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# Female Sufism in Pakistan: A Case Study of Bibi Pak Daman<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to investigate the role of female Saints in the preaching and advancement of religion of Islam. The underlying hypothesis is that mysticism<sup>2</sup> is a phenomenon that transcends gender boundaries as it is an experience which any gender can feel through divinely ordained talent, certain practices, devotion and dedication.<sup>3</sup> It develops in one the love for God and one goes on to teach, practice and preach His message to humanity.<sup>4</sup> Saints have played a significant role in Islam<sup>5</sup> and many of these saintly figures have been women including wives of the Holy Prophet, or Sahabis, or their descendants. After the death of Holy Prophet his missionary work was carried out by his immediate followers and their descendents and owing to their efforts Islamic religion spread worldwide.<sup>6</sup> Besides male saints, many female saints have done this service for the promotion and advancement of Islam in foreign lands but their role and stories have remained marginalized. One such story is linked with the mausoleum of Bibi Pak Daman, situated in Lahore, Pakistan and attributed to Bibi Ruqayyah, daughter of Hazrat Ali (R.A), and her entourage.<sup>7</sup> Though main objective of the paper is to throw light on the gender and Sufism yet this paper also touches upon the narratives related to Bibi Pak Daman, a small shrine in Lahore,

commonly known the graves of six women from the Prophet Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) family and subject to a range of theories regarding its origins.

Pakistan's land is full of hundreds of shrines, in big cities as well as in small villages, scattered in the whole country where linkages between Sufism and the places of worship of different holy people and Sufi run deep. Many are unknown to the majority of the people, serving as sites of worshipers, while some are prominent on national level. Whereas each shrine owns its specific qualities and circle of followers, but may be none of them is as controversial as the stories relating to the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman in the city of Lahore.

Likewise, Lahore is quite remarkable regarding the arrival, preaching and practices of the Sufi saints and thereby it is known as the city of legendary saints like Hazrat Data Ganj Bukhsh,<sup>8</sup> Hazrat Mian Mir,<sup>9</sup> Hazrat Shah Jamal<sup>10</sup> and many others. Though most of these saints are males but there are a few female Sufis, enshrined in the mausoleum of Bibi Pak Daman, who unfortunately, have not received scholarly attention from Pakistani historians to date. This paper, while focusing on the social history of Pakistan, and attempting to fill an important research gap in the historical literature of Pakistan discusses the story of six ladies, collectively known as 'Bibi Pak Daman'<sup>11</sup> buried in Lahore.<sup>12</sup>

As cited above, there are number of debates and discourses about the identity of these six ladies buried in this small compound, as compare to the many famous Sufi saints of Pakistan.

The most commonly strong claim states that the main mausoleum in Bibi Pak Daman belongs to Bibi Ruqayyah bint Ali,<sup>13</sup> daughter of Hazrat Ali (RA), the fourth Caliph of the Muslims.<sup>14</sup>

Broadly speaking, the story goes like this that six ladies with the names Bibi Haj, Bibi Shahnaz, Bibi Noor, Bibi Taj, Bibi Hur, Bibi Gauhar, who left the city of Mecca and reached Lahore immediately after the Karbala tragedy<sup>15</sup> and because of their preaching and practices, they were successful in converting a

sizeable Hindu community to Islam.<sup>16</sup> Since then, their disciples, followers and visitors who are Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and others alike have been visiting to offer veneration to them.<sup>17</sup> Hundreds of people, majority of them female come to pray for the fulfillment of their wishes. Therefore, it is important to investigate the identity of these women, their purpose in coming to Lahore and how did they get this far to Lahore. Also it would be interesting to explore their mission, preaching and practices. Another dimension of it would be their reception by the local community and state because one 'narrative' strongly suggests that wherever they went and settled impacted the local society and left lasting cultural heritage.<sup>18</sup>

Muslim-bin-Aqeel,<sup>19</sup> husband of Bibi Ruqayyah, an ambassador and cousin of Imam Hussain (R.A) was murdered in the city of Kufa.<sup>20</sup> As a matter of fact, he was considered to be the first martyr of Karbala.<sup>21</sup> The question that how daughter of Hazrat Ali (R.A) had been buried in a small graveyard in Lahore, remains the matter of several conflicting stories, all of which disclose the multipart religious and financial, interests at stake in this shrine.

There are two versions of historians on the purpose of their arrival, activities and demise of these women. According to the first school of historians, which includes S. M. Latif<sup>22</sup>, Mufti Ghulam Server<sup>23</sup>, Molvi Noor Ahmad Chisti<sup>24</sup> and mostly Shiite hagiographies writes that Hazrat Ali (R.A) on his death bed asked all his sons to promise their loyalty to Hassan (R.A) and Hussain (R.A),<sup>25</sup> who would become the second and the third Imams; while he assigned his eldest daughter, Bibi Zainab (R.A) the mission of carrying out the message of the Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH).<sup>26</sup> Many Shiite hagiographers thus claim that today wherever Islam is present and has succeeded, it is because of the daughters of Hazrat Ali (R.A)<sup>27</sup> and wherever these pious women did not reach Islam also did not spread to those areas.<sup>28</sup> Hazrat Ali (R.A) further advised Hazrat Ruqayyah, "that after the martyrdom of your husband in Karbala, you along with your daughters will go to Sindh and Hind. There, your responsibility is for the preaching of

the religion of Mustafa (the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him). The people of that area will accept Islam on your hands, and then this will be the land that will be right place for the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and a large number of the followers of the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) will live here".<sup>29</sup> According to traditions, the 'will' of Hazrat Ali (R.A) is an important milestone for Islam; as the 'will' drew the first imaginary map of Islam, making a sacred topography that would then come to execution as his descendants spread to preach the faith of Islam.<sup>30</sup> Keeping with this account, local writers claimed that Bibi Ruqayyah was raised up with the knowledge that she would describe the events of Karbala and was intended to preach in the subcontinent, raising the status of Islam in the region.

After the massacre of Karbala, Medina had become horrendous for the family of the Prophet (PBUH),<sup>31</sup> and in an atmosphere of disturbance and oppression, according to the will of Hazrat Ali (R.A) and the advice of the fourth Imam Zainul Abidin,<sup>32</sup> Bibi Ruqayyah left Madina, while there, Ameer Mukhtar Sakfi<sup>33</sup> ordered Ibrahim bin Malik e Ashtar<sup>34</sup> to safely escort her to Makran (Sindh) in 685 AD.<sup>35</sup> For many years, Bibi Ruqayyah preached and spread the message of Islam in Makran.<sup>36</sup> She headed a convoy of three hundred members of the Bani Hashim clan including many of Hazrat Ali's (R.A) grandsons and many other Muslims as well.<sup>37</sup>

A large number of the deprived community of local people accepted Islam, which alarmed and threatened the Hindu Raja of Jaislamer.<sup>38</sup> These developments not only annoyed the local Rajas but also the Umayyad rulers. They continually sent spies to capture and kill her and her companions; they also conspired with the Raja to curtail her influence on the local people. The famous conqueror of Sindh, Muhammad bin Qasim, was apparently one of those who was sent to fight against Bibi Ruqayyah.<sup>39</sup> Abdullah Abu Hashim bin Muhammad Hanafiyya bin Ali (a great grandson of Hazrat Ali (R.A) was the commander of Bibi Ruqayyah's army, he defeated Muhammad Bin Qasim and captured him. When Muhammad Bin Qasim came to know about the miseries of the

Prophet's family, he became a supporter of Bibi Pak Daman.<sup>40</sup> He then continued his conquest to raise the flag of Islam in all of Sindh as a disciple of Imam Hussain (R.A) and this was the reason that he was called back to Damascus, where he was sentenced to death for his disloyalty to Umayyed dynasty.<sup>41</sup> According to these hagiographies, the chase for Bibi Ruqayyah did not stop even after the arrest of Muhammad bin Qasim, so she continued her journey and crossed the River Sindh and reached Lahore.<sup>42</sup> Umayyad agents intensified their efforts to capture her. The group of Bibi Pak Daman reached Lahore and laid down their camp where today the final resting place of Bibi Ruqayyah is situated.<sup>43</sup>

Some stories reveal that the place where nowadays is the mausoleum, was a jungle near the river Ravi. The city of Lahore was very small and ruled by a Hindu ruler named Barmantri or Maha Brant. The Raja sent his son named Bakrama Sahi with an army to arrest these ladies. Impressed by the personality and the sermons of Bibi Ruqayyah the prince became their disciple and embraced Islam. The prince was named Abdullah. As a result, for some time Bibi Ruqayyah and her family were able to live in peace and preach the message of Islam under the protection of the prince and the favour he commanded from the Raja.<sup>44</sup>

However, continued harassment by the Hindus made their lives unbearable. The army of the Raja tried to arrest these ladies, feared of her disgraceful treatment, she called the remaining women of her clan and in their despair they collectively prayed for divine rescue from the threat of constant danger. To fulfill their wishes and because of their high status in the eyes of God, the ground split and their base camp disappeared underground.<sup>45</sup> At this place a remainder piece of cloth of the dopatta (scarf) was said to be visible but later it also disappeared. Thus the name Bibi Pak Daman was associated with these ladies that even the scarf of the lady was pure and could not be touched.<sup>46</sup>

Before his disappearance Bibi Ruqayyah gathered a large number of Quranic scholars that had travelled under her command from Karbala and ordered them to disperse across the region to forward her preaching.<sup>47</sup> Thus, she ensured that her

teachings would continue around the region, in accordance with her father's wishes, as these scholars would become venerated pirs amongst their own followers.<sup>48</sup> After their disappearance the prince respected their covering and constructed a boundary wall around the area so that no male could easily enter the site where Bibi Ruqayyah and other ladies had disappeared.<sup>49</sup> It is also said that the present mujawars (custodians) of the shrine are descendants of that prince.<sup>50</sup> But this version of the story is almost absent and not accepted by many historians, because Muhammad bin Qasim attacked on Sindh to punish the than ruler of Sindh Raja Dahir who captured some Muslims women, and to release them he attacked on Sindh.<sup>51</sup>

Yet, there is another version which is supported by some historians like Kanhya Lal, Muhammad Aslam and Tanveer Anjum<sup>52</sup> that following the misfortune of Karbala no reason was there for any Muslim lady to come to Lahore which was ruled by Hindus.<sup>53</sup> However, according to Kanhiya Lal six real sisters with the names Bibi Haj, Bibi Shahnaz, Bibi Noor, Bibi Taj, Bibi Hur, Bibi Gauhar, fled from the city of Mecca after the carnage at Karbala on the 10th day of Moharram. But he also narrated the other viewpoint that Bibi Haj was the name of the daughter of a pious man named Walliullah Sayyad Ahmad Shah Tokhta 54 further this issue was also investigated by Department of Auqaf which manages the affairs of the shrine.<sup>55</sup> According to an employee of the Auqaf "Bibi Haj and her other five sisters were pious and chaste ladies who after the death of their father confined themselves outside Lahore to continue their prayers without any disturbance. When there was a massacre in Lahore because of the Mongol invasions these ladies prayed to Allah for their demise as they feared that non-Muslims would see them and may dishonor them.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, an earthquake erupted and these chaste women were buried alive along with their female servants.<sup>57</sup>

However, historians have confronted this versions of the story because one of the daughters of the Ahmad Shah Tokhta whose name was Bibi Taj had been murdered in UP by the Brahmans and her mausoleum is in UP Sawana Basti, the other daughter Bibi Haj

was married to a ruler of Kach Makran and she died in 1178 AD and her mausoleum is in Makran.<sup>58</sup> Available evidence suggests that Ahmed Shah Tokhta died in 1204 AD while Data Ganj Bakhsh used to visit the shrine more than hundred years before this time. Multiple sources recount that Data Ganj Bakhsh was a dedicated visitor to Bibi Pak Daman and he spent days in meditation and prayer at the shrine.<sup>59</sup> On the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman, there remains a marble slab that symbolizes the place where Data Sahib used to spend his time in prayer to Bibi Ruqayyah. Thus, this narrative verifies two purposes: it verifies the disputed timeline of Bibi Ruqayyah's arrival in Lahore and that there is not enough evidence to support the fact that Genghis Khan had ever attacked Punjab as the Mongols first attacked the Subcontinent in 1221,<sup>60</sup> and also that Data Ali Hujveri lived in the 11th century and as such Bibi Ruqayyah must have reached the subcontinent well before the 11th century and the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman must have been there before the 11th century. This timeline confirms that the pious ladies buried in the Shrine of Bibi Pak Daman cannot be the daughters of Tokhta as discussed earlier Ahmed Shah Tokhta died in 1204 AD and her daughters died while he was alive. In fact, the vast majority of Sufi saints in the subcontinent trace their pedigree to Hazrat Ali (RA), they all pursued to pay their respect to Hazrat Ali's (R.A) daughter. Famous Sufi saints including Data Ali Hajveri, Junaid Bhaghdadi, Khawaja Hassan Kharkani, Laal Shahbaz Qalandar, Boo Ali Qalandar, Baba Adam Bukhari, Syed Ahmed Tokhta, Syed Hussain Jalaluddin Jahaniya Jahangasht, Sultan Bahu, Syed Mouj Darya, Khawaja Nizamuddin Aulia all used to visit and pay their respect on the shrine of these pious ladies.<sup>61</sup> These narratives reveal the existence of Bibi Ruqayyah (the daughter of Ali (R.A) in Pakistan. The lives of these Ladies have all made an ineradicable mark on the subcontinent and occupy central roles in the cultural heritage of India and Pakistan.

A different history for this mausoleum is described in Naqoosh Lahore, a famous magazine, according to their editorials and reports, these are all myths that need to be

researched especially about the names like Bibi Haj, Bibi Shehbaz ,etc. are not Arabic names and no one of the daughters of Hazrat Ali (R.A) had these names. It is also pointed out that there were no Muslims who were living in Lahore at that time so it did not make any sense that why these women would travel such a long journey to come here.<sup>62</sup> John Subhan argues about the names of the five pious ladies buried along with Bibi Ruqayyah, Bibi Hur, Bibi Nur, Bibi Gawhar, Bibi Taj, and Bibi Shahbaz. He described that these names are Persian, and for those who express doubt about Ruqayyah's presence, this fact challenges the claim that these women are from Hazrat Ali (R.A) Family. He further says, this is a fact that many Muslims married to the Persian ladies after the after the Muslim conquest of Iran and most of the ladies who belonged to the royal family were given in marriage to 'Ali's (R.A) sons and relatives.<sup>63</sup> Apart from that there is another version that these names were actually given by some local people to these pious ladies, Bibi Pak Daman was named Bibi Haj, and the other were named Bibi Hur, Bibi Taj, Bibi Noor, Bibi Gohar, and Bibi Shahbaz but their real names were Bibi Ruqqaya, Ume Hani, Ume Luqman, Ramla, Zainab, Asma and the name of their servant famously known as Bibi Tanoori was Kaneez Haleema.<sup>64</sup> The claim that the grave of Bibi Ruqqaya is in Syria, is not the daughter of Hazrat Ali (RA), that mausoleum is Imam Hussain's (R.A) daughter which is built by the Iranian government.<sup>65</sup>

Preceding paragraphs have tried to explain that 'who, where and what' were the Pak Bibian including their religious position. We have given all stories of Bibi Pak Daman, first version of them being the daughters of Hazarat Ali (RA), the second being them the daughters of Ahmad Shah Tokhta. The author is not able to find any primary evidence regarding the history and origin of these pious ladies. All evidence that has been acquired is the secondary sources while verifying the history of these pious ladies; other traditional means are used for this purpose. Apart from all these stories whatever the real story about these ladies, the fact remains that there is a shrine in Lahore where people have been turning up for a variety of reasons. Our goal, however, is not to investigate



who they were, we simply tried to investigate how these pious ladies spread Islam throughout these areas. Historical figures such as Data Ganj Buksh, Khuwaja Moinudin Chishti along with common people have come and put faith into these pious ladies, which shows the place and level of these ladies. The people perform different rituals to get their wishes/problems addressed because of the miracles related to the ladies and the tomb of Bibi Pak Daman.

## Tomb

Though there is no primary sources yet it is claimed in some writings that the tomb on the six graves was built one thousand years ago by Mahmood Ghaznavi and his soldiers and Hazrat Data Gunj Bakhsh every week used to attend and offer Fateha for these six ladies.<sup>66</sup> He was a devotee of the shrine of the Bibi Pak Daman.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, the extension of Bibi Pak Daman and the creation of waqf around the site are attributed to the Mughal Emperor Akbar.<sup>68</sup> The holy shrine of Bibi Pakdamen also received a vast tract of land during the Sikh period, which the British unfortunately reduced drastically.<sup>69</sup> In 1960 a pious lady Fakhra Begum wife of Imam Ali Shah from Multan construct the road of the bazar related to the shrine. In 1962 Hakim Khadim Aslam reconstruct the Mazar, in 1970's Shaikh Abdul Majid decorated the shrine with marble stones and mirrors.<sup>70</sup>

## Miracles/Karamat1

There are a number of miracles (karamat) attributed to the mausoleum. Generally, it is claimed whoever comes to the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman and gets his wishes fulfilled. Whoever has been searching for his internal self can also attain this trait. It has been said that hundreds of people have gotten rid of health issues by going and paying respect to this shrine.

Anyhow, the most important karamat about the six ladies, buried in the mausoleum, is their living burial itself as Shiite hagiographies claim: "still alive, just out of sight". Another karamat has been described by Noor Ahmed Chishti that Hindu

Prince who became mujawar of the shrine married a disabled woman and prayed at her grave that if his wife's disability would be recovered she would serve at shrine. On the spot, his prayer was accepted, making the girl healthy. Six or seven Jats witnessed the event and also embraced Islam.<sup>71</sup>

### Ladoo (sweet)

Disciples carry out several services at the tomb to make their desires come true. A regularly seen ritual at the tomb is the circulation of ladoos (sweet) alongside silver rings which are worn. Ladoos are served at the holy place of the mausoleum and anyone who wants to make a wish picks up a ladoo and wears the silver ring in his or her finger and continues to wear it until his/her desire is fulfilled and then he/she has to place fourteen ladoos in the tomb for other disciples and thus this wish cycle perpetuates itself. Many shopkeepers, who own sweet shops at the market, said their dealing flourishes with the coming of month of Muharram. One of them told, "Mostly women believe in this myth and many cultured and sophisticated females from high-class areas like Cantonment, Gulberg and the Defense Housing Authority go to the tomb with a hope that their legitimate desires or needs will be fulfilled."<sup>72</sup>

Shiia community along with the Ladoos also offers an Alam (a flag of Ghazi Abbas in the battle of Karbala) to the shrine for the acceptance of their prayers. They also lighten five lamps of oil (Chiragh) for this purpose. The men and women also used the oil of these Chiraghs for their health and mostly rub it on the effected parts of their bodies to retain their health. It is also a common ritual to tie a thread to the mausoleum of Bibi Pak Daman for the acceptance of their prayers. The young unmarried prays for their marriages or for the success in exams. The people who do not have babies pray for babies, pray for the success for themselves and for their loved ones. The salt available there is believed to be very helpful and effective in curing hundreds of illnesses.

Some years back, men were not allowed to go inside and they prayed while standing outside whereas, the women would stay

inside and pray, it's the only shrine where the women were allowed to go inside while the men had to stay outside, as compare to other famous Sufi saints where women are not allowed to go inside the main area of the graveyard. The women cleaned the graves of these pious ladies for the acceptance of their prayers especially for the babies.

A 35 years old female worker at the tomb narrated that these pious ladies came here on camels, after their live burial these camel became trees and these trees are standing in the middle of marble floor. She told that several infertile women come here and eat leaves of these trees and wish for their fertility. She told that taste of these leaves is sweet. It is also said that five leaves are given to the couple suffering from infertility and both have to eat two and half so that female can conceive. Sometimes childless women also eat apples and wear silver rings so consequently after getting pregnant they pay tribute of twelve apples and twelve silver rings.<sup>73</sup>

The people also offers Majalis (religious practice)<sup>74</sup> for the acceptance of their prayers, commonly held by the Shiia sect.

Hundreds of thousands pilgrims visiting this shrine every day is in itself proof of miracles of Bibi Pak Daman. Had there been no realization of the prays of people visiting the shrine there would have not been such miraculous gathering from all across Pakistan both from rich and poor circles of the society.

On the path to the memorial one can see a street which is over packed with huge gathering of small boys who are standing with their mothers by their side.

One can listen to women demanding money while passing the street saying that her son is the beggar of Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A), give him some Almas, because it's an old myth that the woman who desire a male heir promises to make her child Imam Hussain's (R.A) 'malang' (devotee) for a specific period of time. Within that period the parents do not purchase any dresses for the boy, they only wear the dresses purchased from the money which they get as a beggar of Imam Hussain (RA), no matter they belong to a rich family or a poor.

### Zuljinnah procession<sup>75</sup>

One more custom which is exclusively connected with the mausoleum is the Zuljinnah's (a symbolic horse of Imam Hussain (RA) in the battle of Karbala) being there at the tomb during the month of Muharram. Men and women both stand on both sides of the lane and let the Zuljinnah pass through the lane. Some offer tributes to the Zuljinnah as a sign of veneration and respect.

Although the Majalis<sup>76</sup> continue across the year however; in the month of Muharram<sup>77</sup>, the mausoleum becomes the center of Majalis and processions mourning the tragedy of Karbala. One of the reasons for the huge congregations is the presence and charisma of Bibi Ruqayya, the sister of Imam Hussain (R.A.) and daughter of Hazrat Ali (R.A.). People all across the country flock at the shrine to grieve the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (R.A.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Charity and compassion are seen at their best during these days with generous distribution of food, sweets and drinks. In the Majalis and processions, the pilgrims also recite Nohas<sup>78</sup> and do Ma'tam<sup>79</sup> lamenting the woes and miseries of Ahl-e-bait (family of Holy Prophet PBUH). As a matter of fact, the Majalis and processions continue day and night throughout the first 10 days of the month of Muharram.

Another ritual associated with the shrine is the wearing of a thread of red colour on one's wrist and wishing for something. Devotees tie a thread of red colour on their wrists and also touch this thread with the graves of these ladies so that this thread becomes sacred and after that pray for their wish. After fulfilling of their wishes they distribute some sweets (Nayaz). The tying of the red thread around the wrist is an important characteristic of the tomb culture and is normally linked with a wish that is asked for at the tomb.

### Alam (flag)

Alam is a customary Shiia emblem with a hand, which means to symbolize the hand of Hazrat Ghazi Abbas (RA), a son of Hazrat Ali (R.A) from his wife Umm-al-Banin bint Huzama

(R.A), and was the real brother of Bibi Ruqayya, who was the flag holder of the army of Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A), during the tragedy of Karbala. A woman who was wearing a cotton green suit with her head covered with a scarf stood next to it and was praying with her eyes closed. The Alams were covered with flowers of different kinds and there were oil lamps and incense lit next to it. This is the place where men and women gathered and took oil of these lamps as tabaruk.<sup>80</sup>

There is a famous myth regarding locks. People of various beliefs and various sects bring lock with themselves and make wishes. After wishing these people put the lock and unlock only after their wish was fulfilled.<sup>81</sup>

### Peace/meditation and social gathering

This shrine is a place of comfort for those who are deprived or grieved. Women from different areas and of different sects come and pay tributes. This is the place which provides shelter and food as well. Every year a three-day Urs is celebrated on 6th, 7th, and 8th Jamada us Sani of Islami calendar to pay tribute to the ladies of chastity. Ceremony starts with the washing of graves of pious ladies by rose water. On the 6 Jamadi-ul-Sani after Zohar prayer the grave is rinsed and washed and small pots of sweet rice are distributed during the evening. On 7th of the month, after Isha, there can be observed recitation of Quran and the distribution of langar and then qawwali (choir, sufi music) is performed. On the 8th, naat khani (humn) continues and after reciting and completing of Quran langar is distributed. Thousands of men and women attend this Urs every year. This is the death anniversary of these pious ladies. In this regard, people come from all over Pakistan to attend the death anniversary known as Urs.<sup>82</sup> People from all communities like Hindus, Sikhs and Christians also have been coming for centuries to attend this Urs and pay their respects alongside Muslims. There are dhamals (ecstasy dance) and performances and food. At the end of the Urs, scarfs are circulated to all the male and females who narrate milad.<sup>83</sup>

Though department of Auqaf manages the affairs of mosques and the shrines but still in the lack of effective control financial corruption is observed because of business and financial relationships between caretaker of the tomb and the shopkeepers. Because of the veiling of the lady of purity and her disappearing from the eyes of people, the devotees here frequently offered chadars (mantle) or scarfs as tribute. These were usually received by the associates at the shrine and many attendants who received these donations and rupees they resold them in the bazaar. The Auqaf Department, however, has been trying to eliminate these practices. This department has issued strict instructions to enlist all donations which can be dopattas, cash or other items and the attendants who serve in the ladies section of Bibi Pak Daman enlist these donations according to the orders. Cash is not being received by hand and it goes directly into boxes locked with chains and no male follower or devotee is allowed to sit near the memorial place.

If someone visits the tomb of Bibi Pak Daman he or she would see druggies, homeless women and abandoned children. It is also important to ask why these shrines have become attractive places for such type of people. For all these people, such shrines are the places of shelter where they find refuge to carry out their illegal practices. Auqaf government has lately been paying attention to the matter. Now they have strong checks over the pilgrims and also over vagabonds.<sup>84</sup>

## Conclusion

The present authors are unsure mainly because of the absence of primary sources about the authenticity of origin and truthfulness of the story about the descendents of Hazrat Ali (R.A). Despite ambiguity about the authenticity of the mausoleum as the final resting place of Hazrat Ali's (R.A) offspring,' the custodians, followers and pilgrims of this tomb continue to believe in the popular narrative about the place. Apart from projections of Shiites about the veneration of the Ahl-e-Bait, it is in fact the needs spiritual, social, economic, psychological and

even biological of the people who compel them in thousands, not only from the local community but also from foreign countries, to visit the shrine to pay homage. Ladies of chastity in the Bibi Pak Daman's have far reaching impact upon the society because of the symbolic and spiritual appeal of their shrine. It has been attracting millions of people since ages and may well continue to do so as for the devotees the miracles attributed to the tomb are being manifested every day. They are involved in such rituals which could best be categorized as hybrid mixture of Hindu and Islamic traditions. The mystics of the past, apart from showing their miracles to attract people from their localities, always taught the lesson of love, peace and harmony to create a harmonious society. Thus, tombs and shrines, similar to that of Bibi Pak Daman's, in Indian past had become the centers of social activities which had promoted religious harmony and interfaith unity. In fact, this was the popular culture of the Indian society before the colonial period. After the creation of Pakistan the legacy of mutual, love, respect and tolerance not only between Muslims and non-Muslims continues but also harmony between Shites and Sunis has been a hallmark of this mausoleum because the karamat of Bibi Pak Daman are been displayed on the regular basis in the eyes of the visitors.

## Notes and References

- 1 The summary of the paper was presented in the Sufi SAARC Festival held in October 2014, at Jaipur India but it is being reproduced with modifications, citations and references.
- 2 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimension of Islam* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003), 1-15.
- 3 Sayd Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol,1 (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004), 5.
- 4 S. Fadhlalla Haeri, *The Thoughtful Guide to Sufism* (New Delhi: Bhavana Books and Prints, 2006), 25-40.

- 5 M. A. H. Ansari, *Sufism and Shari 'ah* (UK: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), 61-62.
- 6 Jean-Louis Michon, *Lights of Islam* (Islamabad: Lok Virsa, 2000), 168
- 7 There are varied definitions of term Sufism. "Though term Sufism is deceptive but it is firmly rooted in particular local contexts, often related to the tombs of deceased saints. Individual Sufi groups or traditions in one place may be completely oblivious of what Sufis do or say in other regions". Carl W. Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2005), 22.
- 8 Da'ata Sahib was a Persian Sufi and scholar in the 11th century. He significantly contributed to the spreading of Islam in South Asia; He was born around 990 CE near Ghazni, present day Afghanistan, during the Ghaznavid Empire and died in Lahore in 1072 CE. His most famous work is *Revelation of the Veiled Kashf Al Mahjub* written in the Persian language. The work, which is one of the earliest and most respected treatises of Sufism, debates Sufi doctrines of the past.
- 9 Hazrat Mian Mir was a famous Sufi saint who resided in Lahore, specifically in the town of Dharampura (name of the place in Lahore). He belonged to the Qadiri order of Sufism. He is famous for being a spiritual instructor of Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and also laid foundation of Golden Temple in Amritsar.
- 10 Hazrat Shah Jamal was born in 1588 CE. Syed Shah Jamal belonged to the school of Qadiriyyah and Suhrawardiyya. He lived in Ichra at the time of Mughal emperor Akbar the Great.
- 11 Pak Daman literary means the pure cloth, as associated to this Shrine.
- 12 The mausoleum of Bibi Pak Daman is located nearby Queens Mary's College at Garhi Shahu. This cemetery houses the six ladies popularly known as Bibi Pak Daman.



- 13 Bibi Ruqayya was the daughter of Hazrat Ali (R.A) from his wife Umm al Banin Binte Huzzam and married to Hazrat Muslim Bin Aqeel who was the cousin and messenger of Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A) in Kufa.
- 14 Bibi Pak Daman shrine contains 6 grave markers. The centre structure is for Bibi Ruqayyah. The five others are for her female relatives and companions, though explanations vary on whether they are her daughters or Muslim Ibn Aqeel's sisters. Ali Shah, Bibian Pak Daman kon thin or kahan say tashrif lain, (Lahore: Hameed book Deput, ND), 4.; Masood Hashmi, Makhdoma Bibi Ruqayya Bint e Ali (Lahore: Alghazi Publications, 2006), 6.
- 15 The terrible events of Karbala in which Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.S) (grandson of the Prophet PBUH) and his family members were martyred by the army of Yazid, the ruler of the Muslim world at that time.
- 16 Mufti Ghulam Server, Tarikh e Makhzen e Punjab (Lahore: Dost Associates < 1996), 522.
- 17 Ali Shah, Bibian Pak Daman kon thin or kahan say tashrif lain, 8.
- 18 Majid Sheikh, "Mystique of the six pious Ladies". Dawn 13 June, 2004. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1066081>.
- 19 Muslim ibn Aqeel Al-Hashimi was the husband of Bibi Ruqayya and was the son of Aqeel ibn Abu Talib and a member of the clan of Bani Hashim, thus, he is a cousin of Hussain ibn Ali.
- 20 Kufa is a city in Iraq.
- 21 Karbala is home to the Imam Hussain (R.A) Shrine. Karbala is famous as the site of the martyrdom of Hussain ibn Ali (R.A) (Imam Hussain (R.A)).
- 22 Muhammad Latif, Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities (Lahore: New Imperial Press, 1892).
- 23 Mufti Ghulam Server, Tariekh e Makhzan e Punjab.

- 24 Noor Ahmad Chishti, *Tahqiqat-e-Chishti*. Lahore: Nashran wa tajran jutab, 1867.
- 25 Hazrat Ali's (R.A) sons and the grandsons of the prophet Muhammad PBUH.
- 26 Masood Hashmi, *Makhdoma Bibi Ruqqayya Bint e Ali*, 8.
- 27 As Muhammad Latif 27 and Moulvi Noor Ahmad Chishti has also floated the same idea that after the tragedy of karbala these six ladies who were also the part of the group at Karbala managed to get away and ended up in Lahore It is also said that in this graveyard a grave famous with the name of Bibi Haleema or Bibi Tanori who prepared meal for the chaste lady and people related to this field considered Bibi Tandori as their Peer. Masood Hashmi, *Makhdoma Bibi Ruqqayya Bint e Ali*, 10.
- 28 Ali Shah, *Bibian Pak Daman kon thin or kahan say tashrif lain*,(Lahore:hameed book deput, ND),16,17.; Masood Hashmi. *Makhdooma Bibi Ruqayyah Bint Ali: Bibi Pak Damana Lahore Mein*. (Lahore: Al-Fazi Publications, 2004, 3rd edition), 185–86.
- 29 Ghaffir Shehzad, *Hazrat Bibi Pak Daman*. (Lahore: Department of Religious Affairs and Auqaf ,Punjab,2005), 3.; Masood Hashmi. 86.
- 30 Masood Hashmi,22.
- 31 Syed Amir Ali, *A History of the Saracens*(Lahore: Peace publications, 2011),89.
- 32 Son of Imam Hussain (R.A) and grandson of Hazrat Ali (RA).
- 33 Al-Mukhtar ibn Abi 'Ubaydah al-Thaqafi was an early Shiia Islamic revolutionary based in Kufa, Iraq who led an abortive rebellion against the Umayyad Caliphs in vengeance for the death of Hussain ibn 'Ali (R.A) at the Battle of Karbala.
- 34 Ibrahim ibn Malik al-Ashtar was the son of Malik al-Ashtar, along with Mukhtar al-Thaqafi raised against the

killers of Hussain ibn Ali and they two killed most of the killers of Hussain and his army.

- 35 Masood Hashmi, 22.
- 36 Makran is a semi-desert coastal strip in Balochistan, in Pakistan and Iran, along the coast of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Masood Hashmi, 24.
- 37 Masood Hashmi, 21.
- 38 The story as told by Shiites hagiographies about these ladies becomes unauthentic when one tries to trace the history of Jaisalmer. In fact, the Maharaja of Jaisalmer trace their lineage back to Jaisimah, a ruler of a clan, though Deoraj, a famous prince of the Bhatti clan during the 9th century. With him the title of "Rawal" commenced. "Rawal" means "of the Royal house" Balfour, Edward (1885). The Cyclopædia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia: Original from Oxford University: B. Quaritch. p. 406.
- 39 In 712 AD, the fiercely pro-Umayyad Governor of Iraq, Hajjaj bin Yousef, dispatched his young nephew Muhammad bin Qasim to conquer Sindh in the name of the Umayyad dynasty.
- 40 Ghaffir Shehzad, Hazrat Bibi Pak Daman. (Lahore: Department of Religious Affairs and Auqaf, Punjab, January 2005), 3.
- 41 Hashmi, Makhdooma Bibi Ruqayya, 141.
- 42 Shemeem Burney Abbas, The female voice in Sufi ritual: devotional practices of Pakistan and India (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002,) 9,; Hashmi, Makhdooma Bibi Ruqayya, 142.
- 43 Hashmi, Makhdooma Bibi Ruqayya, 143.
- 44 Noor Zaidi, "A Blessing on Our People": Bibi Pak Daman, Sacred Geography, and the Construction of the Nationalized Sacred".
- 45 According to some historians at that time, this area was under the ruler of Multan, thus, he sent his son Rai Chawli

to go wage a war against this group. However, his son ended up accepting Islam and when his family found out about his conversion they murdered him. The body which was killed would come back to life every time it was killed. Even today, Dewan Chawli Mashaikh and his sister who had converted with him can be found buried near Multan. After that, Raja sent his second son to Lahore in order to arrest these Bibis. Hashmi, Makhdooma Bibi Ruqayya, 143.; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOyYIQezf9Y>

- 46 Masood Raza Khaki. *Bibian Pak Daman* (Lahore: Haidri Press, 1998), 7. ; Raza Rumi, *Lahore\_ A Visit to Bibi Pak Daman* <https://lahorenama.wordpress.com/2008/04/03/lahore-a-visit-to-bibi-pak-daman/>
- 47 Mohammad Latif Malik. *Aulia-e-Lahore*. (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publishers, 2005), 111.
- 48 Subhan, *Sufism*, 122.
- 49 Noor Zaidi, "A Blessing on Our People": Bibi Pak Daman, Sacred Geography, and the Construction of the Nationalized Sacred". *The Muslim World, Special Issue: Minorities in Islam; Muslims as Minorities*. Edited by Nelly van Doorn-Harder, Wake Forest University Volume 104, Issue 3, pages 306–335, July 2014
- 50 Muhammad Latif, *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*, 213.
- 51 Alexander Berzin, "Part I: The Umayyad Caliphate (661 - 750 CE), The First Muslim Incursion into the Indian Subcontinent", *The Historical Interaction between the Buddhist and Islamic Cultures before the Mongol Empire*, Retrieved 15/5/16.
- 52 Kanhiya Lal, *Tareekh-e-Lahore*, (Lahore: Takhliqat, n.d.); Tanveer Anjum, *Chishti Sufis in Sultanate of Delhi 1190-1400: From Restrained Indifference to Calculated Defiance*, (Karachi: OUP, 2011); Muhammad Aslam, *Khuftegan e Khak e Lahore* (Lahore: Idara Tahqiqat e Pakistan, 1993).

- 53 Majid Sheikh, *Mystique of the six pious ladies*. Dawn 13 June, 2004 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1066081>
- 54 Kanhiya Lal, *Tareekh-e-Lahore*, (Lahore: Takhliqat, n.d.), 301-302.; Tanveer Anjum, *Chishti Sufis in Sultanate of Delhi 1190-1400: From Restrained Indifference to Calculated Defiance*, (Karachi: OUP, 2011), 98.; Prof Muhammad Aslam, *Khuftegan e Khak e Lahore* (Lahore: Idara Tahqiqat e Pakistan, 1993), 372. has also supported Kanhiya Lal's point of view that these ladies belonged to Syyed Ahmed Tokhta as she has mentioned that other; migrant sufis of that era who settled in Lahore include inter alia, Saiyaid Ahmad Tokhta Tirmizi, the father of four sufi women referred as Bibi Pak Daman (literally the chaste women) buried in Lahore.
- 55 Interview of a number of persons including members of Auqaf Department, security guards, maids, visitors, males and females was conducted on 30 June 2015, at 10 am to 1 pm. Ms Anam, Lecturer, History Department, P.U. Ms Hina an M.phil student, History Department, P.U., helped conducting these interviews.
- 56 According to Majid Sheikh "In the year of 1221 AD Changes Khan chased the Afghan ruler Sultan Jalal-u-din Khwarzmi, the adjoining areas were also subjected to loot and rape, as was the Mongol tradition after a victory in battle. Fearing the worst, the six sisters, so legend goes, got together to pray for their chastity and that moment earth was struck, burying them alive along with their maids." Majid Sheikh, *Tales without Tradition*, (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publishers, 2008), 70-73.
- 57 Knhiya Lal, *Tareekh-e-Lahore* (Lahore: Takhliqat, N.d.), 301-302. 58 Ahmad Shah Tokhta had two daughters and their names were Bibi Haj and Bibi Taj, one of his daughters Bibi Haj was married to Prince Makran at the age of 17-18 and gave birth to Sultan Hamidudin Hakim in 570 AH. However, he had to bear the loss of his mother at the young age of mere three. Her grave has been traced to the area of Lahore. She is prominently known in the area of Mohala Chila Bibian in Akbari Mandi of Lahore. It is

also mentioned that in Garhi Shahu there was a graveyard famous with name of "Bibiyan Sahib" and Dara Shikoh in his Sakinatul Auliya has also mentioned the names of Bibi Haj or Bibi Taj. On the contrary, it is still not proven that these are the real graves thus the story that they had settled beneath the ground can be classified as a myth. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOyYIQezf9Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOyYIQezf9Y;);; Naqoosh Lahore Number, 158-159.

- 59 Shehzad, Hazrat Bibi Pak Daman, 4.; Noor Zaidi, "A Blessing on Our People": Bibi Pak Daman, Sacred Geography, and the Construction of the Nationalized Sacred". *The Muslim World, Special Issue: Minorities in Islam; Muslims as Minorities*. Edited by Nelly van Doorn-Harder, Wake Forest University Volume 104, Issue 3, pages 306–335, July 2014.
- 60 Ali Shah, Bibian Pak Daman kon thin or kahan say tashrif lain, (Lahore: hameed book deput, ND), 16, 17.
- 61 Shehzad, Hazrat Bibi Pak Daman, 5.; Ali Shah, 16, 17.; Masood Hashmi, 21, John Subhan. *Sufism, its Saints and Shrines: An Introduction to the Study of Sufism with Special Reference to India*. (Lucknow: The Lucknow Publishing House, 1938), 120.; Masood Raza Khaki. *Bibian Pak Daman* (Lahore: Haidri Press, 1998), 8.
- 62 Naqoosh Lahore Number, 158-159.
- 63 John Subhan. *Sufism, its Saints and Shrines: An Introduction to the Study of Sufism with Special Reference to India*. (Lucknow: The Lucknow Publishing House, 1938), 120.
- 64 Noor Zaidi, "A Blessing on Our People": Bibi Pak Daman, Sacred Geography, and the Construction of the Nationalized Sacred". *The Muslim World, Special Issue: Minorities in Islam; Muslims as Minorities*. Edited by Nelly van Doorn-Harder, Wake Forest University Volume 104, Issue 3, pages 306–335, July 2014
- 65 Masood Raza Khaki, *Bibian Pak Daman* (Lahore: Haidri Press, 1998), 8. 66 On one side of the tomb Base has been

marked, which is attributed to a place where Data Gunj Bakhsh every week used to attend and offer Fateha for these six ladies. He was a devotee of the shrine of the Bibi Pak Daman. This proves that these graves are more than one thousand years old. So if it is true then these are the very first Muslim graves in the subcontinent.

- 67 Majid Sheikh, Lahore Tales without End, 72
- 68 John Subhan, 120.
- 69 Noor Ahmad Chisti, Tahqiqat-i-Chisti, 163.
- 70 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBkoC4vphjE>
- 71 Noor Ahmad Chisti, Tahqiqat-i-Chisti, 164.
- 72 Ali Usman (April 30, 2012). "Bibi Pak Daman-A place of solace for everyone". Daily Times, Lahore. Retrieved 11/5/ 2016.
- 73 Interview of a lady at the shrine by Miss Anam.
- 74 Gathering of people to mourn to the tragedy of Karbala.
- 75 The authors also visited the shrine during the month of Muharram to personally witness the Majalis and processions and compare the historical facts available in the books with on ground manifestations.
- 76 Religious gatherings where a religious scholar narrates the tragedy of Karbala and the virtue and piety of house of the Holy prophet.
- 77 Muharram is the first month of Islamic year. The tragedy of Karbala took place between 1st Muharram to 10th Muharram. Therefore, Muslims especially the Shiia mourn the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (RA) during these days.
- 78 Verses or the rhymes narrating the events, woes and miseries of the family of Holy Prophet.
- 79 Self-hitting of one's chest to commemorate the tragedy of Karbala and relate oneself with the pain and woes of Imam Hussain (RA) and his family.
- 80 Interview with the Custodians of the Shrine.

- 81 A Visitor described this to the author while interviewing at the Shrine of Bibi Pak Daman.
- 82 Ghafir Shahzad, *Punjab Main Khanqahi Culture*( Lahore: Fiction House, 2007), 152.
- 83 Ibid, 160.
- 84 Interview with the manager of the Auqaf Department.