

Rituals, Spiritual Practices, and their Symbolic Meanings: A Sociological insight into Spiritual Devotion at the Shrine of Pir Baba

Aziz ul Hakim

PhD Scholar, Department of Sociology, University of Peshawar

Email: azizuom464@gmail.com

Noor Sanauddin

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Peshawar

Zafar Ahmad

Lecturer in Sociology, Higher Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ISSN: 3006-6549 (ISSN-L)

ISSN: 3006-6557 (Online)

ISSN: 3006-6549 (Print)

Vol. 2, No. 3 (2024)

Pages: 54 – 62

Keywords

Shrine of Pir Baba, Rituals, Prayers, Circling the Shrine, Holy Salt, Urs Celebration, Symbols

Corresponding Author:

Aziz ul Hakim

Email: azizuom464@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study explores the rituals and spiritual practices at the shrine of Pir Baba, a famous saint venerated by a large number of people from across Pakistan. The study documents the various rituals and a ceremonial activity performed by the devotees at the shrine of Pir Baba and explores the religious and symbolic significance, functions, and meanings attached by devotees to these rituals. Using qualitative research methods, data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 30 participants, including 10 resident devotees and 20 visitor devotees, categorized by age, gender, education, and location. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-step approach, was used to identify common themes and insights from the data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the spiritual and cultural practices at the shrine. The study reveals that the devotees perform different rituals at the shrine of Pir Baba, including prayers, recitation of the holy Quran, circling the shrine, tying threads, eating holy salt, and celebrating the annual Urs, which reflects profound spiritual devotion and cultural traditions. These practices symbolize blessing seeking, protection, spiritual reflection, and divine mercy while fostering communal spirituality and interconnectedness among the devotees.*

Introduction

Shrines are holy places dedicated to specific saints or similar figures of respect, wherein they are venerated. Shrines are found in almost all religions and regions of the world and are known by various names (Hassan, 1987; Islam, 1967). In South Asia, including Pakistan, the terms *Ziarat*, *Mazar* and *Dargah* are commonly used to refer to the shrine of a Muslim saint or *Sufi*. Shrines are associated with divinity and are considered sacred places where the saints and pious people are buried. People visit Sufi shrines and circle the tomb throughout the year to show their love, respect, and devotion to the saints and their spiritual legacy. The devotees of the shrines have a firm belief that these saints have spiritual links/contacts with God and can bring blessings, happiness, and cures to their followers (Chaudhry, 2013; Tyson, 1997). The followers share their social, psychological, and cultural difficulties and pray for relief. Shrines are also characterized by rituals that show the fundamental legacies of the local culture and communities (Raj & Harman, 2006).

Researchers, such as Lwisa (1985) and Schimmel (1982), trace back the devotional beliefs and Sufism of Muslims in South Asia to Islam, where the reverent Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is deemed as the mediator between God and his followers. Sufism represents the inward-looking, mystical dimension of Islam and can be defined as an approach that mixes mainstream religious

observances, such as prescribed daily prayers, with a range of supplementary spiritual practices, such as the ritual chanting of God's attributes (*zikar*) or the veneration of saints (Choudhary, 2010).

It is believed that the culture of *Pir-Murid* (Saint-Disciples) has existed in South Asia for long. However, this informal relationship became institutionalised and took the form of *Silsila* (Sufi Orders) after the 11th century (Chittik, 2000). As a result, the different saints (*Pir*) came to be associated with one of the four recognized Sufi orders/chains (Chittik, 2000; Hassalani, 2009; Khanam, 2006). The first order is known as *Qadria*, which was established by Shiekh Abdul Qadir Jelani (1071-1166 AD). The second order is *Suherwardia*, which was established by Abdul Najeeb Suherwardi (1098-1168 AD). The third order is known as *Naqshbandia* and was founded by Khwaja Baha Ud Din Naqashbandi (1381-1398 AD), and the fourth one is *Chisthia* established by Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (1143-1236) (Aziz, 2001; Chittik, 2000; Khanam, 2006). Each one of these have their own specific *Tariqat* (lit. paths) with their own religious rites and rituals, saintly lineage and leadership structure (Choudhary, 2010).

Some sacred objects, rituals, and practices are associated with Sufi shrines. These practices and rituals are compulsory elements of every shrine. Some of the elements and practices which are performed in all the Muslim shrines with varying natures include Music (*Qawali*), *Minnat*, and *Urs*. Music (*Qawali*) is an important element of shrines where musical artists sing spiritual rhymes. The artists sing Sufi and folk poetry which is an important source of expression of emotions and is adored and valued by people. Similarly, *Minnat* is also a practice at shrines which is a humble plea of a visitor for some material or non-material gain. The visitors deem the saint as a mediator between them and God's favour. Likewise, *Urs* is also an important ritual in shrines. The term *Urs* in shrine culture is used for the death anniversary of the buried saint which is celebrated every year by the devotees in respect and reverence of the saint (Raj and Harman, 2006).

Sufi shrines in the sub-continent have multidimensional social, economic, political and racial implications (Malik, 2015; Platteau, 2011; Brewster, 1976 and Frembegen, 2012). Since time immemorial visiting sacred places had been considered as a source of piety, washing off the sins, and purification of body and mind. It is believed that paying homage to shrines brings prosperity and blessings to individuals and their families (Gadith and Khalid, 2002). The visitors strongly believe that since the saints have spent all their life worshipping God and serving humanity; they have a special connection with the supernatural. Hence, they have the power to mediate between people and God. Therefore, the shrines are well attended by people experiencing social, economic and psychological distress (Ahmad, 2001). However, the perspectives of people towards shrines vary from region to region. For instance, people of some regions are more inclined and committed toward Sufism than others (Campbell, 1998). Some prefer to visit shrines for treatment of illness and infertility rather than going to hospitals or to doctors (Frembgen, 2004; Kurin, 1983).

Although there is a large number of shrines in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan, with devotees regularly visiting various saints and shrines in the province for centuries, no significant study has been conducted on these shrines. According to a survey titled "*Giving at Shrines*" (2016) conducted by the Pakistan Center of Philanthropy (PCP), there are 9 shrines in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which are registered with the Religious and Auqaf Department of Pakistan. *Pir Baba* is a renowned Sufi saint whose shrine is situated at District Buner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His fame and legacy go beyond Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as people from all over Pakistan and Afghanistan visit his shrine frequently. His real name as per oral and written history is Sayed Ali Termezee. *Pir Baba* is believed to have a miraculous power which he used to resolve familial, social, and economic and spiritual issues of the people (Baghi, 2017). His miraculous power made him famous not just among Pashtuns but among Punjabis and Sindhis as well. In this study, the researchers explore the different rituals which the devotees perform within the premises of the shrine of *Pir Baba*, their meaning and their social functions for devotees.

Devotees perform different rituals within the premises of the shrine for the fulfilment of their social, economic and psychological needs, such as *Mannat* meaning (vow) a wish made by individuals to seek the blessings of a deity or a holy shrine. *Mannat* is often associated with visiting religious shrines and making a request or a promise in exchange for the fulfilment of a desire or to

express gratitude for a granted wish. The devotees believe that by making a *Mannat* or vow, they are establishing a personal connection with the divine and increasing the chances of their wish being fulfilled. Visitors may engage in various rituals and offerings to express their devotion and reinforce their prayers. This could include lighting candles, offering flowers or fruits, tying threads or cloth to sacred trees or structures, or performing specific prayers. Other rituals include putting oil in the earthen lamp of the shrines, praying on the grave of the saint, placing a piece of cloth on the shrine (*Chadar Charana*) and taking amulets (*Taweez*) (Abbas, et al., 2013). Believers often have deep faith and devotion towards the deity or the spiritual power associated with the shrine. They trust that their prayers will be heard and their wishes will be granted if they make a sincere *Mannat* (vow) and demonstrate their commitment through rituals and offerings. When a wish is fulfilled, it is common for individuals to return to the shrine to express gratitude. This may involve offering additional prayers, making donations, or participating in religious ceremonies as an acknowledgement of the fulfilment of their vows (Abbas, et al., 2013).

Likewise, for the treatment of different physical diseases, the visitors practice different rituals within the premises of the shrines. They have firm beliefs that these chronic diseases can be cured by eating holy sugar, salt, and drinking water (*Dam Wala Pani*) (Forkert, 2014). For instance, in a shrine in Punjab known as *Sial Sharif*, there is a berry tree and the people eat leaves from that tree for the treatment of different illnesses and diseases. The people also drink hand pump water which is believed as the cure for different diseases. The devotees consider these things as part of the worship and the followers consider these things sacred and a source of *Barakah* (blessings) and protection from the different types of diseases. Pirani, (2009) identified various therapeutic rituals at the shrine such as seeking blessings, reciting prayers, and engaging in rituals, which are believed to contribute to the alleviation of symptoms and the restoration of health. The researcher further explained that the visitors also take a sheet of cloth with them which are decorated with sacred verses, and Sufi poetry. The descendants of the saints (*Sajda Nasheen*) give bath (*Ghusal*) to the shrines with rose water and during this practice the followers recite *Darood Sharif* and *Surah Fateh* within the premises of the shrine. The concept of the convent (*Bayth*) is also common at the hand of (*Sajda Nasheen*) which is considered important for spiritual elevation (Levin, 2008).

Methodology

Universe of the Study

The research study was conducted in *Pir Baba's* shrine located in district Buner- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *Pir Baba* is the most famous shrine in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and district Buner is considered the land of Sufiism. Therefore, the researcher has selected the said shrine as the research site.

Research Participants and Sampling

A pilot survey was conducted to know the potential research participants, their types, and the general features of the shrine and the area. After in-depth observation and investigation from the local key informants, servants (*Malang*) of the shrines, and the administration of the shrines, it was found that there are mainly two types of visitors to the shrines. First, there are "Resident Devotees" who visit the shrines almost daily and consider themselves as the servants (*Malang*) of shrines. They usually spend most of their time in the vicinity of the shrine. Second, there were "Visitor Devotees" who visit the shrines frequently, usually every Monday (*Pir Wraz*), Thursday (*Ziarat Wraz*), or Friday (*Juma*).

Qualitative data was collected from a total of 30 participants through semi-structured interviews till the "saturation point" was achieved. Ten of the research participants were "resident devotees" and twenty were from the "visiting devotees". The data was collected over a month in the premises of the shrine following all the ethical guidelines including informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. A topic guide was prepared to guide the researchers in conducting the interviews. A female research assistant was also hired to conduct interviews with female participants as it was difficult for the male researchers to have access to female participants due to cultural restrictions imposed by purdah. The research assistant, a university graduate, was fully trained in the objectives of the study and how to ask appropriate questions for collecting the

desired data. The interviews lasted on average for 50 minutes. No incentive was paid to the participants. These considerations made the researcher categorize the research participants on the basis of age, gender and education as shown in the following (Table - 1).

Table-1: Categories of Sampled Research Participants

Gender	Younger (Age 30 and below)	Older (Age above 30)	Total
Male	15	15	30
Female	15	15	30
Total	30	30	
Education	Married	Unmarried	Total
Illiterate	20	10	30
Literate	10	20	30
Total	30	30	
Location	Upper Class	Lower Class	Total
Rural	10	20	30
Urban	20	10	30
Total	30	30	

Data Analysis

The researcher closely examined the data to identify the common topics, ideas and themes. The most common *six-step approach to thematic analysis* of Braun and Clarke (2006) was adopted in this study which includes familiarization with data, coding, and generating themes, reviewing themes, naming and writing up themes.

Results and Discussion

The data analysis led to the identification of a number of rituals and spiritual practices performed by devotees at the shrine of Pir Baba. These rituals have specific structures and functions and devotees attached different symbolic meanings to these practices. The following section explains the various rituals and ceremonial activities performed by devotees in the shrine of *Pir Baba*.

Offering Prayer and Recitation of the Holy Quran

The study finds that the majority of the devotees offer *Nawafal*¹ prayer, and recite specific verses from the Holy Quran within the premises of the shrine. In this respect, one of the visiting devotees who belonged to Swat expressed:

"I offered two Rakat² of Nafal prayers here in the proximity of the shrine of Pir Baba. Moreover, I along with my children collectively recited Surah Yaseen, Surah Fateha, and Darood Sharif and prayed for ourselves."

Thus, the two common practices observed within the premises of the shrine of *Pir Baba* are recitation of the Holy Quran and offering *Nawafil* prayers for Barakah (blessing) Jalal (2001) has also found that recitation from the holy Quran and offering *Nawafil* prayers are the most common rituals performed at shrines. The recitation of the Holy Quran has a significant importance in Islam. The Muslims believe that reciting the Holy Quran not only brings spiritual benefits but also invokes blessings and mercy of Allah. The devotees of *Pir Baba* engage in the recitation of specific chapters or *Surahs* from Quran such as *Surah Yaseen* and *Surah Fateha*, which are considered particularly beneficial. *Surah Yaseen*, for instance, is often recited for various purposes including seeking blessings, seeking forgiveness and asking for divine intervention in matters of difficulty or distress. The act of reciting the Quran in proximity to the shrine of *Pir Baba* holds additional significance for devotees (Mushtaq, 2000). It is believed that the environment of a revered shrine is spiritually charged and any good deeds performed within this sacred space carry even greater blessings and spiritual rewards (Mushtaq, 2000). Therefore, devotees take the opportunity to engage in the recitation of the Quran within the premises of the shrine to seek spiritual elevation and closeness to the God (Pirani, 2009).

¹*Nawafil* Prayer is a type of non-obligatory prayer, mostly performed to earn additional/extra blessings.

²*Rakat* is a single iteration of prescribed movement and supplications performed by Muslims as part of the prescribed obligatory prayer.

Besides the recitation of the Holy Quran, the devotees offer *Nawafil Prayers for Barakah*. The term “*Barakah*” generally refers to blessings or divine favour. Within the context of the shrine of *Pir Baba*, devotees engage in offering two *Rakat* of *Nawafil* prayers with the intention of seeking blessings and favour from Allah (Ahmed, 2001).

The act of offering *Nawafil* prayers at a shrine holds a specific cultural and spiritual significance. The shrine of *Pir Baba* is likely a place with spiritual blessings and miracles attributed to him. Devotees believe that by offering these special prayers in such a spiritually charged environment, they are more likely to receive blessings, have their prayers answered, and experience positive changes in their lives through divine intervention (Sechrest, 1972). The practice of reciting the Holy Quran and offering *Nawafil* prayers within the premises of the shrine of *Pir Baba* expresses the beliefs and devotions of the devotees in the powers of these practices to bring spiritual benefits and blessings. The shrine acts as a focal point for their religious practices, creating a sense of community and spiritual connectedness among the devotees who come to seek solace and divine mercy at this revered place (Mushtaq, 2010).

Circling around the Shrine (*Zyarat Karna*)

The act of circling around a shrine, also known as “*Zyarat Karna*” is a common practice in various Sufi traditions and other religious contexts (Shaikh, 2010). It involves walking or moving in a circular pattern around a sacred site or tomb in a symbolic gesture of devotion, reverence and seeking blessings. During the fieldwork, we observed the majority of the devotees circling around the shrine of *Pir Baba*. One of the devotees explained his circling of the shrine as:

“I circled here around the shrine of Pir Baba and I prayed for my own welfare and for the whole human beings”.

Ritual circling a Sufi shrine is the manifestation of a number of beliefs and symbolic meanings. For instance, through circling around the shrine of *Pir Baba* the devotees engage themselves in a physical manifestation of their spiritual connection and devotion to *Pir Baba*. The devotees circle the shrine for the purpose of gaining spiritual benefits, which include seeking blessings, guidance, protection, or the fulfilment of personal wishes or needs (Bord & Faulkner, 1975). The act of praying reflects a strong belief in the intercession of *Pir Baba*, viewing him as a spiritual guide who can act as an intermediary between the devotees and the divine. Likewise, the act of circling and praying for humanity demonstrates the recognition of a shared human experience and interconnectedness. It emphasizes the idea that all humans are part of a larger spiritual family and the well-being of one individual is tied to the well-being of the whole of humanity. The devotees’ actions are driven by a strong faith in the spiritual significance of the shrine of *Pir Baba*. Such faith can be a source of comfort, hope, and inspiration, helping individuals cope with life challenges and uncertainties.

Thus, the act of circling the shrine of *Pir Baba* and praying for oneself and humanity reflects a profound spiritual journey that combines devoted individuals with a broader sense of compassion and connectedness. It exemplifies the core values of Sufi traditions and demonstrates the power of faith, community and altruism in shaping the devotees’ spiritual experiences.

Knotting Thread with the Shrine

During the fieldwork, the researchers observed women devotees knotting a thread or a piece of cloth with the shrine of *Pir Baba*. This act carries religious or symbolic significance, which may be specific to the followers of *Pir Baba*. When asked about the purpose of knotting the thread, the devotees explained that through this ritual, Allah will give them a child. Women who are married but do not have children usually tie the knot as a ‘promise’, a vow of allegiance to the shrine and pray for a child.

Infertility is both a deeply personally and culturally significant issue for couples who desire to have children but are unable to conceive (Shaikh, 2010). The shrine is perceived by these devotees as a place where they can find potential solutions to their infertility issues (George & Sreedhar, 2006). Devotees’ tying threads on shrines is a common practice in many cultures and religions, particularly in South Asia. This ritual holds significant symbolic meaning and is performed for various spiritual and personal reasons. From our discussions with various devotees who were seen tying

threads, we have identified several symbolic meanings of such rituals. For example, some devotees tie threads to make a wish or prayer. They believe that by tying a thread, their wish will be granted or their prayer will be heard. This act symbolizes a connection to the divine and a plea for intervention in their lives. Some devotees also tie threads as a form of making a promise to the saint. They vow to perform a particular act of devotion or to lead a righteous life in exchange for a blessing or favour. Similarly, it was found that tying a thread can also symbolize seeking protection and blessings from the saint. It is believed that the thread carries the blessings of the saint and protects the devotee from harm and misfortune. On the other hand, devotees also tie threads as a way of expressing gratitude for the blessings received. This act is a way of giving thanks for the fulfilment of prayers or ongoing protection and support. This shows that devotees attached a different meaning to the act of tying thread but all of these interpretations have one thing in common- the connectedness of the devotees to the shrine through a thread.

Eating Holy Salt and other Edibles at the Shrine

Another important part of every shrine is the salt considered holy by the visitors. Almost all devotees were seen tasting and eating a small quantity of salt with the purpose of getting the blessing as the salt is believed to cure various physical diseases and illnesses. Some women also eat the salt as a cure for their infertility. A few devotees were also seen taking some salt with them to home to be given to other members of their family and friends. During the fieldwork, we observed a female devotee explaining to another female devotee:

“This Holy salt is a cure for the otherwise incurable infertility”.

This implies that the female devotees believed in the sacred properties of that salt and sought its potential healing effects to address their fertility issues.

Along with salt, devotees considered almost everything related to the shrine as sacred with healing properties. For example, some devotees were drinking holy water (*dam wala pani*) while others were seen eating sugar. These edibles are usually supplied by the caretakers of the shrine for free or in exchange for a small amount of money/donation called *shukrana*.

Blessed salt and holy water have been a tradition in most religions, especially Christianity. Sufi Islam also believes in the healing properties of the blessed salt and visitors of Pir Baba shrines taste the salt for curing various diseases such as hepatitis, tuberculosis, typhoid, and paralysis. In some cases, the stones placed at the graves are also considered blessed and devotees rub the stones on their bodies for physical and spiritual health.

In short, anything associated with the shrine is considered holy and is believed to have healing properties by visitors. The salt, however, has a special status as it is available on almost all shrines in Pakistan and tasting it is almost a must as a healing ritual.

Tying Children to the Shrine

Due to the relatively higher infant mortality ratio in Pakistan, many people rely on spiritual intervention to protect their children from dying at an early age. A number of mothers were seen at the shrine of *Pir Baba* who had witnessed the death of their children in infancy. The researchers interviewed women within the shrine who faced the problem of survival of their children. They narrated that most of their children usually die during infancy. One female devotee said:

“My children do not survive and they are dying in their infant stages. Therefore, I tied this child to the shrine so that he may survive due to the blessings of Pir Baba.”

She considers the shrine of *Pir Baba* a sacred and blessed place and believes that Allah will bless her child with survival through the virtue of *Pir Baba*. Such findings have been found by other researchers as well, such as Kurin (1983) and Voll (1992). The devotees explain the logic and reasons behind such beliefs and say that they have been transmitted to them from their ancestors. Whenever they face such a problem, they visit the shrine of *Pir Baba* and by virtue of him, Allah protects their children from dying in infancy. (Iqbal, & Farid, (2017).

Celebration of Urs

The term "*Urs*" refers to the death anniversary of a Sufi saint. In Sufi tradition, the *Urs* is a significant celebratory event that marks the passing away of the saint. It is observed annually on the same date of each year and typically includes various activities such as prayers, recitations of poetry, singing of

Qawali (Sufi devotional songs) and the gathering of devotees at the saint's shrine or tomb (Abbass, 2013). During the *Urs*, people across different walks of life, including the followers of the Sufi saint and other visitors come together to pay their respects, seek blessings and to participate in the festival. The *Urs* is often viewed as a time for spiritual reflection, renewal of faith, and a celebration of the saint's life and his teachings (Sajjad& Khan, 2011). The specific date of an *Urs* varies depending on the Sufi saint's death anniversary. Different Sufi saints have different *Urs* dates and are usually known to and observed by their followers and devotees (Abbas, *etal.*, 2013). Like most other saints, the devotees of *Pir Baba* also celebrate their saint's death anniversary with devotion and enthusiasm. A devotee of *Pir Baba* explained:

"We usually celebrate Urs on 11 Rajab³ but now due to security issues, we celebrate Urs by the directive of security and police forces. Moreover, on the occasion of Urs, the Sufi poets, saints, and scholars come from different areas of the country and they sing Qawali, poems and present speeches".

The *Urs* of *Pir Baba* is not just a day of remembrance, but also an occasion for various spiritual and cultural rituals such as *Minnat* (Divine Intercession) in which the devotees seek the intercession of the saint, believing that the saint can act as an intermediary between them and the divine. Similarly, the devotees also perform poetic sessions called *Qawali*- a devotional musical genre that is an integral part of Sufi gatherings. It involves singing praises of Allah, His Prophets, and the Sufi saints. In addition, the devotees also perform prayers and recitation from the holy Quran during the *Urs* celebration. These practices hold special spiritual and psychological importance in the lives of the devotees.

The *Urs* celebration is a time of unity, devotion, and spiritual reflection for the followers of the Sufi saint. It brings people from different religions and sects together to commemorate the life and teachings of the saint, reinforcing their shared beliefs and cultural practices.

Conclusion

The rituals and ceremonial activities performed by devotees at the shrine of *Pir Baba* reflect a profound spiritual devotion and cultural heritage. These practices include offering prayers, reciting the Holy Quran, circling the shrine, tying threads, using holy salt, and celebrating *Urs*, each imbued with deep religious and symbolic significance. Devotees engage in offering *Nawafil* (voluntary) prayers and reciting specific verses from the Holy Quran, such as *Surah Yaseen* and *Surah Fateha*, within the shrine's premises. These acts are performed to seek blessings, spiritual benefits, and divine mercy. The recitation of the Quran is particularly significant as it is believed to invoke Allah's blessings and mercy, especially in the spiritually charged environment of the shrine. The act of circling around the shrine symbolizes devotion, reverence, and a physical manifestation of spiritual connection. Devotees engage in this practice to seek blessings, guidance, protection, and the fulfillment of personal wishes. It also reflects a sense of communal spirituality and interconnectedness, emphasizing the shared human experience and collective well-being. Devotees, especially women, tie threads and cloths to the shrine as a symbolic gesture of their prayers and wishes. This practice signifies making vows, seeking protection, and expressing gratitude. Additionally, the use of holy salt, believed to have healing properties, is particularly sought for addressing fertility issues, highlighting the shrine's perceived role in providing solutions to personal and health-related problems. In cases of infant mortality, mothers tie their surviving children to the shrine, believing that the blessings of *Pir Baba* will protect their children from harm. This practice underscores the faith in the saint's intercession and the shrine's sanctity as a source of divine protection and blessings. The *Urs*, marking the death anniversary of *Pir Baba*, is a significant event involving prayers, recitations, *Qawali* (devotional songs), and gatherings of devotees. It is a time for spiritual reflection, renewal of faith, and communal celebration of the saint's life and teachings. The *Urs* fosters unity, devotion, and reinforces the cultural and spiritual traditions associated with the shrine. Overall, these practices at the shrine of *Pir Baba* illustrate the deep-rooted faith and spiritual aspirations of the devotees. The shrine serves as a focal point for their religious activities, offering a

³ Rajab is the month in which the fourth Rashid Caliph of Islam was born.

space for communal worship, individual supplications, and the pursuit of spiritual elevation and divine mercy. The rituals not only reflect personal piety but also strengthen the sense of community and shared cultural identity among the devotees.

References

- Abbas, S., Qureshi, S., Safdar, R., & Zakar, R. (2013). Peoples' Perceptions about Visiting Sufi Shrine in Pakistan. *South Asian Studies* 28(2), (1026-678).
- Adler, P.A. and Adler, P. (1987). *Membership Roles in Field Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Ahmed, A. S. T. (2001). *Tohfath-ul-Zaairan*: Hyderi Printing Press. Karachi.
- Aziz, K. K. (2001). *Religion, land, and politics in Pakistan: a study of Piri-Muridi*. Vanguard Books, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Baghi, A. B. (2017). *The history of Buner*, Luqman graphics and publisher, Malak supermarket Mingora.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Batool, A., (2015). Mannat and associated belief system of people visiting shrines. *The Explorer: Journal of Social Sciences ISSN: 2411-0132, Vol-1, Issue (2): 37-41*. Pakistan.
- Batool.Tahi., Qureshi., Safi., (2018). Superstitions as Behavioral Control in Pakistan. *Pakistan Behavior, Evolutionary Anthropology*, 36:55-71.
- Brewster, D. P. (1976). The study of Sufism; towards a methodology. *Religion*, 6(1), 31-47.
- Chittick, W. C. (2000). *Sufism: A short introduction*. Oneworld Publications Limited.
- Bord, R. J. and Faulkner, J. E. (1975). Religiosity and Secular Attitudes: *The Case of Catholic Pentecostals*. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 14 (3), 257-270.
- Chaudhry, H.R., (2013). Saints and Shrines in Pakistan: Anthropological perspective. *Islamabad. National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Center of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University*.
- Choudhary, M. A. (2010). Religious practices at Sufi shrines in the Punjab. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, 31(1), 1-30. Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data Analysis: Complementary Research Strategies*, London, Sage.
- El-Islam, M. F. (1967). The psychotherapeutic basis of some Arab rituals. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 13(4), 265-268.
- Forkert, A. (2014). *British Musical Modernism Defended Against its Devotees* (Doctoral dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London).
- Frembgen, J. W. (2004). From Dervish to Saint: Constructing Charisma in Contemporary.
- Frembgen, J. W. (2012). Dhamāl and the performing body: trance dance in the devotional Sufi Practice of Pakistan. *Journal of Sufi Studies*, 1(1), 77-113.
- Gadit, A., & Khalid, N. (2002). *State of Mental Health in Pakistan: Service, education and Research*. Hamdard Foundation, Karachi. Pakistan.
- George, S., & Sreedhar, K. P. (2006). Globalisation and the Prevalence of Superstitious Beliefs. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, 32(3), 241-245.
- Hassanali, M. (2010). Sufi influence on Pakistani politics and culture. *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies*, 2(1), 23-45.
- Hassan, R. (1987). Religion, society, and the state in Pakistan: *Pirs and politics*. *Asian Survey*, 27(5), 552-565.
- Iqbal, T. (2013). *Spiritual Practices at The Shrines of Chishtiya Order In Punjab: A Comparative Study of Dargah Baba Farid Ganj Shaker and Khawaja Shams-Ud-Din Sialvi* (Doctoral dissertation, Government College University Lahore, Punjab).
- Iqbal, T., & Farid, M. (2017). Sufi practices as the cause of spiritual, mental and physical healing at Chishti shrines in Pakistan. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 20(10), 943-953.S
- Jalal, (2001). Faithful Stories: Exploring Shrine Veneration in Bangladesh in A New Light. An Anthropological Study.
- Kurin, R., (1987). Islamization: A view from the countryside. In Anita. M. Weiss, (ed) *Islamic Reassertion in Pakistan: The Applicant of Islamic Law in Modern State*. Vanguard, Lahore.

- Khanam, F., (2006). *The Origin and Evolution of Sufism*. Goodword Books.1, Nizamuddin West Market, New Dehli.
- Khan, S., & Sajid, M. R. (2011). The essence of shrines in rural Punjab: A case study of the shrines at Barrillasharif, Gujrat-Pakistan. *Humanity and Social Sciences Journal*, 6(1), 66-77.
- Levin, J. (2008). Esoteric healing traditions: A conceptual overview. *Explore*, 4(2), 101-112.
- Lwise, P. (1985). *Pirs, shrines and Pakistani Islam*. Christian Study Center. Rawalpindi. Mayer, A. C. (1967).
- Malik, A. & Mirza, R.A. (2015). *Religion, Land and Politics: Shrines and Literacy in Punjab*. University of Oxford.
- Manzo, L. C. (2003). Beyond house and haven: Toward a revisioning of emotional relationships with places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23(1), 47-61.
- Mushtaq (2010). Shrines in Pakistan and their Impacts on Society (A Case Study of Golra). In charge, Deptt. of History & Pak Studies, GC University, Faisalabad.
- Mushtaq, Q, A., (2000). Shrines in Pakistan and their impact on society. Unpublished work Incharge, Department of History & Pak Studies. GC University, Faisalabad
- Pirani, F. (2009). *Therapeutic encounters at a Muslim shrine in Pakistan: an ethnographic study of understandings and explanations of ill health and help-seeking among attenders* (Doctoral dissertation, Middlesex University).
- PCP, (2016). *Giving at Shrines Survey*. Pakistan Center of Philanthropy. Platteau, J.P., (2011). Political instrumentalization of Islam and the risk of obscurantist deadlock. *World Development*, 39, 243–250.
- Platteau, J.-P. (2011). Political Instrumentalization of Islam and the Risk of Obscurantist Deadlock. *World Development*, 39(2), 243-250.
- Raj, S. J., & Harman, W. P. (Eds.). (2006). Dealing with deities: The ritual vow in South Asia. New York, NY: SUNY Press.
- Schimmel, A. (1982). *Islam in India and Pakistan*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Saniotis, A. (2015). Contesting the Sacred at Muslim Shrines in India: Conflict and Retrieval in the “Spiritual” Arena. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 33(1), 139-151.
- Sreedhar, S. G. (2006). Globalisation and the prevalence of superstitious beliefs. *Journal of the Studies*, 42 (2), 251-268.
- Shaikh, Z. A., KHATOON, F., HUSAIN, S. S., Ibrahim, A. M., & Abdullah, M. (2010). Visiting Holy Shrines: A Survey to Assess the Common Reasons By Devotees In Karachi, Pakistan. *The Professional Medical Journal*, 17(03), 493-497.
- Sechrest, L.; Fay, T. L. & Zaidi, S. M. H. (1972). Problems of Translation in Cross, *Cultural Research, Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp.41–56.
- Tyson, D. (1997). Shrine Pilgrimage in Turkmenistan as a means to understand Islam among the Turkmen Central Asia Monitor: Online Supplement 1.
- Voll, J. O. (1992). Conservative and traditional brotherhoods. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 524(1), 66-78.