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Jammu Massacre: The saint who became a shrine — Part II



By Bilal Handoo



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10, 2018



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Once done slaughter in Jammu in November marauding started mountains carnage. But the kill campaign was shielded by a saint, who eventually fell when plotters and executors came together in the Jammu Massacre's most dramatic encounter.

As another kill plot unfolded, the rioters regrouped and began moving towards the mountains — where Peer Fateh Shah was seen as a “spiritual shield” for the sizeable native and migrant Muslims.

At his abode, the meditative saint would predict the terrible times ahead. His prophecies made him a doomsayer, yet his spiritual seat at Budhan village of Reasi's Gool Gulabgarh Tehsil had become a crowded place. It held the anxious Muslim devotes together, like a flock of scared sheep, oblivious of their fate.

Soon as Budhan turned unsafe, Muslims began abandoning their hearth and



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ALSO READ: **Jammu Massacre: The saint who became a shrine — Part I**

“Once he learned about his son’s *change of heart*, the saint sent his disciple to push him back,” says Abdul Majeed Bhat, the fact-finder of the event—maintaining an astute storyteller’s stance while narrating one of the unknown accounts of modern history’s most brutal and neglected ethnic cleansing, the Jammu Massacre.

“After receiving a cautionary word, the son left for Pakistan, with tears rolling down his cheeks. He had realised the possible fate of his father.”

The saint shortly left Budhan village, riding on his mare — Neeli.

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“Despite being commanded
by the saint, the mare stood
her ground,” Bhat says,
recalling the event as
explained by a survivor
accompanying the saint.
“Even as he gave her reins to
one of his disciples, the mare
didn’t budge.”

Neeli’s reluctance had more
to it — perhaps the sign of the
soon-to-be-dawned dark
hour.

Then, Peer Fateh asked his
disciple, ‘Let her take her own
course.’

With that, the saint’s mare
started moving back to
Budhan — then, hardly
housing any Muslim.



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Refugees from West Punjab, Pakistan arriving in India.

Years later, all this unknown and intriguing narrative would be resurrected, following Bhat's travel, which led him to come across some surviving *Sufis*, who were with the saint during his final hours.

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The moment the mare took the saint back to Budhan village, she stopped on the road, leading to Gool.

*“Neeli maghrib ki jaanib
moun karke kadhi hogaye*
(The saint's mare stopped towards west),” Bhat was told by one of the saint's disciples.

In the fascinating world of spirituality—known for mystic powers and extra-sensory

perceptions—
carried a deep
what it would
could know,
began inching
saint.



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Peer Fateh Shah took a long
tour around the area on the
back of his mare, before
dismounting and directing his
disciples to call the villagers
and his own family back to
Budhan.

The spot where Neeli had
halted was to become the
saint's next stopover.

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In a nearby abandoned
house of his disciple Ghulam
Qadir Gojar, the saint decided
to stay. He soon called his
another disciple Abdul
Wahab Turkan and asked him
to take Neeli for grazing in the
neighbouring village.

At Budhan, the grass was no
longer green.

But the mare—apparently
sensing the imminent peril—
refused to leave the saint. It
was then the saint intervened

and told her:
order, Neeli!

It's said that
and his mare
tearful farew

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In between, Peer Fateh
Shah's family members
rejoined him at Budhan and
soon, a swarm of rioters
came, and surrounded the
saint's shelter.

“With prayers on his lips, he
held a whip in one hand and a
torch in another,” says Bhat,
narrating his research, which
has now taken a shape of a
paperback. “As one rioter
forced his entry inside the
home for loot and kill, the
saint whipped his neck. He
died instantly. His gang
outside soon got mobilised
and stormed the home with
swords and guns.”

As bullets and swords rained,
the saint's woman family
member ran through a
backdoor and climbed a tree
—from where she helplessly
watched the carnage. She
would later join her brother,



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The saint kept fighting back,
until a bullet hit his right
shoulder and a sword pierced
his neck.

“The saint soon fell down—
reciting the *Kalima*—after a
Sten-gun burst hit his belly
and chest,” Bhat says. “He
finally achieved what he had
predicted—his martyrdom.”

His four family members—
including his wife Naseem
Begum, his daughter Zeenab
Begum, her son—along with
his five disciples, including
Sufi Buland Khan, Sufi Abdul
Subhan, and others were also
slaughtered.

The saint’s daughter Shah
Begum Ferooza and her son
Ashiq Ali managed to run,
only to recreate the rattling
details of the carnage later.

“The killers soon left with
their accomplice’s body and
looted wealth,” Bhat says.

Later those dead bodies
would be assembled in an

open ground
after the may
a doctor. The
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They were finally handed over to the locals, who held a discussion on their final resting place. When no consensus was reached, all the bodies were buried at a spot—where the saint's mare had stopped upon taking him back to Budhan. It was an uncanny event—especially for the saint's disciples, who soon turned his grave as his shrine.

Today, the saint's final resting place is visited by thousands of devotees every year. But while Peer Fateh Shah became an *immortal* after his martyrdom, his killers met such a grisly end that it became the Jammu Massacre's most horrible aftermath...

To be continued...

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