

**SPIRITUAL HEALING IN SINDH: OVERCOMING A DJINN THROUGH
DHAMAAL (DANCE) AT SHRINE OF QALANDAR LAL SHAHBAZ**

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ABSTRACT

Spirituality is one of the basic teachings of every religion from the beginning human beings have been in search to enlighten their soul and have tried various ways to satisfy it. Islam and Hinduism are two major religions in Sindh and both these religions put light on spirituality and spiritual healing. According to Muslim tradition the Prophet (PBUH) used spiritual healing as treatment method to heal different patients having different spiritual and social ailments. It is mentioned in the holy Quran that this book is revealed to Prophet Muhammad, it is healing to those who believe in it. Likewise the Hindu rishis and saints leave materialistic world and seek for the soul to connect with God Almighty.

Spiritual healers in Sindh are highly adored and respected, people go to them for the solutions of social, economic and spiritual problems, to solve these problems spiritual healers use different methods. Apart for this the people of Sindh visit different shrines of the Sufis and saints to get inner peace and soul satisfaction. However, the shrine of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz located at Sehwan Sharif is shrine that is visited most frequently by huge number of visitors, they visit this shrine to get remedies, some come for good luck, better future and blessings, while others come to heal spiritual ailments, and there are patients, who come to overcome djinns through dhamaal. We would elaborate this in detail in this research paper.

Keywords: Sindh, Spirituality, Spiritual healing, djinn, Dhamaal, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz.

INTRODUCTION

Sindh is an ancient land having a history of thousands of years, according to a recent study done by Calcutta and Deccan Universities the Indus Valley civilization is the oldest civilization of world as it dates back to eight to nine thousand years before Christ. Being a historic land it has been influenced and been the center of many religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam (Roa BV, 2003).

According to H. Graffith the translator of Rigveda the Vedas were written by the saints and sages on the banks of Indus. Rig Veda considered to be the most sacred Hindu scripture and it speaks about

Sindh and Sindhu with highly respectable manner, paying glorifying tributes the Rig Veda calls the Sindhu river's water flowing faster than any other river on the face of earth, its water has shining and reflection, its flow reminds of a warrior's horse at battle field and no one is able to stop it, it has the same power like thunder, it flows from the barren lands, the river gives fruit and life. The Rig Veda also claims that the rajahs and maharajahs of the valley and above all Raja Bhavya and his family came to Sindhu for baptism and present special gifts and sacrifices to this mighty river. The Rig Veda also teaches an incantation about the River Indus and it reads O! Sindhu: may your horses always remain healthy and beautiful red birds fly upon you forever. All the creations know Sindhu as Indra, Heavens, Mitra, Prithvi, Agni, Aditi and Varuna known. The river is called a famous goddess for giving life and fruit to everyone. It ends with special favors from the river (Butt Kaleem, 2012).

During the Rai Dynasty Buddhism flourished in Sindh and many monasteries were established. According to Butt Kaleem, a Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang travelled through Sindh in 642 AD; there were thousands of Buddhist monks living in Sindh and there were several monasteries. Monasteries at Thul Mir Rukan near Daulatpur and a stupa found at Mirpur Khas are sites of importance and from here the largest idol of Buddha was recovered that was passed on to Sri Lankans as a gift by Ayub Khan. It must be worth mentioned that these monasteries may not have huge buildings like Nalanda and Vikramasila at Bihar, but they were well-recognized sites, roughly fifteen sites at upper and lower Sindh have been found about which it could be said with reasonable surety that they were Buddhist monasteries. Buddhist sites have also been found at Badah, Mari Sabar, Depar Ghangro, Brahmanabad, Mirpur Khas, Thul Mir Rukan, Sudheranjo-Daro, Kafirkot, Banbhore, Thatta, Budhjo-Takar and Naukot (Butt Kaleem, 2013).

Likewise Islam came to Sindh after Mohammad bin Qasim Conquered this land in 712 A.D, all these religions in one way or the other have concept of spiritual healing. According to Encyclopedia of Religions, Buddhism is the way to enlighten the soul, while in the Hindu traditions it is found that saints and sages leaving the world behind went out to search spirituality (Lindsay, Micrea, Adams, 2005).

SPIRITUAL HEALING IN SINDH

Islam and Hinduism are dominating religions in Sindh and both these religions teach spiritual healing; according to Islamic traditions Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to recite different verses from the Holy

Quran to heal the sick, according to Hadith Prophet (PBUH) used to recite Surah Fateha (first sura of Holy Quran) as remedy of headache, while there are many examples that Prophet used to recite Surah An-nas, to break black magic spells and so that evil spirits might not attack. Likewise Hinduism has its own ways and methods of spiritual healing, the rishis and sadhus are taken as powerful human beings who have supernatural powers to heal people possessed with djinns, black magic, or any other physical and spiritual ailment. The people of Sindh highly respect the spiritual healers, and in rural as well as urban areas the spiritual healers are known as pirs, and they have control over the lives of people a pir is considered to be the master and his followers are his slaves, they owe everything to the pir, these pirs are very much influential and they have influence on society, politics, economics and religion of the ordinary people. The common people consider these pirs to be divinely guided and shadow of God on earth. Various methods of spiritual healing are used in Sindh to heal social, spiritual, physical and mental ailments, some famous methods are amulets, dum, collective prayers, chila and other methods. The Sindhis believe that spiritual healers have power to take out djinns from people, could heal different physical ailments, they could break the magical spells, evil eye, evil spirit, they could open the closed luck and have ability to give prosperity in business, job and health through their prayers. The people of Sindh give offerings willingly at shrines and to these spiritual healers for solution of their problems. Sindhis also visit the shrines of Sufis and saints more often and they observe the Urs (death anniversaries) of the saints, they tie threads on trees at different shrines; so that their Wishes could be fulfilled, they ask for sons, for prosperity in business and jobs. Though there are many social and economic factors like lack of education, lack of medical facilities, no proper counseling but it is the strong religious belief of the people that motivates them to go to these spiritual healers. One prominent saint of Sindh is Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. His shrine is at Sehwan Sharif and every year in the month of Shuban, the eighth month in Islamic calendar, large numbers of people visit his shrine and observe his Urs for three days. The Sindh government announces official holiday on this day for Jamshoro district.

THE ORIGIN OF QALANDAR LAL SHAHBAZ

History is witnessing that spirituality has been fascinating on protecting and motivating people toward firm believe in goodness in any religion of the world. Land of Sindh province has been fertile and rich

cultivating the seed of tolerance and religious harmony. It is due to the shrines and effective preaching of Sufi saints (poets). They were preaching all good human characteristics that enlighten the hearts of people from every religion and it leads on bring peace and religious harmony. Lal Shahbaz Qalander (Syed Muhammad Usman Marwandi) was born in the family of Syed Hassan Kabeer-u-din in Marwand. His forefathers had remained in Iraq and Iran. Later on he arrived in Sehwan in 1246 A.D. and settled permanently till he last breathed in 1252 A.D. He was a profound intellectual of Arabic and Persian languages. His composed poetry and prose is an evidence of his scholarly thought and preaching of good deeds while in the present of many contemporary Sufi scholars in Sindh (Pakistan) as well as in other countries. He learnt Quranic verses by heart in very younger age. He was buried at Sehwan Shareef a small city near the historical mountain Kirthar range, beside the Manchar.

Lake and area familiarly is known as Kachho. There are many folk-stories and peculiarities largely circulated about the area near the Sehwan Shareef.

A golden color pleasing to the eye tomb of Usman Marwandi was constructed in the year of 1356. It is well-decorated with original tiles, very beautiful stones, with an elegant mirror-work. There is gold-made door that was donated by the Raza Shah Pahlavi during the regime of Zulifqar Ali Bhutto. Outside the tomb area, shopping streets are overcrowded and congested in season and out of season but under the golden tomb inner sanctum is widely constructed where devotees continuously making rounds and reciting the prayers and Quranic verses. There is a wooden stands folded where set of Quran are kept safely covered with multiple pieces of clothes at each because devotees open Quran, they recite with careful manner and chanting voice. Thousands of people from different religions gather there for inner satisfaction because Qalander Shahbaz institutionalized some norms, customs at shrine and adapted some spiritual signs i.e. in native language like Dhama Dham Mast Qalander means Qalander very rich in spirituality, Jhulelal means a son in cradle - it connects piety and pureness of heart filled with love of God and having greater connection of serving for the humanity selflessly.

BACKGROUND OF QALANDAR LAL SHAHBAZ

According to Allana, G.A. 1996 Sindh is the land of Sufis and saints. Some famous shrines are that Abdullah Shah Ghazi at Karachi, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz at Sehwan Sharif, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai at Bhit

Shah, Sufi Shah Innayat at Jhok Sharif and others. These shrines are adored and respected by people of all faiths at Sindh, and Qalandar Lal Shahbaz is considered to be the saint not only for Muslims but for everyone. According to caretaker of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz's Shrine, his real name was Mohammad Usman Marwand, he was born in 1177 A.D and arrived in Sindh in the 13th century, when he came to this city today known as Sehwan Sharif, he found it be city of evil-mongers and prostitutes, women used to roam in streets absolute naked, but when this saint came, the ladies felt their nakedness and tried to hide themselves. Qalandar started to preach the true light of God to everyone and asked people to come to the true path of God, when he saw that people are not returning to the true path of God, he became angry and kicked the ground and in the wink of an eye the whole city being a mound of soil, after that he re-established the city, Ali Ahmed 1999. It is believed that two and half Qalandars have visited this world one is Usman Marwandi, the other is in India named Bu Ali Qalandar and then there is Bibi Rabia Basri, since she was a lady she is considered as the half Qalandar (Maya Jai 2001).

There are many rituals performed at Qalandar's shrine, some are commonly performed on other shrines and some are exclusively performed only at this shrine. According to Abbas Homey Shemeem 2010, she observed a ritual that the women devotees held up glasses of water to seek ritual blessings from the guluband or a heart-shape necklace that belonged to Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar that hang over his tomb at Sehwan, and then the glasses of water were shared with their kins women and men (Abbas Burney Shemeem 2010).

The word Qalandar is associated with the fakirs or malangs, the Sufi mendicants. They are thought to be itinerant dervishes and usually do not associate with any particular order. However, those in Sehwan are believed to be associated with Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. These fakirs and malangs are now found in lodges in Sehwan located next to the shrine of Sikander Bodla Bahar close to the shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. Bodla Bahar is known as Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's most faithful disciple. (Mokhtar Shehram 2012).

Among various rituals performed at the shrine of Qalandar one is dhamaal, The ecstatic dancing of Lal Shahbaz in the presence of prince Sultan Khan Shaheed has been mentioned in a historical book Tarikh-e-Firuz Shahi, a history of the Muslim monarch Firuz Shah Tughlak, in 1357 AD (Qazi, 1971). Ecstatic dhamaal is considered a gift of God to Lal Shahbaz Qalandar because of which he is given a high stature among

mystics. The practice of dhamaal to beat of drums continues to this day at the shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar and at his disciple Bodla Bahar's shrine. During the Urs, performances of dhamaal, we become intense as thousands of devotees take part in it. The practice continues throughout the year without failing except for the ten days of the Islamic month of Muharram, when Muslims mourn the murder of the Prophet's grandson and Ali's son Husain (Qazi, 1971:16-17). Both men and women perform dhamaal on the shrine and it was observed during the stay that dhamaal started after the third prayer and carried on till sunset in the veranda of the shrine, there is a huge one sided drum present that is beaten during the dhamaal and the fakeers start spinning their bodies on the drumbeats, a particular song "Lal Meri Pat Rakhiyo Bhala" is sung, while the men and women having large hair and green tunics start the dancing that continues for hours regularly.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data in this research has been managed from both primary and secondary sources including personal observations, interviews, books, research journals and published articles.

DHAMAL

The spiritual dance is familiar as "Dhamal" in sub-continent mostly in south Asian region at the shrines of Sufi saints. Word "Dhamal" is originated from Sanskrit language referred as "Sufi Dance" to attain union with the Divine. It is purely set out to attain the love of God.

OVERCOMING A DJINN THROUGH DHAMAAL

Possessed by a djinn is one of the common spiritual ailments, and it is witnessed since ages, according to Islamic traditions a djinn is creation made of fire, with supernatural powers one among them are to have this ability to change shapes, enter and control a human body. A djinn could either be a Muslim or non-Muslim, since a non-Muslim djinn has evil intentions, spiritual healers believe it hard to capture or overcome such a djinn, while both men and women could be possessed by this creation.

According to a tradition the holy Prophet Muhammad said "djinn (satan) flows in human body like blood, "one companion asked: "what about you, O prophet! " He said: "In me too but I have controlled mine and you have to do the same", Illahi Ashique Moullana, & Sahahi Bukhari, Sahahi Muslim. In Sindh there are many spiritual healers who claim to take out djinns from possessed people, there are some true cases but many of there are fraudulent spiritual healers who fool around people

to make money. However, it was observed at shrine of Qalandar, a married woman aged 30 was brought from Sukkur to the shrine just before the time of dhamal, it was told the caretaker that she possesses a djinn, the djinn entered her because she had prayed from God for special help, as her in-laws used to ill-treat her, they also used to physically torture her, so from bottom of her heart she asked God for help and a djinn entered her body, after that she started to take her revenge, when the family realized change in body and attitude of the lady, contacted a local spiritual healer, who started his ritual upon the lady and a male voice came through her mouth that he is a djinn and follows the saint of Sehwan Sharif, who has sent him for the aide of the lady, now he won't leave her body. The local spiritual healer suggested the family to take the lady to the shrine of Qalandar, she would find the remedy only at that place. When the dhamal started the effected lady was brought to the centre and green tunic was put on her, the leader of the dance group, who was an elderly man asked the lady to perform dhamal on the beat of the drum, as the drum started to beat, everyone started dancing, after half an hour the lady was out of control and she was shouting but rather a female voice, suddenly the lady fell down on the ground. The elderly guy was leading the group came to her and put his on her hand told the djinn to leave body of this lady for Qalandar's sake, the djinn promised to leave her body, if the family promises not to ill-treat again, once the promises were done, the djinn left her body and then the elderly cut off the lock of lady's hair as sign that the djinn won't come back to her again.

FINDINGS/SUGGESTIONS

It was observed that there is very small space to perform the ritual of dhamal, while men and women perform this ritual together, which is against the spirit of Islam. It was also observed that many fakeers and visitors use drugs with the premises of the shrine, which is against the respect of the shrine. There is no management in the shrine and different people claim to own the shrine, while this holy site is being used to earn money, even the prostitutes and trans genders are allowed to perform dances in the premises of the shrine. Many other things were also observed like putting threads to the trees, rings and stones were sold, or people were prostrating before replicas of items used by the saint that are totally against the religion of Islam.

It is suggested that there should be a separate place or spot for dhamal for men and women, so that both gender may not intermingle with each other. The laws led by Islam should be followed, no one should

be allowed to use drugs within premises, so that the respect of the shrine is maintained, there should be proper management of the shrine so that visitors may not find any difficulty, prostitutes and transgender should be banned from entering this holy shrine, un-Islamic practices should be banned and rather giving ownership to private people the government should own the shrine and from such policies that are beneficial for the visitors.

CONCLUSION

Spirituality is a way or method that is the core idea of every religion, almost all religions believe that there is life after death, in fact the physical body dies, but spirit always remains alive, like a physical body even the spiritual body has its own needs. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran that: “most definitely in the remembrance of God, souls do get satisfactions,” the spiritualists always try to connect themselves with God through mystical powers. Spiritual healing is an ancient method and it is the only remedy for many spiritual and mental ailments, in this age of modern science and technology, when people waste their time and money on other healing methods but they are not healed because they fail to realize that for spiritual problems, spiritual healing is the only remedy. In Sindh spiritual healing practice is very ancient and the spiritual healers are highly regarded and respected in this part of the world, people bow down to them and call them with respectable names. More often the spiritual healers of Sindh come across with patients, who are possessed with djinns, learned healers treat them differently and un-learned spiritual healers ill-treat the patients, because they have no ability to treat spiritual problems. Most common methods used by healers in Sindh for spiritual healing are: amulets, dum, giving a thread, collective prayer and others. People of Sindh also believe in healing coming from the shrines of saints and Sufis, there are number of shrines of saints in Sindh, and a huge number of people visit this shrine throughout the year. One important shrine in Sindh is of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz situated at Sehwan Sharif, people here come for different reasons, some come to pay just a visit to the saint, while many others come to solve their social, economic and spiritual problems and to get blessings from the saint. Many people come for good luck. Different rituals are performed at the shrine and one of them is dhamal, it is a form of mystical dance, and the performers usually wear green tunic, it is performed after the third prayer till sunset. People possessed with djinn also visit the shrine in many cases, these patients are

healed through the dhamal, as it is one of the ways to connect one's soul with God.

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