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SACRED TRAVEL’S TOWARDS THE HOLY SITES, IN THE RELIGIOUS DOGMA’S OF NON-SEMITIC RELIGIONS OF SOUTH ASIA

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Abstract: This paper postulate sacred sites as a theoretical construct to study and analyze the status of non-Semitic religious holy places in south Asia. The diversity among the religious traditions represents the pattern of belief & practice in any religion. Religious dogma is mostly centered in the construction of sacred places and embodiment. This paper conceptualizes the various well known sacred sites of south Asia and its foundational values, core essence & deep sentimental roots. The paper employs religious sites as a hypothetical assemble of ethical, corporal, religious and highly spiritual conservatism; sacred sites are symbol & icons of faiths? It also seeks to investigate the beliefs of religious people about the sacred are fundamentally different from those held by others. The paper is confined on holy sites of the major four non-Semitic religions of south Asia; Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. After analyzing the sacred sites along with its location on maps and figures as well, it raises the question that stereotypes of the religious beliefs & practices are so widespread that a real effort is needed in order to discover ‘what a religion looks and feels like to its adherents’. They are valued because of their association with a particular religion or saint and valued because of their association with rituals. Some location identified as sacred is left entirely alone, while in others the site has been transformed by human intervention.

Keywords; Beliefs & practices, non-Semitic religions, sacred, transformed, hypothetical

Introduction

Religion has foundational status in human life. It is as ancient and sacred as men. Native people's beliefs about the sacred are basically different from those held by non-native. They have a holistic view of the sacred and believe that all nature and all life within nature is part of the sacred world. They also hold a strong interest in living in harmony with natural cycles such as the seasons and the harvesting of resources. That is not to say that all locations have the same value. Some locations are valued because of their association with a particular spirit; others are valued for their association with particular resources; still others are valued because of their association with ritual activities & associated with their conception of sacredness. The sacred always manifests itself as a reality of a wholly different order from "natural" realities. Every individual human, every animal, every plant and even every part of nature, is sacred; God made the world to be appreciated and enjoyed by humans in a deep and mystical harmony.

Asia, particularly south Asia is the mother of multi religions terminologically known as non-Semitic. The non-Semitic religions of South Asia are mainly Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism. The person who knows only one religion does not know any religion. Religious people of south Asia beliefs about the sacred are fundamentally different from those held by others. Asian' religious s had a holistic view of the sacred and believes that all nature and all life within nature is part of the sacred world. Some sacred locations are associated with their conception of sacredness. These are religious icons situated in south Asia. Some of them were fixed by the religious texts and some by their holy persons & saints.

1 Sacred Sites of Hinduism

To be a Hindu, the religion made some obligatory duties for each Hindu. Sacred visits are one of them. Certain visit traditions are common in Hinduism. In Hinduism, physical and formal visits are represented to obtain unusual powers. Their sacred book *Bhagavad-Gita* 18: 58 describes; "*if from self conceit, thou wilt not listen (To Me), thou shalt perish*". *Bhagavad-Gita* explained that soul reincarnates many times and pilgrims help a person to rebirth in a better form.

Sacred visits have a very vital position in the religion of Hinduism from the era of fifth century. (*Mahabharata* 13.111.18) The major purpose of such sacred visit is to look for healing for unwell, wiped off sins, and guarantee of pleasures that will give to the follower or visitor. "*Tirthas-Mandir, Tirtha & Jala Tirtha*" (sacred water) are the sacred places for Hindus (Bhardwaj 1973). Some places are opening to all masses' concerned with any class or sect of the society but some sacred places are not open to all. In the same way, some temple are particular to gods "*Trimurti*" (*Brahma, Shiv, Vishnu*) and some are to goddesses (*Lakhshmi, Kuldavi, Kali*, etc.) and belongs to a particular god

like 'Vishnu'.(Bhardwaj, 1985: 241–61)The Sanskrit term “Tirtha” means a bridging towards the sacred world’ in order to attain liberation from the circle of rebirth in Hinduism.

Basically the sacred visit as a rite of passage involves three stages of function: initiation (from awareness to start), liminality (the journey itself and experiences), and re-aggregation (the homecoming) (Singh, 2013:52).

Figure 1 displays the hypothetical relations amongst various stages of the sacred journey.

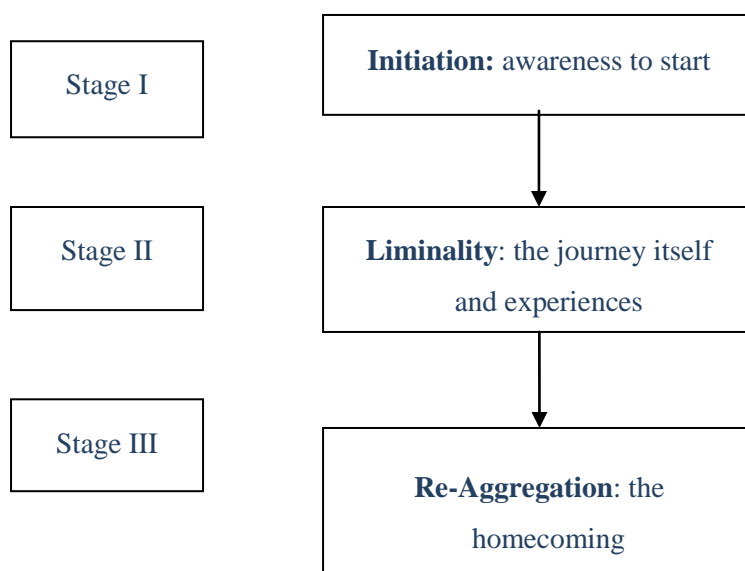


Figure 1: Various stages of the sacred journey

According to Hindu religious book “*Ramayan*” the Lord ‘Rama’ has visited some places. These places are *Ayodhya*, *Prayag*, *Chitrakut*, *Panchavati*, *Nasik*, *Kishkindha*, and *Rameshvaram*. Later on these places became famous as sacred sites (*Mahabharata* 3. 82; 13.108). “In India, there are 330 sacred sites and 12 major journey tracks of pilgrim included India, Kashmir (north), to Kamarupa (east), Kanyakumari (south), and Saurashtra (west).”

Visiting temples is quite a purifying act in Hinduism. Inside the temple premises, the task to be done are usually worshipping or serving the gods within the temples, temple constructing, and so on. To be here in a temple neutralizes even the gravest sins. The sacred places of Hindu religion are *Himalayan Char Dham–Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri*’ sites in India and some other are Varanasi/ kasha, Allahabad /prayag etc. There are seven especial holy places of the Hindus: Benares, Mathura, Ayodhya, Hardwar, Dwaraka, Ujjain and Conjeeveram. Mathura; “*Mathura*” was Krishna's birthplace and “*Dwaraka*” his capital. “*Harivarhsa*”, and in

the “*Purana*” stories, there is much additional matter about “*Krishna*” the eight ‘*avatar of vishnu*’. (Bhardwaj, 1973 47-57) “*Mathura*” (*Mutthra*) is in north India, these groves' linked with his birth. The complete Stories of his life are associated with it. Ajodhya was Rama's kingdom while Hardwar ‘Ganges’ comes down to the mountain has foot-print of “*Vishnu*” is known as Hardwar. “*Dwaraka*” is for “*Siva*”’s adoration. Ujjain is a great centre of “*saiva Hnga*” worship. This is celebrated in april and may named “*Vaishakha*”. Conjeeveram (*Kanchipuram*) is one of the great centers of “*Durga*” worship in the south, as well as of “*Vishnu*” and “*Mva*”.

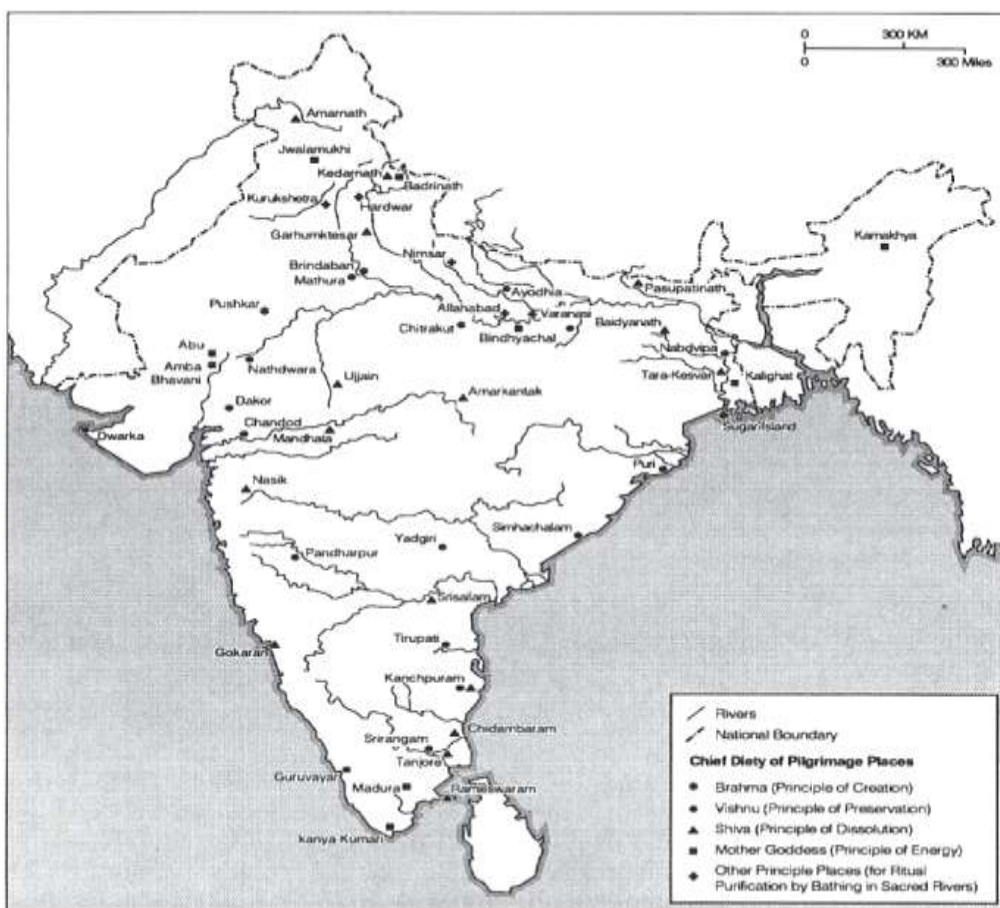


Figure 2 Sacred Sites in India

1.1 Nasik; Nasik is celebrated at sacred spaces in august and September called “*bhadrapada*” in Hindu calendar.

1.2 Haridvar; “*Haridvar*” this is also a religious festival celebrated at sacred sites in the month of March and April called “*Chaitra*”.

1.3 Benares; “*Varanasi*” (previously Benares) is located in the northern India and known as “city of pilgrimage”. *Varanasi or Kasi* represents *Saivism*. The entire city is considered sacred, especially the River Ganges Mother ‘*Ganga*’, which flows

through it. Devotees visits and bathe. 'Ganga' flows in the city about ten miles. People visits and take baths here to attain spirituality and to be purified (Parrinder, 1961:54).

1.4 Paryag; "Paryag" is in Allahabad almost eighty miles away from Banaras. It is a place where two rivers Ganga and Jamna are combined. This is the month of January and february called "Magha".

1.5 Kalighat; Kali (goddess) most famous temple "Kalighat" is in Calcutta, where blood sacrifices are being offered on daily basis .the goddess appears as "Durga" & "Kali" in terrifying and fearful images mostly in black with blood all over. Kali pictures can be seen everywhere in India. Kali has been considered as the great mother. Women go to shrine and kiss the temple wall with believe to be pregnant and pray for family prosperity. The saint and priest 'Ramakrishna' of nineteenth-century had a deep devotion to kali and his disciple Vivekananda also had the same devotion (Parrinder, 1961: 47).

Association with	goddess Shrines no	goddess Shrines %
1. River	179	45
2. River Bank	96	24
3. River Confluence	8	2
4. Sources Of River	6	2
5. Lakes & Holy Pond	13	3
6. Mountains	3	1
7. Sea Coast	16	4
8. High Mountain	7	2
9. Hilly Track	60	15
10. Mountainous Cave	7	2
Total	395	100

Table Sacred Sites of goddess in India

1.6 Site of Kumbha Mela "Kumbha Mela" is a bank fair held four times every twelve years, turning between 'Allahabad' flowing together with rivers 'Ganga', 'Jamuna' and 'Sarasvati', Nasik on the Godavari River, Ujjain on the Shipra River, and Haridvar on the Ganga. About 20 million people visits there. "Puranas" has mentioned the ancient story of the fair that was a fight between gods and devil. During this fight four drops of nectar dropped on that particular land (Singh, 2002; Feldhaus, 2003). This is the biggest gathering of Hindus as a religious ritual.

1.7 River Ganga; In Vedas (Shatapatha Brahmana 7.8. 2.2; 3. 6. 1. 7; Atharva Veda 2.3.6) River Ganga is taken as the most sacred water (Stephen 2001) & healer of life. (Atharva Veda 7.91.3) In Rig Veda 'River Hymn' 10.75.5 describes "Ganga" with divine power that spreads prosperity & peace. Same kind of expressions found in Rig Veda 7.45.3 1; and in Padma Purana Shristi 60.64-65.

Ganga is holy and it washed away all sins and make pure. (Eliade, 1959:131) A bath in Ganga corresponds 6 years of "Kraccha" acts of penance. When a visitor covers 60 "Yojanas" in order to visit the river ; since one "kraccha" act of penance need to 12 days and can be done only once a month, along with 30 miles of pilgrimage corresponds 180 "kracchas" altogether. In the northern bank of Ganga

there are 'Ghats' for dead person's ceremonies as this area is considered to be sacred and direct passage to heaven according to Hindus. There are some obligation for visitors that are ablutions in sacred water *Ganga*, Karma Yoga, (*Bhagavad-Gita* 4:8) to drink the juice of palm trees "*Surpana*" are also set rules for visitors. (Manu Smriti 1.106; The *Devi Bhagavatam*, *Skanda IX*, *Brahmavaivarta Purana*, *Mahabharata*, *Anusasana Parva* 27: 26-97-100, *Bhaja Govindam*: 20)

Hindu scriptures prescribed sacred visits for salvation. The dogmas (*Manu Samhita* 1:98-99, *Rig Veda* 6, Hymn 28, *Bhagavad Gita* 17.15) depicts Brahman "*suddha*" as contaminated and lower caste is worst. (*Arthashastra*: I chapter III, IV chapter VI, IV chapter X)

Most of the sacred sites are consisted upon natural sites like river groves, hills etc. Hindus must pray on these sacred sites of particular god and dedicate many offerings to them and keep fasting at such places. They make circumambulate around these sites. According to their dogma, man is born with the quality of identification bodily vocal and psychological evil and good in performance and deeds (*Anguttara Nikaya* 3.2) so a Hindu needed to be non violent, restraint, vegetarian in diet and also believe in the holiness of cow especially during their sacred visit. The basic purpose of sacred visit is to be purer and spiritual (*suddhi*) as Sanskrit law-books mentioned. As Manu Smriti 1.109 says; "*The casing is cleansed by water, the inside is cleanse by the honesty, the natural soul by sacred contemplating and the mental power by actual wisdom.*"

2 Sacred Sites in Buddhism

To visit a sacred place is considered highly spiritual in Buddhism. Three major twigs; 1st "*Mahayana*" 56 %, are positioned largely in China, Japan, and Korea. 2nd are "*Theravad*"; 38 % of Buddhists, to be found mainly in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. "*Vajrayana*" are 6 % lived in Tibet and Mongolia. There are some common visiting sites and some different of these sects.

Buddha has advised his followers to visit these places to be enlightened. A Buddhist gets higher stages of spirituality as they visited much sacred places. It is the deepest desire of a Buddhist to achieve this level by repeatedly visits in his life. Buddha has suggested four sacred places to visit them. These are birth-place of Buddha, the place he preached for the first time, the place he got "*Nirvana*" and the death-place of Buddha. Buddha said that a person visited these sacred places and if he passed away during that visit with calm heart, will reborn again in heavenly world and will not receive any kind of demolishing stage 'normally occurs after death.

Buddha has been provoked his followers to visit these sacred places. Due to the provoking speeches, hundred billions had travelled and visited these "Monuments of Buddha". In these visitors not only '*Bhikkhu*', monks and nuns were included but thousands of '*Upasaks*' (layman) were also. Buddhists were taught to travel bare-footed with hardships. These agonies are considered the act of higher level of purity and beneficial spirituality. The bell shaped scared Shrines for Buddhists spread across India and

Nepal: Lumbini (birthplace of Buddha) Bodh Gaya (enlightenment of Buddha) Sarnath (teaching of Buddha) and Kusinara (death of Buddha). Here is a brief description of Buddhist sacred places;

2.1 Therawada Visiting Places; There are many sacred places in “*Therawada*”. People travelled for thousands of miles to visits here.

2.2 Sri-Pada; The most famous place for spiritual visit is “*Sri-Pada*” name of a hill station in Sri-Lanka. The height of the mountain is seventy-five hundred feet. The meanings of *Sri-Pada*” is the print of foot-step of Adam. This is the common sacred place for Christians, Muslims, and Hindus as well. In the season of visit, thousands of people came here every year and pay their sacrifices & offerings here and express their devotions & loyalty. According to a narration, Buddha has left his one foot-print here and the other on a hill of Thailand. In Ceylonese tradition, Buddha flew through the island and left his footprint on “*Sumanakuta*” (Adam's Peak).

2.3 Ten Stupas; ten stupas were implanted & elevated over the ashes of the Buddha, which contained the remains of various Buddhist “*Arahats*” or saints. Buddha’s collar-bone, tooth and bo-tree are in Ceylon. In Burma, there are eight hairs of Buddha enshrined in the Golden Pagodas at Rangoon and Pegu. Similarly foot-print and hairs are also in Theravada lands. “*Moggallana*” & “*Sariputta*” (two disciples) of Buddha s remains have been founded in India in nineteenth century and taken away to a London Museum. Later on these remains were handed over to the Colombo Museum and finally installed in shrine at Sanchi in 1953(Hilliard, 1965:109).

2.4 Lumbini: In early Buddhism, the third century BEC ‘Asoka’ memorialized his pilgrimage to Lumbini (Buddha’s birth place) with an inscribed pillar. He enshrined eighty four thousand Stupas of Buddhas relics as stupas and visiting sacred sites. In southern branch of Silk Road, there are many sacred sites related to Buddhism.

Asoka's son ‘*Mahinda*’ took over as the Conqueror' (Geiger, 1912:116). Buddha's collar-bone was taken here and positioned in a strongbox of gold, enclosed in stupa. The sacred Bo-tree branch was taken by Mahinda's sister. Now a day, this tree is at “Anuradhapura”. This is taken as the oldest tree in the world. “*Sumanakuta*” is the ending spot of Buddhist pilgrims.

2.5 The Temple of the Tooth; The temple of the tooth in Kandy Ceylon, is housed what is held to be the sacred tooth of Buddha. It was brought by a princess secretly and kept in a miniature pagoda made of gold and jewels in the temple precincts. Other relics (Śarīra) in Ceylon are kept in high bell shaped buildings called ‘*Dagobas*’ (Parrinder, 1961:96). Tooth of Kandy is the most crowded place for communal worship. The priest collects gifts of yellow and white flowers and decorates into shrine. Drum beater with bare waists beats drums in the loudest pitch.

2.6 Golden Pagoda Temple; Golden Pagoda Temple is situated in Rangoon. In Burma Buddha temples called Pagodas. They shaped like cone. It is about two thousand or two thousand five hundred years old and shaped like a huge Buddhist Cathedral. It contains hairs of the Buddha, a sandal, ceremonial dress of previous Buddhas; these are kept in a secured underground basement its spire is covered in gold leaf taken by pilgrims. Many pure gold images of Buddha decorated with jewels are also here. The temple also contains many chapels and rooms for monks and worshippers to pray and meditate.

2.7 Bodh Gaya; Buddha got enlightened here' situated in the middle of "Madhyadesha". In the "Mahaparinirvana" (great final *Nirvana Sutra*), Buddha tells his followers after his death they should visit the places where he was born, gained enlightenment, first taught and passed away. Since then people make their pilgrimage toward these places. Buddhists visits to Buddha Gaya to see "Bodhi" tree, where Buddha got enlighten.

2.8 Shikoku Island; Shikoku is an Island situated in Japan. The space of the Island is 1,540 km (970 miles). The pilgrims belongs to different of the general public arrives here (Tanaka, 1981). There are approximately 88 Buddhist temple recognized as sacred sites in Buddhism. "Tanaka" has recognized and labeled 35 types of corporeal characteristic of the eighty eight Buddhist compounds. These compounds are consisted of halls, monks, rector's, habitations or lodges', gates, statues, sacred water and pilgrim road signs and 'thirteen' are separate sets of the religious ritual of pilgrim. According to "Tanaka", 14 sites have been changed to some others' in sixteen century and people travelled clockwise to all such sites. People now travel on trains and transports rather than on foot' that was an ancient tradition. The visitors Buddhist pilgrims often wear special clothing and observe distinctive conventions of speech and behavior along the route. Fasting or special attention to maintaining mental and physical purity is often undertaken. They make vows and have the hope of diversity of routine life profits.

Buddhism in the commencement era was essentially a lobby group or a movement against ceremony, rites and the dominant system of Brahman caste of Hinduism but on the other side we see, in Buddhism, there is the system of spiritual rituals for "Suddhi" found in "Pali" scripture.

Three practices for sacred visits to gain "suddhi"; are asceticism, baptism and fire rituals. Mostly the devotees "monks" reside in such sacred places. They take very less diet in daily routine that mostly consist of vegetable only. Buddha emphasized upon inward or sensual purification of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, physical body and even thoughts in mind as *Dhammapada* 25:360-361 saying; "The monk restrained in every way is freed from all suffering."

According to Buddha, in whatever way or manner' a man use his body his verbal expressions and his brain that's according to his wish and will. This is his entire silhouette. A person performs good deeds, will get his reward inverse in the next world (*Dutiya-Aputtakasuttaṃ* 51-52) So his performance not only counts in this world but also the life hereafter depends upon his worldly deeds.

Danapunaya, *Svarga* (morality and heaven), Evils of *papa/karma* (immoral acts/pleasure seeking), *Nekkhamma* (value of renunciation) are the gradual levels that enable the merger of one's self with Buddha.



Figure 3 Sacred Sites in South Asia

3 Sacred Sites of Sikhism

“Gurdwara” is the worship place in Sikhism, built up & asserted, all over India, in addition to in nearly every nation where Sikhs reside. Most of the sacred locations are in Amritsar and Lahore. Gurdwaras are open to all, apart from of creed, caste or race etc. Importance of holiness can be seen in the religious literature of Sikhism by their Guru Granth: 20; *“The filthy or polluted body and cloths could be cleaned out but sinful and polluted mind only can be purified by the name of the Lord. Merely words can't be counted as virtue; repetition of sin makes the soul filthy. You will gather in what sow, O Nanak, by the Hukam (order) of God's Command, we*

come and go in reincarnation.” Most of the sacred places are the monuments of Sikh gurus.

3.1 Hari-Mandir Sahib; the mainly sacred shrine is the “Hari-Mandir Sahib” in Amritsar, referred to as the “Golden Temple” in north India. There is a site given by Akbar named “Pool of Nectar” (Water of Life). Groups of Sikhs frequently go to and congregate at the Harimandir Sahib. *Harimandir Sahib* was destroyed and rebuilt in 1764. Golden Temple is 200 ft in length, three stories high, the gilded upper half surmounted with a copper dome (Hilliard, 1965:61). In the morning, Granth ceremonially carried to the temple from the treasury (Amritsar) where it kept overnight and in the evening it is escorted back in the same manner. In Amritsar treasury stands at the opposite end of the causeway from the temple and is guarded by soldiers. In the golden temple the Granth is carried in large ark of silver, covered with flowers. Six men carried it on their shoulders. Worship there is in congregation. They sing hymns, sermon is also given here. After prayer “communion” is distributed. In famous temple food is served for three days to all without considering what religion he may belong (Hilliard, 1965:66). A Sikh must engage himself in remembrance of God (*Naam Japna, Simran*) on daily basis particularly at sacred sites and commit selfless service (*Sewa*) to community and shares his wealth with the needy and poor’s called “*Wand ka Chakna*”(Guru Granth 1245).

3.2 Sacred sites in Punjab (Pakistan); In Lahore, there are famous Sikh temples. Sikhs came at their particular events and visit these religious monuments. The sacred sites in Pakistan are “*Gurdwara Janam Asthan*” at Nankana Sahib, “*Gurdwara punja sahib*” Hasan Abdal and the “*Samādhi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (place of rites) in Lahore. *Gurdwara janam sthan*” at Nankana Sahib has some other monuments as well. After the overtake of british rule in sub-continent, Hindu “*Mahant*” took possession of *Gurdwaras* and violating the sanctity of it that compelled Sikhs to initiate the struggle to wrest control of *Gurdwara* from Hindu Mahant. Sardar Lachhman Singh in 1921, accompanied by 200 Sikhs came to take possession of *Gurdwara*. Hindu Mahant refused to hand over and brutally martyred all of them. Hindu Mahant Narayan Das & his accomplices carried out the savage murder of Sikhs. Sardar Lachhman Singh was burnt alive after hanging him with a tree. The tree is still here in “*Gurdwara Janam Asthan*” as a religious monument of Sikhs. Guru Angad Guru Nanak's successor) organized Sikhs into 22 Sangat centers (congregations) called “*Manjis*”.

Sikhism was basically a movement of the abolition of the caste and creed system of Hinduism. It is emphasized that to be a part of a high caste will not matter; just the good deeds will determine the destination. A Sikh should be “*Gurmukh*” concerned with God, not “*Manmukh*” concerned with in him (desires). The spirit of

service and self sacrifices were taught by the Guru. “*Char Padarath*” (the four treasures) are need of Soul, described in a “*Gurmukh*”. (Guru Granth 1075)

As a religion discipline, Sikhism much emphasizes the inner transparency of mind and heart and denounces all sorts of externalism. Hypocrisy of all sorts is decried by Sikhism and only those practices are treated as religious which have their roots in heart. (1987 176-177)

A Sikh, according to their religious scripture’ should defend his life from the five evil internal forces in the sense of *paap*; attachment (*Moh*), lust (*Kaam*), wrath (*Krodh*), ego (*ahankaar*) and greed (*Lobh*). (Guru Granth 710) Guru Nanak castigation of violence is significant indeed; if *the blood sticks to the cloths the clothes are rendered impure; will the mind of those be pure who suck the blood of humans?*” Another verse says; *whatever pleases, are the only good deeds.* (Guru Granth 140 18 19)

4 Sacred Sites of Jiana

The pilgrimage to sacred sites is an important element of the custom & ritual in the world religions. The sufferings of the passages restraint & control the body and the companionship of other deities heighten the spiritual confidence. The sacred visit inspirationally elevates their followers to worship at the particular monuments of their religious chief and saints. The soul gains worth and the mind gets harmony.

South Asia particularly India is a territory of mysticism and dedication. Indian Jain temples exposed an essential union of the Jain “*Tirthankars*”. The *Tirthankars* have broadened the idea of “*Ahimsa, Anekantavada, and Aparigraha*”. The sacred sites have their particular back-grounds. A number of such sites were known as the birth place of *Tirthankars*. Several sacred sites are known as the places where they got enlightenment, “*Diksha*”, and earned freedom “*Moksha*”. These places were visited and touched by ‘*Tirthankars*’ so it declared sacred by the religious leaders. There were fixed many idols & images of ‘*Tirthankars*’ in the temples’ & shrines of Jainism. The sense of inspiration & admiration and adoration along with inner satisfaction & peace to strengthen of the soul’ brought up here. Some of the famous Jain Temples are Ranakpur Jain Temple, Dilwara Temple, “*Mirpurjain*” temple, “*Shri mahavirji*”, “*Sanghiji*”, “*Sanganer*” (Jaipur) and “*Soniji Kinasiyan*”(Ajmer Jain temple)etc.

There are many Jain temples that do not believe in gods to worship. They paid honors to the twenty four Jainas (conquerors) or “*Tirthankar*”. The Jaina seems always to have chosen for their sanctuaries the crests of wooded hills. The contribution of religious scriptures and sacred sites were taken as holy & virtuous work. In every village of India, there is one Jain temple, where the followers comes and pray on daily basis. Worship Places were made to illustrate the major events of ‘*Tirthankaras*’ lives. There are some pilgrimage sites of Jainism;

4.1 Parasnath Hill & Rajgir; “*Parasnath*” Hill and “*Rajgir*” both sacred sites are situated in the Indian district “Bihar”.

4.2 Satrunjaya & Girnar Hills; “*Satrunjay*” and “*Girnaar*” hills on the Kathiawar Peninsula are among such important ancient pilgrimage sites.

4.3 Sravana Belgola; “*Sravana Belgola*” shrine is one of the famous shrines that have become pilgrimage destinations in Karnataka.

4.4 Mounts Abu & Kesariaji; Mounts Abu & Kesariaji both are situated in Rajasthan, known as a sacred site.

4.5 Antariksa Parsvanatha; "*Antariksa Parsvanatha*" is also known as pilgrimage site of Jainism situated in Akola district, Maharashtra.

4.6 Satrunjaya & Mount Abu; these sacred sites are adorned with lanterns. Special celebrations made on complete moon nights. The scriptures have been worshipped there. Before the April-May moon fairs are held and people commits their sincerity oaths. (Coleman S. & Elsner, 1995:7) Mostly during the sacred visits the fasting has been observed to attain highest spirituality.

The foundation of Spiritual Purification in Jainism is morality, practices for monastic monks, nuns and public separately. Main teachings of "*Mahavira*" 'the spiritual leader of Jainism' are summed up in five terrific vows; non-violence, non-stealing, non-laying, sexual purity and non-possession" (Heehs, 2006:100). In their basic believes they are proud of possession to be follower of king *Zenana*, (Babb 1996) who was famous for his purity. Their major teaching consists of ethics. According to Mahavira the actual destination of a Jain is "*Nirvana*". To achieve the level of "*nirvana*" there are three methods to apply. First is the right and accurate believes, second is right knowledge and third is the right action. Jains have believed in that soul exists in all animal, plants, and human beings. Spiritual purification can achieve only by excluding ambiguity all "*Karma*" from the soul. Classical Jain believed in to maintain "*karma*". There is association of both karma and soul described as "*ekaksetravagaha*" or "occupying the same locus." Karma is the result and reward of previous life and it occupies the soul (Singh, 2000:351). The "*□srava*" 'fundamental reality of the world' is passing through karma as karma is attraction of soul by appealing activities of mind, deliverance and body (Padmanabh, 1998:112). The worst fault that a man can commit is to eat meat, if this were done open and persistently, he would be put out of caste absolutely and never be allowed to eat with his equals again. If however it were done accidentally and repented of, the offender would confess it and have to observe very strict fasts before he would be regarded as purified. The rule is the same for drunkenness.

Birth impurity (*vrddhi sutaka*), death defilements (*mrtyu-sutaka*), touching any outcaste also cause all conditions are of physical impurity. In Jainism '*Brahmcharya Pratima*' is a custom for a devout layman to observe celibacy before any of the great Jain festivals or fasts, before going on pilgrimage, and for twenty days of every month, as he advances in holiness (Stevenson, 1915:233). A jain is always most anxious to maintain ceremonial purity and says that they have borrowed their rituals from Hindus (*Brahmins*), for only when a state of ritual holiness can he go to temple or monastery, or perform any of his religious duties, such as meditation, adoration, or reading the sacred book; but ceremonial pollution is very difficult to avoid, accruing, as it does, I so many minor ways (1915:258).

Different religions have defined sacredness someway same and a fewer way differently. The descriptions of sacred sites are the evidence present in non Semitic religions. The architectural & structural fact and value doesn't matter

regarding the sacred sites. To establish these sites, deep mystery & wisdom of human involved.



Figure 4: Purpose's of Sacred Visits

Conclusion

For a religious man, space is not homogeneous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others. When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophant, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the nonrealistic of the vast surrounding expanse. The manifestation of the sacred ontology founds the spiritual realm. The sacred sites are mostly consisting upon natural areas. These areas interconnect the physical & metaphysical worlds. These are particularly groves, caves, springs, rocks, canyons and mountains generally. Some areas are sacred because of their association with particular animals or plants mentioned in their religious

texts. In such sacred sites, the animals or plants would be harvested with ritualistic care. There are special areas for ritual activities, some into the sacred places and some outside. Therefore, every religion needs to be respect and regard harmony. During the sacred visits, the devotees held flags in their hands' dressed in a certain way, praying and playing music, singing hymns, makes circuits of such places.

In Hinduism, egoism, evil conduct, evil desires, selfishness, death, disease, suffering, sorrow, conflict, poverty, sin (*papam*), weakness, lust, pride, envy, anger, cruelty, duality, Spiritual impurity also lies with some food (meat), alcohol, inter-relations with "Sudar" or other low caste(Bhagavad-Gita 4:13) and by attending funeral ceremony, particularly for Brahmans.

As Buddha says; "Not to do evil, to cultivate merit, to purify one's mind - this is the teaching of the Buddhas" (*Dhammapada* 183). Buddha says in his teachings to leave all impurities to be spiritually high; "lacking interest and carefree prayers, dullness person, immaturity, illegal practices, spends but keep possessions on money are all impurity for both men and women but the ignorance the worst one. Get rid of all impurities."(*Dutiya- Aputtakasuttam* 18)

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