

Architectural Glory and Cultural Fusion of Indo-Islamic and Bundeli Architecture during the Later Medieval Period

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Abstract: This article analyzes the glory and article fusion of Indo Islamic in South Asia during the later medieval Period of Pran Nath Temple Prana. In this research paper, after studying the primary source material available in Prannath temple, Panna, new facts have been compiled and analyzed from them, and new facts have been exposed. An intensive field survey has also been used in this research paper to shed light on the untouched points. Research result shows that: (1) In this region of Bundelkhand, the temple of Mahamati Prannath has become the center of religious tourism. Thousands of pilgrims have come over here in the Winter Festival in November every year after Dushahara for Sharad Purnima International Festival, (2) The temple of Prannath has become the architectural hub in Bundelkhand and provides so many primary sources to the researcher. Kuljam Swaroop, the pious Grantha of Pranami Sect, have preserved here in original form. This holy and religious grantha gives us valuable information for the regional history of Bundelkhand. (3) The temple of Prannath is a vast center of Communal harmony and Hindu-Muslim unity in this region (4) The Temple of Prannath provides a primary historical source regarding local history, history of Rulers of Bundelkhand, especially Maharaja Chatrasal, who was the disciple of Mahamati Prannath. The heritage of Bundeli and Islamic Architecture is very important for tourism objects.

Abstrak: Artikel ini menganalisis kejayaan dan peleburan artikel Indo Islam di Asia Selatan pada Masa pertengahan akhir di Kuil Prana Pran Nath. Dalam makalah ini, setelah mempelajari bahan sumber utama yang tersedia di Kuil Prannath, Panna, fakta-fakta baru telah dikumpulkan dan dianalisis darinya, dan fakta-fakta baru telah terungkap. Sebuah survei lapangan intensif juga telah digunakan dalam makalah penelitian ini untuk menjelaskan poin-poin yang belum tersentuh. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: (1) Di kawasan Bundelkhand ini, Kuil Mahamati Prannath menjadi pusat wisata religi. Ribuan peziarah telah datang ke sini dalam Festival Musim Dingin pada bulan November setiap tahun setelah Dushahara untuk Festival Internasional Sharad Purnima, (2) Kuil Prannath telah menjadi pusat arsitektur di Bundelkhand dan menyediakan begitu banyak sumber utama bagi peneliti. Kuljam Swaroop, Grantha yang saleh dari Sekte Pranami, telah diawetkan di sini dalam bentuk aslinya. Grantha suci dan religius ini memberi kita informasi berharga untuk sejarah regional Bundelkhand. (3) Kuil Prannath adalah pusat kerukunan Komunal dan persatuan Hindu-Muslim di wilayah ini (4) Kuil Prannath menyediakan sumber sejarah utama mengenai sejarah lokal, sejarah Penguasa Bundelkhand, terutama Maharaja Chatrasal, seorang murid Mahamati Pranath. Peninggalan Bundeli dan Arsitektur Islam sangat penting untuk objek wisata.



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INTRODUCTION

Panna is a part of Bundelkhand. Bundelkhand is situated in the center of India (Dixit, 1977, p. 12). Bundelkhand was known as Jaijakhukti during Chandelle period (Bose, 1956, p. 42). This Janpad was known as Bundelkhand in the mid of 16th century, just after the rise of Bundela Power. This region was known as different names in ancient period such as *Puling, Dasharn, Chedi, Madhya Desh* etc. (Majumdar & Alteker, 1967, pp. 36-39). This region was ruled by Chandelles before the rise of Bundela Power (Gupta, 1997, p. 24). The state covers an area of 2,371 sq. miles. (Luard, 1907, p. 163). The chief town of the state Panna was situated in 24° 43' north latitude, and 80° 12' east longitude. (Luard, 1907, p. 198).

The History of Panna is intimately connected with that of Orchha in conjunction with which it should be read. (Luard, 1907, p. 6). After the revolt and death of Maharaja Jujhar Singh in 1634 A.D., the Orcha state territories were incorporated in to the Mughal Empire (Elliot, 1877, p. 7-47). At this juncture, moreover, a leader appeared in Champat Rai Bundela (Luard, 1907, p.168). Champat Rai was a grandson of Udayaditya, or Udayajit, the third son of Raja RudraPratap, the founder of Orchha, who had, on his father's death, received Maheba (24° 24' N, 80° 10' E) in Jagir (Elliot, 1877, p. 61).

Panna was originally a 'Gond' settlement but fell apparently to the Beghela chiefs of Rewa in the 13th or 14th century (Luard, 1907, p. 198). It was in 1494, in the time of Raja Veer and again in 1499, the object of an attack by Sikandar Lodhi (Luard, 1917, p. 198). In 1555, it was held by Raja Ram Chandra of Rewa. In the 17th century, it was taken by Chhatarsal, and became a place of importance in 1675, when he made its capital. (Luard, 1907; Dayal, p. 36). A foreign traveler, Tieffenthaler, who visited the place about 1765, called Panna as a populous village of the Dangahi chief, and it is famous for its diamond mines (Elliot, 1877, p. 462).

Panna is very well known for its architectural heritage and beautiful historical Temple of Mahamati Pran Nath. This Pran Nath temple of Panna, presents a fine blend of Hindu & Muslim architecture. Panna is the most sacrosanct pilgrimage for the followers of the Pranami sect world over. The dominant architecture schemes of a majority of the temple are informally homogenous (Elliot, 1877, p. 31-32). The temple building of in the Panna town are largely constructed of local stone which gives it a clear and substantial appearance. The earliest reference to the site is probably contained in the Chatterprakash (Luard, 1907, p. 36) written by *Lalkavi-*

and *Bundela-Bhasker Mehakavya* written by *Rajkavi Kavimani Krishna Kavi*, who is the Raj Kavi of Panna Durbar.

The policy of temple destruction on which *Aurangzeb* launched in 1669-1670, created an opening which Chhatra Sal at once seized. *Chhatrasal* was, therefore hailed as the champion of the Hindu faith and Kshatriyas honor. Even *Sujan Singh*, the loyal *Bundela* Rajah of *Orchha* sent him a secret message of praise and good wishes (Krishnadas, 1974).

METHOD

The objective of this research paper is to explore the various elements of the blending of Bundeli and Islamic art that have not yet come to light and are lacking in Historical material and also to highlight the Islamic influence on Bundeli art and architectural glory and cultural fusion of Indo-Islamic and Bundeli architecture during latter medieval period in central India. In this Research Paper, after studying the primary source material available in Pranath temple, Panna, new facts have been compiled and analyzed from them and new facts have been exposed. Intensive field survey has also been used in this research paper to shed light on the untouched facts.

RISE OF PRANAMI DHARMA IN BUNDELKHAND

It is well known that from 15th to 17th century, devotional religious leaders, Saints played an important role in bringing about the immense social and religious changes that swept through the lands of the erstwhile Mughal Empire. Names like Guru Nanak, Kabir, Tulsi das, Mira Bai, Narsi Mehta, Dadu are familiar example in this regard. The present Paper is about one figure who, while being lesser known is yet one, who, in many ways, sheds invaluable light on the history of the period: Mahamati Pran Nath.

Mahamati Pran Nath was born in the family of the east while 'Diwan' of Jam Nagar in *Gujarat*. His mother Dhanbai belongs to Sindh province and a father to a neighboring province *Kutch*, both with very similar languages. On seeing the dominating social evils like communalism and untouchability, he was upset and opposed the ruler of *Jam Nagar*, a supporter of old conventions and religion-based differences. He started preaching the principles of *Vishwa Dharma* (one religion for the entire world) based on the teaching of his Guru Devchandra ji, who belongs to Sindh province. To bring equality for all, he stood against the existing practices of differentiating among person to person. He put for-

ward the conception of one religion by combining the principles of all religion namely- *Hindu, Muslims, Christian, Sikh, Jain, Buddha, Parsi* etc. who are spread all over the world.

Mahamati Pran Nath of "Pranami Dharma" was undoubtedly the supporter of Hindu Muslim unity and religious liberalism. He tried to contact with *Aurangzeb* through the Mughal Nobles and *Ulama* for the aim of religious liberalism in the religious views of different social Organization, but he failed. *Mahamati Pran Nath* has actively supported to a young, rising Chief *Chhatrasal Bundela* in Mughal Bundela struggle in *Bundelkhand* against the religious policy of *Aurangzeb*. *Chhatrasal* has sent his religious followers of *Pranami Dharma* to Nepal for the publicity of liberal and religious views and feelings of his religious Guru *Mahamati Pran Nath* on the basis of Hindu religion, and feeling of Hinduism. These followers were called Dhamis or Pran Nathis.

Mahamati Pran Nath presents a fascinating personality, whose writing provides a uniquely revealing lens on larger issues of the society of his time. He can be considered as one of the last of the important Sant figures, and his teachings, while sharing many concerns and ideas with the other great devotional leaders, at the same time, presents a unique and remarkable religious consciousness. *Mahamati Pran Nath* brought together teachings from several different religious traditions with the aim of showing the essential inner unity of these religions. He was enabled to do so due to his great learning and active efforts to understand the scriptures of the different traditions. His opposition to exclusivist and narrow interpretations of various religious traditions indicates his engagement with one of the most prominent social issues of this time.

The 17th century witnessed dramatic social upheaval through the lands of the erstwhile Mughal Empire, with repercussions felt at many layers of society, of particularly among urban-based populations and among the rural communities, to a lesser degree. These changes were the result of numerous occurrences in the spheres of religion, politics and economy. Most prominent among these were the declining fortunes of the Mughal Empire, the appearance of regional rebellions and several semi-independent regional polities, commercialization of society, and rapid urbanization. In this context, when all of his compositions are taken into consideration, *Mahamati Pran Nath* reveals an exceptional sensitivity to the particular social circumstances of the people to whom he preached. For example, *Mahamati Pran Nath* would cite and discuss specific

religious scriptures, selecting these according to his listeners, particular background knowledge etc. (B.D. Bajpai, *Mahamati Pran Nath*, p. 24)

Towards the close of the seventeenth century, there arose in *Bundelkhand* a reformer named ' *Mahamati Pran Nath*', who called upon the people to prefer the essence to the forms of religion, a living faith to a dead mechanical ritual and the spirit to the letter of their scriptures; he insisted on the unity of the Godhead underlying the multitude of the idols of popular worship, invited earnest believers to his fold without distinction of caste or creed, and tried to form a brotherhood of the elect. The aims of *Mahamati Pran Nath* were abandoned by his sect when his successors in the leadership of the *Hindu* set up temporal dominion for themselves and made military drill take the place of moral self-reform and spiritual growth (Prannath, 1972; Laldas; 1973; Bajpai, 1981, p. 5). *Mahamati Pran Nath* of "Pranami Dharma" was undoubtedly the supporter of Hindu Muslim unity and religious liberalism (Prannath, 1972; Laldas, 2008, p. 6; Kumar, 2009). He tried to contact *Aurangzeb* through the Mughal Nobles and *Ulama* for the aim of religious liberalism in the religious views of different social Organization, but he failed (Prannath, 1972, Bajpai, 1981, p. 5). *Mahamati Pran Nath* has actively supported to young, rising Chief *Chhatrasal Bundela* in Mughal Bundela struggle in *Bundelkhand* against the religious policy of *Aurangzeb* (Prannath, 1972, Laldas, 2008; Bajpai, 1981). *Chhatrasal* has sent his religious followers of *Pranami Dharma* to Nepal for the publicity of liberal and religious views and feelings of his religious Guru *Mahamati Pran Nath* on the basis of Hindu religion, and feeling of Hinduism (Laldas, 2008, pp. 5-9). These followers were called Dhamis or Pran Nathis (Laldas, 2008, pp. 5-9).

ORIGIN OF MAHAMATI SHRI PRAN NATH TEMPLE

The temple of Pran Nath belongs to the interesting local sect of the Dhamis or Pran –Nathis. (Laldas, 2008, pp. 1-13). The exact date of Pran Nath's arrival in Panna is very uncertain. From the best accounts he appears to have come in the time of Raja Sabha Singh in about Vikram Samvat 1742, and not as popular tradition has it in the time of *Chhatrasal* (Laldas, 2008, pp. 1-13). Another source reflects that the meeting of *Mahamati Pran Nath* and *Chhatrasal* was held in *Mau*, near *Chhatarpur* by the efforts of *Devkaran*, the nephew of *Chhatrasal* in Vikram Samvat 1740 (Laldas, 2008, pp. 1-13). *Pran Nath* appears to have risen to favour by being

instrumental in causing the diamond mines to be re-opened. Pran Nath was a native of *Jamnagar* in *Kathiawar*, and was of *Kshatriya* caste (Luard, 1907, p. 37). He said to have settled down on the bank of *Kundi* river (Luard, 1907, p. 37).

Pran Nath, like *Kabir*, was well versed in the lore of both the Hindu and Muhammadan faiths and endeavored to show that no essential difference existed between them (Laldas, 2008, p. 40). To this end, he collected a large number of sayings from the *Vedas* and from the *Kuran*, which he compiled in to fourteen books, all in verse. The language is very uncouth (Gupta, 1997, p. 92). The disciples of Pran Nath prove their acceptance of his doctrines by eating in a mixed assembly of Hindu and *Muhammadans* (Luard, 1907, p. 37). It does not appear, however, that with this exception and the resulting abolition of all east's, that the two classes in any ways confound their civil or religious distinctions, the unity of belief consisting merely in admitting that the God of the *Hindu* and of the *Musalman* or any other faiths is in reality one and same (Luard, 1907, p. 37). Those who follow this faith are known as Pran Nath's, or *Dhamis* (Luard & Shambhudhyal, 1907, p. 37).

ARCHITECTURE OF SHRI PRAN NATH TEMPLE (GUMMAT JI TEMPLE)

Pran Nath temple is one of the most famous temples in Panna District. It is located in the west side of Panna. This huge and beautiful temple was constructed under the rule of Maharaja Chhatrasal and under the supervision of Seth Lal Das. The Pranath Temple of Panna is a syncretic example of the Bundela style and the Hindu Muslim style. This temple was built during the time of Shri Prannath ji in 1688 AD with the contribution of Maharaja Chhatrasal, the supreme disciple of Mahaprabhu Prannath and all the disciples. This is the most important temple of Pranamies, which reflects their social life. The GarbhaGrah of this temple is Octagonal. It has eight corners (Pahlu) in North, South, East, West, Agni, Nairatya, VayavyaIshan direction (Luard, 1907, pp. 37). The Shikhar (Dome) of this temple has constructed with Golden Kalash (Singh, 1975, p. 118). The main central Dome has constructed with eight additional Domes (Luard C.E. 1907, p. 199). These Domes are the symbol of Ideology of Pran Nath ji's '*Sarvadharm Sambhav*' (Luard, 1907, p. 199). The interior decoration of this temple is according to the *Bundeli style* (Luard, 1907, p. 199). *Jali window, Multi Dome, Palki Dome are the main architectural characteristic of Bundeli style* This style have come in to an existence with the



Figure 1. The Octagonal Dome of Pran Nath Temple

mixing of *Rajasthani, Mughal*, and the local architectural style (Luard, 1907, p. 199). Inner walls of this temple decorated with "*Pachhikari*" and beautiful paintings which reflects the *Ras Leila* of Lord Krishna (Luard, 1907, p. 199). It is believed that *Pran Nathji* lived here and will remain here and thus became the highest Pranami tirtha as *Mahamati's Punyasthali*, and hence *Panna* is the *Param Dham* for Pranamies (Luard, 1907, p. 199). The *Rang Mahal* has eight Pahals. The spherical central *Dome* is as Muslim architecture and the *lotus* form on this *Dome* is according to Hindu tradition. The object of worship in the temple of Pran Nath is one of Pran Nath's Books, which is kept, on a gold embroidered cloth (Luard, 1907, p. 199).

GLORIOUS WISDOM OF PRANATH TEMPLE

Mahamati Prannath became Brahman while contemplating and meditating in this temple. Rasraj Shri Krishna is worshiped in the Nijanand community, so here there is a decoration of Shri Krishna's murlis, crown and Vagavastra etc. The construction of the temple investment is based on the medieval Maharaja Rao style. The main gate is called Kamani Darwaza. This temple is a fine example of post medieval architecture. The *Musa Chitta* at the top of the temple complex is attractive. The golden urn on

the top and the paw, the universal symbol of Lord Krishna's religion, is installed on the best part. It is a symbol of the Sihotpurna Brahma Paramatma of Shri Prannath. The horns and upspring around the central dome above the temple Garbhagraha enhance the beauty of the central vistas. Narratives and religious stories are painted on the walls in the temple. The unique shade of the temple is worth seeing in the moonlit night. Mahamati Prannath used to meditate in this temple, and this is where he became Brahman. This is the main temple of Shri Krishna Pranami sect. On the occasion of the full moon of autumn, a big fair of the International Autumn Festival is held in this temple, where tourists and pilgrims from Southwest Asia, East Asia, Europe America and other parts of the world gather here and for 11 days, Shri Krishna is here. Janmotsav, Shri Prannath PragatanMahotsav, and Holi festivals are celebrated with great pomp. In this way, this temple is a wonderful example of universal unity and mutual unity of different religions.

Mahamati Pran Nath wanted this message of unity between the teachings of different faiths to reach the world. Impressed by discussion and arguments on scripture, heads of many sects came to Mahamati collectively. He explained to them how their attitude clinging to the ritualistic formalism had tarnished the image of Hinduism in the eye of others.

In the heart touching verses Mahamati has pleaded unity with him as the soul is unable to bear the pangs of separation anymore. The anguish of the soul is clearly visible in these verses. In each season the condition of the soul is so pitiable without the Lord that the life in this world is not worth living.

Mahamati says that anguish of gopis in Vrandavan subsequent to the disappearance of Shri Krishan is similar to the status of the separated soul. As the days pass, the seasons too change in the year, but the longings of the soul do not subside at all. The weather conditions add more fire to the agony, particularly during the festivals and other celebrations (Charitamirat, 1974).

These verses in Sindhi Wani Mahamati expressed his views in different aspects-

Aanunhueisdhane je kadamon, tade sang nasaangaaye

Cheyaaunhganibhatiya, pan thiyamnasaanjaaye.
Section 5/11

When I was at the feet of the Guru, I did not know about my relations.

He tried to make me understand in many ways,

but I remained ignored.³⁶

*Ache aanuperelagi, Tademoonkecheyaanunei
Rooh tohejeeroyethee, Aanunpeyaanaras mein
keen. Section 5/15*

When I sat at the feet of the Lord, The Guru told me (Devchandraji)

Your soul is weeping, how can I have you here and go back to the Abode.

*To IlamChayaolaadpaarindo,
Temiensaknakaanye*

*Je jebhatein moon nhaariyo, Ilameinsabhedinee-
pujaye. Section 7/45*

The Spiritual Knowledge (Tartam) given by you will fulfill all my dreams,

I have no doubt about it, I have observed from various angels,

That it has accomplished all the tasks.

Sarosachsaahabjo, Hit sachohallaneHak

He koodaakaajeeraand mein, Bhaaeiyehinmaafak.
Section 7/70

This is the court of my true lord

Here only truth prevails.

In this false world of false judge

Do not pronounce improper judgments.

*Main Lakhon Vidh Dekhiyaa, kahun Khudi Kyo-
nAe Na Jaaye*

AekyonJaavePedse, Jo DoojiHakenDayiDekhaaye.
Section 15/1

(The Doha as a Vehicle of Sant Teaching Pran Nath's Choupai)

Strange is it not, that of the million ways which I endeavor to test through the door of darkness not once the ego crept silently to rest! But how can it be effaced when the Lord has its counterpart made manifest.

SHRI BANGLA JI TEMPLE

Shri Bangla ji temple was built up in 1683 A.D. by Mahamati Pran Nath as the live heart around which the further establishment of Panna town. (Luard, 1907, p. 199). This temple situated in the courtyard of Prannath ji temple was established in the year 1683 AD by Mahaprabhu Prannath ji as the first construction of the present Panna city. At the time of Mahamati Pran Nath, this Bangla ji Temple was roofed with timber and hay and later on it was given the present structure by Maharaj Chhatrasal (Luard, 1907, p. 199). Then, the disciples of Mahamati Pran Nath the *Sundersath* having devoted their body, mind and wealth, further added to its magnificence. During the time of Mahamati Pran-

nath, this Shri Banglaji temple was Krishna and indebted, which was built by Maharaja Sabha Singh, the son of Maharaja Chhatrasal, in the present corporeal form. From time to time the disciple Mandal of Mahamati Prannath Ji, Sundarsath gave it its present modern form with its body, mind, and wealth. Mahamati Shri Prannath used to give sermons to his disciple group in Shri Banglaji temple itself. As a result, it is known as the Parliament House. According to the same tradition, even today the discussion of Brahmavarni and bhajan, kirtan and worship is done in this temple.

In this temple, sandalwood and seat Takht is still present, on which Mahamati Shri Prannath used to give orders to his disciples. There is a painting of Shri Krishna Leela in the parikrama of the temple, which is very attractive. Shlokas from the scriptures and Vedas are inscribed. In the decoration of the temple, the main religious text of the Pranami sect on the huge throne of Chuki is replaced by the Kuljam form. The Murli and the crown of Lord Krishna are worshiped here. Religious festivals are celebrated in this temple. Mahamati Shri Prannath had come to Panna Nagar with the throne of his Guru Shri Devchand ji. Whose service was entrusted to Brahma Muni Jayanti. Here also the service of Krishna ji is worshiped in the form of Shri SadguruDev Chand ji. This temple was given a grand look by Shri BhushanKash Dhama.

In this historic temple Mahamati Pran Nath directly addressed people's concerns regarding their experiences of the dramatic social upheaval that characterized much of late Mughal India. His works reveal the influence of the Sant tradition, Bhakti, (especially the Nirgun tradition), Vaishnavism, Sufism, and even Ismail Shi'ism. Mahamati Pran Nath display an intimate familiarity with the practices and beliefs involved in the worship of Krishna, particularly as it existed in Braj-Mathura region. Hence, In Mahamati Pran Nath's, Shri Ras, one encounters the intense emotionalism of the Viraha motif, as well as references to the Puranic tradition from which the Krishna tradition is in part derived. In the Kirtana, Mahamati Pran Nath is shown to be conversant with Jain beliefs and their penitential practices. Yet in his Sanandh, Mahamati Pran Nath reveals a thorough knowledge of Indian Sufi tradition, with its concepts of Ishq, and Mashuq-love, the lover, and the beloved. In his last work, Mahamati Pran Nath brings in yet another tradition, that of Ismail Shi'ism, with its notion of the Mehdi of Messiah of the end times (David, 1996).

Pran Nath's desire to bring together beliefs

from both the Vaishnava and Islamic traditions, call to mind the earlier efforts of perhaps the best-known Bhakti figure, Kabir, criticizes the exclusivist and orthodox members of three communities-usually in the person of the mullah and the Pundit; for their narrow, superficial view of their respective religions. Both men also emphasized the ultimate sameness of God when viewed from an inner, devotional perspective. The following Doha of Kabir was taken as representative of his overall attitude to external, ritualistic religion:

O Allah Ram, present in all living beings.

Have mercy on your servants, O Lord!

Why bump your head on the ground, why bathe your body in water?

You kill and you call yourself 'humble' -

But your vices you conceal what's the use of ablution, litanies, purifications and prostrations in the mosque?

If you pray with a heart full of guile, what's the use of Haj and Kaaba? (Charlotte, 1993, pp. 217-218).

THE SPIRITUAL GLORY OF PRANNATH TEMPLE IN CONTEXT WITH TEACHINGS OF PRANNATH

Since Mahamati Pran Nath used to expound the great truths to the assembly of his disciples, over here, so it was also known as '*Sansad Bhawan*' or Parliament building. Even today the same old tradition is being followed in that the expositions on Tartam sagar, singing of devotional songs and congregational programme are held here. The coat seat (Takhat) of sandal wood on which Mahamati Pran Nath sat to deliver his preaching's is still present in this temple and it is now on that historical cot that the 'Tartam sagar' clad with the attire and diadem with flute is seated representing Shri Krishna to whom the service cum worship is offered on the eightfold time unites of the day (Gupta, 1997, p.152).

This temple is the official court of the *Purna* Brahma Parmatma to whom the devotees submit their applications mentally. It is a matter of common experience that nobody returns unfulfilled from here. Shri *Sad ChidAnand* grants fulfillment to the desires of each and all applicants. All the festivals of the tradition of the path of devotion to Shri Krishna are celebrated with great earnestness here; especially the five days programme of Sharad Purnima is celebrated very magnificently, when the *Deity* is led in a grand procession to be seated in the '*Raas Mandali*' situated just beside the Bangla ji Mandir.

This five days celebration of Sharad Purnima



Figure 2. A Panoramic View of Pran Nath Temple

assumes International magnitude, as the Sunder-sath from Sindh, Pakistan, USA, U.K., Canada, Australia, Nepal Bhutan etc. Throng here, the erudite orators arriving here from distant places deliver inspiring talks and the different groups of artists display Raas dances and other elevating art feats (Brajlal, 2010, p. 13). This was the temple wherein Mahamati used to meditate and to ultimate cast his physical vesture here. In Nijanand Sampradaya, Shri Krishna, the lord of sweetest bliss is the object of worship, therefore on the front hub, the presence of Shri Krishna, the bliss incarnate, is envisioned through the symbol of his flute, diadem, and attire. In the Nijanand philosophy the living presence of Purna Brahma Parmatma is to be felt in the 'Tartam Sagar', which was given to the world through Mahamati Pran Nath (Dubey, 2010, p.13). Shri Krishna, at the time of his leaving Bijamandal, gifted the set of his flute, diadem and attire as the representative of his bliss aspect to the Gopis in order to relieve their pangs of Separation, instructing them to feel his presence in those symbolic objects. In the very same way Lord Pran Nath at the time of his holy, transit from the moral vesture gifted Tartam sagar to his disciple saying, "You may always find me in the scripture." (Dubey, 2010, p.14), so these two mementoes, namely the Tartam Sagar and the set of flute, diadem and attire altogether constitute the perfect form in which Mahamati Pran Nath alias Purna Brahma Parmatma, Shri Krishna Lives; because Pran Nath in his self-enlightened state was identified with Shri Krishna and so we realized Ma-

hamati Pran Nath and Shri Krishna as one, in this representative form of sweetened bliss.

The temple of Pran Nath and this holy land of Panna has been acknowledge as an extension of the holy land of RAAS and that of the Lila (The divine sport) of Bijamandal, so it is the firm faith of the devotees that this place harbour the living presence of Purna Brahma Shri Krishna and Mahamati Pran Nath in a single form. It is therefore that is not only worship, but the service sum worship for all the eight PAHARS of the day is performed here with the feeling that right from morning to midnight we serve and worship our most beloved Lord. All the festivals of the tradition of the path of devotion to Shri Krishna are celebrated here with the strong faith and feeling that Shri Krishna himself along with his Gopis is presented in every celebration of the festival.

Pran Nath Social background, on the other hand, allowed him to be a highly educated and that too in several languages. One can see, in Pran Nath's writings, a concern to bring people from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds into a unified community. While a good many of Pran Nath's followers, who are Sindhi Hindus of Sindh, and they were migrated from Pakistan, of the merchant profession or from families involved in trade, his verses that make use of weaving metaphors indicate that he also had devotees among the weaving community. Furthermore, he is at different times seen to be addressing sadhus of various Panth, Muslims, and even Jain ascetics in his verses,

indicating that he was concerned with engaging people of divergent religion and cultural background. Mahamati Pran Nath Consciousness of the profound changes, sweeping through India, is reflected in his Choupai. His early collections (Ras etc.) deal with various themes that were widely popular among Bhakti movements. These themes have been elaborated by Karine Schumer in an article analyzing the poetic forms used by North Indian Bhaktas and saints and include such motifs as the importance of the sat guru, Varaha, Maya, man, and faith, references to other earlier Saint figures, among other themes. Schumer also emphasizes the importance of understanding the various contexts in which saint poems appear, and writes that, "They cannot be properly understood without taking into account that multiplicity of contexts in which they can occur."

A Second phase is discernible in Mahamati Pran Nath's engagement with the Sufi tradition. Mahamati Pran Nath also elaborated on mystical cosmology, using both Puranic and Sufi notion of a hierarchy of worlds.

Mahamati had approached the entire social sphere with an open mind and cosmopolitan outlook. In advancing his religious ideals his point of emphasis was marked by a concept of unity and magnanimity. It was a period of great crises and people from all over the world were quarreling with one another without understanding the true meaning of religion and without grasping the fundamental unity underlying all the religious creeds. Mahamati took up the sword of integral knowledge to kill this monster of ignorance (Champakalakshmi, 1996, p. 32)

Mahamati Pran Nath directly addressed people's concerns regarding their experiences of the dramatic social upheaval that characterized much of late Mughal India. Pran Nath's desire to bring together beliefs from both the Vaishnava and Islamic traditions, call to mind the earlier efforts of perhaps the best known Bhakti figure, Kabir, criticizes the exclusivist and orthodox members of three communities-usually in the person of the mullah and the Pundit; for their narrow, superficial view of their respective religions. Both men also emphasized the ultimate sameness of God when viewed from an inner, devotional perspective. Mahamati Pran Nath Consciousness of the profound changes, sweeping through India, is reflected in his Choupai. Mahamati Pran Nath also elaborated on mystical cosmology, using both Puranic and Sufi notion of a hierarchy of worlds (Brendan, 2001, p. 315).

The hole Ares of the wide expanse in which Shri Gummat ji and Shri Bangla ji temple are situated is known as the "Brahma Chabootara" (Shrivastava, Vinay, field survey). Here Mahamati Pran Nath ... And his accompanying followers have, for year after year staged the sweet and blissful "Lila" of Purna Brahma Parmatma Shri Krishna with music, singing, dancing, and acting (Shrivastava, Vinay, field survey). This is the land of austerity, where various 'Brahma Munies, having reached the culmination of their' "Sadhana", austerity and devotion gained the experience of the Supreme Truth (Shrivastava, Vinay, field survey).

THE OPEN HAND IN BLESSING GESTURE

When Maharaj Thakur through awakening of his highest self-became Mahamati Pran Nath, then five divine powers, bestowed upon by Purna Brahma Parmatma got seated into him. The symbols of these five power is the open palm in the blessing gesture, which is visible as placed on the golden cupola (Kalash) on the dome of the temple, and is reverentially called 'Shri Panja Sahib' (Shrivastava, Vinay, information received from Prannath temple). In fact, Mahamati Pran Nath has been raining prosperity over the whole world by his blessing hand. The remembrance of this blessing hand gives us the assurance of being secure under the infinite shelter of Purna Brahma Parmatma whose grace has been symbolized in it, under whose protection we obtain the confidence to conquer over all kinds of difficulties and struggles. The glistening divine *Golden Kalash* is accompanied by the *divine Panja*, which denotes Mahamati's blessing and signifies the Akshartritiyaa Purna Brahmanl (Shrivastava Vinay, information received from Prannath temple). The main entrance of central *Dome* is called *Kamani Darwaza*, which is made of Silver (Shrivastava Vinay, information received from Prannath temple) on *Sharad Purnima*, every year, thousands of people gather here to celebrate the Mahotsava. The '*Tartam Sagar*' Grantha is presented in this temple, which is the collection of the 'Spiritual Speeches' of *Pran Nath*.

CONCLUSION

After the decline of Mughal Empire, *Muslim architectural wisdom* appeared in this temple like *Domes* of temples are plain as well as onion shaped. *Pran Nath* temple of *Panna* have *Kalash* is on the top and most of the tallest *Dome* have a lotus form. Thus, the heritage of Bundelkhand architecture has reflected in *Pran Nath* temple of *Panna*, which reflects the architectural glory of Bundeli style. This temple

represents the Hindu, Muslim unity, religious strength and mutual love and affection of the people of Panna. The Pran Nath temple reminds the beauty of medieval architecture and mix with Bundeli architecture. This temple reflects the new ideas and ideology of society of this region. The temple of Pran Nath is the important source of beautiful paintings, decorative features, and cultural Heritage of Bundelkhand. The Pran Nath temple of Panna creates a cultural fusion in religion, art and architecture in Medieval period of Bundelkhand

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