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# **The Role of Sufi Practice Zikr-e-Qalbi in countering Sorcery-**

An Ethnographic study of Dar-ul-Irfan Munara, District Chakwal.



**Kausar Mati**

**Quaid-i-Azam University  
Department of Anthropology  
Islamabad - Pakistan  
Year 2016**

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**Kausar Mati**

Thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Anthropology.

Quaid-i-Azam University  
Department of Anthropology  
Islamabad - Pakistan  
Year 2016

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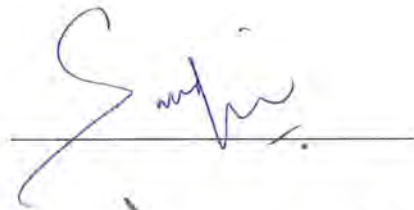
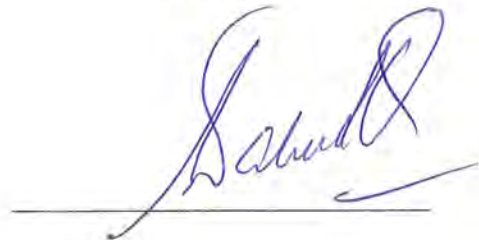
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This is to certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Ms. Kausar Mati. It is our judgment that this thesis is of sufficient standard to warrant its acceptance by the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad for the award of the Degree of "Master of Philosophy in Anthropology".

#### **Committee:**

1. Dr. Saadia Abid  
Supervisor
2. Prof. Dr. Saif ur Rehman Saif Abbasi  
External Examiner
3. Dr. Waheed Chaudhry  
Chairman  
Department of Anthropology

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Saadia', written over a horizontal line.A complex, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Waheed', written over a horizontal line.

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**Kausar Mati**

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the beautiful things that I have encountered in my life.

## ABSTRACT

Sorcery/black magic or 'kaala jadu' is one of the widely discussed and well recognized topics across Pakistan and there are a number of healing practices that the people make use of. Sorcery is a tabooed concept and its practice as well as its curative method is not so openly discussed by people because of a number of associated cultural and social factors. This study aims at finding the relationship of sorcery and the practice of zikr-e-qalbi as a curative method for warding off the negative effects in the Pakistani context. The ethnographic research was conducted in Dar-ul-Irfan, Munara (Chakwal district) and a number of structured and semi-structured interviews were carried out in the process. Through purposive and snow ball sampling method the respondents were selected. The present study helps in finding the relation of the two aspects as well as unravels the impact of sorcery in an individual's life. It also helps in finding the relation of the human soul with sorcery and assists in scrutinizing the healing process which in this case is the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi. The overall results suggested that the practice of zikr-e-qalbi could be used as a way for healing the sorcery effects and there are a number of effects (both physical and spiritual) of sorcery in the person's life who had been under its influence or attack. It further explains the curing process through zikr-e-qalbi as well as the influencing factors that are related in the entire process.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the historical times, the concept of sorcery has been widely known to the mankind and countless practices have been devised for countering it for the fact that the impression of sorcery is mostly associated with harming the individuals and disrupting their normal routine life. The act of sorcery has been considered to be an immoral act in many of the classical religions like Islam, Christianity and Hinduism and its existence could as well be traced in different cultures in different parts of the world (Minhas et al., 2015; Ndzovu, 2013; Qamar, 2016; Stein & Stein, 2011, Tonkinson, 1981). It had been given a lot of importance in the old times as well as in the world of today and the existence of the same concept has been bent differently and there have been different ways devised to neutralize the negative effects as well.

There are a number of reasons for which people give so much attention to sorcery and these reasons include the damage to the individuals lives that are socially, personally as well as physically linked with them (Cumes, 2013; Forsyth & Eves, 2015; p.5-10; Webb, 1971). Sorcery, evil magic (mostly referred to as black magic) and witchcraft has also been the mostly discussed topic for the fact that these concepts are linked with the intangible beings of spirits as well as the unseen knowledge. Moreover, this makes the whole concept even more peculiar and all of these carry different meanings but are most of the time linked and misinterpreted to be the same. However, on the contrary, they are different concepts that will also be discussed further in the literature section.

Although, it is recognized globally that there are people who believe in these spirit related intangible concepts and at the same time, many have counteracted against the beliefs on its existence. On the other hand, the concept is so old that it could be traced back to the ancient Egypt times in which the archaeological evidences have even words about the term of sorcery (Harris, 1998, p.156) and it does indicate that the concept had been existing in the past and could be seen in different practices even in the world we are living in today. There are a number of ways for countering sorcery for the fact that the anti-dotes are always present whenever a problem is identified in any kind of situation. Just like there is water for extinguishing the fire, there are ways to ward off the

negativities that are caused to an individual or any entity; be it in the physical tangible form or any other intangible non physical form. So, basically it is a concept of antiquity and had survived through the history which is why it carries so much importance (King, 1975).

The present study is focused on finding the relation between the two variables of sorcery and zikr-e-qalbi as a way of warding it off. This study would also help in understanding deep rooted meanings and concepts that might as well be helpful in understanding of the concepts by the person that is not part of the region. The topic under discussion, in this piece of writing, will only be limited to these two concepts predominantly.

The concept of pervasiveness and ubiquitousness could be very much related to sorcery from Pakistani perspective. In Pakistan, the concept of sorcery is almost known to every individual for the fact that any misfortune, damage or troubling situation is most of the time linked with the evil eye, sorcery, witchcraft and black magic. It will not be an unordinary for any family to hook up the jealousy as well as envy of the relatives with the causation of the misfortune through the channel of sorcery and people do tend to have strong belief in the concept that they do tend to approach ways for countering it.

Most of the fortune tellers that tend to show publically that they are healers or 'faith healers'. But in reality, they are basically practicing sorcery and use all of the practices that are linked to casting spells including animal blood and the like. Why is this so? The answer to this question is that the concept is a taboo and it is not accepted or appreciated by the people as well as the religion. Hence, there is a concept of disguising the entire practice. In this way, the people that are envious or have any other wish that they want to be fulfilled, approach the sorcerers that are basically the 'fortune tellers and healers' on the surface (Samad, 2003).

Just like the existence of sorcery, there has been the existence of the Sufi<sup>1</sup> practices as well in the country. In Pakistan, there is almost one or sometimes multiple Sufi shrines in

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<sup>1</sup> The person engaged in the practice of Sufism or Tasawwuf is called Sufi. The meaning of Taswuf is essentially 'nothingness or insignificance' i.e., to feel that there is nothing in the world but the Divine (Allah). Tasawuf is basically extracted from the word 'tazkia' which means to clean or to purify. So, the Sufi would be someone that works and engages himself/herself to clean the heart and the inner self.

many famous cities and there are a number of Sufis that have lived on the land and this makes the understanding of the belief system of the people on the spirituality as well as mystic practices. People do tend to feel honored when they are involved in any mystic or Sufi practices and they also believe in asking for the fulfillment of wishes on the shrines. It is a very understandable concept for the citizen of Pakistan that there are so many people that have their own ways of practicing the mystical practices and they do seek something out of it. Sufism basically aims at attaining the closeness with the Almighty and there have been many practices that claim to be of achieving different levels. The main aim of the practice is basically to purify oneself of the worldly desires and get close to the divine energy. Not only does the practice involves closeness with Allah but also seems to cleanse the whole soul and start a new journey of life. The Sufi practices are carried out to be close to the God and for making the human soul stronger.

For this particular study, the concept of the Sufi practice will be derived as a way of warding off the evil that is caused by sorcery and as a way for healing the soul as well as the human body. This is basically for the reason that the Sufi practices help in attainment of positive energy and on the contrary, sorcery affects the human soul as well as the body due to the negative effects of the evil spells that are involved in the whole process. Also, if a practice, that could help in strengthening the human soul, it could be used in healing the soul as well as for warding away the negative impacts that are done by the negative ways i.e., sorcery.

zikr-e-qalbi is basically one of the Sufi practices that is carried out to purify the human soul and the heart. It aims at providing the essential positive energy to the human soul that could help the individual in attainment of the right path as well as the attainment of the contentment of heart. The concept will be deeply discussed later in the literature section and is practiced in many parts of Pakistan and it is hypothesized with the help of this study that any individual who is affected by the sorcery has some kind of weakness in the soul that made him or her become the victim and could be healed through this Sufi practice. Otherwise, if the soul had been strong, the sorcery would not have made the person weak or vulnerable. In addition to that, if this practice is aimed at purifying the

soul of a person, then it could be used as a means of warding off the evil that is done by the sorcery and the individual could go back to the normal routine life.

## 1.1 Background

There are a number of practices that are related to the framework of Sufism and mystical practices. People even have their ways of adopting those practices that are outnumbered. The researcher was mainly attracted to the concept of the Sufi practices and the feelings that are associated with it and how an individual seems to be connected to the divine with the help of those practices. On the way to field to know more about the zikr-e-qalbi, the researcher found out that there are even people that make use of it for healing purposes and those illnesses for which they seek help are spiritual in nature; but at the same time, has an impact on the body as well. This made the researcher think about the concept even more deeply that if something that helps in gaining the positive energy, it could be used as a shield against the negative energies (in this argument, the sorcery) and an individual could stay protected and could ward off those negative energies. This is how the researcher came to realize that not only is the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi employed as a way of gaining the positive energy and satisfaction of the heart, but could also be used as a way of healing the soul as well as the body.

The Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi is used as a meditation and as a way of healing. The spiritual illnesses predominantly included the cases of possession, sorcery or black magic. The researcher's choice was either to study the possession cases or the sorcery affected individuals that had attained healing from it. The possession is somehow also linked with the sorcery for the reason that in many of the cases, the possessed spirit makes the desired tasks and controls the affected individual but then it further was analyzed that it would be quite challenging to have discussion on the topic with someone who might not have been fully recovered and might still be affected by the psychological affects.

Sorcery and possession are somehow related and for both the problems that are regarded as spiritual illnesses, zikr-e-qalbi as well as the usage of amulets is used as a healing method. So, the sorcery was the variable that the researcher took and during the field

trips, the researcher found that most of the people that came to seek for help thought that they had been the victim of sorcery. This was a different understanding as well as the experience that the researcher had for the reason that people would think that the mystic and Sufi practices are only limited to the religion as well as the attainment of the divine. However, on the other hand, there are so many aspects as well as the factors that are associated with the Sufi practices which for this study, the aspect of healing as well as the associated feelings that people gain out the practice, have been taken as the main subject of interest.

Much of the technological advancements as well as the scientific and psychological theoretical frameworks have totally denied these practices and beliefs and regard them as 'psychological' or as 'pathological' (Basu, 2014) which is not the case for many societies and the concepts are still believed in. Each practice has a whole explanation and knowledge system that needs to be understood in a cultural context as well as in the religious context which would also be carried out through this whole ethnographic research study. There are concepts that are involved in the roots of the culture and provides basis of many things within the culture and needs to be studied in accordance with that and it basically is a pilot study on such topic.

## **1.2 Sorcery: The Pakistani Context**

In Pakistan, most of the newspapers have advertisements of different healers who claim to heal many illnesses and out of those, the dominant one is sorcery also termed as *Kaala jadu* (Black magic). Not only the newspapers carry such advertisements but also the well known shopping areas or Bazaars include such billboards and public notes in which either there are fortune tellers offering their services about the future and hand palms pictures are used as advertising techniques.

The idea could further be understood by the following figure in which a man is offering his services for domestic fights, childlessness problems and business related issues etc.:



nails of lions and bears and spines or excretions of certain animals etc. Some people also come to feed certain animals to complete the process of sorcery as well (Dawn, 2014a). This is how this entire process is related in the context of the sorcery in Pakistan and it is a social reality.

In reality, all of these methods involve using of sorcery as well as black magic which also tells that people actually go to these ‘faith healers’ to get their problems resolved. This additionally explains that this is how these people are making money out of these kinds of services that they are providing so that they are actually spending on these advertisements. The economic aspect is quite embedded in the entire process in which the services are provided for the financial outcomes (The Express Tribune, 2014).

Through the following advertisement taken from a local newspaper, it could be seen that the person is openly calling himself as a sorcerer and is offering his services:

Figure 2. Newspaper advertisement of a sorcerer offering services



(Source: Daily Jang ePaper, 09-07-2016, p. 8)

However, in the following advertisements, it is not openly mentioned that they are sorcerers but regard themselves to be doing faith healing instead:

Figure 3. Newspaper advertisement of sorcery services for a number of end results



(Source: Daily Jang ePaper, 16-07-2016, p.10)

Both of these advertisement figures further helps in understanding the concept and also point out that it is a reality in Pakistan and is fairly known by the people residing in the country.

Pakistan is a collectivistic society predominantly and people do tend to depend on each other financially as well as socially and this dependence factor basically sometimes leads to sorcery in which people are envious of the levels of household incomes as well as the progress of any of the individuals. The concept could not be explained merely in words but needs to be experienced. It does give a hint to the person who might not know about the culture and religion, that it is something being done secretly. There might be many reasons attached to it. Most of the population of Pakistan believes in the existence of religion and the act of sorcery has been widely known to be evil by many religions. Furthermore, belief in sorcery could also be regarded as an off shoot of belief in the religion. In this whole process, religion plays a dominant role because of the involvement of the way of life and certain ideas.

So, due to the collectivism, dependence on each other, belief in the religion as well as the commercial aspect of the sorcery, it is quite relatable and understandable from the

Pakistani perspective. Likewise, the ways to counter these kinds of practices and to ward it off, there are also people that claim that they are healers of the black magic and so on. So, it is basically considered as a social issue because it not only affects an individual's life but there are several aspects related in the process that are social and economical. Both of these positive as well as negative sides i.e., healers and sorcerers could be seen in the Pakistani context and this is what is deeply engraved in the social as well as cultural context that most of the people do have an explanation for something that does not involve a scientific explanation of the problem that is going on.

Sorcery is considered to be a problem in the context of Pakistan for the reason that it has been known for its evil causes and effects and it is not being openly discussed by individuals who are affected by it because then it would involve blaming the people who have done the sorcery and that would in return make problems as well. It is one of the purposes of this research to find out the reasons for resorting to sorcery. Some say that jealousy is the root cause while others suggest that it happens because of the family disputes because most of the time, the victim's family members and close relatives are involved. So, this also suggests that it is used as an indirect and a secret way of harming any other individual in cases where one cannot openly channelize the envy towards another and people who do it, or using the middle person (the sorcerer) for doing it, are not on the surface. This is how the cycle goes on.

Not only it has an impact on the individuals but the sorcerers carry out immoral and ghastly activities to carry out the practice which is why, it is regarded as an evil act (Dawn, 2006; Dawn, 2012; Dawn, 2015).

### **1.3 Sufi Practices in Pakistan**

Pakistan being the cultural, religious as well as a collectivistic society, there are majority of the people that have their beliefs in religious as well as other related practices. There are a number of places within the region of Pakistan that includes the places where big Sufis have lived and have been buried (Dawn, 2014c) and it does indicate the reason for the people who do believe in the Sufi practices in the Pakistani region. The concept is not unknown or new to the Pakistanis who have been living in this country. People do tend to

associate themselves to the practices and feel sense of identity to it and it is considered normal to have an essence of spirituality as well as Sufism in their lives. This also indicates that the mystical as well as the spiritual practices are considered as positive aspect in their lives because these practices tend to encourage the message of the Divine love (Dawn, 2014b).

## **1.4 Problem Statement**

Sorcery affects an individual's social and personal life both implicitly as well as explicitly. There are a number of physical problems that are linked with the causation of the sorcery and are known to be even killing the individual. This impact is on the body, the soul and the life in general. The social problems are also associated with the affected individual includes disputations in the family life or relationship, ending of the social bonding, troubles in making any relation bond and many other related problems (The Express Tribune, 2014) that will be further explored with the help of this pilot study. Sorcery affects different dimensions of an individual's life that makes the normal way of living problematic for the victim and this is why it is considered as a problem.

Previous studies show that different practices of Sufism have been associated with healing different natural and supernatural diseases (Kiymaz, 2002; Mason, 2004). Among all other supernatural problems, one of the wide spread issue is sorcery which has been widely known to have an effect on an individual's life and disturbing families as mentioned in the aforementioned paragraph. Some people also claim that there have been deaths and murders that are mostly associated with the sorcery and were unexplainable (Dawn, 2015).

Zikr-e-Qalbi on the other hand, is a practice that is attributed to Sufism and it is also used not only for the attainment of the divine but also to heal one's self from the bodily diseases as well as the ones that are spiritual such as sorcery itself. Sufism is considered as essential part of the Muslim belief system and it is a mystical spiritual tradition within Islam that is based on the spirituality of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Masters of present day-Sufi schools trace their origins back to the Prophet through a chain of Masters. In other words, Sufism may be described as a path, or way, of attainment to

Allah (The God), with possible paranormal powers and knowledge. As mentioned before, zikr-e-qalbi is also a sufi practice, the purpose of this present study is to analyze the practice of zikr-e-qalbi in countering the effects of sorcery on the effected victims and how it has helped them in their lives.

The practice of zikr-e-qalbi is aimed at purifying an individual's soul and this is how it is linked with healing the sorcery effects. When an individual's soul is healed and becomes stronger by the constant exercising it, the negative attacks get warded off eventually. It further leads to the settlement of the other related social issues because of the reason that the person is being controlled by the negative forces when under the influence of sorcery spells. It seems like there is a link of soul and human body with the two variables i.e., sorcery and zikr-e-qalbi in which one is attacking it (sorcery) while the other method is making it stronger and curing it (zikr-e-qalbi). So, there exists a strong link of the human soul with the body as well which is why sorcery further makes the problems in an individual's life. Thus, by healing the soul through zikr-e-qalbi one's bodily problems also get settled and the victim could come back to living his or her normal life which will further be analyzed with the help of this pilot study.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The main research question that this study basically addresses is:

What is the significance of doing zikr-e-qalbi in a sorcery affected person's life? And what are the view points of those individuals who are or who have been affected by sorcery? In addition to that, this study will also help in understanding the entire Sufi healing process of the sorcery affected victims. The research also targets and questions the areas which were related to the entire healing process and the factors that are involved in it.

The thing that needs to be told apart here is, the 'impact' of sorcery is the main focus which includes questions like: the affects (bodily, mental, spiritual etc.) of sorcery on an individual rather than the 'process' that was involved in the sorcery. Sorcery is kept mostly as a secret method and the affected victims mostly only have the suspicion about the person who might have been involved in the process. So, this is what needed to be

clarified. Furthermore, the identification of the sorcery victim and the symptoms or the effects (if any) that exist in the victim's life will further be scrutinized.

## 1.6 Objectives

- The main objective of this study is to have a deep understanding about the effects and impact of sorcery on an individual's life and the impact of zikr-e-qalbi as well which has been adopted as a way of warding off the negative effects of sorcery.
- After finding the relation of the two main factors i.e., sorcery and zikr-e-qalbi the relation will further be explored.
- This study would focus on exploring the external factors (Social, economical, education, modern medical system etc.) as well that might be supplementary in understanding of the phenomenon.

## 1.7 Hypothesis

Following are the hypothesis of this study:

- Sorcery is regarded as an evil act and could be warded off by the positive and opposite energy which is zikr-e-qalbi.
- Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi could be used as a healing method to ward off sorcery.
- There exists a link between the human body, soul as well as the sorcery.

## 1.8 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study will be explained through the following points:

- 1) This study is basically aimed at bridging the Sufi practice with the healing outcome that could be carried out by the individual himself or herself.
- 2) It establishes the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi as an alternative healing method and this practice will be explored with the help of this pilot study. It would be an exploratory research and would help in unraveling the other related aspects that

might have been involved with the matter of discussion. Previously, in the field of academic researches, no research has been conducted particularly on this topic that finds the relation of these two factors. Secondly, this research would also help in unlocking much information related to sorcery as well as the zikr-e-qalbi as being the Sufi practice and would help in understanding the relation between these two factors.

- 3) The role of an individual/victim/sufferer within this healing process will be examined.
- 4) How are the personal lives (be it social, physical or psychological) of the individuals being influence, modified or changed by it? It will also be explored in the process.

Many concepts exist all around the world showing that there are many practices which are not aimed at dealing with the matters that are physical in nature but are seen as a way to help individuals in healing. There are different perceptions that are present around the globe on the existence of the intangible, spiritual, or supernatural entities, ideas, concepts and matters that exist beyond the realm of the physical world. This study will also help in understanding many of those existing concepts that are not physical in nature but help and facilitate in healing the physical illness or the physical effects of the illnesses which in this case is sorcery for the most part. The effects of sorcery are physical in nature but the concept and the evil it holds is not physical, it is intangible. So, in short, this study will help in understanding this whole concept as well as in untangling the concepts that exist with reference to the chosen practice in the Pakistani context that will help the future researchers as well as the anthropological literature in gaining more information.

## 1.9 Chapter Outline

**Chapter 2** Presents the literature review of the Sorcery as well as the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi. The factors that are involved with both the concepts with reference to the Pakistani context would be deeply discussed with the help of the previous researches and literature. This part of the text would also present a generic overview of the Sufi practices as well and how it could be regarded as a healing practice for sorcery. This chapter would include the theoretical framework as well that has been used for this study.

**Chapter 3** Includes the methodology that has been used for this study. All of the techniques as well as the processes that had been made into use for this study will be discussed in this part of the textual document. Not only that, but the issues that have been faced by the researcher and the remedies suggested will be discussed in it.

**Chapter 4** Highlights the locale and the area profile that includes all of the important and relevant information about the area that had been selected for the research.

**Chapter 5** Comprises of the findings and the chapter will cover the relation of sorcery with the human body, soul and human mind. It will include the symptoms and the nature of the problem that will also involve the description of the case studies as well.

**Chapter 6** Involves discussion about the role of sorcery in an individual's social, economic, religious as well as cultural dimensions and the impact that it causes in these particular domains.

**Chapter 7** Involves the discussion about the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi as a practice and the associated factors that are involved in the whole process. In this chapter, the discussion spins around the importance of the practice of zikr-e-qalbi in an individual's life and how it acts as a protecting shield against the evil.

**Chapter 8** Concludes the entire research and involves the summary and analysis of the research. It also includes the recommended theoretical model that is provided by the author and is based on the data collected so that the future researchers could get guidance before formally starting the research.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study focuses mainly on the concept of sorcery, the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi as well as establishing the link between the two factors and how can zikr-e-qalbi contribute towards healing an individual from the effects of sorcery? This part of the document would involve deep rooted evidence from the literature of the two concepts as well as explaining the factors that are interlinked and involved in the overall process. The historical evidence and the explanation of the concepts would also be further explained and certain arguments will be made out of the literature. The literature review is basically divided into two main sections in which the first part of the section will involve literature related to the sorcery and the later part of the section will highlight the literature of zikr-e-qalbi respectively.

Following is the literature review of the previous studies conducted as well as the main conceptual existence of the sorcery:

### **2.1 Sorcery**

#### **2.1.1 Sorcery: Historical Context of the Term**

The existence of any kind of term or any of the expression in any language shows that the practice or the concept has been present if it is traced back to the literary evidence, or is still present in that particular time period. For example, if the technologically advanced gadgets are present these days and there are a number of words as well as slang words devised for them; like tablets, 'smart' phones and the number keeps on going. If traced back to the older times, neither were these words present before nor was there any kind of technological gadgets present in those days. This is how; a concept could be related to either an older society or with any other societies.

Correspondingly, if one looks at the existence of the term for sorcery, it could be found out that the concept as well as the related practices had also been existent in those times. The concept of sorcery marks back to the Egyptian and Babylonian times in which the literature also establishes the fact that it was being practiced by trained sorcerers (King, 1975; Pinch, 1994). The word 'Ipsu' has been used both for sorcery as well as for the

magic in the Babylonian time period (King, 2000, p.139). Also, 'Akhu' is an Egyptian word that is referred for the magical power and it could be translated as sorcery, spells as well as enchantments (Harris, 1998, p.156).

The sorcery and magical powers in the time period of the Egyptian civilization of Pharaohs have been known to the man kind and has also been depicted in the movies as well. The Egyptians magical and sorcery techniques involved invoking their gods and goddesses and commanding them for carrying out the desired tasks through using power of words and by reciting their names (Harris, 1998, p.156). Not only does it suggest that the sorcery is not something which is new to the times in which we are living in but the literature evidence also suggests that the concept could be trailed down to the centuries old civilizations.

### **2.1.2 What is Sorcery?**

Before arriving at the discussion of the interrelated variables and the main argument of the related factors, it would be appropriate to have a deep understanding of the term. So, what exactly is sorcery? Is it an evil practice or not? And if yes, then why is it considered as an evil practice? What other factors are associated in the entire process and so on? The answer to some parts of these questions could be explained by the studies of Evans Pritchard who has worked on the Azande's culture practices of witchcraft, magic and sorcery. He described sorcery to be regarded as 'bad magic' and states that:

"Sorcery is the magic that is illicit or is considered immoral" (Evans-Pritchard, 1976, p.227-228).

This single definition suggests that the sorcery is mostly linked with certain unethical practices that might be causing any kind of harm to an individual and hurting someone but this single definition does not provide enough answers to the questions such as, why it is considered as an evil act. Quite similar terminologies of magic and witchcraft are also most dominantly used with the phrase of sorcery. However, in the world of anthropological literature, these are quite different and carry dissimilar meanings to it.

Further explanation that would help in understanding a broader aspect of the concept as well as definitions would be discussed in the section below:

### **2.1.3 Distinguishing/Defining Sorcery, Magic and Witchcraft**

It is quite an important thing to have the three concepts defined and distinguished from each other because in Pakistani context, all of them mostly carry an equal meaning and are considered evil. But before doing that, the concepts will be further explained and analyzed in a way that the concepts also get applied in the region of Pakistan from the literary perspective. So, not to confuse the entire study on either of the concepts, the three will be defined and distinguished and then, the reason for choosing sorcery as a variable for this study will further be elaborated.

There have been a number of differences found between the concept of sorcery, magic as well as witchcraft as per the anthropological literature. For example, the term witchcraft as well as sorcery itself carries different meanings in different cultures and the terminologies that are used cross culturally are also different. The African concept of sorcery and witchcraft is closer to the older European notion of the evil eye and malefice (Bowie, 2006; p.201). This is basically what this entire argument is suggesting. What might be called in one culture would entirely be meant differently in another. For example in Digo society, sorcery has dualistic nature and is considered both moral and immoral at the same time depending on the situation in which it is carried out. If it is used for destroying someone, it is immoral whereas, if its use is carried out for a revenge or retaliation, it is acceptable by the society (Ndzovu, 2013).

For the above mentioned reasons and many other that might not have been covered in the above argument, the terminologies will be defined and discussed in the following section and the term that is the most appropriate and applicable in the Pakistani context will be taken forward for the literature of this study. Sorcery and magic are quite interrelated and need to be defined separately to have the understanding. The description and definition of magic and how it is different will be further explained

#### **2.1.3.1 Magic**

Evans-Pritchard (1976, p.227-228) defined magic as:

“A technique that is supposed to achieve its purpose by the use of medicines. The operation of these medicines is a magic rite and is usually accompanied by a **spell**.”

The spell is basically a component of the magical process and he further defined it as follows:

“A *Spell* is basically an address accompanying rites and forming an integral part of them. When the address is made to medicines I call it a spell”.

On the other hand, Stein & Stein, (2011, p.136) has defined *Magic*, (the term that is dominantly used by the anthropologists) as:

“Magic basically refers to the acts or rituals through which an individual can compel and induce the supernatural to behave in definite ways.”

Both of these definitions suggest that there is no connotation about the magic that suggests whether it is evil or illegal or not. But as mentioned earlier, Evans-Pritchard regarded sorcery to be the magical practices when carried out for illegal means. This is how magic is related to sorcery. Also, magic is something that could be learned through a process from the family members or kin. The key components in the process of magic involve the usage of spells (the words that are spoken) and another most dominant point that distinguishes usage of magic from the sorcery and witchcraft is that, it is practiced basically for safety purposes and for a number of other reasons that are quite neutral and could not be regarded as negative. For example, it helps in assuring protection and success and there are certain rules and principles that are incorporated in the process of magic that makes it something that is moral in certain cultures (Stein & Stein, 2011; p. 141-149).

In addition, Evans-Pritchard referred to the medicines that are used in the process as ‘good medicines’ because they are used for good ends. He also made use of the term ‘good magic’ as well which is basically the magic that is socially approved (Evans-Pritchard, 1976: p.227-228).

The literature suggests that magic is mostly referred to as having positive outcomes as well in which the spell is casted to protect an individual from an evil-eye etc. It is

sometimes also referred to as a curative magic but if someone regards the magic to be something that is good, does not necessarily mean that it will be rendered to be 'good' by all the inhabitants living in any particular culture (Knudsen, 2011, p. 126). Some people, be it a magic, witchcraft or sorcery; think of all the practices to be unlawful and unethical. But the main focus here is to highlight the connection as well as the distinction between these three terminologies rather than calling any to be legal or illegal. While, on the other side of the argument, sorcery is a course of action that could be learned and could be learned through exercise (Kapferer, 1997, p.263) and further description of which will be given below:

#### **2.1.3.2 Sorcery**

Stein & Stein (2011, p.149) further has explained the concept of *Sorcery* as: Magic that is used for illegal and anti social means that includes interference with the economical activities of other individuals, causing illness and even death to the individuals...Any practice involved with the disruption of life and happiness of any individual is regarded as sorcery.

Evans-Pritchard made a distinction in the world of anthropology by having defined the concept of sorcery in a very detailed and yet in a very simple way. He mentioned that sorcery is: deliberate using of the magical rituals with an intention of harming, causing misfortunes or even killing others. The capacity of the sorcerers in harming others depends on the sorcerer's ability to control the extrinsic powers (Glick, 1973).

This further suggests that there is a deep connection between sorcery as well as magic. The concept of sorcery is quite different than witchcraft and there are various methods of carrying out sorcery that involves using poisons and toxic substances whereas, the newer versions of sorcery simply involve the process of uttering spells and harming others (Eves, 2013).

Evans-Pritchard mentions that sorcery is a way of intentionally using magical rituals with the aim of causing misfortune, injury or even killing an individual. Whereas, on the other hand, witchcraft is basically an unconscious capacity of harming others (Eves, 2013; Patterson 1974–75; Reay1987:92; Stephen 1987b:251; Zelenietz 1981). In addition,

Evans-Pritchard made use of the term of 'bad medicines' that are used in the process of sorcery and the sorcerer is someone who possesses these types of medicines makes use of them in the rites of sorcery. Also, he described sorcery to be something that could be learned by an individual (Evans-Pritchard, 1976, p.227-227).

Just like a medicine, that could both be good or bad depending on the context, magic could also be used in that way and when used for unethical and anti-social means, it is referred to as sorcery. Hence, it suggests that any kind of magical practice that disturbs an individual's life and happiness is termed as sorcery. So, based on the above mentioned definition and explanation, it is quite perceptible that the *sorcerer* (the person doing the black magic) is generally considered an evil figure, one who deals in the matters that his/her clients would rather keep secret and one whose work may be downright antisocial. Furthermore, another important aspect in the process of sorcery is that the sorcerer 'steals' things like nail clippings, excretions, hair, food remnants from the victim on which the magical practices could be carried out (Ndzovu, 2013; Stein & Stein, 2011).

Now, the question arises that if it happens on an individual, what needs to be done in response to it? Or is it inevitable? Are there any ways to stay protected or not? The answer to this question is that there are different ways for countering the sorcery and it could be warded off through antidotes and practices that are counter to the magic. In some cultures, the process involves using amulets, practicing of different spells and even using different kinds of charms (Webb, 1971).

Evans-Pritchard has made a notable divergence in both of these terms in the anthropological literature and will further be explained later in the section. All of the definitions related to sorcery suggest that it is something that could be learned and could be practiced by someone along with that, it is considered as an evil and immoral act for the fact that it targets an individual and by using certain magical practices, resulting in harming the person. The concept of witchcraft on the other hand, is quite different than that of the sorcery although it is most of the time related with it and the further explanation of which will be presented in the following section:

#### 2.1.3.4 Witchcraft

Witchcraft tends to be an innate property of an individual that gives power to an individual to transform into something else and cause killing. Sorcery on the other hand, involves the usage of magical means for inflicting sickness and not directly killing that person and it also involves using the part or remnant of an individual (food residue and hair etc) on which the spells are carried out (Stewart & Strathern, 2004; p. 6-7).

Just like sorcery, witchcraft has been associated as something that is evil and is related to illness, death, darkness and misfortune. The only aspect that connects magic with witchcraft is, having connection with the other world which involves the communication with the gods and goddesses and it acts as a channel of communication (Greenwood, 2000, p.2, 23-30). It could be regarded as an unconscious and intrinsic capacity to harm others by staring at the victim that might result in sickness or even death (Eves, 2013; Glick, 1973: 182) which is how it becomes distinctive from the magic and sorcery.

Evans-Pritchard (1976, p.227) defined witch to be:

“A person whose body contains, or is declared by oracles or diviners to contain, witchcraft substance and who is supposed to practice witchcraft”.

This definition clearly suggests that anyone that witchcraft would be regarded to be an innate property of someone and it is basically something that the individual is born with and could neither be learned nor could it be practiced by someone that hasn't been born with the 'witchcraft substance'.

All of these definitions and descriptions of the concepts of magic, sorcery and witchcraft implies that these are three distinct and separate phenomena. Although they are somewhat related but are entirely different concepts depending on the literary evidence. For this study, the concept of sorcery would be used and taken further into account that suggests the involvement and usage of the magical practices for the evil and disruptive means for the fact that this is how it is defined in the context of the Pakistani culture precisely and this is the basic subject of interest for this particular study. Further description and supporting literary evidence of sorcery will be discussed in detail.

#### **2.1.4 The Practice of Sorcery**

Evidences reveal the fact that sorcery seems to be having a connection with different aspects of the cultures as well as the societal fragments where there is conviction in its existence and also where the practice is quite apparent. However, this is not the focus of this particular study. Rather, the focus is more upon the existence of sorcery and the practices which are used to ward it off and counter it but it is important to highlight the characteristics that are involved in the entire process.

In the ancient times, the usage of these kinds of powers (sorcery etc.) was carried out for carrying out of a desired task as well as for gaining an authoritative position. It also involved anger and anxiety in the process that led to carrying out of the spells. Not only that, but it is also made into use for acquiring any task like succeeding at any desired goal or be it something that has something to do with the relationship of an individual, succeeding over an enemy, carrying out love spell, causing separation in a relationship or any other desired objective could be accomplished. The process involves writing of spells on certain tablets; animals body parts etc (Harris, 1998, p. 175-199).

On global scale, there are a number of practices for countering the sorcery effects that not only differ because of the religious aspect but also varies from one culture to another. There have also been some cases in for example, South India as well in which the sorcerers, as well as those involved in the practice of sorcery were incriminated. Another aspect, which is quite evidently seen in other studies as well, is that, the practice of sorcery was also linked with the aspect of envy and jealousy in the society. Not only that, but people mostly linked the suffering's root cause that they were facing, to be the because of the performance of sorcery by someone and the suffering itself was taken as a suspicion (Nabokov, 2000).

However, there are certain other factors involved in the whole process that could not be separated from each other. The society is basically the sum of these aspects which involves the social structure, economy, religion and other cultural aspects. All of these aspects will be further discussed in detail.

### **2.1.5 Social, Economic and Cultural Factors**

Victor Turner (1964) talks about sorcery and mentions that just the way malaria is a medically associated issue; same is in the case of sorcery. If there is lesser number of people who die before their time of death, there will be lesser people who would explain this type of death in association with sorcery and this is how, the concept gets linked up with the society. So, basically what he is suggesting is that, people tend to explain the unnatural phenomenon with abstract and intangible concepts that not only supports their convictions, but also, acts as a way of relating one undeniably odd happening with certain substantiation. The debate here, however, is basically to analyze the reasons behind the act itself.

There are many dominant religions and some of the cultures that do believe in the existence of sorcery and regard it to be an evil act for the reason that it is an evil process with outcomes that include harming or even killing the victim (Minhas et al., 2015; Ndzovu, 2013; Qamar, 2016; Stein & Stein, 2011, Tonkinson, 1981). Furthermore, the aspects that are associated with the sorcery do tend to be having a lot of importance because they provide the reasons and arguments for the execution of the desired practice.

There seems to be a lot of features involved that include the different dimensions of the social life including the aspect of faith, economic status and the culture. An individual might think that why is the practice of sorcery so much involved in some of the societies in the same world while other tend to call it 'old fashioned' or 'ancient or prehistoric way of thinking'. Interestingly, the answer to this question is quite beautifully explained by the literature in which it is mentioned that the poor economic development, negative social problems, insecurity, public health etc. do seem to have a role to play with the phenomenon (Forsyth & Eves, 2015, p.7). And people use the means of magic and sorcery as revenge against the people (Ndzovu, 2013).

It has become quite important to relate the gender aspect with a certain phenomena as well because it reveals a lot of facts and information about a whole process. A person might think that whether the gender roles are equally distributed in the practice of sorcery, or are equally affected by it; or not? There is no specific involvement of the gender factor and both males and females tend to be equally affected by it however, as far

as the practice of sorcery is concerned, males are seen as the sorcery practitioners predominantly because it carries with it a power role (Forsyth & Eves, 2015, p.7).

This literature has given information about the matter from the smaller frame of vision. There are however, other elements that seem to be involved in the overall process on a broader perspective and the following part of the chapter describes the relation of certain social elements with the practice of sorcery.

### **2.1.6 Sorcery and Relation of Social Structure**

The growth of settlements and shift towards materialism and individualism leads towards the formation of economic inequality that further aggravates the feelings of hatred, jealousy and envy among the people. These feelings are then related to the beliefs of sorcery related suspicions (Forsyth & Eves, 2015; p. 5-10). This suggests that the social structure and the economic aspect is one of the dominant aspects in the act of sorcery be it on a personal level or on a broader level. Not only is the economic aspect involved in the hierarchy within any society but also, seems to be making certain imbalances in the lifestyles of the people that do tend to fire up the feelings of envy and jealousy (Edgar & Henig, 2010).

Tonkinson (1981, p. 77-88) worked on the Melanesians of the south-east Ambrym and his study has also revealed some interesting facts about the factors behind the act of sorcery that are quite related with the above mentioned study. He mentions that sorcery is practiced because of jealousy and envy and it is mostly linked with death, secrecy and possessing the evil powers. Sorcery is known to be the reason behind any serious illnesses, the cause of death and even for carrying out of murders. He also suggested that the reason for sorcery among Melanesians is found to be dispute over women, land boundaries and vegetation. Furthermore, sorcery promotes fear, tensions and hostility among the people of the area and people get scared because of it.

Mary Douglas (1966, 1970, 1973, as cited in Kapferer, 1997, p. 306) has distinguished between sorcery and witchcraft and linked the concept of sorcery with the social structures of the society. She mentions that sorcery exists among societies that have hierarchy in their structures and where there are well defined social boundaries. Whereas,

on the other hand, witchcraft exists in the societies that are open and are loosely bound i.e., those societies where there is no presence of a distinct division like that in the Central Africa. In the view of Mary Douglas, the act of sorcery as well as witchcraft is in one way, a response of the social structures. However, she has not described these concepts as a way of knowledge or something other than that. She has merely explained the concepts in the social view rather than what they actually are and what is the process etc.

Another study that was conducted on the Melanesian society showed that when the two contrasting sides are present (for example, one being the elites and the other being the poor) in the society, sorcery is acts are carried out either for elevating the status or in degrading anyone's status (Lindenbaum, 1979). This suggests that the overall role of status is quite important because it is connected with the power which again is related with the social structure within a society. This is one of the important aspects that basically gives rise to the feelings of envy and jealousy and the act of sorcery is basically a response to stabilize the entire situation. But the act of sorcery could not be justified for the fact that this is a way of indirectly attacking and harming another individual and the discussion of which will be in the section where sorcery will be analyzed as an evil act.

### **2.1.7 Sorcery as an Evil Act**

This is the essentially the main argument of the entire literature because it is one of the major concerns for many people around the world. People do tend to approach ways to counter the act so that their lives could come back to normal routine. So, why is sorcery an evil act? Sorcery was considered an institution that was legitimate and it was used to counter the external threats among Ambrym but later on in 1920's after Christianity practices overcame the land, it was considered as an evil act. There existed conflict between the sorcerers and those who were the Christian leaders. People recognize that they were affected by sorcery by noticing the signs of omen for example sudden death of a domestic animal etc., or by being informed by the diviners. In addition, sorcery is known to attack an individual's personal storage of power which in some cases gets washed-out and extinguished and eventually leads to an individual's death. Factors which

either eliminate or the devalue sorcery includes the formation of the capital and the changes in the socio economic levels (Tonkinson, 1981).

Sorcery is termed to be as an evil act for the fact that it brings along the negative impact as well as harmful end results for the individuals (Webb, 1971). In the established classical religions like Christianity, Hinduism and Islam; the concept of sorcery is fairly known to the disciples and each religion has recognized and renowned methods for countering the whole evil process.

It is termed as an evil act because it disrupts an individual's life (Desai, 2014; Kibor, 2006; Rasanayagam, 2006). The reason why it needs to be warded off and properly monitored is because of the reason that sorcery acts like a hypnotic device that makes the individual fall into the muddle of death and causes them harm. An individual does not seem to be having control over the self and this is how, it is labeled as a hypnotic device (Webb, 1971).

Whether the person believes in it or not, that person could be affected by it. Sorcery could be used for harming an individual or even causing death from a distance with a magic charm or a hex and these effects could either be local or non-local i.e., even if the person believes in it or not, it could have an effect on the individual's life and is regarded as nocebo effect (opposite of the placebo effect). Sorcery as well as witchcraft, both could be the reason of illness of an individual. Mostly associated root cause for the sorcery and witchcraft is envy and jealousy and this is why both the concepts are regarded as evil acts for the fact that they make use of the evil powers to harm other individuals and in some cases even can cause in killing them (Cumes, 2013).

It could even result in causing body paralysis, illnesses and causing insanity in which the person behaves in an abnormal manner (Ndzovu, 2013). These are the reasons behind its evil nature. Anything that is used for harming an individual with negative incentives would be an evil act and an anti-social act. This is an ethical consideration which most of the religions also promote. This is why, the practices that are used in the process to ward off the negative effects, seems to be linked with the religion most of the times.

### **2.1.8 Usage of Amulets and Charms for Affecting the Victim**

So, there are different ways in which the sorcerer basically makes use of certain steps to carry out the desired tasks. It is a combination of steps that is mostly kept as a secret and very little is known in the literature about it. One of the most dominantly known methods is that the sorcerers make use of poisons, herbs and body exuviae of the victim that includes things like nails, hair, urine etc. (Cumes, 2013). Spells are carried out on those things that act as something that belongs to the individual. In some of the cases, amulets are used to carry out the process of sorcery.

One another method that is found to be related with the act of sorcery is that, a foreign food item that is given to the individual involves the sorcery spells is given to the targeted person and it travels in the whole body through the stomach that further leads to the surfacing of the symptoms of sorcery (Basu, 2014). Witches, sorcerers and fortune tellers are known to be under the guidance of the evil spirits and are also sometimes referred to as controlling the evil spirits (Perlmutter, 2013).

Not only is that but the usage of amulets is carried out for a number of reasons. It could not be solely related with the negative aspects rather, amulets are also used by the healers in the process that involves removing the effects caused on a victim. The amulet is also used by the magicians and sorcerers themselves for protecting themselves against certain things. It is worn by them like a necklace that involves usage of leather, wood or any other kind of material (Harris, 1998, p.169).

Furthermore, the concept of using the amulets and charms is part of many regions of the world and they act as a way of warding off the evil spirits. The usage of different items for the same purpose could be differently interpreted and analyzed (Webb, 1971). For example, if the sorcerer uses it, it would be for an evil act and if someone used it as a method of countering the act of sorcery, it will be entitled as a good act and vice versa.

### **2.1.9 Practices to Ward off Sorcery**

Believing in sorcery would require a countering way to ward-off the negative effects which would eventually have an impact on the society in many ways like, what ways are used? Are they related to any religious faith or not etc.? There has also been a relation of

sorcery with the Religion. Especially, when it comes to ward it off, there are a number of practices that exist in different cultures all around the world. In some of the Muslim countries, there is even a strict penalty for its practice because of it being an evil act.

But surprisingly, another study reveals that there are also some of the political leaders who have also used the way of sorcery for getting their political agendas fulfilled within the same societies (Perlmutter, 2013). In a society where there is a strong belief in the existence of sorcery, the good (practices countering sorcery) and the evil (Sorcery and the actors involved in it) both the actors would be having an impact on the society not only in the religious connotation but also in terms of other factors like the economic, social and moral etc.

Evans-Pritchard (1937) has analyzed sorcery to be regarded as socially illegitimate act. Whereas, on the other hand, another study suggests that some people do not think about it as an illegitimate if used for revenge (Ndzovu, 2013). This would take us to the view that those people or those practices that help in countering the sorcery would be considered not only as important people holding a positive reputation in the society but also that those who practice it would be considered as evil figures because hurting an individual in any possible way is ethically considered as an immoral act despite the belongingness of the individual to any kind of religion.

There have been a number of practices that exist in different societies that have been devised and used as a way to ward off the negative impact as well as negative effects of sorcery on the victim. This involves a series of different methods and sorcery effects are countered by anti magic practices and antidotes (Stein & Stein, 2011, p.149).

The entire literature that has been explained in the above section is about sorcery from different parts of the world. The present study will be conducted in the context of Pakistan and it will be appropriate to have it explained from the perspective and from the context of the religion that has been selected for this study and the details of which will further be presented.

### 2.1.10 Sorcery: The Pakistani Context

In Pakistan, which is not only a cultural society but also a society that follows religious doctrine, there exists a relation of sorcery with the society for which this study might help in understanding the phenomenon. There are a number of practices that includes *tona*<sup>2</sup>, magic and sorcery that involves usage of supernatural powers, concepts as well as beliefs for many purposes in different areas of Pakistan (Knudsen, 2011, p. 126-129; Qamar, 2016).

In NWFP region of Pakistan for example, literature suggests that magic is used as a protection against misfortune, death and personal injury. It is also believed that the supernatural beings are visible to the magician but not the people that do not possess the knowledge about it. The belief system also includes the usage of sorcery or 'harmful magic' is forbidden by the religion and must not be practiced. The usage of amulets is also quite known in the area that is used by the men to protect themselves and it. However, the person is not protected by the death because it is decided by the God Himself but it acts as a shield. But surprisingly, not all people in the area believe in it for the reason that the amulets are written in secret numerals rather than the Arabic script. Another thing that could be noticed is that the people use it for attracting the opposite gender as well which suggests that it is some kind of sorcery and it is being used for compelling someone else to fall in love with another (Knudsen, 2011, p. 126-129).

This further recommends that the concept of magical and sorcery related practices do seem to be existent and believed in. The word that is used in Urdu language for sorcery, witchcraft, magic, spells, wizardry, charms, is *Jadu* and the sorcerer or the conjurer is referred to as *Jadugar or Jadugarni*. There are two terms that are used for the sorcerer in Urdu language and refers to someone carrying out the black magic practices be it a male or a female. Magic/sorcery is considered as a fact and its practice is banned and is considered to be unholy. There are a number of words that carry different meanings in the English language but in the Pakistani context, all of these words would be simply referred by this one word and is considered as an unholy practice (Qureshi, 1971; p.222). This

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<sup>2</sup> A local term for magical or sorcery related practices.

definition also suggests that in Pakistani context, the sorcerer could be a male as well as a female.

When the term of sorcery and magic is back translated in Urdu, it delivers the similar meaning and refers to the process that involves usage of the black magic and using the practices to make an effect on the individual respectively (Jalibi, 1994, p.1175, 1897).

A country like Pakistan where there is multiplicity of socio-economic status and where there is poverty and economic pressure, and more dominantly, where there is a belief system, there would be a very strong interplay of the sorcery with the actors who are either the victims or the perpetrators (sorcerers) for the fact that the poor economic development, negative social problems, insecurity, public health etc. do seem to have a function to play in the process of sorcery (Forsyth & Eves, 2015, p.7).

#### **2.1.11 Theoretical Framework**

There are a number of studies previously conducted that have talked a lot about the concept of magic and sorcery related practices. Evans-Pritchard work is one of the mostly discussed topics in the area of sorcery, witchcraft and magic in the field of anthropology which is referred every time whenever these aspects are discussed in the studies because his study unravels a lot of information that is involved in the process. The entire study cannot be chosen as a framework in this context; however, the ways he defined the sorcery and distinguished it from sorcery is quite noticeable.

In the book, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (Evans-Pritchard & Gillies, 1976, p.176, 195), it is further mentioned by the author that the magical practices that are used for the anti-social and evil needs is sorcery and witchcraft and both are opposed by good magic. The literature further explains that people do tend to attribute almost all of the problems or sickness to witchcraft and sorcery. It could not be generalized in all the cultures because in the country like Pakistan, both medical as well as traditional/religious healing practices are believed in (Anwar, Green, Norris, & Bukhari, 2015).

Evans-Pritchard further makes use of the concept that sorcery is always a conscious act and is carried out for hurting the individuals. In his study, he also mentioned that the

healers also make use of good magic. The term 'good magic' cannot be used in the context of Pakistan because magic and sorcery both carry equal meaning in the language and the main focus of the study is on the 'bad magic/sorcery'. The spiritual healer cannot be seen as someone that makes use of 'magic' and if someone uses it, it is considered as a suspicious activity.

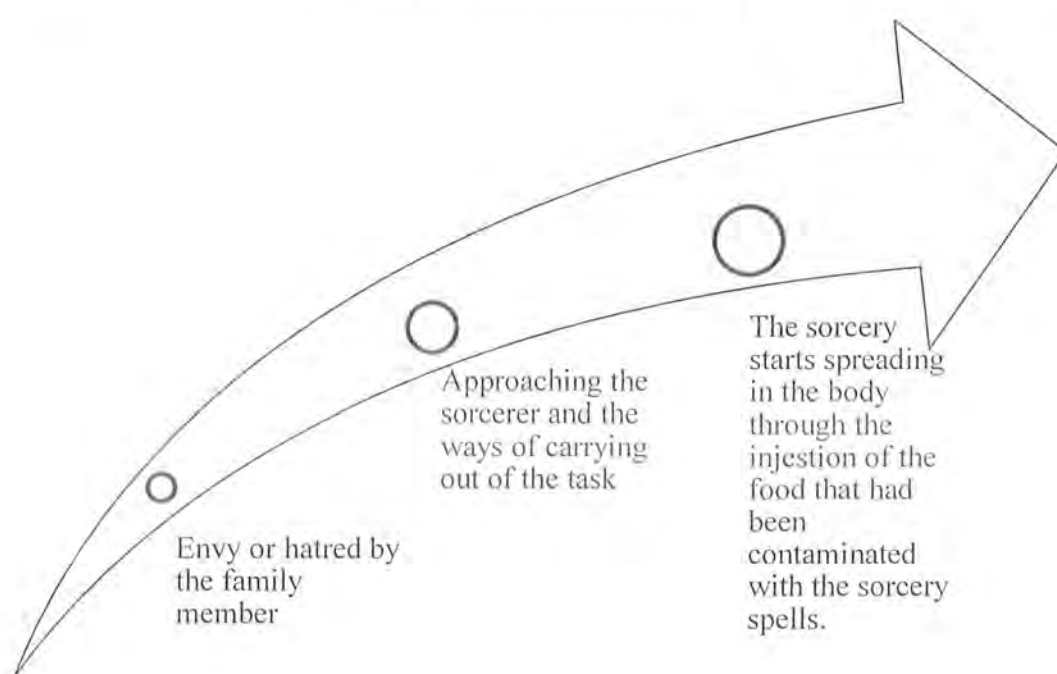
Materialism and individualism tend to have a relation in the practice and belief of sorcery i.e., when there is unequal distribution of economic facilities, people tend to be envious of others that further leads towards the belief as well as the practice of sorcery. Lack of development is another factor that helps in establishing the argument of the sorcery related practices. It is found out that when people's expectations to have better life standards are not met, it further leads to the sorcery (Forsyth & Eves, 2015, p.7, 28). There might as well be other aspects included along with the unequal economic distribution but not much has been known about the associated factors. It could be related in the Pakistani context that there is an unequal distribution of wealth among people. Within a same city, people do not enjoy the similar economic as well as health benefits. The poorest and the wealthiest people could both be seen within the same region. This could be a good explanation of the materialism and the act of sorcery.

On the other hand, there are a number of ways that are adopted further to help in healing the sorcery in the regions where there is conception and understanding of the matter. For this study, the Sufi healing practice has been incorporated.

A study conducted at finding the explanation of the Sufi practice for healing the sorcery as well as possession states that the human mind is the seat of reason and the human heart is the place for the desires and emotions. The problem occurs when the mind-heart relation gets interrupted and leads towards painful sensations and an unreasonable behavior. It further leads to the problematic social behaviors that include lack of personal cleanliness, violent behavior, and inability to perform social duties by the individual and so on. The main cause that is identified for the root of these problems is most of the time sorcery and causes madness in an individual that had been performing normally before. It works in a process form in which there is first cultivation of hatred or envy in the family member from another as a result of which, that person approaches another person for

carrying out of the black magic. Eventually, this practice would hurt the targeted person (victim) in a secret manner. The individual that had pursued the sorcerer would be told how to make use of the spell and poison the food etc. and the way normal circumstances, the task is carried out. The food would then enter the victim's body through the stomach and then would travel the heart and the brain which would also induce terrible pain that would further lead to the madness of the individual as well as the causation of the disruptive behavior (Basu, 2014).

**Figure 4. Process of sorcery effect**



The Sufi healing ideology basically suggests that the Sufi who heals acts as a mediator between the sufferer and the Divine. It is all dependent on the Divine (Allah) to heal. These healing practices are also applicable in the healing of individuals in clinical and behavioral related problems as well. The acts that are performed by the individuals disappear but the impact and effect that those acts have on the individual remains. It either makes the soul lighter or darker. This is what the Sufi healing does, it basically cleanses and helps in fixing those parts of the soul. The heart contains the effects of the symptoms that are seen in the mind, behaviors and the spirit. There is a connection of heart with the spirit and if the spirit is weak or faces malnutrition, the heart will exhibit

depression for the reason that it is the place from where the emotions flow (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014). This is why the role of heart is important with reference to the Sufi healing practices and the link of the heart and the soul is interrelated.

So, when the concepts of sorcery suggested by Evans-Pritchard, the process of sorcery impacting a victim and the Sufi healing process of the aforementioned study are fused together, it further suggests that there is a relation between the mind and heart and the impurity of the heart that further leads to being vulnerable to the force of sorcery. The aspects that exist in the social context could be very much related in the Pakistani society which further leads to the understanding of the sorcery happening. There are various methods to overcome the negative effects of sorcery and *zikr-e-qalbi* being one of them which basically helps in cleaning the heart and the soul and could be used as a way to heal the sorcery affected individual. Through cleansing the elements that are affected in the process of sorcery such as the heart and the soul, the sorcery effects could be eventually warded off and it will further be investigated with this study further.

There is no way that sorcery could be scientifically proven but socially its acceptance is accepted and believed in. When and wherever the belief exists, it regards sorcery as a problem that is to be overcome. Socially sorcery is a tabooed topic plus one with the negative opinion so neither the victim nor the perpetrator would accept and talk openly about it. All of these studies do tend to describe information that helps in anthropologically relating the culture with that of Pakistan and as well are partially applicable in the context.

### **2.1.12 Complementary and Alternative Healing Practices**

There are a number of healing practices other than the medical healing methods that exist in many parts of the world that seem to have shown beneficial outcome results and actually have helped people in getting healed from the problems that they have been facing (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014; McClean, 2013; Ndzovu, 2013). For example, the involvement of prayer has shown to be giving improved outcome results on dealing with different illnesses which is not basically part of the contemporary medical practices (Andrade & Radhakrishnan, 2009). Not only that, but there are cultures in which people prefer or practice both the traditional healing practices (supernatural and herbal treatment

methods) as well as the medical healing practices (Edwards, 1986; Mohyuddin, Khan, Chaudhry, & Ambreen, 2013).

Another research revealed the facts that people do tend to follow the methods that are traditional alternative healing practices as well as spiritual healing and have seemed to seek benefit out of those alternative healing methods (Jonas & Crawford, 2003). This suggests that through the spiritual healing practices, individuals do seek benefit and that is the reason why a number of people are following the practices and it is quite understandable from the cultural as well as an outsider point of view. One would think that spiritual healing methods are only related to religion or anything that has something to do with the human soul, spirituality or the like. However, on the contrary, the biological illnesses have been also found out to be resolved by using the spiritual healing techniques (Abbot et al., 2001; Wirth, 1995).

It would be inappropriate to make one healing practice to be dominant over another and to regard any of the healing methods as primitive because the end result is basically to get the desired outcome results. People do tend to approach the ways that are more traditional and that also emphasis on the spirit world, religion and the supernatural forces (Ndzovu, 2013, Struthers, Eschiti & Patchell, 2004). These practices are the complementary and the alternative healing methods and people do actually get benefits out of it. Not only that but it is also being observed that people in the developing countries do tend to seek help from the traditional healing practices (WHO, 2002) as well as there are those that seek help from using both medical as well as ritualistic healing practices of sorcery and possession (Quack, 2014; Halliburton, 2009).

There are healing practices that tend to have a belief system suggesting that when the harmony and balance of the life forces are disrupted, it results in causing problems in an individual's life. It includes social, emotional as well as physical balances that could be restored back to normal (Struthers, Eschiti & Patchell, 2004). It could be magnificently explained through another study conducted in the Navajo culture that mentions one of the case that needs to be quoted here: In my culture medicine is performed by a hataalii, someone who sees a person not simply as a body, but as a whole being... Body, mind,

and spirit are seen as connected to other people, to families... And even to planet and universe. (Alvord & Van Pelt, 1999, p. 3)

This suggests that the spiritual healing does seem to be having an impact on the psychological as well as certain physical dimensions. There are, however, certain elements involved in the process as well for example; the degree of bonding and communication between the spiritual healer as well as the patient is a main factor in the process of healing (Wirth, 1888).

Although it is a bit difficult to make an understanding of a phenomenon that is not visible to the naked human eye but the changes that the individuals' feels and experience are also, at the very same time, inevitable. The spiritual healing is basically aimed at tapping into the energy field also known as the 'aura', of the individual that basically exists around and inside an individual. This energy field of the individual that penetrates the physical body has an impact on the wellbeing as well as health of the individual. This concept could be easily explained with an example. If the waterfall is properly channeled in the right direction, it helps in producing the energy and gives light (Barrick, 2005). This very same principle of channeling the energy in the right way could be explained with reference to the spiritual healing.

### **2.1:13 Alternative Healing Methods from Pakistani Perspective**

The main focus of this study is on the healing methods that exist in the view of Pakistani context and what kinds of practices do they seek for the healing. In Pakistan, a study was conducted to find out about the approaching ways of the people for getting healed and the results suggested that people prefer opting for self care, herbal remedies as well as the spiritual healing methods for curing (Anwar, Green, Norris, & Bukhari, 2015). It suggests that the existence of the alternative healing methods in the scenario of Pakistan do seem to be quite common in many areas (Minhas et al., 2015; Mohyuddin, Khan, Chaudhry, & Ambreen, 2013).

In Pakistan, there are a number of methods that are used for the healing and it includes religious, spiritual and traditional healing practices (DeLoach & Swaroop, 2014). Similarly, in many other Islamic societies, people do tend to opt for the religious healing methods (Ndzovu, 2013). Pakistan is a developing country that is also related to the

religion, collectivist society and a region with a dominant culture. All of these aspects are quite related in the context of the country and this also explains that the practices that are alternative to, or are taken side by side with the medical healing methods, are quite applicable in the Pakistani scenario. Through the personal interest, the practice of Sufi healing method as a spiritual healing technique is taken forward for the study.

## **2.2 Sufi Healing Practices**

Rahman (2014, p.2-8) elaborates about the Sufi spiritual healing by stating that:

“Sufi spiritual healing is neither a magic nor a mysterious process but is in fact very natural instinct with which every human being is born but fail to actualize this potential power”.

Moreover, he further elaborates about the healing practices and distinguish them to be of the four major types namely:

- 1) Modern (counseling therapy)
- 2) Traditional (homeopathy, reiki, acupuncture etc.)
- 3) Spiritual (including breathing exercises, hypnosis etc.), and
- 4) Divine spiritual power (zikr, meditation etc.)

So, basically, depending on the nature of the problem and the region to where an individual belongs, there are certain ways devised and being practiced for the cure of different types of illnesses. There are spiritual ways of healing in which the use of ‘energy’ is used which is referred differently in different cultures. So, this is how the spiritual practices actually work and they make use of that specific ‘energy’ that helps out the healing process. The Sufi healing practice had not only been given importance in the old times, but is also recognized in the world we are living in today.

He further categorizes the Sufi healing methods into the following three parts:

- 1) Body related

2) Related to mind and emotions

3) Related to the soul

Therefore, depending on the kind of problem, there are different kinds of Sufi healing practices that are practiced differently in different regions of the world (Basu, 2014; Kiymaz, 2002, p. 12-13; Rahman, 2014; Rytter, 2014). Sorcery, which is the main focus for this study, is taken as the problem which is related to the human soul and the Sufi healing method of *zikr-e-qalbi* is taken as a healing method for this particular study which will further be discussed but before doing that, there needs to be further discussion on other related areas as well.

Sufism is recognized as the science of the inner self and focuses mainly on ejecting the diseases of the heart that includes aspects like jealousy, deceit, envy and doubt etc. (Schimmel, 1975). There are, however, certain practices within the sphere of Sufism, which are also aimed at healing the person as well. The Sufi healing practices is fundamentally the healing methods that are practiced by the Sufis and the basic ideology behind the Sufi healing is that the Allah is the True Healer Himself and the Sufi (who is supposed to heal the individual) acts as a mediator (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014).

People do seem to approach Sufi methods for getting their domestic, physical and spiritual (sorcery related) problems healed through consulting the *Sheikhs*<sup>3</sup> and other related practices even if they are living in the developed European countries (Rytter, 2014) which further entails that not only could the Sufi practices be used as method for the fulfillment of spiritual requirements of an individual, but it could also be used as a method for alternative healing as well for the problems that are spiritual and also physical in nature.

### **2.2.1 Types of Sufi Healing Practices**

Choosing the charismatic healer may depend on a number of reasons that includes: personal preferences, religious orientation and the family tradition (Rytter, 2014). However, there are different healing methods for the physical as well as the spiritual

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<sup>3</sup> Spiritual teacher of the Sufi practice (singular Sheikh, plural *Sheikhs*)

illnesses within the framework of Sufism. The healing practices involve the use of verses from The Holy Quran (which is the Holy Book for Muslims), some give amulets with the Holy names of Allah written on it, other Sufi practices involve the concept of *dam*<sup>4</sup> (breath) in which verses are blown by the healer over the affected individual. Similarly, there are many other practices within the domain of Islam that are performed to ward off the illness of the soul as well as the body (Kiymaz, 2002, p. 12-13).

The concept of *dam*<sup>5</sup> does exist in Islam and it could also be traced back to the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in which his disciples once carried out *dam* of Surah Al-Fateha over a person who got bit by a snake (Awan, 2011, p.106). But *dam* needs to be carried out when the meaning of the recited words or verses are known and it is not likely to get *dam* of something which cannot be deciphered or comprehended. In addition to that, the person who is carrying out *dam* needs to be pious and must possess the knowledge about religion otherwise *dam* cannot be performed by someone who does not have the understanding of it. The effectiveness of *dam* relies on the person who is carrying it out (Awan, 2015, p. 60-62). Not only that, but the sheikh could use the method of protective *tawiz* (amulet) or *dam* (Rytter, 2014).

An ethnographic study conducted in India suggested that there are a number of psychiatric issues, sorcery problems and exorcism cases that are resolved through the involvement of the Sufi practices (Basu, 2014) and another study conducted on the transnational Sufi practices revealed the piece of information about the people getting benefits and staying connected far away, seek for spiritual as well as other related help (Rytter, 2014).

In the process of healing, the relationship of the murid (disciple) with the sheikh (spiritual father/teacher) is considered to be very important. The sheikh is basically the religious figure who has achieved this role through observing the ways of living the right way including pious lifestyle and learning and is gifted with Baraka (a blessing). The sheikh's spiritual genealogy could be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This further

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<sup>4</sup> It is the Islamic practice of blowing verses/prayers (provided by Allah) through breath over an individual for healing.

<sup>5</sup> The process of exhaling of breath directed at the glass of water, any food substance to be consumed or directly over the person for the transference of Baraka/blessings.

gives the sheikh with spiritual power that could help in healing as well as helping out the people of the societies (Rytter, 2014). But even if the person is not the disciple of a Sufi, that person could still be healed and get benefits in the process.

So, what specific thought is the main focus in the Sufi healing method? According to the Islamic Sufi consideration, the diseases come from the God (Allah) and He is the one who would cure it. If an individual is affected by sorcery, the argument suggests that the methods and practices which would be divine and holy would eventually help in countering it and the individual would be able to live the normal life again.

For this study, the Sufi Islamic practice of zikr-e-qalbi would be taken as a method that counters the negative effects of the sorcery because, purification of heart and countering the negative effects of sorcery are two different outcomes out of many others of zikr-e-qalbi. It is required that the victim purifies the heart through this practice and cleanses himself or herself of the negative effects. Zikr is also a method that is used for the healing purposes and the Sufi healing process of zikr-e-qalbi that has been made into focus for this particular study would be a combination of both spiritual as well as the Divine spiritual power method that is being put forward by Rahman (2014).

Anything that purifies the soul and body would eventually also help in fighting the evil as well. So, the argument leads us to believe that since sorcery has the negative effects on an individual's life and zikr is a purifying method for cleansing, it would be also a healing method to fight the sorcery effects. Heart is of importance in Sufism and the purification as well as the well being of it is the main concern which is why it is under discussion here in the text.

The concept of zikr in general as well as zikr-e-qalbi would be further explained in the text below with reference to different scholars:

### **2.2.2 Defining Zikr**

The term Zikr in Urdu carries a lot of meanings including mentioning, remembering or referring. It is also referred to as repeatedly invoking God's name when the term of practicing or doing zikr is used (Qureshi, 1971; p.332). The reason why it has been taken in the context of Urdu is because it is the national language of the country and is mostly

made into use by many people to communicate and for making any kind of conversation. The word needs to be contextually analyzed and defined which would be carried out in the following text:

The word Zikr (sometimes also referred to as Zikar or Ziker in English language) literally means 'Remembering' and T.B Hughes (1885, p.703) defines it as:

"The religious ceremony or act of devotion, which is practiced by the various religious orders of Faqirs, or Dervishes."

With the above definition, it is quite clear that through the religious practices, the remembrance is carried out. The concept of Zikr is also defined as:

"Every action whether it is a Farz (Obligatory), Wajib (Necessary), Sunnah, or Mubah (proper/permissible), includes the Remembrance of Allah, and is therefore Zikr" (Awan, 2013c, p. 2).

And,

whatever an individual does, and if it makes that person remembrance of Allah, it could be regarded as zikr (Awan, 2014a, p. 204).

When the concept of Zikr is explained from the lens of Sufi practice, the religious Sufi practice of Zikr is performed to become closer to the Creator and this concept has existed among the Muslim Sufis all around the world. This practice of Zikr not only purifies the mind but also the soul which helps the soul further to reach the stages of the spiritual world. So, the main idea is basically the purification of the heart, body as well as the soul from the evil. The practice that purifies the soul would eventually also help in fighting the evil effects of the sorcery as well for the reason that the sorcery is considered to be an evil act.

There are different ways of doing Zikr and the forms of Zikr have been explained in different ways by different scholars. Hughes (1885, p.703) explains two main divisions of Zikr namely *Zikr Jali* and *Zikr Khafi*. Zikr Jali is the Zikr which is recited out loud and

the former type of Zikr is performance in low voice or mentally. He further mentions that *Naqshbandiah* order of Faqirs usually perform Zikr Khafi whereas, *Chishtiyah* and *Qadiriya* orders celebrate the Zikr Jali.

Whereas, another division of Zikr by Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan of the same concept which is as follows:

1. *Zikr-e-Amli* (Practical zikr)

Practices ranging from worshipping and covering all the worldly affairs, fall in this category.

2. *Zikr-e-Lasaani* (Oral zikr)

This type of zikr includes tasbeehaat, Darood shareef and recitation of the Holy Quran.

3. *Zikr-e-Qalbi* (Zikr with heart)

It is a method of Zikr, within the heart, which cannot be discerned even by the Recording Angels<sup>6</sup>. It is also termed as Zikr-e-khaffi (Awan, 2013c, p. 2-3).

Hughes (1885, p. 703) further mentions about zikr-e-khafi/qalbi by stating: *Zikr khafi*, or that which is performed in either a low voice or mentally. Closing his eyes and lips, he says, "with the tongue of the heart," *Allahu Sami'un*, "God the Hearer." *Allahu Basirun*, "God the Seer." *Allahu 'Alimun*, "God the Knower".

### 2.2.3 Muraqabah (Meditation) as a Continuation of Zikr

There are a number of ways that have been known to the people all around the world that involve using the meditation technique. The same concept is used as a muraqabah and is also considered as a way of doing meditation. Muraqabah word exists in the Urdu literature and the literal meaning of the word in English means observation, meditation, or to be absorbed in the meditation (Qureshi, 1971, p. 578).

Another act of devotion, which usually accompanies the *zikr*, is that of *Muraqabah*, or meditation. The worshiper first performs *zikr* of the following: - *Allahu haziri*, "God who

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of recording angels exist in Islamic, Christianity and Judaic ideologies that states that God has assigned certain angels with the task to record the events, actions, prayers etc.

is present with me." *Allahu naziri*, "God who sees me." *Allahu ma'i*, "God who is with me." (Hughes, 1885, p. 703)

#### **2.2.4 Impact of Zikr-e-Qalbi on Human Soul/Rooh**

The concept of nafs, soul and heart has been beautifully explained by Imam Ghazzali R.A who is a well known Muslim scholar in his book 'The Alchemy of eternal bliss' (2001) in which he has mentioned that, the way a deaf person signifies that there is some kind of defect in the ear, similarly, the soul becomes sick when it is deprived of the food that it is designed to take in. This food of the soul is basically the 'Marafat' (meaning direction, path or a way) of Allah. And when an individual does not take in any of that and does not find it in the heart, which is when the individual feels sick or ill (p.748-750). The zikr-e-qalbi is basically the way of providing that specific food for the human soul that not only helps in the spiritual gains, but also helps in resolving the related illnesses.

#### **2.2.5 Sufi Practices and Factors Involved**

In the discipline of spirituality, the chain and the lineage is very important. This is not only part of the Sufism but also in many practices of yoga and other spiritual practices for the reason that not only the message, but the transmission of the energy of the message is also part of the process. The basic aim of the Sufi's and the related practices is the 'nearness' to the Creator. Through having a Sheikh (Spiritual teacher), one becomes initiated in receiving the energy. It is not something that could be learned from the books but could be felt. It is not obligatory for the Sheikh to be present because the spiritual link can go beyond the distance. The Sheikh is basically considered as the 'door' through which people can attain energy. A lot of attention has been paid to the heart and to clear the negative emotions that might come in the way of daily functioning of an individual (Mason, 2004).

Sufism is basically spiritual practice within Islam that is based on the spirituality of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The lineage is traced back to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through the series of spiritual masters. It could be described as a way or a passageway of reaching Allah (The God). It includes spiritual knowledge as well as spiritual powers. It does involve the orthodox Islamic practices as well including daily

prayers, some of the prohibitions relating to diet as well as everyday meditation of worshiping. These practices are not only beneficial for the attainment of spiritual benefits but also have other positive health benefits as well. It is not mostly accepted or exercised by all of the Muslims (Micozzi, 2001, p.381-386)

This is why the concept of lineage is quite important in the process. The lineage that the zikr-e-qalbi practice follows is named as the ‘Silsila Naqshbandia Owaisiah’ and it traces back to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is currently headed by Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan and the details of which will further be given in the locale section.

### **2.2.6 Bridging the Gap between Sufi Practice and Islam (Spirituality and Religion)**

Spirituality and religion are mostly used as a separate entities rather than making the view to be as interdependent and diffused. Religion is seen as an institution that is considered to be rigid and formally constructed whereas, spirituality on the other hand, is referred to as something that is related to the individual’s own personal experience. The terminologies or phrases that most of the people have been using nowadays that ‘spiritual but not religious’ or ‘spiritual and religious’ have lead to a concept of distinction and separation of the two terms. Furthermore, there have been surveys and studies that have reported individuals that seek spiritual means in their lives most of the time. On the other hand, there are also findings of the studies in which individuals reported to be both spiritual and religious.

This does imply that there exist a relation between the two terminologies but much has not been said about it. There are interesting findings in the previously conducted studies in which most of the participants regard themselves as both spiritual and religious. It could be said that the both concepts are also intertwined however much has not been researched upon particularly in this field. For some, spirituality is linked with the supreme power while for the others, spirituality could also mean something to be obtained from objects and whatever pleases them becomes spiritual (Hill et al., 2000).

The term ‘religion’ basically originated from the Latin word *religio* which elaborates and is a sign of a presence of bond between humanity and some greater-than-human power.

There have been at least three historical descriptions being identified from this term that are (Wulf, 1997):

- 1) Individuals motivated or committed to a supernatural power,
- 2) The presence of feeling among individuals who conceive such power, and
- 3) The rituals or acts that are carried out in respect of that particular power.

On the other hand, most of the spirituality understandings are characterized by researcher in the three main categories that are (Spilka, 1993):

- 1) A God oriented spirituality; where practices and thoughts are based on theologies,
- 2) A world oriented spirituality; that stresses on the relationship with the nature or ecology, and
- 3) A people oriented or humanistic spirituality; stressing on the human potential or achievement.

### **2.2.7 Zikr-e-Qalbi as a Spiritual Sufi Method for Countering Sorcery**

As mentioned before, the literature reveals that sorcery is linked with the 'evil' in many of the dominant religions and there also exists the concept of evil and sorcery and many methods have been devised to counter it. The practice of zikr-e-qalbi countering sorcery would be a new phenomenon to understand in the literature because this is the method that would be practiced by the victim himself or herself. Although there is no previous study conducted on the phenomenon that is why the literature could not be included in this section.

It would also be very interesting to find out what the victim have to say about the whole experience and what are their overall views and personally going through the entire situation of being effected and to getting out of the entire situation through the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Before practically going to the field and getting involved in the fieldwork, there were a number of things that were kept into focus. The main aim was whether the data will be available or not and how will it be gathered. The research was designed in accordance with these queries. This was carried out so that, the process would involve the minimum amount of issues as well as limitations.

Qualitative research method was used for this research and the data was collected through the interview method (both semi structured as well as unstructured interviews). The data was gathered from those females only that had been affected by sorcery themselves and those who have approached the method of zikr-e-qalbi to heal and cleanse themselves out of the negative effects. For this study, purposive sampling technique i.e., the sorcery affected participants who are practicing zikr-e-qalbi; was carried out. There was a use of snowball technique in some phases of the research and the affected females were approached due to the fact that they were known to be either the most severe or the most successful cases. There was use of the telephonic interview (though seldom), focus group discussions, photography, informal conversations and participant observation.

The fieldwork formally started on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 and ended formally on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2016 which is about six and a half months time period, in Dar-ul-Irfan Munara, District Chakwal. However, there were a few visits to the fields prior to the actual date of initiating the fieldwork that involved the process of taking permission to carry out the research, the purpose of the study as well as discussing the ways of performing the research.

The researcher asked for permission to sit in the place known as ‘dara’ at the time of the day where people come for a number of reasons and they come and sit there. Due to personal interest in the Sufi practice predominantly, the researcher visited the place Dar-ul-Irfan and it further helped in knowing about the primary information and knowledge about the subject.

During the stay there, the researcher covered head and the dress worn was warm shalwar kameez or kameez trousers with a shawl over the head which is a traditional dressing in

the country. Most time of the day, the researcher had to go to the Dara where the observations were carried out. It's a cabin like structure that is open from the sides. There is a separate sitting area for the females as well where there are chairs and tables arranged for them to wait.

In dara, there is the main office where Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan who is the sheikh of the Silsila Naqshbandia Owasiah<sup>7</sup>, sits and people come in the official timings for taking the amulets and to meet him for spiritual guidance. Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan met his sheikh Allah Yar Khan at the age of 24 and remained in his supervision for 25 years. He acquired all of the Islamic knowledge and spiritual blessings from his sheikh directly and did not receive any formal education at any religious institution. He was then assigned the duty of becoming the sheikh of the Silsila Naqshbandia Owasiah by his sheikh to keep the practice living. He has written the tafseer<sup>8</sup> the Holy Quran and is also the dean of the Siqarah Education System.

The researcher positioned herself and sat there at dara regularly from 10am till 2pm (except Fridays and Mondays). Weekends were the busiest days and many people from the country belonging to even far off cities also used to come. The researcher managed to make small or long talks to them by having conversations related to their problems most of the time and about general subjects. The surrounding place is hilly and in the winter the weather gets dry and really chilly which is why, the initial phase of the research posed a bit challenge.

### **3.1 The Interview Process:**

Through the following techniques, data was collected:

### **3.2 Sampling Techniques**

The first level of sampling was the choice of Dar-ul-Irfan for the research. This choice was made to select Dar-ul-Irfan for the main reason that the Sufi practice of this nature

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<sup>7</sup> It is the Sufi order which could be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through a chain of saints. This Sufi order implies the method in which blessings could be achieved by the through Awaisee (Hazrat Awais Qarni R.A achieved blessings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by not physically being there in His (PBUH) company) method without staying in the company of Sheikh. It is currently headed by Sheikh Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan.

<sup>8</sup> It is the interpretation of the Holy Quran.

(i.e., zikr-e-qalbi) is practiced and preached here and this is the main centre of it. People from all around Pakistan belonging to different cities, as well as from other countries (though seldom) come and visit this place for doing zikr. During the fieldwork and the process of data collection, the sampling technique that was implied was snowball sampling method as well as purposive sampling method. This was essentially the second level of the sampling and the individuals that were affected by sorcery were predominantly being asked questions and conversations were conducted. Not only that, but the inclusion criteria was also to have maximum conversations with the affected individuals with only those who were also healed by zikr-e-qalbi and were previously affected by sorcery. People came for numerous other reasons that included taking amulets for several mild and critical medical problems (included cancer, major and minor illnesses as well as diseases), spirit possession and sorcery.

Generally, females came here to visit Dara for a day trip that involved spending about an hour at the locale; and within that time period, the data was collected. There were some cases that had to live for a couple of days due to the severity of their problems and were asked to regularly do zikr and take the amulets.

The age of the respondents ranged from the 18 to 65 years and a total of more than 25 conversations and interviews were conducted. The overall process of this research was qualitative in nature for the reason that an in depth and the underlying meanings of the process could be analyzed and then described through the process of this research.

### **3.3 Profile**

The respondents that were interviewed and with whom the conversations were carried out were both educated as well as a few cases were of females that did not gain a formal degree. The majority of the participants that the researcher had come across were of educated background. All of the cases that the researcher had encountered were house wives with one case that had a small business of sewing centre in her house. The age of the respondents was recorded to be 18 years minimum and 65 years maximum while the majority of the participants were in their 30's or 40's. The mainstream of the respondents

could afford the medical treatment methods and had a well off lifestyle which was assessed by their choice of attire, transportation as well as other related factors.

### **3.4 Informal and Semi-Structured Interviews**

During the process of data collection, the information was gathered with the help of semi structured and informal interviews. This additionally was quite helpful in the research for the reason that it provided an easy flow of information as well as it became very convenient and quite more suitable to build a rapport in such a concise time. The semi structured interviews essentially covered the aspects that included: what are the effects of sorcery on an individual? How has zikr-e-qalbi helped the victim in their life? Why do they practice it and what are the associated factors with the sorcery?

Listening to the conversations amid people was very helpful during the data collection process. When people discussed problems with each other, it became very effective for the researcher to be a good listener rather than asking the questions and making anyone either uncomfortable or distracting the ongoing conversation subject matter. This additionally helped in accessing a continuous flow of the data. This was carried out in the process of informal conversations, FGD as well as in the unstructured interviews specifically.

The informal interviews were effective in an smooth gathering of the information for the fact that people usually do not feel comfortable in openly discussing the matter of sorcery and it is considered as a taboo because there are so many associated cultural pressures quite specifically in case of the females. So, the informal interviews assisted both the researcher as well as the respondents during the process and it made the informants a lot more comfortable and lesser reluctant while sharing the information.

### **3.5 Focused Group Discussions (FGD)**

FGD's assisted in the gathering of plentiful information in such a short period of time and in having the understanding of the gaps in the information. It also provided an in depth information about the process as well from the perspective of the respondent's view point. The information was collected on a note pad and if necessary, the responses were also told to be repeated so that the right information could be recorded and noted down.

The number of respondents in both of the FGDs conducted was five respondents and the focus of the FGD revolved around the gender influences in sorcery as well as the sorcery impact on an individual in general. The FGD also focused on finding the relation of the zikr-e-qalbi with the healing process of sorcery.

### **3.6 Photography**

Photography was used for taking the pictures of the places that were important to be mentioned in the documentation process. Pictures of the female participants could not be taken for the reason that there is a concept of observing purdah<sup>9</sup> in the place and overall in most of the other areas that could be related to the locale as well. For this reason dominantly, the pictures of the respondents could not be taken. Upon asking about the permission for photography, the researcher was allowed to carry out the locale photography. Photography basically provides the visual image of the process and helps in a better understanding of the area. It further helped in capturing the significant places that were important for the research.

### **3.7 Field Jottings**

A personal diary was used during the course of field work that involved mentioning of the personal feelings as well as the challenges that were faced by the researcher during the field research. The diary included the questions and the missing spaces that were kept as a reminder so that it could help in gaining more access to the data and also in establishing connections of certain phenomenon. Additionally, it helped in writing the responses of the unstructured interviews that had to be written down immediately that helped in re-remembering of the whole interview and the conversation. The diary was frequently used for having a written record of the data.

During the times when there was a flow of data by the respondents, the researcher used to immediately jot down the information in the smart phones which was the most convenient method for me rather than using a piece of paper or anything else. That way,

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<sup>9</sup> Purdah is recognized as a regional term of the form of clothing or screening of females from the strangers or men. It is not particularly associated with the dressing solely but is also related in other dimensions such as not taking pictures or recording voice because it could be seen or heard by another person respectively.

the researcher neither disrupted the conversation and at the same time, the information was also gathered systematically. During the FGD, jottings helped in asking other related questions that further helped in gaining the in depth access to the knowledge and the nature of the problem. The usage of smart phone was not only convenient in the process of noting down the information but also helped a lot more than a piece of paper because papers or note pad was not always with the researcher in the field.

### **3.8 Secondary Data**

Secondary data was one of the most helpful techniques in gathering of the arguments and questions and in establishing the connections of the data. During the course of field work, the researcher took the articles and journals along on the laptop that further assisted in the formation of the questions and also in making certain links that would not have been solely possible only through depending on the research. Internet was not available in the fieldwork so the researcher downloaded anthropological articles from valid journals and took some books (both in the soft copy and hard binding) so that the process of literature gathering and making actual use of it in the fieldwork also keeps on going.

It additionally helped in elaborative understanding of the topic. At some points during the fieldwork, the researcher would get supplementary information related to the subject matter and then she went back home and further explore it. That information that was gathered through the research was also supplemented by the secondary data that further made the researcher think about the widespread themes of the sorcery among different regions. There were some connections and likeness of the same concept among different parts of the world. In the whole process, the association between the secondary data and the data collected during the research, was made into used that made the research process even more applicable and understandable.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

Following were the ethical considerations that were kept into focus while doing the research:

- The information was not shared with anyone that the respondents forbade from sharing. This was due to the personal experiences and the taboo that is attached with the concept of sorcery and that might become problematic for them in their lives.
- There was a complete confidentiality and names were neither written nor shared with anyone.
- If the respondents were reluctant to share their information, they were neither probed nor asked about over and over again so that they do not feel uncomfortable.
- Recording was not carried out during the conversations during the FGD due to the purdah of voice.
- The photography of the affected females could not be done because of pardah.
- Before collection the data through conversations and conducting interviews, the consent and permission was taken from the head in charge of both female and male wing and the entire research idea was discussed.
- Permission was taken for the researcher to be seated in the dara from Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan, which is a place where people come to meet their sheikh and ask for amulets. This whole process took about two weeks and after that, proper data collection phase started.

### **3.10 Data Collection and Challenges Faced**

There were a few cases when Punjabi sometimes posed challenge but that happened quite rarely. When such situation happened, the researcher had to cross question the respondent to understand the meaning of the statement. So, through the non-verbal gestures and through other ways of asking question, the question was made understandable for the respondent and the response was also cross checked through this method. For example, there was a one case of a female that started talking in Punjabi first but she knew Urdu as well. So, to express her thoughts, she merged Urdu as well as Punjabi for making the

researcher understand her feelings. But other than that, there were no serious challenges that had been encountered by the researcher.

### **3.11 Reflexive Ethnography**

For participant observation, it becomes really important at some occasions and quite challenging at the same time because the researcher has to be also giving information in order to get some. Otherwise there is no information sharing by the respondent and the respondent is reluctant to share information. For a complete stream of information, the respondent also needs to provide a proper conversation in order to create a comfort zone for the respondent and also to get maximum amount of information. This also includes informal talk like talking about the family etc. It was a bit difficult for the researcher in the beginning because the researcher focused more on getting information in the beginning. But after some time of having conversations, things started to make sense and the researcher started the conversation by doing informal talks like ‘where have you come from? Did you come here in good health etc’? With that, the respondent became even more comfortable and started to share the personal information. Personal feelings were kept aside for utmost valid data. So, in this way being a researcher the researcher had to position herself to get the quality and the most valid information.

### **3.12 Rapport Building**

Although there was a limited time with the respondents that the researcher would get to spend with the respondents. But within that time period, the researcher started by asking some informal conversations like for example, greeting them or responding to their greeting. It was further followed by asking them indirect question if they had come with good health and wellbeing. This is how it became smooth and a lot more comfortable process rather than asking anyone bluntly or directly about their problems.

## 4. LOCALE

Dar-ul-Irfan has been selected as the location of ethnographic research which is in the Munara region of the district Chakwal but before talking about the research area profile, it would be appropriate to have the detailed review of the Chakwal district itself along with the surrounding habitat etc. because Dar-ul-Irfan lies within this district. In order to understand the physical and geographical context of the locale, it would be significant to have the area profile of Chakwal explained in detail which is as follows:

### 4.1 Chakwal: Area Profile

Dar-ul-Irfan lies in the city/district of Chakwal (located in Punjab) which includes four tehsils<sup>10</sup> in it namely: Chakwal, Choa Saidan Shah, Kalar Kahar and Talagang. Chakwal was given the position of district in the year of 1985. About 1,652,443 acres (6524 km<sup>2</sup>) area is covered by the district. The total population of the area is about 1267,000 people (618,000 males and 649,000 females) and the density of the population within this district is about 194 people per square kilometers. There are vocational training institutes both for men and women in the area. About 1,04,936.55 Hectares area is covered by the forests which is roughly about 14.57% of the total area of district (IRM, 2012; Malik, 2009; PMDFC, 2006).

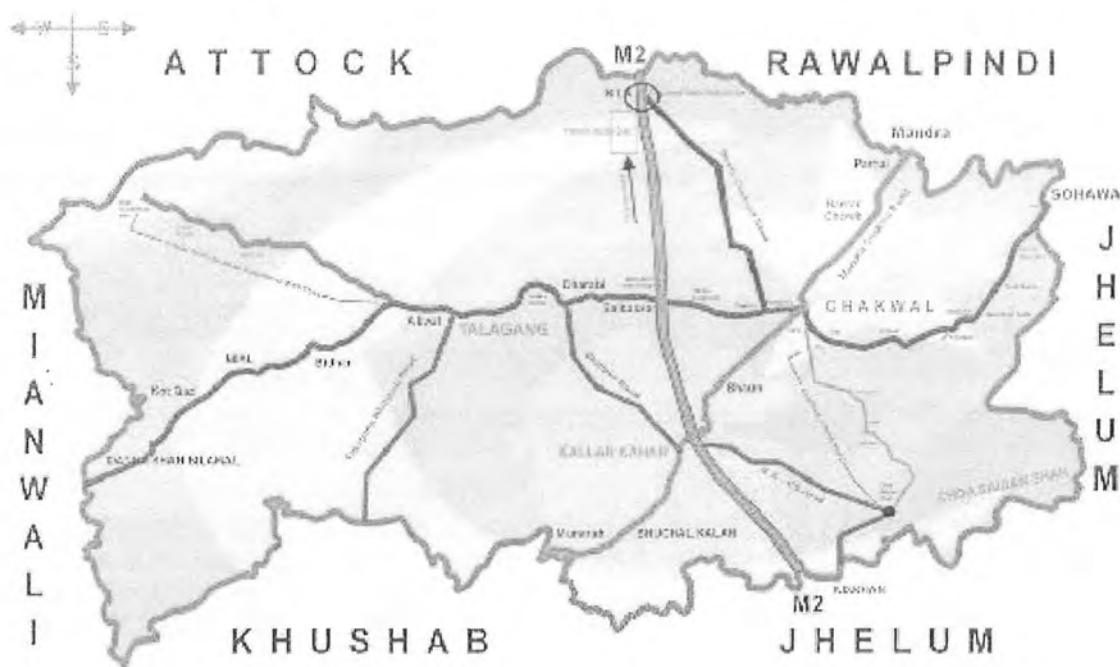
The road length in the district is measured to be 2552.66 kilometers and it links up the district with other major cities of the country including: Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Khushab, Mianwali and Attock. Whereas, the motorway (M-2) helps in linking the district from Lahore to Rawalpindi which is about 200-250 km (Malik, 2009). The Chakwal district borders the districts of Rawalpindi and Attock in the north, Khushab in the south, Jhelum in the east and Mianwali in the west respectively. During the British colonial rule, Chakwal was a district of the Jhelum district (IRM, 2012).

Following are the maps of the Chakwal city:

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<sup>10</sup> Tehsil is basically an administrative division of the city or a town that serves as its administrative centre.

Figure 5. Map of Chakwal district



(Source: <http://www.mappk.com/chakwal-union-councils-uc-elections-update/>)

Figure 6. Map of Chakwal showing surrounding cities



(Source: <http://www.tmachakwal.com/Maps/BM.pdf>)

#### **4.1.1 Climate and Geographical Layout**

The weather surrounding the area is intense in summers and winters and is on average recorded to be 42°C (maximum) and 8°C (minimum). The average rain is recorded to be about 880mm. The area is predominantly hilly but valleys and plain areas could also be seen around the area. Water is a bit scarce and most parts of this region is deficient from water resources (Malik, 2009).

#### **4.1.2 Power Supply and Availability of the Natural Gas**

The power supply is given to the district with 6 grid stations and hold the capacity of 66 KV to 132 KV. The natural gas facility is only limited to two tehsils of Chakwal and Choa Saidan Shah respectively (Malik, 2009). Gas cylinders are used as a substitute to fulfil the basic needs in many parts of the district.

#### **4.1.3 Telecommunication Facility**

The district involves facility of the cellular networks as well as the phone line telecommunication services. There are about 65 exchanges of the telephone that includes the range of lines from about 48 to 6190 lines (Malik, 2009).

#### **4.1.4 Post offices and Banks**

According to the Punjab development statistics (2008), there are about 31 post offices and 78 banks in Chakwal district alone (Malik, 2009).

#### **4.1.5 Dress Pattern**

Traditional Pakistani dress of Shalwar Kameez and dupatta is worn by females whereas men are also mostly seen wearing shalwar kameez around the area. Older men are also seen wearing turbans over their head in the area of Buchaal, Nurpur and Miani that are a few kilometers distance away from Dar-ul-Irfan. The overall dress pattern is basically the traditional Pakistani dress in general.

#### **4.1.6 Language, the Communication Pattern, Ways of Addressing Each Other**

Punjabi is mostly spoken in the area including the dialects of dhani, majhi and pothwari/potwari. Besides Punjabi, Urdu is also spoken and people communicate in these

two languages. The signs of the houses, shops and the schools are written in Urdu and English around the area.

For referring and addressing each other, people use words like ‘baji’<sup>11</sup>, ‘bhaijan’<sup>12</sup>, ‘baba ji’<sup>13</sup> and ‘aapa or aapa jan’<sup>14</sup> to refer to each other and do carry a connotation of respect in it.

#### **4.1.7 Education**

There are a number of schools and a few colleges in the surrounding area of Miani and children do have to travel a few kilometers distance to gain the access of schooling. A military cadet college also runs in the region of Kalar Kahar.

#### **4.1.8 Transportation**

The most commonly used transportation services include usage of bikes as well as Qingqi<sup>15</sup>. Big trucks, tractors as well as buses are seen in the area. Females are seen travelling alone in these qingqi related transporting automobiles and are seen carrying shopping bags of the daily household bought items. In the shops, both males and females could be observed buying items for their daily needs. Not only that, but seldom one or two females were also seen driving their own cars. It could not be said whether they belonged to the area or not, but it was observed when I visited the bazaar for a few times.

#### **4.1.9 Family Pattern**

Predominantly, joint family system was found in the area in which the whole household was dependent on family ties. People are quite active in participating in the family events as well as in events that are related to the family solidarity for example marriages, deaths and other related significant life events. The local inhabitants that visited Dar-ul-Irfan

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<sup>11</sup> Used as a way for calling a female that is older than someone and it means ‘sister’ but with a hint of respect in it.

<sup>12</sup> This word is used for calling a male who is older and it carries a meaning of ‘brother’ out of respect.

<sup>13</sup> Used for male who is in his old age.

<sup>14</sup> Used for female who is older in age.

<sup>15</sup> It is an automobile with the front a bike and there is an open seating attachment on the back side on which the passengers can sit.

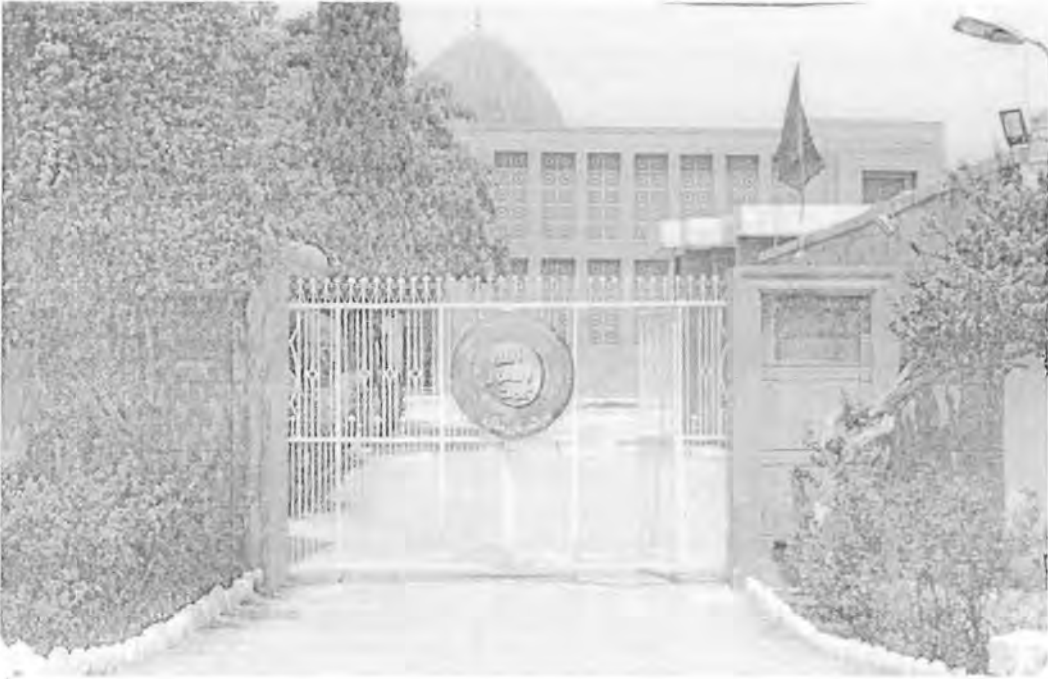
were asked questions regarding their family members as well as general questions about their life activities which is how this is how the data was gathered.

These were all the facts and characteristics regarding the district Chakwal as well as the surrounding region which is very important because Dar-ul-Irfan is part of the region and it becomes important to have the surrounding explained as well. In the following part of the chapter there will be further in depth description of the locale Dar-ul-Irfan specifically.

## **4.2 Dar-ul-Irfan**

For this particular study, Dar-ul-Irfan had been selected as the main locale which is located in Munara, District Chakwal. Dar-ul-Irfan (the name is in Arabic and it means house of light) is basically the centre of the order 'Silsila Naqshbandia Owaisiah' and it is aimed at the practice and spreading of the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi so that it is known to people all around the globe. Coming from the Rawalpindi motorway, the road that goes in the direction of Kalar Kahar must be chosen to reach the destination. On the way to Dar-ul-Irfan from Kalar Kahar, the areas of Buchal, Miani and Nurpur come in the way that are about 10 minutes driving distance away from each other. The distance is about 30 minutes long from Kalar Kahar under ideal road and traffic conditions.

**Figure 7. Entrance gate of Dar-ul-Irfan**



(Source: Author's own photography, 2016)

Dar-ul-Irfan includes a Siqarah education system for children on primary and college level in which the facility of a proper system of boarding facility is also present. Kids from the local areas and other parts of the country have been enrolled in the institute. Dar-ul-Irfan has a monthly magazine named 'Al-Murshid' that has the main focus on the Sufi teachings and zikr-e-qalbi with certain chapters that cover different themes. There is also a proper system of books publishing department as well as recording video and audio bayaans<sup>16</sup> that are delivered by Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan.

Through the newest means of website, social networking as well as other related means, people can listen to the audio, video speeches and literature online. It is not a Sufi shrine that is most commonly linked with Sufi practices in Pakistan rather it is more focused on the practice of zikr-e-qalbi.

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<sup>16</sup> Detailed speech.

Figure 8. Satellite view of the locale



(Source: Google maps, 2016)

#### 4.2.1 Physical Layout

The opening and closing timings of Dar-ul-Irfan are from fajr<sup>17</sup> prayer till 11pm at night. People mostly come for a day trip and seek out help for whatever their problem or matter is. Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan sits in his office from 10am to 2pm and meets the guests one by one who have come from different parts of the country and sometimes abroad. Dar-ul-Irfan includes an office area where people come known as dara, three canteens, mosque and mess facility that provides food for all the people living in Dar-ul-Irfan.

A day starts at very early morning right before the sunrise in which people offer tahajjud<sup>18</sup> prayer and zikr is practiced at that time. It is believed that zikr is considered essential to be practiced predominantly twice a day i.e., at the time of tahajjud and after

<sup>17</sup> It is one of the obligatory prayers of the five times daily prayer by the practicing Muslims that is offered before sunrise.

<sup>18</sup> It is the 'night prayer' which is basically a voluntary prayer that is performed by the Muslims.

maghrib<sup>19</sup> prayers. The school timings start at about 8am and students start arriving before that and they could be seen running in the playground. People are seen busy in their work and from 10 am to 2 pm, the office (Dara) of Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan different visitors come either to seek help for illness, problems, guidance or for meeting their sheikh for spiritual gain.

**Figure 9. Dara**



(Source: Author's own photography, 2016)

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<sup>19</sup> It is one of the obligatory prayers of the five times daily prayer by the practicing Muslims that is offered after the sunset.

**Figure 10. Sitting area for females at Dara**



(Source: Author's own photography, 2016)

**Figure 11. Sitting area for males at Dara**



(Source: Author's own photography, 2016)

### 4.2.2 Demographic Features

People from even very far off areas of Pakistan come here on a salana ijtima<sup>20</sup> which is 30-40 days long and people come here especially for worshipping and for zik-e-qalbi mainly. There is a proper time table that is followed and it is advised that no one uses mobile phones for the reason that people are advised to come solely for worshipping and they must only be focused on that. During the entire research, people that had been encountered by the researcher belonged to KPK, Punjab, Kashmir, Sindh and some also came from overseas countries including UK, Abu Dhabi, Africa and Japan.

### 4.2.3 Funding

The organization is self funded and is running through the finance of Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan. He owns coal mines as well as has a lot of lands, vegetation and crops. The crops include wheat, peanuts, grains and other related crops that are used for the langar/mess that is consumed by all the residents and visitors of Dar-ul-Irfan three times a day. Food is equally given to everyone and every single person in the organization consumes the same food. Those people that come for a day trip also visit dara, have lunch in the mess, offer their prayers in the mosque and then go back to their destinations without paying anything.

It is strictly discouraged to pay for the amulet as per the directions of Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan for the reason that the main goal is to spread the practice of zikr-e-qalbi so that people could benefit from it spiritually and the amulets are not given to people for the sake of money. The amulet does help in providing with quick healing; and not to get paid for the services. No visitor or guest is charged for the food all time of the year and it is up to the person whether they want to contribute to the organization voluntarily or not and it is not made compulsory. Everyone is treated equally whether they contribute or not and get the same food to eat for the meals. There is also no involvement of any foreign aid.

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<sup>20</sup> It is annual gathering of the people solely for practicing zikr as well as spending those days specifically for the religious practices in which all of the members are supposed to follow the time table that has been organized as per the directions of Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan. The duration is about 30-40 days long that includes regular zikr after every prayers, classes that includes teaching the basics of the prayers etc.

#### 4.2.4 Canteens

There are three canteens that are present in Dar-ul-Irfan, two on the male side and one on the females' portion. The canteens have all the important groceries that might be used by the people living in the Dar-ul-Irfan as well as those that came for visit. Dar-ul-Irfan is located a few kilometers away from the main market of the region which is why the canteens help out in ease for the people living in the place. It helps the students, visitors, guests and the residents an easy access of the daily usage items.

**Figure 12. Canteen and mess**



(Source: Author's own photography, 2016)

#### 4.2.5 Mosque

There is a mosque in Dar-ul-Irfan that has increased in its size over a number of time when more people started coming and attending different events in the place. The male and female side of the mosque is separated from each other. The prayer as well as the zikr-e-qalbi is practiced in the mosque. In the special days of gathering like Ijtimah (both monthly and annually) and Friday sermons, people stay in the mosque and gain

knowledge about the Sufi practice, practice zikr-e-qalbi and listen to the speeches that are delivered by Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan.

**Figure 13. Mosque**



(Source: Author's own photography, 2016)

#### **4.2.6 Market**

The markets are a few kilometers away from Dar-ul-Irfan and if someone wishes to buy any grocery or related item, it is bought from the markets in the areas of Miani, Buchal and Nurpur. The markets involve outside shop vendors selling fruit and vegetables as well as well build shops that involve selling of the newest technological gadgets like LED's, electric ovens, electric stoves as well as LCD's and so on. Hence, things that are used in daily routine of the people are all found in the market area. There are shops that deal with the businesses of coal industry as well as construction material and on the way from Kalar kahar to Dar-ul-Irfan, a number of stone cutting machineries as well as marble businesses could be seen on the way.

**Figure 14. Market area- A few kilometers distance away from Dar-ul-Irfan**



(Source: Author's own photography, 2016)

#### **4.2.7 Economic Structure**

People living in the surrounding areas of Dar-ul-Irfan are mostly involved in doing jobs in armed forces which was the information gathered through the informal conversations with the local inhabitants. There is a cadet college in the Kalar Kahar area that also explains the forces related jobs. In addition to that, females are seen doing teaching as well as manage their households at the same time. Some have also opted for foreign jobs.

#### **4.2.8 Technological Facilities**

There is usage of the speakers and microphones in the mosque of Dar-ul-Irfan in which the prayer call, bayaans/speeches, zikr-e-qalbi could be heard from.

#### **4.2.9 The Website of Dar-ul-Irfan**

There is a website of Dar-ul-Irfan which is updated almost daily in which the newest audio and video bayaans (speeches) of Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan are uploaded. The introductory information about the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi as well as about the entire related information is mentioned on the website. There is free access to some of the

books as well that includes the knowledge about the practice of zikr-e-qalbi. Following is the screenshot of the website:

Figure 15. Website screenshot



(Source: <http://www.oursheikh.org/Home.aspx>)

4.2.10 Aim of Dar-ul-Irfan

The basic aim of Dar-ul-Irfan is to make this Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi available and known to everyone. Everyone is invited and is allowed to practice it and there is no such compulsion or limitation of it. The aim is basically to do zikr twice a day.

Anyone belonging to any religion and doing any kind of job be it a male or a female can practice it. There are people that come from abroad and have been doing zikr-e-qalbi for the certain ‘feelings’ they attain after the practice. The main aim is to stay connected to Allah and keep the heart busy in doing zikr and one can also practice it even walking and lying down.

Following is the chart that shows the timings of doing zikr in a normal daily routine:

- Before sunrise i.e., tahajjud time

- After assar<sup>21</sup> prayer
- After maghrib prayer
- After isha<sup>22</sup> prayer

The timings of the zikr depend on the prayer timings which basically change over the year and are in accordance with the positioning of the sun. However, there are people that are also seen doing zikr by themselves whenever they feel like doing it. For the ijtimaai-zikr<sup>23</sup>, there are specific timings of the day that have been mentioned in the bullet points earlier. The Ijtimaa'i zikr spiritually gives more benefits for the reason that the zikr is conducted in the form of a group.

#### 4.2.11 Rules/Obligations for the Practice

There are no specific rules or obligations for carrying out of the practice and it is believed that the practice will guide the individual itself because it changes the heart and the ways of thinking. The practice of zikr-e-qalbi will itself guide the individual and make him/her choose the right path. People are told to do zikr at least twice a day for about half an hour so that they can get the beneficial outcomes. The method that has been told is through the heart and breathing.

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<sup>21</sup> It is one of the obligatory prayers of the five times daily prayer by the practicing Muslims that is offered in the afternoon.

<sup>22</sup> It is one of the obligatory prayers of the five times daily prayer by the practicing Muslims that is offered at the night time.

<sup>23</sup> It is the zikr that is carried out in the form of group.

## 5. SORCERY, MIND, HUMAN BODY AND SOUL

When the discussion arrives on the description of the impact of sorcery in an individual's life, four themes have been made by analyzing the whole data that was gathered in the whole process. Sorcery seems to have an impact on the human soul, human mind (Rytter, 2014) and eventually, the human body (Tonkinson, 1981, p. 77-88). It has been found out that when an individual's soul becomes weak in this world because of a number of reasons which would also be further explained in detail; the person becomes vulnerable and exposed to become a victim of sorcery. Otherwise, had the soul been strong, the person would not have been affected by it be it a male or a female.

The problematic situation occurs when the human soul becomes weaker and the impact of the sorcery becomes stronger. One could relate it to the protective shield that one would wish to wear against someone who seems to be attacking. If the person is not well protected (the soul), anyone that wishes to affect that person could become a victim of the act of sorcery and gets harmed. This is a very huge debate and there is an interaction of a number of reasons that do come into play. The questions that do come to a person's mind are: Why the human 'soul' when it cannot be seen? Why an idea that is totally related to a system of belief? And also, why bother doing something to protect it when one cannot see it? Well, the answer to all of these questions is that, there are individuals that do seem to be having healed and the process helped them as well which suggests that it could be a reality for someone who does believe in it.

Zikr-e-qalbi, as mentioned before, had been selected as a variable that basically helps the individual in gaining the feelings that are associated with this Sufi practice. However, this practice is taken as a healing method for this research study specifically and the concept of heart and soul is quite important for it because the idea is basically to have the heart and the soul cleaned out of anything that is immoral. Not only is it used as a method for elevating one's spiritual status, but also acts as a protection shield and as a positive energy by the practicing individual and that person cannot be effected by anything that is evil. Since sorcery is considered as an evil act, so, anyone that carries the 'good energy' will not be affected by the 'bad/evil energy'.

But the argument further leads to the discussion that if it is the soul that has been affected, why and how does the body gets involved in the process? The soul seems to be intangible and out of this world while on the other hand, the body is tangible and physical, then what is the relation? Is there any involvement of the human mind as well in the process or not? The interplay of these three factors of human mind, body and soul will also be discussed in detail in the later section. All of the sorcery affected victims that had been observed and interviewed in the participatory fieldwork, had severe problems of headaches, body pains and tingling sensation in the body, severe anger, anxiety, burning sensation of any particular body part, severe digestive and other psychological problems. The findings were then further divided into three main problem related categories for an easy understanding and a comprehensive explanation of the whole process, namely:

- Physical or body related problems
- Mental or psychological problems
- Spiritual or soul related problems

In the following section, the discussion will revolve around the physical problems, that were mostly described by the affected victims and the physical problems have further been made into categories (themes) that will also be explained in the section below:

## **5.1 Physical Problems**

The sorcery victims had explained a number of physical problems that were quite common and that were also related to other sorcery affected victims who have been interviewed. The physical symptoms involved problems like headaches, vomiting and digestive problems that will be discussed further as well. These problems were faced during a longer period of time and the distinguishing factor was that the medical practitioners could not diagnose and find any physical problem or cause for the illness. With this issue and in some cases, other paranormal activities in the house, the victims seemed to link the problem to be something that is not solely medical issue but rather seems to have other links as well. Basu (2014, p. 326-331) also explains that the physical problems are related to the sorcery and do seem to be having an impact on the individual's physical well being.

Furthermore, there is a relation of the body as well as the sorcery effects that could also be traced back to the reference of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He (PBUH) felt headache from the sorcery (Kaala jadu/black magic) and used the last two Surah's of the Quran to ward off the negative effects (Awan, 2004; p. 526-527). The same reference was provided by a participant in the FDG in which she made use of the same reference when the question was asked to have the link of the sorcery with the human body explained. Following is one of the responses of the FDG:

*'There is a direct relation of sorcery with the human body and it could be related with Prophet Muhammad (SAW) when He (SAW) was affected by sorcery and He (SAW) felt mild headache. But if an individual is strong spiritually, the effects are not so severe and could be resolved merely by reciting the maoozatain (sarah falak and surah naas) by the individual himself/herself over the body. This exists in the history of Islam so that if anyone gets affected by it, there is a remedial solution to it as well.'* (FGD# 01)

This explains that there is an existence of the sorcery with the physical problems of the individual because it is this physical body that is basically targeted by the people who are envious or jealous through the channel of sorcerers and they cast evil spells that directly makes the individuals have certain physical problems. During a conversation of the researcher with a female who was married and came from Jaswal<sup>24</sup>, she seemed to have experienced something unusual and the problem was physical in nature. She mentioned that:

*"I feel that something starts entering from the toe of my feet, it starts to warm up when this whole situation starts. Then my feet turn really hot and I feel something entering up and reach up in my head and starts to spin in front of my eyes. And when this happens, I cannot concentrate."* (Case #02).

She further explained that her kids sometimes also have the same tingling sensation in their feet as well but she hasn't told them that she also feels this way so that they do not get scared or feel something unusual and also so that they do not start over thinking about

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<sup>24</sup> It is the town of the Chakwal district and is about 1 hour drive from Dar-ul-Irfan.

these happenings. The physical problems caused by sorcery could further be explained through the following case studies:

#### ***Case Study 01***

*"My son sometimes hits me and my other kids who are older than him. People say that he was under effect of this problem since his childhood. I have also seen fire (twice) under my bed and sometimes my kids also get scared from time to time from certain things (she was referring to evil spirits). My son, whenever I recite Quran, comes and stops me, he covers my mouth and tells me not to do dam of the verses over him. When I ask him later about the situation, he doesn't have a memory about it and says that he neither said it nor did anything. A lot of snakes have been coming to my house that sometimes disappears or any of my kid kills it but they keep coming which is quite strange. I am also affected by it (sorcery). I have approached many peers and faqeers etc. but I think that it made the problem even worse. This place was suggested by a family friend with whom we meet. I had been planning to come here from quite a long time and I somehow managed to come here today."*(45 years old female, Khushab)

#### ***Case Study 02***

*"I have severe pain in my belly area which starts around 4pm and is at its peak in the evening and then it ends at the night. Once it got so painful that I was awake till 1am in the midnight. The pain starts from belly area and then it goes up towards my spine. I have had so many checkups from different doctors and they didn't find any medical or physical reason behind its cause. My youngest child got really scared that day from something that we do not know about because he is too young to have explained it and got temperature because of it. My husband doesn't believe in these concepts of sorcery etc. at all. But one day when we came back to our house there was blood all around the house walls and we got really scared. We showed pictures of the wall with blood stains all around to someone holding the spiritual knowledge about these issues who also approved that it was sorcery. We are the only ones living in the house and the kids are really small and there is no one at all playing with the blood or red color in the house. I also found a burnt shirt of my second son in the dustbin. We do not have any matchbox around the house anywhere. These kind of suspicious things have been happening and*

*then our mind came to believe this. My parents and my husband's parents do zikr regularly but we are not the regular doers to be honest. But I realized that the day when I did zikr, there was no bellyache at all and things got really well that day. I do try to do zikr because it helps me a lot and I hope that I will keep doing it. Amulets have been given which I will use. I came all the way from Rawalpindi here just for this because I was really worried about the issue. The problem started a few weeks back and I had been doing medical checkups for it and me and my husband did not even think that it would be sorcery or anything like it. We just thought it will be some viral issue. Because of these pains I couldn't do perform my prayers and when no medical reasons were found, and then later on, we started thinking about it from this aspect because of the happenings of the unusual things in the house. There could be someone who might be jealous of us because we are financially doing quite well. I do not know why people do this (sorcery) and are jealous of us. I have never said anything to anyone Alhamdulillah.” (29 years, female, Rawalpindi)*

In the following section, the physical problem of headaches will further be discussed:

### **5.1.1 Headaches**

Headaches seemed to be the most dominant problem among the affected victims and many of them mentioned it. The problems associated with the headaches also included dizziness and nausea as well. There was one female, who started vomiting because her head was spinning after she practiced zikr and got out in the ground because she was not feeling so good. Another quite similar thing happened with another female who mentioned that: *“I have started zikr right now and when I do it I feel nauseous my head spins”* (on that day she couldn't get out of bed and when I asked her if she needed something she told me it's ok! It happens to me once or twice in a week normally) (C1, married, 49 years old).

### **5.1.2 Digestive Problems**

When an individual becomes a victim of sorcery by another person that seems to be having problems that mostly involves envy and jealousy; the process involves the casting of the spell that are carried out in a number of ways and in one method, the food is given

to an individual that has been spelled upon. The sorcery containing item is ingested and is travelled in the whole body through the stomach (Basu, 2014). It could be one of the reasons for the stomach related issues in the human body. However, the digestive problems could be also linked with the improper dietary habits by an individual but the above mentioned literature does seem to create a link between the food and sorcery.

The process of sorcery does not solely rely on the digestive problems of an individual because it could also be because of improper dietary habits. It could be explained through another case in which the researcher could only have a conversation with a female who came here with her brother and he was affected by sorcery. Along with severe digestive problems that included issues like ulcers in the stomach, severe vomiting, blood in the stool and surprisingly, there was no medical related reason behind all of that as well. Her brother who was about 35 years old and was quite well established financially, did not believe in sorcery but after the recurrence of the digestive issues after a number of months without having any medical reason behind it, he came for having the problem resolved.

The researcher also came across another case that was a female who was 22 years old, she seemed not to eat anything at all before, her mother mentioned and it was becoming problematic for her family members because her health kept going down. The family had taken her to different doctors who had given a number of supplements and checked her but the problem did not improve with that as well. She had been using amulets and has been doing zikr that had very positive impact on the problem that she had been facing. When this question was asked by the researcher in a FGD that was conducted, one very interesting answer was given by a female who mentioned that:

*“There was one female that came here during the ijtimaḥ (annual gathering in which there is a proper schedule for practicing zikr) and she was affected by sorcery. She was a beautiful girl that was about 25 years old. I remember her doing vomiting after every zikr and she could not properly eat anything before. The reason is that zikr cleanses the individual from the inside and a person gets cleansed of the negative effects of sorcery. After spending a couple of days here and properly doing zikr, she started to eat food, her*

*vomiting and digestion problem also got resolved and when she left, she herself mentioned that she is feeling as if someone has lifted off the weight from her"* (FGD).

### **5.1.3 Relation of Food with Sorcery**

There exists a relation of the human body with the food that an individual's eat after all; there is a common saying in English about it that 'you are what you eat'. Proper dietary habits and eating healthy food makes the individual healthy and helps the body in fighting against a number of problems. Poor dietary habits itself becomes a problem. But the topic under discussion is linking the impact of food with the sorcery. If there is an impact of food on the human body in terms of either making the body stronger or making it fragile and a way for the diseases and illnesses, in the most similar way, the findings of this particular research suggested that there is a link of the human body as well as the human soul with the food that an individual eats. The three factors are quite interconnected. The response that was collected in the focused group discussion that supports this argument as well is as follows:

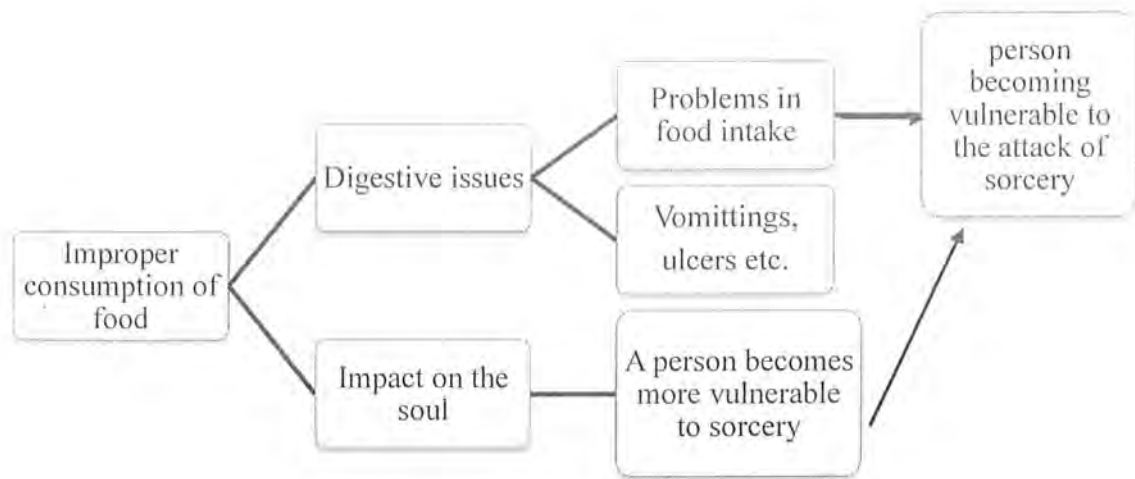
*"People have been eating haram and unhealthy foods that have an adverse impact on the human soul (rooh). When an individual eats something at the restaurant, there is no guarantee about the food whether it has been properly butchered and koshered or not and the news channels have also shown that very well known food business doers are serving the meat of dead animals. In a situation like this and people eating this type of food, there is a definite impact on the strength of the human soul and these things further act as a pollutant of the human soul. When the human soul is polluted and weakened by these factors, the sorcery and the human possessions become the problem for an individual."* (FGD)

This above answer supports the argument that was presented in the document before as well in which the weakness of the soul was identified as a problem for becoming an easy victim of sorcery. Improper dietary habits, not knowing whether the food anyone is consuming is halaal or haram and the constant consumption of the food not only has an impact on the human body i.e., digestion and related issues but also, has an impact on the human soul. Furthermore, this makes the person defenseless against the sorcery. An individual needs to check whether the food that is being consumed is according to the

standards or not, otherwise, not only will the health be affected but the soul will also get weaker. People that are involved in regular practice of zikr, they try to consume food that is properly cooked so that their spiritual status does not get affected by the food. This is how important the food is for an individual and needs to be checked and monitored through personal certainty. Halaal and haraam draws the line between the permissible edibles/acts/ways with those that are not permitted by the Islamic principles. The concepts are not only applicable to the consumption of the food but also includes the proper means of earning as well (Ghazzali, 2001; p. 514-529) but that is not the topic under discussion.

This phenomenon could be further explained through the following diagram as well:

**Figure 16. Figure showing the process of the impact of food on an individual**



**5.1.4 Unknown Factor for the Cause of Ongoing Illness- Relation with Sorcery**

During the entire research, another quite interesting fact that was found to be related with the act of sorcery was that, the sorcery affected people mentioned that when there was no medical reason was found for the illness that they were facing. Otherwise, one might have said that if there is an illness, it could be cured through proper medication and

treatment. There was no link established that whether someone that has gained a masters degree would be less effected by sorcery as compared to someone that has not for the reason that there will be a difference of opinion in terms of opting for this healing method. During the course of fieldwork and through the researcher's own personal observations, the people that were educated and financially stable enough seemed to have an advanced ways and approaches for the treatment of illness in which the medical doctors for which they had opted for were paid more as compared to those who could afford to go to any local medical area for the treatment. But in both the situations, the problems seemed to remain the same i.e., untreated and undiagnosed.

Along with that, the factor of believing on sorcery was not very dominant at first by the people that the researcher had come across. Almost every single person had approached any other way of medical treatment rather than blaming it all on the sorcery and when no option was left, this made them think about the other side of the frame as well which is 'sorcery'. There was no medical relation found in all the cases with the ongoing health issues and medical doctors had mostly said that there is nothing wrong with them and they seemed to be perfectly alright. And surprisingly, the person could not perform any religious activity at the very same time. These factors started to make connections in the whole story. Another factor that was quite dominantly observed and being mentioned by the sorcery affected individuals was that the medications used for the physical problems had no effect on them and the physical condition kept going worse with the time and without letting the victim being medically diagnosed.

So, despite the method of using medicines for the nature of the problem, the health kept getting not as good as it should have been ideally. And after all this process, people who could not relate the explanation for their physical condition of the problems and found no solution with the doctors and the severity of the problem increased with a mysterious pace and in suspicious times of the day specifically, they then related their condition with sorcery either by themselves or were being told by any other healer which they approached.

One of the respondents mentioned that:

*'My mother is severely ill. We do not know in real what is wrong with her. We have taken her to several doctors. We have a suspicion that it might be something else (sorcery) because she catches one illness after another and never gets fully recovered. We did not think about it at first but there are a few people that are not happy with our financial stability'. (Female, 48 year old)*

This implies that when it comes to the scientific explanation of the severity of the problem, when no link was established between the ongoing situation and no physical or medical reason was brought into being, it was mostly associated with sorcery. Another quite similar verbatim was given by a female who was facing the same problem. She said:

*"I've been to medical doctors many times and all they could say was that there is no medical reason and nothing is wrong with me. Then why do I have all of these body aches all around my body? It's been told to me here that I should take amulet (taweez)."*

There was another female that the researcher had a conversation with and she was 41 years old. She mentioned that:

*"I have been having severe body aches in my entire body and people think that nothing is wrong with me. Only I know what pain I have to go through. When I do zikr I feel so content and relax and I noticed it for the first time that when I did zikr, I could perform and work like a normal individual the entire day otherwise these body aches do not let me do anything. I cannot even pray because of these problems that I feel in my body. I feel so relaxed after zikr that I cannot even express it in my words (her eyes were filled with tears). I just want to be near Allah that's all I want from my life and this is the sole purpose of my life but I can't because of this problem. I have come here with a lot of difficulty so that I can be at peace".* The female that came with her mentioned that she even sometimes hit people that are around her but afterwards she does not seem to have any memory about it. She was given an amulet to wear around the neck and was told to take water amulets (naqsh) as well.

In an interview conducted by the researcher with Malik Abdul Qadeer Awan, who is the Chief Administrator and is heading a number of departments in Dar-ul-Irfan, he mentioned that people these days seem to be having a 'fear of unknown' which is something they do not know about themselves and fear from it. He further mentioned that the way any individual has a field specialty in any subject, in the similar way, the spiritual problem could be judged by the person that has the field specialty. A person for example would know whether anyone is angry with me even if that particular person does not talk about it, similarly, anyone suffering from sorcery will be judged by anyone holding the expertise.

All of this dots of the debate points out towards the view that, the paranormal activities, when combined with the unknown cause of the illness makes the individual think about whether it is sorcery or not. In Pakistan, people do seem to believe in sorcery but the attitude is not blaming every mishap or problem with the sorcery. As far as the researcher's fieldwork and personal observations are concerned, it was found that people first opt for the medical healing methods and when no link is found, they then go for the alternative healing techniques especially in the cases when there are other suspicious going on around the house as well that will further be explained through the case studies as well.

## **5.2 Mental/Psychological Problems**

Another important aspect that was related with the sorcery victims was that, people seemed to be having mental and psychological problems as well. Through the personal observation, the researcher also came to notice without having a conversation with the individuals that, respondents that were wither lost in their thoughts or were completely blank faced were mostly related to the sorcery related problems and after igniting a conversation with them, the similar response they would give me regarding the nature of their problem.

Literature also suggests that there are associated behavioral problems related to sorcery in which the person acts like a mad person and is known to be controlled by the alien forces that control the brain of the victim. After the effects of sorcery comes to the surface, the

human mind stops functioning properly (Basu, 2014). This suggests that not only does the person suffer from the physical problems that are mentioned in the above text, but also, there is an impact on the person's mental well being as well.

An FGD that was basically conducted on finding the relation of sorcery with a number of factors suggested that, people that are either possessed or affected by sorcery seem to be behaving not like normal individuals and also, they cannot perform their normal daily tasks like other individuals. Possession is the severe form in which a person is even seen as losing senses and the evil spirit makes the person controls. The person loses his or her own personality and a different devilish personality takes its place for a while. This possession could be carried out by someone that is working in conjunction with the devil (Baroja, 1961, p. 131). But in case of the sorcery, most of the problems are related to the emotional and mental state that are further divided into different themes and will further be discussed in the section below:

### **5.2.1 Uncontrolled Emotions**

Not only does the sorcery have an impact on the physical body of an individual, but it also effects the individual's emotional well being as well. Psychology as well as the medical science suggests that there exists a relation of the emotions and the physical being of an individual as well. In case of the sorcery victims, the individuals responded that the closed members of their families who were affected showed aggressive behavior in terms of either hitting other family members or other related responses and when afterwards, they were asked about their behavior, the victim had no previous memory of the problem.

Sorcery compels an individual to behave in a certain way in which the individual does not seem to be having any personal control over the self which is also related to the display of uncontrolled emotions. These emotions are not solely aggressive behavior but the findings also suggested that it also included people having uncontrolled display of sadness and despair in which the person also feels helpless about the whole situation.

The same response was given by a respondent in the FGD in which she mentioned:

*'I have seen so many cases, There was this one girl that had severe possession related problem and this was one of the severe problems that I have ever seen in my whole life ever. She used to shout and was almost abnormal. She could not even communicate properly with anyone. I remember her hitting the walls and forcefully hitting the floor of the room. Those things (she meant evil powers and the evil spirit/entity inside the body) make a person weak and irritate and also drives the person mad.....Sorcery and possession are somewhat similar for the reason that through sorcery, the evil figures are asked to carry out the desired tasks. '* (FGD)

The evil spirits or jinn/jin (Plural: Jinnat) are basically are malevolent and malicious beings who cause harm to people who encounter them. They are found in the places such as abandoned villages, houses, in cemeteries, in the manure of donkeys and horses, and in the ash (Rasanayagam, 2006). Jinn can even transform their shapes to other living creatures like apes and swine. They are transparent and aerial bodies which can assume various forms (Hughes, 1885, p.133-137)

Another parallel response was given by the respondent who shared another story that she had encountered:

*"A lady once came to canteen and while talking she opened a pack of tea whitener and threw it away. Her face was blank and she started asking bizarre questions from me that who am I etc? I used to think that she is pretending but then I realized that she was affected by sorcery. I saw her talking to herself and sometimes crying out loud. With the passage of time after she did regular zikr and I think she had also been taking the amulets, she came back to normal and now I have seen her doing things just like any normal person would do. She also used to mention that there are certain beings that she sees who scare her and are after her"* (FGD).

The case study that is the perfect example for this problem related to the sorcery is as follows:

### **Case Study #01**

The case 01 is a female belonging to Lahore city belonging to an educated family and also is well established. She is married and has 3 kids (2 daughters and so on). She had the most unusual experience of sorcery in her life in which all of her family members were affected by sorcery. She mentioned that 22 of her family members were sorcery victims and all were cured solely by zikr-e-qalbi. The most effected member of the family was her daughter who was 13 years old at that time but acted like a kid and would ask her mother to give her feeder bottle, walked and talked like toddlers and acted like them. She also had seizures in which her hands and feet became stiff and bent, she wouldn't sleep. Her daughter would have serious pain in the back and asked her mother to hit her hard with a hammer because of the severity of the pain. For this reason, she lost 3 years of her studies because she used to have so many problems that used to occur one after another. Her mother mentioned that:

*"She acted like an abnormal person and there were times that she used to have so much energy and power in herself that she pushed four people at a time with one blow of the hand. She was only 13 years old at that time and a person cannot even push another in an age like that. But now she is totally normal. If you see her you won't say that she was once a victim of all of this".*

This severe condition lasted for 3-4months and then it all started to go away gradually and it did not go at once. This sorcery was performed by 6-7 separate people on the family she further explained. There was an unusual incident that happened in which her daughter took her hand and told her that there were magical amulets present in the house. And wherever she mentioned, it was present there.

### **5.2.2 Pessimism**

When an individual does not have the control over the situation one is going through and the outside people also do not seem to be helpful, it further leads to the feeling of helplessness and later on, depression which has been the case of sorcery in which the problem persists despite the fact that the medical practitioners do not seem to find any particular evidence for the problem. In case of the sorcery victims that the researcher had interviewed and carried out conversations with, there were a few respondents that

mentioned that they had no words to express whatever they go through or have gone through.

Similar such response was given by a female as well who said:

*"A lot has happened. It was the toughest time of my life. I can't express myself in words. Such unusual things have happened that if I keep telling you about it you would say as if I am a crazy person. My whole house state was upside down and I only saw despair".*

Another female respondent in her late thirties who was affected by sorcery mentioned that: *'I did not want to talk to anyone and I wanted to stay alone. I wanted to do something about the whole situation but I couldn't. I used to open Quran so that the problem gets resolved and I achieve peace, but that was also not possible because of the forces were telling me to close it and did not let me recite it'.*

Along with the feelings of hopelessness as well as depression, people also had the feeling of leaving this life which will further be explained.

Suicidal ideation was found to be linked with the sorcery victims in which they had not actually attempted to kill themselves as far as they had provided the answers but did mention that they have thought about killing themselves. These thoughts were found to be driven because of two dominant reasons:

- 1) Something was telling them to kill themselves, and
- 2) They wanted to get out of this painful situation by killing themselves.

These were found to be the main reasons behind the suicidal ideation because the level of pain which they could not express in their words was quite high. Another such case that had experienced the similar problems is mentioned in the case study below:

### Case Study

*"Something was telling me to go to a river and drown myself."* She narrated a story of a woman (that woman was not related to her and she had heard the story from someone else) who went in a bus and stopped by the river and kept walking towards it and drowned herself who was also a victim of *sehr*<sup>25</sup> (sorcery). She said that this is how she felt and *"there was something calling me that I should kill myself, it was extremely painful. I can understand the feeling of the person who is affected by sehr which no one else might understand. May Allah never show anyone this kind of illness (she touched her ears and nodded her head which is an expression of showing the level of severity). I thought I should die and I wanted to die, I had a feeling that my grave is waiting for me. It has been two years since this problem started and I think my in laws are involved in this act because they do not like me because of the ethnicity differences. They are involved in practicing sehr and I have heard about them doing it. They are jealous of the wealth that my husband possesses because we are financially doing quite well. All praise is to Allah. I do not say that I have a lot but I have enough and I do not mean to show off but I think this is the reason behind it."* (C#01: Female, 39 years old)

One more problem that was quite related to the sorcery victims was their lack of interest in the daily life activities. The family members of the victims also mentioned that the person is not interested in studies, household tasks, discussions etc. Hence, anything that would involve the actual participation of the individual becomes missing in the life which the individual used to perform.

The lack of interest was identified to be the problem when compared to the previous routine of the individual and later on, was followed by the health issues. This afterwards led to the psychological and mental issues and it disrupted with the normal living of the individual and that is when the problem became severe. It could be one of the factors that is linked with the psychological issues only but then again, it is not this one factor that seems to be dominant, there are a number of other factors that link together and thus are related to the sorcery.

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<sup>25</sup> It is an Arabic term for sorcery/black magic.

Social isolation was not so common among all of the respondents but was found to be dominant aspect for one of the female who was affected by sorcery. She did not seem to be taking interest in the household tasks and along with the suicidal ideation, she wanted to be around no one and wanted to be left alone in her own company because of the reason that she thought no one else would understand the situation she is going through. She mentioned that she tried to avoid situations in which people backbite and say wrong things about others which suggested that her personality was oriented towards being an introvert and that is why she wanted to keep the problem to herself rather than explaining it to other people. Not only that, but this social isolation made her family think that she was going through depression and took her to other doctors which also did not seem to be helpful.

Based on one single case, it could not be said that this is the universal symptom of the sorcery on all of the respondents just like the other symptoms that have previously been discussed. But it is quite important aspect that had to be mentioned in this piece of writing which could also be connected to the feeling of helplessness. Not everyone seems to be expressive about the problems that they are facing and there are different types of personality traits that differs one from another.

### **5.3 Spiritual or Soul Related Problems**

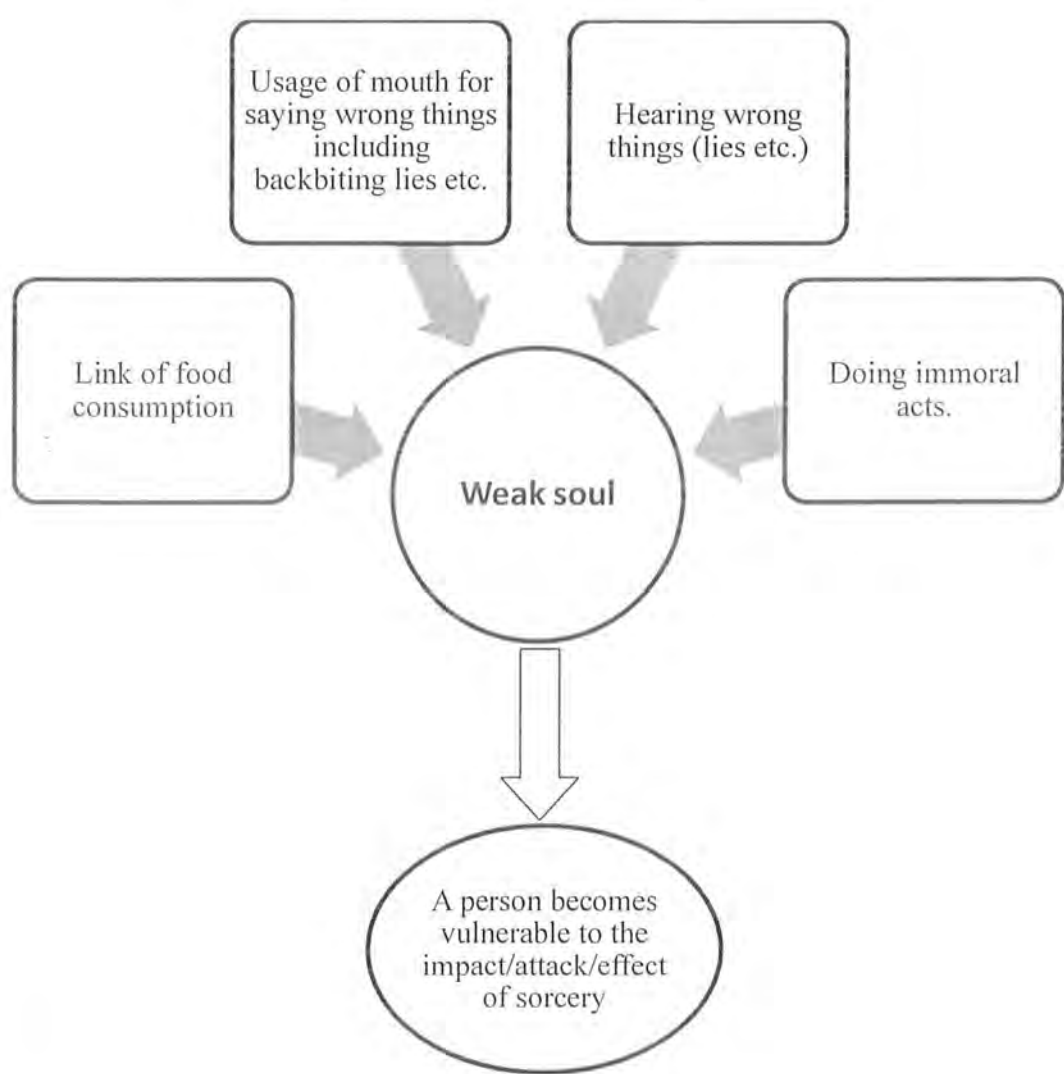
During this entire process of the research, what was found a bit different than the other ongoing researches on the same topic was that sorcery does seem to have an impact on the person and the severity of the problem depends on the strength of the human soul. There are ways for making the soul strong and one of the ways is zikr-e-qalbi in which an individual attains certain spiritual status but it is practiced as a Sufi practice. Through this study, it was used as a method of healing the sorcery affected victims because both deal with the spirit or the soul of an individual. Sorcery seems to be having a destructive impact on an individual's mind body and soul while on the other hand; the zikr-e-qalbi practice plays the opposite and a constructive role in the entire process. So, if any activity that is helping the soul would eventually help in protection and its guarding as well.

Another response that was transcribed from an FGD said that:

*“Mouth and ears are a passage towards polluting the heart and if a person speaks wrong things (including back biting etc.) or listens to wrong and immoral things (e.g., like lies etc.), through this way, the soul becomes weak and thus, becomes vulnerable to the effect/impact or attach of sorcery” (FGD).*

This is quite interesting information that is being gathered and the summary of which could also be represented in the following flow chart diagram as well:

**Figure 17. Flowchart of the process**



(Source: Author’s own)

This entire discussion on the sorcery and its effect on the human body, the human soul and other related aspects do suggest that according to this entire knowledge system, the whole idea is basically dependent on the soul of an individual and if that is properly fed, properly guarded, all of the problems would get not only resolved, but would help the individual in staying away from many problems. One of the ways for attaining that is through the practice of zikr-e-qalbi and it helps an individual to build the heart and the soul stronger through the positive energy. This further helps an individual in fighting away from the sorcery attacks which is basically the negative energy. The impact of zikr-e-qalbi will be further explained in the chapter 7 and in the next chapter; the role of sorcery in the social cultural and religious aspect will be deeply analyzed.

## **6. ROLE OF SORCERY IN SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS**

This chapter basically talks about the factors that are linked with the sorcery that does not possess any direct physical relation with the individual but have something to do with the cultural, social and economic life predominantly. Previous study also suggests that there exists a link that is related to the sorcery with certain elements that are present in the society. These factors involve the social, economic as well as the cultural facets (Forsyth & Eves, 2015) and the findings of the study have also suggested somewhat similar results that will also be further discussed in details and different themes have been made out of those related aspect. Quite unforeseen facts that are related to sorcery (which are only specific to the gender of female) will be presented later in the section of the associated factors. There is also a presence of social as well as economic factor associated with the act of sorcery.

Along with the personal life of an individual, the social life also gets disrupted because most part of the Pakistani society is collectivistic and people live together. The roles that an individual is assigned would eventually be affected by something that have a direct impact on an individual's life. Also, a number of factors that are involved with the causation of the incident of sorcery were also identified in this research study. The respondents mostly mentioned that there are people that are either jealous of them or they think that are jealous of them, are involved with the act of the sorcery. Some of the respondents mentioned that they do know who was involved with the sorcery while there were some who did not. Those who did not, however, did have a linkage of the causation of sorcery and some identified their better financial status (economy) to be involved as the root cause of the sorcery. But then again, this is basically related with the envy of another individual who was fundamentally jealous of the person and opted for the sorcery as a way of hurting that particular individual (Edgar & Henig, 2010; Nkosi, 2012).

The link of jealousy/envy will be further explained in the following part of the document:

## 6.1 Jealousy/Envy and Sorcery

Nabokov (2000) has linked the act of sorcery with the feelings of envy and jealousy and there is another quite similar and interesting research and the findings of this study suggests that, in the societies where there is an unequal distribution of wealth, it further leads to aggravation of feelings of jealousy among the inhabitants what further act as a way in the formation of sorcery related suspicions (Forsyth & Eves, 2015; p. 5-10). It could be accurately related in the context of Pakistan where there is an unequal distribution of wealth and within the same area of the city, there are people seen belonging to the elite and poor class. It could be said according to the findings of this study that if any family either starts improving financially, people (it could be those that are somewhat related to that particular person or family either by blood or in any other kind of a relation) become jealous of their stability and thus, intervene 'invisibly' through sorcery.

There are other areas under discussion in the context of Pakistan as well, that are related to sorcery. One of the widely known is in which spells are being carried out over the opposite gender that compels him/her to fall in love with that particular individual. But the findings of this study have not yet established any fact recorded about this kind of incidence. The things that were found were mostly related to the envy among the closed ones of the victim (Edgar & Henig, 2010). The perpetrators were also not directly identified by the victim but were only suspicious about.

One of the respondents gave quite a similar response and her brother was under the sorcery spell. She said:

*"Jealousy is the only reason. I have been doing zikr myself for quite a long time Alhamdulillah and I asked my brother to come here so that his problem gets resolved. He did not want to come at first and kept saying that he is doing fine. But after a few months, when his symptoms started to come back again in which there were sever vomiting, presence of blood in stool and so much so that his intestines got ulcers that's why he came here. There was something that used to scare him".*

One of the respondents mentioned that she belonged to another racial ethnicity and she was married to her current husband by her father because he had known him. These racial differences were never accepted by her in laws and she herself mentioned that her in laws are involved with this act that has made her so ill which is quite better now because she had regularly been offering prayers, taking amulets and doing zikr.

Along with the envy and jealousy, sorcery is quite related to the economic aspect of life and these two phenomena are very much related. Further description will be carried out in the following section:

## **6.2 Sorcery and the Economic Life**

When it comes to the description of the sorcery's role in an individual's social as well as economical life, the findings of the study suggested that there were no particular economical differences that existed and people belonging to any sphere of life were equally affected. People that were from well off families and that had gained a good education, as well as those respondents that were not educated enough when compared on the economical standards; both seemed to be equally affected by it. The economic factor that was observed was through analyzing the ways of transportation/commodities of the individuals (i.e., either they owned their own cars or had chosen any public transport system), usage of the technological gadgets, education background, the dressing, options pursued for the medical treatments (some approached doctors from abroad), the lifestyle that they had and so on. A direct question of monthly or yearly income could not be asked from the respondents because of the lack of time and this is why, other related factors were analyzed and the economic standing was then judged in accordance with that.

However, a distinction that was found based on the observing the factual differences was that, people that had gained more education had first doubts about the belief of sorcery but when the evidences as well as medical reasons were not found out, the suspicion then turned out to go towards the sorcery. But when the paranormal activities started to appear in their lives, this made their suspicion stronger. While those individuals, that had lesser educational background, one might think that their belief on sorcery might be the first

thing that would have come to their might and would have blamed everything on that. But on the other hand, they had also the similar way of acting out for the symptoms of sorcery. There was no existence of any differences in the opinions or suspicions about sorcery based on the educational background.

Another thing that was found from the view of the economical aspect was through the respondent who was a victim of sorcery and it will further be discussed with the help of the case study:

### ***Case Study***

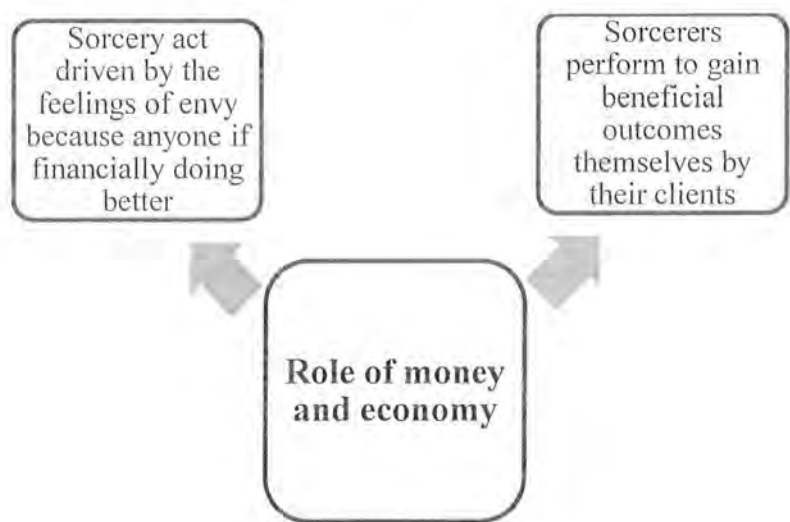
*"I have been giving amulets to other people myself, that involved writing numbers on it and reciting some verses on it and I used to give them so that they could heal from illnesses. There was my teacher who taught me this and he had learned this from his teacher. There were scriptures written in Arabic and digits like charts which I would give to the people who came for cure".* Upon asking, she told me that she didn't know the meaning to those Arabic scripts. People used to come and give her *nazraana* (money) in return and she would keep some amount for herself and would give the rest to her teacher who taught her all this. *"My in-laws follow the teacher who taught me the practices that I used to do earlier and they do not support zikr that I do now. So, it was difficult for me to come here but I did come so that things could come back to normal. My mother told me that I should come here for the cure and to get out of the problems that I am currently dealing with. I feel like ever since the day I stopped performing these practices, problems arose because it was not only a source of income for me but also for the person who taught me all this. Some mishaps also happened one day after another in my house after that. For example; the fire wood was set on fire in my house and no one else could do that and not only that but several other financial issues started to arise. I found no evidence of the sorcery in my house (like an amulet etc)".* She was advised to do a lot of zikr and she also got *naqsh*- Case# 02

It had been mentioned earlier in the document before that the healing process does not require any secretive digital numbers or scriptures and the above mentioned case suggests that she had started something that was related to the sorcery itself but she did not know about it herself and when she stopped doing it, the person that she was learning from had

casted sorcery spells over her which she mentioned herself. This also suggests that the act of sorcery involves secretly using of ways in which people are being told that they are doing it for beneficial and healing purposes but on the other hand, they are basically involved in the sorcery themselves. The biggest factor that is involved here is the economical benefits and gains through this act. The sorcerers make money out of the process and it could be seen through the above mentioned example as well, that as soon as someone wants to go out of it, they do not let that person to go out of the business because of the reason that they are the way of their income.

This woman had started doing zikr and she said that she had gained a lot of benefits out of it but she had been facing some financial issues which were the reason for her involvement in this process. The process could be summarized through the diagram below:

**Figure 18. Process showing role of money in sorcery**



**6.3 Sorcery and Social Pressure (with Reference to Females only)**

The limitation of this study is that the study was only conducted on the females for many associated cultural barriers that will also be discussed in detail later in the document as well and only the female perspective will be given in this part of the text. The findings of

this research suggested that there were some females that were reluctant to share about their experiences of the effects that were caused to them by sorcery. The most dominant reason that was found to be associated with this reluctance was the taboo that is linked with the topic of sorcery. Not only is it considered as an evil thing but also, in Pakistani culture, once the individual gets associated with any possession or sorcery related case, that person carries it for the rest of his or her life.

During the course of the research, it was found out that respondents that were suffering from sorcery or that had already suffered from it were quite reluctant to share their personal experience. This reluctance, according to the researcher's personal observation was due to the tabooed concept of sorcery and also, in a collectivistic society where there is an association of people among each other and where there is so much family pressure, parents do feel reluctant to share their problems. Especially in the cases of young daughters which the researcher had encountered, there are a number of reasons that are associated that the girl might carry with her for the rest of her life. Sorcery makes a person behave in a bizarre way that is not according to the norms of the society and furthermore, despite the fact if an individual gets treated and comes back to a normal life; if, in any case at some part of life a person gets sick or ill again, he/she would have been labeled as an abnormal person for the rest of the life.

The female that was a teenager had been a victim of sorcery and the researcher could not directly interact with her during the field observation. Whenever the researcher tried to ask any question, one of her family members who were associated to her would answer my question. This might have been for two reasons: either the girl's problem was so severe that she was unable to answer or, her family did not want her to talk about the problem to anyone else which in this case was me.

Another similar case that the researcher had encountered was also reluctant and despite my usage of probing question, she would not give answer to the questions that were related to her sorcery related problem. She gave answer to other questions quite enthusiastically, but whenever the researcher asked her 'what happens during this type of illness?', she would only say "*a lot happens*". This is all the information that the researcher could get from her.

Another quite interesting fact that was found in an FGD was that, there are some people that are not actually under the effect of sorcery but rather, pretend that they are. This could be because of any wish fulfillment or any other purpose but not everyone having the surface symptoms are actually under an effect. The response of the FGD is as follows:

*'Some of the cases deliberately want to be seen as ill or affected by sorcery. Sometimes the problem is mere psychological in nature rather than spiritual'. (FGD)*

It also suggests that psychological issues are also sometimes misinterpreted to be as sorcery and some of the females over think about the situation. Sometimes they themselves see as if they are under an effect of sorcery while actually, they are not and they are being told to treat themselves medically. If the similar side of the story was analyzed from the male's perspective, it would have provided both sides of the story. For example, there was a female who came and asked for the amulets to get her diabetes healed and she was being told to have medical treatment for that. The illnesses that are being treated with any other medical methods are being told to be treated in that way. Those illnesses that are actually related to the spiritual problems or any other, they get treated through amulets and vice versa.

Through these cases, the researcher deduced this that the females were quite reluctant to share their information and it took a variety of ways to extract the information out of the respondents. Some of the respondents did not feel shy or reluctant in sharing their information but the majority did feel a bit reluctant at first. It would have been a bit more informative to have had the information from the gents' perspective as well but then again, it is the limitation of this study. The relation of sorcery with reference to the gender was also researched upon so that if there does exist any kinds of gender differences, it would be highlighted.

## **6.4 Sorcery and Gender**

As mentioned in the earlier section, only females were interviewed and approached due to the cultural limitation. However, the gender was highlighted with the help of FGD and the facts were gathered to fill in the gaps and also to gather some more evidences about the phenomena. The findings of this research have suggested some unanticipated

answers. There exists a link between the human body, human soul as well as the effects that are caused by sorcery. When a victim gets affected by the negative *asraat* (impact/attach/effects) of sorcery, the balance that exists in harmony of an individual's body gets disrupted as well. The damages that the soul faces, results in the form of bodily problems. But the question arises, is there any kind of relation of the gender with the effect of sorcery or not? Does one gender, let's suppose for argument sake that a female, tends to be affected more as compared to males? Is this the case or is it the opposite of it? All of these questions will be covered in this section of the document.

In an FGD, when the gender related discussion was ignited, following were the responses that were given by the respondents:

*Both males and females get equally affected by sorcery. This could not be said that males do not get affected by it neither could it be said that females are not affected by it. If their soul is weak, they surely will get affected be it a male or a female. It all depends on the strength of the soul which is basically through praying, performing religious obligations.*  
FGD

It has also been supported through the evidence as well. People think that females tend to be more affected by sorcery however, both the gender seem to be equally affected by sorcery (Jorgensen 2014). There is however a gender perspective that explains the females' being the more victim of the sorcery. Females tend to be married-in or married-out of the certain community groups.

## **6.5 Disruption in the Religious Practices**

This was one of the biggest problems that were being described by majority of the effected victims. Since Pakistan is a society where the people that are living in are mostly Muslims and the people that the researcher had interviewed and had conversations with were Muslims. The dominant impact that the sorcery had on people were on their religious practices. People did mention that whenever they did zikr, their religious practices came back to normal. But that did not happen for the first time. In few of the cases, where the effect of sorcery was very massive and elevated, despite their resistance and will power, they could not perform any religious task.

The person with severe effects was also asked to stay in Dar-ul-Irfan and do zikr regularly so that the severity of the problem could be minimized at a faster pace. One of the respondents mentioned this problem as well. She said:

*"I can only think properly and perform religious practices only in these two hours of the day (from 10am to 12 in the noon). Otherwise I can't perform prayers etc. I really want to pray and do ibaadaat but I can't. I have burden on my mind". (Case# 02, Jaswal)*

Similar response was given by another female who was under the effect of sorcery but had been cured and she shared her thoughts by saying:

*"Whenever I had those negative effects of sorcery on me, I tried to do some religious practices. I would open Quran but I couldn't recite it. I felt as if something is stopping my mouth to open from recitation."*

Another respondent that the researcher had interviewed said:

*"I get extremely terrified. I see scary faces during my five time prayer. I fear that I will die from it and those faces will kill me".*

All of these above responses by the individuals do seem to suggest that the symptoms as well as the problems are quite related and there is a common theme that is associated to their view points. Another female that had come for her son's cure who was about 12 years old and was a sorcery victim said that, her son would come and hold his hand on his mother's mouth whenever she would blow any Quran verses over her son.

This suggests in general that anyone that is trying to perform any kind of religious tasks, this basically irritates the evil spirit or the effects of sorcery because it would eventually ward it off. And to try to keep harming that particular individual, those negative forces try to keep the person away from performing the religious tasks as much as they can. The religious practices act as a positive field that counter the sorcery effects.

It was also being told by a respondent in an FGD in which she mentioned that whenever there was a conduction of zikr practice, the girl that was basically possessed, used to shout out loud that she would get scared. She further mentioned that the evil spirits/jinn

that possess the individual basically infuriate the person that is under effect. This is why; the person tries to stay away or is compelled to stay away from the religious practices.

There is a difference between the two terms i.e., sorcery and possession. People sometimes think of the two to be the same however, they actually are different. They are a bit overlapping concepts and that are interrelated in some of the cases and the detail of which will be explained further in the text below.

## **6.6 Difference between Sorcery and Possession Affected**

### **Victims**

As mentioned earlier, there exists a relation between sorcery affected victims as well as the possessed person for the reason that in some of the cases, when there is an act of sorcery, the sorcerer basically uses the evil spirits for carrying out the process and this might result in causation of possession in the victim's body. The evil spirit controls the individual to carry out the desired tasks (Cohen, 2008) and it becomes a combination of possession as well as sorcery in a number of cases. The differentiating factor is only known to the person having the field of expertise and can judge whether the case is of a possession or that of sorcery and any layman cannot tell by looking at the person. Not all of the possession cases are related to the act of sorcery and there is a difference in the two sometimes but in a few cases, the possession is followed by the sorcery.

People do tend to get affected by possession and all of these evil spirits are basically the enemy of an individual for the reason that they are known to be the disciples of the Satan, and he, is basically the enemy of mankind as per the Islamic ideology. Satan or Devil is fundamentally an evil spirit which is different than jinn although some of the jinns are not evil where others do not harm the people (Hughes, 1885, p. 133-137; Oxfam, 2010, p. 3-14). The evil spirits or the jinns will be referred here in the context of evil characteristics of harming the individuals.

An individual is protected by the angels that have been ascribed the task of protecting him or her but when the deeds of an individual becomes polluted, that is when the evil spirit have the capacity to attack and possess that particular person. It could be solved through piouness and through following the right path and it does not require an

individual to go for the places that involves using spells, money or visiting the shrines (Awan, 2014c, p. 87).

An FGD that was conducted on finding a relation between a numbers of factors with sorcery suggested quite attention grabbing answers in which one of the respondents mentioned:

*"The case that I have personally seen was of a girl who was a victim of sorcery but her problem had worsened over a period of time and she was possessed by a number of evil spirits/jins. This made her act like an abnormal person and she used to shout out loud because those 'things' used to irritate her. She used to look up in the sky and she stayed here for about one month. If I compare her situation when she went back with her first day of arrival, I would say that she had improved a lot. Her name was Fatima. When I asked her about her name, she used to say that I have no name because the name was 'paak' (holy, pure) (Fatima was the name of Prophet Muhammad's PBUH daughter). After a number of days, when I asked her what her name was, she would answer by saying Fatima. Along with this one condition, there were many more by which I came to realize that she was improving". (FGD)*

This is how, the relation of sorcery exists with that of possession and it has established a descriptive argumentative discussion about the relation and the differences of the two issues.

## **6.7 Existence of the Concept of Sorcery in Islam**

In Pakistan, where the majority of the people belong to the Muslim faith, it would be suitable to have the concept of sorcery defined from the Islamic perspective as well because it will further help in conceiving of the idea.

In the Surah Al-Airaaf (118-109) also add exact translation, there is a narration of the incident in which Hazrat Musa (A.S) had to face the biggest sorcerers of Egypt in the times of Pharaoh. Pharaoh himself had the biggest sorcerers of the times as his disciples and they were asked to fight back with the marvels that Hazrat Musa (A.S) had. The sorcerers first made the people around them fearful about the happening that hypnotized

their vision further. The ropes were ropes but seemed like snakes to the audience for the reason that their vision and their thinking capacity had been altered when the sorcerers warned them. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had also been affected by sorcery and He (SAW) felt headache that was later on solved when He (SAW) recited Surah-Falak and Surah-Naas (add translation of these two). If anyone feels that he or she has been affected by sorcery, by reciting these two verses from Quran in odd numbers (by reciting darood shareef before and after), the problem gets resolved. People relate all their problems with sorcery however; this is not the case (Monthly Al-Murshid, 2013 p. 8-14).

The existence of sorcery/magic is present in Surah Al Airaaf (Ayat 116). It is being said that people got hypnotized and spellbind in a way that they interpreted and saw the ropes as snakes. Sorcery or magic does not actually change the nature of the object rather, it makes the vision distorted. The ropes would remain ropes but the way an individual sees and interprets it, that vision basically gets distorted. And if people are not scared of it, it will not affect them. If magic or sorcery had the power of changing things, then the sorcerers would have changed the soil or stones to gold rather than asking for money from the pharaoh himself. It is just a sensory illusion and cannot alter the reality of any substance (Awan, 2012b, p. 50).

It is also possible for the noble people and Prophets to be affected by magic/sorcery as they too are human beings. However, the effects can never be the same as on an ordinary person, as the more purified a being is, the lesser it can be affected, and the quicker these effects clear off (Awan, 2001, p. 464).

Labib bin Asim stole some sacred hair of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), tied these in knots around the teeth of a comb and buried the comb under a stone in an abandoned well. The Holy Prophet became ill and He was informed through the revelation about the matter. The two Surahs i.e., Surah Falaq and Surah Nas were revealed and with each Ayah, a knot was untied and He (PBUH) recovered. These two Surahs basically help in protecting oneself against every type of witchcraft, magic or sorcery and whenever The Holy Prophet (PBUH) ever felt indisposed, He would recite these Surah's, blow on his hands (dam) and rub them over his entire body (Awan, 2004, p. 526-527)

The sorcery has been mentioned in Quran as well in the Surah Taaha Ayat 58-61 in which Hazrat Musa A.S (Moses) had encountered the biggest sorcerers in the Egyptian Pharaoh reign. Sorcery basically affects the imaginative force of an individual and is nothing in reality. The sorcerers first made the people in that time scared about the happening of the event which made their imaginative sense weak. The ropes remained ropes but the people that were gathered there saw snakes instead. If an individual is already scared and frightened about these matters, sorcery would have an impact on him/her and that is the reason why many sorcerer first make people scared about certain matters and people start paying them with more money. So, this process basically distorts the reality for an individual and the individual starts interpreting the life events with a distorted sense of vision and imagination. A sorcerer can never succeed (Awan, 2015, p. 180-185)

In the next chapter, the practice of zikr-e-qalbi will be deeply discussed and how it acts as a curative method specifically for the effects of sorcery and what other related factors are associated in the process. All of this will be further discussed.

## 7. UNDERSTANDING ZIKR-E-QALBI: METHODS AND EFFECTS

This chapter mainly focuses on the outcomes that the individuals get after practicing the zikr-e-qalbi. There have been many people that have come to Dar-ul-Irfan for a number of reasons that involved people that were suffering from cancer and other severe illnesses. They came here to Dar-ul-Irfan for the amulets so that their problem gets resolved and during the field work the researcher had conversations with a number of people in which one of them said that due to her back bone issue, and the doctor said to her that she would be unable to walk again after one year utmost. And she said that it has been more than seven years that she has been walking all by herself and does not need any kind of support. Likewise, there was another female who got cured for her depression symptoms and she was cured through zikr-e-qalbi.

So, there were people that have come for healing for a number of reasons but the research focused mainly only on the sorcery victims that had actually opted for the zikr-e-qalbi as a curative method. When it comes to any kind of practices that has its links with the religion, it comes to an individual's mind that this practice would supposed to be practiced at all times of the day in the place that is dedicated specifically for its practice and exercise (which in this case is Dar-ul-Irfan). However, when it comes to the place Dar-ul-Irfan where the researcher had been doing the research. A day that is spent here appears like any other day which the individual might have to do through and spend in any other place.

People come here, have their meals done, talk and chat like anyone would do in their daily routine days, go to the mosque for prayers and do zikr-e-qalbi after every prayer. This is how the practice is going on. In contrast, it comes to anyone's mind that where there is a religious or a Sufi practice related platform, people must solely be involved in that practice and must have been wearing long robes as their dresses and beads in their neck. However, this is not the case here and the idea is totally different. The main ideology of this practice is to keep the worldly tasks as well as do zikr and remember the divine in the heart. Similarly, here in Dar-ul-Irfan, every person is seen involved in doing the normal daily routine life practices and activities and keep the Sufi practice regularly

as part of their daily routine. The individuals that come here also carry out their normal daily routine tasks and also keep their curative methods along with them.

During the research, upon asking about the reasons behind doing zikr-e-qalbi from the individuals that were newcomers and had just started doing the practice by the researcher, they said that it gives them peace of mind and tranquility. One of the respondents mentioned that whenever she practices zikr, her mind gets so relaxed that she wants to keep practicing it. This has been the reason for her coming here from time to time. She mentioned that there is no serious problem in her life and she just comes here for the associated feelings with zikr. Some of respondents also mentioned that through zikr, much of the problems be it psychological or spiritual, also gets resolved.

One of the respondents that were affected by sorcery mentioned that she was affected by sorcery and no other curative technique has ever worked in her case. The feelings of restlessness as well as other related negative feelings would persist despite any kind of curative method. She mentioned that zikr has changed her entire life. The process was a bit slow for her for the fact that she was not regular in her practice. After her practice became steady and regular, she said that despite the problems that come in life, deep inside her heart she feels content and relaxed. She mentioned that this is what zikr has changed in her life.

There are a number of reasons that people come here and the researcher found following reasons to be the main themes:

- People come here to stay connected with their sheikh spiritually and gain spiritual benefits.
- People come here for taking amulets to get their medical illnesses cured.
- People come here for any spiritual related illnesses and predominantly most of them come for the cure of sorcery.
- There have also been a few victims that were cases of possession.

Zikr-e-qalbi as a way of healing method will further be discussed with the help of the cases that had taken benefit out of it. This entire chapter would be explained with the literature written by Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan for a better understanding of the

practice as well as the phenomenon based on the local knowledge of the entire process. And this entire chapter would as well be explaining about the process and factors that are involved and those that need to be highlighted or explained in detail. Since, zikr-e-qalbi is a Sufi practice that is based on the concept of tasawuf<sup>26</sup> and that needs to be explained in detail.

So, tasawuf or tasawwuf is basically cleaning the heart, the inside of an individual and purification of the innermost self (Awan, 2012a, p.260). Its meaning is 'nothingness or insignificance' i.e., to feel that there is nothing in the world but the Divine (Allah) and to feel that the person himself or herself is basically nothing and insignificant, this is what basically tasawuf is all about. The concept of tasawuf does not exist when there is a sense of 'Me or I' (sense of superiority) present in an individual. However, when there is no ego left, that's when tasawuf becomes evident (Awan, 2014f, p.279).

Furthermore, tasawuf (could also be regarded as spirituality) could not be separated from the religion and it provides the foundation and basic for the religion. Enlightening the heart and going in accordance to the religion is basically tasawuf (Awan, 2012b, p.316).

In other words, searching for the right path is basically Tasawuf and every single individual has devised a way for praying for the one who is the controller and has the power (God). People do tend to have a question mark in their lives in which they search for the entity that is controlling them and they make their own explanations and translations about it whatever they can comprehend of the concept with the help of their knowledge, mind and their brain. Some have devised ways in which they pray for idols, trees, stars, angels etc. Every single individual has this candle that already has the fuel but needs to be lighted and it gets lighted with the blessings/barakat of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and this transference of *blessings* from one heart to another is called *Tasawwuf/tasawuf* (Awan, 2008, p.26-228). This tasawuf is essentially known to be the base of the Sufi practices, is variedly defined as well as explained and in this paragraph one of the ways of interpreting it has been explained by Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan.

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<sup>26</sup> The science of soul purification. It is represented by the word Tazkiyah in Quran, Ihsan in Hadith, and Tasawwuf in Persian. These are three names of the same reality.

If the heart carries so much importance in the physical existence of the human being as well as the spiritual world, it must be something worth studying and analyzing about. This is why I have been so much interested in researching about the subject. I have always been fond of studying about a practice that is spiritual and has a deep rooted meaning to the people that are practicing it. The reason behind selecting this method solely is basically because of the fact that it is one of those practices that could be adopted by the individuals themselves and they practice it on their own without having the use of any conversation. This practice involves the concentration on the heart and focusing on the breathing side by side to gain the outcomes that are essential for the soul and the heart. It is the sense of good or feeling of contentment that an individual gathers in the process which is quite appealing for me.

### **7.1 Why the Heart (Qalb)?**

So, the question is why heart is important in the process and what is its significance? Gulen (2011) has explained it in his book ‘Emeralds hills of the heart’ and states that: “The heart is the seat of belief, worship and perfect goodness or excellence, and through it runs a mighty river flowing with radiance and inspiration that arise from relationships with God, humanity and the universe” (p.1-2). He further mentions that the heart can act as a bridge to receive the blessings and good to a person and it could also act as a means for satanic and ill temptations. So, this explains the importance of cleansing the heart.

The next argument that comes is that why zikr by heart or zikr-e-qalbi? Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan states that the heart is known to be the main holder and controller of the whole body where Allah (The Divine) lives in. If it is pure, the wishes that emerge out of it would eventually be pure and the mind would have to act accordingly for the fact that it is being controlled by the heart (Awan, 2011; p.222). This heart differentiates a human being from other animals and living creatures. Other beings know how to have their needs fulfilled and they use their brains for it. When the heart gets filled with the light or starts living, it starts seeing things from another perspective (Awan, 2013a, p. 352-353). So, although it seems like just an essential organ for the physical body which is known to be the reason for an individual’s living.

The indulgence in sins by an individual creates a black spot on the heart (Awan, 2000, p.410). If it is persisted, the entire heart is darkened which could also be observed in our society as well. To cleanse the hearts, zikr-e-qaalbi is imperative and it could lead towards higher levels of Divine cognition (Awan, 2004; p. 465-466). This is why, the heart is important in the spiritual understanding of the concepts.

## 7.2 Types of Zikr

There are other ways of doing zikr in which there is remembrance of God and it also includes the daily life routine tasks for the reason that it reminds an individual about the Divine. The practical zikr would stop once the person stops doing it whereas, there are other ways in which a person is doing zikr and at the same time the other worldly tasks are also going side by side. It is also mentioned directly in Quran to do zikr but the ways of doing zikr are not necessitated. Particularly, for zikr, there is no requirement for any timing, posture or any other limitation. Furthermore, the associated feelings could only be felt by a person himself/herself and cannot be described in words (Awan, 2008, p.235-237).

It is being mentioned in Quran as well in 205 Ayat of Surah Al-Airaaf in which it is being mentioned that remember your Cherisher (Allah) by heart, humbly and without making a sound (or without speaking) and there should not be a time of the day when you do not remember (zikr) Him (Awan, 2012b, p.227-228). This is how; zikr-e-qalbi is practiced through the method of breathing.

Are there other ways of doing zikr or not? The answer to this question according to the literature would be yes. Du'a (seeking and fulfillment of needs) also means zikr Allah, and it is practiced with humility and in secrecy. The Sufis have also practiced zikr-e-Jahar (Loud zikr) and it is supported by Sunnah provided the limit that it is neither done in pretence nor should it be a source of inconvenience for the others. However, along with that, the superiority of zikr-e-khafi is also proved in Hadith: "The best zikr is zikr-e-khafi, and the best provision is that which suffices for one's maintenance" (Awan, 2000, p.385). This is how, zikr-e-khafi becomes different than the other ways of zikr.

### 7.3 Method of doing Zikr-e-Qalbi

Zikr is basically provides a way of living to an individual and there is no limit of zikr-e-qalbi however, there are different levels associated. Every single thing that is in accordance with the ways provided by Allah and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is basically zikr. These are the different ways in which a person could carry out zikr but it needs to be constantly done and with a lot of intensity. The thing that keeps working and is intact with an individual who lives, sleeps, eats, wakes up and it is 'breathing'. It is one of the most carried out task that is done by the human body and if it gets associated with zikr, it could be regarded as the zikr that is carried out in abundance by any individual (Awan, 2014e, p.185-186).

All of the practices pertaining to Zikr help an individual in gaining the spiritual purification and getting closer to the Divine. Following is the method of doing zikr-e-qalbi which would be the main interest of the current study.

'The person should imagine that the word 'Allah' is going in with each inhaled breath and the word 'Hoo' comes out with every exhaled breath. Not only should Hoo be exhaled with the breath, but also it should strike the Heart'. (Awan, 2013c, p.38).

**Figure 19. Method of zikr-e-qalbi**



(Source: Silsila Naqshbandiah Owaisiah)

Zikr-e-Qalbi (The word literally means *Remembrance by heart*) the contextual meaning of this term is basically remembering Allah by heart. It is a method of Zikr, within the heart, which cannot be discerned even by the Recording Angels. It is also termed as Zikr-e Khaffi.

## 7.4 Understanding Zikr-e-Qalbi: The religious Context

The practice could be carried out by anyone and there is no limit ascribed or described. It is also not considered to be having defined sects or anything for the reason that anyone that considers himself or herself as a Muslim and follows sunnah, then no concept of sect is left in the process. It is a straight path that is followed through the sunnah. Every other sect that has been separated from each other is the self explanations of the individuals.

The concept of sect is not encouraged for the reason that in Islam there is no division or sects present in the religion. When the individual's own translation and own understanding comes in the way, it makes a sect or a division. The path towards the *deen* is straight and there is no division in Islam, people have the tendency to divide and to differentiate. When a person either adds up or lessens something out of the religion, this makes a sect (Awan, 2013b, p. 213).

Allah says: "Remember me and I'll remember you (Al-Quran, 2:152)."

The word zikr has been mentioned in Quran for a number of times and there are a number of Hadiths given by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that signifies the importance of zikr in an individual's life.

*Remember the Name of your Rabb and devote yourself to Him wholeheartedly.* (Al Muzzammil: 8)

The command of **Allah**, when dispatching Hazrat Musa (AS) and Hazrat Haroon (AS) to Pharaoh: '*And slacken not in keeping Me in Remembrance* (Ta Ha: 42)'. It is referred here that the Zikr should not become secondary in His (Hazrat Musa AS) attention.

Allah says: Zikr (remembrance) of Allah is the highest. Hazrat Ibn Abbas said: This is for two reasons. One reason is that, Allah's remembrance of you is better than your

remembrance of Allah. Another reason is that Allah's remembrance is better than all other divine services (Ghazzālī, 1993, p. 229-230)

Furthermore, the excellence of the Assembly of zikr is explained through the following Hadith (Ghazzālī, 1993, p. 230-233):

- The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "One engaged in the zikr of Allah among the heedless is like a living tree in the midst of dry trees.
- The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: 'if a party of men are engaged in the Zikr of Allah, the angels surround them, mercy encompasses them and He remembers them before His angels.
- "Saturate your tongue with the zikr of Allah, morning and evening; you will have no sin morning and evening."
- There is a polish for everything that takes rust, and the polish for the heart is the remembrance of God (Tirmidhi).

#### **7.4.1 Collective zikr**

There is also a way of doing zikr in the form of group which is known as the *ijtimai zikr* or collective zikr. It could be traced back to the times of Hazrat Daud A.S (David) in which the mountains and birds would join in zikr and highlights His (A.S) miracle. 'Certainly, collective zikr carried out in any specific manner has its own merit and exhilaration as every person experiences a unique spiritual state, which, in turn, is disbursed to the entire assembly'. It also gives the participants a unique pleasure as well as elevation of the spiritual grades (Awan, 2004; p.28).

#### **7.4.2 The Concept of Lata'if (Points of the Soul)**

The concept of *lataif* has also been presented by the author of Tafsir-e-Mazhari in his explanation of *Nafs* (soul). He mentions that a human soul is basically the byproduct of the four elements namely air, clay, fire and water. But the *Qalb* and *Rooh/Ruh* etc are the *lataif* of *Alam-e-Amr* and their origin is beyond *Arsh*. The human soul has further three states as explained by Quran namely: *Nafs-e-Ammara* (soul at evil), *nafs-e-lawwamah* (the accusing soul) and *nafs-e-mutma'inah* (soul at peace) (Awan, 2001; p.283).

Shah Wali Allah of Delhi has talked about these lataif and it is essentially a Sufi terminology which refers to the “nonmaterial component of the person which can be influenced or “awakened” through spiritual practices”. It could also be referred as the ‘subtle spiritual centers’ (Hermansen, 1988).

The process of zikr-e-qalbi involves the concept of lata’if as well which are basically the points of the soul/rooh. The name that is being given as a lata’if to it is for the fact that it is a delicate and a rarified thing and it is intangible i.e., can neither be seen through an eye nor could it be touched and this is what it means. A human being differs from other living creature because of these points or lataif of the soul (Awan, 2014d, p.35).

There are a number of vital organs of the human body, likewise, there are vital organs of the human soul and are referred to as lata’if but the distinction between the human body and the human soul is that, the human body organs are made up of the physical matter, but the spirit/rooh or the soul is basically known to come from the Realm of Command, and these vital organs referred to as lata’if also belong to the Realm of Command. Hazrat Mujadid Alif Sani (rehmatullah alaeey) writes about the formation of the human being in which ten elements were involved. Five of them are the lata’if of the rooh whereas; the remaining five are the components of body that are clay, water, fire, air and Nafs which is formed when these components combine together.

The lata’if or the points of the soul are:

- 1) Qalb
- 2) Rooh
- 3) Sirri
- 4) Khafi, and
- 5) Akhfa

They could also be explained with the help of the following figure:

**Figure 20. A figure showing the lataif in a human body with point 1 being the qalb/heart**



(Source: Silsila Naqshbandiah Owaisiah)

It is basically these points that have the capability of accepting and perceiving the Divine Lights and also, to obtain the spiritual states. These five lata'if, are the foundation and the core of all these five lata'if is one which is the lateefa Qalb which is the basic point (Awan, 2013c; p. 11). This is basically the main summary of the points of the soul on which zikr is practiced upon.

After the seven lata'if, there are certain muraqabaat (plural of muraqabah) that are basically dependent on the effort of the individual and the continuous practice of zikr-e-qalbi. The muraqabaat are basically the spiritual statuses that the individuals attain and are limitless.

### **7.5 What is Soul/Rooh? Why is it so Important?**

There is an existence of two worlds, one is known as the 'aalam-a-khalq' which has been created or formed and it includes human beings, living things hence, and every single thing that has been created by Allah. Another world is known as the 'aalam-e-amar' which begins when the limits of alam-e-khalq come to an end. Soul or rooh basically belongs to the 'aalam-e-amar' and no one could further say where has it come from, how does it look etc, it cannot be comprehended by this worldly knowledge of an individual (Awan, 2014e, p.113).

The human soul as well as the human body are interconnected (Hermansen, 1988) and through the zikr-e-qalbi, it is the soul or the spirit that helps the individual in attaining the spiritual status that will further help the individual in the hereafter life and this is why, the concept of soul or rooh is important to understand in the entire process.

## **7.6 Zikr-e-Qalbi as a Healing method**

As mentioned earlier, zikr-e-qalbi is helpful in healing a number of problems that are either body related or spiritual in nature. Previous study has also shown that zikr could be used as a way for benefiting the bodily problems and the spiritual problems (Soliman & Mohamed, 2013). Not only that but with zikr, which is actually a Sufi practice carried out for the cleansing of the heart and human soul; when the heart of an individual is purified, the whole body gets automatically cleansed afterwards because the heart is the main pumping organ of the entire body; which further suggests that the illnesses that are in relation with the spirit of the individual (sorcery and possession) would get eventually resolved. The same has been observed through this research as well and people that have actually sorted out their problems through zikr were being interviewed and conversed with.

Two themes were extracted to be the main subject matter. People mainly came here for the healing of two dominant reasons: 1) Physical problems (that included illnesses like cancer and many other health related problems that were found to be incurable by the doctors. They also came for the treatment of minor illnesses as well) and, 2) Spiritual condition, which included possession and sorcery problems predominantly as mentioned earlier. The researcher's area of interest was spiritual condition and there were further two types of cases that the researcher came across and that had fallen in the spiritual condition. The problem of sorcery as well as possession fell under the spiritual problem that had also been previously discussed and both the cases, the researcher observed that they had been cured by means of regularly usage of the amulets as well as through the meditation of the zikr-e-qalbi.

In zikr-e-qalbi, heart is basically known to be the core of the human body. It works on its own and guides the mind as well. If the heart is *zakhir* and there is a positive energy in it,

the blood that pumps through the heart travels in the whole body and thus, the whole body also gets purified spiritually. This is the main idea behind the entire practice. The spiritual problems arise due to a number of reasons and the factors that I found to be associated were due to the weakness of the human spirit.

People that were suffering from anxiety and depression problems were being told to do regularly zikr at least twice a day and spend maximum amount of time on it with a lot of concentration. This helped the individuals in calming down. Not only that, but it helped the individual in carrying out of the tasks that were related to the normal daily activities of the life. Zikr could be used as a meditation and as a therapeutic procedure that helps in healing the individual physically, mentally and spiritually (Soliman & Mohamed, 2013).

All of this could also be explained with the help of the following diagram:

**Figure 21. Zikr-e-qalbi as a healing method and outcomes gained**



(Source: Author’s own)

Zikr-e-qalbi is also practiced as a meditation in which the people attain spiritual status through constant exercise. Further description will be given in the subsequent section.

### **7.7 Zikr-e-Qalbi as a Meditation**

Just like many meditations practices, zikr-e-qalbi is a Sufi mediation practice that not only helps in healing of the certain problems, but also, some people practice it as a meditation exercise. According to the practice, people achieve certain spiritual status that is attained through regular practice of the individual. These spiritual statuses are referred to as *murakbaat*. It is also taken as a way of meditation in which there are certain *murakbaat* in which an individual closes the eyes and makes connection with the spiritual world. Muraqabah is referred to as contemplation and meditation which is an act of devotion performed by the Sufis (Hughes, 1885, p. 420).

So, along with the spiritual benefits attached with the Sufi practice of meditation, there are therapeutic benefits as well in which the person imagines that the heart is connected with the heavens above with the eyes closed. So, despite the fact if anyone possesses any kind of spiritual status or not, people can practice it by themselves for other related purposes.

### **7.8 The Healing Process**

Zikr-e-qalbi has been particularly chosen as a way of healing method to ward off the impact of sorcery. The whole process was explained before in the previous chapters as well because the discussion was interrelated and it will also be highlighted in this part of the document as well. Zikr is a method that helps in improving the emotional well being, reducing the physical pain as well as enhancing the spiritual growth of an individual. Not only that, but the Zikr therapy is known for strengthening the mind, soul as well as the body (Soliman & Mohamed, 2013), The best way to keep the effects of sorcery away from oneself is to have a strong faith that the person will never be harmed by it because Allah is protecting him or her and He will keep me protected from the devil and evil spirits. If that person is scared of the sorcerers and the sorcery effects, it indicates that his/her faith is a bit weaker. The best way and solution against it is to eat halal and to

trust Him (Awan, 2012a, p. 214). Also, the best way to stay shielded from sorcery or magic is not to be scared from it (Awan, 2012a, p. 50).

When the researcher asked a female about the zikr as a curative method, who had been one of the most severe victims of sorcery she said:

*"Curing through zikr-e-qalbi is 100%. People told me to go to other fakir baba's, but I've been only doing this and it helped 100% Alhamdulillah. When I did zikr, those forces stopped me from doing it. Not only that but they also stopped me from performing prayers and prostration. The prayer that would take 5-10 minutes would take more than 2 hours. They would choke my neck but now Alhamdulillah everything is fine."*

While asking about the experiences from the individuals that were affected by sorcery, there were a number of responses that showed the process and the feelings that were involved in the healing of the individual. One of the respondents said:

*"I have started zikr right now and when I do it I feel nauseous my head spins"* (on that day she couldn't get out of bed and when the researcher asked her if she needed something she told me it's ok! It happens to me once or twice in a week normally).....  
*"When I do zikr, I feel content and I feel happy. I feel good"* (she could express her feelings but it showed that she felt better when she practiced it) (Case #01).

Another female that had undergone through a similar experience mentioned:

*And after I started doing zikr, I could do things the way I used to and I was back to normal for two months. Whenever I do zikr, I am back to my routine life and the problem disappears and now that she stopped doing it, they have re-appeared. I remember when I was young and did the zikr for the first time; I felt as if the room was filled with light.*

Individuals that had suffered from sorcery did not always know about the reason behind the person that had been involved in casting of the spell. Some of the respondents had suspicions but that did not mean that they were sure about it. In Dar-ul-Irfan, the main focus is not to tell the individual about who was involved in the sorcery at all. Rather, the focus is solely mainly on the practice because it will heal all the associated problems with the soul.

### **7.8.1 Bonding between the Healer (Sheikh) and the Victim**

Literature also puts forward the relation as well as the bonding between the healer and the patient is very important in the whole process (Wirth, 1888). It could also be explained through an example, if an individual is willing to have cured certain physical illness, an ideal situation would suggest having the problem cured with only one doctor rather than going for multiple doctors because each would give their medications based on their own knowledge. In the most similar way, it is suggested for an individual to have the problem resolved through one way. And if the amulets are being used by the individual, it is recommended not to use any other way to get the problem resolved by one doctor.

Moreover, the literature seems to indicate that the role of Sufi healer and his spiritual power plays a significant role in which the healer is able to penetrate into the minds and heart of the people and diagnose their sufferings. He is able to see the invisible spiritual beings and malevolent influences as well (Werbner, 2003, 27-8).

### **7.8.2 Duration**

In some of the cases, depending on the nature and severity of the problem, the duration is longer while some heal with a faster pace. The process depends mainly on the effort of the individual as well. If the person is regular in taking the amulets as well as in doing zikr, the process of healing will be faster. One of the cases that the researcher had personally interviewed mentioned that the sorcery was carried out on their family from multiple people and this had made the problem go for so long. It took almost three years to slow down the pace of the effects on their family. The daughter came back to normal and after more than three years of constant struggle as well as constant fight, the problem got resolved. She mentioned that it is totally dependent on the association with the sheikh (spiritual teacher). She also consulted a doctor for her daughter's treatment who worked in USA who mentioned that her daughter would only be cured to 17% because of the illness. But today, her daughter is an engineer and she said that she gave no medicine at all to her daughter. The only curing method which she used was zikr-e-qalbi and amulets. Her daughter is now married and it's been more than 10 years now that she is free from all sorts of sorcery effects.

The method of healing is complemented by usage of the amulet in which the individual is either advised to put amulet around the neck or is advised or take amulets in the drinking water or in some cases, both options. It will further be discussed later in the section below:

### 7.8.3 Usage of Amulets

When it comes to warding off the sorcery related effects, the victim or the effected individual is given water amulets known as *Naqsh* that require changing depending upon the severity of the problem. *Naqsh* basically are the amulets that the individual puts in the drinking water and the aim should be to have a continuous usage of the water until the problem gets resolved and it is preferred that the affected individual uses it in all the edible things and mix the water in it so that the person can get healed at a faster pace. Furthermore, if the color of the amulet changes (it happens in the case of severe affects), the amulet gets tore down by itself into a half or several pieces, the water gets smelly or murky; the amulet needs to be changed instantly as well as the bottle or any container in which the amulet is being used needs to be changed for the reason that it indicates that the *naqsh* is taking the effects of sorcery, possession or any other physical/ mental/ spiritual illness. The usage of amulet for protection is not an unusual aspect within the dimension of the Sufi practice and it is used for a number of reasons (Rytter, 2014).

In Pakistan, the usage of amulet is practiced for a number of reasons and the most dominant usage is for the protection of the individual. It is not something novel or new concept to the Pakistani inhabitants that the people might not know about (Knudsen, 2011, p. 127; Qamar, 2016). Amulets basically complement the healing process and act as a protective method. It carries the *barakah* that is basically the reason behind the healing. It is believed that healing is done by Allah, proper means needs to be used but the main Hand behind the entire healing process is by Allah.

The amulets that the people took with them, as per my personal observations, were of the following two types:

- Amulet to be worn around the neck (referred to as Taweez)
- Amulet to be used in the drinking water (referred to as Naqsh)

There was one female that kept using the same water bottle and the same amulet that had changed its color and this did not change the situation. Rather, it affected the whole family because the water was used by the entire family and it spread the effects among the whole members. The reason that is ascribed for changing the amulet after it changes its physical color, shape or odor is that, the amulet takes the negative effects on itself and that is why, it needs to be discarded.

Another respondent had mentioned about her experience with usage of the amulets and she was under an effect of sorcery. She further said:

*"Since the time I've been taking the water amulets, I am feeling alright and I've been offering my daily prayers regularly."*

Another female, who had been experiencing some paranormal activities in her life mentioned:

*"My health has been badly affected by it and I see scary faces and figures. At times I hear the cat's meow that comes from nowhere. Even since I started taking the amulet, it had a very positive affect. I used to see devilish faces before. This amulet is very effective I must say. I had it before around my neck but then I lost it that's why I've come back to take it. Because of the negative effects of sorcery, I couldn't perform my prayers but zikr has been quite effective. I noticed that my daily practice of other prayers also improved with that"* (Female, 45 years old).

It is essential for the person to have the problem identified that is making the problem rather than taking amulet for every kind of problem. For example, there was a female who came for the amulet for diabetes and she was told to get medication for that. It is necessary to know the main root cause of the problem rather than having the solution for the effects and the symptoms for example, treatment of the fever is not to put ice on the body to lower the body temperature rather, it needs to be treated and the root cause needs to be found out and that needs to be treated (Awan, 2014b, p. 122). So, the spiritual illnesses are to be treated spiritually whereas the medical illnesses need to be treated medically. The amulets usage basically compliments the healing process and adds *barakah*. Healing is basically done by Allah.

When the amulets are being used, it is recommended not to use any other means of warding off the effects. Not more than one doctor is mostly used for the healing of any physical illness because each will suggest their own medicines. In the same way, it is advised to use the amulets that are provided here and not seek any other spiritual healer and constantly do zikr.

#### **7.8.4 The Continued Zikr**

The continuous doing of zikr will speed up the process and will help in developing strength in the spirit (rooh) that will not only act as a self defense but also increases invincibility in an individual. The findings of the field work suggested that the people that had suffered from the possession and sorcery effects did not want their body to be touched by the amulet. They would shout out loud if it touched the body and would say that it is burning their body. Similar is the case with practicing zikr. During the researcher's stay there at the Dar-ul-Irfan, the researcher came across a female that started crying and shouting when the zikr started. She used to go out in the ground as far away as she could go. It is advised for the individual to keep a constant usage of the amulets and do zikr so that the process of healing is faster.

#### **7.9 Justifying Zikr-e-Qalbi through Religion and Science**

It is quite an interesting fact that is being discovered by the scientist that the heart is composed of a number of neurons and a hub of neurons. According to Aristotle's cardio-centric model, the heart is basically the organ of intelligence. It has been recorded through many cases in the field of science, that there is a link of heart and the body. The heart has its own nervous system and it is the 'mini brain' of the body that controls and has its own capacity of thinking (Ghilan, 2012). The person's emotional state information is carried out in the whole body through the magnetic field of the heart. The negative emotions that include frustration as well as anger are related with the elevated heart beats and likewise, the positive emotions also have the opposite impact on the heart. These types of emotional responses have an impact on the electromagnetic field changes produced by the heart and are measured through the spectral analysis (McCraty, Bradley, & Tomasino, 2015). This is basically known as the subtle heart or the *qalb* which is the main controller of the entire body (Awan, 2014e, p. 186). If this part of the body is

cleansed and positive energy is deposited in it, it surely does have a huge impact on the working of the entire body.

This could be associated with the depression as well as anxiety problems that were healed by the zikr-e-qalbi because not only does it help in the control of breath and exercises the whole body, but also, through the relaxation and meditation, the mind, body and the spirit becomes in harmony with each other.

Not only is the zikr-e-qalbi used for healing, for spiritual benefits, but also for the strengthening the heart and soul spiritually. Zikr acts as a protective shield of positive energy that could keep an individual away from many of the evil aspects that might harm the individual. It cannot be said that people that constantly practice the zikr-e-qalbi do not catch any kind of physical illness. They do get ill but the point that is being said here is that, the spiritual illnesses that are involved in harming the individual which include sorcery and possession, a person becomes invincible to such negative impacts.

An individual gains feeling of contentment and happiness after the practice of zikr which had also been recorded as a point of view by many of the respondents that had been interviewed. Some said that they have not been affected by any kind of sorcery or whatsoever, but the associated feelings are felt, cannot be expressed in words. Another female mentioned that when she did zikr for the first time, she would not stop weeping and she did not even know the reason behind it. Those, she referred to as 'good tears'. That made her want to practice zikr even more and this weeping persisted but afterwards gave her such a relief and such satisfaction that she said she could not explain.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The present study helps in establishing the relation between the zikr-e-qalbi as a healing method for sorcery. Not only did it focus on finding the relation of both variables but also helped in analyzing the associated impact of sorcery on an individual's life (physical, spiritual as well as inter personal). Through this entire research it was found out that zikr-e-qalbi is adopted for a number of reasons by the people that involves spiritual benefits and along with that outcome gain, zikr-e-qalbi could as well be used for a number of healing purposes such as sorcery and spirit possession etc. It was found out that many of the people chose this Sufi practice to get meaning out of their lives and they do essentially seek assistance out of it as well. Some also believed that zikr-e-qalbi provides them a way of life and acts like a guiding tool.

The research does seem to indicate that sorcery has a direct impact over the physical existence of an individual and has manifest effects on people. Not only does the social life of an individual get disrupted but the religious practices are as well influenced by it. The reason that was associated for the act of the sorcery was found out to be feelings of jealousy and envy that also is in accordance with the study that had been selected for the theoretical framework (Basu, 2014; Edgar & Henig, 2010; Nkosi, 2012).

On the other hand, there is an adverse impact of sorcery over the spiritual existence of the individual as well which could further be resolved with the help of the spiritual and Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi. The main objective of this study was to establish a relation of the two aspects and investigate the zikr-e-qalbi as a healing tactic. Zikr-e-qalbi is basically a practice that is aimed at gaining beneficial outcomes for the spiritual world and for a number of other spiritual gains. And on the contrary, sorcery is an evil performance. So, the main aspiration of this study was additionally to seek that if something that could be used for the positive or spiritual gains in the world such as the zikr-e-qalbi in this case, it could also be used as a curative method for sorcery which of course is a malevolent act. The findings of the study supported the main hypothesis and the fundamental objective of the study and verified it further.

So, there are so many Sufi practices that are existent and practiced in many regions of the world and one of those is zikr-e-qalbi which could also be used as a healing method for sorcery as per the findings of this current research. Another important aspect that was unraveled was the relation of the human body and human soul with sorcery (Tonkinson, 1981, p. 77-88). It was hypothesized that if zikr-e-qalbi is practiced for the spiritual gains then there is a definite chance that sorcery has something to do with the spiritual existence of the human being. The findings of the study highlighted some of the interesting facts in which this relation was identified as a main factor in the impact or the attack of sorcery. It was discovered that the soul is the main factor that mediates in the entire process. Sorcery basically has an impact on the soul specifically that is vulnerable and is weak and zikr-e-qalbi on the other hand, helps in making the human soul strong and thus acts as a curative method in warding off the effects that are negatively influencing human soul. So, the study results further establish the argument that there is a relation of the human soul with the effects on the human body that could occur due to sorcery.

As a consequence of this connection of the human body and the human soul, the physical symptoms occur in a human being who has been under the attack of sorcery and those have further link with the emotional and social well being of the person. These problems predominantly included digestive problems, headaches, pessimism, uncontrolled emotions and so on. One of the factors that assisted the healing process was the usage of amulet that further helped in a faster recovery of the victim.

In addition to that, sorcery seems to be having a relation of economic, social, cultural and religious aspect of an individual's life that was further validated over the course of this research. In all of the cases, the predominant factor that was found with reference to the sorcery was that, all of the individuals mentioned that they were unable to perform their daily prayers which further made them think about the possible reason behind it. There were no gender differences that were identified as such and an argument was established that sorcery is independent of the gender and affects every single person equally provided if the soul is vulnerable. If not, sorcery attacks would fail.

A model has been proposed for this research which will further be discussed in detail in the following part of the chapter:

## **8.1 Proposed Model**

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, there are a number of studies that have been previously conducted to find out the relation of sorcery with certain other dimensions of the societal factors (Evans-Pritchard & Gillies, 1976, p.176; Forsyth & Eves, 2015; p.7, 28). And a study had been helpful in explaining the entire process of sorcery as well as the usage of the Sufi methods for countering them (Basu, 2014). All of these previously conducted studies did provide a lot of information and ways for establishing an argument, but they did not seem to provide a coherent model for this particular study. So a theoretical framework has been recommended and developed during the course of this research.

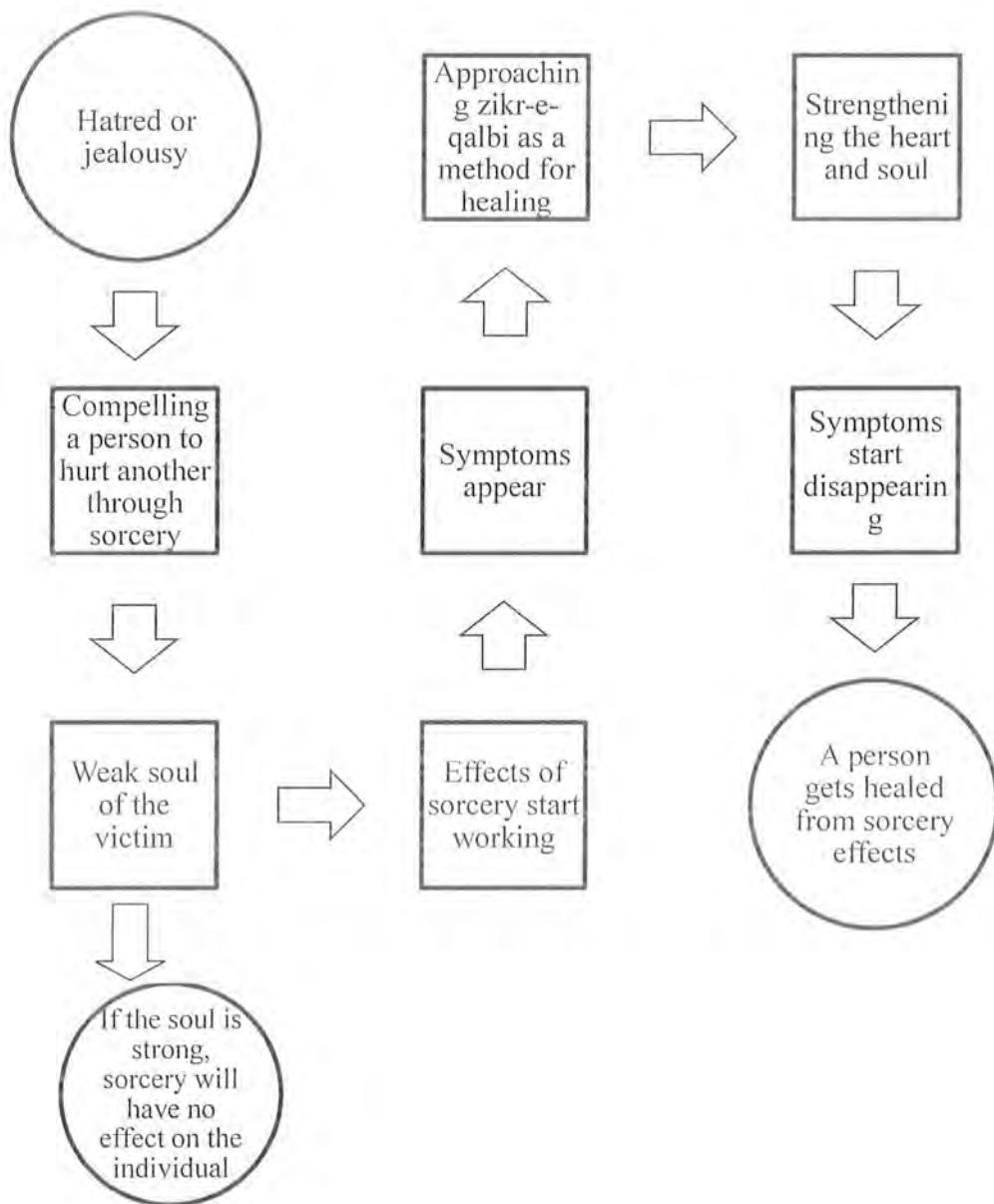
The theory suggests that the individual could be under the affect of sorcery for a number of reasons that include jealousy, envy, hatred or any other issue that involves affecting the victim for any specific matter (Edgar & Henig, 2010). These feelings trigger the sense of hurting the victim by the perpetrator and that is carried out in secrecy in the form of sorcery for the fact that the perpetrator will not be openly identified as a convict. The victim is then targeted through involvement of the black magic/sorcery amulets that are given to the victim in the food, by placing them in certain places of the victim's house or any other means that are being recommended by the sorcerer. Once the process initiates, it further makes the desired harmful impact as well as outcome results on the victim's life that further leads to the problems in the behavior and other bodily dysfunctions. The soul of the victim gets polluted and influenced by the sorcery effects that further leads to the bodily dysfunctions as well as the social lack of correspondence.

Had the soul not been weak, it would not have been affected by sorcery. The Sufi practice suggests that the human soul is strengthened through zikr and remembrance of the Divine. So, eventually the Sufi practice of zikr-e-qalbi helps in directly cleansing that negative impact on the human soul that eventually becomes purified and strengthened through the process. It ultimately not only wards off the negative sorcery effects but in

addition to that, makes an individual invincible of such intangible and spiritual related problems. Once the soul gets healthy, the body also starts healing and the physical problems disappear through the advancement of the time. It is a process and depending on the state and severity of the problem, the healing time is determined accordingly. But if the zikr-e-qalbi is carried out several times a day, this would further help the individual in a speedy recovery.

So basically, the problem is the sorcery and zikr-e-qalbi is used as a resolving practice or a method. It could also be demonstrated through the following chart:

Figure 22. Proposed model



Hence, this is the entire model that fills the gaps that are present in the researches that have been conducted previously and provide the information that has been found to be sufficient enough to explain the entire process in detail. Not only is this model based on the data of the present research but is also applicable in the context of Pakistan as well as in any other context where there is a belief in sorcery and any curative method that explains the dimensions of the spiritual world. So, through this study a model has been

presented that further explains the process of effect of sorcery on an individual as well as the process of curing to come back to the normal life.

All of the findings of the study are essentially based in the Pakistani context and were explained with reference to its culture. The concepts are so embedded in the social structure of the country and have been explained in accordance with the general as well as specific understanding of the phenomenon through this piece of writing. It might also be applicable in other cultures as well and this study could be used as a comparative study for finding the cultural differences or similarities.

There were however some of the limitations that were identified and were important enough to be mentioned in this study so that it might be helpful for the future aspiring researchers.

## **8.2 Limitations**

The limitations of the study will be identified through the following points:

- The reason for only approaching females was due to cultural barriers as well as gender segregation in the area in which the researcher could not directly have contact with the male members for gathering of the data.
- It was not possible for the researcher to have a direct face to face interview with male because of the cultural limitations where females cannot talk directly with the males.

### 8.3 Epilogue

Through the findings of this study it could be concluded that in the Pakistani society where there is a belief system (both religious and cultural) and it is one of the reason that the existence of sorcery is known and recognized by majority of the people. Most of the people seek refuge for certain spiritual illnesses through the religion and this has been the reason why, the practice of zikr-e-qalbi had been selected for the study. The study suggested that zikr-e-qalbi could be used as a healing method for sorcery and other related spiritual illnesses. An argument was also established that sorcery directly impacts the human soul and it could be resolved through the practice of zikr-e-qalbi.

The study not only helped in gathering the essential information regarding the problem area but additionally provided some major argumentative discussion on the subject matter.

The present study could be used as a model for analyzing the other alternative healing methods for sorcery and other related aspects of it because of the reason that no previous research had been conducted specifically on this topic. This study has just been able to focus on one dimension which might open up certain recommendations for newer offshoots of the topics within the same topic.

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## GLOSSARY

### *Dam*

The process of exhaling of breath directed at the glass of water, any food substance to be consumed or directly over the person for the transference of Baraka/blessings.

### *Barakah*

The auspiciousness, the blessing, emanating from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) or the Quran or anything held sacred by Islam.

### *Murid*

Disciple or student of the spiritual teacher or Sheikh.

### *Sheikh*

An accomplished Sufi master who is adept in both:

- 1) Teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) of Islam and,
- 2) The art of acquiring His blessings.

### *Tasawwuf*

The science of soul purification. It is represented by the word Tazkiyah in Quran, Ihsan in Hadith, and Tasawwuf in Persian. These are three names of the same reality.

### *Tawajjuh*

Spiritual attention of an accomplished shaykh or his accredited representative

### *Zikr (Azkar plural)*

Remembrance, mention, invocation of Allah's Name orally or within the heart. The former is termed as zikr-e-lisani and the latter zikr-e-qalbi. Also used for the Quran and the Salaat (an obligatory worship that an adult and sane Muslim is enjoined to perform five times a day).

### *Arsh*

The empyrean. The first is known as 'Arsh-e-Azim (the Great Emppyrean) and where the 9<sup>th</sup> ends, the Realm of Creation ends. Beyond is the Realm of Command.

### *Alam-e-amr*

Lit. Realm of Command. One of the two Realms mentioned in the Quran. It is above and beyond the Realm of Creation. It is where the human Spirit originates from and wherein all exalted stations of Suluk (The sublime Sufi path) are located.

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