Chapter V

Conclusion
An attempt has been made to throw light and analyse the sociological dimensions of the religious shrines of India and Iran respectively. Since religion is a social phenomenon, both religion and society are interconnected and dependable on each other and both are necessary for a prolific synthesis of faith. The study focuses mainly on the social contributions of the shrines of India and Iran with respect to their rituals and ceremonies contributing religiosity and widening the horizons of social interaction.

The study covers religious, psychological, social, cultural and economical aspects of the shrine. It also focuses on the primary purpose and need of pilgrims visiting the shrines, since human being tend to attain salvation and expiation from sins by praying and following a religion attributed to God. ‘Salvation however may be linked with belief it has some attribution of truth to a certain metaphysical data’,¹ development of dogmas and acceptance of faith.

Shrines act as not only a religious place but of social and cultural as well. It is undoubtedly a place for offerings and performing rituals and act as centre for social, cultural and religious synthesis. It is also a shelter for the homeless and sufferers.

As far as religion is concerned it is a collective phenomenon based on unified beliefs and practices related to sacred things. Social life is inherently religious and religious ceremonials are basically celebrations of social life. Harry Alpert a scholar of Emile Durkheim
classifies four major functions of religion viz. disciplinary, cohesive, vitalizing and emphoric social forces. Religion has also a euphoriac function in that it serves to counteract feelings of frustration and loss of faith establishing the bellicose sense of well being. 'It is the product of effervescence induced by ceremonial activity'. Religious rituals prepare men for social life by imposing self discipline and certain measure of asceticism. In the similar vein religious ceremonies bring people together and thus serve to reaffirm their common bonds and to reinforce social solidarity. 'Religion has in it two elements, social custom and collective conscience'. The first religious representation is of collective consciousness which is widened through the rituals and ceremonies performed by a pilgrim at shrines. Comprehensively, religious observance maintains and revitalizes the social heritage of the group and helps transmit its enduring values to future generations. Emile Durkheim opines that 'there is something eternal in religion it is the cult and the faith, men can not celebrate ceremonies for which they see no reason, nor can they accept a faith which they in no way understand'.

Shrines and its pilgrimage enhance the faith and belief of an individual in a religion. These centres act as catalyst in forming and establishing a bond or relationship with the saint (though in oblivion) and finally with God. The association has pious and important relevance. Pilgrims seek solution of their problems through saint and desire to bring favourable conditions for themselves and their families.
Due to the fact that religion is everywhere an expression of a sense of dependence on a spiritual or moral power. Hence the shrines offers spiritual favour to an individual.

There can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which make its unity and its personality and this can be achieved by the means of reunion, assemblies and meetings where the individuals being closely united to one another reaffirm their common sentiments. Hence pilgrimage is an act of paying homage and tribute to the saint as well as a social act of maintaining and forming a relationship with others. It also gives an ample opportunity for the pilgrims to interact socially with other people establishing a relationship, thus expanding the horizons of social interactions.

A pilgrim has preconceived notions and has no doubts on visiting the shrine and holds firm belief on the saint. Moreover, the pilgrims indulge in religious acts and ceremonies which is commonly practised by an individual such as, saying prayers, (Dua) reciting Quran and offerings (nazar). Since the religion belonging to the realm of the Orient 'emphasizes the necessity to live up to traditional - mystical social standards of conduct, rather than promulgating new standards'.

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All four shrines under study executes religious acts in their shrines. *Namaz* (prayer) is held in congregation, Dua is performed usually by the Dua Navees (writer of prayer) or any other official of the shrines, Quran is read, *nazar* is offered in form of cash money, gifts and sweets. These religious act are Islamic and are practiced by the Muslims in their daily life hence they do not hesitate while re-practicing it at the shrine. Moreover, collective religious consciousness at the shrine inculcate religious fervour in them, since religious ideas are produced by a synthesis of individual minds in collective action. These religious centres are meant for practising and performing religious rites and rituals collectively. The purpose behind all these religious activities at the shrine is to pay tribute and homage to the saint and to achieve a good rapport with God through the medium of saint.

It is worthy to note that some rituals performed by the pilgrims at the shrines are related to pre-Islamic culture and traditions of India and Iran respectively. When Aryans came to Iran and India, they possessed culture and tradition of their own. Reflection of their culture and tradition can be traced in Zorastriasm and Islam in Iran and Hinduism and Islam in India. Through illumination and fragrance Aryans use to invoke gods. Hence lighting ceremony or the illumination at the shrines is essentially a ritual of Aryans which was religiously practised in Iran and India and thereafter became an essential ritual of the shrines.
The present study investigates the historical perspective of the shrines of India and Iran and concludes that all four shrines and their respective saints found refuge in safer place, they were the victim of bigot rulers and unsurpers. Preaching the gospel, and sayings of Prophet Mohammad, these four saints devoted their entire life in meditation, prayers and propagation of Islam. Historical evidence betrays that among all four saints, Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti was chosen and sent to India for the purpose of propagating Islam. Born in Sistan (Iran) Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti came to Ajmer via Baghdad, Lahore and Delhi at the age of 52 years around 1190. At that time the religious, cultural and social milieu of India was different. Ajmer was ruled by a Rajput King Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti took up the challenge of converting things according his ideologies and religious learning. It was the magnimity and grace of the saint that he became popular in very less time devoting himself in giving divine teaching to his disciples. People of Ajmer became his followers and embraced Islam. This how he succeed in his purpose of propagating Islam and thereafter devoted his entire life for the spiritual healing of his disciples. After his death at the age of 97 he was buried in the place where he lived and gave teachings. In order to glorify and preserve the memory of the spiritual mentor his followers and disciples started visiting his grave expressing deep sense of affection and love towards him, gradually the grave was turned into tomb and finally in
the shrine where large number of followers and believers visit and pay homage to the saint.

The present study focuses on the life history of the saints of India and Iran investigating course of happenings and circumstances (after the death of saint) which lead to the establishment of concrete structure of the shrines. Be it a shrine of India or Iran, the establishment of pilgrimage and the construction of shrine was executed by the disciples and followers of the saints. A close study of all four shrines under study reveals that saint lived a virtuous and religious life making them exemplaries of sincerity, faith and devotion towards God.

Another saint worth mentioning is Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya a great Sufi saint of the fourteenth century India. He was born in Badaun in the East of Delhi a famous centre of Islam prior to the conquest of Delhi by the Turks. He received religious teachings from his childhood which in calculated religious fervour in him. Among all four saints Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is the only one who was born in a country and remained there for rest of his life, though tracing the geneology of his grand father Syed Ali, it is revealed that he migrated from Bukhara to Badaun. Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya was a devoted disciple and follower of Baba Farid, who gave him religious teachings. The generosity and sympathy of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya for common people is evidenced through an event before his death in which he ordered to give all his belonging and food stored in his house, among
the poors, he also ordered to open langar khana for distributing free food among Muslim and Hindus. During his life time a Khanqah was built by his disciples, expressing devotion and love for him which later became permanent place for Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in his last phase of life and even after his death, he was buried there, the Khanqah was later turned into shrine, near Humayun’s Tomb at East South of Delhi.

Shrines of Iran under study became religious centres functionally after the Islamic revolution in 1979. The shrines are visited by large numbers of pilgrims as compare to that of India because of the reason that majority of people in Iran are Muslims. Pilgrims at the shrines of Iran contribute a good income through gifts and endowments hence the fund of shrines at Iran is large as compare to that of India. Since the pilgrims visit the shrine of Iran in great numbers, several officials are available at the shrine.

The genealogy of Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani and of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh connects with Hazrat Ali. They both found refuge in Iran, a safer place. They both were the subject of tyranny and animosity done by the Abbasid Caliphs. Both saints lived a virtuous and pious life preaching and propogating Islam in their region.

Historical evidence betrays that Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani migrated from Madina to Ray (Iran), following the order of Imam Hadi who has sent him to control all legal and religious affairs, as well as for
propagating Islam. It was due to his popular preaching that several people converted and accepted Islam in Ray. After his death he was buried in an apple garden and later his disciples turned the grave into primarily a dome and finally to the shrine.

Another saint under study is Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh son of Imam Moosa Kazim, like all other Imams and saints he also lived his life full of virtue and good deeds, he established himself as an exemplary saint. After his death, his grave was fenced and a primary sepulcher was built. Later it was expanded and decorated by his followers Halakoo Mirza, later the dome was built by one of the disciple Hasan Fadakar in 1945 and decorated it with tiles.

Hence the historical perspective of all four shrines reflects generalization of faith, spiritual belief and guidance. All four saints lived a pious and sincere life praying and meditating, they did not missed a single opportunity of benefiting their people. They propagated Islam and converged several people to Muslim their disciple expressed utter devotion and love towards them by turning their graves into shrine. Some of them even supported the extension and construction of the shrine and established a custom of pilgrimage at the shrine.

All four saints were responsible for widening the horizon of society, religion and culture. Their existence turned to be a boon for the particular social, cultural and religious setup. Their presence
moulded and changed the whole scenario of the society, culture and religion.

It is also worthy to note that all four saints were blessed with staunch and devoted followers, these followers during the life span of the saints served them with utter devotion and sincerity, stood next to the saints helping them to fulfill the mission of delivering human beings from predicament and worldly problems. Khwaja Ziauddin Wakil the Ameer of the city personally expressed his intention out of devotion to build a Khanqah for Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Similarly Gayasuddin Balban of Ghulam dynasty financially supported for constructing tomb over the grave of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti. Halakoo Mirza was a staunch disciple of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh, he decorated and repaired the shrine of the saint.

The study of all four shrines reveals that there are different class and number of pilgrims visiting the shrine. They belong to various religion, caste and creed. In case of the shrines of India not only Muslims but Hindus, Sikhs and Christians visit the shrine. Pilgrims visit the shrine according to their convenience some are regular visitors, others are occasional (especially in the days of Urs), some visit the shrine without any need or problem, expressing their love and veneration towards the saints. However, some exclusively visit the shrine in their adversities, usually when they have family disputes, illness or any other predicaments.
Rituals and ceremonies held at the shrine gives an opportunity to the believers to relax and shrug off their anxiety. Pilgrims who visit the shrine in need, receive solace and peace of mind while attending the ceremonies and rituals. For them pilgrimage is a religious and time passing affair. Pilgrims relax and spent their time in meditating and praying with a belief of getting their problems solved with the intercession of saint. Hence the psychological function of shrine offers an influential capacity which regards shrines as the final resort for the oppressed belonging to all religions and cultures.

All fours shrines under study provide employment to several people associated directly or indirectly to the shrine such as Sajjada Nashins, Mutawallies, Khadims, Dua Navees, Fatiha Khwans, shop-keepers, beggars, vendors, permanent, non permanent associate's and officials of the shrines. Hotel owners, restaurant owners, shop keepers earn good money from the pilgrims by accommodating them and selling items related to the rituals and ceremonies of the shrine.

A part from the religious and psychological concern of the shrine its cultural aspect is also important. Shrines are not only religious and social centers, they also play an important role in forming the culture of nations. As culture is an essential part of formation of religious and social belief and vice versa. Shrine is a common place for all cultures, religions and society. Usually a comprehensive relationship and bond among pilgrims is formed at the shrine. Pilgrims belonging to different
cultures interact and exchange views. Moreover, pilgrimage gives them strength and courage to face the stern adversities of life.

The present study also reveals that shrines of India and Iran have affluent endowments and properties attached to them. Shrines of Iran have study centres, library and medical centre rendering useful service to the employers and people related to the shrine. There is a charity institution extending financial help to the people in meeting social needs such as, finance for marriage, medical treatment of illness, purchasing house. Moreover, cooperative shops under the control of shrine provide essential household commodities to the employees and pilgrims at lower price. Society of Syed Zadgan at the shrine of Moinuddin Chisti invite the rich pilgrims for charity works. Similarly at the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti Khadims run a charitable society of Syed Zadgan. Beside providing educational scholarship to the students widow receive a fixed monthly amount from the shrine.

The income generated from the shrine is used by officials for managing and extension of the affairs of the shrine. A bulk of money is spent for organizing various ceremonies and functions. Four lakh (400000) pilgrims visit annually at the time of Urs. The shrines contribute largely for the economic prosperity of the city where they are located. Markets, laundries, banks, restaurants, guest houses, book shops and flower shops extract good income from the pilgrims who have come for performing rituals and ceremonies at the shrines.
The saints under study casted a critical influence and effect on the political authorities of their time and place. It is worthy to note that apart from general people, rulers and beauracrates were also believers and followers of the saints. Several rulers and administrators sought blessings from the saint time to time especially when they were at war, in need or in state crisis. They contributed financially for the extension of the shrine especially the shrines of India were largely extended and constructed on the instigation of Mughal rulers. They also gifted precious items and goods.

It's also worthy to note that various buildings, tombs and parts of the shrine under study bears historical names since its construction was financially supported by various rulers, administrators and authorities of the time. In the case of the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti at Ajmer, Usmani gate, Shah Jahan gate, Akbari mosque, Aulia mosque, Alamgiri mosque, Begami Dalan, Diwan Khana, reflects the intervention and contribution of Mughal rulers for the affairs and extension of the shrine. These Mughal rulers were the believers and intimate to the saint, they paid, homage and expressed their love and veneration for the saint by financially supporting for the extension of the shrine.

Whereas, the shrines of Iran do not possess such historical names and buildings since the culture, rule and social set up of India and Iran is dissimilar to an extent. It is worthy to note that the shrines of Iran have more endowments, charity institutions and centres for
social service as compared to that of India. The shrines of Iran is technically more equipped and focuses on providing education to the people through libraries, astronomy centre and computer facilities. The shrine largely contributes in propagating religious sciences and scientific knowledge among the people of Ray. Hence the shrine of Iran especially of Hazrat Abdul Azim's Hasani in Ray is comparatively more advanced and educationally equipped with facilities and resources, besides being a religious centre.

A close study of the physical description of the shrines reveals that the buildings and extensions attracts large number of believers and pilgrims to the shrine. The premises of the shrines, especially its glorious and magnificent buildings, artistic decorations and its splendour enthralls the senses of the pilgrims. They are pleased by observing the buildings. Moreover, the spiritual elegance of the shrine makes it a sacred and important place for the men of faith.

It is worthy to note that the shrines witness a reciprocal contribution. On one hand it provides, employment, economic prosperity and business profits to the people attached to it directly and indirectly and on the other hand believers and pilgrims visiting the shrine spent money on endowments, gifts and purchasing things essential for rituals contributing a good income. Hence the shrine gives spiritual and charitable benefits to the pilgrims and in return a good income is generated through them which is used for repair and extension work of the shrine. In both ways general people including
pilgrims, officials and other associates are benefitted. Hence, these religious centres are “bread and butter” for several officials and associates of the shrines.

Daily, weekly, monthly and yearly performances at the shrine including mourning ceremonies in Moharram and celebrations such as Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Azha, Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum and birth anniversary of Prophet, Imams and saints gives spiritual and religious edge to the believers. Since religion is the product of social cause. Pilgrims attain collective consciousness and participate in the rituals and ceremonies held at shrine with full zest and zeal.

Shrines also act as the centre of meditation, expiation of sins and awareness for good deeds. Pilgrims visit the shrine with a specific aim and urge to realize the importance and purposes of their visit. Generally the purpose is rooted in solving their problems through the intercession of saints. As ‘the saints has always been the intermediary between their followers and the spiritual power’.6

It is worthy to note that pilgrims visiting the shrines are conscious and careful about their hygiene, they wear clean clothes and consider all belongings of the shrines as pious and sacred. Hence they kiss and touch the entry gate of the shrine. It is also considerable to note that the essential part of any pilgrimage tawaf is performed by the pilgrims at all the shrines under study.
Present study focuses on the various degrees and genre of problems and its solutions which pilgrims seek at the shrines. Usually the pilgrims seek solution of ailment, child birth, family disputes, financial problems, bankruptcy, matrimonial etc. Pilgrims have firm faith and belief in the miraculous power of saints and seek their blessings. For pilgrims, saints are a link to God.

Hence, saints of the shrines under study casted a psychological, religious and spiritual effect on the believers which is essential for moulding faith and belief in God. Personality of these saints are regarded by large numbers of believers and people as exemplars of piety and spirituality. These saints effectively inculcated faith and belief in their disciples for God.
References


