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CERTIFICATE

I hereby recommend the following thesis, prepared under my supervision by Mr. Shaheer Khan,
entitled

**“UNDERSTANDING THE SUHARWARDIYA SILSILA IN MULTAN: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE RITUAL PRACTICES AT THE SHRINES OF
SHEIKH BAHAUDDIN ZAKARIYA AND SHAH RUKN-E-ALAM”**

Accepted partially for the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy
in Pakistan Studies

Dr. Sadia Mahmood
Supervisor

Author's Declaration

I, Shaheer Khan, hereby declare that the thesis titled “Understanding the Suharwardiya Silsila in Multan: A Comparative Study of the Ritual Practices at the Shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam” is my own work and has not been submitted by me for any other degree from Quaid-i-Azam University or from anywhere else.

At any time, if my statement is found incorrect even after the receiving of M.Phil Degree, the University has the right to cancel my degree.

Shaheer Khan

DEDICATION

To my Parents, my siblings, and my friends, Zahid Iqbal, Ameer Hamza Ansari, Abdul Majid, Sufyan Bugti, Saeed Khan, Nabeel Ahmad, and Ikramullah Khetran, I dedicate this thesis to you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Allah, the Most Beneficent, for bestowing upon me the guidance and potential to conduct this research. Without His blessings, this research endeavor would not have come to fruition. I extend my sincerest appreciation to my Supervisor, Dr. Sadia Mahmood, whose guidance and encouragement were instrumental from the inception to the end of this research work. Her expertise and support have been invaluable in shaping this study. I am also indebted to my friends, whose kindness and moral support have been a source of motivation throughout the project. Last but not least, I am grateful to my family members for their unflagging support, both morally and financially. Their belief in me and their sacrifices have been the cornerstone upon which this research stands.

Shaheer Khan

Abstract

The Shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya (d.1262) and Shah Rukn-e-Alam (d.1335) are the two of the most prominent Suhrawardiya shrines in Multan, Pakistan. The devotees in large numbers come to these shrines on daily basis and engage in ritual activities. This thesis explored the ritual practices in both shrines through participant observation, and informal conversations with the caretakers and visitors of the shrines. The thesis employs comparative analysis to understand the similarities and differences between the ritual practices at the shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. There are distinctions to be found in the practices of both shrines despite sharing the same Sufi Silsila. While the practice of vocal recitation is peculiar to the shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya, the lighting of lamp after the fulfillment of mannat to express gratitude, the prostration at the feet of deceased Sufis grave to express submission, the rubbing of the head on the certain spots at the tomb as per belief in healing from physical and psychological ailments; were distinct to the shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam. The thesis further argued that the visitors who perform these rituals at the shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam manifest significance beyond only spiritual dimension. The visitors have certain objectives which, they believe, will be achieved through these performances. The thesis builds on Catherine Bell's ritual model to understand the organization of these rituals, while Clifford Geertz's ritual theory to comprehend the symbolic aspects of these rituals, and how these rituals bridge gap between idealistic concepts and actual behaviors. Stanley Tambiah's ritual model is also applied to elucidate how these rituals are performative in nature, serving as a means for individuals to communicate and establish relationships, particularly with the shrine itself. The findings from these interviews revealed a complex interplay of motivations. These encompassed social aspirations, psychological well-being, the pursuit of broader success, and a profound belief in the spiritual power of the Sufis. These motivations collectively drive a majority of devotees to actively engage in the ritual performances at these shrines. For the data collection, Interviews with devotees were conducted at the shrines.

Glossary of Terms

Barakah: Divine Blessing. Commonly refers to financial abundance or spiritual growth.

Bid'ah: It refers to innovation or deviation. It refers to the introduction of new practices, beliefs, or rituals into Islam that are not supported by the Quran or Sunnah.

Dhikr: The practice of remembrance of Allah through the repetition of His names or other sacred phrases, often done as a form of meditation or prayer.

Du'a: A supplication or prayer made to Allah, often for personal needs, forgiveness, or guidance.

Durood: A specific prayer or invocation seeking blessings and peace upon the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

Farz: An obligatory act or duty in Islam, such as the five daily prayers or fasting during Ramadan.

Fatiha: It is the opening chapter (surah) of the Qur'an often recited by Muslims in their daily prayers (Salat). Fatiha is also recited on various occasions, such as during funerals.

Futuwwa: An Arabic term referring to chivalry or ethical conduct, often associated with Sufi codes of ethics and behavior.

Isaal-e-Sawab: A practice in Islam where one dedicates the reward of their good deeds or prayers to benefit a deceased person's soul.

Khanqah: A Sufi lodge or spiritual retreat where disciples gather for spiritual training, guidance, and communal worship.

Langar: A free community kitchen in Sufi traditions, providing meals to people.

Manqabat: A eulogy, often in praise of a Sufi saint or spiritual leader, expressing devotion and admiration.

Mannat: An oath made to Allah, often in exchange for a favor or blessing granted, typically fulfilled by performing a specific act or charity.

Muraqba: A Sufi practice of inward meditation or spiritual contemplation, focusing on one's inner self and relationship with God.

Murid: A disciple or follower of a Sufi order, committed to the teachings and guidance of a Sufi shaykh (spiritual leader).

Murshid: A Sufi spiritual guide or mentor who provides guidance and instruction to disciples on their spiritual journey.

Na'at: A form of Islamic poetry and song that praises the virtues of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

Nafil: Voluntary or non-obligatory acts of worship or deeds performed by Muslims.

Qawwali: A form of devotional music in Sufi Islam, typically characterized by the singing of mystical poetry and accompanied by musical instruments.

Rohaniat: Spiritual essence or spirituality, often associated with the inner, mystical dimension of Sufi practices and beliefs.

Salat: The obligatory Islamic prayer performed five times a day by Muslims, facing the Kaaba in Mecca.

Sama: Sama refers to the practice of listening to spiritual or devotional music, particularly the mystical poetry and music associated with Sufi orders.

Silsila: A Sufi spiritual chain of teachers and disciples, often tracing back to a specific Sufi saint or spiritual leader.

Tabbarak: An Arabic term referring to a blessed item, mostly food, associated with a personality or a sacred site.

Tafakkur: The act of deep contemplation and reflection on the signs of Allah in the universe, seeking spiritual insights and wisdom.

Wird: A repeated practice of specific prayers, recitations, or supplications.

Ziyarat: It refers to the act of visiting the shrines, graves, or holy places associated with revered figures, such as prophets, Imams, saints, or religious leaders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	I
ABSTRACT.....	II
GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	III
INTRODUCTION	1
PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	2
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	2
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	3
LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES	5
LITERATURE REVIEW:.....	6
STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS:	12
SUFI RITUALS AND RITUAL THEORIES	13
CHAPTER 1: THE SUHRAWARDIYA SUFI ORDER.....	17
1.1. INTRODUCTION.....	17
1.2. ORIGINS OF SUHRAWARDIYA ORDER	18
1.3. SUHRAWARDIYA IN MULTAN.....	22
1.4. TEACHINGS OF SUHRAWARDIYA.....	30
1.5. CONCLUSION	34
CHAPTER 2: TEACHINGS OF SHEIKH BHAUDDIN ZAKARIYA AND SHAH RUKN-E-ALAM.....	35
2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	35
2.2. LIFE AND BACKGROUND OF SHEIKH BHAUDDIN ZAKARIYA	36
2.3. SHEIKH BHAUDDIN ZAKARIYA AND SUFI RITUALS.....	40
2.4. LIFE AND BACKGROUND OF SHAH RUKN-E-ALAM.....	44
2.5. SHAH RUKN-E-ALAM AND SUFI RITUALS	47
2.6. COMPARISON OF THE RITUAL PRACTICES AND SPIRITUAL METHODS	49
2.7. CONCLUSION	51
CHAPTER 3: EXPLORING SUFI RITUALS AT SHEIKH BHAUDDIN ZAKARIYA AND SHAH RUKN-E-ALAM SHRINES IN MULTAN.....	53
3.1. INTRODUCTION.....	53
3.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF SUHRAWARDIYA SUFI SHRINES IN CONTEXT OF MULTAN	54
3.3. RITUAL AND RITUAL THEORIES.....	57
3.3. RITUALS OBSERVED AT THE SHRINE OF BHAUDDIN ZAKARIYA	60
3.4. RITUALS OBSERVED AT THE SHRINE OF SHAH RUKN-E-ALAM	64
3.5. COMPARISON OF RITUAL PRACTICES AT THE SHRINES.....	68

3.6. UNDERLYING OBJECTIVES BEHIND RITUAL PERFORMANCE.....	70
3.7. CONCLUSION	75
CONCLUSION.....	77
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	79

Introduction

This thesis explores the Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals performed at the shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya (d.1262) and Shah Rukn e Alam (d.1335) in contemporary Multan, Pakistan. These Sufis hold significant importance in the region of Multan. Understanding their teachings and influence can provide valuable insights into the religious practices, and spiritual beliefs of the devotees in Multan. This thesis aims to shed light on the importance of these rituals in the Suhrawardiya Sufi order's spiritual practice and its relevance for the devotees in contemporary Multan. Multan is a city of great antiquity. According to revealed excavations, it was an important center of culture in 800 BCE.¹ It was subdued by Alexander the Great in 326 BCE, and was brought under Islam by Umayyad Dynasty in 712 CE.²

In my study, I employed participant observation to investigate the rituals conducted at the shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam in Multan, focusing on the experiences of devotees. I actively participated in Sufi rituals at these shrines to gain a deeper understanding of their significance and meaning for devotees and their role in promoting spiritual development and social cohesion among devotees in Multan. Throughout my research, I observed the behavior and interactions of devotees, documenting their experiences and perceptions of these rituals. I also conducted interviews with shrine devotees, using a list of open-ended questions as a guide while allowing for unexpected insights and ideas to emerge during the discussions. I chose a semi-structured approach for my research methodology, which enabled me to lead the conversation while encouraging devotees to share their own ideas and perspectives.

Problem Statement:

In my thesis, I argued that although these shrines belong to the Sufis from the same Silsila-e-Suhrawardiya, the rituals observed at the shrine carried a few distinct practices peculiar to the pilgrims of the shrines. I further argued that the devotees who perform these rituals at the shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam manifest significance beyond only spiritual

¹ Khan Durrani, Ashiq Muhammad. "Glimpses from the History of Multan." *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 28, no. 4 (1980): 249.

² Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Multan." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 7, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Multan>.

dimension. The devotees have certain objectives which, they believe, will be achieved through these performances.

Significance of the Study:

The research conducted is significant in the following aspects:

1. The study aims to provide a detailed understanding of the main objectives behind the rituals performed at the two shrines. This will help to shed light on the beliefs and practices of the Suhrawardiya Sufi silsila and the ways in which these rituals contribute to the spiritual and social needs of the devotees.
2. By examining the spiritual benefits of these rituals, the study demonstrates how these contribute to the spiritual attainment of the devotees.
3. The study contributes to our understanding of the ways in which the rituals performed at these two shrines interact with the devotees. This includes the provision of spiritual guidance, social support such as providing a space for communal prayer and worship, facilitating social gatherings and festivals, and providing support and assistance to those in need, and cultural continuity.
4. By documenting and analyzing the rituals performed at the two shrines, the study helps to preserve the important cultural and religious heritage of the region.
5. The study sheds light on how these rituals align with the spiritual beliefs and aspirations of the pilgrims.
6. By examining the ways in which Sufi rituals are performed at the two shrines, the study sheds light on the ways in which religious traditions are transmitted and adapted across generations.
7. Finally, the study contributes to our understanding of the ways in which religious traditions can serve as a source of resilience and strength in times of social and political upheaval. By exploring the ways in which Sufi rituals at the two shrines provide spiritual and social support to their followers, the study helps to highlight the important role that rituals can play in fostering a sense of hope, resilience, and community in times of crisis.

Research Questions:

- What are the ritual practices performed at these Shrines?

- How are these rituals performed at the Shrines beneficial for the spiritual attainment of the devotees?
- What are the main objectives behind the rituals performed at the Sufi Shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn e Alam?

Research Methodology:

In my research, I employed a comprehensive research methodology to delve into the aspects of ritual performance by devotees at these two historically significant shrines. Through the comparative analysis of the data collected from these interviews, I aimed to discern patterns, similarities, and differences in the ritual practices at the two shrines. My research approach spanned the period from April 2023 to June 2023.

To conduct my research, I utilized both primary and secondary data sources. For primary data, I conducted in-person interviews with devotees and caretakers. In total, I conducted 24 interviews to gain valuable insights into the ritual practices. These interviews included conversations with two caretakers each from the Bahauddin Zakariya Shrine and the Shah Rukn-e-Alam Shrine. Additionally, I interviewed eight visitors from each of these shrines to gain an understanding of their personal experiences and perspectives regarding the rituals. Furthermore, I conducted two interviews each with individuals who had associations with these shrines through other means, such as operating shops nearby. It's important to note that all these interactions were with male participants, and the research findings are reflective of their perspectives.

During the interviews, I posed specific questions to collect clear and relevant information, allowing for observations that could aid in my analysis. I had prepared a list of open-ended questions to guide the conversations, while also leaving room for unexpected insights that might have emerged during the discussions. My research methodology followed a semi-structured approach, enabling me to lead the conversation while also encouraging participants to share their own ideas and perspectives. This approach provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, as it allowed me to ask follow-up questions and clarify any points of confusion.

In addition to interviews, participant observation was a vital method for gathering information. Devoting a substantial amount of time at the research sites enabled me to observe individuals in their natural environments. This approach proved to be invaluable in acquiring a deeper

understanding of the ritual practices carried out by both the devotees. It provided firsthand insights into the prevailing beliefs and values associated with these rituals.

I had the opportunity to witness Sufi devotees' rituals through participant observation, which helped me understand the significance of these rituals in their lives. I conducted observations at the shrines, where I focused on the devotees' behavior, the caretakers' roles, and the types of the rituals. I took detailed notes during my observations for a comprehensive analysis. By participating in the devotees' rituals through observation, I gained a deeper understanding of how these rituals impacted the practitioners' lives.

I expanded my comprehension of Sufi rituals by utilizing secondary data from books and research articles. Analyzing the existing literature assisted me in organizing the information I gathered from interviews and observations, enabling me to pinpoint recurring themes and patterns within the data. This method unveiled valuable insights that may not have been immediately apparent solely from individual interviews or observations. I delved into the works of respected scholars in the field to deepen my understanding of the subject matter.

To compare practices between two shrines, I examined the observed rituals for similarities and differences. Specifically, I conducted interviews and observations at both the Shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam in Multan. My primary objective was to investigate and understand the various rituals performed at each shrine. These included activities such as the recitation of Quranic verses, the distribution of food to visitors, and musical performances.

Furthermore, my research aimed to understand how the Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya propagated the teachings and practices of Bahauddin Zakariya and the profound influence it had on its visitors. Likewise, I investigated the role of the Shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam and its relationship with its devotees. By comparing the data collected from both shrines, I sought to discern both similarities and differences in the observed practices. I identified rituals or practices that were shared by both shrines, as well as those that were distinctive to each one.

Through the comparative analysis of practices at the Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya and the Shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam in Multan, I acquired a profound insight into the significance of Sufi rituals and their impact on the lives of the devotees. This research has provided me with a comprehensive

understanding of the importance of Sufi rituals and their relationship with the devotees who performed these practices.

Limitations and Challenges:

Undertaking fieldwork for academic research can be both rewarding and challenging. It allows researchers to gather first-hand data and insights, but it also comes with various obstacles that can impact the quality and depth of the research. In my study focused on understanding the Suhrawardiya Sufi Rituals, I have encountered some challenges and limitations that are worth mentioning. One of the significant challenges I faced during my fieldwork was the unresponsiveness and non-cooperation of certain individuals or groups involved in the rituals. Sufi shrines can be highly sacred and guarded places, and gaining access and trust of the caretakers, custodians, and devotees might not always be straightforward. Some may be hesitant to share information with an outsider, while others may simply not respond to requests for interviews or data collection. This can limit the depth of primary data, leading to potential gaps in research findings.

One notable limitation of this research was the language barrier. Interviews were conducted in Urdu, while the majority of the population in the region, including devotees, often communicated in Saraiki. This language difference may have hindered the depth of communication and understanding during interviews. Participants might not have been able to express themselves as freely or accurately in a language that was not their primary means of communication.

Another significant limitation was the limited perspective from women. This limitation was primarily due to cultural norms and practices prevalent in the study area, which restrict women's participation in public and communication with the opposite gender. As a result, the research primarily engaged with male participants, which may not provide a holistic view of the rituals, especially since gender perspectives can significantly influence the interpretation of religious practices. The absence of female voices in the research may lead to a biased understanding of the overall context.

Additionally, there have been concerns about misrepresentation or misunderstanding of their beliefs by an external researcher. This reluctance to disclose information could lead to limitations in fully understanding the rituals and their underlying meanings. Rituals often carry deep symbolic

meanings and information. The fear of misinterpretation or misrepresentation of their practices might have discouraged some participants from openly sharing their experiences or beliefs. This fear of misunderstanding could have led to limited disclosure during interviews or data collection.

To overcome these challenges, I have employed various strategies and approaches. I have spent more time within the shrines, attending rituals, and participating in the everyday life of the shrine have helped establish rapport. I have tried being self-aware of one's own cultural biases and remain discerning of the cultural norms and practices of the community which is crucial in ensuring respectful interactions. I have also attempted using a mix of data collection methods, such as participant observation, informal conversations, and visual documentation, which might have helped capture diverse perspectives.

Literature Review:

Catherine Bell (1992), in her work *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* focuses on the performative aspect of rituals and their role in shaping human experience and culture. She argues that rituals are not mere symbolic representations but rather embodied practices that play a crucial role in creating and maintaining social order. For Bell, rituals are transformative processes through which individuals and communities engage with the sacred realms. One of Bell's key contributions is her emphasis on the threefold structure of rituals: “ritualization”, “ritual efficacy”, and “ritual interpretation.” Ritualization involves the performance of specific actions and gestures, emphasizing the importance of bodily engagement in rituals. Ritual efficacy refers to the belief that rituals have the power to produce certain effects or outcomes, whether it be healing, purification, or social cohesion. Ritual interpretation involves making sense of the symbols and actions performed during the ritual, allowing participants to attribute meaning and significance to their experiences. In her another work *Rituals: Perspectives and Dimensions* (1997) provides a comprehensive understanding of rituals and their unique characteristics. She identifies key features that differentiate rituals from general practices, laying the groundwork for analyzing Sufi rituals. Her insights help us comprehend the ritualistic elements and their significance in the Sufi context. By focusing on these distinguishing features, we gain clarity on the nature of Sufi rituals and their deeper implications. She identifies six features that distinguish a ritual from a general activity. These features are **Formalism**: Rituals often employ more formal, or restricted, codes of speech and action than people use in everyday life. In Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals, the formalized recitations

and movements during Dhikr ceremonies contribute to the sacred atmosphere and spiritual connection. **Traditionalism:** Rituals often employ archaic or anachronistic elements. Within the Suhrawardiya tradition, the preservation of age-old chants and ceremonial attire reflects a sense of historical continuity and reverence for the Sufi saints. **Invariance:** Rituals often follow strict, often repetitive, patterns. The repetitive nature of Sufi Dhikr rituals induces a meditative state and spiritual connection through continuous recitation. **Rule-governance:** Rituals are often governed by a strict code of rules that determine appropriate behavior. The adherence to specific guidelines and etiquettes in Sufi Dhikr ceremonies demonstrates the devotion and respect of the participants towards the Sufi tradition. **Sacral Symbolism:** Rituals often refer to, or employ, sacred symbolism. In Sufi Dhikr rituals, the use of specific chants, sacred phrases, and symbolic gestures embodies the essence of sacral symbolism, connecting devotees to the divine presence. **Performance:** Ritual often involves public display of ritual actions. The collective participation in Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals creates a sense of unity among devotees and reinforces the communal aspects of these practices.

In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, anthropologist Clifford Geertz presents a significant theoretical model for understanding religious rituals and their deeper cultural meanings. Geertz argues that rituals are not just empty, mechanical routines, but rather, they are rich, meaningful performances that hold profound significance for the people who practice them. By examining religious rituals as symbolic expressions, Geertz delves into the way thoughts and actions merge to shape the cultural worldviews and ethos of a society. Geertz's central idea revolves around the notion that rituals represent a fusion of thoughts and actions, where the symbolic aspects of the ritual serve as a bridge between the abstract beliefs and the concrete practices of a culture. Religious rituals, therefore, act as vehicles for communicating and reinforcing shared beliefs, values, and meanings among the members of a community. Geertz emphasizes that rituals are not isolated acts but are deeply embedded within the broader cultural context. They reflect and embody the fundamental worldview and ethos of a society. Through rituals, individuals and communities affirm their place in the universe, their relationship with the sacred or supernatural, and their roles within the social order.

Stanley J. Tambiah (1979) in his work *A Performative Approach to Ritual* focuses on the communicative aspects of rituals and how they serve as powerful means of conveying spiritual

information and establishing social relationships within a community. Tambiah's ideas can further enrich our understanding of various rituals, including religious and cultural practices worldwide. Tambiah's performative approach to ritual emphasizes that rituals are not merely descriptive or representational acts; instead, they are performative in nature. This means that rituals are actions that bring about changes in the world by virtue of being performed. In this sense, rituals are not just symbolic but have tangible effects on the participants and the social structure. He also suggests that language and metaphor often play a significant role in ritual communication. Chants, prayers, or specific recitations in rituals employ language to convey spiritual ideas and invoke the sacred. Metaphorical expressions in rituals help participants to grasp abstract concepts and make them more accessible and relatable. Metaphors can also be vehicles for expressing emotions and experiences that are challenging to articulate directly.

John Renard's *Historical Dictionary of Sufism* (2016) is a valuable resource that offers comprehensive insights into Sufi terminologies, providing readers with clear and concise explanations of various concepts and practices within Sufism. Renard delves into the ritual practices and devotional acts that form an integral part of Sufi tradition. Readers can gain a deeper understanding of Sufi rituals such as dhikr (remembrance of Allah), Sama (spiritual music and dance), and various forms of meditation and prayer, all of which play a vital role in Sufi spiritual practices. It is a crucial reference for anyone interested in Sufism.

Al-Aurad is a significant book in the realm of Sufism, authored by the renowned Sufi saint Bahauddin Zakariya. The title "Al-Aurad" can be translated to mean "The Litanies" or "The Invocations," and it comprises a profound collection of daily prayers, litanies, and invocations intended to be recited by Sufi practitioners as an integral part of their spiritual journey. The book serves as a spiritual guide, providing seekers with a structured framework for their daily devotional practices. The prayers and invocations within "Al-Aurad" are carefully crafted and infused with deep spiritual insights, drawing from the teachings and experiences of the Sufi tradition. These practices are designed to facilitate a connection between the practitioner and the Divine, fostering a sense of spiritual purity, and ultimately leading to a heightened state of closeness to Allah.

Siyar ul Arifin, written by Hamid bin Fazlullah Jamali, is a significant classical Persian work focusing on the Sufis of India. This book contains biographies of Muslim saints who lived in the Indian subcontinent. It belongs to the hagiographical genre, which highlights the extraordinary

piety and spiritual experiences of these Sufi saints. “Siyar ul Arifin” encompasses a wide range of Sufi saints from various regions and Sufi orders in India. The book is organized systematically, allowing readers to explore the biographies in chronological order or according to different categories. Through this compilation of hagiographies, the book not only provides information about individual Sufi saints but also offers a glimpse into the broader social and cultural context of their time.

The book “*Yaadgar-e-Suhrawardiya*,” authored by Khawar Suhrawardiya, is a collection of biographies of the Sufi masters belonging to the Suhrawardiya order. The book discusses the lives and teachings of the order's founders and their successors, such as Abu al-Najib Suhrawardiya, Abu Hafs Umar al-Suhrawardiya, Bahauddin Zakariya, and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. The author supports these accounts with references to reliable sources. Alongside providing biographical information, the book also serves as a guide for spiritual seekers, introducing them to the principles and practices followed by the Suhrawardiya order. The book explores how the Suhrawardiya order has made significant contributions to Islamic thought, culture, and society, particularly in India and Pakistan. It emphasizes the order's interactions with other Sufi orders and traditions, showcasing the unity amidst the diverse landscape of Sufism.

I. Netton (1993), “*The Breath of Felicity: Adab, Ahwal, Maqamat and Abu Najib al Suhrawardi*,” in: L. Lewisohn (ed.), *Classical Persian Sufism from Its Origins to Rumi*, is a fascinating exploration of the life and teachings of Abu Najib al-Suhrawardiya, one of the most influential Sufi masters of the 12th century. Netton examines the concept of adab, or spiritual etiquette, as a key element of Suhrawardiya's mystical path, and how it relates to the stages of ahwal (states) and maqamat (stations) that the seeker must traverse in order to attain felicity. Netton also analyzes Suhrawardiya's famous work, the *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, which is a comprehensive manual of Sufi doctrine and practice and shows how it reflects Suhrawardiya's synthesis of various strands of Islamic thought, such as jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, and ethics. Netton's article draws upon both primary and secondary sources in Arabic and Persian. He provides a clear and concise overview of Suhrawardiya's biography, his affiliation with the Suhrawardiya order, his influence on later Sufi figures such as Rumi and Hafiz, and his legacy in the history of Persian Sufism.

Islamic Mysticism: A Short History by Alexander Knysh is a comprehensive survey of the Islamic Mysticism that continues to play an important role in Muslim communities world-wide. The book

provides a general overview of the history of Sufism from its inception up to the present, covering its origins, development, diversity, doctrines, practices, institutions, and interactions with society and other branches of Islamic thought. Knysh adopts a thematic and chronological approach, combining historical analysis with textual and doctrinal sources. He also pays attention to the regional and cultural variations of Sufism, as well as its artistic and literary expressions. Knysh provides useful information and insights into the doctrinal, institutional, and social aspects of the Suhrawardiya, as well as its relations with other Sufi orders and political authorities. doctrinal, institutional, and social aspects of the Suhrawardiya, as well as its relations with other Sufi orders and political authorities.

A History of Sufism in India is a two-volume work by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi that traces the development of Sufism in India from the early centuries of Islam to the modern period. It provides detailed information about the origin, spread, and influence of Suhrawardiya order in India. The book provides a rich and detailed account of the history, doctrine, practice, literature, culture, and impact of the Suhrawardiya order in India, especially in Multan. It also explores the interactions and influences between the Suhrawardiya order and other Sufi orders, such as the Chishtiyya, Qadiriyya, Shattariyya, Naqshbandiyya, as well as other religious traditions, such as Hinduism. The book is a valuable resource for understanding the context under which Suhrawardiya prevailed in Multan.

Sufism in the Age of Transition: Umar al-Suhrawardi and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods by E.S. Ohlander is another valuable contribution to the study of Sufism in general, and the Suhrawardiya order in particular. It sheds light on a crucial period of transition and transformation in Islamic history when Sufism emerged as a major force of religious authority. It also explains how under the patronage of Caliph al-Nasir, Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya was able to extend his influence and prestige beyond the city of Baghdad. The book can also be useful for studying the Suhrawardiya of Multan, as it offers a historical and doctrinal background for understanding the origins and development of this branch of the order. The book shows how Suhrawardiya established his presence and influence in Multan, where he settled for some time and attracted many disciples. The book also discusses how Suhrawardiya's successors continued his legacy in Multan. It thus provides a rich and detailed account of the Suhrawardiya order as a dynamic and diverse movement that spanned across different geographical and cultural domains.

Qamar al-Huda (2003) in his book *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual exercises for Suhrawardi sufis* examines the theological, philosophical and mystical dimensions of the Suhrawardiya order. The author focuses on the spiritual exercises and practices of the Suhrawardiya, especially those of its founder Abu al-Najib al-Suhrawardiya and his successors in Multan and Uch. The book analyses their interpretation of sacred texts, such as the Qur'an, hadiths, sunna, and malfuzat, and how they developed a unique self-understanding and a distinctive Sufi path. The book can be useful for studying the ritual practices of the Suhrawardiya in Multan. It provides a detailed description and analysis of the main rituals performed by the Suhrawardiya, such as dhikr (remembrance of Allah), salat (prayer), sawm (fasting), hajj (pilgrimage), ziyara (visitation of shrines), futuwwa (spiritual chivalry), and wilaya (spiritual authority). It explores the role of rituals in shaping the identity and community of the Suhrawardiya in Multan. Qamar ul-Huda also wrote an article “*The Remembrance of the Prophet in Suhrawardi’s Awarif Al-Ma’arif*” which is a scholarly and insightful analysis of the role of the Prophet Muhammad in the Sufi thought and practice of Shaykh Abu Hafis Umar Suhrawardiya. The author examines how Suhrawardiya used various sources, such as the Qur'an, the hadiths, and the writings of earlier Sufis, to construct a comprehensive and coherent doctrine of the remembrance (dhikr) of the Prophet as a means of spiritual purification and elevation. The author also explores how al-Suhrawardiya integrated the remembrance of the Prophet with other aspects of Sufi ethics, such as adab (manners), akhlaq (character), and maqamat (stations).

Tarikh e Multan is a two-volume work that covers the history of Multan authored by Noor Ahmed Faridi. The book situates Suhrawardiya within the broader historical context of Multan and its interactions with other regions and cultures. The book shows how Suhrawardiya adapted to the changing political and social circumstances of Multan, which was ruled by various dynasties and empires over the centuries, such as the Ghaznavids, the Ghaurids, the Mongols, the Mughals, the Sikhs, and the British.

Anna Suworova (2004) in her book, *Muslim Saints of South Asia: The Eleventh to the Fifteenth Centuries*, details the Muslim Sufis' rituals and behaviors related to devotion. It summarizes the key developments of the principal Sufi orders in India, as well as the teachings and profiles of both well-known and lesser-known Sufis. Additionally, it sheds information on the growth of pilgrimage to their Dargahs in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India. A thorough explanation of the

cooperation of Hindu and Muslim Sufi spiritual practices shows how the South Asian region is divided between the conservatism of traditional Islam and the openness of popular Islam.

Structure of the Thesis:

As mentioned before, I have explored the similarities and distinctive features of the rituals at these Sufi shrines belonging to the same Sufi silsila to understand the peculiarities of both shrines and broaden my Information. The ritual actions, and the objectives behind performing those rituals is enlisted. Allegiance to a particular saint differs since the saints are identified with the region where their shrines are located. This variance is also a product of the traditional adherence (bai'at) with a saint who is said to have converted the people, from that area to Islam. Katherine Ewing (1983) mentions that the tribe usually retains memory of the conversion as a focus for maintaining the traditional tie with the shrine. For this reason, the devotees are inclined towards one saint despite the adherence to the same Sufi silsila.³ I have also concentrated on the experiences and perceptions of the devotees in spiritual attainment.

In the first chapter, I provide a comprehensive examination of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order and its influence in Multan. I also focus on the historical context under which the Suhrawardiya Sufi order prevailed in Multan. The chapter also examines the political and social context of the region, which influenced the growth of Sufism and the Suhrawardiya Sufi order.

In the second chapter, I focused on the Suhrawardiya Sufi order with a particular emphasis on two of its most prominent Sufis, Shiekh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. I have provided a detailed biographical sketch of these Sufis, highlighting their contributions to the development of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order and their impact on the spiritual life of devotees in Multan.

In the third chapter, I have provided a comparative analysis of the rituals associated with the teachings of Shiekh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. I have examined the differences and similarities between these practices and explores their significance for the spiritual development of the Sufi followers. Through a comparison of the practices observed at the Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya and the Shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam in Multan, I have aimed to analyze

³Ewing, Katherine. "The Politics of Sufism: Redefining the Saints of Pakistan." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 2 (1983): 251-268. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2055113>

the different types of rituals that take place at each shrine. This may include an examination of the recitation of Quranic verses, the distribution of food to visitors, and the performance of music and dance. Additionally, I have also explored the historical and cultural significance of each shrine, including its connection to Sufi saints and its impact on the pilgrims who visit. By comparing the data gathered from the two shrines, I have drawn conclusions about the similarities and differences in the observed practices and the role of the shrines in promoting Sufi practices in Multan.

In the fourth and final chapter, I have concluded the study based on the research conducted in the previous chapters. I have presented a synthesis of the key findings from the research and draws conclusions based on the comparative analysis of the Sufi practices observed at the shrines of Shiekh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. I have also provided a comprehensive and thoughtful analysis of the research conducted in the preceding chapters, drawing together the key findings and insights to offer a rich and nuanced understanding of Sufi practices in Multan.

Sufi Rituals and Ritual Theories:

Rituals are spiritual practices that are performed by members of the Sufi silsila as a means of attaining closeness to Allah. These rituals include dhikr (remembrance), sama (chanting), tafakkur (contemplation), and physical movements. Rituals play a vital role in Tasawwuf. They serve as a means of attaining Rohaniat (spiritual purification), developing a deeper connection with Rab (divine), and achieving inner transformation. Each ritual has its own specific purpose and significance, and together they form a comprehensive system of spiritual practice. A Sufi ritual is defined as:

“The whole complex of patterned behavior oriented to Sufi communal, social, and devotional life, including not only the five pillars of Islam but a host of activities sometimes distinctive of individual orders.”⁴

Rituals in Sufism serve multiple purposes, including the attainment of spiritual purification, the cultivation of mindfulness and remembrance of Allah, and the development of a deeper understanding of the inner self and the divine reality. These rituals take various forms, such as Dhikr and Salat (prayer), Muraqiba (meditation), Tafakkur (contemplation) and Qawali

⁴ Renard, John. *Historical Dictionary of Sufism*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

(devotional music) among others. Each ritual has its own specific purpose and significance in the Sufi silsila. For example, Dhikr is a way of expressing gratitude, repentance, supplication, and praise to Allah, as well as seeking guidance and protection from Him. Dhikr also helps to align one's will with Allah's will and to purify one's heart from worldly attachments and distractions.⁵ Muraqiba (meditation) is a practice of focusing one's attention on a sacred word, phrase, or image that represents an aspect of Allah or His attributes. Meditation helps to calm the mind, enhance concentration, and increase awareness of Allah's presence and mercy. Meditation also facilitates the experience of fana (annihilation) and baqa (subsistence), which are states of losing one's ego and becoming absorbed in God's essence.⁶ According to Sufis, Chanting is a form of dhikr vocalizing Allah's names or praises in a rhythmic and melodious manner. This exercise helps to create a spiritual atmosphere, to invoke Allah's blessings and grace, and to awaken one's love and devotion for Him. Chanting also stimulates the heart and soul and prepares them for deeper levels of contemplation and ecstasy.⁷ Qawwali is a traditional form of Sufi devotional music and poetry that often involves chanting, singing, and musical instruments to express devotion and spiritual longing.⁸ attain closeness to Allah.

Foundation of Suhrawardiya Silsila: The Suhrawardiya Sufi order was founded by Sheikh Abu Najib Suhrawardiya (d.1168) in the twelfth century in Baghdad. The order emphasizes the importance of spiritual purification, self-discipline, and adherence to Islamic teachings. The Suhrawardiya silsila adheres to strict Sunni Islamic beliefs while incorporating elements of tasawwuf in the silsila. Suhrawardiya's approach aimed to bridge the gap between the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of Islam. This integration would enable individuals to develop a balanced approach to their religious practice, encompassing both the external aspects of Sharia (Islamic law) and the internal dimensions of the spiritual path. Rituals are an essential part of this order, and they are performed to achieve spiritual enlightenment and connect with the divine. The Suhrawardiya Sufi order places great emphasis on the practice of ritual and devotion as a means of attaining spiritual enlightenment and a deeper connection with the divine. At the shrines of Sufi saints,

⁵ Chittick, William C. *The Sufi Path of Love: The spiritual teachings of Rumi*. State University of New York Press, 1984.

⁶ Ernst, Carl W. *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*. Shambhala Publications, 1997.

⁷ Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

⁸ Gilani, Iftikhar, and Muzammil Saeed. "Qawwali and the Folk Festivals: Musical Performances on Mystical Poetry." *Journal of World Researches* 2.1 (2022): 9-14.

including Hazrat Bahauddin Zakariya (d.1262) and Shah Rukn-e-Alam (d.1335) in Multan, devotees of the Suhrawardiya order perform daily rituals that are an essential part of their spiritual practice. These rituals vary depending on the shrine.

Rituals in Suhrawardiya Silsila: Suhrawardiya Sufi order places its emphasis on the practice of ritual and devotion. The order believes that these practices are essential for achieving spiritual enlightenment and for cultivating a deeper connection with Allah. Devotees of the order engage in daily rituals that help them to focus their minds and hearts on Allah. The practices and rituals observed at the dargahs of Sufi saints in Punjab reflect the strong spiritual and cultural beliefs of the people of the region. Devotion to Sufism has been an integral part of the cultural fabric of Punjab for centuries, and the veneration of Sufi saints has continued to hold a special place in the hearts of its people. Visitation of dargahs is regarded as a matter of belief and familial tradition, as most devotees come to pay their respects to the Sufis out of their deep devotion and reverence. Similar practices are observed at the shrines of Suhrawardiya Sufis, such as Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn e Alam. The rituals performed at the Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya include various forms of worship, such as Dhikr (recitation of prayers), Langar (distribution of food), the distribution of Tabbarak, Qawwali and Manqabat (devotional songs), recitation of Naatiya poetry, barefoot visitation by devotees, Mannat (the making of oaths), throwing money into the well located within the premises of the Shrine, knotting a thread to signify the number of oaths taken, and feeding the birds.

Similarly, the rituals observed at the Dargah of Shah Rukn e Alam, located in Multan, are also deeply rooted in the spiritual and cultural traditions of the people of Punjab. the rituals performed at the Dargah of Shah Rukn e Alam involve Dhikr, Langar, recitation of Naatiya poetry, lighting of a lamp for Mannat, and rubbing one's head against the wall at the tomb.

One of the most important rituals in the Suhrawardiya Sufi order is the practice of dhikr, or remembrance of Allah. This practice involves the repetition of specific phrases or names of Allah, which are intended to help the practitioner focus their mind on the divine. The practice of dhikr is believed to be a powerful means of achieving spiritual purification and enlightenment, and it is an essential part of the Suhrawardiya Sufi path. This practice is typically performed in the presence of a Sufi master, who leads the group in prayer and supplication. The dhikr is intended to create a powerful spiritual atmosphere that helps the practitioners to connect with the divine. However,

dhikr is not restricted to the participation in a group. It is practice that can be performed by an individual while performing daily activities as outlined by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya in his book *Al-Aurad* (n.d).⁹

The research delves into the ritualistic patterns performed at the Sufi Dargahs by building upon the ritual theories of Catherine Bell (1992), Clifford Geertz (1973), and Stanley Tambiah (1979). The works of these theorists are beneficial for a detailed explanation of the behaviors that are perceived at the shrines of Sufi saints. Bell enlists the features that distinguish a ritual from any other general practice which will be helpful for understanding what a ritual entail.¹⁰ The Geertz theoretical model for rituals explains that a religious ritual involves a symbolic fusion of thoughts and actions, and in ritual patterns; the **ethos** and **worldviews** are fused.¹¹ The *Sufi Dhikr rituals* contain a combination of thoughts and actions which entail the ethos and worldviews of devotees at these shrines. The Geertz model, in many ways, is suitable for studying the Sufi rituals of Suhrawardiya. Geertz's theory of ritual, which emphasizes the symbolic nature of rituals, is also relevant in understanding Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals. Sufi rituals are rich in symbolism, and each action and utterance have a particular meaning and significance. For example, the ritual of dhikr, which involves chanting the names of Allah, is a symbolic act that is believed to create a spiritual connection with the divine. Stanley Tambiah's theory of ritual, which emphasizes the communicative aspect of rituals, is also relevant in understanding Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals.¹² Rituals are communicative acts that convey spiritual information and establish social relationships. Sufi masters play an important role in leading and guiding the rituals, and their words and actions are seen as conveying spiritual teachings and insights. The communicative aspect of rituals is also emphasized in the use of language and metaphor, which are used to convey spiritual ideas and experiences. The approach taken in this study is to combine the theoretical models of these theorists to derive strategies and articulate the ritual practices performed at these Sufi shrines. When we look at the ritual practices in a Sufi context, these are a combination of thought, action, and expressions that are rooted in religious commitments.

⁹ Zakariya, Bahauddin, *Al-Aurad* . Tasawwuf Foundation, 1999.

¹⁰ Bell, Catherine M. *Ritual: Perspectives and dimensions*. Oxford University Press, USA, 1997.

¹¹ Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected essays*. NY: Basic Books. 1973.

¹² Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. A Performative Approach to Ritual. *Proceedings of the British Academy London*. Vol. 65. Pp.113-169. 1979.

Chapter 1: The Suhrawardiya Sufi Order

1.1. Introduction:

In this chapter, I will explore the origins and growth of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order, with a particular emphasis on its development in the city of Multan. By examining the historical development and ideological foundations of this order, I aim to understand how it was established and expanded over time. Additionally, I will investigate the unique teachings, practices, and principles of the Suhrawardiya order within the broader context of Sufism.

Furthermore, I will focus on the presence of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order in Multan, with a specific analysis of the historical circumstances and networks that facilitated the dissemination of its spiritual teachings and practices in the region. Through this examination of how the Suhrawardiya order spread in Multan, I intend to gain insights into its profound influence on the local religious and cultural landscape. In Multan, the Suhrawardiya Sufi order experienced significant growth and flourished within the local context. This expansion can be attributed to several factors, including the presence of prominent Sufi scholars and their efforts in spreading the teachings of the order. Multan's geographical location as a major trading and cultural hub also facilitated the exchange of ideas and the establishment of networks through which the Suhrawardiya order disseminated its spiritual wisdom.

The Suhrawardiya Sufi order's influence in Multan extended beyond the realm of spirituality. It played a vital role in shaping the religious and cultural foundation of the city. The Sufis of this order established hospices, known as khanqahs, where seekers of spiritual guidance gathered and received instruction from accomplished Sufi masters.¹³ These khanqahs became centers of knowledge, attracting not only locals but also travelers from distant lands who sought the wisdom of the Suhrawardiya tradition.

¹³ “A Khanaqah is Sufi lodge or hospice; the khanqah is an essential institution within the Sufi brotherhoods. It is typically a place where the disciples of a Sufi master, the shaykh, gather to receive religious instruction, participate in rituals, and pursue their spiritual quest”. Knysh, A. (2009). *ḲĀNAQĀH*. In J. L. Esposito (Ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. Oxford Islamic Studies Online. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0432>.

This chapter explores the origins, growth, and influence of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order, with a particular focus on its presence in Multan. By examining its historical development, ideological foundations, and propagation in the region, we gain valuable insights into the profound impact of this order on the religious, cultural, and intellectual landscape of Multan.

1.2. Origins of Suhrawardiya Order:

The Suhrawardiya Sufi Tariqa was initially established by Shaikh Abu Najib al-Suhrawardiya (d.1168). Shaikh Abu Najib was born in 1097 in the town of Suhraward, located to the west of Sultaniyya in the al-Jibal province of Iran. His involvement in the Sufi tradition began through his association with Shaikh Ahmad al-Ghazali, who was a prominent scholar at the Nizamiyya madrasa in Baghdad and the brother of the well-known Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. Shaikh Ahmad al-Ghazali invited Shaikh Abu Najib to become his disciple and delve into the study of Tasawwuf, the mystical aspect of Islam. Once he gained proficiency in Sufi spirituality, Shaikh Abu Najib al-Suhrawardiya established a khanaqah, a Sufi monastery, on the banks of the Tigris River. He also authored a popular Sufi manual called “Adab al-Muridin” which provides guidance on the importance of disciplined behavior for Sufis.¹⁴ The Adab is a special type of Sufi composition because it looks at Sufism from the perspective of rules for how to behave. Instead of explaining Sufi beliefs in detail, the manual by Abu Najib focuses on teaching good manners and ethics for Sufi practitioners. The book is mainly aimed at beginners who are about to join a Sufi community. It teaches them how to choose clean and pure food, drinks, and clothes. It emphasizes the importance of helping and serving their fellow Sufis and advises them not to leave their spiritual teacher until they have gained a deeper understanding. It also encourages them to spend time with people who share their beliefs and can help them grow on their spiritual path.¹⁵

After the death of Abu Najib Suhrawardiya, the Suhrawardiya order of Sufism continued to evolve and spread due to the contributions from Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya (d.1234). He was originally from Iran and came from a famous family of religious scholars and jurists who followed the Shafi'i school of thought. Just like other members of his family, he left Suhraward in Iran and

¹⁴ Huda, Qamar-ul. *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual Exercises for Suhrawardi Sufis*. Routledge, 2005.

¹⁵ Netton, I. "The Breath of Felicity: Adab, Ahwal, Maqamat and Abu Najib al Suhrawardi," in *Classical Persian Sufism from Its Origins to Rumi*, edited by Lewisohn, Leonard. London and New York. 1993.

moved to Baghdad. He spent eight years studying under his uncle, Abu Najib Suhrawardiya.¹⁶ Due to his strong connection with the 'Abbasid caliph, al-Nasir, Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya was appointed as a court theologian and special envoy. As a result, he was granted the esteemed position of being the head (Shaykh al-Shuyukh) of the Sufi congregations in Baghdad, enjoying special privileges.¹⁷ The Suhrawardiya Sufi tariqa experienced significant growth, primarily due to the close relationship between Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya and Caliph al-Nasir (1180-1225). While Caliph al-Nasir expanded his direct rule in neighboring territories through conventional military means, he also extended his influence throughout the Islamic world through ideological channels. In his perspective, the caliphate played a crucial role beyond being a mere certifying authority; it held a distinct position that differed from the idealized caliph envisioned by later theorists of a Shar'i society.¹⁸ The caliph al-Nasir noticed that many people were interested in the teachings of Suhrawardiya. He wanted to strengthen the power of the Abbasid state by gathering support from various religious and social groups. So, he supported al-Suhrawardiya and built a *ribat* called al-Marzubaniyya for him near the western part of capital Baghdad.¹⁹ This was a way for the caliph to show how much he respected and valued the popular Sufi leader and gain the support of Suhrawardiya's many followers in the capital and nearby areas.²⁰

During the reign of Caliph al-Nasir, *futuwwa* was practiced and encouraged.²¹ *Futuwwa* is a concept of chivalry and ethical behavior that emphasizes virtues such as courage, generosity, and loyalty. The caliph supported and promoted futuwwa organizations to strengthen the moral fabric of society and unite various religious and social organizations under his rule. By encouraging futuwwa, the caliph aimed to foster a sense of unity, loyalty, and honorable conduct among his subjects, ultimately aiming to reinforce the authority and stability of the Abbasid state. Abu Hafs

¹⁶ Anqa Publishing, Shihabuddin Abu Hafs 'Umar al-Suhrawardiya, <https://anqa.co.uk/about-ibn-arabi/contemporaries/shihabuddin-abu-hafs-%E2%80%98umar-al-Suhrawardiya> (accessed 5 June, 2023)

¹⁷ Knysh, Alexander. *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History*. Lieden-Boston-Köln: Brill. 2000.

¹⁸ Hodgson, Marshall GS. *The Venture of Islam: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*. University of Chicago press, 1974.

¹⁹ "The ribāṭ was originally a frontier fortress in which warriors took shelter while expanding Islamic rule, and eventually came to be thought of, metaphorically, as a residence for ascetics and others engaged in the inner jihād." see Renard, 257.

²⁰ Knysh, 197.

²¹ "The term derives from the Arabic word fatā, meaning noble youth, a kind of heroic figure. During the period of the Crusades especially, futūwa organizations arose in some numbers under the official leadership of the Abbasid caliph... Unlike the Sufi orders, these organizations tended to be more social than spiritual in orientation". Renard, 77-78.

Umar Suhrawardiya played a significant role in the development and promotion of futuwwa during his time. According to Suhrawardiya, the futuwwah was a part of the sufi way, set off (by Abraham) precisely for the ordinary folk for whom the full sufi way was too hard.²² Suhrawardiya played a crucial role in the political strategy of Caliph al-Nasir, who sought to reduce his dependence on the military strength of the Seljuks and other empires. Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya and his followers became the focal point of this strategy, serving as a unique and effective means of mobilizing many people in support of the caliph's cause. The caliph recognized that by aligning himself with Suhrawardiya and his devoted followers, he could rally a significant mass of people to his side. This had the dual effect of demonstrating the caliph's independence from the self-appointed “protectors” of the caliphate, who often had their own interests and agendas, while also reinforcing the caliph's authority and legitimacy.

With the patronage and support of Caliph al-Nasir, Suhrawardiya's influence expanded far beyond the confines of Baghdad. His teachings and practices resonated with people across various regions, and he gained widespread recognition and respect. This elevated his personal prestige and laid the foundations for the subsequent rise of the Suhrawardiya tariqa, an international Sufi order that followed his teachings and principles.²³

In his writings, Suhrawardiya made an effort to highlight the close relationship between the principles of futuwwa (chivalry) and the spiritual practices of Sufism. He had two main objectives with this. Firstly, he aimed to indirectly support the religious legitimacy of the caliph as the leader of futuwwa organizations by associating futuwwa with widely accepted Sufi spiritual discipline. This helped establish the caliph's authority in guiding and governing matters related to futuwwa. Secondly, Suhrawardiya sought to give organized Sufism a sense of legitimacy by connecting it to the respected Abbasid caliphate, an important Islamic institution.²⁴ By doing so, he aimed to present organized Sufism as a valid and respected part of the broader Islamic tradition. Through his emphasis on the connection between futuwwa and Sufism, Suhrawardiya not only supported the religious authority of the caliph but also provided credibility to organized Sufism. This had the

²² Hodgson, 282.

²³ Knysh, 198.

²⁴ Hodgson, 282.

effect of strengthening the caliph's position and elevating the status of Sufism as a recognized and respected practice within the context of the Abbasid caliphate.

Futuwwa played a significant role in the expansion of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order during the reign of Caliph al-Nasir. The caliph recognized the potential of futuwwa as a means of mobilizing and unifying people, and he sought to harness its power to support his rule. By patronizing and supporting Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya, the caliph strategically aligned himself with a popular spiritual leader who emphasized the virtues and principles of futuwwa.

The association between futuwwa and the Suhrawardiya Sufi order helped to attract followers and gain support for the order's teachings and practices. As futuwwa was already a widely recognized code of conduct that emphasized values like bravery, generosity, and loyalty, integrating it with the spiritual teachings of the Suhrawardiya order made the teachings more accessible and appealing to a broader audience. Under the patronage of Caliph al-Nasir, Abu Hafs Suhrawardiya was able to extend his influence and prestige beyond the city of Baghdad. The caliph's support provided credibility and recognition to the Suhrawardiya order, elevating its status in the eyes of the people. This support also allowed the Suhrawardiya order to establish a network of followers and branches in various regions, contributing to its expansion and growth as an influential Sufi order.

Furthermore, the caliph's patronage and endorsement of the Suhrawardiya order helped to legitimize it in the eyes of the public. By linking the order to the 'Abbasid caliphate, which held significant religious and political authority, the Suhrawardiya order gained greater acceptance and recognition among the people. The alignment of futuwwa with the teachings of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order, supported by Caliph al-Nasir, played a crucial role in the expansion of the order. The association with futuwwa helped attract followers, while the caliph's patronage and endorsement provided legitimacy and support for the order's teachings and practices. This ultimately led to the growth and prominence of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order during that period.

Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya played a crucial role as a political advisor and religious authority in sufi orders and futuwwa under the reign of caliph al-Nasir. His efforts were aimed at promoting unity among different groups. Suhrawardiya's sufi worldview helped in clarifying the role of the leader and their spiritual function to the members of futuwwa. In addition to his religious authority,

Suhrawardiya was sent on diplomatic missions by al-Nasir to resolve conflicts and tensions with their adversaries. Suhrawardiya also worked on establishing new relationships and alliances in regions such as Egypt, Syria, and Anatolia.²⁵ These areas faced political uncertainty, and al-Nasir saw an opportunity to provide support while also recruiting new members to the futuwwa groups. By utilizing advisors like Suhrawardiya, al-Nasir aimed to strengthen his power base and maintain control over expanding power structures.

Despite his involvement in political activities, Suhrawardiya maintained his commitment to tasawwuf (Sufism). He believed that his actions allowed him to defend important aspects of Suhrawardiya tasawwuf, such as upholding Islamic law (sharia) and promoting the practice of the Prophet's teachings to a wider audience. Suhrawardiya aimed to show that tasawwuf and the authority of the state could coexist, creating a balance between Sufism and adherence to religious principles.²⁶

After the death of Suhrawardiya, his son Imad al-Din Muhammad Suhrawardiya (d.1257) became the leader of the Sufi lodge called al-Mamuniyya. When Suhrawardiya's disciples completed their Sufi education, they either returned to their home regions or settled in new areas. They spread the teachings of the Suhrawardiya order, which were expounded in the book 'Awarif al-Ma'arif', considered the order's teaching manual.²⁷ One of the most successful proponents of the Suhrawardiya teachings was Bahauddin Zakariya. He initially joined Abu Hafs Suhrawardiya in Baghdad after spending some time in Bukhara. Later, he established a prominent center for the Suhrawardiya order in Multan, which became the main hub for the order in India under his successors.

1.3. Suhrawardiya in Multan:

The establishment of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order in Multan in the year 1222 was marked by the arrival of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. From the era of Sheikh Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya, who served as the spiritual mentor to Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya in Baghdad, to the time of Sheikh Shah Rukn-e-Alam, the final eminent Suhrawardiya sheikh in Multan, this Sufi order experienced

²⁵ Ohlander, Erik. *Sufism in an Age of Transition: 'Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods*. Vol. 71. Brill, 2008. 113-133.

²⁶ Huda, 39.

²⁷ Knysh, 204.

a period of immense popularity. They had strong connections with the rulers and social institutions and were involved in politics. Over time, the Suhrawardiya Sufi order experienced a decline in their relationship with rulers such as the Khiljis and Tughluqs, resulting in the loss of the support they had previously received. The Suhrawardiyas were not passive or detached sufis; they embraced the world and combined their spiritual practices with adherence to Islamic law and involvement in politics. At certain times, their association with the ruling powers allowed them to receive grants, positions, salaries, and funds to build their places of gathering. One notable instance was when Shah Rukn-e-Alam accepted the largest land grant ever bestowed by the Khilji dynasty. In another gesture of appreciation, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq donated a hundred villages to Shah Rukn-e-Alam in recognition of his support. This close relationship between the Sufis and political leaders in Multan gave the rulers a degree of influence over the Suhrawardiya order.

Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya Multani was the main successor (khalifa) of Shaikh Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya, and he played a pivotal role in establishing the Suhrawardiya Sufi order in the city of Multan.²⁸ Under Shaikh Zakariya's leadership, his khanaqah (Sufi lodge) became a prominent and influential center for various Sufi activities. To guide his disciples and followers, Shaikh Zakariya authored a significant Sufi text called *Al-Aurad*. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariyya established a Sufi khanaqah in the city of Multan. This was a period filled with political uncertainty after the sudden death of Qutbuddin Aibek. Qutbuddin Aibek (1206-1210) was a slave who rose to power and became the first Sultan of Delhi as well as the founder of the Delhi Sultanate. As a result, there was a struggle for power among the Turkish political leaders and slave dynasty officers. This division led to the formation of separate regions in India: Lakhnauti, capital of Bengal, ruled by Khalji dynasty (1206-1231), Delhi and its surrounding territories under the control of Iltutmish (1211-1236), and Sindh governed by Nasir al-din Qubacha (1210-1228).

During this time, Sultan Iltutmish aimed to unite the empire of Delhi Sultanate, but he faced opposition from other military contenders, such as Taj al-Din Yildiz (1206-1215), the ruler of Ghazni; who challenged Iltutmish's claim to political authority. Sultan Iltutmish was the third ruler of the Delhi Sultanate. While residing in Multan under the rule of Qubacha, Shaikh Zakariyya openly expressed his support for Sultan Iltutmish and recognized his authority in Delhi.²⁹ Shaikh

²⁸ Jamali, Hamid.B.F. *Siyar al-Arifin (Urdu)*. Urdu Science Board, Lahore, 1975.

²⁹ Rizvi, Athar.A. *A History of Sufism in India, Vol. 1*. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1975.

Zakariyya's endorsement of Iltutmish revealed his alignment with the central political power in Delhi, despite living in Multan under Qubacha's governance. This demonstrated the Shaikh's willingness to support and align himself with those he considered to possess legitimate political power. It was a clear indication of his commitment to upholding the established authority and maintaining stability in the region.

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's relationship with the ruling class during his time, particularly with Sultan Iltutmish, reflected an interplay of religious, political, and social factors. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya held significant spiritual influence over his followers and the general population. Sufi lodges (khanaqahs) like the one he established in Multan were not just places of worship, but also centers of community, education, and guidance. This gave Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya a platform to influence the beliefs and actions of his disciples. The ruling class, represented by Sultan Iltutmish in this context, often sought the endorsement of respected religious figures to legitimize their authority. Sheikh Zakariya's support for Sultan Iltutmish provided a religiously sanctioned validation of the ruler's political power. This alignment helped enhance the sultan's legitimacy and authority, especially in the eyes of the people who held the Sheikh in high esteem. Sheikh Zakariya's endorsement of Sultan Iltutmish might have been based on the assessment that Iltutmish's rule aligned with these ethical values, making him a suitable choice for support in the Sheikh's eyes.

After the death of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya; Shaikh Sadraddin Arif (d. 1286), who was the eldest son of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya, took over as the prominent spiritual leader of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order in Multan. One of the notable transformations within the Suhrawardiya order occurred in Shaikh Arif's personal views regarding wealth and involvement in government service.

Being a member of the Suhrawardiya family, Shaikh Arif held a strong disdain for the accumulation of wealth. He believed that worldly possessions and material gifts were distractions from the spiritual path of tasawwuf. Shaikh Arif saw his rejection of wealth as consistent with the teachings and practices of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order. He pointed out that previous sheikhs of the silsila, who were skilled in managing the expenses of the Suhrawardiya silsila, accepted wealth but maintained a balance between their financial responsibilities and spiritual pursuits. In contrast to his father, who possessed a strong character and self-control in resisting the corrupting influence

of wealth, Shaikh Sadraddin Arif recognized his own vulnerability to be consumed by money. He acknowledged his lack of personal strength to prevent the absorption of wealth's negative influences. This realization of his own limitations shaped his attitude towards wealth and reinforced his commitment to focusing solely on the spiritual aspects of tasawwuf.³⁰

Shaikh Arif not only opposed the accumulation of wealth, but he also stood in opposition to Prince Muhammad, the governor of Multan. Prince Muhammad, who was the eldest son of Sultan Balban, was a skilled military leader known for his defense of the northwestern borders. During his rule, Multan became a vibrant cultural center, attracting scholars, poets, and artists who had been displaced due to political instability in Baghdad and Bukhara. The political instability in both Baghdad and Bukhara during the 13th century was largely driven by the devastating impact of Mongol invasions, the collapse of established political orders, and the resulting dispersal of scholars, artists, and intellectuals. These factors contributed to the disruption of cultural and intellectual centers, leading to the migration of these individuals to other regions, including Multan, where Prince Muhammad's rule provided a more stable environment for cultural and scholarly activities.

Prince Muhammad held a strong connection to the Suhrawardiya Sufi order and actively supported its activities. He extended invitations to renowned figures like the Persian poet Sa'adi, offering them a place of residence in Multan and even proposing the construction of a grand khanaqah for them. The prince also organized magnificent sama gatherings at his court, where participants engaged in ecstatic music and dance. On one occasion, Prince Muhammad invited Shaikh Qidwah, the esteemed son of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariyya, to honor the well-known sufi shaikh, Shaikh Uthman. During the spiritually charged moments of the sama performance, with participants freely expressing themselves through dance and music, Prince Muhammad was moved to tears and openly displayed his emotional state.³¹

However, Shaikh Arif took a different stance and openly opposed Prince Muhammad, despite the governor's support and patronage of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order. The reasons for Shaikh Arif's opposition may have been rooted in his belief that the accumulation of wealth and involvement in political affairs could corrupt the purity of the Suhrawardiya teachings. His actions represented a

³⁰ Jamali, 181.

³¹ Huda, 123-124.

departure from the close association between the Suhrawardiya order and the political elite, demonstrating his commitment to maintaining the integrity of the Sufi path.

The relationship between Shaikh Arif and Prince Muhammad took a complicated turn when the shaikh agreed to a personal favor. In an impulsive act, Prince Muhammad divorced his wife but later regretted his decision and desired to reconcile with her. However, according to the prevailing laws, the prince could only remarry his wife if she was married to another man and subsequently divorced. Determined to find a pious man who would participate in this plan, Prince Muhammad approached Shaikh Arif, who eventually agreed to the proposal.

The following day, after the marriage between Shaikh Arif and the princess took place, the shaikh refused to grant a divorce, claiming that she was not interested in obtaining one. This unexpected persistency on the part of Shaikh Arif surprised Prince Muhammad, who couldn't comprehend the shaikh's steadfastness regarding the marriage. Unfortunately, before the issue could be resolved, Prince Muhammad was killed in an invasion by the Mongols.³²

The historical accuracy of the mentioned event, as described by hagiographers, is questionable among historians. Many contemporary biographers have also attempted to discredit its authenticity by highlighting inconsistencies and anachronisms within the narrative. Khawar Suhrawardiya points out that earlier versions of the manuscript *Siyar al-Arifin* refer to the Prince as Hazrat Khan, while later manuscripts mention him as Qadar Khan.³³ The attribution of this event to Prince Muhammad, who held the title of Wali of Multan, appears to be a later fabrication. Furthermore, the absence of any mention of this event by Abdul Qadir Badayuni in his work '*Muntakhib al-Tawarikh*' further supports the notion that the event lacks authenticity.³⁴

According to hagiographies, Prince Muhammad's relationship with Shaikh Arif became complicated when the latter criticized the prince for punishing another sufi saint by lashing him. Due to the large number of people residing in Shaikh Arif's Khanaqah, the prince grew concerned about potential betrayal from Shaikh Arif and his followers. Consequently, he prepared to attack the Khanaqah. However, his army was unexpectedly attacked by the Mongols, resulting in the

³² Rizvi, 203.

³³ In *Siyar al-Arifin*, as it exists today, the name Qadar Khan is mentioned. The event and its attribution to Prince Muhammad is questionable according to Khwaja Nizamuddin. See Jamali. 190-192.

³⁴ Suhrawardiya, Khawar. *Yadgar-e-Suhrawardiya*. Nazir Sons Publishers, 1999.

prince's death during the battle.³⁵ This event is regarded as a miracle attributed to Shaikh Arif in Sufi traditions. The accuracy of the narrated event is debatable. Nonetheless, it illustrates the deteriorating relationship between the Suhrawardiya sufi order and the ruling authority due to the conflict between Shaikh Arif and Prince Muhammad.

It was not uncommon for Sufi orders to receive patronage from ruling elites during medieval times. Rulers often saw the Sufi orders to gain legitimacy, support from the masses, and a sense of spiritual connection. This patronage could include land grants, financial support, and other privileges. However, the dynamic between Shaikh Arif and Prince Muhammad reflects the complex interplay between spiritual authority, political power, and the preservation of Sufi teachings during that time. Shaikh Arif's opposition can be interpreted as an effort to preserve the authenticity and purity of the Sufi path. He may have believed that direct involvement with political matters could divert the Suhrawardiya Sufi order from its core principles and dilute its spiritual message. While Sufi silsilas were centers of spiritual guidance and enlightenment, they also acted as sources of social and cultural cohesion. Shaikh Arif's stance exemplifies the idea that Sufi leaders have a responsibility to safeguard the teachings they impart and the values they represent. This role can sometimes conflict with the interests of political rulers who seek to co-opt Sufi influence for their own purposes.

The succeeding Suhrawardiya shaikh was Shaikh Ruknuddin Abul Fatih, also known as Shah Rukn-e-Alam. He was the son and khalifa of Shaikh Sadraddin Arif and the grandson of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya. Shaikh Ruknuddin Abul Fatih followed in his grandfather's footsteps by actively engaging in political affairs. Shaikh Rukne Alam accepted the largest land grant ever bestowed by the Sultanate and used his influence to protect the family members of Sultan Alauddin Khilji (1296-1316).³⁶ During the reign of Sultan Mubarak Khilji (1316-1320), he was invited to the court to discuss the construction of a khanaqah in Delhi. In an attempt to undermine the popularity of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, Sultan Mubarak Khalji sought Shaikh Rukne Alam's assistance in establishing Delhi as a prominent center for the Suhrawardiya order.³⁷ However, despite these political maneuverings, it is evident that Shaikh Rukne Alam held great respect for

³⁵ *ibid.* 177-178.

³⁶ Huda, 124.

³⁷ Farishta, M.Qasim. *Tarikh-e-Farishta (Urdu)*, trans. Abdul Hayyi Khwaja (Al-Meezan Books). See also. Faridi, Noor Ahmed. *Tarikh-e-Multan*, Vol. 1. Qasr-ul-Adab Publications, 1972.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and was unwilling to compromise their relationship for political gain. He prioritized his admiration for Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya over the Sultan's objectives.³⁸

During Ghiyasuddin Tughluq's reign (1320-1325), the shaikh resided in Delhi as a guest for several years. It is recorded that Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq (1325-1351) made a substantial donation of a hundred villages to the shaikh.³⁹ Shah Rukn-e-Alam was active in political affairs and had close ties with Khalji and Tughluq Sultans. During his visits to Delhi, he assumed the role of a mediator between the public and the sultan, serving as the channel for conveying the requests and aspirations of the public to the ruling authority for their consideration and potential fulfillment.⁴⁰

During the rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq, a series of uprisings occurred, one of which involved the rebellion of Behram Aiba, the governor of Multan, against the Sultan. Shah Rukn-e-Alam, in support of the Tughluq dynasty, took a stand against Behram Aiba. In an effort to confuse Behram Aiba's army, Shah Rukn-e-Alam's brother, Shaikh Imaduddin, was positioned under a royal canopy. However, he was tragically killed, leading Behram Aiba to believe that the Sultan himself had been slain. Taking advantage of the confusion, the forces of the Sultan ambushed and defeated Behram Aiba. Subsequently, the Sultan directed his forces towards Multan and initiated a violent suppression. In the midst of this, the people turned to Shah Rukn-e-Alam for help. He approached the Sultan humbly, barefoot, and pleaded for an immediate cessation of the massacre, as well as the release of Behram Aiba's relatives and companions. The Sultan granted his requested.⁴¹ His loyalty to the state may have been the reason that Alam implemented a rule requiring every visitor to obtain permission from the wali (governor) of Multan before staying at his khanaqah.⁴²

Shah Rukn-e-Alam's involvement in political affairs showcases his recognition by the ruling class as an individual whose support and influence were valuable. Accepting significant land grants and being entrusted with the protection of ruling family members emphasizes his role as a political figure. These favors bestowed upon him were likely a result of his ability to sway public opinion through his spiritual teachings and following. Shah Rukn-e-Alam held considerable religious

³⁸ The association between Shah Rukn-e-Alam and Nizamuddin Auliya was characterized by deep respect and admiration. Numerous accounts of their interactions have been documented by Noor Ahmed Faridi. see Faridi, 236-239.

³⁹ Huda, 126; Rizvi, 213.

⁴⁰ Faridi, 244.

⁴¹ Rizvi, 213.

⁴² Huda, 126.

authority over his followers. Sufi silsilas often attracted large followings, and the rulers recognized the potential of these figures to shape public sentiment. Shah Rukn-e-Alam's spiritual teachings and practices gave him a platform to influence public opinion, making him an important ally for the rulers seeking to consolidate their rule. This religious authority also provided him with a means to negotiate with the ruling class and advocate for the interests of his followers. The relationship between Shah Rukn-e-Alam and the ruling class was marked by an interplay of political influence, religious authority, and personal principles. His actions and decisions enabled him to navigate these complexities, showcasing his understanding of the socio-political environment of his time. This interplay allowed him to maintain his position as a respected spiritual leader, while also engaging with the political landscape to safeguard the interests of his followers and uphold his spiritual heritage.

After the death of Shah Rukn-e-Alam, a succession conflict arose as he had not named a direct successor or had a son. His nephew, Shaikh Hud, contested for the position and sought the intervention of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq to make the final decision. The sultan decided to convene a hearing in Daulatabad to determine the next leading Suhrawardiya shaikh. He was appointed the next Suhrawardiya shaikh; however, his relations with Muhammad bin Tughluq deteriorated when latter accused the Sheikh of using Khanaqah's income for personal use. Sheikh's property was seized by the state and after Sheikh planned to flee to Turkistan, he was captured and executed by Muhammad bin Tughluq on the charge of plotting a Mongol invasion in India using his influence as a descendant of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya.⁴³ Firoz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388) later appointed Yusuf Girdez as next Shaikh-ul-Islam. However, Suhrawardiya lost its influence as the interest of Delhi Sultanate shifted towards Chishti Sufi centers. Suhrawardiya saints migrated from Multan and preached the Suhrawardiya teachings in regions like Gujarat, Delhi, Bengal, and Uch.

The Suhrawardiya order gained popularity and attracted followers from different backgrounds. However, the position of Suhrawardiya faced challenges and eventually declined. The development and position of Suhrawardiya in Multan underwent a complex trajectory. While it initially experienced growth and popularity under the leadership of prominent figures, external and internal challenges, including the fragmented political landscape, succession disputes, and

⁴³ Rizvi, 214.

increasing state control, eventually led to its decline. The interference by ruling powers, financial subordination, and the loss of influential leaders significantly impacted the order's influence and autonomy over time. While political instability, internal disputes, and state interference posed significant challenges to the order, its teachings and spiritual practices continued to resonate within the devotees.

1.4. Teachings of Suhrawardiya:

The Suhrawardiya Sufis of Multan represented a unique blend of Tasawwuf with traditional Sunni Islamic practices. Central to their beliefs was an unwavering commitment to monotheism, evident in their rejection of prostration for veneration of anyone but Allah, safeguarding the purity of worship. They integrated spirituality into ritual through practices like dhikr within obligatory prayers, forging a connection between outward acts and inner devotion. The Suhrawardiya believed in the direct link established through obligatory prayers, emphasizing immediate communion with the divine. Their balanced approach to spiritual relationships upheld the importance of Sufi Pirs and Murshids while cautioning against excessive reverence. Notably, they combined traditional Islamic education with Sufi training, harmonizing knowledge and experiential devotion. Rejecting celibacy, they endorsed marriage and familial responsibilities as compatible with the spiritual path. Their skepticism towards mystical claims demonstrated a commitment to authentic Islamic teachings. Sending blessings to Prophet Muhammad emphasize their reverence, while preserving core Islamic values that establish their entire spiritual journey.

They held distinctive views on various aspects of Islamic worship, including their rejection of prostration as an act of veneration and their emphasis on the fardh salat (prayer). The Suhrawardiyas disagreed with the practice of prostrating to show veneration or reverence to anyone other than Allah. They believed that prostration should be reserved solely for worshiping and showing devotion to Allah. The Suhrawardiyas held a strict interpretation of Sunni Islam and held a distinctive view on prostration as an act of veneration or reverence. Suhrawardiyas were critical of prostrating to anyone or anything other than Allah. They emphasized that prostration should be directed solely towards Allah and rejected the practice of prostrating to show reverence or veneration to human beings, whether they were spiritual leaders, saints, or any other respected figures. Their viewpoint was rooted in the belief that the act of prostration carries deep theological

significance and should be exclusively reserved for the worship of Allah. They argued that associating prostration with anyone other than Allah could potentially lead to the blurring of boundaries between human beings and the divine, undermining the fundamental principle of monotheism. Suhrawardiya maintained this belief citing the verse from Qur'an where it is stated: 'None believes in Our Signs except those who, when they are given good counsel through Our verses, fall down prostrate and celebrate the praise of their Lord and do not wax proud.'⁴⁴ Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya accepted ordinary Islamic greeting as it was closer to norms of traditional Islam.⁴⁵

The Suhrawardiya placed great importance on the obligatory prayers. They emphasized the performance of these prescribed prayers in their proper form and at their appointed times. They considered the canonical salat to be a fundamental aspect of a Muslim's worship and a means of establishing a direct connection with Allah. Suhrawardiya Shaikhs incorporated dhikr into obligatory prayers and after the salam, Suhrawardiya Shaikhs recited *adhkar* and sent respects toward Prophet Mohammad in forms of *durood*.⁴⁶ Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya, within his Sufi text *Al-Aurad*, introduced a practice of incorporating specific supplications (*adhkar*) into the obligatory Salah (prayer). One illustrative instance of this practice is mentioned in "Zikr-e-Namaz Dhuhhr" which he recommended during the Dhuhhr (noon) prayer. In this practice, he advised reciting certain Surahs from the Quran during various segments of the Salah. For instance, during the Sunnah (voluntary) prayers preceding the obligatory ones, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya suggested reciting Surahs known as "*Qul*" Surahs in the first four Rakahs (units of prayer).⁴⁷ Upon completing these Rakahs, it was recommended to recite the "*astaghfar*" (seeking forgiveness) supplication 100 times. In the Fardh (obligatory) *Rakahs*, he further advised reciting a substantial portion of the Quran, approximately 30 to 40 verses. Following the Fardh *Rakahs*, he recommended reciting the Kalma Shahadah (the declaration of faith) as an additional act of devotion. During the Sunnah prayers following the Fardh *Rakahs*, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya proposed reciting specific Surahs. In the first *Rakah*, Surah Al-Kafirun (Chapter 109) was suggested, while in the second *Rakah*, Surah Al-Ikhlās (Chapter 112) was recommended. In the subsequent Nafal (extra

⁴⁴ Holy Qur'an 32:15

⁴⁵ Suvorova, Anna. *Muslim Saints of South Asia: The Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries*. Routledge Curzon, 2004.

⁴⁶ Zakariya, 86.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* 85-88. *Qul* Surahs are Surah Al-Ikhlās (chapter 112), Surah Al-Falaq (chapter 113), Surah An-Nas (chapter 114), and Surah Al-Kafirun (chapter 109).

voluntary) prayers, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya advised reciting particular verses from the Quran. In the first Rakah, he recommended reciting Ayahs 54 to 56 from Surah Al-A'raf (Chapter 7), and in the second Rakah, Ayahs 107 to 110 from Surah Al-Kahf (Chapter 18). Upon concluding the entire prayer, the practice concluded with the recitation of Durood, a supplication invoking blessings and peace upon Prophet Muhammad. This integration of specific Quranic recitations and supplications within the various segments of the Salah as described by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya explains his emphasis on combining the act of prayer with the remembrance of Allah and seeking His forgiveness. Through these practices, individuals are encouraged to establish a deep connection with the Quranic teachings and the tradition of Prophet Muhammad.

The Suhrawardiya maintained a cautious stance towards excessive reverence and courtesy towards spiritual leaders, such as pirs or murshids. While they acknowledged the importance of seeking guidance and knowledge from knowledgeable individuals, they emphasized the need for a balanced and sincere approach to spiritual relationships. Abu Hafs Suhrawardiya believed in the potential benefits that could arise from combining formal madrasa education with tasawwuf training under the guidance of Sufi shaikhs. He advocated for a balanced approach that incorporated both Sufi-murid (disciple) training and traditional Islamic education. Suhrawardiya's approach aimed to bridge the gap between the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of Islam. He believed that combining the rigorous academic training provided by madrasas with the spiritual guidance of Sufi shaikhs could lead to a more comprehensive understanding and experience of the faith. This integration would enable individuals to develop a balanced approach to their religious practice, encompassing both the external aspects of Sharia (Islamic law) and the internal dimensions of the spiritual path.

Despite recognizing the potential benefits of tasawwuf, Suhrawardiya maintained a cautious stance regarding the claims of divine manifestation made by some Sufi shaikhs. He was aware of the historical challenges and controversies surrounding the authenticity of these claims and the potential for deviation from the teachings of Islam. In his renowned work "Awarif al Ma'arif," Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardi addressed these issues by seeking guidance from Prophetic Hadiths (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad) and the sanctions of Sharia (Islamic law). By grounding his teachings in the authoritative sources of Islam, he aimed to provide a reliable and

authentic framework for the practice of tasawwuf.⁴⁸ Such a stance can be found in the life of Bahauddin Zakariya as well. On one occasion, Bahauddin Zakariya expressed great disappointment with his murids' misplaced enthusiasm when they interrupted their ablution (wudu) upon seeing him. He specifically mentioned one disciple who had completed his ablution before approaching him, stating, "Among all of you, only this individual is a true dervish. He first completed his ablutions and then came to pay his respects to me."⁴⁹

The Suhrawardiyas regarded the fasts observed during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan as sufficient in fulfilling the obligation of fasting. They did not encourage or promote additional fasting outside of the obligatory fasts prescribed in Ramadan, considering them to be voluntary acts rather than essential requirements of the faith. They viewed any additional fasting beyond Ramadan as voluntary acts of worship, known as *nafl* or *sunnah* fasts. While such voluntary fasts held spiritual merit and could earn additional rewards, the Suhrawardiyas did not consider them to be essential requirements of the faith. Instead, they regarded the fasts of Ramadan as the primary focus and emphasized the significance of fulfilling this obligation with sincerity and devotion. Suhrawardiya Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi used to advise sufis to eat three times a day to keep their strengths for prayers and abstention from sins.⁵⁰

During the time of Nizamuddin Auliya, celibacy was preferred in Chishti discipline. According to him, when a dervish ables to refrain from his desires because of his absorption in divine contemplation; his tongue, eyes, and mouth will inevitably abstain from sinful behaviors.⁵¹ The Suhrawardiyas rejected the concept of celibacy, which refers to abstaining from marriage and sexual relations. They believed that marriage and the fulfillment of familial responsibilities were encouraged in Islam. They considered a balanced approach to marital life and the pursuit of spirituality as integral to the practice of the faith. It is evident that Baha'uddin Zakariya dedicated significant resources to the education of his sons, showing great care and attention to their upbringing. He held a special affection for his elder grandson, Ruknuddin Abul Fatih (commonly known as Shah Rukn-e-Alam), and held him in high regard. Additionally, Baha'uddin Zakariya

⁴⁸ Huda, Qamar ul. The Remembrance of the Prophet in Suhrawardiya's Awarif Al-Ma'arif. *Journal of Islamic Studies* 12:2 (2001), pp.129-150.

⁴⁹ Suvorova, 136.

⁵⁰ Rizvi, 217.

⁵¹ *ibid.* 218.

had a favorable opinion of his daughter-in-law, Bibi Pakdaman. Another Suhrawardiya Shaikh, Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi (d.1235) employed teachers for his sons but also for his daughters. This decision to provide education to both genders was highly unusual in the context of the time.⁵²

1.5. Conclusion:

In this chapter, I have explored the beginnings and growth of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order, with a focus on its development in Multan. By studying its history and beliefs, I have gained a deeper understanding of how this influential spiritual tradition was established and expanded over time. By delving into its historical trajectory and ideological foundations, I have uncovered valuable insights into the unique teachings, practices, and principles of the Suhrawardiya order within the broader context of Sufism.

I began by tracing the historical roots of the Suhrawardiya order, by starting from its founder Abu Najib Suhrawardiya, and Abu Hafs Shihabuddin Umar Suhrawardiya who was a key figure in expanding the Suhrawardiya Sufi order outside the borders of Iraq and explored the political, social, intellectual and spiritual influences that shaped its early development. From there, I have focused on the specific growth of the Suhrawardiya order in the city of Multan, identifying the key factors and individuals that contributed to its establishment and prominence in the region.

By examining the ideological foundations of the Suhrawardiya order, I have highlighted its adherence to strict Sunni Islamic beliefs while incorporating elements of tasawwuf in the silsila. I have explored the distinctive teachings and practices that set the Suhrawardiya order apart, such as their stance on prostration as veneration to the shaikh, their emphasis on obligatory salat, and their perspective on fasting and celibacy. In the next chapter, I will be focusing primarily on Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam lives and backgrounds while simultaneously considering their perspectives on Sufi rituals for understanding the ritual practices of Suhrawardiya.

⁵² Suvorova, 139.

Chapter 2: Teachings of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam

2.1. Introduction:

In this chapter, I explore the lives and teachings of two distinguished figures in the Suhrawardiya Sufi order: Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. As pillars of the Sufi tradition in Multan, their spiritual contributions have left an enduring impact on the hearts and minds of their devotees.

The first section of this chapter explores the life and background of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya, shedding light on the formative experiences and spiritual journey that led to his prominence within the Suhrawardiya order. Additionally, an in-depth examination of his notable contributions and teachings provides insight into the profound impact he had on his devotees and wider society. His perspective on sufi rituals is also considered.

The subsequent section of the chapter focuses on Shah Rukn-e-Alam, offering a comprehensive account of his life and background. It explores the events and influences that shaped his spiritual path, ultimately leading him to become a revered figure in the Suhrawardiya Sufi tradition. Furthermore, the chapter analyzes the significant contributions and teachings of Shah Rukn e Alam, elucidating the ways in which he continued and enriched the Suhrawardiya Sufi legacy.

The final section presents a comparative analysis of the roles played by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam in the Suhrawardiya Sufi order. By examining their distinct approaches, methodologies, and spheres of influence, this chapter aims to provide a nuanced understanding of their respective contributions to the development and dissemination of Suhrawardiya Sufism.

Understanding the lives of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam is integral to gaining a comprehensive understanding of Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals. Their lives and teachings offer valuable insights into the spiritual practices, beliefs, and principles that built the foundations for the Suhrawardiya Sufi tradition.

2.2. Life and Background of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya:

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's Grandfather Kamaluddin Abubabakr had migrated from Mecca to Khwarizm, and later, settled in Multan. Bahauddin Zakariya was born in Kot Kehror (now Muzaffargarh), a town near Multan in the southern part of Punjab province of modern Pakistan, in 1170. He belonged to the Qureshi tribe and traced his ancestry to Asad ibn Hashim, an uncle of Prophet Muhammad.⁵³ His grandfather, Shah Kamal-ud-Din Ali Shah Qureshi, migrated from Mecca to Khwarizm, and later settled in Multan.⁵⁴

During his childhood, Multan was under the rule of the Ghurid Empire, which had conquered it from the Ghaznavids in 1186. He grew up in a scholarly environment and received education from renowned scholars, such as Abdul Rasheed Kirmani. Seeking further knowledge and spiritual guidance, he embarked on extensive travels, visiting Khurasan, Bukhara, Mecca, Medina, and Baghdad, where he learned from various masters and enriched his understanding of Islam and Sufism.⁵⁵

During his travels, Bahauddin Zakariya encountered Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya, who acknowledged his spiritual worth and honored him by placing the Khirqa (a Sufi robe) upon him, thereby appointing him as a Khalifa (spiritual successor). This significant recognition added to his authority in the Sufi tradition.⁵⁶ A spiritual training took place between Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya, which lasted a surprisingly short duration of merely seventeen days. Despite this brief time period, these seventeen days held immense significance as they marked the transformation of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's spiritual journey. Under the guidance of Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya underwent a profound spiritual journey that led him to attain the esteemed status of Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya's Khalifa and was sent to Multan. This recognition by Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya indicated that Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya was considered a spiritual heir, inheriting a profound spiritual legacy. As a symbol of this spiritual inheritance, Umar Suhrawardiya presented Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya with a khirqa (a Sufi robe). This khirqa represented a sacred mantle that signified the

⁵³ Faridi, Noor Ahmed. *Tazkira Bahauddin Zakariya*. Department of Auqaf Punjab, 1980.

⁵⁴ Jamali, 143.

⁵⁵ Hashmi, H.S. *Ahwal-o-Asaar Hazrat Bahauddin Zakariya Multani*. Tassawuf Foundation, 2000, 27.

⁵⁶ Farishta, 784.

spiritual authority and blessings passed down from master to disciple. However, this gesture caused a stir among the other disciples of Umar Suhrawardiya, who might have expected such an honor for themselves. Their reactions revealed their attachments and egoistic attitudes, indicating that they were not yet prepared to receive the higher teachings of Sufi spirituality.

Nizamuddin Auliya, another eminent Sufi saint and a close observer of the events, narrates that Abu Hafs Suhrawardiya had the gift of ilm-e-kashaf, which refers to the ability to unveil hidden realities and perceive the inner states of individuals. Through this divine insight, Umar Suhrawardiya perceived the attitudes of his disciples and discerned their lack of spiritual readiness. Abu Hafs Suhrawardiya, in his wisdom, conveyed that the other disciples had been like wet wood, lacking the essential spiritual maturity and readiness to be ignited by the divine flame of spiritual guidance. On the other hand, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya was likened to dry wood, signifying his preparedness, sincerity, and spiritual readiness to receive and embody the profound teachings.⁵⁷ This metaphor of dry wood beginning to burn incessantly signifies that when a sincere and spiritually pure individual is guided by a true master, their spiritual journey accelerates rapidly, and they become a source of divine illumination. Like dry wood that readily catches fire and burns continuously, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's heart and soul were profoundly touched by the divine presence, and his spiritual journey began to unfold rapidly and intensely.

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya faced a challenge upon returning to Multan, the city where he sought to spread his message of spiritual enlightenment. The local religious scholars, engulfed in their traditions and hierarchies, were not open to the arrival of a new spiritual figure and viewed his presence as a threat to their authority. In a show of disapproval and rejection, the scholars decided to convey their contempt through a symbolic act. They presented Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya with a mug filled to the brim with milk, a gesture that represented their disdain and refusal to accept him as a spiritual leader. It was a clear message that they believed he was an unwanted in their religious community. Bahauddin Zakariya took a single flower and placed it inside the mug of milk. This simple act held great significance. By returning the mug with a flower inside, he was communicating that his presence in Multan would be like the flower in the milk i.e., a catalyst for change, a source of beauty, and a bringer of harmony.⁵⁸ He aimed to show that his mission was

⁵⁷ Jamali, 148.

⁵⁸ Suhrawardiya, 143.

not to disturb the existing order but to add a new dimension of spirituality and understanding to the lives of the people in Multan.

This disdain manifested in the historical conflict between Maulana Qutbuddin Kashani and Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya which sheds light on the tensions that sometimes arose between religious scholars with differing interpretations of Islamic teachings. Nizamudin Auliya narrates that upon Maulana Qutbuddin Kashani's arrival in Multan, Qabacha, the ruler of the region, showed respect for his scholarly prowess by constructing a madrassa and appointing him as its Imam. Kashani was well-versed in traditional Sharia teachings, and he conducted prayers and delivered sermons in the madrassa. However, his interpretation of Sharia differed significantly from the Sufi practices followed by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. Maulana Kashani's understanding of Sharia conflicted with Sufis. Rooted in his disdain, when Kashani tried to dissuade Bahauddin Zakariya from praying morning prayers behind him as it was far from his khanqah, the latter quoted a Prophetic Hadith to support the significance of congregational prayers. The discord between the two scholars intensified during a heated debate over a legal point concerning prayer. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya argued from the perspective of "*nur-e-batin*," an inner spiritual light that guides individuals in their religious practices. However, Kashani, adhering strictly to traditional Sharia principles, discarded the notion of "*nur-e-batin*," viewing it as conflicting with Islamic law and rooted in ignorance. The debate over prayer turned into a representation of the broader clash between the mystical and traditional approaches to Islam. This ideological conflict eventually became insurmountable, and Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya decided to leave the madrassa, never to return.⁵⁹

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya also played a significant political role in the city of Multan during his time. During that time period, the Indian subcontinent experienced power struggles and rivalries among different ruling factions. One of these conflicts involved Nasiruddin Qabacha, the ruler of Multan. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya was an outspoken critic of Qabacha. In the midst of the power struggle, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya allied himself with Mamluk Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish, the ruler of Delhi. Together with the Qazi of Multan, Sharfuddin, he wrote a letter to Sultan Iltutmish, urging him to take action and conquer Multan, which was then under Qabacha's rule.

⁵⁹ Jamali, 176-177; Suhrawardiya also narrates this event in his hagiographical account of Suhrawardiya Sufis. See Suhrawardiya, 153-154.

However, the letter inadvertently fell into Qabacha's hands. Upon discovering the conspiratorial letter, Qabacha confronted Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. Despite the risk to his own life, the Sufi saint did not deny his involvement in writing the letter. He proclaimed that his actions were stipulated by the divine. Qabacha executed the Qazi but decided to release Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya.⁶⁰ Zakariya's influence and popularity among the masses helped Iltutmish to overthrow Qabacha and annex Multan to his empire in 1228. As a reward, Iltutmish appointed Zakariya as the Sheikh-ul-Islam, or the supreme religious authority, of Multan and granted him official state patronage.⁶¹

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya used his position to spread his Sufi teachings and attract many converts from Hinduism. He also befriended other famous Sufi saints of his era, such as Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakar, and Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari. He was revered as one of the four friends (Char Yaar) who shaped the spiritual landscape of South Asia.⁶² He was also a prolific writer and poet. He has written *Al-Aurad* which contains various prayers, invocations, supplications, and recitations that Zakariya taught to his disciples and followers. Throughout his spiritual journey, Zakariya's life became intertwined with numerous accounts of miraculous events, as narrated by his devoted disciples. These miracles, ranging from healings to *Ilm-e-Kashaf* (knowledge of unseen) to extraordinary feats, contributed to the reinforcement of his spiritual prowess and divine connection in the eyes of his followers. The attribution of these miracles to Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya was not only a testament to his spiritual prowess but also a source of inspiration for his adherents, consolidating their faith and devotion to his teachings.

Bahauddin Zakariya died in 1262 at the age of 92 and was buried in his *khanqah* in Multan. His shrine is one of the most revered and visited places in Pakistan. The shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya in Multan subsequently attained revered status as a prominent spiritual center, drawing countless Muslims seeking guidance and blessings. The life and teachings of Bahauddin Zakariya remain an integral part of the rich Sufi tradition and hold scholarly significance in the study of medieval Islamic mysticism.

⁶⁰ Farishta, 786; Jamali, 158.

⁶¹ Rizvi, 192.

⁶² Faridi, *Tarikh-e-Multan*, 144.

2.3. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Sufi Rituals:

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya advocated for a balanced approach between Sharia (Islamic law) and Tasawwuf (Sufism) as he believed that by integrating both aspects, one could achieve true spiritual transformation and draw closer to the Divine. His teachings focused on fostering inner spiritual growth and enlightenment through the outer practices and rituals within Sufism.⁶³ One of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's primary objectives was to distinguish Suhrawardiya Tasawwuf from other Sufi orders. He believed that while the outer practices in Sufism, such as prayers and rituals, were essential, they should be performed in a way that should lead to a profound inner experience, guiding the Sufi murids (disciples) towards true divine connection and spiritual enlightenment. To achieve this, he emphasized the significance of the ritual of **Dhikr**, which translates to “remembrance of Allah.”

In his work, “Al-Aurad,” Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya provided detailed instructions for Sufi murids on how to engage in the Dhikr practice effectively.⁶⁴ Unlike a mere repetition of divine names, the Dhikr ritual was designed to be a transformative process, nurturing the soul and elevating the spirit. Through consistent and dedicated Dhikr, Sufi murids were encouraged to immerse themselves in constant remembrance of Allah, enabling them to experience spiritual awakening and closeness to the Divine. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya structured the Dhikr ritual to encompass specific times of the day and months in the Islamic calendar, thus integrating it into the daily lives of his disciples. For instance, different prayer recitations were prescribed for each Islamic month, such as Muharram, Safar, Rajab, Shaban, Ramadan, and Zil-Haj. Each month held unique spiritual significance, and the Dhikr practice helped Sufi murids align themselves with the spiritual projection of that particular time.

Furthermore, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya included additional prayers in the Dhikr ritual, such as Tahajjud (Night prayer), Ishraq (prayer at sunrise), Shab-e-Miraj (the night of 27th Rajab), and Chasht (noon prayer). These additional prayers held special spiritual merit and were integrated into the Dhikr practice to reinforce the Sufi murids' connection with the Divine throughout their daily lives. By incorporating these moments of heightened spiritual devotion, Sheikh Bahauddin

⁶³ Faridi, *Bahauddin Zakariya*, 270.

⁶⁴ Zakariya's entire work is dedicated to the performance of Adhkar at various times and events.

Zakariya aimed to help his disciples maintain a constant state of mindfulness and remembrance of Allah, infusing their lives with spiritual significance and purpose.

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's views on ritual practice of **Sama** (the practice of whirling and the use of music) have been a subject of profound debate among scholars. Faridi insists on the belief that Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya remained steadfast in upholding the principles of Sharia concerning the legal point of view related to music. According to Faridi, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya displayed great reverence for the sacred rules of Islam, adhering strictly to the prescribed boundaries of musical expression. He points to Fakhruddin Iraqi, the son-in-law and Khalifa of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya, and argues based on his departure from the Khanqah. Iraqi's deep engagement in the ritualistic practice of Sama prompted him to part ways with the Khanqah of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya.⁶⁵

Hashmi proposes an alternative viewpoint, suggesting that Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya did indulge in occasional Sama practices. Hashmi cites a compelling incident involving Abdullah Qawal, an esteemed performer.⁶⁶ The incident, also documented in Jamali's 'Siyar-ul-Arifin,' portrays a moment when Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya attended the prayer of Isha and recited Quranic verses before proceeding to a location where Abdullah Qawal was residing. Displaying his deep appreciation for the spiritual artistry of music, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya recited two Juz of the Holy Quran before inviting Abdullah Qawal to perform his melodies.⁶⁷

However, Faridi counters this argument by pointing out that the incident of Abdullah qawal was an isolated event in the life of Sheikh Bahaudin Zakariya, and that it does not prove his endorsement of Sama as a regular practice. Sheikh agreed to listen to Abdullah's poems in a Sama session out of respect for his master Umar Suhrawardiya, who had also attended a similar session in Baghdad. Faridi concludes that Sheikh was a staunch follower of the sharia and did not deviate from it in his spiritual path. Additionally, Faridi highlights a historical confusion surrounding the involvement of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya in Raag and melody. He clarifies that such musical pursuits were falsely attributed to the Sheikh when they belonged to someone named Bahauddin Barnavi. Subsequent literature may have mistakenly confused the two names, leading to the

⁶⁵ Faridi, *Bahauddin Zakariya*, 262.

⁶⁶ Hashmi, 175-177.

⁶⁷ Jamali, 160.

erroneous association of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya with the introduction of Raag and Melody in Multan.⁶⁸

It may be noted that Jamali's 'Siyar-ul-Arifin' does not record any specific Sama sessions where Sufis whirled and danced in the presence of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. The incident involving Abdullah Qawal, which took place inside a residence where Abdullah stayed, was not a formal Sama session. Rather, it was a private gathering where Abdullah performed his melodies. Moreover, according to the same historical source, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya left the gathering after listening to it for some time, indicating that his involvement was not extensive or regular.⁶⁹ The absence of any other mentions of Sama sessions in Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's *Khanqah* further supports the notion that he did not actively engage in ritual practice. The event of Abdullah Qawal's performance should be understood in the context of respect for his spiritual guide, Abu hafis Umar Suhrawardiya. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya may have attended the gathering out of reverence for his master, rather than as an indication of his endorsement of Sama as a regular practice.

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya holds the same view as the traditional schools of thought in Islamic jurisprudence on the ritual of Ziyarah, which is the visitation of graves. He does not consider Ziyarah to be anything more than a simple reminder of the hereafter and the importance of reflecting on one's own mortality and the ultimate reality of life after death. For his disciples (murids), Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya has provided guidelines on the prayers to recite when visiting the graves. These prayers serve as an expression of respect and supplication for the deceased and are intended to seek forgiveness and blessings for them in the afterlife. One of the prayers that the visitors are encouraged to recite is:

“Peace be upon the people of the graves. There is no god but Allah.”⁷⁰

This prayer acknowledges the oneness of Allah and sends peace upon the inhabitants of the graves, emphasizing the core Islamic belief in monotheism. The prayer holds significant meaning and encompasses various aspects of Islamic belief and practice. By saying “Peace be upon the people of the graves,” the visitor is offering greetings and salutations to the deceased. In Islam, sending

⁶⁸ Faridi, *Bahauddin Zakariya*, 265.

⁶⁹ Jamali, 160.

⁷⁰ Zakariya, 151.

peace upon someone, living or deceased, is considered an act of virtue and a way of showing respect and honor. The act of visiting graves and reciting this prayer serves as a reminder of the hereafter and the transient nature of this worldly life. It encourages believers to reflect on the impermanence of earthly existence and the ultimate reality of death. This reflection can inspire individuals to prioritize their spiritual journey and prepare for the eternal life that comes after death. Sheikh quotes the Ayah from Quran which reads:

“The disbelievers claim they will not be resurrected. Say, O Prophet, “Yes, by my Lord, you will surely be resurrected, then you will certainly be informed of what you have done. And that is easy for Allah.”⁷¹

Another prayer mentioned by the Sheikh is a supplication specifically directed towards the deceased by name, for example:

“(O the son of so-and-so), may Allah forgive you as He forgave His Prophet, peace be upon him and his family.”⁷²

This prayer seeks Allah's forgiveness and mercy for the deceased, drawing a parallel with the forgiveness granted to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his family. When reciting this prayer, the visitor addresses the deceased by their name, for example, “O the son of so-and-so,”. The central theme of this prayer is seeking Allah's forgiveness on behalf of the deceased. It acknowledges that every human being is prone to mistakes and sins, and by invoking Allah's mercy and pardon, the visitor is beseeching the Almighty to overlook the shortcomings and wrongdoings of the deceased. The prayer draws a parallel between seeking forgiveness for the deceased and the special status of forgiveness granted to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his family. In Islam, the Prophet is considered the best example of character and behavior, and his family holds a unique place of honor. By invoking the forgiveness bestowed upon the Prophet and his family, the supplicant seeks to entreat Allah to grant a similar favor to the deceased.

In addition to these specific prayers, the devotees are advised to recite certain Quranic verses as an act of remembrance and to seek blessings. These include Ayat-ul-Kursi (the Throne Verse)

⁷¹ Holy Qur'an 64:7; Zakariya, 152.

⁷² *ibid*, 150.

which is one of the most renowned and significant verses in the Quran.⁷³ Surah Fatiha (the Opening), the first chapter of the Quran and holds immense importance in Islamic prayers and rituals.⁷⁴ and Surah Zalzala (the Earthquake), which speaks about the Day of Judgment.⁷⁵ Reciting these verses is considered a means of invoking Allah's mercy and blessings for the deceased.

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya approached the practice of Ziyarah with caution. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya holds the same view on the ritual of Ziyarah as the traditional fiqh schools of thought within Islam. This means that he considers Ziyarah as a permissible and commendable practice within the bounds of Islamic teachings. Ziyarah serves primarily as a reminder of the hereafter. When Muslims visit the graves of pious individuals or loved ones, it prompts them to contemplate the temporary nature of this worldly life and the certainty of death. The view that Ziyarah is not considered anything more than a reminder aligns with the mainstream understanding within the broader Islamic community. While some Sufi groups have attributed additional beliefs or practices to Ziyarah, Sheikh Zakariya's adherence to the traditional fiqh schools of thought keeps the focus on the core elements of this practice.

In conclusion, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya advocated a balanced approach between Sharia (Islamic law) and Tasawwuf (Sufism) to achieve true spiritual transformation and closeness to the Divine. He believed that integrating both aspects was essential for a holistic and meaningful spiritual transformation. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's life and teachings revolved around the central tenet of Dhikr, as he believed it to be the primary path to spiritual growth and closeness to Allah. While upholding the principles of Sharia, he embraced aspects of Sufism and sought a harmonious integration of both to attain a more profound understanding of spirituality and Islamic teachings.

2.4. Life and Background of Shah Rukn-e-Alam:

Ruknuddin Abul Fateh, more commonly known as Shah Rukn-e-Alam, was a prominent figure of Suhrawardiya Sufi order. He was born in 1251 to Pir Sadruddin Arif, another esteemed Sufi of his time. Shah Rukn-e-Alam's family lineage can be traced back to the great Sufi saint, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya, who was his grandfather. This rich heritage of spirituality and wisdom would

⁷³ Holy Qur'an 2:255.

⁷⁴ Holy Quran, 1:1-7.

⁷⁵ Holy Qur'an 99:1-8.

profoundly influence Shah Rukn-e-Alam's life and shape his destiny as an influential religious leader and pillar of faith. He was named "Ruknuddin" by his revered grandfather Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. Shah Rukn-e-Alam's spiritual journey began at an early age. Growing up under the guidance of his learned father and being exposed to the teachings of his grandfather, he absorbed the values of Sufism. As he matured, Shah Rukn-e-Alam's spiritual prowess became evident, and he garnered a reputation as a devout and knowledgeable individual. Khwaja Shams Sabzwari, recognizing Shah Rukn-e-Alam's exceptional qualities, honored him with the addition of "Wal-Alam" to his name. His name "Ruknuddin wal-Alam" translates to "The pillar of faith and the world".⁷⁶

After the passing of his father, Pir Sadruddin Arif, Shah Rukn-e-Alam assumed the esteemed position of the successor of Suhrawardiya in Multan. Shah Rukn-e-Alam's spiritual journey took on a deeper dimension as he embraced the role of a spiritual leader and guide to his followers. To symbolize his succession and affiliation with the revered Sufi lineage, Shah Rukn-e-Alam adopted the turban worn by his grandfather, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. The turban was not merely a piece of clothing; it carried profound spiritual significance as it had been passed down from generation to generation, signifying the continuity of the spiritual legacy. Shah Rukn-e-Alam also received the khirqa, from Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. This khirqa was given to sheikh by his spiritual guide, Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardiya.⁷⁷

Shah Rukn-e-Alam's influence extended beyond his role as a spiritual leader, as he maintained strong ties with the ruling Khilji and Tughluq sultans of his time. He acted as a bridge between the public and the sultans, effectively conveying the aspirations and requests of the people to the ruling authorities. This unique position allowed him to address the concerns of the common people and advocate for their needs directly to the rulers. It is recorded in *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, that Sultan Alauddin Khilji held Shah Rukn-e-Alam in high regard. Whenever the public presented their appeals or grievances to Shah Rukn-e-Alam, he would take those matters to the Sultan's court. Sultan Alauddin listened attentively to each request brought by Shah Rukn-e-Alam. Upon receiving a request, Sultan Alauddin would personally consider the matter, seeking to understand the implications and the potential impact on the people. Once he had analyzed the situation, he would

⁷⁶ Suhrawardiya, 181.

⁷⁷ Jamali, 200.

pen a response on the backside of the original petition and affix his royal seal as a sign of acknowledgment. He would stay at the Sultan's court until each request had been addressed.⁷⁸

Shah Rukn-e-Alam maintained a deep and profound connection with the eminent Chishti Sufi saint, Nizamuddin Auliya, who held great influence in Delhi. Their relationship was marked by mutual respect and admiration. During the rule of Sultan Mubarak Khilji, recognizing the widespread popularity and spiritual influence of Nizamuddin Auliya, the Sultan sought to diminish his growing prominence by asking Shah Rukn-e-Alam to establish a khanqah in Delhi.⁷⁹ The Sultan's hope was that by having Shah Rukn-e-Alam establish a presence in Delhi, it would divert some of the attention and devotion away from Nizamuddin Auliya. However, Shah Rukn-e-Alam refused the Sultan's request. He was not swayed by political motivations but rather upheld the sanctity of the relationship he shared with Nizamuddin Auliya. He visited Delhi on two occasions during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khilji. It is mentioned in *Siyar-ul-Arifin* that Shah Rukn-e-Alam himself expressed, "It is Nizamuddin Auliya's admiration that brings me to Delhi."⁸⁰

Shah Rukn-e-Alam was also active in political affairs and had close ties with Khilji and Tughluq Sultans. During the rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq, various uprisings and rebellions challenged the stability of the Tughluq Dynasty. One significant uprising involved Behram Aiba, the governor of Multan, who rebelled against the Sultan's authority. Shah Rukn-e-Alam found himself facing a crucial decision as he had to take a stand in support of the Tughluq dynasty against Behram Aiba's rebellion. To confuse and disorient Behram Aiba's forces, Shah Rukn-e-Alam's brother, Shaikh Imaduddin, was strategically positioned under a royal canopy. Tragically, during the confusion of battle, Shaikh Imaduddin was killed, leading Behram Aiba to believe that the Sultan himself had been killed. This momentary misperception created an opportunity for the Sultan's forces to take advantage of the chaos and mount a counterattack, eventually defeating Behram Aiba's uprising. Following the suppression of the rebellion, the Sultan directed his forces towards Multan and initiated a violent campaign to punish the rebels. In this situation, the people of Multan turned to Shah Rukn-e-Alam for help and intervention. Shah Rukn-e-Alam was seen as a trusted figure to advocate for peace and justice.

⁷⁸ *ibid.* 203.

⁷⁹ *Farishta*, Vol.1, 284.

⁸⁰ *Jamali*, 201.

Approaching the Sultan barefooted, Shah Rukn-e-Alam pleaded for an immediate cessation of the massacre, showing his genuine concern for the well-being of the people. In addition, he urged for the release of Behram Aiba's relatives and companions. Moved by Shah Rukn-e-Alam's earnest appeal and recognizing his esteemed position as a spiritual leader, the Sultan granted his requests. He halted the violent suppression, sparing the lives of many, and released the relatives and companions of Behram Aiba.⁸¹

Shah Rukn-e-Alam passed away in 1335 and was buried as per his own wish in the mausoleum of his grandfather, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. However, later on, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq had Shah Rukn-e-Alam's coffin transferred to the present mausoleum. With no direct heir to succeed him, a succession conflict arose, leading to a power struggle within the Sufi order of Suhrawardiya. In the absence of a clear successor, his nephew Sheikh Hud assumed the position of Khalifa, the spiritual head of the Suhrawardiya order in Multan. Sheikh Hud's rise to the position of Khalifa was met with suspicion and accusations, ultimately resulting in his execution by Muhammad bin Tughluq.

2.5. Shah Rukn-e-Alam and Sufi Rituals:

Shah Rukn-e-Alam did not leave behind any written works or books to document his teachings. Instead, his wisdom and knowledge were preserved and passed down through oral traditions by his devoted followers, known as murids, and other Sufi dervishes. These narrations form the primary source of understanding the rituals and spiritual practices that Shah Rukn-e-Alam engaged in during his lifetime. Through the accounts of his murids and fellow Sufi dervishes, we can investigate the rituals that defined his spiritual path.

Shah Rukn-e-Alam lived during the same era as Nizamuddin Auliya, the eminent Chishti Sufi saint of Delhi. The mutual admiration between these two spiritual giants led to a significant exchange of spiritual ideas and practices. Shah Rukn-e-Alam's visits to Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi on multiple occasions. Shah Rukn-e-Alam recognized the spiritual greatness of Nizamuddin Auliya and sought his company to gain spiritual insights and guidance. These visits allowed the two Sufi

⁸¹ This event is mentioned by Suhrawardiya, 200-201; Rizvi, 213; and Faridi, Vol.1, 254-260.

saints to engage in profound conversations, share their experiences, and learn from each other's wisdom.⁸²

Shah Rukn-e-Alam was nurtured in a spiritually enriched environment from an early age. He inherited the Sufi tariqa (spiritual path) from his esteemed father, Pir Sadruddin Arif, and his grandfather, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. This spiritual heritage profoundly influenced Shah Rukn-e-Alam's practices and spiritual transformation, laying the foundation for his journey as a revered Sufi master. For Shah Rukn-e-Alam the essence of spiritual transformation lay in the practice of Dhikr. One of his notable disciples and devoted followers was Makhdoom Jahaniyyan of Uch, whose association with Shah Rukn-e-Alam played a pivotal role in the flourishing of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order in the region of Uch. Makhdoom Jahaniyyan narrates that the saint engaged in intense Dhikr after performing the Tahajjud (night) prayers until the break of dawn, before the Fajr (morning) prayer. Even after completing the Fajr prayer, Shah Rukn-e-Alam continued his Dhikr, immersing himself in the remembrance of Allah until the time of the Zuhr (noon) prayer. These extended periods of Dhikr were integral to his spiritual practice.⁸³

Shah Rukn-e-Alam's spiritual journey was marked by a distinct practice that set him apart from his grandfather, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. While Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya did not permit Sama gatherings within the Suhrawardiya order in Multan, Shah Rukn-e-Alam, on the other hand, embraced this tradition. The difference in their approaches to Sama could be attributed to Shah Rukn-e-Alam's admiration and connection with the Chishti Sufi saint, Nizamuddin Auliya, whose influence likely played a significant role in shaping his spiritual practices. Nizamuddin Auliya was renowned for his deep engagement in Sama gatherings, where music and poetry were used to invoke divine ecstasy and spiritual enlightenment.⁸⁴ Shah Rukn-e-Alam's admiration for Nizamuddin Auliya's approach to Sama likely inspired him to incorporate similar practices into his own spiritual journey. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya held traditional views of Islami Jurisprudence regarding Sama, other Suhrawardiya saints in different regions, such as Qazi Hamiddudin Nagauri and Fakhruddin Iraqi, were also known to engage in Sama practices.

⁸² These interactions are mentioned by Faridi, *Tarikh-e-Multan*, 236-239, and Ghulam Sarwar Lahori in *Khazinat-ul-Asfia*, Vol. 4, 83-86 (Maktabah Nabawiyya, 1994).

⁸³ Qadri, M. Haseeb. *Seerat-e-Hazrat Shah Rukn-e-Alam*, Akbar Book Sellers. Lahore, 45.

⁸⁴ Jamali, 99.

The accounts from *Siyar-ul-Arifin* confirm that Shah Rukn-e-Alam attended Sama gatherings alongside Nizamuddin Auliya.⁸⁵ This association allowed him to experience the profound spiritual atmosphere of Sama and its potential for elevating the soul to higher states of consciousness. Even in Delhi, where Shah Rukn-e-Alam's Khalifa, Wajihuddin Usman, resided, Sama gatherings were a regular part of their spiritual practices.⁸⁶ This suggests that the influence of Sama extended not only to Shah Rukn-e-Alam but also to his spiritual successors.

In essence, Shah Rukn-e-Alam's spiritual journey revolved around the practice of Dhikr, which was central to his devotion to Allah. Through the constant and focused remembrance of the Allah, he sought to purify his heart and attain a profound connection with Allah, elevating his soul to higher levels of consciousness. What set Shah Rukn-e-Alam apart from his esteemed grandfather, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya, was his openness to embrace Sama gatherings. This blend of Dhikr and Sama became a defining characteristic of Shah Rukn-e-Alam's spiritual journey, showcasing his receptiveness to diverse spiritual practices. He recognized the value of different paths to the Divine and the potential for spiritual growth through various forms of devotion. Shah Rukn-e-Alam's embrace of Sama gatherings enriched the spiritual landscape of the Suhrawardiya tradition in Multan.

2.6. Comparison of the Ritual Practices and Spiritual Methods:

The comparative analysis between Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam revolves around their approach to spirituality, specifically their perspectives on the integration of Sharia and Sufism, and their focus on Dhikr and Sama gatherings. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya advocated a balanced approach between Sharia and Tasawwuf. He firmly believed that adhering to the principles of Islamic law was a fundamental aspect of leading a righteous life and drawing closer to Allah. For him, Sufism provided the means to purify the heart, attain self-awareness, and deepen one's spiritual connection with the Divine. By harmonizing Sharia and Sufism, he sought to offer his followers a holistic path towards spiritual growth.

Shah Rukn-e-Alam's spiritual journey demonstrated a similar emphasis on Sharia but showcased a more open and inclusive attitude towards Sufi practices. While he respected and upheld Islamic

⁸⁵ *ibid.* 203.

⁸⁶ Lahori, 92.

law, he also embraced aspects of Sufism, including the practice of Sama gatherings. This willingness to incorporate diverse spiritual practices into his journey displayed his flexibility and recognition of the potential for spiritual growth through various forms of devotion.

For both Sufi saints, Dhikr was not merely a ritualistic recitation but a profound spiritual exercise that enabled them to transcend the mundane and worldly distractions. Through Dhikr, they sought to immerse themselves in Allah's remembrance, freeing their minds from preoccupations and turning their attention solely to the Divine. This constant remembrance of Allah allowed them to maintain a state of spiritual mindfulness and heightened awareness of the Divine presence in every moment. This practice of Dhikr was not limited to specific times or places for Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. They encouraged their followers to engage in Dhikr regularly, whether in solitude, during communal gatherings, or as an integral part of their daily activities. By fostering an attitude of constant remembrance, they aimed to infuse spirituality into all aspects of their lives and nurture a deep sense of devotion to Allah. Both Sufi saints recognized the transformative power of Dhikr in elevating the soul to higher levels of consciousness. Through consistent and sincere remembrance, they believed that the hearts of believers could be purified from negative traits. Dhikr was considered a means to cultivate virtues like humility, gratitude, and compassion, bringing individuals closer to Allah.⁸⁷

The notable difference between Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam lies in their stance on Sama gatherings, which reflects their respective approaches to spiritual practices and their attitudes towards incorporating diverse elements into their paths of devotion. While Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya recognized the significance of purifying the soul through Dhikr, he might not have been as open to incorporating musical elements, such as those found in Sama gatherings, into his spiritual practice. On the other hand, Shah Rukn-e-Alam's embrace of Sama gatherings enriched the spiritual landscape of the Suhrawardiya tradition in Multan. By welcoming Sama

⁸⁷ Makhoom Jahaniyyan narrates an incident concerning Shah Rukn-e-Alam and one of his devoted followers. In this incident, a murid approached Shah Rukn-e-Alam, expressing a dream he had where someone advised him to undertake the sacred Hajj pilgrimage. To this, Shah Rukn-e-Alam responded, cautioning the murid that the dream might be a temptation from Satan to divert him from his true path of engaging in Dhikr. Shah Rukn-e-Alam reminded the murid that, considering his impoverished state, the obligation of Hajj did not rest upon him. See Suhrawardiya, 192.

gatherings, he demonstrated a sense of receptiveness and inclusivity towards diverse spiritual practices.

The difference in their approaches to Sama gatherings highlights the individual nuances in their spiritual journeys. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's focus on Dhikr and more traditional practices exemplified his dedication to the inward journey and self-purification. Shah Rukn-e-Alam's openness to Sama gatherings revealed his adaptability and recognition of the potential for diverse spiritual practices to enrich the spiritual growth of his followers. By embracing Sama gatherings, he broadened the scope of spiritual experiences available to his followers, making the Suhrawardiya tradition in Multan more accessible to individuals with varying inclinations and spiritual needs. Shah Rukn-e-Alam's association with Chishti Sufis, particularly Nizamuddin Auliya, likely influenced his embrace of Sama gatherings.

2.7. Conclusion:

In this chapter, I covered the biographical accounts of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. The role played by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam in Multan's history made significant impact on Multan's history, and their stories offer insights into the city's past, revealing the interplay of spirituality, scholarship, and societal transformation. I also explored the events that shaped their spiritual transformation. Additionally, I discussed their relationships with Sufi saints from other Sufi Silsilas and how these interactions may have influenced both. Furthermore, I examined the ritual practices associated with both Sufis and discussed their respective views on these practices. Both Sufis primarily adhered to the ritual practice of dhikr and recitation, which suggests a consistency in their spiritual practices. However, I found notable differences in their views when it comes to the Sama ritual. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya did not consider Sama a necessary practice for a Sufi, while Shah Rukn-e-Alam viewed it as another element of spiritual devotion that brings a Sufi closer to Allah.

In the next chapter, I will delve into the rituals performed at the shrines of these Sufi saints, incorporating the ritual theories of Catherine Bell, Clifford Geertz, and Stanley Tambiah. I will provide an overview of the rituals practiced at the shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam and conduct a comparative analysis, showcasing the similarities and differences between these practices. Additionally, I will discuss the main objectives behind the rituals

performed at the Sufi Shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam, and how these rituals are beneficial for the spiritual attainment of the devotees. Moreover, I will explore how both shrines contribute to meeting the socio-religious needs of the community.

Chapter 3: Exploring Sufi Rituals at Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam Shrines in Multan

3.1. Introduction:

In this chapter, I will delve into the rituals performed at the shrines of Sufi saints, incorporating the ritual theories of Catherine Bell, Clifford Geertz, and Stanley Tambiah. I'll be building upon their ideas to explore the ritualistic patterns I've observed at the Sufi Dargahs. I find Bell's insights particularly helpful as she outlines the distinctive features that set rituals apart from everyday practices, giving me a clearer understanding of what these rituals entail. Catherine Bell's contribution to ritual theory provides a basis for distinguishing rituals from ordinary practices. Her work outlines key features that set rituals apart, thus aiding in comprehending the nature of rituals performed at Sufi shrines. These rituals, unlike mundane activities, hold symbolic significance and convey a deeper spiritual meaning.⁸⁸ Clifford Geertz's theory emphasizes the symbolic fusion of thoughts and actions within religious rituals. It elucidates how rituals embody and enclose the ethos and worldviews of a particular religious community. The Geertzian perspective proves suitable for examining Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals due to their rich symbolic nature and the manner in which they amalgamate beliefs and actions.⁸⁹ Stanley Tambiah's ritual theory centers on the communicative aspects of rituals. This perspective aligns with Sufi practices as they convey spiritual insights and establish social communion.⁹⁰

My approach involves integrating the insights from these theorists to better understand and describe the ritual practices occurring at these Sufi shrines. Within the Sufi context, I've come to see these practices as a blend of thoughts, actions, and expressions rooted in deep religious commitment. To illustrate these concepts, I will provide an overview of the rituals I've observed at the shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. By conducting a comparative analysis, I hope to highlight both the commonalities and differences in these practices. This exploration will reveal not only the rituals' spiritual dimensions but also their response to the dynamics related to the pilgrims.

⁸⁸ Bell, Catherine M. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. Oxford University Press, USA, 1997.

⁸⁹ Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Basic books, 1973.

⁹⁰ Tambiah, Stanley J. "A Performative Approach to Ritual." *Proceedings of the British Academy London*. Vol. 65. Pp.113-169. 1979.

I have already situated the silsila and the rituals within the historical time and space of medieval Multan of 13th century. For this purpose, I have explored how and when the Suhrawardiya silisla was established in Multan. I have explored its founding figures, their practices, and their teachings which shaped the religious outlook of Multan. This contextualization is vital for illustrating how this silsila, alongside revered sheikhs, interact with the local pilgrims to the shrines. I will also uncover the underlying objectives of these rituals at the Sufi Shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. I intend to demonstrate how these practices contribute to the spiritual growth of devotees. These rituals, rich in symbolism and communication, serve as a path toward spiritual transcendence and personal development. Overall, my goal is to uncover the profound significance of these rituals within the broader scope of the Suhrawardiya tradition, highlighting their role in nurturing spiritual connections, preserving a sense of community amidst pilgrims.

3.2. Significance of Suhrawardiya Sufi Shrines in context of Multan:

Suhrawardiya shrines hold immense significance in Multan. Multan has a rich history deeply intertwined with Suhrawardiya silsila, and its numerous Sufi shrines play a crucial role in the 1. social, 2. cultural, and 3. religious fabric of the city. These shrines are not only places of spiritual devotion but also centers of social gatherings, cultural expression, and historical preservation. The shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam are the spiritual abodes that draw devotees from diverse backgrounds. Devotees are attracted to these revered sites, engaging in acts of devotion, meditation, and reflection, seeking spiritual solace and a profound connection with the divine.⁹¹

Architectural Significance: The Suhrawardiya shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam in Multan are remarkable architectural structures that blend various styles and techniques from different eras. The Tomb of Shah Rukn-e-Alam is considered to be the earliest example of Tughluq architecture. The Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya became the prototype for Multan's distinctive architectural style⁹². The shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya was built before the death of Zakariya. The structure was paid for at the expense of Bahauddin Zakariya himself.⁹³

⁹¹ these insights are taken from the interviews collected from people who were connected to the shrines, and participant observation.

⁹² Khan, Ahmad Nabi. *Islamic Architecture in South Asia: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh*. Oxford University Press. 2003.

⁹³ Suvorova, 153.

Shah Rukn-e-Alam had initially been buried in the Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya, but the present tomb was gifted by Muhammad bin Tughluq to the descendants of Shah Rukn-e-Alam, who had his coffin transferred to the present mausoleum.⁹⁴ These shrines showcase intricate stonework, and delicate calligraphy that reflect the evolution of art and craftsmanship over time. The fusion of Persian, Central Asian, and local architectural elements is a testament to the cultural exchanges that have taken place in Multan throughout history.⁹⁵ The shrines' intricate designs tell stories of the people who built them, the artisans who contributed their skills, and the historical contexts in which they emerged.⁹⁶

Historical Significance: These shrines carry a profound historical significance, which is linked to the Suhrawardiya silsila. The sufis they commemorate, Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam, were revered scholars and mystics who made indelible marks on Multan's history. Their stories offer insights into the city's past, revealing the interplay of spirituality, scholarship, and societal transformation.⁹⁷ These narratives bridge the gap between history and spirituality, providing a holistic understanding of Multan's evolution. The teachings of the Suhrawardiya Sufi order, propogated by Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam, emphasize unity, spiritual exploration, and inclusivity. The Sufi shrines they inspired are embodiments of this ethos, welcoming individuals from diverse backgrounds to partake in spiritual contemplation.

Communal Significance: The shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam in Multan transcend their spiritual importance to become central points of communal life. They serve as unifying forces, bringing people from different backgrounds together to celebrate, commemorate, and engage in rituals. Through these gatherings, the shrines foster unity, understanding, and a shared sense of humanity that transcends societal divisions. Religious festivals are celebrated at

⁹⁴ *ibid.* 152.

⁹⁵ Rajput, Shahid Ahmad. "The Role of Sufi tombs towards the Development of Islamic art in Pakistan." *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Arts and Humanities (IJIRAH)* 1 (2016): 33-36.

⁹⁶ Meister, Michael W. "Crossing Lines: Architecture in Early Islamic South Asia." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 2003, <https://doi.org/10.1086/RESv43n1ms20167593>. Accessed 4 Sept. 2023. See also Hillenbrand, Robert. "Turco-Iranian Elements in the Medieval Architecture of Pakistan: The Case of the Tomb of Rukn-I 'Alam at Multan." *Muqarnas*, vol. 9, 1992, pp. 148–74. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1523141>. Accessed 4 Sept. 2023.

⁹⁷ Shah, Imtiaz Hussain. *Tazkira Auliya-e-Multan*. Muhkam Art Press. Multan.

these shrines, such as the Urs (anniversary) of the saints. These festivities not only hold spiritual significance but also showcase the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Cultural Significance: The Suhrawardiya shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam hold a significant place in the city of Multan, both historically and culturally. These shrines have managed to maintain their relevance and engagement with the contemporary city in various ways, preserving cultural identity, providing spiritual sanctuaries, fostering social cohesion, contributing to tourism and the economy, reviving cultural practices, and offering spiritual guidance. The Sufi shrines are integral to the cultural identity of Multan. They represent the city's rich historical and spiritual heritage. The rituals associated with these shrines are reflective of the region's cultural history and traditions.

Significance for Social Union: The shrines play a role in fostering social cohesion within the community. People from different backgrounds and social strata come together during events, festivals, and gatherings at the shrines. These occasions promote a sense of unity, transcending social and cultural differences. The shrines often host music performances, and traditional ceremonies. These activities contribute to the revival and preservation of local cultural practices, music, and art forms that might otherwise be fading away in the face of modernization. The shrines provide a platform for artists and artisans to showcase their talents.⁹⁸ Although there is an economic motive for these artists behind their performances. For artists and artisans, especially those from marginalized communities, the opportunity to showcase their talents at shrines can be a crucial source of income.⁹⁹ Devotees generously contribute money and food as a form of support. This economic aspect helps sustain the livelihoods of these artists, fostering a sense of economic stability within their communities.

The Khanqahs established by Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam represented far more than mere architectural structures; they were hubs of spiritual awakening, intellectual exploration, and community bonding. The legacy of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam, as exemplified by the Khanqahs they established, continues to exert a significant influence in contemporary Multan. While the modern landscape of the city has evolved and transformed, the

⁹⁸ Gilani, Iftikhar, and Muzammil Saeed. "Qawwali and the Folk Festivals: Musical Performances on Mystical Poetry." *Journal of World Researches* 2.1 (2022): 9-14.

⁹⁹ Insight taken from the interaction with a faqeer artist playing instruments at the shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam.

essence of the Sufi teachings and the values promoted by these revered figures still find resonance in the lives of its residents. Valuable manuscripts from their educational institutions and libraries, which hold significant national importance, are dispersed among family collections of Suhrawardiya. These manuscripts remain untapped resources that hold the potential to revitalize the scholarly aspects of Sufi teachings.¹⁰⁰ Riaz ul Husnain, aged 64, a caretaker of Bahauddin Zakariya's shrine, mentions challenges associated with accessing these materials, citing the ongoing dispute over *gaddi nasheeni* (spiritual leadership succession) between Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his brother Mureed Hussain Qureshi.¹⁰¹ He further mentions that the political background of Shah Mehmood Qureshi, current Sajjada Nashin of Suhrawardiya silsila, further complicates the issue due to political implications. People ally themselves with Shah Mehmood, or Mureed Hussain due to their personal interests which complicates the issue.

Before delving into the specifics of Sufi rituals practiced at the Sufi Dargahs in Multan, it's crucial to establish an understanding of the term "ritual" itself. Exploring the socio-religious and historical implications of this term provides a foundation for comprehending its significance. In this regard, scholars like Catherine Bell, Clifford Geertz, and Stanley Tambiah have contributed valuable theories that shed light on the study of rituals.

3.3. Ritual and Ritual Theories:

Rituals are integral components of human culture and societies, spanning across various civilizations and eras. They encompass a wide array of practices, from religious ceremonies to cultural traditions, and they play a significant role in shaping the way individuals and communities interact, understand their world, and express their beliefs. Ritual is a specific, observable mode of behavior exhibited by all known societies. It is thus possible to view rituals as a way of defining or describing humans.¹⁰² Rituals often involve symbolic actions, words, and objects that hold specific meanings within a given cultural or religious context. These symbols carry significance, helping individuals connect with the sacred or the communal. For instance, lighting candles during a religious ceremony may symbolize enlightenment or spiritual guidance, while exchanging rings

¹⁰⁰ Vandal, Sajida Haidar. *Cultural Expressions of South Punjab*. UNESCO, 2011.

¹⁰¹ Interview conducted by author.

¹⁰² Penner, Hans H. "Ritual". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 7 Dec. 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ritual>. Accessed 29 August 2023.

in a wedding ritual signifies unity and commitment. Clifford Geertz focused on understanding the cultural significance of symbols, rituals, and shared meanings within societies. Geertz emphasizes the role of rituals in bringing together the “world as lived” (everyday reality) and the “world as imagined” (symbolic or metaphysical conceptions). Rituals create a space where these two realms come together, blurring the line between them. This fusion of the practical and the symbolic is what gives rituals their transformative power. Geertz's ritual theory highlights the intricate relationship between symbolic forms, cultural meanings, and human experience. Rituals are not just empty traditions; they are powerful mechanisms through which individuals and societies navigate the complex interplay of the material and the symbolic, ultimately shaping their understanding of reality and their place within it.¹⁰³

Catherine Bell's model of ritual is based on three elements: ritual as an activity, as a fusion of thought and action, and as a form of cultural communication. She provides framework for understanding the relationships between rituals, symbols, action, and thought, highlighting the ways in which rituals bridge gaps between idealistic concepts and actual behaviors, while also serving as a channel for integrating different sociocultural forces.¹⁰⁴ From a practice viewpoint, Bell formulates these six features that collectively define and distinguish rituals from other activities. First, rituals exhibit Formalism, displaying a structured and organized sequence of actions. Second, Traditionalism is evident as rituals are deeply intertwined with cultural heritage and longstanding practices. Invariance reflects the consistency of rituals over time, even as societies evolve. Rule-governance emphasizes the adherence to prescribed guidelines that govern ritual performance. Sacral Symbolism manifests the presence of meaningful symbols and objects within rituals, conveying spiritual or cultural significance. Lastly, rituals involve Performance, where participants engage in a specific set of actions that embody the ritual's essence.¹⁰⁵

Stanley Tambiah viewed rituals as complex performances that go beyond their superficial appearance, involving various elements that convey deeper meanings and serve social functions. Tambiah emphasizes that rituals are not just symbolic or verbal expressions but involve actual actions or behaviors. Participants in rituals perform specific gestures, movements, and tasks that hold significance within the cultural context. These actions are often choreographed and have

¹⁰³ Geertz, 112-113.

¹⁰⁴ Bell. *Ritual Theory*, 31-32.

¹⁰⁵ Bell. *Ritual: Perspectives*, 138-169.

established meanings that might not be apparent to outsiders. Tambiah likens the setting of rituals to a stage, where the performance unfolds. This “stage” could be a physical location or a conceptual space where the ritual takes place. The environment is carefully arranged and embellished with various sensory elements, such as music, chants, incense, and visual symbols, all of which contribute to a heightened emotional and psychological experience for the participants. This multisensory aspect intensifies the impact of the ritual.¹⁰⁶ Tambiah introduces the concept of "indexical values" to refer to the symbolic devices used in rituals. These include elements like special sites, sacred texts, objects, and other symbolic references. These elements not only convey meaning but also serve to reinforce social hierarchies and relationships. For instance, certain rituals might be accessible only to specific individuals based on their social status, roles, or privileges.¹⁰⁷

Incorporating these theories into the study of Sufi rituals in Multan allows for a comprehensive analysis of the rituals' functions, meanings, and effects. By categorizing rituals, interpreting their symbolic content, and acknowledging their transformative potential, I can gain insights into the intricate relationship between rituals, culture, spirituality, and community cohesion. This contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of Sufi rituals within the context of Multan's socio-religious landscape. Geertz's emphasis on understanding the cultural significance of symbols, rituals, and shared meanings is particularly relevant for studying Sufi rituals in Multan. By exploring how Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals incorporate symbols, metaphors, and shared meanings, I can delve into the deeper layers of spirituality and community identity.

Applying Bell's model to the study of Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals can provide a structured framework for analyzing the rituals' formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance. This would help identifying how Sufi rituals are organized, how they draw from historical practices, how they adapt or remain consistent over time, and how participants engage with and communicate through these rituals. Tambiah's approach would help researchers uncover the complexity and depth of Sufi rituals in Multan. By viewing these rituals as complex performances involving various sensory elements, researchers could explore the choreography of actions, the use of sensory stimuli, and the ways in which these elements contribute to a transformative experience for participants. Additionally, Tambiah's concept of

¹⁰⁶ Tambiah. 119.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.* 152-153.

“indexical values” could shed light on how Suhrawardiya rituals reinforce social hierarchies and relationships within the community.

To understand the rituals at the shrines, their objectives, and their contribution in meeting everyday needs of the devotees. I conducted a fieldwork study based on participant observation, interviews, and informal conversations to study the rituals at shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. Following study elaborates the ritual performances, their objectives, and their interaction with local devotees.

3.3. Rituals Observed at the Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya:

At the shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya, daily rituals are observed by devotees to honor and seek Barakah (blessings) from Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya.¹⁰⁸ Following is an elaboration on the daily Sufi rituals observed at the shrine:

1. **Vocal Recitation of Adhkar (Supplications and Invocations):** A murid engages in recitation of adhkar, which are specific supplications and invocations praising Allah and seeking His blessings. This practice involves the vocal recitation of specific supplications and invocations, which hold deep spiritual significance. The loud recitation adds an element of communal worship and emphasizes the connection between the murid, the saint, and the Divine. These adhkar vary at times and most often constitute Ayat al-Kursi, Darood Sharif, and Asma al-Husna.¹⁰⁹
2. **Placement of Chaddor (Cloth Sheet):** The caretaker of the shrine provides a small piece of cloth, often referred to as a chaddor. This chaddor is symbolic and holds spiritual significance. It is placed at the feet of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya's grave as a mark of respect and reverence. The chaddor serves as a physical representation of the deep reverence and honor that devotees hold for Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. Placing the chaddor at the feet of the saint's grave is an outward expression of the inner respect and devotion that the murids carry in their hearts.¹¹⁰ Placing the chaddor at the feet of the

¹⁰⁸ All the rituals and their performance are personally observed, and data is collected from the interviews.

¹⁰⁹ Ayat al-Kursi is the 255th verse in second chapter of Holy Qur'an. Darood Sharif refers to the practice of sending blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Asma-ul-Husna are the names of Allah found in the Qur'an and Hadith. This practice was observed during participant observation.

¹¹⁰ Khan, Irfan Moeen. *Re-centering the Sufi shrine: a Metaphysics of Presence*. Vol. 348. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2023.

Sheikh's grave also signifies the murid's hope to receive blessings and positive spiritual influence through the Sheikh's intercession.

3. **Recitation of Fatiha:** Fatiha is recited at the grave Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. This recitation holds profound spiritual significance as a supplication for the deceased sheikh and as a demonstration of devotion to Allah. The aim of this ritual is to send isaal-e-sawab (pious merit) for the deceased saint.¹¹¹
4. **Engagement in Dua (Supplication):** The devotees perform dua, or supplication, seeking the intercession of Sheikh. The belief is that the Sufi saint can intercede on behalf of the supplicant, imploring Allah to grant their wishes and fulfill their desires. This reflects the Sufi idea of the saint's spiritual authority and closeness to Allah. Like other Sufi traditions, Suhrawardiya silsila holds that the saint's close spiritual proximity to Allah grants them the ability to intercede on behalf of their devotees. The dua becomes a means to tap into this spiritual connection and invoke the saint's influence in their affairs.¹¹²
5. **Qur'anic Recitations:** The shrine of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya is considered a sacred space, imbued with the presence of the saint's spirituality. The recitation of the Qur'an within this environment elevates its sanctity and adds a layer of divine reverence.
6. **Langar (Community Kitchen):** Langar is a practice of offering free meals to devotees, regardless of their religious or social backgrounds. It symbolizes equality, humility, and community service.
7. **Distribution of Tabbarak:** Tabbarak refers to blessed items, often food or other offerings, that are distributed among the devotees. These items are believed to carry the blessings of the saint and are considered sacred.
8. **Qawwali and Manqabat (Devotional Songs):** At the entrance of the shrine, devotees are greeted by qawwal singing devotional qawalis and manqabat expressing virtues of Sufi sheikh.
9. **Recitation of Naatiya Poetry:** Naatiya poetry is performed at the shrine of sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya consists of poems that eulogize and praise the Prophet Mohammad. The recitation of Naatiya poetry at the shrine of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya is a practice

¹¹¹ ibid. 30. This practice has been regarded as Bid'ah (innovation) by traditional Islamic scholarship as there is no evidence of it in Qur'an or authentic Hadith.

¹¹² Hashmi, Said Ghulam Mohammad, Salahuddin Momand, and Seraj Ahmad Habibi. "Some Criticisms of Sufism and their Answers." *Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal* 4.1 (2023): 135-141.

that allows devotees to express their deep love for and connection to the Prophet Mohammad. Through the verses of praise, they celebrate his virtues, teachings, and the profound impact he has had on their lives. This practice not only enhances the spiritual atmosphere of the shrine but also reinforces the enduring bond between the devotees and the Prophet (P.B.U.H).¹¹³

10. **Barefoot Visitation by Devotees:** Devotees undertake the practice of visiting the shrine barefoot as a sign of humility and reverence. The act of walking barefoot emphasizes the unique sanctity of the shrine. It's a way of acknowledging that this space is not merely a physical location but a means for spiritual connection and transformation.

11. **Mannat (Making of Oaths):** Devotees make vows or promises (Mannat) at the shrine, seeking the intercession of the saint for their wishes or prayers to be fulfilled. This practice is done with sincerity and the belief that the saint's blessings can help in fulfilling their desires. An aspect of this practice is the distribution of langar in connection with the making of oaths. Devotees believe that their Mannat is not fully fulfilled unless they also engage in acts of charity, such as providing food to the needy.¹¹⁴ The distribution of langar reflects the understanding that spiritual fulfillment is intertwined with helping those in need. It reinforces the concept of shared humanity and the interconnectedness of giving and receiving blessings.

12. **Knotting a Thread to Signify Oaths:** Devotees often tie knots in a thread as a symbolic representation of the oaths they have taken or the promises they have made to the saint. Each knot represents a commitment or prayer. Whenever an oath is fulfilled, the devotee unties a knot and continues the commitment till each oath is fulfilled. A respondent, Noraiz Hiraj aged 27, completed 12 years of education, mentioned:

*“When we make an Oath, we tie a knot on a thread for each desire. As each wish is fulfilled, a knot is untied. Some people have tied shopping bags because of their poor economic conditions as they cannot purchase the thread of mannat which is worth 40 rupees.”*¹¹⁵

as mentioned earlier that mannat is linked with distribution of Langar, the less fortunate

¹¹³ Huda, Qamar-ul. “Memory, Performance, and Poetic peacemaking in Qawwālī.” *The Muslim World* 97.4 (2007): 678-700

¹¹⁴ Taken from the conversation with the caretaker of the Shrine. Interview conducted by the author.

¹¹⁵ Interview conducted by the author.

pilgrims offer a meal on Thursday to a faqeer. The respondent further mentioned:

“These less fortunate individuals, unable to distribute food for their vows, often provide meals to a Faqeer. Through the intercession of Ghaus Pak, they receive Allah's blessing and can offer a meal to a needy person for a day.”

13. **Throwing Money into the Well:** The act of throwing money into a well located within the shrine's premises is often seen as an offering to the saint and a symbolic gesture of giving away material wealth to seek spiritual blessings. This well was built during the reign of emperor Jahangir by Baqir Khan, the governor of Multan.¹¹⁶
14. **Feeding the Birds:** Birds are fed at the shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya. This practice is considered an act of kindness and compassion. It reflects the Sufi values of caring for all living beings and recognizing the interconnectedness of creation.

The rituals associated with the shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya, exemplify the broader concept of Dargahs being cultural and spiritual hubs. The recitation of prayers (Dhikr), devotional songs (Qawwali), distribution of food (Langar), and other acts of worship are not only religious in nature but also deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of the region. The Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya shrine stands as a communal center, transcending its role as a religious center. It embodies the fusion of the spiritual and the cultural, providing a space for people to connect with the divine and with each other.

The rituals at the shrine align closely with Bell's model. The structured nature of these practices, including the recitation of prayers and devotional songs, exhibits formalism—a structured sequence of actions. The deep intertwining of these rituals with Sufi beliefs and practices reflects traditionalism, reinforcing cultural heritage. Invariance is observed as these rituals continue to hold significance over time, even as societal dynamics evolve. The act of participating in Langar exemplifies rule-governance, adhering to prescribed guidelines for communal sharing of meals. The symbolic acts of Mannat and offerings to birds signify sacral symbolism, embedding spiritual and cultural significance. The performance aspect of these rituals is evident in practices like Qawwali and Manqabat, where participants engage in specific actions that embody the essence of devotion.

¹¹⁶ The history of the well is inscribed along the periphery of the said Well.

Geertz's emphasis on understanding cultural symbols and rituals as expressions of shared meanings finds resonance in these Sufi practices. The rituals encapsulate the core principles of love, humility, and selflessness, serving as embodiments of the cultural values upheld by Sufism. The acts of Dhikr, prayers, Qawwali, and Manqabat are symbolic expressions that bridge the gap between the everyday reality and the metaphysical, bringing participants closer to the "world as lived" and the "world as imagined." By engaging in these rituals, devotees navigate the complex interplay of material and symbolic realms, shaping their understanding of reality and their place within it, in alignment with Geertz's insights.

Tambiah's ideas resonate in the sensory-rich aspects of these rituals. The shrine setting acts as a stage, carefully adorned with sensory elements like music, chants, and devotional songs. The act of visiting the shrine barefoot intensifies the multisensory experience, emphasizing the embodied aspect of the rituals. The concept of "indexical values" is evident in practices like Mannat and symbolic acts of offering, as they hold both symbolic meaning and reinforce the devotees' relationships with the divine and each other.

The Sufi rituals at the Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya align with Geertz's focus on cultural symbols, Bell's model of ritual, and Tambiah's insights into the sensory and symbolic aspects of rituals. Through these lenses, we gain a comprehensive understanding of how these rituals embody Suhrawardiya beliefs, cultivate spiritual growth, foster unity, and transmit cultural heritage. The practices serve as a bridge between the material and symbolic, offering devotees a transformative journey towards divine proximity and inner peace.

3.4. Rituals observed at the Shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam:

The rituals observed at the Dargah of Shah Rukn e Alam are also deeply rooted in the spiritual and cultural traditions of the people of Multan. It is another spiritual and cultural center for the people of Multan. Following are the daily rituals observed at the shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam:

1. **Dhikr:** Devotees engage in dhikr by reciting prayers under their breath. This whispered recitation adds an intimate and personal dimension to the practice, as it's a conversation between the devotee and the divine. Many practitioners of dhikr utilize prayer beads (tasbeeh) to help them keep track of the repetitions. Each bead represents a repetition of the

sacred phrase or prayer. If beads are not available, devotees often use their fingers to count the repetitions.¹¹⁷

2. **Qur’anic Recitations:** The practice of reciting and listening to the Quranic passages at the shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam serves as a pathway to spiritual enlightenment and divine connection. It's a practice that not only deepens one's understanding of the Quran's teachings but also fosters a profound relationship with Allah, creating a space for inner transformation and personal growth. Devotees recite Qur’an at the grave of Shah Rukn-e-Alam to pay Isaal-e-Sawaab (pious merits) for the deceased Sufi.
3. **Praying by Prostrating at the Feet of Shah Rukn-e-Alam's Grave:** Many devotees come to the shrine to offer their prayers in a deeply humble manner. This often involves prostrating at the feet of Shah Rukn-e-Alam's grave as a symbol of submission and devotion.¹¹⁸ The practice of prostration is considered idolatry by traditional Islamic Fiqh. But pilgrims view it as a practice of devotion. Rizwan, aged 52, who is one of the caretakers of the Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrine, mentions:
*“The bestower is, indeed, Allah Himself. We are not engaging in any form of shirk with His essence. Rather, we visit this dargah seeking waseela (intercession) through His chosen intermediaries, who are esteemed saints in the eyes of Allah. We are sinful humans and perceive these Walis (Friends of Allah) as Allah's. Shah is Qibla-e-Hajaat (Centre of needs) It is our sincere hope that through their intercession, Allah may grant us His grace”*¹¹⁹
4. **Fatiha:** The practice of reciting Fatiha at graves provides supplications for the deceased. It allows the devotees to express their emotions, seek healing, and find a sense of connection with the deceased.

¹¹⁷ The act of Keeping track of a dhikr repetition find its basis in Hadith. Prophet Mohammad specified several Adhkar to her daughter, Fatima. These specified Adhkar were Subhanallah 33 times, Alhamdulillah 33 times, and Allahu Akbar 34 times. Hashmi, Said Ghulam Mohammad, Salahuddin Momand, and Seraj Ahmad Habibi. “Some Criticisms of Sufism and their Answers.” *Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal* 4.1 (2023): 135-141.

¹¹⁸ This practice has been condemned by traditional Islamic schools of Fiqh. According to these schools, prostration, even as an act of veneration, falls in line with kufr. As mentioned before, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya also condemned this act. However, Chishtiya silsila condoned this practice. See Suvorova, 136. It is plausible that Suhrawardiya adopted the practices of Chishtiya because of the close links between Shah Rukn-e-Alam and Nizamuddin Auliya and other sufis later on. righteous servants.

¹¹⁹ Interview conducted by the author.

5. **Praying in a Mixed Gendered Setting:** Unlike some other sacred places that segregate men and women, the Dargah of Shah Rukn-e-Alam is known for allowing both genders to pray together in the same space. This practice promotes inclusivity and unity among the devotees. Rizwan further mention:

"Both men and women come to this Mazaar (shrine). Many women come with their fathers, brothers, husbands, or children. Some women also visit alone. So, there is space inside the Shrine. Men sit on one side near the graves, while women sit on the other side. Therefore, there is no need for curtains or veils. People come here for various reasons, some people come for Ziyarah (to pay their respects to the Sufi), others with their personal intentions. There is no need for curtains because everyone is busy in their own activities and dhikr."

6. **Langar (Community Kitchen):** Langar is a communal meal that is offered to all visitors, regardless of their social or economic status. This practice emphasizes equality and sharing, as individuals from diverse backgrounds come together to partake in a meal provided by the shrine's volunteers.
7. **Recitation of Naatiya Poetry:** Naatiya poetry refers to verses that praise and extol the qualities and virtues of the Prophet Mohammad. This poetic form is often recited at the Dargah to express love and admiration for Shah Rukn-e-Alam, equating him to a spiritual heir of the Prophet. By doing so, the poets and devotees aim to emphasize the continuity of the Prophet's teachings through the spiritual lineage of Sufi saints.
8. **Lighting of a Lamp for Mannat:** Pilgrims often make vows (Mannat) at the shrine, seeking blessings or assistance in times of need. Knots are tied on the tree and after the commitment is fulfilled. Lighting of a lamp takes place. This lighting of a lamp is an offering that represents the fulfillment of a vow and is a way of expressing gratitude for granted wishes.¹²⁰
9. **Rubbing One's Head Against the Wall at the Tomb:** The practice of rubbing one's head against the walls at the tomb of Shah Rukn-e-Alam is a practice woven with layers of faith, myth, and health beliefs. A myth is associated with this practice that certain spots on the tomb's walls possess *Shifa* (a healing touch), capable of alleviating physical and psychological ailments. Devotees who suffer from specific conditions may rub their heads

¹²⁰ Taken from conversation with the caretaker of the shrine.

against these spots, believing in the miraculous efficacy of the practice. Over time, this myth has become a part of the ritual.¹²¹

The rituals at the shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam embody Geertz's emphasis on cultural symbols and shared meanings. The practice of Dhikr, the rhythmic chanting of sacred phrases, exemplifies the fusion of the practical and the symbolic. Through Dhikr, participants bridge the gap between their everyday reality and the metaphysical realm, embodying the core principles of love, humility, and connection. Similarly, the practice of Quranic recitations deepens participants' understanding of their faith, reflecting the "world as imagined." Geertz's view of rituals as mechanisms that shape understanding of reality is evident in the diverse practices, fostering unity and a sense of interconnectedness among devotees.

Bell's model provides insights into various aspects of these rituals. The communal aspect of Langar reflects rule-governance, where free meals are offered to all, emphasizing equality and inclusivity. The act of praying by prostrating at Shah Rukn-e-Alam's grave exemplifies formalism, as it involves structured and organized actions with profound symbolic significance. The mixed-gender prayer setting fosters cultural communication by promoting inclusivity and unity, exemplifying the blending of cultural norms with spiritual practices.

Tambiah's perspective on sensory-rich rituals is evident in the practice of rubbing one's head against the wall and lighting lamps for Mannat. These sensory acts intensify the multisensory experience, enhancing the emotional and psychological engagement of participants. The concept of "indexical values" is present in practices like Fatiha, where the recitation of Quranic verses serves both as a symbolic act and as a means of seeking intercession.

Incorporating these theories, the rituals at the shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam can be understood as profound expressions of Suhrawardiya beliefs, creating a transformative space where participants navigate the material and symbolic realms. The shrine serves as a spiritual and cultural center that embodies the principles of Suhrawardiya spirituality and provides solace, guidance, and a shared sense of humanity for the devotees.

¹²¹ A participant was interviewed who held the belief that these locations held the potential for "shifa," believed to provide protection against both physical and psychological illness.

3.5. Comparison of Ritual Practices at the Shrines:

The Dargah of Bahauddin Zakariya and the Dargah of Shah Rukn-e-Alam hold profound significance as spiritual and cultural hubs for devotees and visitors alike. While these two shrines belong to the Sufis of the same silsila; the shrines are characterized by many distinct rituals which shows the development of Suhrawardiya silsila as it spread in Multan over time. While these two shrines share common threads of devotion, unity, and spiritual engagement, they also exhibit unique practices that set them apart.

Both shrines share a common emphasis on spirituality, serving as centers of devotion and connection with the divine. The rituals performed at both locations are centered around fostering a deeper spiritual understanding and a closer relationship with Sufi saints. Both shrines incorporate practices of Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and Quranic recitations. These practices involve the repetitive chanting of sacred phrases and passages from the Quran to achieve a state of heightened spiritual awareness. At both shrines, devotees express their devotion and humility through acts of prostration, which symbolize submission to the divine and the Sufi saints. These acts of humility reinforce the central Sufi principles of love, humility, and selflessness.

Another shared practice is the distribution of tabbarak, blessed items that are believed to carry the spiritual blessings of the respective saints. These items, often in the form of food or other offerings, symbolize the barakah of the saints and hold a sacred significance for devotees who seek their blessings. This act of receiving these blessed items fosters a sense of spiritual connection and serves as a reminder of the saint's intercessory role.

The practice of barefoot visitation is yet another common element between the two shrines. Devotees visit these sacred sites without footwear, a gesture that reflects humility, respect, and a recognition of the sanctity of the space they are entering. This act of walking barefoot emphasizes the spiritual purpose of the visit and underscores the devotees' readiness to engage in a deeply personal and reverent experience.

Both shrines offer langar, a communal meal provided to all visitors irrespective of their social or economic backgrounds. This practice fosters a sense of equality and unity as individuals from diverse walks of life come together to share a meal and partake in an act of service that transcends boundaries.

The recitation of naatiya poetry, which praise the virtues of the Prophet Mohammad, is a common practice at both shrines. Through these poetic verses, devotees express their profound love for the Prophet and seek to strengthen their connection to his teachings. This practice reinforces the enduring bond between the devotees and the Prophet, enriching the spiritual atmosphere of the shrines.

The shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam, while sharing common spiritual roots, exhibit distinct ritual practices that highlight their unique traditions and beliefs. One such distinction lies in the manner of recitation. At the shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya, devotees participate in the vocal recitation of adhkar, specific supplications and invocations. Conversely, the Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrine practices dhikr, where whispered recitations of prayers create an intimate and personal connection between the devotee and the Divine. This variance in recitation style lends each shrine a distinctive spiritual atmosphere.

Another dissimilarity emerges in the rituals involving the saint's grave. At the Bahauddin Zakariya shrine, a chaddor (a cloth sheet) is reverently placed at the saint's feet, symbolizing deep respect and devotion. In contrast, at the Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrine, devotees prostrate themselves at the feet of the saint's grave, an act that signifies submission and profound devotion. These distinct practices at the two shrines capture the essence of veneration in their own unique ways.

An intriguing contrast surfaces in the realm of gender inclusivity. The Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrine stands out for allowing mixed-gender settings for dhikr and ritual recitations, a practice that promotes inclusivity and unity among devotees. In contrast, the Bahauddin Zakariya shrine's practices, while deeply spiritual, maintain a separation between genders during ritual performances, reflecting variations in norms.

The practice of lighting a lamp for fulfilled mannats (Oaths) is a distinctive ritual at the Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrine. This practice involves lighting a lamp as an offering of gratitude for granted wishes. In contrast, this practice is not explicitly observed at the Bahauddin Zakariya shrine. The lighting of a lamp symbolizes the fulfillment of a vow and serves as a visual representation of the devotee's gratitude.

One particularly unique practice at the Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrine involves the act of rubbing one's head against the tomb walls for healing purposes. This act is believed to possess a healing touch

capable of alleviating physical and psychological ailments. This practice intertwines faith, myth, and health beliefs, creating a distinctive layer of ritual within the shrine's traditions.

When we analyze the ritual practices at the shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. They share a core devotion to Sufi spirituality. Although, the shrines belong to the Sufis of same *sisila*; we find differences and distinctions among the ritual practices of devotees. At Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrine, devotees prostrate at the feet of the saint's grave as a symbol of submission and devotion. A practice that was prevalent among Chishtiya which found opposition from traditional schools of Fiqh.¹²² While both shrines share common themes of devotion, reverence, and ritual performances, their specific practices are influenced by other Sufi *silsilas* and cultural traditions. The practices at each shrine offer unique ways for devotees to connect spiritually and seek blessings from the respective saints.

3.6. Underlying Objectives behind Ritual Performance:

These sites are often considered honorable and spiritually enriching, believed to bring purification to both the body and mind. The Suhrawardiya shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam are integral components of Multan's religious and social landscape. These shrines also have a social role in addition to their religious significance. They often function as community centers, hosting events, gatherings, and festivals that promote a sense of unity and shared identity among their followers. The association of rural families with specific Sufis like Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam is often rooted in the history of their conversion to Islam by the hand of specific Sufi.¹²³ Such as the case of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam who had converted tribes and families.¹²⁴ One participant, Ali Asad, aged 29 who completed 10 years of education, being interviewed at the shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam mentioned:

"We have one special "Baba." When we want to ask for blessings from the divine, we focus our hopes on a particular dargah. This follows the way our forefathers did things. This special place

¹²² Rizvi, 218.

¹²³ Ewing, Katherine. "The Politics of Sufism: Redefining the Saints of Pakistan." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2, 1983, pp. 251–68. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2055113>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

¹²⁴ Many of the Jat and Rajput groups claimed to have been converted by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya. See Richard Maxwell Eaton, eds. *India's Islamic traditions, 711-1750*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003. 272. Joiya clan was converted by Shah Rukn-e-Alam. Faridi. *Tarikh-e-Multan*, 240.

was where my father used to pray in the past and undertake mannats. This practice has continued through time. Me and their brothers and sisters are also doing the same thing."¹²⁵

The objectives behind ritual performances at the Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrines encompass spiritual, social, cultural, emotional, and even pragmatic dimensions. These objectives are deeply rooted in the faith and trust that individuals place in the mystical powers of the Sufi saints and their ability to impact various aspects of their lives. A fieldwork study using participant observation and interviews with caretakers, and devotees is conducted to provide valuable insights into the motivations and outcomes of these performances. The various objectives and motivations behind the ritual performances at the shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam are following:

1. **Social Desires:** A significant driving force behind the visits to these shrines is the pursuit of social desires. Families may seek the blessings of the Sufi saints for specific outcomes. Additionally, the shrines are considered places where family disputes and conflicts can find favorable solutions through divine intervention. These desires are deeply tied to societal norms and expectations, and people turn to the saints' intercession to fulfill these important life milestones.¹²⁶ 3 out of 24 participants interviewed at these Shrines mentioned family disputes as a reason behind their visit to these Shrines. A respondent, Zaigham Abbas, aged 32 mentions:

*"I've been dealing with a land dispute involving my paternal uncle and his children for the past five months. I've been caught up in legal proceedings during this time. I come here often to give sadqa (alms), and I also offer prayers. I hope that my issue gets resolved soon."*¹²⁷

4 out 24 participants had dedicated a significant period of their lives at the shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. They were murideen of the respective sufi and did not have necessarily a desire other than dedication. The other 3 out of 24 participants indicated that they visited the shrines solely for the purpose of *ziyarah* and prayed *Fatiha* for the deceased saints. They emphasized that the deceased cannot intercede

¹²⁵ Interview conducted by author.

¹²⁶. Abbas, Safdar, Dr Shazia Qureshi, Rabia Safdar, and Dr Rubeena Zakar. "Peoples' Perceptions about visiting Sufi shrine in Pakistan." *South Asian Studies* 28, no. 2 (2020).

¹²⁷ Interview conducted at the shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya.

on behalf of anyone as they are dead. All three were college and university students. The other 14 participants reported miscellaneous social needs such as praying for the birth of a male child, marital issues, better education etc.

2. **Psychological Peace and Escapism:** The shrines offer a sanctuary of psychological peace and pleasure for many devotees. Respondents often express that the rituals such as Dhikr, Nafal prayers, Quranic Recitation and atmosphere at the Dargahs provide them with a respite from the stresses and challenges of the outside world. Engaging in ritual performances and spending time within the serene environment of the shrines can bring a sense of calmness and emotional relief, contributing to overall psychological well-being.¹²⁸ Almost all the respondents (22 out of 24) revealed that they find solace in the practices conducted at the shrines. Engaging in dhikr and other rituals allows them to temporarily set aside their worries and immerse themselves in a spiritual experience. This sense of tranquility and escapism is perceived as a way to temporarily detach from the burdens of everyday life and connect with a higher purpose, helping them gain perspective on their problems. A respondent, Basit Ali, who was aged 26, a graduate, mentions:
*“In this particular location, I find peace. I can sit here for hours without hesitation. The environment here is such that it manifests calmness. There may be numerous complications outside, whether related to work or family matters. I visit this place regularly, approximately every one or two weeks. Once I'm here, I engage in my wird (repeated recitation) in silence.”*¹²⁹
3. **Business Success:** A strong belief exists among devotees that the spiritual prowess of the Sufi saints can have tangible impacts on their lives. Individuals may seek success in their business endeavors, believing that the Barakah (blessings) received from the shrine will enhance their prosperity.¹³⁰ To understand this, 4 participants were interviewed who operated shops near the shrines. 2 participants from the proximity of Bahauddin Zakariya shrine were included, and 2 participants were included from near the shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam. According to these participants, the primary driving force behind shopkeepers operating businesses in close proximity to shrines was their strong connection to the shrine

¹²⁸ Charan, Iftikhar Ahmed, et al. "Rethinking Efficacy: People's Perception of ritual healing and Trance Religious Practices at shrines in Pakistan." *Asian Journal of Psychiatry* 52 (2020): 102020.

¹²⁹ Insight taken from the conversation with a participant at shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya.

¹³⁰ Abbas, et al, 378.

itself. They managed these shops with the belief that it was the barakah from the shrine that sustained their prosperity. The proportion of shopkeepers running businesses primarily for economic purposes was notably in small numbers. All of these 4 participants have been running businesses near the shrine for more than a decade.¹³¹ Out of other 20 participants, 15 believed that the rituals performed at these two shrines bring prosperity in lives of the pilgrims. Once the rituals are performed with complete devotion and faith, they interact with the devotees in form of fortune and well-being. 13 out of these 24 total participants belonged to the middle or lower class. Yet, they manifested firm devotion to these Shrines and associated their comfort with the practices performed at these shrines.

4. **Healing:** For individuals with physical or mental disabilities, the shrines represent a beacon of hope and a source of spiritual healing. The sanctity of these spaces and the revered status of the Sufi Saints lead people to believe that the saints possess a unique connection with the divine. This connection is believed to grant them the ability to channel divine blessings and intervene on behalf of those seeking relief from their afflictions. In the context of the shrines, the combination of faith, community support, and the unique environment may contribute to positive psychological and even physical outcomes.¹³² This was observed primarily at the Shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam, where participants were seen engaging in a ritual of rubbing their heads at specific locations within the shrine. They believed that these walls held sacred qualities, and through this act, they sought healing for various mental and physical ailments, including headaches and psychological disabilities. Interestingly, none of the 12 individuals interviewed at the Shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam denied the presence of this sacredness associated with the tomb. Amongst the 12 participants at the Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya, 9 of them reported that the rituals performed at this shrine also carried a sense of sacrality. *Dua* (Supplications) made at the dargah of Bahauddin Zakariya served as an intermediary in their belief system. Within this context, Sheikh is regarded as having a higher spiritual status compared to others, and their *waseela* (intercession) is considered a source of healing for individuals dealing with mental or physical disabilities.

¹³¹ Interviews were conducted from 2 participants near the shrine of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya, and 2 others were running businesses near the shrine of Shah Rukn-e-Alam.

¹³² Charan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Banghu Wang, and Dewei Yao. "Cultural and Religious Perspective on the Sufi shrines." *Journal of Religion and Health* 57 (2018): 1074-1094.

The ritual performances at the shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam are driven by a complex interplay of social desires, psychological well-being, and a deep-seated belief in the spiritual power of the Sufis. These desires encompass a range of aspirations, from family matters to personal success, and are entwined with the cultural, mystical, and historical fabric of the community. The shrines provide a space where individuals can find solace, connect with their spirituality, and seek solutions to life's challenges, fostering a sense of empowerment and hope.

Moreover, the rituals' interaction at the shrines extends beyond the spiritual realm. The cultural expressions associated with these shrines, such as Qawwali music and Naatiya poetry, play an essential role in preserving and transmitting Multan's cultural heritage. These artistic elements contribute to the city's vibrancy and serve as mediums through which the past is interwoven with the present.¹³³ Additionally, the charitable practices, like Langar (community kitchen), have contemporary relevance by addressing social issues such as hunger and inequality, aligning with the modern city's efforts to promote social welfare.

The primary purpose of these shrines is to provide a space for individuals to connect with the Divine and seek spiritual fulfillment. The rituals, devotional songs, and practices observed at these shrines offer a direct channel for devotees to strengthen their spiritual connection. Through supplications, Quranic recitations, and devotion to the saints, individuals find solace, inner peace, and a deeper sense of purpose.¹³⁴

The shrines serve as sources of healing, both physical and emotional. Practices like rubbing one's head against tomb walls at the Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrine and the belief in the healing touch of these sacred spaces provide a sense of relief for those seeking physical and emotional well-being. The act of making *mannats* (Oaths) and seeking intercession through the sufis offers hope and comfort, addressing the emotional needs of individuals facing challenges. The practice of offering langar, a communal meal, underscores the importance of community bonding and social equality. Regardless of social or economic background, all visitors are welcomed to partake in the langar,

¹³³ Vandal, 29.

¹³⁴ Chaudhary, Muhammad Azam. "Religious Practices at Sufi shrines." *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 31.1 (2010): 2-10.

promoting a sense of unity and breaking down societal barriers.¹³⁵ This practice fosters a spirit of sharing, compassion, and interconnectedness among diverse individuals.

The practice of allowing mixed-gender prayer settings at the Shah Rukn-e-Alam shrine reflects a growing awareness of inclusivity and the changing dynamics of religious spaces. This approach meets the needs of devotees seeking spaces that are open to all, irrespective of gender, promoting equality and unity in worship.¹³⁶ These shrines also contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage. The recitation of Naatiya poetry, the use of traditional music and art forms, and the continuation of practices rooted in local customs and traditions help safeguard cultural identity.¹³⁷

3.7. Conclusion:

The exploration of rituals performed at the shrines of Sufi saints within the Suhrawardiya Sufi context, as I discussed in this chapter, has provided a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between religious commitment, cultural expressions, and ritual interactions with the pilgrims. By synthesizing the ritual theories of Catherine Bell, Clifford Geertz, and Stanley Tambiah, I have shed light on the profound significance of these practices and their contributions to the spiritual growth of devotees. The integration of insights from Bell, Geertz, and Tambiah has allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the rituals at the shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. The amalgamation of thoughts, actions, and expressions observed in these practices reflects a deep-rooted religious dedication, acting as a bridge between the human experience and the divine realm for those who come to pay their respects and seek spiritual solace. The comparative analysis undertaken has not only highlighted the similarities that bind these practices together for devotees but has also elucidated the differences that arise due to the specific historical and cultural contexts surrounding each shrine.

For devotees, these rituals embody a fusion of tradition and modernity, allowing them to connect with their heritage while navigating the complexities of the modern world. The devotees who

¹³⁵ Abbas, et al. 379

¹³⁶ Werbner, Pnina. "Beyond division: Women, pilgrimage and nation building in South Asian Sufism." *Women's Studies International Forum*. Vol. 33. No. 4. Pergamon, 2010.

¹³⁷ Saeed, Muzammil, and Syed Iftikhar Ali Gilani. "Expansion and existence of Sufi orders in South Punjab, Pakistan." *AL-ASAR Islamic Research Journal* 3.2 (2023).

participated in the study were observed to be performing rituals at these shrines in hope of receiving solace or a socio-economic reward in return. The ritual practices at these shrines symbolized rohaniah (spirituality) and the practitioners are believed to be recipients of the blessings from the rituals. The participants were performing these practices as part of their affiliation with the shrine. The objectives that driven these participants were associated with social desires, search for psychological and spiritual solace, economic conditions, or physical serenity; and the ritual interactions at these shrines acted as a stimulus for the devotees.

Conclusion

In this research, I delved into the Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals carried out at the shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam in contemporary Multan, Pakistan. In the preceding chapters, I explored the historical background and significance of each shrine, tracing their connection to Sufis and their influence on the pilgrims who came to pay their respects. My focus was to unveil the ritual practices performed at these shrines. Since both shrines belong to the Sufis from same Sufi Silsila; I aimed to discover the distinctions and similarities in ritual practices performed at these shrines. I also attempted to address the motivations behind the visits to these shrines, and how the ritual performances at these shrines fulfill the spiritual aspirations of the devotees.

To set the stage for the comparative analysis of the two Suhrawardiya shrines, I have provided a comprehensive overview of the Suhrawardiya Sufi Silsila with a particular emphasis on its development in the city of Multan. I have explored the historical development and ideological foundations of this Silsila, aiming to understand how it was established and expanded over time. I also investigated the unique teachings, practices, and principles of the Suhrawardiya order within the broader context of Sufism.

To provide further context into the practices at these shrines, I have also explored the lives and backgrounds of the Sufis resting in these shrines; Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. I have also shed light to formative experiences and spiritual journey that led to their prominence within the Suhrawardiya Silsila in Multan. I also examined the ritual practices associated with both Sufis and their respective views on these practices. Both Sufis primarily adhered to the ritual practices of Dhikr and recitation. However, I found notable differences in their perspective on Sama ritual. This notable difference highlights the development of ritual practices within the Suhrawardiya Silsila in Multan with the passage of time.

In this study, my research questions were centered around exploring the Suhrawardiya Sufi rituals conducted at the shrines of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam in Multan, Pakistan. My first research question aimed to identify the prevalent ritual performances at these

shrines. To address this question, I dedicated a substantial amount of time to visit the Shrines of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam, actively participating in the ritual performances. These rituals encompassed various dimensions, including the spiritual, social, cultural, emotional, and even pragmatic aspects. Through my analysis, I have shed light on several significant facets that contribute to the rituals' importance in the lives of devotees. I have thoroughly examined the social, psychological, spiritual, and cultural dimensions, thus showcasing the richness and depth of these practices in the lives of the pilgrims.

The second research question delves into how these rituals contribute to the spiritual growth of devotees. Through my analysis, I have discovered that the rituals conducted at the shrines are not only religious ceremonies but also serve as a means of spiritual purification. These sacred sites offer pilgrims a space for deep self-reflection, serving as a catalyst for inner transformation. The atmosphere within these shrines acts as a stimulus for this inner journey for those who visit. Engaging in Dua (supplication), which symbolizes seeking intercession from the deceased sheikh, highlights the pilgrims' recognition of their own spiritual inadequacy. The recitation of Quranic verses elevates the shrine's sanctity, which is already infused with the spirituality of the Sufis. Additionally, the Qawwalis and Manqabat performed at the shrines embody the virtues of the Sufis, while barefoot pilgrimages and the making of Mannats (oaths) at the shrines, often in exchange for blessings or rewards, all play a role in spiritually engaging with devotees. Simultaneously, these rituals motivate devotees to strive towards becoming better individuals, fostering personal growth and spiritual development.

The third research question revolves around identifying the underlying objectives that drive the rituals conducted at the shrines. To investigate this aspect, I conducted interviews with various individuals closely connected to these shrines, including the shrine caretakers, local devotees, and even individuals indirectly associated with the shrines through businesses located in the vicinity. In order to foster candid and open discussions, I also engaged in informal conversations with these participants. In total, I interviewed 24 participants, evenly distributed with 12 individuals from each of the two shrines. The findings from these interviews revealed a complex interplay of motivations. These encompassed social aspirations, psychological well-being, the pursuit of broader success, and a profound belief in the spiritual power of the Sufis. These motivations collectively drive a majority of devotees actively engage in the ritual performances at these shrines.

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