddhist stupa Butkara, Jogimara cave in Mirzapur district, Ajanta and Bagh caves. The earliest examples found in Punjab were Mehrab of the tomb of Shaikh Ala-ud-din Mauj Darya at Pakpattan by Tughluqs in 1336. The fresco was found in tomb of Sultan Ali Akbar at Multan 1585. The practice found in Mughal era, in the Maryam Zamani masjid in 1613. The fresco was found Masjid Wazir Khan, Lahore in 1634 the practice of fresco painting observed in Bahawalpur is masjid Daulat Khana in 1881.

The use of foliage, vegetal motifs and floral patterns in the fresco represents innovation and traditional rendering, elaborating the decorative floral garden of paradise which has been promised by the saints to the people to follow the path of Allah. It reflects the visual, aesthetic and spiritual pleasure passed on generation to generation and contributing to the historical monument with respect to traditional arts along with religious art reflecting the taste of the patrons, prioritizing the existing paradigm of Islamic, Mughal and Persian art. According to Edward: "Islamic Art is the expression of a whole culture, intimately intertwined with religious theological, and legal commitments".¹⁸ The floral decoration being the expression of cultural and traditional aspects intermingle with religious aspects remained the dominant character of Sirani Darbar, valued the concept of spirituality along with symmetry and unity.

¹⁷ Dr. Ahmad Nabi Khan, *The Art of Fresco Painting: A Favourite Media of Architectural Decoration*, 56.

¹⁸ Abdul Basit, "Study of Decorative Art in the Muslim Religious Monuments with Religious Significance," *Journal of Asian Civilizations* 38, no. 2 (2015): 95.



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)

The region of the South Punjab has developed a repertoire of motif and composition which are unique and artistic expression of the local artesian embodying their artistic skills. The fresco painting focused in the study are illustrated by the variation of the tree of life symbolizing the universality of the celestial and terrestrial life-metaphysically tied to the religion of Islamic Art and connection to the divine. The tree of life locally known as huma-e-gul.

Tree of life panel 1

The tree of life in figure 10 is composed with in multi-cusped arch and highly decorated floral patterns painted on it. The stylized tree is festooned with foliage, flowers, and fruit and signifies the concept of unity and togetherness composed together to form a tree of life by keeping the religious expects of aniconism established in Muslim state of Bahawalpur. The tree is bordered by arabesque panel of stylized acanthus leaves and floral patterns. According to Mandel, plants designs were acquired from the Sassanian and Greco-Roman art by Abbasid and Turks due to the love for flowers and gardens.¹⁹ The enigmatic nature of the tree of eternity is highlighted by Rumi in his Masnavi in which he narrates the story of a king, who sent a convoy to find it. After years of fruitless search the convoy, in desperation, approached a wise man saying: “Tree is unique in all times of the world: its fruits constituent’s water of life”.²⁰ Indeed, it has been written in holy Quran that “those who feared the punishment of Allah in this world will be in the shade of the trees of Paradise and the fountains flowing in Paradise in the Hereafter, and they will enjoy the fruits of whatever they want”.²¹ In return for your good deeds that you did in this world, eat and drink with relish such delicious and pure things, in which there is not even the slightest suspicion of physical harm. Do good deeds so that you can get such a reward. It has also been written in “Tafsir al-Jalalayn” that the people of Paradise will get heavenly blessings according to their will as opposed to worldly life, while in this world, a person has to be satisfied with what is available to him.²²

Tree of life: panel 2

The tree of life, figure 11, is festooned with six petals pomegranate flower arabesque arranged with acanthus leaves motif. The panel is adorned with fluted pilasters on either side painted in red and decorated with floral motifs on the base forming multi-cusped arch. The spandrel of the arch is festooned with lilac floral designs.

The panel presents Multani blue pottery flower pot decorated with fully grown floral tree in it. The pot symbolizes Multani blue pottery influence. Moreover, the melons on the left and the watermelon on the right adorned with leaves and poked with knife presenting life after death in paradise (figure 12). The fresco signifies the elements like fruits, foliage, flower pots and the luxuries which are promised with the pious people and discussed in the tafseer about It shows the conceptual relevance of the text with fresco painted in the darbar. The concept of prostration towards Allah and accepting Him as Lord, do good deed and following the path of sufism is the basic ideology adopted in Sirani Darbar.

¹⁹ Gabriele Mandel, *How to Recognize Islamic Art* (London: Macdonald Educational, 1979).

²⁰ Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Mathnawi of Jalal al-Din Rumi*, trans. R. A. Nicholson, vol. II (London: Luzac, 1926).

²¹ *Holy Quran*, Surah Al-Mursalat, verses 41–42.

²² Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, under Al-Mursalat 77:42, 486.



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)

Tree of life –panel 3

The panel represent stylized acanthus leaf design on the corners of the panel (figure 13). The lyrical arabesque motif with acanthus leaves forming Bahawalpur State insignia as center of interest and fully grown poppy flowers festooned over them. The presence of poppy flowers represents the khashkhash plant. The state insignia on the top emphasize the supremacy of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan-IV was a modern ruler who keenly took interest in the construction and decoration of architecture monuments and state insignia was also considered an important part of the decoration (figure 14).

This panel is symmetrically aligned composition of hamu-e-gul tree of life, bouquet of roses and different flowers with cypress tree on either side. The cypress tree is festooned with six petals flowers and twigs of pomegranate flower symbolize fruit of paradise and the cypress tree symbolize the garden of heaven. Hence the panel is the symbolic representation of paradise with its flowers, fruits and trees. There is an arabesque pattern surrounded by border in blue on white base provides a contrasting impression on the panel. Tree holds special sacredness in the life of Muslims. The Tree of Life is a recurring symbolic motif in South Asian and Islamic art, illustrated on carpets, tapestry, paintings and monuments signifying fertility, continuity, spiritual growth, and the connection between the earth and divine.

The cypress tree is the significant Persian influence observed in the surface decoration. The cypress trees are augmented with the swirling stalks of orange flower and green foliage, poetically complimenting the composition. The cypress tree motif appears commonly in Mughal Architecture, with the most famous being the Itimad ud Daula of Agra, built by Nur Jahan for her father. The other is the stunning Cypress Tomb in Lahore, built in the 18th century commonly known as Saruwala Maqbara. The term cypress is initiated from Greek word of kuo means growth and Pariso means equal. The term elaborates symmetry of tree, branches and crowns.²³ Cypress is known as the initial allegorical prototypes.²⁴ In Iranian culture, In Iranian culture, nature is a significant mythological feature, the cypress has three forms, Saru Azad, Saru Sahi and Saru Naz. The Saru used in the panel is Saru e naz means tall, cylinder, strenghtful and as it has been told by rumi that it has come from heaven.²⁵ In Greek and Roman ideologies, cypress tree is connected to gods of hell, and symbolically used on cemeteries. According to Zommordi, celtic people used symbol of tree as metaphor of death. They believe the deceased should be buried in tree, which is hollow, since the life of human is sustained in the plants.²⁶

There are different believes in regions about cypress tree, like in the Mediterranean shores, cypress is the tree of grieving, granted eternity, due to its gum, which is incorruptible and evergreen. Chinese supposed that the cypress is eternal living tree, thousands of years old, with deep roots connected to the beginning of human beings.²⁷ In old Evidence, the house of God is constructed with wood of (cypress) by David in God's command.²⁸ According to symbolic reference by Saba Alebrahim Dehkrodi, Cypress

²³ H. Sabeti, *Forests, Trees and Shrubs of Iran* (Yazd, Iran: Yazd University Press, 2006), 874

²⁴ H. Zomorodi, *Vegetal Symbols and Secrets in Persian Poetry*, 20.

²⁵ H. Masse, *Croyances et Coutumes Persanes*, ed. M. Roshanzamir, vol. 1 (Tabriz: Institute of Iranian History and Culture, Tabriz University, 1974), 243–54.

²⁶ H. Zomorodi, "Vegetal Symbols and Secrets in Persian Poetry," First Publication (2008): 16.

²⁷ S. Saleh Shoushtari and A. A. Shorazi, "Paralleling the Shape of Trees in Nature and Persian Paintings," *Negareh Journal* 7 (1999): 5–15.

²⁸ M. J. Yahaghi, *Encyclopedia of Mythology and Story in Persian Literature* (2007).



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)

symbolizes lastingness and infinity at the place of God wanted perpetual presence.²⁹

The cypress designs are observed in textiles like on the cashmere scarves with the cypress, tip is bent by the blowing wind, signifying in early times, artesian have given keen interest to the detail observations in their tree designs. The tall cypress tree has been sanctified with distinct representation by Iranians from the ancient epochs.³⁰

The cypress is the representation of the spiritual life, so the holy places in Iran are fenced by cypress tree. It propagates tall, known as free tree for its freedom pointing towards heaven away from the evil and distraction. The tree has different stages sometimes they are leafy and fresh and sometimes declining without leaves with only faded branches cypress is an evergreen tree, full of leaves symbolic vision of eternity but no fruits. In Kulyat-i-Saadi, Cypress is discussed as eternal, leafy but fruitless free.³¹

In poetry, characteristics of cypress is credited by poets and authors as tall as genuine, high, complimentary, fresh, young, magnificence, allegiance, gilding, unrewarded.

Tree of life –panel: 4

The horizontal panel is a symmetrical composition plate (figure 15). The composition of acanthus leaf lyrically, arranged in red color supporting the central vase with blue pottery representing Multani blue pottery influence and full of flowers. The red acanthus scroll is carrying two vases with foliage a peach flowers with traditional lights and darks are balancing the composition. The upper portion is supported by white flowers with blue base showcasing the brilliance and elegance of the artists. Forming the border with stylized acanthus leaf on the spandrel of the panel.

The composition compliments the concept of local foliage available in the region of South Punjab with respect to floral embellishment and to satisfy the aniconism and representing the idea of heaven and its mystic significance elaborated by the Saint. The decoration signify sacred elements identified by the researcher representing the ideology of Unity and Symmetry. Poets used plants as metaphors creating different level of perception by illustrating the perseverance of mysteries and signs in older and contemporary Persian literature.³² Tree being metaphor of revival, reappearance and reflection of human presenting unique idea of man's connection to the divine.



Figure 10. The Huma-e-Gul Panel in Main Chamber of

²⁹ *The Scientific Journal of NAZAR Research Center (NRC) for Art, Architecture & Urbanism: Bagh-e-Nazar*, 2021, 103-112.

³⁰ M. J. Yahaghi, *Encyclopedia of Mythology and Story in Persian Literature*, 112.

³¹ M. Saadi, *Koliyat-e Saadi*, ed. M. A. Foroughi (1977).

³² H. Zomorodi, *Vegetal Symbols and Secrets in Persian Poetry*, 37.

Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)

Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.



Figure 11. Fresco panel with blue pottery and fruits. Picture by author.



Figure 12. Representation of watermelon in fresco panel in Main Chamber of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.



Figure 13. Decorative fresco panel with state insignia in Main Chamber of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.

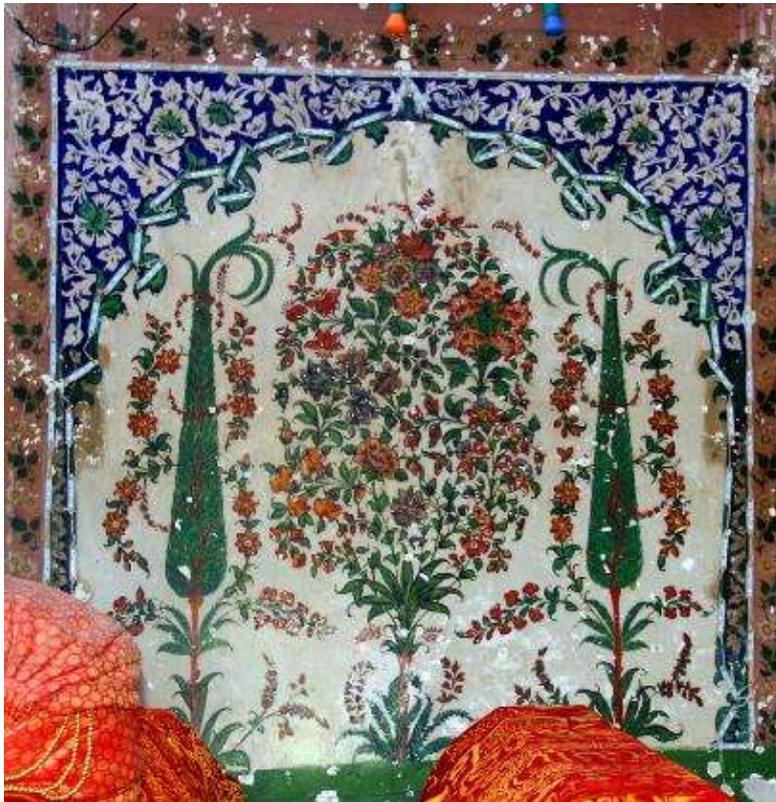


Figure 14. Decorative fresco panel with cypress tree and Hama-e-Gul in Main Chamber of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.



Figure 15. Decorative fresco with blue pottery vase in Main Chamber of Khawaja Mokham Din Sirani, built in 1897. Picture by author.

Conclusion

The study has examined the representation of the Tree of Life in the frescoes of Khawaja Mohkam-ud-Din Sirani Darbar, Bahawalpur, with particularly highlighting iconography, stylized designs and symbolic meanings. Through visual documentation and qualitative



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)

analysis, the research has accentuated the significance of this motif within the structure of the shrine, connecting it with Islamic, Persian, Mughal and South Asian artistic traditions.

The findings reveal that the Tree of Life is designed in stylized vegetal forms and symmetrical compositions, reflecting both local craftsmanship and established Islamic ornamental conventions signifying it with different aspects of paradise imagery, spirituality, sufi meaning. Symbolically, the Tree of Life functions as a powerful metaphor for spiritual growth, continuity, and the connection between the material and decorative techniques. The imagery enhances the devotional atmosphere and transforms the architectural spaces in an impression of the reflection of garden. The study highlights that these frescoes are not merely decorative elements but significant visual expressions of faith.

The traditional fresco technique, combined with a harmonious color palette, demonstrates the aesthetic sensibilities of the era and patrons sensible craftsmanship. The malleability of traditional methods to regional conditions of Bahawalpur. Ichnographically.

References

- Abdul Basit, "Study of Decorative Art in the Muslim Religious Monuments with Religious Significance," *Journal of Asian Civilizations* 38, no. 2 (2015): 95.
- Dr. Ahmad Nabi Khan, *The Art of Fresco Painting: A Favourite Media of Architectural Decoration*, 56.
- Faheem Arshad, "The Khanqah System: An Analytical Study of Its Origins, Development, and Features," MPhil scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, Mohi-ud-Din Islamic University, Nerian Sharif, AJ&K, 1.
- G. A. Pugachenkova, "Khanakqah Bakhauddin," *Maskan*, no. 7-8 (1993): 24.
- Gabriele Mandel, *How to Recognize Islamic Art* (London: Macdonald Educational, 1979).
- H. Masse, *Croyances et Coutumes Persanes*, ed. M. Roshanzamir, vol. 1 (Tabriz: Institute of Iranian History and Culture, Tabriz University, 1974), 243-54.
- H. Sabeti, *Forests, Trees and Shrubs of Iran* (Yazd, Iran: Yazd University Press, 2006), 874
- H. Zomorodi, "Vegetal Symbols and Secrets in Persian Poetry," *First Publication* (2008): 16.
- Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, under Al-Mursalat 77:42, 486.
- Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Mathnawi of Jalal al-Din Rumi*, trans. R. A. Nicholson, vol. II (London: Luzac, 1926).
- J. W. Frembgen, *Journey to God: Sufis and Dervishes in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 38.
- M. Din, *Gazetteer of the Bahawalpur State* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2001), 41.
- M. J. Yahaghi, *Encyclopedia of Mythology and Story in Persian Literature* (2007).
- Malik Muhammad Din, *Gazetteer of Bahawalpur State* (1904), 41.
- S. Saleh Shoushtari and A. A. Shorazi, "Paralleling the Shape of Trees in Nature and Persian Paintings," *Negareh Journal* 7 (1999): 5-15.
- Salah Uddin Awaisi, *Sahib us Sayr* (Lahore: Alfaisal Publishers, 2002), 124.
- Shahid Rizvi, *Sher-e-Bimisal* (Bahawalpur: Shahb Delhvi Academy, 2020), 18.



Vol. 3 No. 12 (December) (2025)

The Scientific Journal of NAZAR Research Center (NRC) for Art, Architecture & Urbanism: Bagh-e-Nazar, 2021, 103-112.

Zahid Ali Wasti, Bahawalpur ki Sarzameen (Lahore: Beacon Books, 2009), 546.