

**Received: 20 March 2024, Accepted: 30 April 2024**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9il.51>

## **Sacred Spaces in Pakistan: The Religious and Cultural Resonance of Syeda Ruqayyah (S.A) bint Ali 's (A.S) Shrine in Lahore**

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### **Abstract**

The study explored Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A), Bibi Pak Daman's shrine and its multifarious importance. This study aimed to identify the function of the shrine and its influence on religious and cultural identities, and its role in promoting social cohesion within Muslim populations residing in Lahore. The research focused on capturing the diverse role of the shrine, especially given the recent attempts by the Punjab Auqaf Department to improve the physical essence of the structure. Such initiatives as upgradation schemes and religious tourism advocacy draw attention to the shrine's contribution to cultural preservation and religious tourism for the socially diverse tourist population. The study design was qualitatively, both interviews and observations were used to collect data. Primary data is collected through observation and

structured interviews with pilgrims, local people and shrine managers during religious activities at the shrine. The theoretical discussion is informed by concepts of the sacred, cultural memory, historical preservation, power and defiance, discursive formations and social and collective travel. The study highlighted the fact that the shrine has evolved to become a vital place for religious activities, personal and group remembrance, and social interaction. The study shows that the significance of the Bibi Pak Daman shrine in the performance of religious activities, remembrance of the past, and maintaining social relations. The historical story of the shrine is embodied in the aspects of the opposition and religious power, while the current practices of preserving it as an object of cultural values adds up to the shrine's imagery. Punjab government's promotion of religious tourism also supports the observations made regarding the shrine's importance in cultural preservation and promoting common identity uniting people. This research advances the knowledge of religious places and their impact on culture, society, and memory.

*Keywords:* Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A) Shrine, Bibi Pak Daman, Ahl-e-Bayt (A.S), sacred space, cultural memory, heritage conservation, social cohesion, Lahore, Punjab Auqaf Department, religious tourism

## **Introduction**

Mausoleum of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A) also known as 'Bibi Pak Daman' is a religious site in Lahore, Pakistan, more notable for the followers of Islamic religion. Historically the shrine is associated with Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A) which is one of the most important women in Islamic history with five other noble ladies of the family of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (S. A. Nizami, 2018). These women in general are missionary spirit, and responsibility forwarded to spread the Islam in India and subcontinents after the catastrophe happen of Karbala in 680 AD (61 A.H). The shrine is not only a place of devotion for the Shia and the Sunni Muslims but indeed reflects the continuity of the mission of Ahl-e-Bayt (A. S.), the family of Holy Prophet (PBUH). The goals of this research include identifying religious and cultural importance of Bibi Pak Daman shrine by researching its history of dissemination of Islam in South Asia and analyzing the current attempts to protect the shrine.

Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A) was daughter of Hazrat Ali (A.S) and cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and sister of Hazrat Abbas (A.S) the commander of the army of Imam Hussain (A.S) at Karbala. Syeda Ruqayyah (S.A) alongside with her companions had to flee after the massacre of Karbala and the martyrdom of her husband Hazrat Muslim ibn Aqeel (A.S) and the brutal persecution by the Umayyad rulers (J. Rizvi, 2020). According to historians they finally migrated to Lahore where they became involved in the task of spreading Islam to the Hindus which seem to have also resulted in massive conversion (S. M. Latif, 1994). Bibi Pak Daman's shrine is as a proof of their hard work to spread Islamic faith and values in the region as it is said to be their grave.

The story and other aspects concerning Bibi Pak Daman becomes tied between myth and history, which turns it into a religious shrine as well as a subject of academic study. The shrine holds considerable importance as it is linked with the Ahl-e-Bayt (A. S.), the Urs that takes place every year is a three day festival which now marks the death anniversary of Syeda Ruqayyah (S.A), people from all sects attend the Urs and hence the spiritual significance of the shrine in the unity of the people (A. A. Khan, 2016).

The reasons why the case study of Bibi Pak Daman shrine is important are as follows. Firstly, it helps in the understanding of the historical advancement of Islam in South Asia, especially, the part of women from the Prophet's lineage. Nonetheless these personalities are not given due recognition in the mainstream Islamic history and that is why this study aims to bring light on important contributions of these personalities (N. Chishti, 1976). Secondly, as mentioned earlier, this shrine serves as the important center of popular and Islamic devotion in the contemporary Pakistan thus proving that such sites remain culturally and religiously important in this region. Knowledge about the shrine and its part for the inter faithful Muslim sectors helps to explain religious subjects of identification in the region (Ghulam Sarwar, 2001). Besides, due to the rapid urbanization most of the historical architecture in Lahore is under threat and thus the significance of documenting Bibi Pak Daman shrine cannot be overemphasized. Thus, this research will contribute to the advances of the thesis that religious places having historical evidence of social, cultural and devotional significance should be preserved (Shahid M Latif, 1994).

## **Scope of the Study**

This research thus aims to undertake a holistic study of the Bibi Pak Daman shrine in Lahore as a place of religious reverence, cultural heritage, and historic importance in relation to the relation of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) and her contribution in Islamisation of South Asia. The paper interprets history and legends to investigate how knowledge of the shrine's existence has evolved over time and explores an extensive review of the legend and the actual history of the shrine critically. Consequently, this research is important in discussing the general relationship of the shrine within Sunnis and the Shias denominations of Islam and its importance towards the concept of unity among the Islamic sects as well as understanding the role of the respect of Ahl-e-Bayt (A. S) within the region. The study also analyzes the socio-political face of heritage conservation in Pakistan to understand the impact of urbanization and the role of the state in preserving religious architecture. However, this approach is inherently constrained by the problems of source survival and authenticity in a text that draws so heavily on history and mythology, which means that the analysis of historical sources must proceed with care when interpreting oral evidence and folk stories.

## **Problem Statement**

Bibi Pak Daman is a highly religious and culturally important landmark in Lahore City, Pakistan Despite the fact that the shrine has a rich history it lacks sufficient critical analytical study especially with reference to history and contributions of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) of paving way for further spread of Islam in South Asia. This shrine is a part of history and is believed by both Shia and Sunni communities however; the history becomes entwined with legend which makes the two difficult to separate at times. Besides, Lahore is experiencing tremendous growth in urbanization, thus the future of this historical place is at risk –more, so it a cultural area. Since no study thus far has covered mainly the religious and cultural significance of the Bibi Pak Daman Shrine while the lack of proper heritage management proves the need for research that not only records historical narratives of the chosen site but also campaigns for the preservation of such heritage. In an attempt to fill these gaps, this research will first offer a

historical and continued examination of the shrine and second offer an examination of the larger discourse of heritage management in the context of the changing urban space.

## **Research Questions**

- 1) What are the socio-cultural and political implications of the preservation and renovation of the Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A) shrine, and how do these efforts impact the local community's engagement with the shrine as a symbol of religious and cultural heritage?
- 2) In what ways does the historical narrative of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A) shrine reflect themes of resistance and spiritual authority, and how are these themes preserved and communicated through cultural practices and heritage conservation efforts?
- 3) How does the Bibi Pak Daman shrine serve as a site of religious significance and identity for Shia and Sunni Muslim communities in Lahore?

## **Literature Review**

The literature review for the study " Preserving the Legacy of Ahl-e-Bayt (A.S): The Religious and Cultural Significance of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A) Shrine in Lahore, Pakistan' uses historical, religious, and culture to support the real meaning of Bibi Pak Daman. The shrine of Bibi Pak Daman located in Lahore Pakistan which is the burial place of six respectable ladies from the progeny of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) especially Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) has a historical and cultural importance in Islamic world specially in subcontinent. This section briefly presents the historical and religious background of the shrine, its cultural significance, and the literature on its conservation.

This research is therefore going to explain why the shrine of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A) in Lahore, Pakistan, occupies a position on religious and cultural map of South Asia and how it is emblematic of the heritage from the Ahl-e-Bayt (A.S) in preserving the tradition of visits to sacred places. Like other sacred sites located in Punjab province of Pakistan it is dedicated to worshipping providing stories of the saints and histories of the culture. Arshaad et al. (2022) made similar argument that Sufi literature of the South Asia play significant part of Divine heritage to maintain and contain the sacred tradition like that some shadow narratives that

narrate sanctity of the shrines and tombs including Syeda Ruqayyah. The emotions and the relation with the divine, as discussed by Khan et al. (2022), are similar to feelings and religiosity observed in the context of sites where mourning and spiritual seeking occurs collectively. Moreover, the spiritual as well as the physical healings witnessed variously in the Sufi Barkat Ali shrine (Arshaad et al., 2023) reflect the common function of such sites in meeting many a need in humans, as in the experience of the Syeda Ruqayyah shrine. Finally, Arshaad and colleagues (2024) examined the secular cultural aspects of Sufi shrines, and remarked on how the openness, participation and collectiveness visible at the shrine of Syeda Ruqayyah underscores the cultural, religious as well as spiritual interactional aspects of the place. Taken together, all these studies underscore the religious, cultural and social significance of shrines in general and Syeda Ruqayyah in Particular, tracing her shrine in the annals of sacred norms and values.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for the study " Preserving the Legacy of Ahl-e-Bayt (A.S): The Religious and Cultural Significance of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S.A) Shrine in Lahore, Pakistan' employs religious studies, cultural anthropology and heritage conservation approach to understand the role and symbolic importance of the Bibi Pak Daman shrine. This framework draws upon the following key theories and concepts:

### ***Sacred Space and Religious Heritage***

In the case of Bibi Pak Daman, the idea of a sacred space is fundamental to grasping its importance. Mircea Eliade claimed that the natural difference between sacred and profane spaces is found in the former referring to the divine or the supernatural, which are the heart of spiritual and social existence. This is a shrine of the Ahl-e-Bayt and is considered as a holy site that has significance to the Shias and Sunnis of South Asia. Paying respect on the grave of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) and other women buried at the shrine turn the place into a holy site for pilgrimage thus playing a role in the conservation of the Islamic culture (Eliade, 1957).

### ***Cultural Memory and Identity***

Applying the theory of lieux de mémoire of Pierre Nora (1989) it will be analysed how the Bibi Pak Daman shrine acts as a site of memory in the given context of the Pakistan culture. Focusing on the memories and the loss of the Ahl-e-Bayt, the shrine becomes a dramatically charged site of religious identity among the Muslims, especially in the terms of South Asia. Standing alongside this theory is an account of how such sites turn into reference points for the remembrance of cultural and/or religious stories that contribute to the formation of group memory over time (Nora 1989).

### ***Heritage Conservation and Religious Tourism***

Basically, the theories of heritage conservation which was propounded by scholars such as David Lowenthal (1985) help to explain the current process of conserving Bibi Pak Daman shrine. Quoting Lowenthal, it is possible to state that memory and the effacing of cultural artefacts and sites serve not history's purpose of providing valuable history facts but as a means to perpetuate collective memories and identity. Within this theoretical understanding it is possible to place the recent improvements and restoration of the shrine (Naqvi, 2023). On the one hand, it is understood that in the context of religious tourism, the preservation of the shrine also responds to the needs and expectations of the modern pilgrimage, and on the other, as emphasized by Lowenthal (1985) cultural heritage as meaning in its process of defense and creation pays attention to identity.

### ***Resistance and Religious Authority***

Shrine's historic context – Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) stance against local rulers and Umayyad rulers can be linked to theories of religious power and rebellion. In his book, Michel Foucault (1977) presented views on power and resistance, which help explain how religious leaders and religious places might become sources of power and convey resistance against political power. The shrine is not only a symbol of the spiritual leadership of Syeda Ruqayyah but also represents the struggle of the Ahl-e-Bayt against oppression, and therefore refers to the tradition of the ancestors (Foucault, 1977).

### ***Pilgrimage and Social Cohesion***

The study of Victor Turner (1973) pilgrimage as a concept of rate of passage can be of help in the realization of the social aspects of Bibi Pak Daman shrine. According to Turner, people envisage themselves as a collective armies of believers in their staged sacred centrality because pilgrimage embodies solidarity of purpose or social bonding. The annually held festival in the shrine which is attended by many pilgrims from different backgrounds can therefore be described as a symbol of social integration hence promoting the unity of the shrine amongst the Muslim worshippers (Turner, 1973).

Based on religious studies, cultural memory, cultural heritage, and anti-hegemonic, and a harmonious society approach, this theoretical framework certainly offers a systemic point of view toward the religious and cultural importance of the Bibi Pak Daman shrine. Combining both these approaches, the study will provide an insightful analysis of how the shrine – firstly, operates as a sacred space; second, how it memorializes the collective history; and third, how it challenges and embodies the religion power.

### **Historical Narratives and Significance**

The history associated with Bibi Pak Daman goes way back in the incident occurred in the year 680 AD or 61 AH after the Battle of Karbala Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) daughter of Hazrat Ali (A.S) played an active role. As stated by Rizvi (2020), Syeda Ruqayyah like her companions escaped from persecution and migrated to the Indian subcontinent and started preaching Islam thus playing a role in the Spread of Islam in the region. Latif (1994) aligns with this account noting that these women played a pivotal role in the missionary activities because they successfully spread Islam among local Hindu inhabitants and consequently brought numerous Islamic populations to Lahore. The stories associated with Bibi Pak Daman are legends, which gives the place historical importance as well as holy significance. Chishti (1976) points out that, the story about the shrine is still passed around by word of mouth and folktales that tend to depict Syeda Ruqayyah (S. A) as highly religious and an ardent missionary. Chishti also identifies certain drawbacks in distinguishing between myth and history, which is an oft-recurring problem in the historical study of sacred spaces in South Asia. This approach also

creates a challenge in compiling a well-documented history of Syeda Ruqayyah's (S. A) life and her contributions which this study seeks to fill.

Located to the south of the city, the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman is considered the burial place of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) and five other esteemed female Holy personalities of Ahl-e-Bayt both in Shias and Sunni Schools of thoughts depending on religious importance. This site also signifies the Islamic heritage of South Asia especially Pakistan as it has been a place of worships for hundreds of years Lahore Pakistan (Naqvi, 2023). This makes it important because the most revered figures of Islam and their contribution in the dissemination of the teachings of Islam and the expansion of the religion in the South Asian subcontinent (Naqvi, 2023, Youlin Magazine, 2023).

In the context of history, Mufti Ghulam Sarwar and S. M. Latif portrayed the historical narrative of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) and other Karbala's women to Lahore. These accounts imply that these women were equally involved in propagation of Islam in the region, and experienced many challenges from local rulers and political elites that persecuted them for their missionary activities (Latif, 1891; Sarwar, 2017). Thus, the present-day shrine of Bibi Pak Daman encompasses not only their religious veneration but also their fight against the unjust powers, which appears to be an unspoken tradition in the historical narrative of the Sufi saints of South Asia (Sarwar, 2017).

## **Women Sufism in Pakistan**

Chawla et al. (2016) studied female Sufism in Pakistan and his research focused on analyzing the work of a female saint, Bibi Pak Daman and examined their contribution in the preaching as well as the promotion of religion of Islam. The assumption made here is that mysticism cannot therefore be considered a gendered affair as it is an experience that any gender can undergo given talent bestowed by the divine, some special techniques, commitment and hard work. It is nurtured in one the love for Him in me and one goes on to teach, practice and spread His word to the world. A detailed study of the saints reveals that the religion of Islam could not be complete without them and many of them were women or wives of the Holy Prophet. After the end of Holy Prophet his missionary activities were performed by his close companions and

successors and due to their services, the Islamic religion spread all over the world. In addition to the male saints, a lot of female saints have performed this type of service for the propagation and growth of Islam in foreign countries but the role and history of those icons are still neglected. One of such tales is associated with the mausoleum of Bibi Pak Daman at Lahore in Pakistan which is believed to be of Bibi Ruqayyah, daughter of Hazrat Ali (RA). Even though this paper's main focus is to engage in a discussion on gender and Sufism, it also provides an account of the narratives associated with Bibi Pak Daman – a shrine in Lahore. In Hussain et al. (2021) they highlight an analysis of sacred narratives regarding Mai Heer shrine in Jhang and revealed the mixed roles of pious belief and rituals in the formation of regional culture.

## **Religious Practices and Devotion**

In Shia and Sunni Islamic tradition the shrine is recognized as an important center of annual pilgrimage or ziyarat. Khan (2016) states that the Urs festival which is held every year for 3 days is the death anniversary of Syeda Ruqayyah (S. A) which is attended by thousands of devotees across different sects, therefore supporting the argument of this paper regarding the importance of the shrine as a place that unite different sects of Islam. Besides being religious, this Fevse also acts as a way to remind and strengthen the bond with the Ahl-e-Bayt (A. S), the family of Holy Prophet (PBUH). Nizami (2018) discusses the Shrine's place in terms of Sufism and the concept of reverence to Ahl-e-Bayt within the context of south Asian region. As for the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman, he suggests that it also embodied both Sufi traditions and Shiite rituals in which honoring the Ahl-e-Bayt is beyond difference of any sorts of sects. These are evident in the shrine being a melting point of religious activities in reference to the position of Lahore. Enhancing the importance of the shrine, it is also linked with holy family which adds to the idea of shrine as the authority of Muslim pietism for the people in this region (Nizami, 2018).

Saeed and Shahed (2020) explored Beliefs and Behaviors of Shrine Visitors of Bibi Pak Daman and concluded that the beliefs are linked with regards to Shrined visits which cause the visitor in a certain manner to think and act. The shrine chosen to form part of this role was the Bibi Pak Daman at Lahore in Pakistan. At this shrine, it was used nonparticipant observation in observing the several visitors. Because the study is qualitative in nature, field notes were

employed in capturing the data and the data were analyzed thematically. From the data analysis, three over-arching themes were derived. The first major theme was immortality which had sub themes along the lines of belief in life after death, belief in supernatural powers of chaste ladies and objects placed on the shrine. The second theme which was identified consisted of superstitions with the sub themes being, object related superstitions and the miracles/mannat system. The third theme of the perceptions and the subthemes were of the beliefs when analyzed with the help of the knowledge regarding the placebo effect and the sub themes incorporated the aspects of prayer fulfillment, spiritual faculty enhancement for problem solving.

Other scholars from the west such as William Chittick and Annemarie Schimmel have also delved in to the topic of Sufi shrines and Islamic culture in general contexts. Schimmel, (1980) asserts that such sites are spiritual and cultural heritages that emphasize the need to maintain the communal observance of Islamic practices into the next generation. Chittick (2000) then builds on these aspects by defining the mystical characteristic attached to such shrines, noting that such spaces are used for the contemplation of spirituality and the mentorship of secret knowledge.

## **Cultural Significance and Heritage Preservation**

It's imperative to note that the Bibi Pak Daman shrine is not only a sacred place for devotees, but also holds a cultural value. Sarwar (2001) also underlines the significance of the shrine in terms of the cultural tradition and social practice of Lahore, considering it as a standing of the Islamic civilization of Lahore. Shrine is situated in the central part of Lahore particularly in Garhi Shahu and Railway Station area which makes it a landmark representing the contribution of Lahore in Islamization process. Another aspect of the shrines' cultural value is expressed through the architecture; the designs of the shrine incorporate the architectural standards of Islam in the region (Latif, 1994). However, the Bibi Pak Daman shrine carries many conservation issues foremost of which are the unpredictable growth rates of Lahore's urban development. Rizvi (2020) outlines the urban development processes that continue to endanger the structures and spatial context of the Lahore's heritage sites, which is also a concern for the shrine mentioned in the paper. Modern development has advanced and placed more pressure on

history and cultural assets leading to campaigns for improved conservation. For this reason, the author Chishti (1976) stresses the necessity to preserve such places, such as religious shrines, for posterity because of their relevance to the cultural heritage of the region. The following are the challenges facing preservation: This is made worse by the absence of government support and funding to preserve religious architecture. Similarly, Khan (2016) argues that the state inadequately preserves heritage, pointing to poor maintenance and deterioration at the Bibi Pak Daman shrine and many other sites. Such ignorance poses a real danger to the future of the shrine and its importance as a site of worship and religious tourism, thus the need for an all-inclusive preservation plan that enlists the support of the central government and people of the region.

Various studies about Bibi Pak Daman shrine a site in Lahore has depicted the social historical, religious, cultural and conservation meaning of the place. There is ample evidence that Gulzar-e-Hakim and the construction of the shrine are linked to Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) of the Ahl-e-Bayt (A. S) However, due to the combination of facts and myths the construction of history poses difficulty for historians in writing historical facts. The importance of the shrine is evidenced not least by its role as the unifying inter-sectarian gathering place as well as by its cultural values as the part of Lahore heritage. However, it is noteworthy that the problem of destruction at a holy place contributes to the processes of urbanization and the complete absence of conservation activities indicates the need for further urgent actions in this regard. Therefore, the purpose of the proposed research will be to make a critical historical investigation of Bibi Pak Daman shrine and promote for the need to preserve its religious and cultural iconography.

However, recent construction, changes or modifications that have taken place and are being initiated by the government to develop the shrine proclaim that the area has not lost its importance in the modern day society of Pakistan from religious and cultural prospective. This extended shrines of the clergy must be seen as a continuing process in its maybe religious historical value, as well as a social stay put for both the Shia and Sunni Muslim populations. Such efforts reflect an increased awareness of the shrine as an imperative site for religious tourism as well as for memories about the Ahl-e-Bayt. Thus, Bibi Pak Daman shrine reflects multiple-layered religious, historical, and cultural context that should be considered when

studying the traditions of Islam in South Asia. Thus, the shrine's importance also lies in its connection with the Ahl-e-Bayt but also as the place of spiritual and cultural resistance, and therefore, the object of historical and modern study.

Previous research and studies on Bibi Pak Daman shrine in Lahore include its religious importance, historical past and the accounts associated with the Ahl-e-Bayt. Although these studies have enriched our understanding of its historical and religious significance, they rarely analyze the shrine further and how it serves as a living culture of memory, culture, and identification in South Asia. Moreover, there is a lack of research that ties the theories of heritage conservation with the analysis of religious shrines, mainly in the context of how such spaces are being managed and reimagined within the changing socio-political landscape. This current study seeks to undertake a comprehensive culture historical analysis of Bibi Pak Daman shrine based on the available literature on cultural memory, indictments of cultural resistance and approaches to cultural heritage conservation. Drawing from religious, cultural and post-structuralist approaches to heritage, this research will provide innovative insights into the shrine and its function in the formation of modern South Asian Muslim subjectivity. It will also investigate the socio-political impact of recent conservation activities in shaping both the local and broader culture and perception of the shrine. This research not only enriches the existing bodies of knowledge regarding Islamic heritage sites but also offers a practical understanding of best practices for the conservation and management of such culturally important areas within dynamic socio-political contexts.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This research adopts a qualitative research approach that is appropriate in the investigation of religious, cultural and historical meanings of the Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) Shrine (Bibi Pak Daman) in Lahore, Pakistan. Qualitative research enables me to capture an intricate or elaborate nature of the shrines, reception, and devotion by various people such as priests, pilgrims, and the community members (Creswell, 2013). This is important in order to

capture such personal and perceived experience attached to the shrine and which consists of religious and cultural beliefs and practices.

## **Data Collection Methods**

The study will use multiple qualitative data collection methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research questions:

### ***Semi-Structured Interviews***

30 face-to-face semi-structured interviews will be conducted with participants from different categories: Islamic scholars, heritage professionals, civil authorities and common pilgrims. This approach enables free interaction with the participants in a certain domain and at the same time guarantee that some questions related to the study objectives will be covered (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The interviews will be conducted and recorded on audio and then transcribed as well as subjected to the process of thematic analysis with the aim of identifying a set of themes regarding the religious, cultural and socio-political importance of the shrine.

### ***Participant Observation***

Participant observation will be made when the participants of the shrine are especially active; this will include during the Urs of Bibi Pak Daman. The researcher will be able to capture how the pilgrims conduct themselves, what practices they undertake and how they relate to one another within the shrine, issues that are important in understanding the ways in which the shrine operates as a culturally sanctified social space and meeting ground (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). These observations shall be noted in the field in order to help write a full account of the event, as well as assisting in comparing the interviewees' testimonies.

### ***Sampling Strategy***

In this study, the participants will be purposively recruited in order to get knowledgeable people involved in the Bibi Pak Daman shrine (Palinkas et al., 2015). The sample will include Muslims are divided between Shia and Sunni sects, and the religious scholars from both the sects were involved. The authorities, involved in the protection of the shrines, refer to specialists in the heritage conservation. A micro group comprises local government officials who are in charge of

the management of this shrine. Men, women, children and young people of diverse economic status that includes the poor and the wealthy. This sampling technique is very important as it provides the study with a wider and rich experience or view from the respondents regarding the shrine.

## Data Analysis Technique

Schmidt (2004) posited that thematic analysis is the most efficient method for analyzing the data gathered from interviews, observations and documents and thus will be adopted for the current study. In this method, the data is coded with factors that were recurrent in the studied data set and that relates the different facts in responding to the research questions. The themes will be clustered under broader and more general theoretical constructs as presented in the theoretical framework which include; sacred space, cultural memory, resistance and heritage conservation. The paper shall also employ methods such as data triangulation in a bid to improve the credibility and the validity of the information obtained (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Triangulation will assist in making sure that the data that is collected is well analyzed and that the various aspect of shrine is comprehensively understood.

## Data Analysis

**Table 1**

*Data from Semi-Structured Interviews*

<b>Participant Category</b>	<b>Number of Interviews</b>	<b>Focus Areas</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Islamic Scholars	8	Religious significance of the shrine, Historical narratives, Role of Hazrat Ruqayyah (S.A)	Islamic Scholars provide authoritative insights into the religious and historical aspects of the shrine, helping to contextualize its importance.

<b>Participant Category</b>	<b>Number of Interviews</b>	<b>Focus Areas</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Heritage Professionals	6	Architectural significance, Preservation efforts, Cultural heritage	Heritage professionals offer expertise on the architectural and cultural preservation of the shrine, highlighting efforts to maintain its legacy.
Civil Authorities	8	Government policies on heritage preservation, Community engagement, Socio-political impact	Civil authorities provide an understanding of the administrative and political aspects related to the shrine, including policies and community interactions.
Common Pilgrims	8	Personal devotion, Cultural practices, Perceptions of the shrine's significance,	Common pilgrims share personal experiences and practices, offering insights into the cultural and spiritual significance of the shrine for the general public.

### *Interpretation of Data from Semi-Structured Interviews*

There are serious social, cultural and political concerns attached to restoration and preservation of any heritage site, the Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) Shrine included according to the participants. Islamic jurists also stated that the shrine needs to be preserved in order to maintain Islamic values and practices also as a crucial religious site for Shia people. They said that it's not only that renovations maintain the aesthetic beauty, but they also serve as an indication of respect of the past which creates a level of pride among the population. Bureaucratic agencies underscored that governmental salvation activities dominate the religious field and are connected with various socio-political objectives encouraging the religious tourism

and developing cooperative relations with the representatives of religious associations. Ordinary travelers said that current conservation activities improve their religious experience and intensify their feelings regarding the shrine thus deepening the integrating of the shrine into the culture of the local population.

The data obtained showed that the work done towards preserving the shrine relates highly with the local community's engagement with the shrine. The transformations keep occurring to encourage more locals and pilgrim-like to visit the sites since they help business and thus trigger increased economic development. Some of the participants had negative attitudes regarding commercialization of the site citing the possibilities of losing the religious touch of the site. In more political terms the constant need to maintain the shrine has led to further discussion among leaders of different religious and political positions and thus mirrors the tensions and affiliations of society.

The historical account of the shrine that I learnt from the Islamic experts and heritage practitioners that seriously infested with motifs of protest and power in spirituality. The following were the findings regarding how the people of Islam view the shrine: Islamic scholars' narrated how the shrine of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) Symbolizes the struggle and struggle against the oppression of the sanctity of Ahl-e-Bayt. Heritage professionals went further to assert that the architectural features and the artifact at the shrine are deemed to hold such messages and the management goes out of its way to make sure that anyone visiting or performing the pilgrimage is consistently reminded of the story behind the shrine. These themes are passed on through rituals like the anniversary celebrations and other related expert performances and other learning activities that are embraced by the people and the religious bodies. Interviews of common pilgrims for thematic analysis showed that such practices reaffirm their faith and relation to the Ahl-e-Bayt which make the shrine a symbol of resistance to historical injustice and a symbol of spiritual authority.

Both the Shia and Sunni people have a lot of religious importance in the Bibi Pak Daman shrine in Lahore but in different ways. There are two main types of shrine – one is for the direct veneration of a saint and the other as a focus for the collective sites of the Ahl-e-Bayt where people go for pilgrimage, worship and meditation. To the Shia Muslims, the shrine has a

historical and a religious significance as it represents the community, its history and culture. Sunni scholars acknowledged the usefulness of the shrine regarding history and Islamic practices but pointed out the shrine's potential as the place of Islamic history for all to visit regardless of the division. The interviews conducted with ordinary pilgrims established that these shrine provides a link of common, hence there is a mutual respect between the two sects despite the existing differences. Officials have elaborated on actions being taken to guarantee that the shrine continues to serve as a spiritual place where both communities can freely worship without engaging in violent actions, referring to its function of fostering inter-sectarian peace. Altogether, the shrine is a place of worshipping and affiliations both for the communities while holding different connotations and functions in different periods of Lahore's growth and socio-religious formation.

The results of the semi-structured interviews have given good understanding of the religious, cultural and socio-political importance of the Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) Shrine. From the above themes it is clear that the shrine served as a preserve, provided resistance to oppression, spiritual authority and inter-sectarian solidarity, hence underlining its significance in looking back at the past and forward to the present age.

### ***Participant Observation at the Shrine of Bibi Pak Daman during Urs***

Bibi Pak Daman Urs takes place during which the shrine becomes more energetic with activities of devotion. People of different faiths, followers of both Shia and Sunni streams of Islam, come to the shrine to pay tribute. The current improvement efforts are quite evident since most pilgrims reported seeing scaffolding and restoration activities. Experts working in the field stated that such actions are not only regarded as maintenance of the building but are deemed as a religious gesture towards the passing on of a legacy. The civil authorities and management of the shrines are also participating in these renovations proving that it is also a political concern to preserve the shrines as religious landmarks. Community involvement is shown, people of the local area conveyed their feelings of pride carrying the responsibilities of Shrine maintenance as a way of connecting with cultural/religious identity. However, some of the pilgrims and local people also expressed similar feelings that the cultural and commercial aspect of the Urs has grown in Importance such as the establishment of shops and stalls all along the banks of the river

selling religious articles. Some opposed to this commercialization due to the belief that it may dilute the religious nature of the shrine.

Being a mystic, the tragedy of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) along with her companions forms the main theme of the Urs. Themes of resistance and spiritual authority prominent among Islamic scholars and devotees were presented in the speakers' speeches as well as in the prayers of the devoted people. The existence of these themes was also noted in the cultural practices that were witnessed during the Urs such as the recitation of poetic verses and mourning elegies which narrate the suffering and martyrdom of these women. In this way these recitations were used as a kind of reminder about the function of the shrine as a space of memory and the sacredness of Syeda Ruqayyah and the Ahl-e-Bayt. The shrine itself which is filled with relics and symbolic representation of martyrdom becomes a work that embodies these ideas. Modern day pilgrims were seen performing some of the rituals that associate them with this legacy which include touching of the walls of the shrine, praying and dancing and performing a drama similar to the suffering of Syeda Ruqayyah and her companions.

Even though it is a Shia cultural uprising, the Urs of Bibi Pak Daman is a celebration that may be recognized by the Sunni society as well, implying the shrine functionality as an inter-sectarian space. The Shia pilgrims were observed participating in full spiritual act of paying homage through the recitation of elegies, nohas in praise of the Ahl-e-Bayt especially on the eve of Urs. For Sunni participants, there were behaviors including washing the graves with water for their ablution and praying which they believed would help them to reach the saints. Contact between Shias and Sunnis was sisters since they respected each other to embrace the shrine as part of their Islamic origin. That the members of two different sects pay respect to the shrine especially during Urs makes it clear that the shrine has always maintained inter-sectarian friendly rivalry in Lahore.

The live observation of the participant during the Urs of Bibi Pak Daman was proved to be highly significant and informative in terms of socio-cultural, religious and political aspects. Despite some controversies that surround renovations at times, the general public perceives the actions as romantic in that they affirm the shrine as a cultural and religious center. The aspect of

resistance as well as spiritual authority are well preserved and apparent in the pilgrimages and the continuation of the shrine into today is an essential element of both Shia and Sunni Lahoris.

## Discussion

The Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) Shrine including its recent upgradation up to Mohsin Naqvi Punjab Chief Minister also bore cultural, social and political importance. Religious and cultural importance of the shrine cannot be underestimated especially to this community and the extended Muslim community in South Asia.

The beautification of the shrine, with addition of the golden latticework, green-domed structures and much better infrastructural development, which has been done by the community, shows the respect and love which they bear towards the Ahl-e-Bayt and their desire to act as custodians of Islamic history. Such endeavors are in line with the theoretical underpinnings of the study's premise that places of worship function as social memories/identities (Eliade, 1957; Nora, 1989). This is especially important as the shrine, after being upgraded becomes a local and cultural religious symbol relevant to the community by rejuvenating the shrine's purpose of religious significance and pilgrimage. That the local residents and the pilgrims only join in the inauguration ceremony shows how the shrine acts as a social integrative mechanism in society as supported by Turner's view on pilgrimage as being a bonding process (Turner, 1973).

The political meaning that could be attributed to the shrine's renovation is underlined by the Chief Minister Naqvi's contribution to the process and public declaration on its completion. This can be seen through his interaction with people in the community for instance talking to the locals and doing interviews with the media on the preservation of the shrine and cuts across political interest. The 'success' of the upgradation project to the extent of its readiness in face of the shrine siting problems in a densely populated region shows a governmental concern and commitment to religious and cultural facilities. However, as Lowenthal notes when it comes to heritage conservation the concepts of nation-building as well as political and cultural leadership still remain topical (Lowenthal, 1985); this can be explained by the fact that the given shrine has been recently reconstructed.

The upgradation project has revitalized the community feeling toward the shrine whereby the place appears to have been upgraded and made more attractive. The expanded entrance/doorway with enhanced carriage greatly enhances admission of the many pilgrims who visit the shrine providing a boost for the shrine in terms of a better tourist appeal and enhancing the significance of the shrine as a religious tourism hub. This makes local economic activity more vibrant and at the same time re-affirms the cultural and religious importance of the shrine.

Conclusively, the historical and ongoing restoration and/or construction of the Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A)' mausoleum has political, social and cultural significance. The efforts initiated by Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi not only maintain both the religious and historical significance of the shrine, but also add to the continued management and involvement of the local people with the site which makes it a symbol of memory, power, identity, relevance, and collectiveness ([Eliade, 1957; Nora, 1989; Foucault, 1977; Turner, 1973; Lowenthal)

This paper focused on the Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali S. A shrine and traced the historical accounts with themes of resistance and the spiritual authority located in the Islamic history and the events that occurred after the battle of Karbala. These are promoted in practices concerning cultural relativity and heritage preservation making the shrine to remain significant both for the religious aspect as well as the memory of the past.

The story of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) cannot be rehearsed without the story of Karbala in which she saw his family members being martyred including his brother Imam Hussain (A. S). After these events, Ruqayyah and her companions went on the kind of struggle against the oppressive Umayyad rule. Her missionary tour in South Asia, especially in Lahore was characterized by her bitterness in spreading the message of Islam despite persecutions from local Hindu kings and the Umayyad spies (Latif, 1891, Anjum, 2014). This is not only a part of her story that is a straight defiance but it also shows the form of spiritual power that she had as Ahl al-Bayt which includes the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

It would thus be argued that this aspect explains continuity of the cultural practices of the Bibi Pak Daman shrine in Lahore – Ruqayyah bint Ali's legacy. This proved to be her tomb and many people still visit there with the intention of receiving blessings from her. Its name is "Bibi

Pak Daman” which in Sindi Language means “the chaste lady” which refers to her spiritual purity and authority. Lamps are lit and prayers offered to her and the rituals performed uphold her authority as a saint cum a figure of struggle against oppression and dictatorship (Chishti, 1861; Khaki, 1977).

The recent move to conserve and restore the Bibi Pak Daman place moreover brings into emphasis the value of Ruqayyah bint Ali’s story in the current age. In addition to protecting the site of the shrine, the attempts of the Pakistani government aiming at the shrine’s expansion and beautification, the construction of new facilities also play the role of preserving the history of the shrine and focusing people’s attention on the struggling of people and authority represented in the shrine. These conservation programs are apparently among the key components of the maintenance of this shrine’s function as a cultural and religious site. The above trends are in accordance with other preservation patterns that are being set in the contemporary society in a bid to ensure that places that are associated with cultural and religion importance are preserved (Government of Pakistan, 2024; Naqvi, 2024).

Altogether, it can be stated that the history of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) is a chronicle of power and faith in broader sense as well as a chronicle of resistance embodied in the practices associated with her shrine, with the acts of worship contemporarily undertaken to protect and restore the shrines of solar prophets as well. In the light of this belief, the Bibi Pak Daman shrine is still existing today in Multan as not only a place to pay a visit but it is also a strong representation for her suffering and the suffering of the Ahl al-Bayt .

The Bibi Pak Daman shrine at Lahore is an important sacred place for Pakistan’s Shia and Sunni Muslims, which can bring them together in times of prayer and religious self-definition. This shrine is in honour of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) and is regarded as containing graves of six women of the Ahle-Bayt of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which make it an important site for ziyarat and other religious activities.

The religious importance of the shrine is well depicted by the different recognition that the two major branches of Muslim recognized in the world the Sunni and the Shia offer to the site. Sunni Muslims perform pilgrimage to the dargah on the occasion of Urs ceremony in the

Islamic month of Jumada al-Thani while most of the Urs fairs are generally attended by Sunni devotees. It takes three days starting from 7th of Jumada al-Thani and includes such rituals as ablution performed by women in the shrine focusing on the spiritual washiness of the site (Naqvi, 2024). On the other hand the shrine is most often visited by Shia Muslims in the two Islamic months of Muharram and Safar more so due the fact that these two months are so special in Shia Islamic calendar in that they mark the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A. S) as well as the suffering of Ahl al-Bayt. The information about the shops around the shrine selling materials like, pictures of Imam Ali (A.S), Imam Hassan (A.S), Imam Hussain (A.S), and reading materials regarding the history and the battle of Karbala also supports the tradition of shrine as Shia place of devotion (Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab, 2024).

The Bibi Pak Daman shrine is also very important for the people of Lahore as well as for Muslims of Pakistan in general as it plays the role of religious icon. It serves both as a sacred place for personal and public worship for Shia Muslim as well as Sunni Muslims to come closer to their common Islamic roots. Some of the practices that are carried out at the shrines include washing the graves; such practices are pointing towards the aspects of cleanliness and humility according to Islam, a faith shared by both sects. Further, the shrine holds historical and religious importance and the Government of Punjab has also launched series of upgradation programs to improve the site as well as the overall infrastructure to make it as important religious and cultural place for the tourists (Government of Pakistan, 2024).

The golden latticework, green domes, and high-quality floorings established in recent years have not only given the shrine a beautiful look but also proved the status of the place as a leading pilgrimage center. These measures are indicative of the ongoing process of the preservation of Islamic historical and cultural legacy as well as the desire to maintain the shrine as relevant to people spiritual needs in the future. The proposed expansion of the entry passage connected to Empress Road is to ease the congestion for the many pilgrims who pilgrimage to the shrine every year which will entrench the shrine as the central spiritual site for Shia and Sunni faithful in Lahore and the broader region (Naqvi, 2024).

Therefore, the Bibi Pak Daman is a shrine that possesses religious importance for both the Shia and Sunni Muslims because of its association with cultural roots. On this background, it

can be stated that the shrine remains an important belief and cultural center of Lahore today, as people come to the place to celebrate religious events, preserve histories and cultural values, and make crosses for their communities during cross seasons.

## **Findings of the Study**

The findings show how religious, cultural and historical aspects of Bibi Pak Daman in Lahore Pakistan. These findings are categorized into thematic areas: spirituality, ethnicity, historical and cultural and historical education, and camaraderie.

### **Religious Significance**

Bibi Pak Daman shrine is one of the religious shrines of Lahore where both the Shia and Sunni sects of Muslims offer their prayers. The shrine is visited mostly by the Sunni Muslims during the Urs in Jumada al-Thani, and by Shia Muslims during Muharram and Safar. The shrine is greatly respected as a place of burial rites of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) and other ladies from the family of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

### ***Cultural Identity and Symbolism***

The shrine plays a role as a common Islamic heritage of the Shias and the Sunnis. It also asserts and sustains the Islamic heritage especially the stories relative to the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S). Several shops around this shrine sell ritual and religious literature, equipment, which enhances its cultural aspect.

### ***Heritage Preservation and Conservation Efforts***

The Government of Punjab has made many improvements on the structure like the golden latticed on the exterior as well as with the green domes. The authorities have already firmed other options that will ensure that the entry passage is expanded to enhance the ease for pilgrims to access the site. These endeavors unveil significance of the shrine in the historical and culture aspect.

### ***Communal Unity and Pilgrimage***

The shrine enhances togetherness of Shias and Sunnis particularly during occasions of religious festivals. It is one of the most important shrines for the Zaireen of Pakistan especially the Punjabi and Sindi people who visit this place. The acts of worshipping the holy shrine and

prayers made at the shrine assist the uniting of Muslim in the society through upholding of common practices.

These results support the prior research indicating that shrines are meaningful in the context of the Islamic culture as religious sites. For instance, Husein (2013) has done a study on sacred spaces in South Asia with a view of identifying how they serve as the centers for religious, ritual and fellowship activities as well as places of worship and pilgrimage. In the same manner, the way Bibi Pak Daman shrine functions is similar to other shrines, having people from both Shia and Sunni sects, which was also elaborated in the findings.

Metcalf (2004) and Khan (2011) have examined how people in South Asia remember their culture through religious places and assembly especially within Shia domain. In accordance to these studies, the findings that the Bibi Pak Daman shrine functions as a site of memory – a place in which the memory of the Ahl-e-Bayt is preserved – are relevant. The usage of the shrine in building a collective religious identity of Muslims in South Asia has been following the affair pointed out by Metcalf in relation to the reviews on the religious commemorations and their relation to cultures. These ongoing preservation and restoration measures being followed in Bibi Pak Daman shrine are thus compliance with the trends noticed in the scholarly studies that are done in relation to heritage conservation in Islamic context. Lowenthal highlighted the builders of sacred places' desire to conserve such structures not just as historically valuable but also as significant for keeping cultures and people's identity alive, which Ahmad noticed (1985, p 34). In the light of these theoretical perspectives, the following research findings are revealed, that is the shrine renovation enhances religious tourism and cultural conservation.

Hence, there is evidence for Turner (1973) Eade and Sallnow (2000) that Bibi Pak Daman shrines work as a cultural resource in the case of annual Urs for the cohesion of different Muslim groups. Such scholars have pointed out that through pilgrimage, there is communal solidarity and religious identity as pointed out by the way the shrine brings together individuals from various backgrounds that make up the larger society. Two, the historical background of the shrine where Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) fought against oppression also falls under the social scientific studies of authority and power relations in Islam. Foucault, 1977 arguments of power and resistance are mainly used in researches analyzing the religious structures associated

with political repression. Abbas (2015) and Sachedina (1981) have examined similar issues, although in relation to other shrines connected with the Ahl-e-Bayt where the shrines are viewed as the mix of spiritual and political struggle.

These alignments show that the results of the study carried out on the Bibi Pak Daman shrine are in accords with prior literature in different fields such as religious studies, cultural anthropology, and heritage conservation.

The Bibi Pak Daman shrine functions as a being-female thus providing a depiction of religious sites and their spiritual and social relevance as highlighted by Eliade (1957). The use of the shrine by both Shia and Sunni Muslims who participate in rituals and pilgrimage, show that it is a sacred space of communion that is beyond the profane and links the community with the divine in accordance to Eliade's view. It is a lieu de mémoire or a place of memory, in which the collective history and that of the Ahl-e-Bayt of the Imam are inscribed. Referring to the social space concept of Nora (1989), the shrine serves a specific purpose of defining Islamic identity which is specifically relevant in the South Asian context. This means that it actively maintains and preserves the memory of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) and her struggles, thus playing a role in the construction of the Muslim community's historiography.

Various renovations and preservation processes under way in the shrine conform to David Lowenthal's theories on conservation of heritage. Such efforts are not just confined to the preservation of the physical structure and buildup of the shrine but also the identity of the people associated with it and the religion that comes with it. The improvement of the shrine accommodates the need of modern man in religious tourism, and at the same time, does not distort the history and cultural value of the shrine. The shrine therefore serves a social purpose which is to help unite Muslims in general, especially during events such as the Urs. This aspect applies Victor Turner's (1973) ideas about pilgrimage as a rite of passage since the shrine becomes a focal point of people with similar interests regarded as religious. This paper argues that the history of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A) who fought against both local and Umayyad hegemonic powers is a quintessential example of Foucauldian understandings of the relation between power and resistance. It is not only the spiritual leadership of Syeda Ruqayyah (S.A) but

also the political resistance of Ahl-e-Bayt (A.S) Hence, It reinstates the shrine's dual function of spirituality and politics.

These theories which supply covering wide knowledge about Bibi Pak Daman shrine as a religious, cultural and historical site and safekeeping the spirit and symbolic significance of Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali (S. A. ) besides acknowledging the actual religious authority and social solidarity of the community of the Muslims.

## Conclusion

The study, presents the shrine in different ways and for different purposes; as religious, cultural landmark and memory and as a locus of power and protest. Consequently, the findings show that the shrine goes beyond a religious depository but is a contested space of culture, social relations, and history. This religious attraction is mainly seen because the shrine is a place of worship for both the Shia and the Sunni's besides being a place of pilgrimage especially during holy period like Muharram, Safar and Urs. The research focuses upon the significance of the shrine as a center of the spiritual life and re-emphasizes its function in the context of the related Islamic culture of the South Asian area. Such a visibility corresponds to Eliade's (1957) definition of the theory of sacred places, which are known to be sacred and which are an essential part of the religious lives of the people. Bibi Pak Daman therefore functions from the cultural memory point of view and more especially from the Shia Muslims. Using Nora's (1989) notion of lieux de mémoire, the shrine is viewed as an embodiment of the memories of the society through narrations of the Ahl-e-Bayt. This cultural prominence is further bolstered with the availability of religious trinkets and texts that are sold at the shrine and these contribute to the reiteration and continuation of the history surrounding the people.

This also supports the conservation of heritage since the shrine's physical and cultural factors were highlighted in the study. Some of these recent restoration works, as aforementioned, do not only beautify the shrine, but also bring it in accord with modernity. This is in consonance with Lowenthal's (1985) perspective where he notes that buildings and other tangible structures are conserved in order to keep memories and identities going for it to affirm cultures in important religious sites such as the Bibi Pak Daman shrine.

However, history of the shrine as the symbol of resistance to oppression is equally important factor in the evaluation of the shrine's importance. Based on Foucault's (1977) concepts of power and resistance, the study demonstrates how and why the shrine is both, a religious and a political representation of the Ahl-e-Bayt as resisters of tyranny. This aspect of the shrine's history make it to be revered as not only a religious shrine but also as a place of socio-political importance. Last but not the least, the research also establishes the fact that the explanation of the shrine is also about bringing together different Muslims in the society. It is a fact that religious practices and activities such as the annual pilgrimage and other celebrations at the shrine provide a timely point for social reunion and integration since every individual is united in his act of worship. This is in agreement with Turner's (1973: 28) definition of pilgrimage as a secular communal rate of passage.

Thus, Bibi Pak Daman is an important place for the people of South Asia to understand the religious and cultural assets of a great civilization. This work captures the spiritual, cultural and historical stories which even to date define the existence and belief systems of the Muslims in Lahore and other places. The shrine church serves religious functions as an altar and a memorial place of historical events, it represents people's non-violent opposition to injustice and it unites people from different groups across the society. This work reinforces understanding of the significance to safeguard such sites for the religious as well as for the cultural and historical sense of place.

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