

## **MUSLIM PERIOD SHRINES AND MYSTIC PRACTICES IN PANJGUR DISTRICT, BALOCHISTAN**

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### **Abstract**

Panjgur has experienced Mysticism and Muslim mystics have left their traces throughout the district. There are several mystic shrines in Panjgur; almost all of them possess simple structures and a few are made of simple stone encircles. Islamic mysticism had long been practiced in the area but in the past few decades, people have not remained inclined towards it. The people still remember some of the important mystics and visit their shrines; however, they do it most often within the bounds of Islamic orthodoxy.

**Key Words:** Mystics, Tomb Architecture, Panjgur, Five Shrines

### **Introduction**

Panjgur is a district bordering Iran (west), district Washuk (north), district Awaran (east), and district Kech (south). Geographically, it is in a strategic position with a rich cultural heritage that has previously<sup>1</sup> and now recently been documented. The remains of the district are at least, based on a recent study by the authors, 7000 years old. Over the years, many Muslim mystics have dwelt all over Balochistan<sup>2</sup>. District Panjgur possesses many mystic shrines; most of them are simple in structure, with few or, no followers now. The oldest so-called shrine/tomb is Shaho

Qalandar now in the district, the only shrine that is functional to some extent.

Etymologically, the name Panjgur is frequently associated with the graves of five companions of Muhammad ﷺ (The Final Prophet Peace be Upon him, his Progeny and Companions). However, Henry Field<sup>3</sup> records a legend about it: “Osman, the third Khalif of Arabia, sent an army to exterminate a wild and lawless tribe. Tradition is silent as to the result of the expedition, but it seems to have led to somewhat serious fighting, for the legend states that five Arab chieftains were slain in an engagement, which took place at the spot where the date groves now flourish and were buried there. From that time and event, the place has been known by the name of Panjgur (“the five graves”), a designation which was eventually applied to the whole district”. Nonetheless, it has never been properly investigated.

People in South Asia venerate or even worship the remains or tombs of Muslim mystics i.e. *mazaar*<sup>4</sup>, *maqbara*<sup>5</sup>, or *dargah*<sup>6</sup>. While it is prohibited to worship any kind of saint in Islam; nevertheless, their veneration is accepted<sup>7</sup>. In the context of Panjgur, it is likely that most people simply venerate the mystics of Panjgur instead of worshipping them, which is *shirk* (polytheism). However, there have been campaigns against stopping Saint-Worship peer *parasti*<sup>8</sup> in the district. Regarding mystic practices though it is hard to locate them in the district, yet people visit the shrines and follow mystic practices to a very limited scale now. However, people once followed Sufi practices and rituals on a large scale that are now considered *shirk*. The ones who previously followed it, now believe in pure Islamic concepts and want to get rid of *peer parasti* which is *shirk* (polytheism).

The principal author has visited and spent time on some of these shrines for observations and collecting information from the visitors. The author has collected data from non-visitors too. The old architecture, also, is documented.

### **The Etymology of the Word Sufi**

The Islamic mystic is often regarded as a Sufi. The word Sufism has been coined from the Arabic word *suf* which means wool<sup>9</sup>. The name was given in the 18th century CE for the fact they wore woolen clothes. The Sufis often regarded themselves as, faqeer or darwesh—impoverished, abid—slave or devotee, zahid—ascetic, salik—spiritual traveler, arif—endowed with spiritual knowledge and/or ashik—lover. They have also

been categorized as peers, sheikhs, and murshids<sup>10</sup>. They are also regarded as walis (friends of Allah).

### **Background of Islamic Mysticism**

After the demise of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (the final Prophet upon whom, his Progeny and Companions be Peace), many Muslims in the later period enjoyed wealth and worldly life greatly and were neglecting spiritual values. Such behavior offended the austere elements who thought it as dissolute living and tempting to evil deeds. The actions and words of the early Sufis also offended traditional Muslims scholars. However, it is often said that al-Ghazali (1058-1111) organized Sufism so that the Orthodox could accept it<sup>11</sup>. Interestingly, they played their role in keeping Muslims focused on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Hadiths throughout history. They went to spread Islam in newly conquered lands and were active as missionaries. Moreover, religious scholarship is believed to have grown in terms of learning and law. They helped to develop the schools of Shari'ah<sup>12</sup>.

### **The Case of Sufism, Shrines, Practices and the Views**

#### *Views against Sufism and Rituals at Shrines*

According to conservative Islamic scholars Saint Veneration is considered a form of polytheism i.e. *shirk* or say a corrupt or unauthorized innovation i.e. *bid'ah*<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, they also practiced *qadar* (Determinism) which means that when you are ill or very poor you should endeavor to resolve your problems through intervention or intercession of the saint instead of relying on the will of Allah. Praying and making offerings to a saint, and practicing ritual activities on his tomb are endeavors to change one's fate (*qadar*) which is thought to be predetermined by Allah<sup>14</sup>. However, there are Sunni Muslims who believe and deny the intercession with God of any Sufi saint. They only venerate them as having performed supernatural deeds but not miracles<sup>15</sup>. As mentioned in Holy Qur'an 2: 255, "This order belongs to Allah who is the sole authority in the universe; who is ever-living and self-subsisting and who is seized neither by slumber nor sleep. The entire universe is engaged in fulfilling His plan. Who is there who can intercede with Him unless it is per His laws? Allah knows the past and present of all people and no one can partake of His knowledge except through the method prescribed by Him. Allah's authority encompasses the entire universe which He maintains untiringly. His power extends from the lowest to the

highest level of His creation”<sup>16</sup>. According to Waliullah (1970: 34), the people who go to tombs for their needs to be fulfilled, are grave sinners. Generally speaking, Qur’an and Sunna also mention the *auliya*, their characteristics, potential of intercessions on Judgment Day, but in this world<sup>17</sup>. The Qur’an says 10: 62-63, “Those people who adhere to the laws of Allah are His friends – they shall have no fear or grief. They are the ones who have believed in and are God-fearing-*muttaqeen*”<sup>18</sup>.

***The Prophet ﷺ (The Final Prophet Upon whom, his Progeny and Companions be Peace) His Views on Graves***

There are references that the Prophet ﷺ (The final Prophet Upon whom, his Progeny and Companions be Peace) earlier forbade the Companions from visiting any sort of grave; however, later he removed this ban<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ visited the graves of the martyrs who died in the cause of Islam and he also prayed for them. One day the Prophet ﷺ went out and offered the funeral prayer for the martyrs of Uhud, He then went up to the pulpit and at one point in a Hadith said, “...By Allāh! I am not afraid that you will worship others along with Allah after me (my death)...”<sup>20</sup>. Nevertheless, Islam does not allow “...performing sacrifices for/or on behalf of the dead (or praying to them with aim of seeking their intercession) at graveyards”. Moreover, “The Prophet ﷺ in his fatal illness said, “Allah cursed the Jews and the Christians because they took the graves of their Prophets as places for worship (mosques).” ‘Aishah (R.A.) added, “Had it not been for that the grave of the Prophet ﷺ would have been made prominent, but I am afraid it might be taken (as a) place for worship (mosque).”<sup>21</sup>. Islam does permit to ask from anyone including the Last Prophet ﷺ to mediate or intercede between them and Allah. Hence, the visiting of graves or shrines is not forbidden but the visit should be lawful according to the Sunna during the *ziyarat*. It is accepted to pray for the dead or recite some suitable verses of the Qur’an<sup>22</sup>. The Sufis practiced the Shari‘ah to a great extent<sup>23</sup>. The Prophet ﷺ even warned his followers that “Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam (Mary), for I am only a slave. So, call me a slave of Allah and His messenger”<sup>24</sup>. The Holy Qur’an mentions in 9: 31 that “Not only do they create sons of Allah, the Jews also take their *rabbis* and priests for Allah and the Christians deify Jesus although they were all enjoined to obey only Allah except Whom none has authority in the universe and Who is far above those whom people set up as His peers”. Even the Prophet ﷺ was warned not to make graves of any kind places of worship, before five days of his death. There are

differences in the veneration of Muhammad ﷺ (The final Prophet upon whom, his Progeny and Companions be Peace) and his family among Islamic sects; however, it is a must to love them but not to deify them<sup>25</sup>.

### ***Shrine Architecture***

Construction of decorated shrines and graves is not allowed in Islam; they need to be simply buried in a pit underground without any particular markers. Muslim scholars justify their opinion that unmarked graves are preferred to prevent Muslims from imitating the ancient people who took them for gods and started worshiping them<sup>26</sup>.

However, the majority of the Sunni Muslims do not deify or pray to the *auliya*<sup>27</sup>, or visit shrines. However, the Shia Muslims think of them as alive, that they can perform miracles, and can intercede too. Despite the interdicts and *fatwas* against *auliya/mystics/pirs*, etc., a large number of people still visit their shrines<sup>28</sup>.

### **Sufi Shrines and their Architecture in Panjgur**

*Shrine*: It is known as *qubah* which means a tomb crowned with a dome that is associated with shrines, mausolea, or spiritual places with saints. Shrine means a 'box' made of precious material to store relics. In other words, it is a place of holy or sacred nature which enshrines the reliquary or tomb of a particular person i.e. saint, martyr, hero, or a respected figure<sup>29</sup> (Eickelman 1995: 69-70). The following are the five shrines:

#### ***Shaho Qalandar Tomb/Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates*: Chitkan / Lat. 26.97195667; Long. 64.0853167

*Date*: 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> CE

*History, Myths, and Beliefs*: It is said that there used to be a stone with its written history on an unknown script that has been stolen now. However, many claim his name was simply Shaho Qalandar, but a few claim it to be Haji Shah Mohammad who is said to be a Sufi /saint. However, none of such information is certain.

Some even claim that he was a nomad who came here and was attacked. Fearing rape of their females, they locked them with some guards on the second story of the tomb and went to war with them, and

died fighting. It is their chief who is buried, and others too, are probably buried in this graveyard.

Many stories are told about the tomb of Shaho Qalandar. According to some locals, he used to be a chief of Panjgur. Once they went to war with some people, but kept their females locked so that their sanctity be protected. However, he was killed in the battle and was later buried in the tomb. There are other graves some of which are thought to be his companions in the battle.

According to the dream of a *Mullah*<sup>30</sup>, it is said that there is a treasure that is protected by a ghost. He or she will allow or guide anyone towards a treasure in exchange for seven heads. It is certainly a myth since it has already been searched for such treasure as locals claim. The ghost, as claimed, has frightened some treasure hunters who left their things and ran away.

*Description:* It is a double-storied tomb made of mud bricks on the interior and baked brick walls are erected to cover them. The locals claim a ground floor too but there are no traces of it at least now; people have gone there and seen dead bodies in clothes rather than shrouds. The ground plan is square (22.116 ft. on the outside, each side) with its small doorway on the south, and there used to be a doorway for the second floor from the eastern side which is in bad condition. However, the dome is completely made of baked bricks. There are traces of mud mortar mixed with straws. The baked brick panels have figurative motifs like horse rider, human figures, geometric figures, handprints, etc. However, most of it has been stolen now. This sort of architecture is called naked brick architecture. The tomb is about 19 ft. high. The bit triangle chamber is 13.67 ft. long and 5.67 ft. in height having the stepped grave (11 ft.) with a *chadar* on it. The radius of this chamber is 18.65 ft. In the chamber, there is a separate prayer place for one person at the extreme north where it is difficult to stand. The second story is 18 by 18 ft. and 11 ft. in height adding the dome height. There are squinches placed at each corner and four recesses in the middle of each wall. Moreover, there are two more recesses beside each of the pointed recesses on each side. The width of the walls is about 2.9 ft. and 2 ft. upper story with both mud brick and baked bricks combined. It is built in the Iranian style of architecture. The hemispherical dome is approximately 62 ft. in diameter and 54 ft. in radius. There are clear traces of human bones in the eastern broken wall of the tomb. The body is lying straight in a coffin and placed on some sort of bed. It is 5.62 ft. on a height of 7.91 ft. from the ground. Moreover, oil lamps and *agarbati* (joss sticks) lamps were also there for the visitors who came and lighted them. It is in very bad condition. Illicit traffickers

and illegal diggers have approached the site for looting purposes and destroyed many of its parts and taking many of the bricks.

Hence, it is not certain that it has been a tomb of a saint or not. But one thing is certain that it is a part of the tomb tradition which was once prevalent in Eastern Iran, Washuk, and Kharan. They are often dated from 13<sup>th</sup> CE till 17<sup>th</sup> CE. However, people sometimes visit the so-called shrine and pray here, offer prayers, light oil lamps, and joss sticks (*agarbatti*). Some people even bring sweets and leave some as a share of the saint. Furthermore, some others clean it. There are no permanent attendants at the tomb, however. People claim that the number of visitors have reduced in the last two decades.

### ***Peer Umar Jan Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Peer Umar Jan, Sarikoran / Lat. 26.95651000; Long. 64.19128500

*Date of Structure:* 26<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2016

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* According to Maitland<sup>31</sup>, “Here is the Ziarat of Peer Umar with a few date trees and a patch of cultivation. There is also a mat hut village of fakirs”. The brother of Mir Gajian Gichki was also living there because of the family quarrels. A. Stein (1931: 47) mentions a resting place of Peer Umer Jan in Grawak in Washuk district. Moreover, there is another one by the same name in Gwargo. Some people consider him a Companion of Muhammad ﷺ (The final Prophet upon whom, his Progeny and Companions be Peace). However, the tomb is not old enough to be that of a Companion (R.A.)

The tomb is said to be of that of an attendant of the saint when he was here; however, it is said to be the grave of his *khalifa*. Locals tell many stories about him. There is a spring on its east that has never dried up ever since it broke out which is said to have started because of the Peer Umer Jan struck his stick here. Some claim that it was the time of Hazrat Umar (R.A.) and there was no water in the area. Because of this spring, it has turned into a small beautiful oasis. Moreover, he is said to have stayed at four places for worshipping: Sarikoran and Sour Aapi Wadd (Panjgur), Simaan, and Ferozabad (Khuzdar). It is often claimed that the actual tomb of Peer Umer Jan is in Simaan, Khuzdar. There is a tomb in his name too. It is the most visited shrine in Panjgur. However, people are now shunning this practice. People visit the shrine, say *fatiha khwani*<sup>32</sup>, pray for themselves, and light the oil lamps and joss sticks (*agarbatti*.) Some also clean the shrine for getting merits and some others bring foodstuff i.e. grains, flour, toffies, etc. In the old times, people used to slaughter

animals thinking of them as a share of the saint. They also tie *katumpaanch*<sup>33</sup> and pray too; it works in a similar way to tying a string. Furthermore, some people tie strings after praying for something i.e. never let my son fall ill. It is an act of tying a palm shoot leaf at a shrine and praying after that. Furthermore, the water is often used to cure certain sicknesses. This water has never dried. It is because he is thought of as a powerful saint with supernatural gifts (*karamat*). According to Anna Suvorova<sup>34</sup>, “There even existed a definite connection between the saint and natural sources of water: tombs of Mangho Pir, Pir Ghaib (Baluchistan), and Shah Saddar (Lakhi, Sindh) are situated between two sulfur springs”.

*Description:* It looks like a small oasis. The tomb used to be in a rectangular small room with a small courtyard made of mud bricks. However, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December 2016, as dated, its architecture sadly has been replaced with cemented architecture which was a mud-brick architecture of rectangular shape having palm logs and shoots on the ceiling and a courtyard with low walls. Moreover, there is an old Masjid on its south which was once properly used by the villagers on the south who moved because of unknown reasons. However, it houses a stepped grave covered with flat sheets. There is a donation box inside the shrine and there is a cemented corner at the northwest for oil lamps, brooms, etc. Furthermore, a pole is attached to the shrine carrying a flag. Moreover, there are date palms all around the spring which is said to have emerged because of the saint who when he first visited the area there was no water. The water is currently cleared and fenced. There another place where he is said to have stayed, known as Souraapi Peer which is in Sour Aap in easternmost Panjgur; it is said to be a cave or rock shelter. Unfortunately, it could not be visited because of the unsafe situation of the area.

### ***Haji Ghazi Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Sordo / Lat. 26. 97884500 and Long. 64. 12403833

*Date of Structure:* about 25 years

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* This tomb is of Haji Ghazi; some people earlier called it Haji Kohi too. He is said to have lived 200 years back. There used to be two persons: Haji Ghazi and Haji Lari. They were from Panjgur and considered as *auliya*. Nothing much is known. However, there is a legend that Haji Gazi and Haji Lari were friends. They were talking to each other. Haji Lari said to Haji Ghazi that I will undergo the earth and die but a part of my scarf will remain outside so please bury it



there. A small mound is thought to be associated with it on the northeast of the shrine. Moreover, it is said that there was no theft in his lifetime. For example, when someone tried to steal dates from the date palms, he could not find any after reaching the top of the tree. When he came down, he saw dates on the top of the date palm again. Additionally, the Zikris, a branch of the Mehdawis, usually come and visit the tomb. The Zikris consider him their ancestor while some believe they have nothing in common with him. However, the Sufi, or to some *auliya*<sup>35</sup> thought him to be a Sunni Muslim. The Zikris visit and clean the shrine, pray here, sacrifice here, etc. However, Muslims too visit the shrine, clean and pray here.

*Description:* It is made of sun-dried mud bricks and mud in a simple structure. The main tomb structure is roughly rectangular with 11.1 ft. north-south, 9.1 ft. east-west, 8 ft. high, and 1.4 ft. thick walls and the courtyard is roughly square with 20 ft. north-south 19 ft. east-west, 5.2 ft. high wall and 0.10 ft. thick walls. There is one entrance from the east through the courtyard and the shrine entrance is also on the east. The ceiling is made with two date palm logs, one girder, and several date palm shoots. There is only a one-stepped grave inside with gravestones, one of which has Persian writing ascribing it to Haji Ghazi.

### ***Shay Mulook Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Washbood / Lat. 27.00453500; Long. 64.15205500

*Date of Structure:* more than two hundred years ago

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* No one knows the certain history of the tomb. However, locals claim that it is one of the tombs of the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ (The final Prophet upon whom, his Progeny and Companions be Peace) who came to Panjgur to preach Islam and died. There is another claim that his caste was Sayyid. The name Panjgur is also sometimes is said to be on the five buried Companions of Muhammad ﷺ. (The final Prophet upon whom, his Progeny and Companions be Peace) Nevertheless, there is no physical evidence of this yet. It used to be sacred to Kharani people who used to come here and sacrificed goats near the tomb and distributed its meat among people; which they regarded as a share of the Sufi saint. The people placed eatables so that people or animals could eat them. Furthermore, there are myths about the tomb that it is buried with gold and treasure which is protected by the powers of the saint. The tomb has, lamentably, been dug-up and searched for treasure.

*Description:* There are no structures of it now nor there is any debris. However, it is claimed that there used to be a structure surrounding the grave decades ago. During the current research, no such evidence could be recorded, nonetheless. It is in an old graveyard having a low-walled small masjid. However, the tomb is surrounded by a circle of mud and stones measuring 52 ft. in diameter with a height of 1.1 ft. It has an entrance of 2.4 ft. on the east. Moreover, the disturbed grave is in the center surrounded by stones which are about 6.3 by 5 ft. wide.

### ***Ainadin Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Khudabadan / Lat. 26.48912333; Long. 64.08813167

*Date of Structure:* about 20 years

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* It is known to be the tomb of Aina-ddin who used to be a saint who is said to be from the Sayyid tribe. He was originally from Peerabad, Iranian Balochistan. It is said that he was a powerful saint. There is a story that once when someone fell badly ill, so a relative went to the saint in Iran. So, he recited some verses and blew them towards the direction where the sick person was. It is said that he was quickly healed. Furthermore, it is said, there was a garden which was watered with a water pump having a noisy sound. It used to disturb the saint so he told people it that they should run the machine only on Fridays. But the owner did not do so and his pump broke down so he removed his pump from there. People used to come here to pray and clean the shrine but there is a lock now because of the junkies who come to sleep in the shrine. It is hardly visited anymore.

*Description:* It is made of mud bricks (plastered) and cemented inside where only one three stepped cemented grave is in the middle of the tomb. It is roughly square having four small towers on its top corners; the plan measures 13.6 ft. from north-south and 13.5 ft. from east-west with a height of 13 ft. with 1.7 ft. thick walls. The tower's height of 1.6 ft. Its simple entrance is on the western side made of steel measuring 5.5 ft. height and 2.3 ft. width. It has a steel window on the eastern side which measures 2.4 high and 2.1 wide. However, it has been repaired once; this repairer closed its two windows (south and north) and converted them into niches and they have also shut the ventilator on the west on the top. There are three niches (about 1.10 ft. high and 1.11 ft. wide) at three sides, leaving the window side. The central stepped grave is 8.11 ft. long and 5.10 ft. wide with a height of 3.5 ft. There is a low cemented battlement wall all around the tomb outside. It has been repaired.

### **Ziarat Shrine**

*Location and Coordinates:* Essai/ Lat. 26.95093350; Long. 64.05101859

*Date of Architecture:* about 50 years

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* The tomb has two graves of brothers: Sayyid Meer Ustaad and Sayyid Takkyah Shah. It is said that they were martyred. They were once the chiefs of Panjgur. They are the sons of Mir Taquiullah and their caste is Bukhari which is a branch of Sayyid. Their ancestor is Katib Abdul-Rahman Shah who came from Baghdad in the middle or late sixteenth century. When Sayyid Meer Ustaad was the chief, according to Amir Mehboob, his brother was instigated by the Keenagzai tribe who turned him against his brother. While he was asleep, his brother tried to kill him with his sword, but super-natural forces would let him do that. Meanwhile, his brother woke up and asked him if he had come to kill him. So, he gave his sword knowing that his brother's sword is unable to kill him. Hence, he was killed by his brother for the chiefdom. However, he was later overthrown by the Keenagzai tribe which took the chiefdom. According to Amir Mehboob, the name Keenagzai has been given to the tribe after this event; *keenag* means jealousy. He also claimed that the Keenagzai tribe people cannot enter the tomb till today. When a movement rose in Panjgur against Sufism/*peer parasti* which tried to destroy shrines; these were then separated from the graveyard and now are a part of a garden<sup>36</sup>. People do pay visits here and offer *fatiha* and place eatables in the shrine. People used to come from Sindh to visit the shrine; they did *fathiha khwani*, slaughtered animals and distributed the meat, cleaned the shrine, lighted up the place burnt joss sticks (*agarbatti*), etc. The slaughtering of animals or placing of things is regarded to be their share. However, the locals are involved in these things less than before.

*Architecture and Description:* The tomb is made of mud bricks and is rectangular (14.4 by 11.7 ft.) with a wooden entrance on its east which measures 4.6 by 2.4 ft. The walls are 1.8 ft. thick. Its height is 9 ft. The grave on the west of Sayyid Meer Ustaad and the east is of Sayyid Takkyah Shah. Both have *chadars* on them and had gravestones. Moreover, the ceiling is made of date palm logs and shoots. There is a rectangular courtyard.

### ***Hazrat Ghaus Badshah Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Gramkan / Lat. 26.99383333; Long. 64.12254000

*Date of Structure:* About thirty years

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* The locals claim that it is either the last resting place of one of the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ (The final Prophet upon whom, his Progeny and Companions be Peace) who are said to have come here for preaching or it was the place of worship (*ibadat gah*) that he used. However, there is a grave inside the room which makes the second claim doubtful... People used to visit the shrine often. People used to distribute eatables and sacrifice animals after visiting the shrine as the share of the saint. Nevertheless, these practices have been shunned now, though, visitors still come.

*Description:* It is a rectangular structure with roundish corners. It is 13 by 9.4 ft. with a height of 8 ft. and a wall thickness of 2 ft. The doorway is on the east and is 3 ft. wide and 5.9 ft. high. It is completely made of mud bricks and roofed with date palm trunks and shoots. The stepped grave is on the western side which measuring from the lower portion is 5.9 by 3 ft. and 2.4 ft. high. It is covered with sheets of cloth. There is a small cemented platform probably for comfort reasons. Moreover, it used to be in a boundary wall and a *kahoor* where people tied their wish strings. Sadly, both these have been destroyed on the order of some people against these acts. The *langar* was often set on Thursdays.

### ***Mazan Peer Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Gramkan / Lat. 26.99766136; Long. 64.13706989

*Date of Structure:* about 35 years

*History and Myths:* It is a shrine of a Sufi saint who is thought to be more holy than Peer Umar Jan which means he lived about the same time as Peer Umar Jan. Peer Umar Jan is said to have served him. However, tradition is silent about his background. People used to pay visits to this shrine.

*Description:* Its architecture is simple which is made of mud bricks and it is plastered. It is roofed with palm trunks and shoots. It is repaired. The structure is a room that houses the grave on the northern portion. Moreover, the structure is 11.5 by 7.2 ft. having a height of 7 ft. and 1.6 ft. thick walls. Its doorway is on the east which is 3 ft. wide and 4.8 high.

*Description:* It is surrounded by an octagonal 3 ft. height wall, 1.2 ft. thick walls, and 9.8 ft. one part of this shape; has a 7.2 ft. opening on the east. The grave is enshrined inside a stepped chamber (14.9 by 9.7 and 5.4 ft. high from the ground to the dome) with a hemispherical long dome (9.9 ft. diameter). It has a small opening (1.9 high and 1.10 ft. wide). The grave is inside with a turban on the head side gravestone. The grave and the tomb is covered with cloth sheets (*chadars*)<sup>37</sup> inside and joss sticks (*agarbatian*)<sup>38</sup> are there to light up. It is well protected by the family of the saint.

### ***Sayyid Yousuf Shah Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Jo-e-Sar, Gwargo/ Lat. 77380406; Long. 64.25906648

*Date of Architecture:* About 30 years

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* He belonged to a Sayyid family. He was martyred. People often visit the shrine and offer *fatiha*. People place flour and other eatables as a share of the saint. Moreover, people used to sacrifice animals as a share of the saint as well. People also visit the shrine

*Description:* This shrine is a walled one with one grave of Sayyid Yousuf Shah. It measures 13 by 10.3 ft. The height of the walls is about 4.9 ft. and 1 ft. thick. The entrance is on the east with a 1.11 ft. width. It is made of stones set in mud mortar and plastered with mud. The structure used to have four goat horns at its four corners; though now only two survive. There is a low stone courtyard too.

### ***Bibi Mouri/ Bibi Lukky Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Gwargo/ Lat. 26.75689160; Long. 64.33142703

*Date of Structure:* More than 100 years

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* Its location is in the interior of the mountains. It is said to be the resting place of Bibi Mouri also known as Bibi Lukky who was the sister of Sayyid Yousuf Shah. She fled on a horse after Sayyid Yousuf Shah was martyred. She survived for some time. However, she prayed to Allah that she should be taken into the earth before falling into the hands of the murderers of her brother. Part of her scarf was out after this. So, it happened one day. Moreover, people also practice *kutumpaanch*.

*Description:* It is the place where she was taken into the ground where once her scarf was visible. Now, it is structured with stones. It is

8.10 ft. NS by 5.4 ft. EW with a height of 3.4 ft. and 1.1 ft. thick walls. Its entrance is 1.4 ft. which is very small. It has a courtyard of 7.9 long by 5.10 ft. wide and a 2 ft. wide entrance too. The wall is 1.4 ft. high. There are several cloth flags attached to sticks on the inside with the western wall.

### ***Khudabadan Damb Worship Place***

*Location and Coordinates:* On Khudabadan Damb, Khudabadan/ Lat. 26.98953794; Long. 64.08551121

*Date of Structures:* about 50 years (now in ruins)

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* No one remembers the name of the *peer* who used to reside here about 80 or 90 years ago. He is said to be a Sayyid who left his adobe only on Fridays and lived a simple life. However, people do remember that he was from Sindh who used to come sometimes here and worship. The locals used to visit him for certain purposes. He was thought to be a powerful saint who, at one time, went back to Sindh and never came back. There he gained more renown. However, it is not known where his grave is.

*Description:* The worship place is on the top of a prehistoric mound (Khudabadan Damb II) on its eastern side. It is said, as locals claim, that there used to be a room on the top of the mound and a den-like room where the *Peer* used to worship. There are traces of a den-like room but in very bad condition. Its entrance is hardly visible which opens from the east side. It is made of mud bricks. However, its ground plan cannot be traced because of its severely bad condition.

### ***Sari Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* On Sari Damb, Tasp/ Lat. 26.96727167; Long. 64.03322500

*Date of Structure:* About 150 years<sup>39</sup>

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* The people used to come on it and place money and other eatables on it so someone i.e. a poor person could collect, and they receive rewards for this good act on the judgment day. However, there are no traces of the tomb now.

*Description:* It was recorded by Stein during his survey (1931: 44). According to him, it was a late medieval tomb with blue panels having animal depictions. There is another such tomb (tomb of Malik Asa) in Tasp Panjgur. However, the shrine has been destroyed and there are no traces of it now.

### ***Hakim Sahib Sufi Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Washbood/ Lat. 27.00517795; Long. 64.15422161

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* The people do not know much about him except that he was a figure who was revered in the past. Moreover, people used to pay a visit to his shrine and say *fatiha khwani* and sacrifice animals like on Shay Maluk.

*Description:* It is a simple shrine on the south of the graveyard. It is made of encircled stones and mud (17.8 ft. NS and 10.5 ft. EW) with its entrance (2 ft.) from the east and there is one grave in it. Its walls are more than 1 ft. high.

### ***Faqueer Dad Raheem Shrine***

*Location and Coordinates:* Shapatan, Chitkan/ Lat. 26.97299760; Long. 64.07558612

*Date of Structure:* About 10 years

*History, Myths, and Beliefs:* He is said to have lived more than 100 years. He lived in many areas of Panjgur; however, his original home is said to be Asiab Bonistan. Nonetheless, his ancestors were from Afghanistan. He is said to be a *faqeer-type*<sup>40</sup> person and an Afghani ra'ees. It is claimed that he received his Quranic education from Deoband in India. Later, he did *chilla*<sup>41</sup>. He reached *Qutubi darja*. He died in 2006. He is now revered among many people because of his humble nature. Many people still visit his tomb and do *fatiha khwani*. Every year a *langar*<sup>42</sup> is organized for the poor. There are few people who dedicate time to this tomb. They entertain the people who come to visit.

### ***Other Aspects of Sufism in Panjgur***

There is an area with the name of a Sufi saint in Panjgur which is named after his beloved, Dasht Shehbaz in Kuhbun. It is said that Shehbaaz Qalandar i.e. Sayyid Muhammad Usman Hanfi (c.1177-1274/5) visited the area for preaching purposes and people fell in love with him and they stopped him for some time. Later, he went to Sukkur, Sindh; his shrine is there (Baloch 2012: 177-78). Lastly, there used to be a Zikri Peer who used to perform *Dhammal* to cure his patients. However, he credited all his *karamats* to Sayyid Yousuf Shah.

## Discussion and Conclusion

There is some degree of certainty that Sufi saints have lived and preached in Panjgur. They also died here. They may have played a role in the propagation of Islam or at least convinced people to come on the right track in later times. There are many shrines in Panjgur which are semi-functional or completely shut. Because of them, people used to come from other districts of Balochistan and even from Sindh to visit their beloved Sufi saints. Previously, the people of Panjgur were blind followers because they did not know the exact teachings of almost all the Sufi saints/*auliya* or *peers*<sup>43</sup>. Except for the fact that they were here to preach or focused on purely Islamic teachings i.e. Qur'an, Sunna, and the Islamic Law (*shar'ia*). Because of security concerns over the past decade, it has been hard coming to Balochistan. Furthermore, the local people hardly visit shrines now. However, once people did go to these shrines sometimes. Visitors vanished when a campaign was started against *peer parasti* several decades back. Now, the locals are not inclined to Sufism or say *peer parasti*. There are few left who are blind followers of Sufism; they do not focus on the authenticity of the information they received from their ancestors. Almost all of them do not understand the true nature of Sufism; they even do not know about the teachings of the Sufi, *peer*, *auliya* they visit or their forefathers used to visit.

Different people from different walks of life, ages, and sex visit these shrines for different purposes i.e. saying *fatiha*, seeking blessings, rarely asking for help, etc. There is no *urs*, *langar*, etc. on these shrines now. Nevertheless, only one shrine still practices it i.e. Faqueer Dad Raheem shrine. The people of Panjgur presently are not inclined to these shrines because of Islamic orthodoxy and education.

The oldest tomb or say shrine is of Shaho Qalandar which is known to be naked brick architecture. Such tombs are numerous in eastern Iran, bordered by Balochistan, Washuk, and Kharan. Some of these tombs are found in Panjgur too but are not given the status of shrines. Moreover, the rest of the architecture is new. They are simple rooms with or without courtyards and there are some stances of simple shrines of stone circles. However, some of the old shrine structures were destroyed and rebuilt. Most of them have one grave in them each and some have sheets of cloth over them. Oil lamps and *agarbatti* were also present at some shrines. They also practice *kutumpaanch* at two shrines. Furthermore, only three shrines had flags attached to them.

It is often said that the name Panjgur is associated with five graves of the companions of Muhammad ﷺ (The final Prophet on whom, his



Progeny and Companions be Peace). It is thought that they came to the region in the time of Caliph Umar. (R.A.) However, in the light of the present research, none of the tombs or shrines is that old to attest to this fact although they are often associated with them. Moreover, the Muslims of that period used to bury their Companions in simple graves that could not stand for 200 years. Even if they died here and are buried, it is very difficult to find the trace of their graves today. Despite this, some renowned Islamic scholars also claim to know these graves. They are silent because they are afraid that people will turn them into shrines. However, still further research can be beneficial on the graveyards for more fruitful results.

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#### **Plates**



**Plate 1.** Tomb/Shrine of Shaho Qalandar  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 2.** Shrine of Peer Umar  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 3.** Shrine of Haji Ghazi  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 4.** Shrine of Ghaus Badshah  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 5.** Mazan Peer Shrine  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 6.** Shrine of Sayyid Yousuf Shah  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 7.** Bibi Mourti/Bibi Lukky Shrine  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 8.** Shrine of Shay Malook  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 9.** Ainadeen Shrine  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 10.** Place of Sari Tomb/Shrine  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 11.** Hakim Sahib Sufi Shrine  
(Photograph by the author)



**Plate 12.** Faqueer Dad Raheem Shrine  
(Photograph by the author)

### Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> A. Stein, *An Archaeological Tour to Gedrosia*, Calcutta, Government of India Central Publication Branch, Vol. 43, 1931; F. A. Khan, Fresh Light on the Ancient Cultures of Baluchistan and Bahawalpur, in *An Anthropological Reconnaissance in West Pakistan, 1955*, pp. 181-211, Cambridge, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. LII, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> I. H. Kausar, *Tazkirae Sufiyae Balochistan* (Urdu), Lahore, Urdu Science Board, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> H. Field, *An Anthropological Reconnaissance in West Pakistan, 1955: With Appendices on the Archeology and Natural History of Baluchistan and Bahawalpur*. Cambridge: Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. LII, 1959, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> A shrine or a masaleum of a saint or a religious leader

<sup>5</sup> A grave of a particularly saintly or religious figure

<sup>6</sup> Tomb or shrine of a Muslim saint

<sup>7</sup> A. Suvorova, *Muslim Saints of South Asia: The Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries*. London, Routledge-Curzon Taylor and Francis Group, 2004, pp. 8, 16.

<sup>8</sup> Sacerdotalism

<sup>9</sup> *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Digital Dictionary).

<sup>10</sup> H. Hassanali, 'Sufi Influence on Pakistani Politics and Culture'. *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 2, No. 1, 2010, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> S. R. Ellwood and G. D. Alles, *Encyclopedia of World Religions*, New York, Facts on File, Inc, 1998, p. 431.

<sup>12</sup> Hafeez-ur-Rahman Chaudhry, *Saints and Shrines in Pakistan: Anthropological Perspective*, Islamabad, National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Centre of Excellence Quaid-i-Azam University, (New Campus), 2013, pp.12-32.

<sup>13</sup> Suvorova, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 25; M. Hassanali, 'Sufi Influence on Pakistani Politics and Culture', *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 2, No. 1, 2010, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> Suvorova, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

- <sup>15</sup> M. Elaskary and E. K. Yun, 'Death, Resurrection, and Shrine Visitations: An Islamic Perspective', [www.mdpi.com/journal/religions](http://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions) 8, 34, 2017, p. 4.
- <sup>16</sup> *Exposition of the Holy Qur'an*, Translated by Ghulam Ahmed Parwez. Lahore: Tolu-e-Islam Trust, 2010.
- <sup>17</sup> Elaskary and Yun, 2017, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
- <sup>18</sup> The ones who are pious, virtuous, Allah-fearing and devoted to him
- <sup>19</sup> Suvorova, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- <sup>20</sup> *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahîh Bukhâri. Vol II.* Translated Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers and Distributors, 1997, Hadith No. 1344.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Hadith No. 1330.
- <sup>22</sup> Elaskary and Yun, 2017, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
- <sup>23</sup> Suvorova, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- <sup>24</sup> *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahîh Bukhâri. Vol IV.* Translated Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers and Distributors, 1997, Hadith No. 3445.
- <sup>25</sup> Elaskary and Yun, 2017, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
- <sup>27</sup> Literally, friends of Allah
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
- <sup>29</sup> D. F. Eickelman, Shrine, in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Edited by John Esposito, S. Akhavi, Y. Y. Haddad, J. P. Piscatori, A. Sachedina, S. Siddique, J. O. Voll and F. R. von der Mehden, New York, Oxford University Press, Vo.1 IV, 1995, pp. 69-70.
- <sup>30</sup> A religious figure
- <sup>31</sup> P. J. Maitland, *Diary of a Journey from Jacobabad to Panjgur and Exploration of Eastern Makran*. Simpla: Government Central Branch Press, 1883, p. 38.
- <sup>32</sup> Show condolences by reciting Qur'anic verses
- <sup>33</sup> The act of knotting a date palm or mazari palm leaf and praying for something.
- <sup>34</sup> Suvorova, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- <sup>35</sup> Saint like figure
- <sup>36</sup> A. Baloch, Personal Communication in Panjgur, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- <sup>37</sup> A piece of cloth often covered with verses
- <sup>38</sup> Incense sticks
- <sup>39</sup> However, there are no traces of it now.
- <sup>40</sup> A Muslim ascetic type
- <sup>41</sup> In Islamic mysticism, it is a spiritual practice of penance and solitude.
- <sup>42</sup> A communal free kitchen
- <sup>43</sup> Sufi spiritual guides