

## Spiritual Healing as a Profession in Pakistan in View of Islam

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### Abstract

Although there are certainly many beliefs regarding the profession of spiritual healing in world religions literature but Islam have unique history in spirituality, very few studies concerning this topic have been carried out. Hence, the primary matter investigated in this article is the main relationship between spiritual healer and their purpose of this profession adoption. This research attempts to look at this topic from Islamic history perspective and as well as its sociological perspective and from an all-inclusive perspective. It attempts to shed light on the reality of spiritual healing. The study demonstrates the social reality of belief in the spiritual healers for adopting this profession for including respect, earn money serve humanity, family heritage, popularity, gift and cultural inheritance that deals with the professional spiritual healers. Moreover, this research paper also establishes an alignment between many world religions and their perspective for adopting spiritual healing profession in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Profession, spiritual healer, Religious scholar, Pesh-imam, Gadinashen, Murshid

This research paper is part of my unpublished PhD thesis (2019). This Ph.D study is a qualitative inquiry investigating the practices of spiritual healing in Malaysia and Pakistan. Whereas, this paper focuses on the profession of spiritual healing in Pakistan. Excerpts of the findings from total (30) participants are presented in this paper highlighting spiritual healing profession in Pakistan. The process involves field work. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting. Site or institution to observe or record behavior in its natural setting. He/She explore the meanings attached to human being, events, situation, and place phenomenon. Semi-structured interviews were taken from (number) participants and after meticulous transcription, data was thematically analysed. Following is the discussion of important themes.

The data in this research has been managed from both primary and secondary sources including personal observations, interviews, books, research journals and published articles.

### **Introduction**

#### **Profession Of Spiritual Healing**

Theme Profession of spiritual healing: Spiritual healing as a profession is a unique profession adopted by intuitively strong people who are also religious by nature, some people are not that much religious but to gain different materialistic gains, like power, wealth and other such things, they enter this profession. They adopt it for many reasons: it is considered respectable profession, it covers great source of income, availability of readymade luxuries of life, group of people who always remain present around spiritual healer for service to him and the social position in the society. But true spiritual healers are **prophets** sent by God, pious and humble religious personalities and saints, who don't have any materialistic motives but their only aim is to serve humanity.

#### **Sources Review**

After Prophet Jesus' time, this is the phase of the last and the final messenger of Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala), Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). During his time he effectively cured all the illnesses that were current in the world through spiritual healing. It is stated in one of the traditions of the Prophet that an ill person bitten by some animal or reptile was healed when the Prophet (ﷺ) rubbed that portion with his saliva. Moreover, he used to recite the Qur'an over the ill person to heal him, as mentioned in the books of tradition (hadith), and the messenger of Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala) also used diverse herbs and plants to remedy physical ailments and communicated to his followers that Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala) Almighty has put cure in different herbs and plants. In the Quran in Sura Naml God says He has put cure in honey and it is treatment for many ailments. In addition, pumpkin, onion seeds, dates and other such things also have cure as mentioned in the books of traditions. Likewise, the spiritual ailments including magic djinns and other such ailments have been described by the messenger of God. Evil eye, possession of djinn and magical spell are three famous spiritual ailments mentioned in the traditions, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite Sura Fateha (also called amal-e-shiffa), while last two suras of the holy

Quran were utilized to remove djinns and magical spells. After the prophet, his companions and scholars after them also used the same methods.

### **Spiritual Healing In Islam**

It is well known that what is popularly known as black magic was also performed upon the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and its resolution was declared by Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala) in the recitation of the last two surahs that are declared to be very much effective and solid for removing the affects and marks of black magic. Thus, spiritualism is accomplished purely on the standard of positive thought in Islam. No negative impact, thought or gain of evil deed is allowed in Islam. Conversely, all the verses of the Holy Quran and according to Sunnahs' preaching, praying and recitation are for the benefit of mankind. (Rahman, 2014)<sup>1</sup>

### **Spiritual Healing in The Holy Quran**

It is known that diverse references are mentioned in Holy Quran about spiritual healing by different Prophets, for example in the Qur'an it is stated; "Musa (A.S) said to them: 'Throw down all that you wish to throw.' They cast down their ropes and staff, saying: By Pharaoh's glory, we shall surely win!' Then Musa (A.S) threw down his staff and it swallowed their false devices. The magicians prostrated themselves in adoration, the lord of Musa (A.S) and Harun (A.S)."<sup>2</sup>"We caused the mountains and birds to join with Dawud (A.S) in our praise. All this we have carried out."<sup>3</sup> moreover, "Sulayman (A.S) (we subdued) the raging wind: it sped at his bidding to the land which we had blessed. We have knowledge of all things."<sup>4</sup> "And of the devils there were those who "dived into the sea for him and performed other tasks besides.

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<sup>1</sup> Rahman Naz Farhat .(2014). Spiritual Healing and Sufi Practices, Nova Explore Publications Nova Journal of Sufism and Spirituality PII: S236867661400001-2 Vol 2(1);1-9) According to Benor (2006)

<sup>2</sup> *Al-Qur'ān*,(43,44,45,46,47,48 :21)

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Qur'ān*,(79:21)

<sup>4</sup> *Al-Qur'ān* ,(81:21)

We kept a watchful eye over them.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, “Ibrahim (A.S) Ibrahim Said: ‘show me, Lord, how you raise the dead’, He replied: ‘Have you no faith?’” ‘Yes’, Said Ibrahim, ‘but I wish to reassure my heart.’” ‘Take four birds, ‘Said He, ‘draw them to you, and cut their bodies to pieces. Scatter the m over the mountain-tops, then call them. They will come swiftly to you. Know that Allah (Tabarak wa ta’ala) is Mighty and Wise.”<sup>6</sup> Finally, the example of Jesus in the Qur’an, “Allah (Tabarak wa ta’ala) will say: ‘Isa, son of Mariam, remember the favor I have bestowed on you and on your mothers: how I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit, so that you preached to men in your cradle and in the prime of manhood: how I instructed you in the Book and in wisdom, in the Torah and in the Gospel; how by My leave you fashioned from clay the likeness of a bird and breathed into it so that, by my leave, it became a living bird; how by My leave restored the dead to Life”<sup>7</sup> and “I will make for you the likeness of a bird. I shall breathe into it and, by Allah (Tabarak wa ta’ala)’s leave, it shall become a living bird. By Allah (Tabarak wa ta’ala)’s leave, I shall give sight to the blind man, heal the leper, and raise the dead to life.”<sup>8</sup>

### Healing Verses in holy Quran

While the entire Quran is a source of healing, there are six verses that address healing and are referred to as Ayat Ash-Shifa or the Quranic Verses of Healing.

And [God] shall heal the breast of the believers.<sup>9</sup>

وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

And We sent down in the Qur’an such things that have healing and mercy for the believers<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Al-Qur’ān*, 21:82

<sup>6</sup> *Al-Qur’ān*, 2:260

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Qur’ān*, 5:110

<sup>8</sup> *Al-Qur’ān*, 3:49

<sup>9</sup> *Al-Qur’ān*, 14: 9

<sup>10</sup> *Al-Qur’ān*, 17:82

وَنَنْزِلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ

And when I am ill, it is [God] who cures me.”<sup>11</sup>

(A supplication of Prophet Abraham)

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ

And declare (O Muhammad) that [the Qurān] is a guidance and healing for the believers.<sup>12</sup>

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي هَدَىٰ لِّلذِّينِ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءً

In Pakistan people choose spiritual healing as a profession for different reasons. Accounts of spiritual healers in this study give a number of reasons for taking spiritual healing as a profession. Some argued that they started spiritual healing because it was followed into their family, some argued that they took up spiritual healing because it was a respectable profession, therefore Profession of Spiritual healing/counselling was adopted by the people having strong belief on it. However, some healers clearly said that their main reason for entering spiritual healing was to earn money. Some argued that they came into spiritual healing after being inspired by their teachers, who tried to solve problems of common people through their supernatural powers and abilities. The prophets, saints, mystics and sages from ancient times have been spiritual healers.

The spiritual healers, religious scholars and mystics have played vital role to shape religious beliefs in Muslim society as per their level of knowledge, position and expertise. (Azra, 2010)<sup>13</sup>

A person claiming to be a spiritual healer is one who guides and motivates people when they are facing hard times and have no other means to come out from those problems, but the spiritual healer has the ability to

<sup>11</sup> *Al-Qurʿān*, 26:80

<sup>12</sup> *Al-Qurʿān*, 41:44)

<sup>13</sup> Azra, Dijk, & Kaptein, (2010). *Aetiology and Treatment* "UK, Oxford University Press.

cure their ailments and offer them remedies during difficult times, and they are very well accepted in the society by every section. (Merriam, 2013)<sup>14</sup>.

There might be many reasons for starting spiritual healing as a profession, but it is worth mentioning that above all spiritual healers enjoy high standards of respect in Pakistani society because, common people play major role in maintaining social position of spiritual healer as these social values are very much supportive for solution of the problems of patients regarding social justice and issues. As people are strong believers of spiritual healing and spiritual healers. Many spiritual healers enjoy status of a king as his dress, food and dwelling is entirely different from common people. No doubt these traditions are transferred from one generation to another generation. In Pakistan it was observed that not only spiritual healer, who is alive has importance but people show huge courtesy, respect and faith towards shrines of saints and mystics, these shrines are considered to be holy places; where the patient would get relief through the saint, who is resting there, while the family members of the saint, carry on with spiritual healing and this chain is called Gadinashen. These shrines also play very vital role in the lives of ordinary people, and people belonging to different faiths and religions believe on the shrines and visit them at the same time. From example *Udero Lal* is basically a Hindu saint, but even Muslims visit it and pay their gratitude to the saint, Marriamabad is a holy spot for Christians or Nankana Sahib is birthplace of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, but people of different faiths are allowed to visit these places and they show their courtesy to these saints also. Traditionally the religious scholars are also considered to be spiritual healers as people contact them for solving different religious problems and inner satisfaction. Such scholars willingly or unwillingly become spiritual healers seeing the level of belief of common people in them. Respect is the most important factor and it motivates many people to join spiritual healing as discussed below.

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<sup>14</sup> Merriam, S., & Muhamad, M. (2013). Roles traditional healers play in cancer treatment in Malaysia: implications for health promotion and education. *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention*, 14(6), 3593-3601



Source: Survey Data, 2014-2017

**Figure: Profession of Spiritual Healer**



Source: Survey Data, 2014-2017

### **Spiritual Healing Adopted for Respect**

Every human being wants that other fellow beings should give him/her respect and for that he/she adopts many different profession, so that he/she should be considered a respectable citizen. There are many spiritual healers who enter spiritual healing as a profession for respect because in Pakistani society it is believed that the spiritual healers are the representatives of God therefore their importance can't be ignored in the society. It is utmost duty of spiritual healer to satisfy his patients to maintain his respect due to religious knowledge, spiritual practitioner and as a counsellor. Some examples of this are given from the data collection through interviews of many spiritual healers, as:

#### **Examples from data (interview)**

*The main reason I joined spiritual healing as profession is respect. When I was a kid I used to see people bowing down and touching feet of my father (who was also a spiritual healer). They gave him respect that motivated me to enter this profession. (SH-5 )*

*Respect, honor and popularity brought me into the field of spiritual healing and tabligh makes spiritual healing more easy, I went for a chila at Raiwind and saw many people respecting the spiritual healer, who was also a religious scholar. Seeing this I was inspired to be a spiritual healer.(SH-17)*

*I was a student at my village maderssa and whenever my parents or other people of village met our teacher who was also our spiritual healer, people used to show courtesy and respect towards him and because of respect, I entered this field of spiritual healing. (SH-37)*

*Because I always wanted to help others and wanted to earn respect into the field of spiritual healing. Basically I am a (chief) cook at Pearl Continental Rawalpindi. And whenever I went to Sunday Church, I used to see people showing a lot of respect to our spiritual healer, so I entered this field seeing that much respect for a healer. (SH-18 )*

*I am a pesh-imam at local mosque and also used to have dum on people for small ailments.They respected me a lot. I was inspired by this and fully entered this profession, to earn more respect. (SH- 8)*

*I am a Mufti/religious scholar. I took interest while looking at my teachers/religious scholars and inspired from the way the people respected them. The people have lot of expectations from me as religious scholar and*

*I chose it as to save common people from fraudulent spiritual healers and to gain respect. (SH-9 )*

Likewise, there were many other spiritual healers apart from these, who were also contacted and gave similar answers like:

### **Explanation of data and analysis (observation)**

There are many spiritual healers who adopt spiritual healing as profession due to respect that spiritual healer enjoys beyond definition. Analysis of the accounts narrated in this section shows that spiritual healer (SH 5) adopted spiritual healing because he saw respect in this profession, as a kid he used to go with his father, who was also a spiritual healer and saw people respecting his father, this motivated him to enter the profession; however, there were many other spiritual healers who gave the similar answer. While SH-17 was a religious student and when he saw people respecting his teacher a lot he came into this profession, while there were many others who gave similar explanation. On the other SH-18 was a chef basically, but seeing the respect people paid to the priest of church, who also happened to be a SH, this respect motivated him to enter this profession, there were many others who gave similar answers, they had different professions but to gain respect they joined spiritual healing. While SH 8 and 9 were pesh-imam and religious scholars but seeing the respect given to them by people, they became full time spiritual healers. There were many other SH who gave same reasons to enter this profession. It was observed during this study that people gave the spiritual healers a lot of respect and it didn't matter if they had any other profession besides spiritual healing.

Summary: Every human being wants that he should be respected in society, people meeting him should show courtesy. There are many spiritual healers in Pakistan, who were having different professions like, chief, booksellers, pesh-imam or a religious scholar, but seeing the utmost respect of spiritual healers, they chose to be a spiritual healer.

Money is another factor that motivates spiritual healers to join this profession of spiritual healing as discussed below:

### **Spiritual Healing Adopted To Earn Money**

In today's materialistic world money is considered to be most important factor and in Pakistan it is believed by majority that the person

having more money deserves to be more respectable, so some spiritual healers start spiritual healing as a main source to earn money and in Pakistan a spiritual healer could earn more and more money without toiling hard from profession of spiritual healing, and it seems to be their aim, they ask for heavy fees and variety of gifts from the patients and visitors visiting them. Many people enter this profession to earn as one could make ample amount of money from this profession due to adherent belief of people. This is further established from detailed interviews done during the data collection some narrated here:

### **Examples from data (interview)**

*I charge fees from the visitors because I give them **amulets**, that are written with musk and other items, some items are very expensive in market, so to purchase those items I require money, that is why I take money from patients, I never charge them for my services but for different items to be used while writing amulets. I get enough money from this practice that I could lead a respectable life without doing anything else. (SH-65)*

*Since I sit in chila for entire night to treat different ailments. I am unable to do any other job. I have to sleep during day, and go for chila at night. That is the reason I charge my patients as this is the only work I am doing. So I earn enough money from my patients that I don't require any other work to do. (SH-70)*

*There is a spiritual healer in our locality who treats people but takes too much money, if someone is unable to pay him on first visit, he asks that patient to bring double amount next time or he won't solve his problem. (PT-10)*

*I paid him in advance because he never allows anyone to enter in hall without paying in advance. Though he claims to be a spiritual healer, but he does it to earn more and more money and those who are not able to pay him, he doesn't treat them. (PT-11)*

*I paid him after the whole process was done, he took money and other gifts from me, he takes gifts and money from every visitor and he has made this profession a business and earns money from it, he also goes to different areas and charges double there. (PT-15)*

Though many other spiritual healers were also contacted and they all gave similar accounts.

### **Explanation of data and analysis (observation)**

Money is an important factor and spiritual healers charge money for different reasons, while others consider it compulsory as SH-65 mentioned that he charged money to buy expensive items to write amulets, while SH-70 charged money because he sits in chila at night and was unable to work in the day. There were many other spiritual healers who gave similar answers. While according to PT-10 the spiritual healer charged money to see patients and if someone was unable to pay him first time, he charged him double. On the other hand PT-11 was of the opinion that the spiritual healer would not allow anyone to enter the hall without charging the fees, and PT-15 told that spiritual healer charged fees and asked for other gifts also. There were many other patients who were of similar opinions. While it was observed during this study that many patients paid fees and gifts to spiritual healers and some spiritual healers asked for the fees and gifts, as well.

**Summary:** Money is considered to be important reason that people join spiritual healing. It is easy to earn money from this profession. Spiritual healers have psychological impact on patients, and most of the times patients pay them willingly because they wanted to get rid-off their problems quickly. In some cases, it seemed reasonable as they had to pay for materials, put in a lot of time, energy and skill. This could be observed in today's physicians, Psychiatrists and specialists who equally charge heavily. Only mode of treatment is different.

Another factor that motivates people to become spiritual healers is to serve humanity, as discussed below.

### **Spiritual Healing Adopted to Serve Humanity**

Serving humanity is an important teaching of every religion as religion is made for betterment of humanity, the fundamental purpose of religion is to uplift living standards of common people socially, mentally and spiritually. Many spiritual healers adopted it while observing pains and sufferings of people; they always try to provide services to needy people. Over all their main purpose to join spiritual healing as a profession is to serve

the humanity. Detailed interviews conducted during data collection supported this fact.

### **Examples from data (interview)**

*Basically I was a primary teacher at local school of the village. The village had lack of medical facilities and people visited a spiritual healer, who live miles away in another village. Seeing these hardships faced by the people, I was motivated to learn the spiritual healing so that I could serve the patients of my village. Thus I learned spiritual healing from the same spiritual healer locally called Baba sain, who lived in other village, Taking his permission I started spiritual healing. Sole motive is to serve poor and needy people and I don't charge any fees from my patients. (SH-95)*

*From an early age I used to notice that after every three months a Christian spiritual healer used to come to our area and used treat people spiritually, and people used to wait for him. Though he never charged any fees yet he had too many patients to see. He was unable to give everyone proper time and people had to wait for another three months. I was unable to see my people suffering from many spiritual and physical ailments. Seeing this I was motivated to learn spiritual healing and practice it, so that I could serve humanity (SH-89)*

*I remained in company of different hakims, sanyasi and spiritual healers. Basically I wanted to become hakim but diverted towards SH due to its effectiveness without any medicines, it was miracle for me because hakim takes hardships to make medicine for the disease but it is less effective as compared to spiritual healing. I wanted to serve humanity that's why I became a professional spiritual healer and wanted that my patients should get remedy as quick as possible. They don't have to spend any money, whenever a patient calls me I visit him/her without caring about time, because I want to serve people. (SH-3)*

*The spiritual healer I visit is an honest, kind and pious man, who feels pain of patients like his own. He claims that purpose of this life is to serve other people, no one can give him reward in this world for his service, only Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala) (Tabar talah) would pay him best reward in Qayamat (day of judgment) for his services. (PT-35)*

*He never asks his patients for anything, it is will of patient to pay or not to pay him. He is nice and humble man. He does spiritual healing to serve*

*humanity and please Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala), he never asks for anything, and if someone pays him willingly he denies the offer. (PT-48)*

*The spiritual healer never asks for money or any other gift. He is a holy man and he does spiritual healing to serve humanity. He always declines to take gifts, no matter how many times a patient has visited. He even visits patients at late hours of night and never says 'no' to anyone. (PT-62)*

While this was discussed with many other spiritual healers and they responded alike.

### **Explanation of data and analysis (observation)**

Serving humanity is the main purpose of every religion, it is the core of all religious teachings, and likewise spiritual healers are religious men they enter this profession of spiritual healing to serve humanity. However, people having no religious belief also opt for spiritual healing because there are certain practices that have nothing to do with religion. As the SH-95 said that he was a school teacher but entered this profession to serve humanity, while there were many healers who gave same answers SH-89 entered the spiritual healing profession seeing people waiting for spiritual healer who visited their area after three months, and many other spiritual healers gave the same answer. While SH-3 seeing that spiritual healing works faster than another treatment entered this profession, so that he could serve more and more patients in quick succession, many spiritual healers were of the same opinion. While the PT-35 claimed that no one could pay him any reward. It is only Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala), who would pay him the reward on the Judgement Day. There were many patients, who gave identical answers. PT-48 said that the spiritual healer never took money or gifts because he was serving humanity. Same answers were given by other patients also. PT-62 gave similar answer that SH never asked for money or gifts. There were many other patients who gave similar answers. The basic tripartite concept of the person is the basis to serve three distinct but interrelated types of healing: Physical healing of bodily illness, inner healing of emotional illness and distress and deliverance from the adverse effects of demons or evil spirits.” Along with it few of them joined spiritual healing only for the sake of their family. However, there are many other

spiritual healers who gave similar answer to join spiritual healing for service of mankind.

Summary: The basic purpose of religion is welfare and service of humanity. Every religion teaches to uplift the living standards of common people and solve their problems, whether social, economic or spiritual. However, there are many people who would not believe in religion but still opt for spiritual healing. There are many spiritual healers; who have adopted spiritual healing as a profession to serve humanity. It's a cause which is taken by them to help others without any reward or greed.

Another major reason people join spiritual healing is because it is their family profession as mentioned below.

### **Spiritual Healing Adopted Due to Family Heritage**

Family values in Pakistani society have great impact on people's life and mostly it is seen that people willingly or unwillingly tend to follow their family traditions. Likewise there are spiritual healers who enter spiritual healing as a profession to carry on the tradition of family, father transfers spiritual knowledge to son(s) and this circle continues, mostly the elder son is given this responsibility. This could be visualized from the accounts narrated below.

### **Examples from data (interview)**

*It is my family profession. Growing age of my uncle and his health would not allow him to work, and therefore I started it. Being Hafiz-e-Quran it was an advantage for me to be a spiritual healer as it helped me a lot to understand and solve problems of my patients. (SH-2)*

*It is my family profession. My father transferred this skill to me. Therefore I adapted spiritual healing as family heritage. Initially I started assisting my father in this endeavor and gradually developed my interest in it. (SH-4)*

*It is my family profession. My father and elder brothers used to do it.. When they retired or died I started this profession to carry on the family tradition. I have been connected with it since childhood. It's a respectful profession. ((SH- 7)*

Several spiritual healers narrated similar experiences.

### **Explanation of data and analysis (observation)**

Family traditions in Pakistan have greater importance in the society and people care for them. Likewise the profession of spiritual healing is taken as family tradition, as SH-2 said that after his uncle grew old, he started spiritual healing to carry on the family tradition, and many other spiritual healers held same opinion. SH-4 told that after his father he took it on as profession. While SH-7 mentioned that after his father and brothers retired or died, he took on the spiritual healing profession. There were many other spiritual healers, who gave identical answers. The central point of spirituality, religion, spiritual healing/counselling is to serve humanity and give a meaning to the life of an individual through spiritual healing/counselling as learnt by their forefathers/masters. This explanation also collaborated with the work of lines, 2002. Therefore, family background brought most of the spiritual healers to join this profession, because spiritual healers treat it as family profession. (The other spiritual healers have almost same ideas as depicted here. It was observed that there were many spiritual healers who were Pirs and Gadinashen of many shrines.

**Summary:** Pakistan society attach great importance to family culture. They are feel pride to father it. They learn this culture over the perid of time. They find it easy to take up and hold their family profession either by compulsion or survival.

It is also seen that popularity is another reason. This is why people join spiritual healing as profession. This is discussed below.

### **Spiritual Healing Adopted Due to Popularity**

It is but natural that every individual wants some sort of recognition and popularity in society. He wants that people living around him should know him and to gain popularity people enter different professions, similarly people enter spiritual healing because they think it would make them popular. Popularity is a kind of addiction which leaves great impact on the person who once enjoys it, therefore save people tend to join spiritual healing as a profession to be popular and gain a place in society. This is found from detailed interviews of different spiritual healers as given under:

### **Examples from data (interview)**

*I am a pesh-imam and mufti. Due to respect, honor and popularity I entered this profession. I was inspired by my guide's popularity, wherever he used to go people recognized him. He was popular among them, so this motivated me to enter this profession. (SH- 14)*

*I came to this field because of respect, honor and popularity and **Tabligh** makes spiritual healing easier. I was always inspired by popularity of my maternal uncle who was also a spiritual healer and people used to know and respect him. (SH- 15 )*

*It is a popular profession and it has become an identity for me and of my family. It gave us good name, fame and more over respect given by people as compared to other professions. (SH-26)*

*My basic profession is school teacher. Al though there is respect for school teacher, yet hardly people know him, so I started spiritual healing and became popular. Now all people belonging to other villages also know me well. (SH- 28)*

*I am a priest/religious scholar. I took interest while looking at my teachers/religious scholars and inspired. Many people knew their name and were popular everywhere. This motivated me and I have become popular through spiritual healing profession. (SH-29)* This very same question was asked from many other spiritual healers and they all related similar accounts.

### **Explanation of data and analysis (observation)**

Everyone wants to be popular and recognized in the society, so to gain it they enter spiritual healing profession. As SH-14 said he was a pesh-imam, and was inspired by his mentor's popularity. While SH-15 was inspired by his mafemal uncles popularity and entered this profession. There were many others who gave similar answers, as SH-26 said he came to this profession seeing the popularity of spiritual healers. Many others had same opinions. SH-28, being a school teacher entered this profession due to popularity, while SH-29 being priest joined spiritual healing to gain popularity. There were many others belonging to different professions who gave similar answers. For gaining popularity spiritual healers have adopted to get involved in developing counselling literature regarding value of relaxing practices with religious and spiritual touch. The sense or interest to be famous/popular brought most of the spiritual healers join this profession,

because spiritual healers treat popularity a major factor which is an obligation in our society. The other spiritual healers held almost same ideas and openness.

**Summary:** Every human being wants to be famous and recognized by others around him, and to achieve that level of popularity they join gainful professions. Most of spiritual healers joined spiritual healing as profession to be popular which is common wish of all the people in society to enjoy that fame. It is believed that the popularity has strong effects on society. However, there are other spiritual healers, who culturally inherit spiritual healing profession.

### **Spiritual Healing Adopted Due To Cultural Inheritance**

To inherit means getting something that exclusively belongs to one's particular family and it cannot be sent out of the family. Things inherited have their own importance that can't be spread out of family. So there are few spiritual healers who adopt spiritual healing in a profession as inheritance from their ancestors. This statement is further established from the detailed interviews conducted during data collection, as stated below:

#### **Examples from data (interview)**

*I belong to a Pir family, my forefathers were also Pirs and used to do spiritual healing, it is a cycle that is inherited from past generation and it continues the same way, our family solves social, economic and spiritual problems of the followers. Now I am the heir locally called Gaadinaseen. Later my elder son would become gaadinaseen. (SH-10 )*

*I inherited it from my forefathers, since generations we are in this profession and people follow us. We are the family who is practicing spiritual healing from many generations and it is grace of God upon us, we try to serve humanity through our knowledge and skill. (SH-24)* This was asked from many other spiritual healers and they gave the same accounts.

#### **Explanation of data and analysis (observation)**

Spiritual healing profession is usually inherited by many Pirs and Syed families of Pakistan. It is a cycle that carries on from one generation to another generation. These pirs are considered to be the guides of their

followers. As SH-10 mentioned that he inherited from his forefathers and after him his son would be the heir locally called gaadinaseen. Many other spiritual healers were of the same opinion, as SH-24 said that he inherited spiritual healing and from generations his family maintained the same profession. There were other spiritual healers who gave identical replies. There are different reasons people enter this profession and one of them is that they inherited.

**Summary:** There are some spiritual healers who have inherited spiritual healing profession. They feel pride in adopting spiritual healing as a profession and some of them have taken it as a compulsion, without any choice. Another reason people join spiritual healing as profession is they get it as a gift from their teachers and guides.

### **Spiritual Healing Adopted as A Gift**

The most precious thing in the world is a gift given to a kid or king, both have an attachment with it. There are some spiritual healers who are gifted with profession of spiritual healing as a gift from their teacher or the guide in return of rendered services carried out by them. It happens because of their attachment with their master which led them to practice profession of spiritual healing. The truth of this could be seen from the interviews conducted during data collection.

### **Examples from data (interview)**

*I got it as a gift from my teacher because he saw something in me and therefore I started it. Being Hafiz-e-Quran it was an advantage for me to be a spiritual healer. My teacher was well pleased with me and at start he gave me few words to practice and in this way one after other I got different wazzaif from him. (SH-22)*

*It is given to me as a gift by my father. Growing age of my father would not allow him to work further. Therefore I joined spiritual healing as a profession. Initially I started assisting my father in this profession and gradually developed my interest in it. (SH-24)*

*I have been connected with it since childhood. It's a respectful profession, seeing my dedication my teacher gifted it to me. At beginning he told me to recite certain verse of holy Quran. When I mastered them he gave*

*me other verses. He took promise from me that I wouldn't use spiritual healing in negative sense. (SH-27 )*

This very same question was asked from many other spiritual healers and of them gave the same versions.

### **Explanation of data and analysis (observation)**

Spiritual healing profession is gifted also to some of the fortunate spiritual healers by their father or master to continue it and to earn respect. Gifted things are considered most valued and as an asset a lifelong. Gift is a most precious thing in the world which can never be calculated in terms of money. Gift is a thing given to a person without money. In our society it is considered as act of piousness and a symbol of love and care as per literature review. (SH-3) started spiritual healing as it was gifted by his master to him due to his services and attachment with spiritual healer (Waliullah). Since he adopted spiritual healing as a profession and lives with gift which was not achieved by SH but gifted to him by his master (WaliUllah). It is an important virtue and it is a gifted thing which is also highly valued in Islamic principles and is the highest act of worship to Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala). There is nothing involved but only services to spiritual healer (Waliullah) and that gift brought most of the spiritual healers to join this profession. This spiritual healer treats it as gifted-profession. There are several spiritual healers who adopted this profession because of only their masters gift. The other spiritual healers held almost same ideas as depicted here. There are many spiritual healers who gave similar answers.

**Summary:** The gift is highly respected in a society. It can be in the form of roses, fragrance or any other thing but most valued and given importance. Some spiritual healers started it as profession of spiritual healing gifted to them by master. However, there are other spiritual healers, who inherit spiritual healing as a profession.

### **Summary All Profession:**

The profession of spiritual healing has been adopted by different professional spiritual healers with different intentions, interest, family will and wish, for materialistic gains, for popularity or gifted by someone. There

some spiritual healers who adopted spiritual healing as a profession due to only respect because respect is only thing which carried them into this profession, while others have intentions to earn money. There are also few of the spiritual healers who came into this profession for the service to humanity and few of them came simply because of their family profession. There is skill one thing which is enjoyed by spiritual healers in their profession is popularity and others take spiritual healing as inheritance. Spiritual healing is gifted to the fortunate people who get it as a gift from their masters for services to humanity.

### **Conclusions:**

#### **Spiritual Healing As A Profession**

Spiritual healing is a centuries old practice. All the major religions Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism one way or the other believe in the concept of Spiritual healing. In countries, which happen to be Muslim majority populated the Muslim spiritual healers enjoy a unique position and status. In Pakistan spiritual healing is regarded as profession, enjoys respect, money, family inheritance and service to humanity. There are some people who are inspired by the respect and status given to spiritual healers in Pakistani society, even the Gadinasheen of different shrines get the equal respect as their forefathers used to get from the people. They control every aspect of followers' life and their decision cannot be superseded. In the Sindh and Punjab the spiritual healers known Pirs, who are considered to guide the followers in this world and the hereafter. They follow them without any doubt, the followers consider these pirs as the only remedy for their problems. While another reason is money and fame, there are many fake spiritual healers in Pakistan who take this as an easy way to make money without any struggle. There are many spiritual healers who get this profession of spiritual healing from their families as traditions. They look after the shrines of their ancestors and carry on with this practice and become spiritual healers. There are others who are spiritual healers by inheritance and gift from their teachers / mentors they serve them. They usually don't misuse the power of healing. They consider it as a gift. They misuse it, the power of spiritual healing would be taken away from them. Another group of spiritual healers joins this profession only to serve the humanity, they have no other material benefit. According to these people they cannot see the humanity suffering from different ailments and take it as

a religious obligation to serve the people and redeem them from their ailments. They take this profession of spiritual healing as their religious obligation and they even don't charge for treating patients. While there are others who joined spiritual healing to become popular and get fame in the society and they have no other aim. According to some spiritual healers of Muslim faith, they came to this profession to serve humanity as healing someone is a prophetic job, God Almighty sent all his messengers to guide humanity to light and cure their spiritual ailments and irrational beliefs. It is learnt from life of on holy Prophet (ﷺ) that he used to heal spiritual ailments by reciting the verses of holy Quran. So seeing his people suffering from different kinds of ailments that medical science had no answer he learnt to heal the people spiritually, he has no materialistic motives. All he wants is to help and serve the humanity.

### **Islam and Professional Spiritual Healer**

Islamic history affirms that Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala) has blessed his prophets with special healing powers. As discussed in start of this article in detail with references of Holy Quran, Hadees and life of prophets (Hzarat Moosa A.S, Hazrat Suleman A.S. Hazara Esa A.S, and last prophet of Allah (Tabarak wa ta'ala) Hazrat Muhammad (saw). In the whole Islamic history, all the prophets have many examples of spiritual healing. Only they are the true spiritual healers because they not only give recovery to the bodies of mankind but also heal their spiritual problems, so the humans could live better and get rid of their issues. In light of this knowledge pious humans who follow the preaching of Islam and practice it with honesty enhance their abilities (positive energies) to be a healer for others. Capability and capacity of each individual varies with the effort one puts on to the highest level of spirituality. Most of the people who are called as spiritual healer are fake because in actual they are not because they do not have actual knowledge of spiritual healing. Similarly, they do not have the level of practical experience so they could be effective to heal other human.

**Variations in the beliefs or practices:** Profession of Spiritual healing is centuries old practice, in fact as human was born he learned spiritual healing. It is present in every religion one way or the other. Pakistan is Muslim dominating countries. So the Muslim spiritual healers enjoy unique status in societies. People of Pakistan enter spiritual healing profession for a variety of reasons. Some enter it for respect, some to earn money, some to carry on

family traditions, some inherit it, and others are given as a gift from their guides, while some enter this profession to serve humanity. However, there are spiritual healers of other religions. They enter this profession for similar reasons. Spiritual healing professionals are not bound and answerable to anyone in Pakistan.



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