

Safr ul Ishq:

Tracing Roots, Embracing Tradition

SOCL 363 Final

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Part I

Introduction

The shrine that I chose for my project is of my great paternal grandfather Ghulam Samdani. It's located in the village of Kakrali, part of the Gujrat district, nearly 190 km from Lahore.

I struggled throughout the semester with incorporating my personal perspective into my research. Throughout my education, I was consistently taught to be objective and removing that part of me to make my work personal was a difficult journey. Undertaking this ethnography, I believed that selecting my great-grandfather's shrine as the subject would be ideal, as it represented the epitome of a personal connection—my own familial heritage. But I was shocked at how much effort it demanded. I found myself wrestling with the question of whether I'm engaging with this research as an anthropologist or as my father's daughter. Attempting to find a balance between both, I sought to immerse myself in this research to genuinely understand my own experience, a much harder task than anticipated. Throughout the duration of this project, I learnt many things about my family and was able to finally understand the significance of the traditions that were standard practice in my house.

Methodology

I spoke mainly to my grandfather, Maqbool Jilani, as he is the primary caretaker of the shrine. He was an electrical engineer by profession and after his retirement in 2004, he devoted his life to carrying on his father's work. Since he was family, I assumed I could

be more open with the questions I would ask, however, my grandfather offered much of the information himself without me asking. I believe it is his desire for me to be as thorough as possible with this unique opportunity. I also spoke to my father, Asim Jilani, about a few things when my grandfather wasn't available, and he translated some of the Persian verses for me for further use.

The focus of my research revolved around the question, "What is the nature of the *kalam* used at this shrine?" But before I could learn that, my grandfather began with the history of the shrine and his father.

Life History

Ghulam Samdani was born Abdul Ghani in the village of Thutha Rai Buhadur in the 1870s, though the exact date of his birth is unknown. He lived just over 100 years and died in 1974. He lived a nomadic life; he travelled through India, was a worker in the Pakistan movement but when World War 1 began he marched under the British banner as a soldier. Seeking a peaceful life away from the horrors of war he quickly left his post and came to Baghdad, where he stayed at the shrine of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. It is here that he received his spiritual guidance, having met Ghulam Jilani through the caliph of that time. He quickly became his disciple and together they stayed in Baghdad for nearly 18 years.

Significance of his Name

When Abdul Ghani entered into his sainthood, a new name was bestowed upon him, Ghulam Samdani. This name change is an accepted tradition in Islam and the Arab region because you are entering into a new life so you're given a new name that will lead you to live a better life. One can liken it to how kings changed their names upon ascension to the throne. Life is like a journey, where one can be born anew. An example of this in other cultures can be with the Piraha of the Amazon. They would be given multiple names throughout their life as they also believe that you cannot be one person your whole life; when there is a significant change in your life, your name changes to fit that.

Ghulam Samdani was given his name by his *peer* Ghulam Jilani when he entered into his new life. When he would write his name or sign it, he would write Ghulam Samdani *urf* [عرف] Abdul Ghani, which means 'also known as (a.k.a)'.

Another point to note is the multi-meanings of a singular word across parent and offspring languages. Since Urdu is a mix of Arabic the meanings change drastically when viewed through that lens. Ghani is an Arabic word which means generous or bountiful but Ghani viewed through the Urdu lens translates to 'بیے پرواہ' which means careless. Samad, taken from Samdani, also means 'بیے پرواہ' or careless but in a much different way. While Ghani is 'not caring' about wealth and other material things, Samad is about 'not caring', or being 'بیے پرواہ' in an absolute sense; when one is Samad he has no interest in literally anything to do with the mortal world. In this way, both of his names represent 2 aspects of his life, both correlated but one clearly praising him to a higher plane.

His House in Gujrat

After Ghulam Jilani taught my great-grandfather everything he knew, he ordered him to go back to India and enlighten the souls there. He built his own house in Gujrat and got married in 1943 and had 4 sons. His wife is buried in the family cemetery in Gujrat whereas his sons are buried with him in Kakrali. After his death, his house transferred ownership from the oldest remaining son to the next until it came into my grandfather's possession. Nowadays, his house exists as an open common ground for his disciples and their children to come during times of my grandfather's regular visits and celebrate God.

During a conversation with my grandfather, he shared an intriguing anecdote that his mother told him regarding the Gujrat house. On a day marked by a raging storm, his mother expressed concern about the possibility of flooding and suggested that they vacate the premises. In response, Ghulam Samdani approached a distant wall and inscribed something with his finger upon the bricks. He then assured his wife that there was no cause for worry, as that specific wall would never crumble. Although the Gujrat house has been renovated and refurbished, that very wall stands today as it did nearly 80 years ago, a testament to his foresight.

Langar

Ghulam Samdani assisted his disciples at his house whenever they visited with their problems. Commonly, they would stay over for many days so to accommodate them

there would be a *langar* (communal feast) prepared. Because multiple guests would come at one time, a small team was developed who would oversee the *langar*. This *langar* turned into a tradition which to this day is conducted on the 11th of every Islamic month. When *langar* is prepared any and everyone is welcome to attend thank God, eat and participate in prayers.

My father told me that Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani said, “I looked into spiritual works and have not found anything better than giving food to give to people. Had the world been in my hands, I would not entertain anything except feeding the hungry”. This forms the spiritual foundation of having this *langar* once a month.

It has been nearly 50 years since his death, and this tradition has continued every month without fail. What is important to note here is that this isn't through the efforts of one person alone. It's a collective effort of any who is willing to help and any who is willing to sit and eat. No one is turned away, people from any and all backgrounds are welcome to take part. I have been witness to this throughout my life. A few days before the *langar*, my grandfather would take us to the market to get a banner made to announce the *langar* and we would hang it over the park gate in front of our house. I remember the youthful excitement amongst my cousins and I when we lived together in Sheikhpura on the day of *langar*. It was an event we marvelled at since it filled the nearby park full of people from across many blocks. Ingredients would be brought in large quantities, and one of us would be given the duty of stirring the cauldrons, another measuring the food per plate and another cleaning the plates or it would be the collective duty of us all. A large carpet

would be set down for people to sit and *langar* would be distributed. People would call their friends and families from all around the neighbourhood, and everyone will sit and eat together. People were welcome to second and third helpings. After the clean-up, those who were Muslim and wanted to pray, would get together and pray the Maghrib prayer in congregation.

Construction of the Shrine

Ghulam Samdani died in 1974 and his disciples wanted him to be buried in their village so they took him to Kakrali. Some villagers say that he himself expressed wanting his grave to be there but my grandfather said people just said that so they could bury him in their own village.

Individuals would gift the shrine their works in hopes to see them displayed alongside the grave. One such individual was Ghulam Samdani's disciple - a learned carpenter. Shortly after his death, the carpenter with the help of a few others gathered the materials and built a mausoleum structure around the grave effectively making it a shrine. After that the people began burying their dead in the nearby open land, and over the years the surrounding area has developed into a community graveyard for a few families of his original disciples.

After Ghulam Samdani's death, his work and position were passed to his eldest son, Margoob Jilani, and when he died, it passed to my grandfather, Maqbool Jilani. Because the shrine itself is very small and the events like *langar* were a regular occurrence there,

he built a small mosque across from it so the people could gather there to pray after such events.

To house the people who travelled across many kilometres to attend and help out a small building was constructed wherein men were allowed to spend the nights and another was erected for the women to rest in.

Finally, a small house was constructed where my grandfather currently lives. Recently he's bought the farmland beside it where he grows his own produce and keeps his livestock.

Books & Kalam

Ghulam Samdani had over 200 books that were passed down to him from his *peer*, but they were mainly in Persian. The majority of the books read aloud at gatherings at the shrine have been translated from Persian to Punjabi so they can be understood with ease.

The most noteworthy book is Saif-ul-Malook, by Mian Muhammad Baksh. Its real name is Safr-ul-Ishq, which can be translated to 'The Journey of Divine Love'. This book is written in the form of easy-flowing poetry which is read in tune out loud at gatherings.

This book is especially important because of its written style. It's written with a storyline, which, when read loud, keeps people engaged throughout. It talks about *ishq*, divine love, and how one can walk in the way of God, separating themselves from the material worldly problems, to achieve divine success.

In addition to the aforementioned, there are several other renowned Persian books which hold significance. These include *Masnavi Maulana Rumi*, *Gulistaan*, *Bostaan*, and *Panj Ganj Malfuza*. Notably, *Panj Ganj* stands out due to its unique compilation process. It involved five revered saints belonging to the Chishti Silsila, who would convene together to engage in discussions regarding God and matters of spirituality. Following their insightful conversations, one of the saints would return home and meticulously transcribe their collective wisdom. This effort resulted in the creation of several manuscripts, eventually being compiled to form the esteemed book known as *Panj Ganj*.

The book Ghulam Samdani wrote himself is of a different kind. It's a book of about 200 pages, written in Arabic and Persian, containing knowledge about how to help people spiritually. This is not his own creation but rather came from his own *peer*, Ghulam Jilani. He would dictate, and Ghulam Samdani would write, so though it is his own writing, the wisdom and knowledge is not original, it has been passed down. My grandfather said there's only one book which is the holy book, the Quran, and all of these other books are just utilising the knowledge that's already available in order to understand it better.

Ghulam Samdani had many other forms of knowledge that were gifted to him and taught by his *peer*. He could speak, read and write Persian, Arabic, Punjabi and Urdu despite never having a formal education; he had *ilm-e-jafar* [numerology], *ilm-e-sitargaan* [astrology], *ilm-e-hikmat* [herbal medicinal knowledge], and there is a branch under this

called *kushta gari* [salt making]. He could also talk to graves, which is known as *kashful-kaboor*.

Part II

Table of Inscriptions

Inscrip. No.	Location	Language	Verse, Peer's saying, etc.	Translation
1	Gate	Arabic	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ	There is no God but Allah Muhammad is the messenger of Allah
2	Gate	Urdu	دربار گوہر بار حضرت غلام صمدانی نوری	The Darbar where you find gems, Hazrat Ghulam Samdani Nouri
3	Outside the door of the shrine	Persian	سجاده نشین خلیفہ بابا مرغوب جیلانی	The one who sits at the prayer mat, Caliph Baba Margoob Jilani
4	Outside the door of the shrine	Persian	دربار عالیہ صمدانیہ قادریہ	Highest court of Samdani Qadri
5	On top of the shrine dome	Arabic	سلطان المحبوبین شیخ غلام صمدانی نوری	The king of the beloved ones Sheikh Ghulam Samdani Nouri

6	Gravestone	Urdu	دفتر معرفت حضرت سلطان غلام صمدانی نوری	The book of knowledge, Hazrat Sultan Ghulam Samdani Nouri
7	Grave cloth paperweight	Persian	-	I saw my <i>Peer</i> and the essence of truth as one, there was no disciple, no disciple, no disciple
8	On the wall inside the shrine	Arabic	يا الله	O God
9	On the wall inside the shrine	Arabic	سبحان الله	Glory to God
10	On the wall inside the shrine	Arabic	الحمد لله	Praise be to God
11	On the wall inside the shrine	Arabic	يا رسول الله	O Messenger of God

Notes on Inscriptions

2. *Nouri*: *Nouri* is driven from the Arabic word *noor* which means light. In Surah Noor of the Quran, Allah describes himself in verse 35 as, “His light (in the universe) may be likened (to the light of) a lamp in a niche: the lamp is in a glass shade: the glass shade is like a glittering star and lamp is lit with the olive oil of a blessed tree which is neither eastern nor western: its oil is (so fine) as if it were going to shine forth by itself though no fire touched it.” Thus, the people who are given the title of *Nouri*, are the people who are blessed to be touched by that light.

3. *Sajjada Nahseen*: The literal meaning of *sajjada* in Persian is prayer mat, but in the Sufi traditions of South Asia, a *sajjada* is a small box comprising of different things like a pillow, staff, gown, turban, scarf, prayer mat etc., that belongs to the saint. It's given to whoever the caliph is. Right now, it's with my grandfather, but before him, it was with his brother, Margoob, before him with Ghulam Samdani and before him, it was with his *peer* Ghulam Jilani in Baghdad. The *sajjada* has been passed down to whoever is the successor of the Sufi saint. The significance of this is that whoever has the *sajjada* has to bear a huge responsibility that comes along with it as he is the torch bearer. My grandfather mentioned how things that belong to the saint have a way of finding their way back to their rightful place. When the shrine was being built, there wasn't a lot of space, so my grandfather's brother Margoob gave the *sajjada* to one of his father's disciples who kept it in his house. That man, Adalat Khan, took great pride in taking care of the *sajjada* through his love for his *peer*. When Adalat Khan died, his wife and kids took care of it, but they didn't have the same love as Adalat did. When my grandfather would go collect it for important gatherings, he would find it dirty and dusty. So, he

decided to speak to one of his friends, Lala Muhammad Hussain, and he said when you go to bring it this time, don't give it back. If they have any sort of connection to it, they will come to collect it themselves. My grandfather listened to him and brought it back, and it's been many years and no one came to ask for it, "they stopped giving love to it, so the *sajjada* stopped loving them too." My grandfather said the *sajjada* did this to keep itself safe, because it wasn't receiving the respect it deserved. After all, the things saints leave behind have a way of taking care of themselves. Another example of this was Ghulam Samdani's sword. After his death, it was given to his other son, Manzoor. My grandfather was certain that it had been sold off. One day he was talking to his late brother's wife, and she mentioned that she still had the sword in a passing conversation and later brought it to him for safekeeping. My grandfather emphasized that he didn't make any effort to seek out the sword as he thought it must've been lost, but it kept itself safe and found its way to a place where it knows it will be respected.

7. This verse is an excerpt from *Masnavi Maulana Room*. This was made and brought in by one of the disciples and used as a paperweight to hold down the grave cloth. The couplet symbolises the blind faith disciples have for their *peer*, because they view their *peer* as the 'essence of truth', making it hard to distinguish who the *peer* and who the disciple is. When people come to visit the shrine, some may take the weight and rub it over their body, over the areas where they feel pain. It is believed that it can relieve their pain, but my grandfather said there's no truth to that. He said it doesn't do anything but people do that just to feel close to their *peer*.

Part III

Transcription

Interview

Log 1

Bismillah. Our saint [pause] left this earth 50 years ago. He was around 100 years old. And [pause] his childhood is not very known but as he got older, he travelled to Baghdad [pause], where he stayed for some time. He stayed at his shrine for some time, duration unknown, but when he was there, he got all the spiritual knowledge and knowledge about *Silsilas* and he was bestowed by this saintship.

He received all the guidance and basic training to enlighten the souls of other people so that they become a good part of society, he then returned to his homeland India and started preaching. He was [pause, intake of breath] ordered to devote his life to the betterment of the people of his area, giving them religious education so that they can become good characters.

So, to fulfil his duty, he started travelling from village to village. He had a cycle, and wherever he went he used that cycle and stayed in the villages for some time, giving people knowledge about God and his prophet SAW, guiding them to the right path. He'll do this in one village [waves hand], then the next [waves hand], then the next [waves

hand]. Like this, he kept on [pause] going and coming, going and coming, from villages, preaching to people about the good, telling them to refrain from the bad.

As a result, those who strayed from the track [looks away], and indulged in bad deeds [pause], gradually returned to the right path [looks back at me] and eventually became good members of society. This was all because of the untiring efforts of this pious man [frowns]. They now knew about Islam and accepted it. And like this [face relaxes], he spent his life.

He kept his *Markaz* (centre) in Gujrat [waits for me to nod]. Here he had his own house, where people also visited and told him about their issues and problems, and sought knowledge and guidance. For this, they even stayed for 2 or 3 days at his home. And while staying over, he would talk to them, and offer guidance and through just talking he would be able to support them. Obviously, when someone is staying over, food is made [clears throat], so in this sense, there was a system of *langar* [I hum in acknowledgement]. However, many guests came, 2, 4, 10, at a time, he made sure all were given chai, food [pause] this was the way. So, a small team was automatically developed to do this work. And according to the weather, they were provided things respectively [long pause]. Like this, when he reached 100 years, then God [pause] took him [pause] from this earth. But today, even after 50 years have passed, people are still [pause] practising what he taught them and still, his ways are followed.

Now in his place, his predecessor sits over, and his name is Maqbool Jilani, and he also follows in his footsteps and serves people. And listens to anyone who comes [pause], understands his problems, and prays to God so God [pause] can help them in his grace. When he comes, he is worried, when he leaves is satisfied and content [slowly nods]. So, like this, the shrine [he says shrine in English] of our saint helps to develop a peaceful environment in our society. People come every Thursday, and on the 11th day of every lunar cycle, and have *langar* too, and pray together. Because this is a *Darbar*, multiple people come, some speak, some listen, some preach. At this place, the book of Mian Muhammad Baksh called *Safr-ul-Ishq*, also called *Saif-ul-Malook* is recited often because it contains a lot of wisdom.

Even 50 years after the death of the saint who is buried at the shrine- the *Darbar*, his ‘good deeds are passed on and spread’ (this is called *faiz*). This will go on forever because it is spiritual guidance (*Rouhani-faiz*), which is protected by Allah. Allah has talked about saints like these in the Quran by using the word *saliheen* (pious folk). Through them, society is able to maintain peace and get knowledge to develop peoples’ characters and morals. These *saliheen* will continue to come till the day of judgement and keep spreading the word and path of God and his prophets. Wasalam [waits for me to stop recording].

Today we will talk about the books at the *Darbar*, people read, listen, talk to each other about it [waves hand in a circle], and decorate their hearts with its spiritual guidance [nods].

Because we are Punjabi so obviously Punjabi books are discussed more [looks at me] but there are also books in Urdu, in Farsi, which are discussed with translation. Our elders who are more educated can understand Farsi so they get their knowledge from there too [pause].

So, of those Punjabi books, one which is at the top of the list is *Saif-ul-Malook* by Mian Muhammad Baksh. It's written in the form of a poem and its real name is *Safir-ul-Ishq*. The ways to get close to God are mentioned and discussed there. Its *kalam* is [pause] nice, easy flowing poetry so people usually read it in tune so the gathering is lively.

Normally, all these books [pause], they're not written by one's own self. There is only one book [holds up 1 finger] which is the Quran. Only from the Quran and hadith are things taken because they're in Arabic, and we're Punjabi so it's not that easy to understand; our saints like Hazrat Mian Muhammad Baksh, learnt Arabic, Farsi, and religious knowledge from a very good Madrassah, but God gave him such a mind, that the things written in Quran and hadith he was able to present them in couplets. Written in the way of a story, it tells people [clears throat] how you can walk in the way of God, separating yourself from the material, worldly problems, to achieve divine success and become near to Allah.

This whole thing is a journey, its name that we wrote *Safr-ul-Ishq*. Other than this, the famous books in Farsi are [voice increases in tempo] *Gulistaan Bostaan*, they contain wisdom and sagacity. But our ancestors knew Farsi in its proper way so they understood perfectly and gave lessons to others with references to these books. In this way, the others would get knowledge. Other than this, there is a book called *Masnavi Maulana Rome*, also written in Farsi containing the same wisdom and sagacity. In it, the sayings of the prophet Muhammad and Allah are explained and taught through this book in Farsi. This is a great way to explain things, because like for kids [gestures with hands], when we want them to learn something, we would explain it in a story or a tale [waves hand] so they can get immersed in it [I nod]. Like this, our saints told a story. At our *Darbar*, sections from this book are also taught. Another book is called *Panj Ganj Malfuza*. This book contains the sayings of 5 different saints from the Chishti *Silsila* [community; spiritually attached lineage]. When these saints sit together [voice drops] they will only talk about Allah and his prophets, no worldly, materialistic discussion; or talk about the companions of the prophets, or sharia [claps]. When the saints of the Chishti used to sit together and talk, one of these 5 saints would go home and write down what they talked about, this is called *malfuzaat*. Like this [pause] 1 manuscript would be compiled, then another [waves hand], then another [waves hand]; in this way, all their daily conversations would be compiled into a book which is known as *Panj Ganj*. This also tells us how our saints spent their lives in a simple humble and respective way. [takes a sip of water from glass]

Most books were translated from Farsi to Punjabi by the saints so the common folk could understand [nods]. When speaking to someone, it's always better to talk in a way they understand [I nod in acknowledgement]. Along with them, Muhammad Boota, Sardar etc are also included in this list [I hum]. The reciting of these books helps remove the burdens from people's hearts... When a person is relaxed in this way, the daily 'tensions' [he says this in English] of life are removed, so they come again and again to experience this serenity.

Taveez (photo available in photography section)

This talisman, written in Persian, is specifically intended to expel the jinn residing within a child's body. It comprises the names of the divine angels, calling upon them for their assistance. To perform the ritual, one must write the prescribed text (*falita*) on a paper and burn it using jasmine oil. Another paper (*naqsh*) is to be given to the child after they have taken a bath. All of this is to be arranged at the designated location where the jinn is to be expelled. The child is instructed to focus their gaze on the writing on the paper continuously, while a small amount of the fragrant oil is applied to the paper. Prior to summoning the jinn residing in the body, it is necessary to recite Surah Fatiha for the controlling angels (muakilaat) of the *falita*.

Part IV

Discussion

Whenever present, my grandfather's appearance courts the company of many individuals from all walks of life; nomads, homeless folk, addicts, elders of houses, sons of growing families, mothers and daughters of parents or husbands of vehement contrast to them. Although they seek the *peer* for guidance, the understanding is made manifest in a small room housing a grave. It attracted me when I first sought out the structure of, at the time, little opulence. Curiosity urged me to seek out the well-preserved and well-dressed grave which holds not inscriptions for man but God, praising his attributes which I've found hard to emulate in all scenarios of life. The four cornerstones which hold the inscribed cloth themselves have painted calligraphy further praising God and his attributes. Most surrounding graves have small inscriptions about the person and God as well. I've tried reading the phrases placed on their graves but some are in Persian and others in Arabic. Those written in Urdu were too complex for me to grasp as a child who was fascinated by the dead and their opulence in death.

The extent to which my great-grandfather's grave has been cared for is truly heart-warming as it is evidence of his impact on his disciples and the community, he lived in. Children care for their parents when they're alive but not many cares for those passed unto the grave and even less care for those they've never seen or are related to by blood. The religious imagery is muted in that room but the love and care for a dead man is not. It speaks to the people who are present around his grave and it speaks to the person who's passed on, but most of all it speaks to the religion which inspires such love. My belief isn't weakened or strengthened when I visit that shrine, it is strengthened when I listen to the people who care for such a grave.

However, just because they care for that little room doesn't mean they disregard the graves nearby. The family graves which are closest, are also well cared for, tiled or marbled with quotes that inspire curiosity and further peaceful moments to understanding the reasons why one would take such long strides to preserve their dead one's presence. The same was my reaction to those graves belonging to people not related by creed, not blood to the man who inspired it all. I would sit by and seek out the differences in their graves and each one would show the unique care their family put in burying them.

I've been going to this shrine ever since I was a child, yet for the first time, I consciously observed the way my siblings and I are treated during our visits. The very first thing that struck me was the abundance of love showered upon us by people. Their grandparents were disciples of my great-grandfather, and although they never met him, they possess a deep and profound unconditional love for him, which extends to his entire family. They'll bring food and sweets and make sure we're all perfectly settled.

Everyone shares a collective responsibility in taking care of this shrine together. While my grandfather is the primary caretaker, he is not there alone, and owing to his old age, he's unable to independently manage the shrine and all the household work. The villagers and his disciples help to take care of him and the shrine together. My grandfather told me he hasn't cooked in years because every day one of the village women will bring him something. One woman I spoke to said that "the love one has for their *peer* can't be replicated, it's a special kind. Because the dead aren't really dead. Their physical body is

gone, but their essence will always be there with them. And he'll come when he's called upon".

Embarking on this ethnographic journey into my great-grandfather's shrine was a profound and eye-opening experience. Initially presented with the challenge of replacing my objective training with the deeply personal perspectives needed as an anthropologist, I overcame it and through the process learnt the value of the delicacy needed when finding the balance between both schools of research.

Kakrali to me had always been a vacation spot, an escape from the bustle of the city, where my family and I could spend a few days unwinding. Through this ethnography, my great-grandfather's shrine transformed and I was able to understand the cultural significance of this place for the people that live there. This shrine serves as a microcosm of love, devotion and communal care. During my visit for this research, I witnessed the unwavering commitment of people from various backgrounds, underscoring the impact my great-grandfather had on his disciples and the wider community.

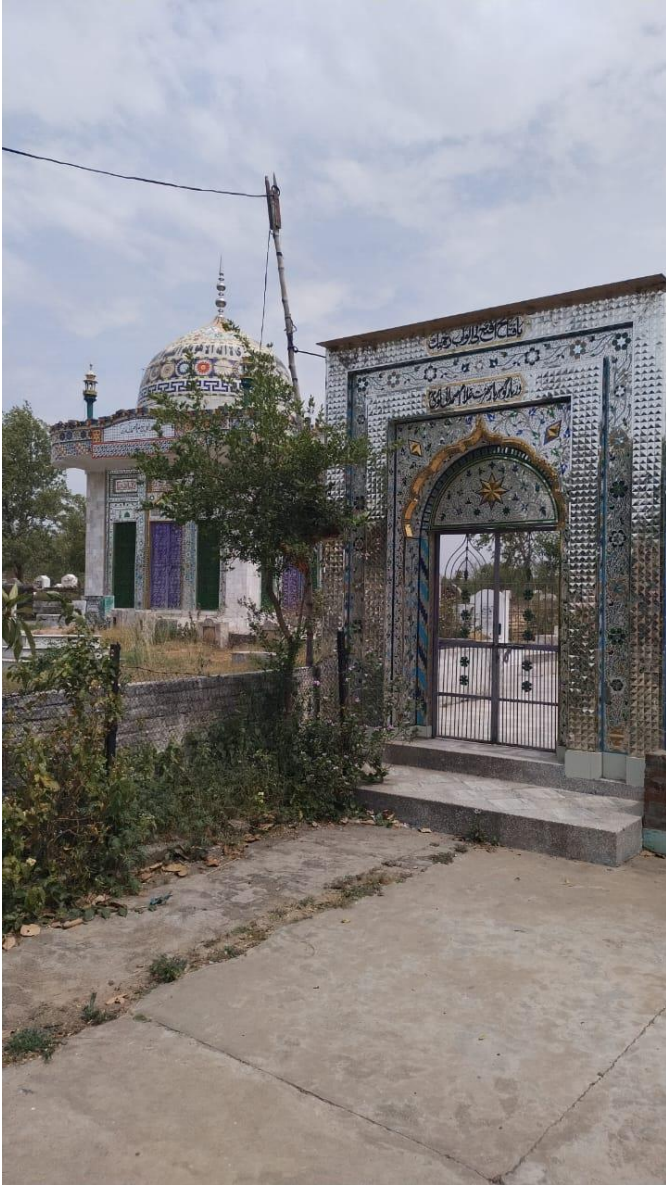
This sacred space showcases the interplay between religious symbolism and family graves, revealing the complex layers of belief. I learnt that though faith may or may not be strengthened or weakened by visiting the shrine, the stories of those who frequent and care for it can truly enrich and deepen your spiritual understanding. I was able to appreciate the power of communal support not just in taking care of the shrine, but also

those who take care of my grandfather on a daily basis. It speaks wonders to the bonds created over generations that connect people to one another.

Conclusion

I embarked on this study with the expectation that I would see contradictions in the history, practice and presentation of the shrine. Fortunately, this personal subject has survived such contradictions and in the ethnographic study of this shrine, the historical reverence and the iconographic presentation combine to make a compelling case for religious understanding and love from beyond the grave. This study was a transformative experience since it had me move out of my comfort zone and seek out definitions of words from multiple languages and correlate them to the experiences my great-grandfather had which led to those words gaining significance in the iconography of the shrine. It challenged my ability to view objective matter subjectively and vice versa. Overall, this ethnography allowed me to enter into the world of personal connection, faith and legacy. This experience has impressed upon me the strength of religion and made me want to connect more with the traditions I previously took for granted to preserve them for the future in a world which seems to be undergoing a divisive time in our history.

Photography



Front gate of the cemetery



Front view of the shrine



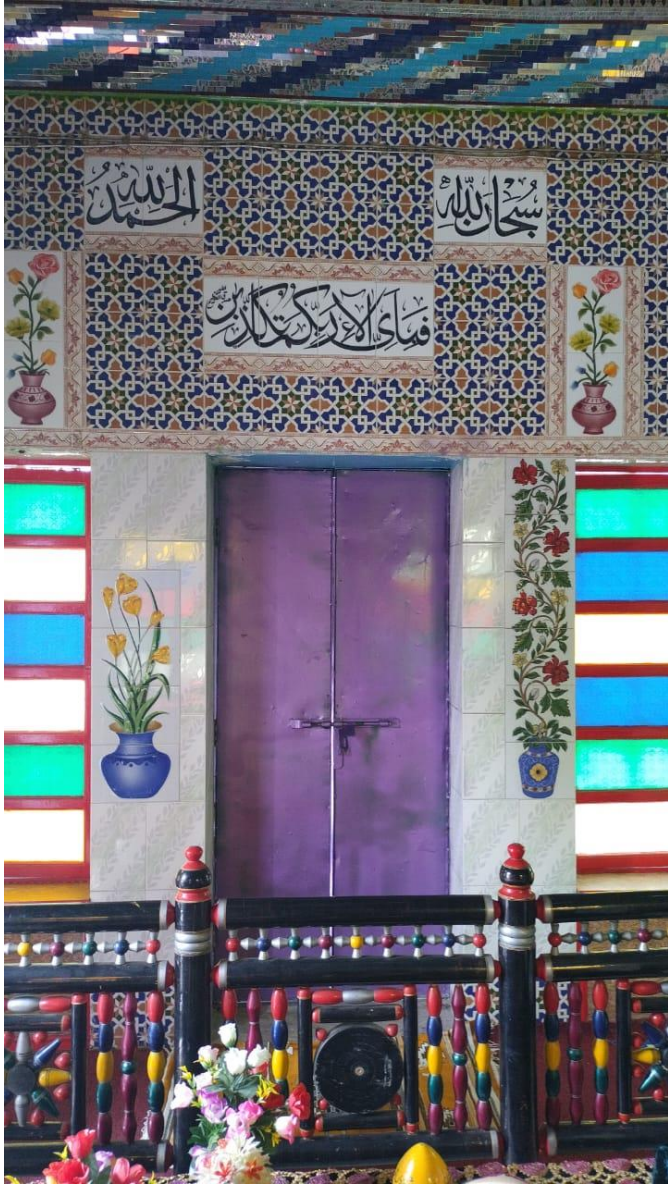
Close view of shrine



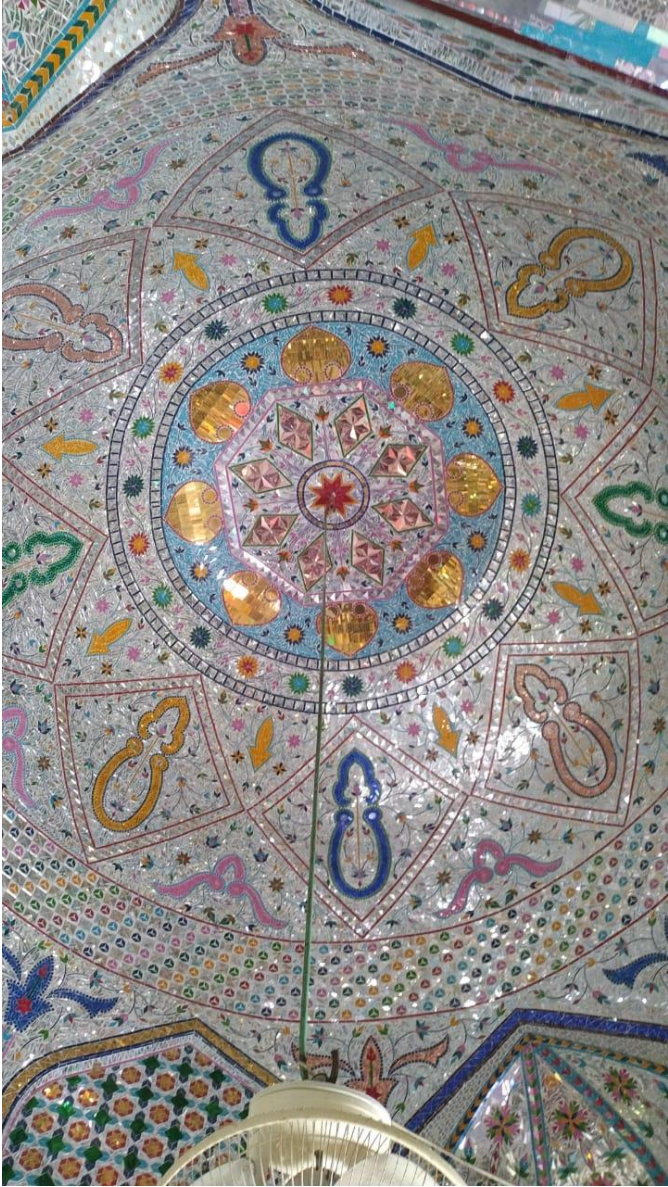
Front gate of shrine



View of one door from inside the shrine



View of another door from inside the shrine



Ceiling of the shrine



Grave of Ghulam Samdani



Masjid across from the cemetery

فصلت بر این مقرر است - این فصلت در جرج رودن نوشته بود و چنانچه بسوزد - و نقش دیگر در دست توک اباج نقل کرده بود -
 موافق ترکیب و از آن مقرر در دست رسیده - و کون و لفظ در سیاهی نقش کرده و در سیاهی نقش نیز فرستاده شده -
 اول تا آخر موقوف برید - فصلت این است -

۴۸۶

یا اسرائیل

۲۱۴۸۰۸	۲۱۴۸۱۱	۲۱۴۸۱۴	۲۱۴۸۱۷
۲۱۴۸۱۳	۲۱۴۸۱۶	۲۱۴۸۱۹	۲۱۴۸۲۲
۲۱۴۸۰۳	۲۱۴۸۰۶	۲۱۴۸۰۹	۲۱۴۸۱۲
۲۱۴۸۰۸	۲۱۴۸۱۱	۲۱۴۸۱۴	۲۱۴۸۱۷

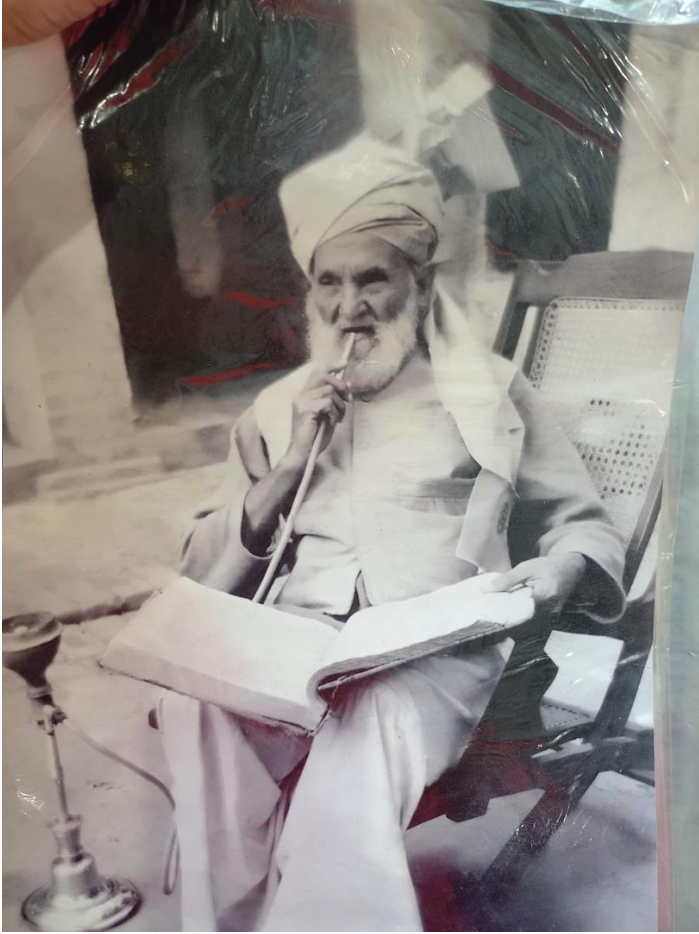
یا طابائل

این فصلت در جرج رودن نوشته بود و چنانچه بسوزد - و نقش دیگر در دست توک اباج نقل کرده بود -
 موافق ترکیب و از آن مقرر در دست رسیده - و کون و لفظ در سیاهی نقش کرده و در سیاهی نقش نیز فرستاده شده -
 اول تا آخر موقوف برید - فصلت این است -

۶	۱۱	۸	۷	۶	۵	۴	۳	۲	۱
۱۳	۲	۱۱	۱۰	۹	۸	۷	۶	۵	۴
۲	۱۱	۲۰	۱۹	۱۸	۱۷	۱۶	۱۵	۱۴	۱۳
۱۰	۱۵	۲۰	۲۵	۳۰	۳۵	۴۰	۴۵	۵۰	۵۵

این در نقش یک فصلت است

Taveez excerpt



Ghulam Samdani