

SHRINES SHAPING THE CITIES LAHORE: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Lahore, exhibiting the architectural remains of various ruling dynasties, is an old settlement with known history of more than one thousand years. Historians have explored in political context its dynamism mostly keeping in view the impact of ruling authorities who contributed in its physical shaping and reshaping by adding various buildings like Lahore Fort, Badshahi Mosque, Shalimar Garden, Mausoleums of Mughal Emperor Jahangir and Princess Noor Jahan etc. Contrary to these royal personalities and their constructed buildings, *Sufis* and their *khanqahs* have played vibrant role in expansion of the old city from within walls to its immediate surroundings. This phenomenon has not been taken into account by architectural historians and urban experts. No comprehensive studies in urban design, anthropology and sociology have been yet carried out to trace the impact of various Sufis and their *khanqahs* on the urban settlement and its expansion.

Story begins with the arrival of Hadrat 'Ali Hujwiri (d.1072 A.D.) at Lahore from Ghazani.¹ Hujwiri settled outside Bhati Gate.² Prior to the Mughal period, Lahore was probably confined to the area West of Shah Aalmi bazaar, and North of Bhati Gate in today's old city. Tombs from the pre Mughal era (Glover, 2011), including those of Malik Ayyaz (1040 C.E.), Ali Hujveri (1072 C.E. outside Bhati Gate), Qutb-ud-Din Aibak (1210 C.E. outside Lohari Gate, in Anarkali Bazaar), and Syed Muhammad Ishaq Gauzroni (1400 C.E. in the courtyard of Masjid Wazir Khan, presently inside Delhi Gate), all lie outside the perimeter of this area and since tombs were usually sited outside the city walls, they

suggest limits to the original walled city. During the Akbar residency (1585-1598) at Lahore, the periphery wall was extended and area of Masjid Wazir Khan as called *Rarra Maidaan* (open field) was included inside walled city. During 16th and 17th centuries, Lahore earned its reputation as a popular centre of *Sufism*. Among the mostly practiced, four Sufi orders³ in Indian Subcontinent, the *Qadiri* order was practiced largely in Lahore. *Qadiri* Sufis believed in the ideology of *Wahdat al-Wajud*.⁴ They influenced the populace of Lahore at socio-religious and cultural levels. There are number of *khanqahs* of *Qadiri* Sufis in and around the old city of Lahore. This paper explores the role of *khanqahs* of Sufis in shaping the city. These *khanqahs* can be divided into two categories based on their location. Firstly, *khanqahs* that were established just outside of the city gates and secondly that were located at a distance from the city, mostly on the road sides linking the neighborhoods with the city. These *khanqahs* were cultural hubs for local residents. Various commercial and residential activities took place that finally controlled and oriented the expansion of the city in forth coming centuries.

Keywords: Shrine, *Khanqah*, Urban Design, Garden, Sufism, Colonial city

1. INTRODUCTION

Multan, a city of Pakistan is truly known as "City of the Saints" but Lahore has also preserved in its soil the Sufi souls of hundreds who entered Subcontinent even before Hadrat Baha al-Haq Zakaria (d.1267 C.E.), Hadrat Shah Shams Sabzwari (d. 1276 C.E.) and others who settled in

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1 Ghazani was a small town located in today's Afghanistan. Hujwiri came to Lahore during the mid years of 11th century A.D.
2 Walled city of Lahore has 12 entry gates. Outside Bhati Gate, Hazrat Ali Hujwiri settled and buried after death. These gates were reconstructed later on during the Mughal and British eras.
3 In India, after Hadrat Ali Hujwiri, four Sufi orders i.e. *Suhrwardiyya*, *Chishtiyya*, *Qadiriyya*, *Naqshbandiyya* were introduced and practiced.
4 The doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajud* meaning "the unity of being or existence" asserts that everything that exists can only exist because it is a reflection of Divine Reality, hence an aspect of Divine Unity itself.



Figure-1: The shrine Complex of Hadrat Ali Hujwiri outside Bhati Gate

Multan and in its environs in 13th century. Lahore has remained a gate-way to the *Sūfis* and Sultāns coming from Central Asia to conquer or invade the people and territory of Indian Subcontinent. Hadrat ‘Alī Hujwīrī (see Figure-1) came to Lahore in compliance to the order of his *murshid* (master), in the mid years of eleventh century.⁵ It was the age when *Ghaznavīd*’s dynasty was waning and Delhi Sultanate was more than a hundred years ahead (Nizami, 1987). Before coming to Lahore, Hujwīrī had a vast exposure

to life, scholarship, erudition, and political happenings in the cities of Central Asia.⁶

The tombs of Sufi preachers inside the Walled City of Lahore are not ubiquitous.⁷ Where as dozens of Sufis settled outside the walled city of Lahore in its immediate surrounding.⁸ Within the walls of the old city, there are few shrines. Outside the city walls, abandoned tombs, temples, and gardens coexisted with a number of populous enclaves that at one

5 The exact date of arrival of Hadrat ‘Alī Hujwīrī is unknown. Researchers are mostly agreed upon that he arrived somewhere in mid years of 11th century A.D.

6 Hujwīrī, before coming to Lahore visited *Khurāsān*, *Maverānnahār*, *MerU*, *Adherbāijān* etc.

7 These mainly include *Hazrat Shah Raza Qādīrī*, *Pir Sherazi*, *Syed Ish.aq Gazrooni*, *Saed Soaf*, *Syed Sar Buland*, *Pir Zaki*, *Saed Mithha*, etc.

8 Hadrat *Bibi Pak Damana*, Hadrat *Miran Hussain Zanjani*, Hadrat *Pir Aziz-ud Din Makki* (d.1215) *Syed Musā Ahangar* (d.1519) *Syed Jhūlan Shāh Ghorey Shāh Bukhārī* (d.1594) Hadrat *Meerān Mauj Daryā Bukhārī*? (d.1604) *Syed ‘Abd al-Razzāq Makki Neelā Gunbad* (d.1638) *Sayyid Shāh Jamāl* (d.1639) *Shaykh Jān Muhammad* (d.1671) *Shaykh Muhammad Isma’eel Miyān Waddā* (d.1674) Hadrat *Shāh Abū al-Mu’ālī* (d.1615) *Shaykh Tāhīr Bandagī* (d.1630) *ʿaʿrat Miyān Meer Qādīrī* (d.1635) *Syed Shah Muhammad Ghawth* (d.1635) Hadrat *Shāh Jamāl Qādīrī* (d.1639), *Khawājāh Khāwind Hadrat Eshān* (d.1642), Hadrat *Shah Kamal Qadiri*, *Khawājāh Behārī* (d.1655) *Syed ‘Abd al-Razzāq Shāh Chirāgh* (d.1658) Hadrat *Shāh ‘Ināyat Qādīrī* (d.1728), *Syed ‘Abd al-Qādīr Shāh Gadā* (d.1741), Hadrat *Shah ‘Ali Rangrez*, Hadrat *Shah Gadā*, Hadrat *Shah Hussain* and many more.

time had been contiguous with these ruins but that now formed more isolated settlements (Glover, 2011). Sufis preferred to live away from the populace and dense residential areas and after death were buried in their *hujrahs* (small room). These shrines being located in the urban and suburban areas have become an essential part of today's Lahore.

The Sufi abodes in the immediate surroundings of the walled city (of Lahore), mainly in the South-East and South-West, are the settlements that provided the impetus and set the direction of city's growth towards them. The Sufis preferred to live in areas around the city that had open agricultural lands and trees; they would be finally buried where they lived and preached religion. Lands adjacent to the shrines were mostly converted to beautiful gardens that

became public places. Various neighborhoods outside the walled city took their names from the holy personages buried there like Mohalla Pir Aziz (later called Mozang), Basti Mian Meer, Mohalla Pir Makki Sharif, Mohalla Daras Mian Wada, Shah Kamal Colony, etc (Glover 2011). The layout of today's road network mostly followed the paths linking the walled city to its surrounding areas where the Sufis lived.

2. SUFI SHRINES OUTSIDE THE CITY GATES

To enter the walled city of Lahore, there are twelve gates (see Figure-). On Eastern side, Akbari, Delhi and Yakki Gates are located. Towards Western side of the Walled city, Taxali Gate and towards Northern side Sheranwala, Kashmiri, Masti and Roshnai Gate are located. Whereas, Bhati, Lohari,

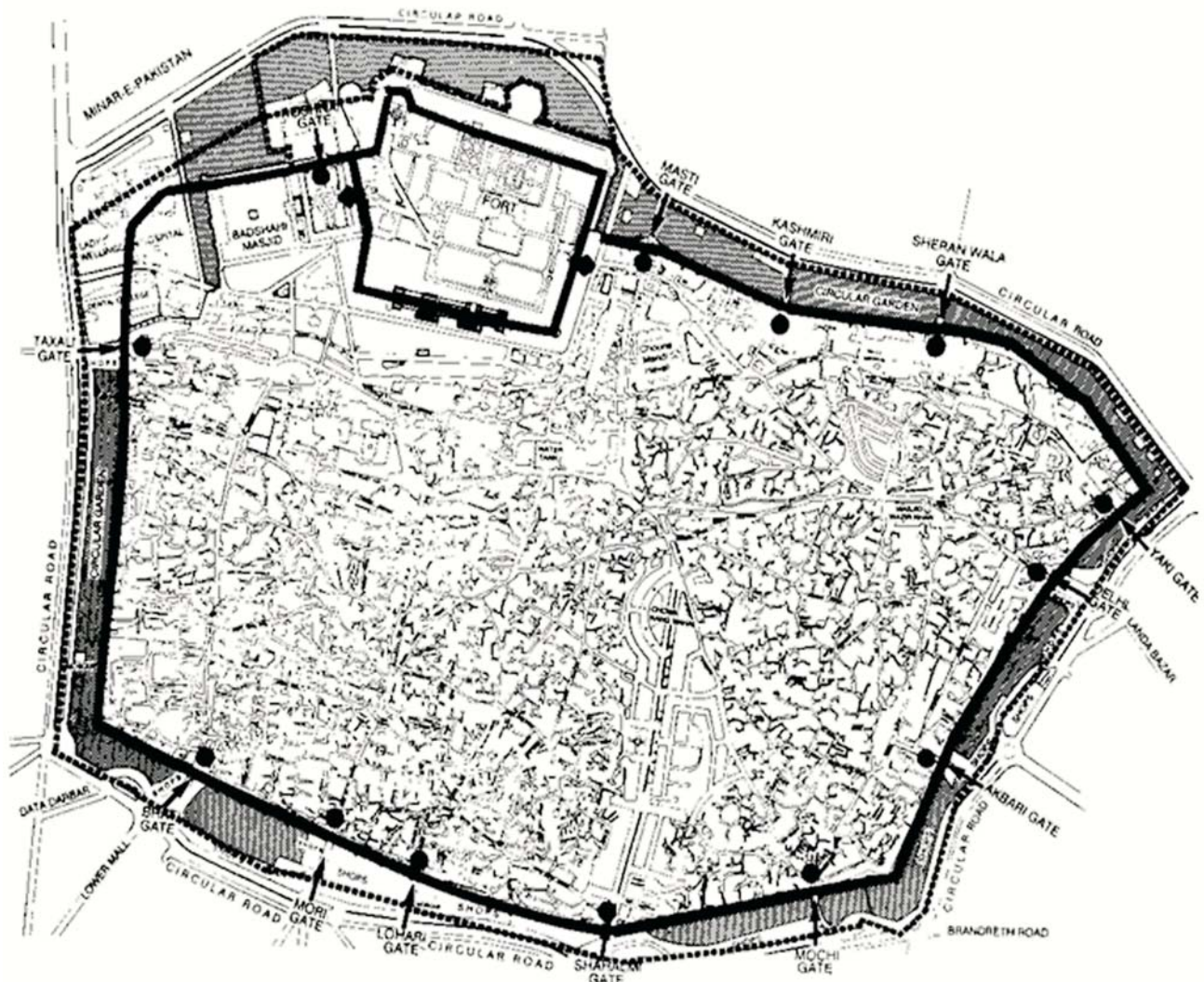


Figure-2: Plan of Walled City of Lahore showing 12 gates (Source: PEPAC)

Shahalmi and Mochi Gates are located towards the Southern side of the old city. Outside or inside of these Gate areas, Sufis are buried and their premises are used for various cultural and social activities. People used to sit and celebrate the events at these shrines. On the premises of some shrines, wrestling arenas have been established where famous wrestlers of Lahore were used to do wrestling every evening. Annual events of national and international levels were held in past years. On the eve of annual 'urs, along with other socio-religious and cultural activities, wrestling competitions were arranged. Outside Bhati Gate, shrine of Hazrat Ghulam Rasool is located who is popular as "Bilyuon Wali Sarkar". Inside Lohari Gate, there is shrine of Molvi Muhammad Nawab known as Sufi Sahib. On the right side of Mochi Gate, there is grave of Pir Muradiya. On left side of Yakki Gate, there is shrine of Pir Zaki. Outside Masti Gate, shrine of Hussain Shah Qadiri is located.

3. BEGINNING OF TRADITION

In other world of Islamic states like Central Anatolia, three types of patronage of shrines can be observed (Wolper, 2003). First group was Seljuk administrators composed of *amirs*, *wazirs*. Second group of patronage was officials of Ilkhanid dynasty and third group was local aristocracy. As these individuals gained more power and wealth, they endowed more buildings. For case of Lahore, These were devotees either from officials of ruling class or local residents who constructed these shrines for the Sufis as gesture of their respect for the Sufi. In Central Anatolia, Dervish lodges blurred the division between private religious space intended for specific religious and ethnic group and the public market (Wolper 2003). In Lahore, the shrines were preliminary living spaces for the Sufis. Later on when they died, were buried in their *Hujras*. These were loaded with commercial activities during 'urs days otherwise, the premises were used for leisurely sitting of people, doing wrestling or involved in other activities of free time.

During the early Sultanate period (11th to 12th centuries), the *khanqahs* were simple burial places of the Sufis and no rituals like 'urs were celebrated annually by the devotees. Multan was capital during the Sultanate period. With introduction to the various Sufi orders in 14th and 15th centuries, the construction of massive and grand shrine buildings for the Sufis of *Suhrwardi* order started along

with the performance of rituals and ceremonies. Hadrat 'Ala al Din Mauj Darya⁹ first time organized and patterned the various ceremonies at the shrine of his grandfather i.e. Baba Farid (a Chishti Sufi buried in Pakpattan). This tradition attracted the devotees for participation. These rituals were adopted by the *mutawallis* of other shrines and in this way, the 'urs days of Sufi became more attractive and encouraged the devotees for regular visitation.

Like most towns and cities in North India, Mughal capitals were usually built on one side of a navigable river, and it was common to build houses, pavilions, and tombs, sometimes set within a formal garden, along the river bank (Glover, 2011). During the Mughal period (early 16th century), the practice of constructing tombs and shrines within the premises of gardens was strong; otherwise gardens were developed surrounding these burial places (Naqoosh, 1962). Construction of shrine in the garden was considered indispensable during these years. These enormous gardens in immediate surrounding of the city attached to the shrines remained intact till commencement of Sikh period in Lahore (see Figure-3). During the Sikh period, a spacious garden named as *Bagh-e Zanjaan* (Naqoosh, 1962) was revived on the footprints of previous foundations around the shrine of Hazrat Meeran Hussain Zanjânî.¹⁰ Illegally constructed residential units and community graveyard had engulfed this garden. The shrine was taken over by the Auqaf Department in 1960. Another spacious garden was attached with the shrine of Hazrat Shah Isma'el located at Hall Road.¹¹ During colonial period, buildings of the European Cathedral School and Roman Catholic Church (Naqoosh, 1962) were constructed on the *waqf* land attached to the shrine.

The British rulers through "Bengal Code 1810" and then "Religious Endowment Act 1863" got full control over all the religious and *waqf* properties belonging to Hindu, Sikh and Muslim faiths in Subcontinent. This gave powers to the colonial authorities firstly to collect the income from these shrines and secondly to place the *waqf* lands at their disposal. When British occupied Lahore in 1848 C.E., they need living spaces for their officers which would be essentially protected. The shrines were sacred spaces for Muslims and secondly were located outside of the city and were more protected. Hence early British Officers preferably lived in shrines or mosque buildings. Johan's brother, Henry Lawrence moved into the tomb of Muhammad Qasim Khan,

9 Ala ud Din Mauj Darya was grandson of Baba Farid who was close to Muhammad Tughlaq.

10 Meeran Hussain Zanjani died and was replaced by Hazrat Ali Hujwiri who came Lahore in compliance to order of his *murshad* (master).

11 Today, Hall Road is the most populated Electronics market of Lahore.

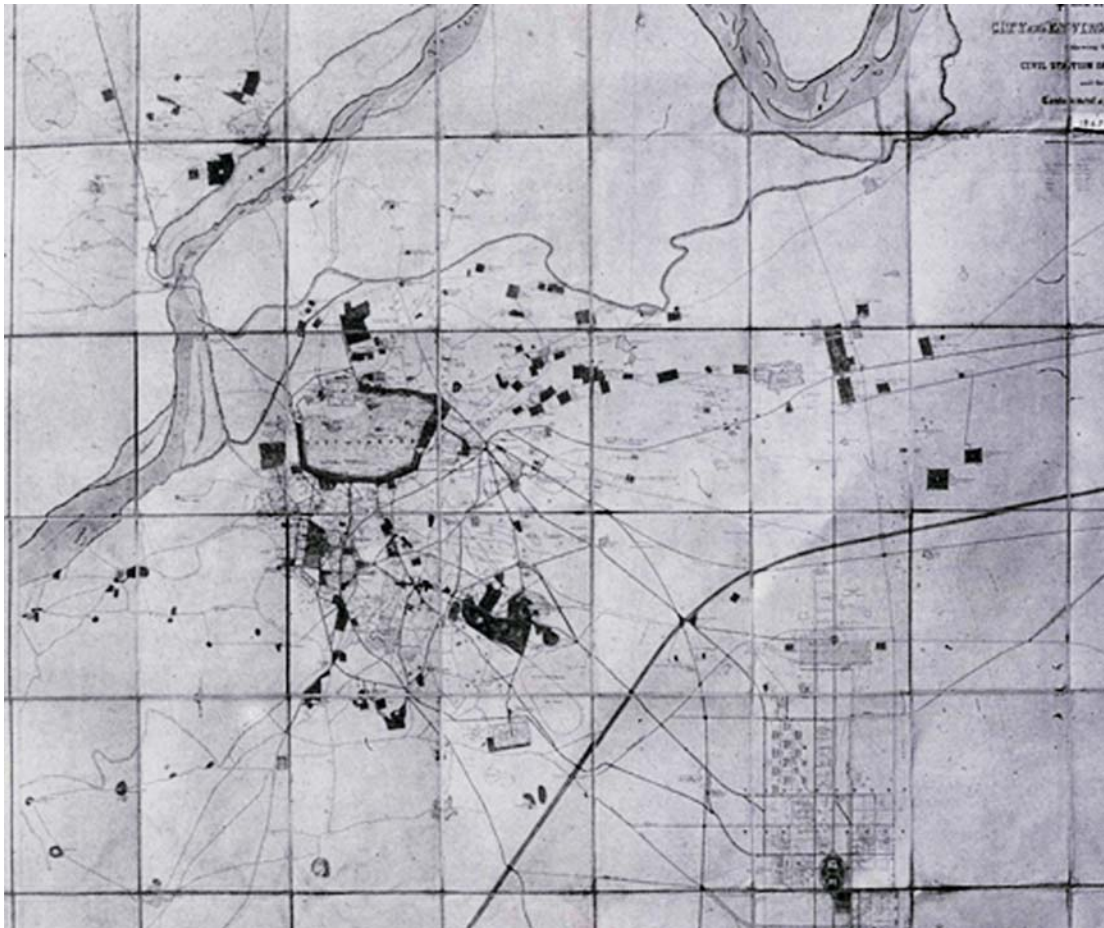


Figure-3: Map showing location of gardens/shrines around Walled City (1867)

which as we have seen, had been occupied earlier by an officer in Ranjit Singh's Court. The first English resident to live in the tomb was Robert Macgregor, the province's first district commissioner. Lawrence replaced Macgregor as the tomb resident, Montgomery then replaced Lawrence when he became Punjab's Lieutenant Governor in 1859 and at that time the tomb was officially renamed Government House, presently called Governor House (Glover, 2011). With the introduction of a new government system, the British required land for construction of buildings for institutions like hospitals, colleges, universities, banks, court of justice, museum etc. It was the *waqf* land used for institutional buildings and was attached to the shrines, reserved for performance of rituals and ceremonies. This construction activity was carried out at large scale and it reshaped the immediate surrounding of the walled city of Lahore during 19th and 20th centuries.

Mayo Hospital, King Edward Medical College, Women Hospital, *Sarae Ratan Chand* and many quarters (Naqoosh, 1962) were constructed on the open land attached to the shrine of Syed Ya'qoob Shah. Remaining land was sold by the *mutawallies*. A land measuring 24 *kanals*, was endowed by Hadrat Abd al-Jalil Chuhar Shah Bandagi in his lifetime to his devotee Shaikh Mûsâ Ahangar (Naqoosh, 1962). It was encroached by the illegal occupants. Towards the South-West of the shrine of Hadrat Miyan Meer (see Figure-4), there was a large size garden where shrine of Hadrat Mullah Shah Badakhshi¹² was constructed. After the Mughal period, when there were often anarchies and/or weak rulers, there were plunderers/foreign invaders who would resort to anarchism, people would take shelter inside the walled premises of the shrine of Hadrat Mullah Shah Badakhshi (Naqoosh, 1962). This turned the garden into densely populated residential quarters.

12 Mullah Shah Badakhshi was *murshad* (master) of Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh who was killed by Alamgir in 1659 A.D. by taking verdict from 'Ulama' regarding the "*Mujma ul-Bahrain*" written by Dara Shikoh.

Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan gifted one hundred thousand golden *tankas* to Hadrat Khwajah Khawind Mahmood Aeshan who constructed a mosque, an amazing garden and shrine in his life (Naqoosh 1962). Ghulab Singh constructed cantonment in place of garden after dismantling the boundary wall during Sikh period. Local Brick-sellers removed the bricks from courtyard of mosque and graves for selling purpose and Ghulab Singh stored ammunition inside the shrine's room (Hindi, 1894). The mosque and shrine still exist but in poor condition.

On the western side of shrine of Hadrat Syed Mahmood (d.1640), there was a magnificent garden till the end decades of Mughal era (Naqoosh, 1962). A grand mosque and garden was constructed attached to the shrine of Hadrat 'Abd al-Razzaq Makki (Naqoosh, 1962). Garden was occupied by the Sikhs and shrine was turned into warehouse for dumping the ammunition.

Before the Colonial rule started, Sufi shrines were having large open *waqf* land being used as garden to celebrate the rituals and ceremonies related to the '*urs*'. During the Colonial Period (dates/century), the government took over some of these open lands for the construction of public institutions

like schools, colleges and hospitals, government buildings, and other public buildings. Thus the areas once used for various rituals and ceremonies related to the shrine were subject to unplanned and unmanaged land use.

The buildings of Lahore High Court, Supreme Court Lahore Bench, Shah Chiragh Building, Aiwan-e Auqaf, and Auditor General Office Building were constructed on the *waqf* land attached to shrine of Hadrat Shah Chiragh Lahori (d.1658) who settled in *Mohalla Langar Makhdome* in 17th century (see Figure-5). The Income Tax Complex and other related buildings are constructed on the premises of shrine of Hadrat Meeran Mauj Darya Bukhari (d.1604). Governor House has enveloped the grave of Muhammad Qasim Khan that still exists. King Edward Medical College University, Mayo Hospital, Anarkali Bazaar and Neela Gumbad Market are constructed on the premises of land attached to the shrines of Syed Ya'qoob Shah and Syed 'Abd al-Razzaq Makki (d.1638). In the Lawrence Garden presently called as Baghe-e Jinnah has also shrine of Hadrat Turt Murad, while entering from the Lawrence Road. There are two other shrines located inside the boundaries of Baghe-e Jinnah. Annual '*urs*' ceremonies are celebrated on these shrines where devotees participate.

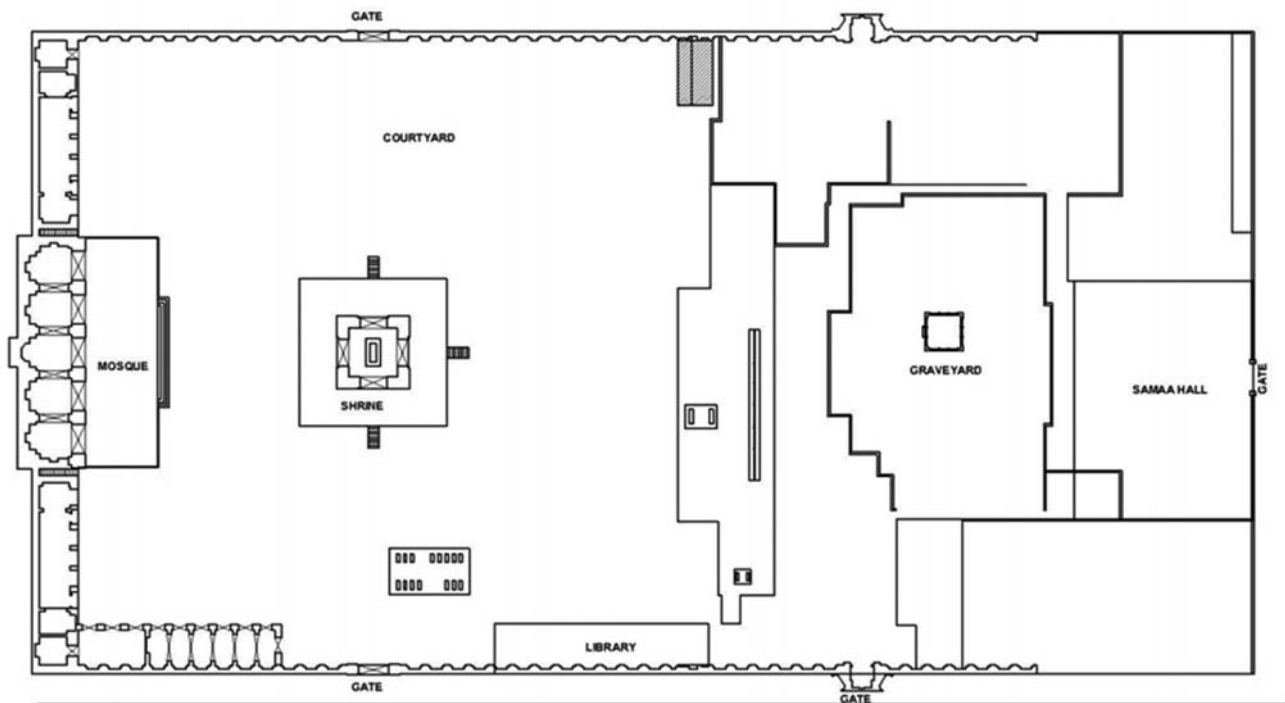


Figure-4: Enclosed Shrine Complex of Hazrat Miyan Meer (Mid 17th century)

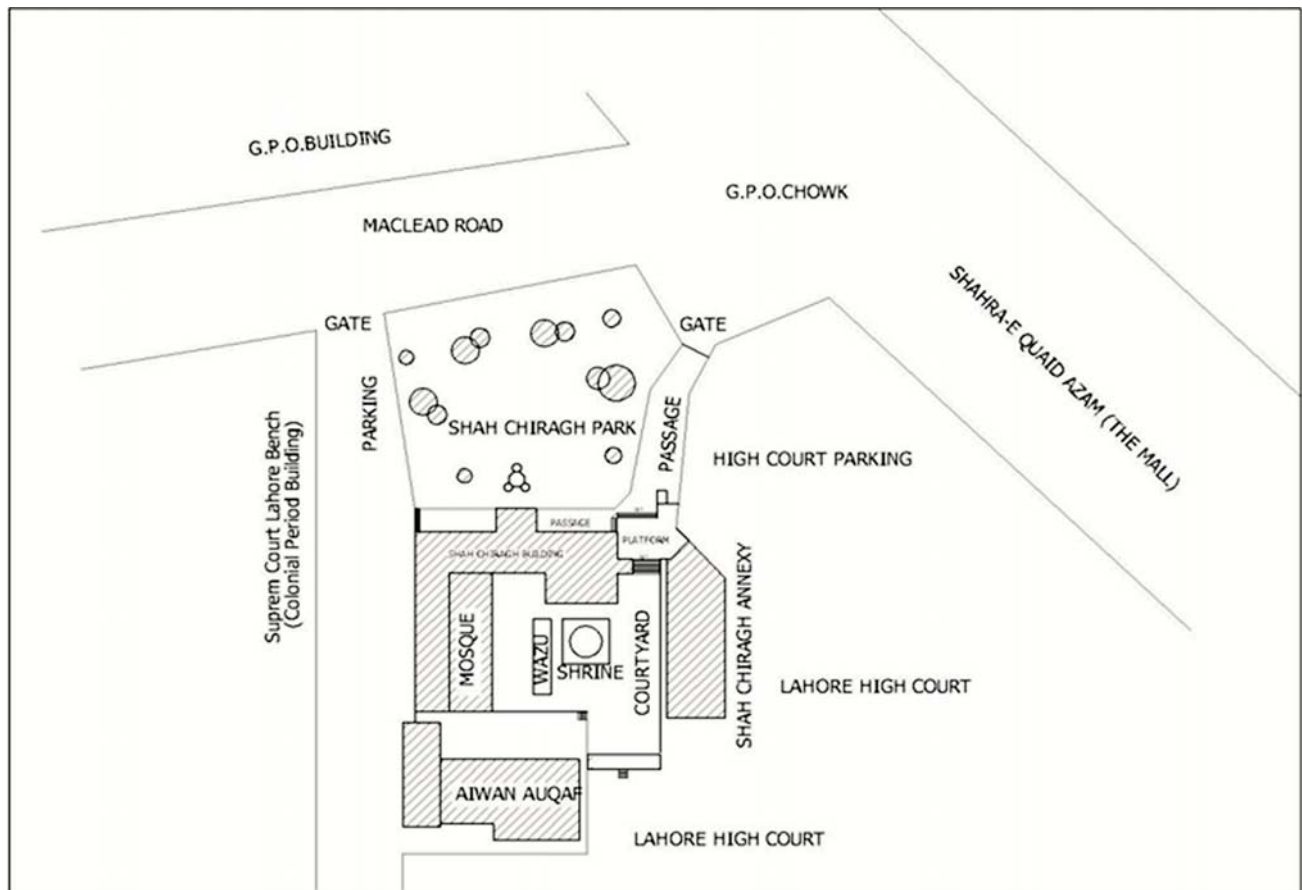


Figure-5: The shrine of Hadrat Shah Chiragh Lahori on the premises of which Aiwan-e Auqaf (1974), Lahore High Court (1880), Supreme Court Lahore Bench, Shah Chiragh Annex (1988), Australasia Bank Building (1879) were constructed.

In general, historical studies reflect that gardens, water wells, wrestling arena, *Saraes*, and older trees were essential components of the Sufi abodes or their shrines. The shrines at Lahore still continue to perform their role in providing space to the people for their socio-religious and cultural activities. After independence, changes have been made in buildings either by reconstructing or adding new structures by the ruling authorities within the boundaries of the shrines. Data Darbar Complex has been expanded from 5 to 58 *kanals* in area. Its old mosque has been replaced by new large size modern mosque with more capacity of people. In its basements, car parking has been provided for visitors. Additions of mosques in Data Darbar Complex and Shrine of Shah Hussain has changed their socio-religious and built environment. These spiritual ambiances have become more Islamic. Construction of commercial units on the periphery

of these shrines has also changed their outer visual impact. In suburban areas of Lahore, these shrines and their surroundings have established as commercial hubs for local residents. *Wqaf* Department¹³ also explores its commercial potential for more financial benefits.

CONCLUSION

The Sufi is dead but *khanqah* is a living thread of urban fabrics of a Muslim settlement in Indian subcontinent. It is not static but dynamic in nature. It is not like a civilization; dead and fossilized but is like culture; ever flourishing, changing, adapting the new versions of life and culture and extending the traditions. Before the Mughals, the shrines were constructed just outside the periphery wall of the city that reflects the outer limits of the town at that time. During

13 Punjab Government has established Auqaf and Religious Affairs Department headed by Secretary/Chief Administrator that take care and administer the *waf* properties including shrines, agricultural land, commercial units under their management and control.

the Mughal period, these *khanqahs* were constructed in suburb areas, at distance from the wall. Such constructions were patroned by the ruling authorities and the devotees. Existence of these shrines encouraged establishment of small scale settlements which led to further expansion. Because of official patronage, informal gardens and open spaces for the visitors were attached with these shrines and tombs. In these gardens, burial place of a Sufi was the central focused point. Sikhs used the rooms of these burial places of Sufis as ammunition stores and horse stables. During the British, the government officials occupied these shrines for residence being outside the city and more protected from the local inhabitants. During colonial period, central focal position of shrines was displaced because of the construction of institutional buildings on their premises. In the post independence period (after 1947 A.D.), the rulers brought changes in the left over premises of *khanqahs* by adding large scale mosques and other required building components to cater for the new life pattern of late 20th century.

Khanqah has successfully performed its role in expansion of urban ambits of Muslim settlements in past years. Its internal spatial configuration is elastic and resilient. On the occasions, it provides space to perform purely religious ceremonies¹⁴ and simultaneously it offers its premises to hold rituals, ceremonies, annual '*urs* celebrations, and *sama*' (Sufi song) etc which are more cultural and spiritual. People achieve ecstasy through *dhamal* (Sufi dance) and *qawwali* (Sufi song) on the rhythm of drum as well as also recite holy Qur'an and perform their prayers being a compulsory act within the same premises but with different time frame. It is a continuous source of income for *waqf* administration with zero investment. It has also become a hub of commercial activity for businessmen because of regular and ever increasing visitation of devotees. It has also been established as a permanent security threat for the law and order agencies.

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14 Like *Me'fil-e na'at*, '*ed milad al-nab'*, *m'iraj shar'f*, *Jumma* prayers, *Eid al-Fitar* and *Eid al-Adha* prayers etc.