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RELIGION, POLITICS AND HOLY SHRINES IN PAKISTAN

Abstract

This article deals with the interlinkages between the constitution, religion and politics of Pakistan. Islam plays an important role in the social fabric of Pakistan and has been incorporated as the guiding principle for the constitutional mechanism and political systems of the country. Various governments have used religion for their pursuit of political legitimacy and power. This has subsequently contributed to politicisation of religious identities in Pakistan manifested in the form of sectarian conflicts, persecution of religious minorities or disempowerment of certain religious institutions and leaders. Whereas debates about defining Muslim identity continue pervading the Pakistani society, it is important to remember that large parts of the Pakistani population adhere to pluralistic forms of Islam based on heterogeneous religious and devotional practices.

Keywords: Pakistan, Politics, Popular Islam, Muslim identity.

Introduction

As an academic who grew up in Pakistan, went to primary and secondary school during part of the military regime of General Zia ul Haq (1977–1988) and acquired university education in Islamabad in the early 1990s, I have been a first hand observer to some of the many attempts made by Pakistani governments to use Islamic ideology to tie up support for their own political agendas by influencing the educational system as well as other important institutions of the country. In this article I argue that the Pakistani state's control of religious institutions, mainly through political and constitutional processes, has often resulted in politicisation of religious identities. This has had serious consequences both within the country and abroad. In fact, the state's control of religious institutions of the country and the marginalisation of religious groups has led to sectarian violence. Pakistani governments' involvement in the religious affairs of the country as well as their concerns related to the military defence (mainly against Indian hostility) have diverted their attention from more urgent issues such as economic development, education and social infrastructure. Whereas debates about defining Muslim identity continue pervading the Pakistani society, this article draws attention

to the fact that large parts of the Pakistani population adhere to pluralistic forms of Islam based on heterogeneous religious and devotional practices.

Islamic ideology and search for national identity

Since its inception, Pakistan has witnessed a chequered religio-political history. The founders of the Pakistan Movement were mainly Western-educated, reformist Muslims whose idea of Pakistan was more of a state where Muslims of the Indian sub-continent could live with freedom and autonomy without the domination of the British or Hindu majority. Whereas these ideas worked well for the launching of the movement and ultimately the establishment of a separate homeland for the Muslims living in areas where they formed the majority, no concrete decision was made regarding the nature of the newly-established state with regard to its Islamic foundation (Haqqani 2005).

In his speeches before and immediately after the establishment of Pakistan, *Quaid-i-Azam* (the Great Leader) Muhammad Ali Jinnah (d. 1948) voiced his own idea of the state's identity in terms of a secular democracy where all sections of the society without any distinction of ethnic, class or religious backgrounds would be granted equal citizenship. The oft-quoted section of Jinnah's address to the first Constituent Assembly (dated 11 August 1947) articulates these ideas quite well:

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State. We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State.... Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State (Jinnah, quoted by Malik 2002:6).

The early death of Jinnah after the establishment of Pakistan produced a real shock to the emerging identity of the country. The uncertainty about the identity of the Pakistani state opened the way for the religious elite to play a role; they had otherwise isolated themselves from the fight for the establishment of Pakistan arguing that the independence movement was led by Western-educated secular-minded political activists (Jawed 1999; Alavi 1988). Since the beginning, the relations between the state and the religious leaders in Pakistan have thus been marked by ambivalence (Haqqani 2005:3).

...the problem of Muslim difference and identity in South Asia has been more complex and nuanced than conceded by the protagonists of the 'two-nation' theory or the practitioners of a historiography based on a binary opposition between secular nationalism and religious communalism.... It is the singular and homogenizing agendas of both nation-states [of India and Pakistan] which have wittingly or unwittingly created the space for religious bigots seeking political power to target vulnerable minorities (Jalal 2001:575).

Religion and government control

The quest for political power led Pakistani governments to align themselves with and claim authority over traditional religious institutions. Quite a few scholars have written about the involvement of the political regimes in Pakistan in the religious affairs of the society in pursuit of political power (Shah 1996; Ewing 1997; Wink 1991; Jawed 1988). Some recent research explores links between the state, represented by civil and military regimes, and religion in Pakistan and its impact on internal dynamics as well as on Pakistan's relations with the larger world (Haqqani 2005; Abbas 2005).

Ayub Khan's government (1958–69) established the ministry of Auqaf¹ that was to take control of the shrines of Sufi saints as well as other religious institutions. The ministry's functions included custodianship of the shrines and mosques, regulation of their incomes, appointment of staff and supervision of rituals. Through its control of shrines, the ministry of Auqaf aimed to re-educate the rural illiterate masses on the personalities and roles of the Sufi saints (Gilmartin 1984; Ewing 1997), whose graves were converted into *dargahs* and *mazars* (places of visits and pilgrimage), and do away with the authority of the shrines' custodians (Ewing 1997). The money generated through the donations by the devotees was spent on projects which the governments had created and therefore did not reach the poor who had initially been helped through these donations (Malik 1990). Despite its jurisdiction over the activities of the shrines, the Ministry of Auqaf has not been able to completely do away with the role of the *sajjada nishins*, who claim enormous popular support and allegiance. The state imposed itself on the shrine structures although it was well aware that any harm to shrines would bring public wrath on their heads. They therefore limited their policies to the shrines' leadership alone (Ewing 1983:261).

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's regime (1971–77), followed the previous government's policy of controlling the shrines. Being inclined towards the Sufi tradition and shrine-veneration himself, Bhutto did not restrict the shrines' rituals. Based on his slogan of 'Islamic socialism', he tried to project himself as the inheritor of the egalitarian and socialist missions of Sufi saints. Bhutto's government also gave in to the demands from the *ulema* and other traditionalist, neo-traditionalist groups and declared Ahmadis (also called Ahmadiyya or Qadiani) a non-Muslim community in 1974. This gave rise to persecution of the Ahmadis on the one hand and legal and political discrimination against them on the other. Ahmadis follow the teachings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the 20th Century Indian figure claiming to be a prophet with an independent interpretation of Islam. The Ahmadi beliefs are considered heretical by most Muslims for being in defiance of the belief in the finality of the Prophet Muhammad.

'Politicisation' of religious identities

General Zia ul Haq's military regime (1977–1988) followed Ayub Khan's and Bhutto's policies of controlling the shrines and other religious institutions but his efforts were concentrated on the *ulema*. This led him to introduce his 'Islamization' programme

(See Wink 1991) aimed at bringing the public and official institutions in line with the Islamic law thus affecting various spheres of the Pakistani society – judiciary, education, family law, economics and culture (Moscalenko 1991:24). This resulted in strengthening of the ‘sectarian, ethnic and regional loyalties’ (Shah 1996:320; Zaman 1998:692) which came to the surface in the later years.

As part of his political agenda, General Zia ul Haq introduced changes in existing criminal laws as well as made new laws. The additions to Pakistan’s Penal Code included Blasphemy Laws (a punitive system against defiling or damaging holy scriptures and uttering derogatory remarks about the Holy Prophet and other holy personages) and the Hudood Ordinance (the Islamic system of limits and justice). Introducing changes in the laws in accordance with *Shariah* (the Islamic law based on the Quran and the Hadith) may be seen as a sign of emphasis on the Islamic identity of the state. The laws enacted under the tutelage of the Hudood Ordinance (1979) include the offence of *zina* (fornication) and offences against property rights. The purpose of enacting these laws was to ‘Islamize’ the society (by setting Islamic standards for running social and judicial institutions) and «to provide justice to the people». Apparently based on Islamic injunctions, these laws were also made applicable to non-Muslims. Moreover, these laws lacked definitional clarity as they failed to make a distinction between rape and adultery. The Law of Evidence 1984 that deals with the right to provide evidence in the court cases reduces women and non-Muslims to half the status of a Muslim male (Kennedy 1990). This legislation largely curtailed the freedom of religious minorities and women.

Other laws apply to the faith of the Ahmadis. Under this legislation, Ahmadis are prevented from: ‘calling themselves Muslim or posing as Muslims’; referring to their faith as Islam; preaching or propagating their faith; inviting others to accept the Ahmadi faith; insulting the religious feelings of Muslims’. Persons committing the above offences ‘shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine’ (Rais 2004:459). The problem with the blasphemy law is that it «does not require any solid written proof...» (Rais 2004:459). According to the Human Rights Monitor (2005:48) prepared by the National Commission for Justice and Peace, the reported blasphemy cases during 2000 and 2004 are 144 against Muslims, 24 against Ahmadis, 23 against Christians and 6 against Hindus.

The present parliamentary government under the presidentship of General Musharraf, yet another martial law dictator in Pakistan’s varied political history, has been facing serious challenges posed by the sectarian violence in the country. Despite General Musharraf’s pledged actions towards discouraging religious extremism and clamping down on the leaders, violent and bloody sectarian attacks have not ceased. The present government’s slogan of «enlightened moderation» can be found in the official speeches and statements, but how this would be implemented at the social level has yet to be seen (Haqqani 2005:320–321).

However, just as Pakistani governments have sometimes used religion for gaining legitimacy, so political oppositions have also been inclined to use Islam as a tool against the governments. In this regard, governments in the past have faced pressures

from parties with religious or secular agendas either to introduce certain policies or to refrain from them. The recent protests held by the religious leaders against the caricatures of the Prophet of Islam published in the European newspapers were partly used to criticise the current government's policies aimed at defeating religious extremism. Whereas Pakistani Muslims in general felt it their religious duty to protest against the provocative caricatures, the leaders who called for these protests were not stimulated by pure religious sentiments but rather had accompanying political agendas. According to one view, the initial protests against the blasphemous cartoons were 'hijacked' by the opposition, mainly led by the religious party MMA (*Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal*), which turned them into «violent anti-government demonstrations» (Khan 2006).

Defining Muslim identity

Whereas the issue of defining Muslim identity continues occupying much of the public debate in Pakistan, it is important to keep in mind that there is a myriad diversity within and among the Muslim traditions practised in Pakistan. None of these traditions are homogenous. The heterogeneity of each tradition is evident from its sects, sub-sects, branches, Sufi orders and sub-orders. Even among the sub-branches, new trends continue unfolding with change of leadership or need of time. Despite several efforts on behalf of military and civil regimes to homogenise the religious life of Pakistan, diversity among Muslims prevails and is with time further variegated.

The issue of religious identities in Pakistan is closely linked with the processes of defining the overall ideological identity of the state. Due to the intense debates on the Islamic identity of Pakistan represented by political and religious sections of the society, views on Islam have taken different directions. Analytically speaking, during a major part of Pakistan's history the issues of Islamic ideology dealt more with what constitutes real Islam and what is and what is not Islamic. More so, there are divergent claims over definitions of Islamic orthodoxy (Rozeenal 2006:44). Many actors take part in the struggle over the roots of Islamic authority, authenticity and the proper role of religion in the ideology of the state (Rozeenal 2006:33).

Thus, instead of becoming a unifying force for the masses, as the former Prime Minister Bhutto had hoped (*The Pakistan Times*, Lahore, 13 February 1972, quoted in Moscalenko 1991:22), religion in Pakistan has itself been divided into different sects and sub-sects. Today, different strands of Islam are believed and practised in the country. As opposed to a more *Shariah*-based, orthodox Islam, the devotional practices followed by a large number of Pakistani Muslims are embedded in the South Asian devotional culture shared across religious traditions (Ballard 2006). In this regard, distinctions can be made between 'politically mobilised identities' and 'culturally evolved identities'. For the Pakistani people, the Muslim identity implies particular factors which are not entirely in consonance with people of other Muslim countries (Werbner and Basu 1998:17).

South Asian Islam has always had two faces, 'orthodox' and 'popular' (Schimmel 1982:3). The goal of a Muslim adhering to devotional practices is to seek the spiritual

essence of Islam. The Sufis' Islam is characterised by tombs as institutional structures where «...faithful Muslims gathered to worship God, praise His Prophet, and ask the saint, living or dead, for intercession on their behalf» (Schimmel 1982:1). However, people involved in devotional practices are not viewed as 'good' Muslims by all. They have been criticised by the *ulema*, revivalist Islamists and even urban intellectuals on the grounds of pantheism, *shirk* (setting equal to God), *Bid'a* (innovation), superstitious practices and backwardness (Ballard 2006:166). While criticism from different sides has been hurled at the popular form of Islam, distinctions have been drawn between these practices and 'real' Sufism. These traditions related to shrines and the devotees are deeply rooted in the Pakistani folk cultures. Muslims whose beliefs are strictly based on *Shariah* alone deny the Islamic nature of such traditions and often accuse them of being the result of Hindu influence (Pemberton 2002:61).

People adhering to devotional Islam do not label themselves as Sufi disciples, rather their self-statement is often related to Sunni or Shia Islam. On the other hand, different sects within the Sunni Tradition, such as the *Deobandis*, *Ahl-i-Hadith* (19th and 20th Century Indian Sunni Muslim revivalist movements), *Wahabis* (the 18th Century Sunni reform movement initiated by Muhammad ibn abd al Wahhab) and *Barelvis* (Movement of religious reform founded by Ahmad Riza Khan a resident of Bareilly, India), hold conflicting interpretations of Islam. *Barelvis* are mostly associated with the shrine-cults and *piri-muridi* tradition (master-disciple relationship) whereas *Deobandis* have a rather normative and rigid approach towards Islam (Alavi 1988).

Although the different strands of Islamic practices may appear divergent, they often overlap. In the so-called Sufi tradition or its different dimensions, there is an element of *Shariah* and its normative aspects. Conversely, some Muslim reformists are inclined towards the mystic and spiritual aspects of Islam. Sufi saints and *pirzadas* (their descendants) belonging to certain orders remain totally aloof from the political spheres, while others may be imparting political as well as spiritual guidance to their disciples mainly due to the changing times and conditions (Alavi 1988). Alliances between hereditary *pirs* (saints; elders) and local *zamindars* (landlords) also point to intermediary relationships at the socio-economic levels (Hassan 1987).

As a result of the governments' intervention in the popular Islamic traditions and their efforts to reform them and lead the Pakistani Muslims to 'real' Islam, a division has sprung up between Sufism, popular beliefs in shrines and *pirs* and other versions of Islam (Ewing 1997). So there is diversity not only in the 'Purist' versions of Islam but also in the 'Popular' versions. This diversity of views about Islam may even be found within a single family. This particular phenomenon about the South Asian Muslim identity has been explained very well by Gottschalk (2006:235):

...modern expressions of Islam, even in India alone, cannot be numbered because of the amazing diversity of rituals, ideas, and communities among Muslims.... In the effort of this chapter to describe Islam in India, it has necessarily emphasized a uniformity that seems apparent from a distance. However, the greater the familiarity one has with Muslim communities and individuals, the more apparent the lack of uniformity becomes.

Sufi Shrines and Devotees: Heterogeneous identities

Pakistani Muslims can be divided into a) the people of the mosque, and b) the people of the shrine (Geijbels 1978:176). Devotees of the shrines refer to the same Muslim identity as the non-devotees but their understanding of Islam comes hand in hand with their traditional and cultural practices, which have developed through generations and continue to play an important part in their lives. It seems that in order to cope with the conditions of their daily lives within their social and cultural contexts, these Muslims do not hesitate to resort to traditions outside strict religious parameters. Such attitudes are translated into devotional practices shared among people of diverse religious backgrounds who, in order to deal with the problems of health, economy, or to gain fertility, resort to rituals of vow in shrines belonging to any tradition (See Raj and Harman 2006). In a way they transcend the boundaries of their own religious identity which though they profess it with pride, remains on the periphery (See Khan 2004). This also points to the fact that a broad-based religious identity may be rather limiting for the people whose lives are better expressed in terms of cultural beliefs (Werbner and Basu 1998).

In the South Asian context, a Sufi shrine is called by terms such as *dargah* (literally, a royal court), *mazar*, *ziyarat gah* (places of visit or pilgrimage), or *khanqah* (a hospice) etc. (see Troll 1989). Sufi *dargahs* are built around the tombs of the saints who though long deceased are remembered and revered by the supplicants and devotees and asked for intercession. *Dargahs* are also described as sacred places marked by intense devotional activity (Gottschalk 2006:231).

Devotional beliefs practised in the *dargahs* of South Asia today have a basis in the history of Islam going back to the veneration of Prophet Muhammad as an intercessor between God and his community (Schimmel 1985:82; Lewis 1985:25) and the Prophet according to the Muslim faith has been sent by God as a 'Mercy for the Worlds'. Today, the tangible form of Sufi tradition is found in the tens and thousands of *dargahs* visited and venerated by millions of people living in South Asia. These *dargahs* perform multiple functions that basically link the spiritual world with the mundane desires of the people and their day-to-day business. In the South Asian context, *dargahs* have also contributed to the linking of local traditions with the philosophy and principals of Islam (Gilmartin 1984:225). Gilmartin (1984:221) shows that 'the rural *dargahs* have presented a form of Islam accessible to the great mass of the rural Muslim population'.

Devotees of Sufi shrines with myriad social and ethnic identities are less concerned with the institutionalized form of Islam, although they instead function better with reference to the institution of shrines where leadership hierarchy is less important. However, what seems more important to these devotees is that they have direct contact with their *pir* who intervenes on their behalf in social and spiritual spheres. A Sufi saint who has long departed also continues to play the role of a mediator between God and people through his spiritual discipline and *baraka* (spiritual blessing associated with Sufi saints).

The *piri-muridi* tradition (master-disciple relationship) is deeply embedded in village communities all over Punjab, Sindh and also other parts of Pakistan. The rela-

tionship between the *pir* and his disciples is usually initiated through an oath-taking ceremony (*baiyat*). The disciple makes a pledge to follow the *pir*'s instructions while the *pir* assumes the responsibility of guiding the disciple through the mundane and spiritual matters of the latter's life. The master-disciple relationship finds its justification from the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. Within the *piri-muridi* tradition (Chaudhry 1996), a *pir*'s social and spiritual roles describe him as a mediator between the saint and the devotees, a curer of physical and spiritual diseases, an exorcist and a spiritual guide (Ewing 1984a). In comparison to this, the *maulvi* (religious scholar or leader) does not enjoy as much popular support and does not often claim the community's backing (Lyon 2004:209). The role occupied by a *maulvi*'s is limited to his scriptural knowledge of the Quran and the Hadith, rituals related to daily prayers and funeral. On the contrary, the relationship between a devotee and his/her *pir* is primarily based on love and affection, which makes the former put a lot of trust in the latter for the articulation of his/her problems and even concerns which are hard to explain. The popular standing and legitimacy that is associated with the role of the *pir* sometimes provokes envy on the part of the *maulvi* and even the government authorities (Lyon 2004:210). The *sajjada nishins* (hereditary *pirs*) and their representatives are chosen on the principle of inheritance and are responsible (besides the appointed Ministry of Aqaf since the 1960s) for the upkeep of the shrines and surrounding institutions.

Another important characteristic of the culture related to the shrines and their following is the charisma of the Sufi orders associated with the saints. The Sufi orders in Pakistan stem from the four major *silsilahs* (chains of lineages) originated both in South Asia and outside: *Chishtiyya*, *Qadiriyya*, *Suhrawardiyya* and *Naqshbandiyya* which are further divided into various branches and sub-orders. All Sufi orders trace their lineages back to the Prophet Muhammad and his son-in-law Hazrat Ali. These are further divided into sub-orders and branches. These multi-layered institutions in the Sufi tradition have principles strongly linked with the historical Islamic legacy and a variety of practices and rituals which, though different in style, share the same essence.

The shrines' devotees belong to various categories based not on their social and economic positions in the society but on their spiritual standing. In the world of 'lived Sufism', one who serves a saint or does service in a shrine will be treated with respect (Frembgen 2004:255). There are also persons residing at the shrine because either they have forsaken their homes in order to spend their lives at the feet of the saint or are homeless. These shrines are also visited by persons of distinct categories called *darvesh*, *faqir*, *qalandar* or *malang* (religious mendicants) who wander from shrine to shrine and are called *bi-shar* – as opposed to more sober *ba-shar* category of Sufis (Ewing 1984b; Frembgen 2004). Pilgrims and devotees visit the shrines, either individually or in groups, on a regular basis in order to pay respects to the Sufi saint.

Upon visiting Sufi shrines in either India or Pakistan, one can observe a large number of non-Muslim pilgrims visiting and paying tribute to the Sufi saints. The presence of multiple identities in the Sufi shrines seems to defy the principle of «simple formulations of identity defined entirely by religion» (Gottschalk 2006:244). The Sufi shrine culture not only accommodates diverse religious identities, it also empowers women through its rituals and literary traditions. Women are known to have most

actively participated in popular Sufi traditions of South Asia (Eaton 1974; Gottschalk 2006). Otherwise performing restricted roles in the religious affairs, women find catharsis in the shrine rituals, for they allow them to express their emotional, material and spiritual needs and to seek their redresses (Mazumdar and Mazumdar 2002).

In Punjab and Sindh, generally known as the heartland of Sufism, people show reverence to the saints without regard for their own religious identities (Frembgen 2004). For example, the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh population of the Punjab on both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border, pay equal respect to the saints and their shrines associated with either tradition. On the Pakistani side, the Sikh shrines, especially those associated with Baba Guru Nanak, are revered and visited by many Muslims. The practice of visiting shrines across religious traditions goes back to the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal period of Muslim rule in India (Gottschalk 2006:214). One supposes that the majority of these Muslim visitors to Sikh or Hindu shrines in Punjab and Sindh are those who either adhere to the Sufi tradition or regularly visit the Sufi shrines. This assumption is based on the fact that those who have an open approach to the fluid religious identities manifest their beliefs not only with regard to the Muslim saints but also to non-Muslim saints on account of a convergence in their teachings and practices.

Sufi poetry and music are important sources of emotional expression for the devotees and especially reach their peak on festivals such as '*urs*' (literally wedding; celebrated on a saint's death anniversary and thus his reunion with God). On these occasions the devotees, both men and women, give open expression to their spiritual state by means of Sufi music and dance, phenomena which are disapproved of by the orthodox Muslims. These practices and rituals often remove apparent differences between the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh pilgrims visiting these shrines.

Conclusion

Religion has multiple roles in Pakistani society, inasmuch as it is interpreted and followed in a diversity of ways. Ever since Pakistan was established, religion has not only been the principle determinant of the country's constitutional history, it has also served the political interests of various governments. Likewise, Islam has been used against political regimes and their policies. The country's social and political environment has been characterised by tensions between myriad approaches towards religion. Contrasting approaches towards Islam often create conflicts especially at the collective level whereby certain groups claim to adhere to a more 'correct' version of Islam. The question of Muslim identity has remained an unresolved issue for more than a century and even creation of nation-states failed to resolve it (Riaz 2003:56). The question of religious identity is then linked to the political history of Pakistan and the issue of state's identity. The reason why Islamization provoked sectarian controversies may be related to its politically charged motives as well as diversity among the religious groups. Due to the fact that Pakistan accommodates a diversity of Islamic groups, any effort to use the religion in a homogeneous fashion would trigger conflict.

The popular Islam characterised by devotional practices found in Sufi shrines is more pluralistic and embedded in locally bound folk cultures. Whereas the reformist orthodox Muslims may judge those associated with the *piri-muridi* tradition or the shrine-cults to be following a so-called superstitious and traditional approach to religion, the latter claim such beliefs to be based on historical Islamic practices. When considering the more fluid identities of the shrine devotees, whose concerns seem to be more locally bound rather than related to a broader concern for identity-making, less emphasis is put on who is 'real' Muslim.

The apparent dichotomy between the orthodox and devotional versions of Islam can be understood in terms of the division between reason and passion. The former emphasises the clear-cut demarcation between one's direct relationship with God and one's respect for saints while the latter has a more open attitude to those who have acquired proximity to God and thus can lead 'ordinary' human beings in both worldly as well as spiritual realms. The former has a more *Shariah*-based approach while the latter seeks to follow devotional practices within the framework of the *piri-muridi* tradition. Popular religious practices are associated with a more personalised form of religion which does not emphasise a particular group identity as compared to orthodox approaches to religion that are based on exclusive identities.

The ecstatic expressions of spirituality through music and dance among these Muslims are shared by their Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist counterparts in South Asia who in turn feel comfortable in relating to devotional practices although wrapped within Islamic folds. If one looks for some sort of syncretism among the South Asian people belonging to different religious traditions, one is more likely to find it in such devotional expressions rather than more *Shariah*-oriented approaches to religious identities.

Notes

¹ Originally based on The Mussalman Wakf Validating Act of 1913, although different in functions. See Malik 1990.

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A century-old sacred Hindu shrine in Pakistan was destroyed by a Muslim mob in December - the second ransacking and desecration of the holy site. Pakistan's Supreme Court has issued an order to officials in the north-western district of Karak to pave the way for rebuilding the Sri Param Hansji Maharaj Samadhi temple, but the attack has left the country's Hindus feeling vulnerable and the government facing accusations that it is failing to protect the country's religious minorities. Pakistan is overwhelmingly Muslim - the Hindu community makes up less than 2% of the population. Prejudice against Hindus is ingrained. The Hindus who attend the Sri Param Hansji Maharaj Samadhi were still in the process of rebuilding the site after the first... The Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) established in 2001 aims at enhancing understanding of the phenomenon of individual and corporate philanthropy and promoting its effectiveness for social development in Pakistan. Governed by its Board of Directors comprising of eminent citizens, representatives of civil society organizations, and the corporate sector, PCP believes that a prerequisite for making the enabling environment functional is mutual understanding among stakeholders. Generally speaking shrine is a holy place because of its associations with a divinity or a sacred person.² Shrine visitation is common in every religion including Islam.³ Malik, A. and Mirza, A.R. Religion, Land and Politics: Shrines and Literacy in Punjab. JEL Codes: I25, N55, Z12, O15. Artikkel 3 av 10Nordic Journal of Religion and Society 02 / 2006 (Volum 19). Vitenskapelig publikasjon. Religion, Politics And Holy Shrines In Pakistan. avUzma Rehman. Informasjon. State And Religion In India: The Indian Secular Model. 3/10. State And Religion In India: The Indian Secular Model. Original Title. 27812483 List of Holy Shrines in Pakistan. Copyright. Attribution Non-Commercial (BY-NC). Available Formats. Multan Wikipedia List of Shrines in Multan. 1. Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria Suharwardi [Google Map] [Outside Mazar] Shared by Mr. Mansoor Ali (pasha1978@hotmail.com). 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. Hazrat Saddaruddin Arif Suharwardi Shared by Mr. Mansoor Ali (pasha1978@hotmail.com) Hazrat Shah Ruknudin Rukn-e-Alam Suharwardi [Google Map] [First Burial Place] [Inside Mazar 1] [Inside Mazar 2] Photos shared by Mr. Mansoor Ali (pasha1978@hotmail.com) Hazrat Makhdum Abdul Rashid Haqqani, Makhdum Rasheed, 20 km from Multan [Google Map] [View Mazar] [Hazrat's Mosque] [Wikipedia] Information shared by. Pakistan - Pakistan - Religion: Almost all of the people of Pakistan are Muslims or at least follow Islamic traditions, and Islamic ideals and practices suffuse virtually all parts of Pakistani life. Most Pakistanis belong to the Sunni sect, the major branch of Islam. There are also significant numbers of Shi'ite Muslims. Among Sunnis, Sufism is extremely popular and influential. In addition to the two main groups there is a very small sect called the Aqmadiyyah, which is also sometimes called the Qadiani (for Qadian, India, where the sect originated). The role of religion in Pakistani society and politics finds its most visible expression in.