

**MANNAT ASSOCIATED TO FOLK BELIEF AT QADAM GAH
MOLA ALI K.W (FOOT PRINTS OF HAZRAT ALI K.W),
HYDERABAD**

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Abstract

The present research findings are majorly focused on, Mannat associated to Folk belief at Qadam Gah Mola Ali k,w (Foot Prints of Hazrat Ali k,w). I have given brief overview of the folk beliefs of the people, and their ritual practices for offering the Mannat. The Qadam Gah Mola Ali k,w remain a significant aspect of the religious folk belief. The purpose behind the present study was to explore the notion of Mannat and its existing types and practices in different religions and sects of the existing society. The major purpose of the present research is to explore the sort of rituals practiced at Qadam Gah Hazrat Ali k,w and how these beliefs and practices culturally transmitted through generation to generation .Qadam Gah of Maula Ali k,w is situated in Hyderabad, Hyderabad and is regarded as Najaf-e-Sindh, (City of Hazrat Ali).For executing this ethnographic research, researchers have used the qualitative methods of data collection along-with few quantitative methods. During research stratified sampling as well as purposive/judgmental sampling was used. The units of data collection divided on the basis of their age, education and particular knowledge about the topic. So the complete views may be obtained.

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Introduction

Qadam Gah Moula Ali k,w is the sacred place where the people perform rituals from many generations. It is especially focused by *Shiite* sect who comes repeatedly and performs rituals and gets psychological satisfaction. At *Qadam Gah* many ritual practices performed by devotees for their spiritual satisfaction. Pilgrim sites are believed to be places where miracles once happened. Still happen and may happen again (Turner, Turner, 1978). According to the devotees they feel spiritual comfort at the *Qadam Gah* Maula Ali a.s, this place provides great miracles to their lives. *Qadam Gah* Hazrat Ali i k,w is a sacred place for them, from many generation they visit the *Qadam Gah* and make the *Mannat*. Their prayer get accepted with the reference of Holy soul of Hazrat Ali k,w. The tradition of visiting sacred places to attain religious merit, washing off the sins and completion of desires and prayers (*Mannat*) are common practice across the world (Frembgen, 2012). People mostly practice religious rituals according to their socio-cultural requirement. Mostly *Shiite* population is observed as folk believers of *Qadam Gah* Maula Ali k,w.

The religious ritual for *Mannat* is practiced in a variety of world's religions, cultures and sects. In Christianity, a person free of marry by making religious *Mannat*. It intended to help people and do well in life. The '*Barata*' (Bengali term for vow) stories provide models for ethics compassion, and caring for others, making virtuous daughters and wives (Rajand Harman 2006). At *Qadam Gah* Mola Ali (k,w) both the believers and non-believers visit and make *Mannat* (to ask or beg), because it is believed that *Hazrat* Imam Ali (k,w) is relatively closer to Allah and can advocate their desires to Him. When the desires, or prayers are fulfilled believers present different things at *Qadam Gah* *Hazrat* Ali (k,w) depending upon their socio-economic condition, including animals, money, gold, sweets, *Daigs* (Large Pot of foot), milk, ghee, pitchers (*Gharolies*), dalies,

Locale

The present research was conducted in a city named Hyderabad in the province of Sindh., Hyderabad is the 6th largest city of Pakistan and 2nd largest city of Sindh.

Hyderabad is a very big city. The size of the city is about 650 square kilometers. Hyderabad was found in the year 1591 by fifth Qutb Shahi Ruler Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. Hyderabad is one of the oldest cities of South Asia. *Qadam Gah* of Maula Ali k,w is situated in Hyderabad, Sindh. Because of the Foot prints of *Hazrat Ali k,w*, Hyderabad is regarded as Najaf-e-Sindh, (City of *Hazrat Ali*).

Methodology

For obtaining the data about the topic various methods and techniques were used according to the nature of the topic. Qualitative anthropological research methods which incorporate such as, participant observation, questionnaires and in- depth interviews, case study. Researcher has conducted 10 In-depth interviews in order to collect empirical data

Research findings

Qadam Gah of Maula Ali k,w is situated in Hyderabad, Sindh. Before the partition of India and Pakistan, this place was known as “*Shah ja Qadam*” (foot prints of Shah) but with the passage of time it is known as “*Qadam Gah* Maula Ali a.s”. The visitors and devotees come from different areas for pray and achieve their heartily wishes. Their wishes are based on their folk beliefs at *Qadam Gah*. According to *Mutawwali (trustee)* of *Qadam Gah Hazrat Ali k,w*, he postulated history of foot prints of *Hazrat Ali k,w* in this way:

Foot prints of Maula Ali k,w was first exhibited for common people at least 250 years ago before the construction of the building of shrine where Qadams (foot prints) are kept. There are two stones of foot prints; one of them is called (Mussala-Prayer Area) which holds the prints of the both hands, both feet, prints of knees, forehead and nose of Hazrat Ali a.s. When these stones were brought here, the prints of knees, forehead and nose were very clear. Hence they were not covered therefore the prints of knees and forehead and nose are somehow weathered. The second stone contains the prints of lion of Hazrat Ali k,w named “Abul Haris” and his Horse named Dul Dul.

A unique culture is observed in various holy places of the world including Mosques, Hindu Temples (Mandir), Churches and in shrines. Muslim saints and

shrines, known as *Dargahs* (shrines) attract diverse range of pilgrims religiously. Some religious beliefs have more resilience and are retained or culturally transmitted by humans (Scupin and DeCorse: 2009), similarly *Qadam Gah Hazrat Ali k,w* is a sacred place for people. People come to Sufi shrines, and sacred places to manage their social and psychological problems (Levin, 2008) different people from different sects such as *Shiite*, Sunnah, Wahabee, Nusery and Non-Muslims etc visit to *Qadam Gah Hazrat Ali k,w* for their spiritual satisfaction. These people have different kind of belief and they always try to show their sprit in different ways.

Mannat

Mannat is asked from Almighty Allah only but it is achieved through or care of somebody holy/sacred or pious ones. It was observed that, *Mannat* is considered as a humble request (*Minnat*) or pray of a person at *Qadam Gah* to get some material or non-material objects which he can't easily receive from God through his own name as they are sinners. The prayers thus when not answered directly, people come to sacred places of (*Saints/Auliya*). There are centers for asking anything from Allah and *Mannat* can be observed anywhere but it is primarily better to offer it at sacred people's places. Thus people move towards the places of devout people and *Walis* (friends of Allah) for performing *Mannat* and achieving their aims. In the same way, people go to perform *Mannat* at *Qadam Gah* Maula Ali k,wat (foot prints of Moula Ali k,w,) on *Alam(Flag) Pak* of Ghazi Abbas Alamdar a.s. *Mannat* has been believed to be as an oath or a promise while some held it as a transaction between a person and a deity, to render some services or gift.

At *Qadam Gah Hazrat Ali k,w* (Foot prints of Ali k,w), believers not only come for social, economic, physical and a psychological need but also for spiritual healing, In this regard, followers seek healing through therapeutic rituals, meditation, and fulfillment of their wishes by using Sufi saints as intermediaries (Glik, 1988). One of respondent was of the view:

After completion of any desire, 'we presenting Nazrana at Qadam Gah Hazrat Ali k,w'. Many devotees agreed that Nazarana (Xenium) is a common practice after the completion of the 'Mannat' while they provide Nazrana at Qadam Gah Hazrat Ali

k,w with their inner satisfaction including animals, money, gold, sweets, Daigs (foot), milk, ghee, (gharolies), dalies, halwa, etc.

The way of performing *Mannat* based on their folk beliefs; there are no fixed religious laws for it. In this regard, some people tie threads, fix locks, or place sweets or distribute it. When their *Mannat* is fulfilled, then they untie the threads, unlock fix and provide *Nazrana*.

Ritual Practices for Offering Mannat

Qadam Gah Moula Ali k,wis the place where the people perform rituals from many generations; it is especially focused by *Shiite* sect who comes repeatedly and performs rituals for their psychological satisfaction. Ritual symbol becomes a factor in social action, a positive force in an activity field. The symbol becomes associated with human interests, purposes, ends and means, whether these are explicitly formulated or have to be inferred from the observer. (Turner 1967: 20) People at *Qadam Gah* practice certain kinds of rituals for their inner satisfaction and showing validity of their religion.

Certain kinds of rituals performed by devotees at *Qadam Gah* for their inner satisfaction, and showing validity of their religion. There are also different sacred places at *Qadam Gah* Moula Ali k,w where different rituals performed by the devotees. These rituals and religious practices provide a structure and meaning to life of the followers (Schrode, 2008).

Lightening Candles

Lightening of Candles (burning of candles, *charagh*, and *agarbatti*) are common practices at *Qadam Gah* Maula Ali k,w is also a religious ritual practiced by people for accomplishment of *Mannat*. People specifically lighten candles on the *Alam Pak* of Ghazi Abbas Alamdar a.s. devotees come at evening time for burning of the Candles, basic intend behind this ritual is the offering “*Mannat*”, people lighten these Candles for accomplishment of their wishes. According to devotees at *Qadam Gah* they were of the views:

Burning of the Candles is a kind of ritual practice. We are followers of Hazrat Ali k,w from many generation. From the childhood we offered Mannat and practice many ritual at Qadam Gah. We believe that Hazrat Ali is close friend of Allah. We

believe that, due to this act Allah blessed with whatever we wish at at Qadam Gah Maula because we know that Allah will not refuse the request of Hazrat Ali k,w.

Tiding Threads

People are visiting different Shrines and tie threads on the main gates and Alam Pak. Tiding threads at *Qadam Gah* Maula Ali k,wis very regular and popular practice of the people, for devotees it is a kind of pray. These threads are mostly tide to the “*Shabeeh*”(Image) Shrine of *Hazrat Ali k,wand Alam Pak*. It was observed that the iron fences of surrounding the Alam Pak are full of these threads.

According to devotees of *Qadam Gah*:

This is done for the completion of their heartily wishes, these threads are tide when people pray for wish, on the completion of these wishes people untie these threads and throw into the river or these are tied around neck, according to the people it is just of way of pray it is our belief. People visit at Qadam Gah, and pray for their wishes, many people comment that we address to the God but we need a source to reach Allah, these Imams are the source for us.

Lock Fixing

Generally lock fixing is a very common ritual amongst the Shrines of Pakistan. People fix lock when they go to the Shrines for some specific reason. They pray for a specific desire fix a lock, when these desires come to true people unlock these locks and give it to the servants of those Shrines.

This ritual of lock fixing is quite common at *Qadam Gah* Maula Ali a.s. these locks are mainly fix on the iron fence surrounding the Alam Pak of Ghazi Abbas Alamdar k,wand “*Shabeeh*”. Shrine of *Hazrat Ali k,w*. according to people at *Qadam Gah* Maula, this act is the reflection of their beliefs towards the *Qadam Gah*. According to them these locks are symbol of prayers.

Case study

Zareena Bibi was a regular visitor of *Qadam Gah Hazrat Ali* k,w. She lived in an area closest to the *Qadam Gah*. She is a follower of Moula Ali a.s. She offered a *Mannat* at *Qadam Gah* Moula Ali a.s. at *Ladoo* (sweet) and a *Parchi* (token). She would follow the given instruction written in token. She followed the instruction whatever is written in *Parchi*. It was compulsory for her to come at *Qadam Gah* Moula for four weeks continuously on Friday. On every visit it was necessary to bring *Ladoo* (sweet) and *Parchi* (token) with her. On first Friday she brought five *Ladoos* and five *Parchis*, on second Friday ten *Ladoos* and ten *Parchis*, on third Friday fifteen *Ladoos* and fifteen *Parchis* and on last Friday twenty *Ladoos* and twenty *Parchis*. Zareena Bibi followed all instructions during her visit at *Qadam Gah* Moula Ali a.s. She said that on third visit she got her *Mannat* accomplished with the grace of Almighty Allah. *Mannat* is a way to pray, that makes us bound to visit the shrine and pray, that prayer (Dua) is completed on any of the visit. I am thankful to Allah that I got my prayers completed on third Friday.

Zareena Bibi added that she had great belief on *Hazrat Ali* k,w. Because *Hazrat Ali* is *Auliya* (Friend) of Allah. He and his family did many sacrifices for Islam. Even *Hazrat Ali* k,w was killed during the time of his prayers inside the mosque in Kufa. She said that she is folk believers of *Hazrat Ali*, and her deliberation was that Allah will not refuse any request of *Hazrat Ali* k,w. She claim that she always make *Mannat* with the reference of *Hazrat Ali*.

We visit this shrine to get our wishes completed, it is our belief that we would never be returned with the wishes incomplete. These are the beloved ones of Allah. These are Imams. These are our leader; we follow their path to get everything we want. We believe that by following then we will reach our goals.

Case study

Mrs. Rubeena belongs to Kotri. She is 34 years old. She is regular visitor of *Qadam Gah*. She belongs to *Ahle- Sunnah* (Sunni Sect.) but her husband believes in *Ahle-Tashayyo* (Shia) and participates in *Majalis* (Assembly). She said that I was blessed with five daughters in the inception but later after observing “*Mannat*” at *Qadam Gah* Moula Ali a.s. I observed the *Mannat* by taking rings from *Qadam Gah*. With the grace of Almighty Allah, I was blessed with male baby. When I offerered *Mannat* it was compulsory for me to return those rings, unfortunately I forgot. Then my son started suffering from diarrhea, for his recovery and return

of rings I had to come back to *Qadam Gah* Moula Ali k,w for the forgiveness. When I returned rings at *Qadam Gah*, then my son become fine. She claims that after giving birth to a baby boy she became an extreme follower of *Hazrat Ali* k,w. She says she knows that *Hazrat Ali* k,w gives hopes to the helpless, children to infertile mothers, and cures the most incurable disease.

Conclusion

The *Shiite* sect strongly believes in the *Imamat*(leadership) of *Hazrat Ali* (A.S). *Qadam Gah* Moula Ali k,w is the sacred place where the people perform rituals from many generations. It is especially focused by *Shiite* sect who comes repeatedly and performs rituals and gets psychological satisfaction. At *Qadam Gah* many ritual practices performed by devotees for their spiritual satisfaction. Devotees believe that these are the Imams who create the link between human and God for the complement of different works and goals of people.

Many people stayed at *Qadam Gah* for their spiritual satisfaction. They believe that *Hazrat Ali* is *Auliya* of Allah. He and his family did many sacrifices for Islam. Even *Hazrat Ali* k,w was killed during the time of his prayers inside the mosque in Kufa. *Shiite* sect are strong folk believers of *Hazrat Ali*, and my deliberation is that Allah will not refuse any request of *Hazrat Ali* k,w. They claim that I always make *Mannat* with the reference of *Hazrat Ali*.

After completion of their *Mannats* devotees presented *Nazrana* in the sort of gifts such as flowers, sweets, *Daigs*, *Braks*, they present these gifts to the *Mutawali* with the core of heart. The *Nazrana* of *Niaz* is considered as the holy thing in the *Shiite* sect and it is used as the best solution for the ending of the problems and sick health and people not only enjoy it for taste but also for the "*Sawab*"(benefit).

Many rituals are performed at *Qadam Gah* for the purpose of mental as well as spiritual satisfaction and the people are of the view that these Imams are the best source to reach Allah the Almighty. One day we will be rewarded well in the manner by God due to love with the Imams (A.S).

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