Devotional Islam in Kashmir and the British Diaspora: the Transmission of Popular Religion from Mirpur to Lancashire

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirement of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by

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Contents	Pages

Abstract

This thesis will explore the underlying dynamics of the religiosity of the Mirpuri Muslim diaspora in Britain. In Chapter 1 my thesis is located in terms of the literature on religion and diaspora though it is argued that the experience of Mirpuris are somewhat absent from the literature to date. As well as an account of my qualitative methodology, accounts of the social context of Mirpuris in both rural 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir and urban Lancashire are given. It is argued that the religion of the Mirpuris can be characterised mainly in terms of devotion to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Sufi saints of the major Indian Sufi orders (the Chishtiyya, Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya) and their shrines. In Chapter 2 it is shown how these orders played a key part in the transmission of popular devotional practices such as *milad sharif* (Prophet's Birthday) and *urs sharif* (death anniversary of a saint) before the emergence of neo-orthodox reform movements in the nineteenth century. In Chapter 3 there is a case study of the popular Qadiriyya-Qalandariyya order and its main saints in Mirpur including a description of the shrine of Kharri Sharif. But what happens to religion when it travels? This is my concern in the rest of the thesis. What changes and what remains more or less constant? In Chapter 4 I examine how the religiosity of the first generation of Mirpuri migrants to Britain was transformed by *pirs* (saints) and *ulama* (scholars) in Barelwi mosques which took on a new significance in the diaspora. In Chapter 5 I examine to what extent these mosques and the Barelwi movement has been successful in transmitting devotional Islam to the second and third generation British-Mirpuri youth. In Chapter 6 I examine alternatives to the Barelwi movement open to young people, from examples of 'anti-Sufi' and 'post-Barelwi' movements, to transnational non-South Asian *pirs* representing

universal Sufism to the persistence of a 'needs-based' *kismetic* religion which deals with fortune and misfortune. By way of conclusion I argue that the devotional religion of Mirpur has been increasingly exposed to neo-orthodox criticism in the diaspora and so is being gradually transformed especially amongst the youth. However, the overall picture is one of plural trends and significant continuity with the past still remains amongst a community which has close diaspora ties to the homeland.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institute of learning.

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In 1969 I left secondary school without gaining any qualifications. Twenty-one years later I went back to full time education as a mature student at the Manchester College of Arts and Technology. Following the successful completion of the Access Course for Higher Education, I gained entry into the Victoria University of Manchester. I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree with honours in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies in 1995, gaining a Second Class, Division One: 2.1. The Following year I was offered a post as a part-time lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Metropolitan University of Manchester. In 1998 due to the efforts of Dr McLoughlin Liverpool Hope University College offered me a scholarship to write a part-time Ph.D thesis on 'devotional Islam' in Britain.

Acknowledgements

This study, first and foremost is the result of Dr Sean McLoughlin's excellent supervision and skilful guidance. Without his support I would have been unable to carry out such an overwhelming task. I regret that the thesis falls short of the high academic standards that he represents. It would be an honour for me if this study contributes to a better understanding of the British Mirpuri Muslim community, a subject dear to Dr McLoughlin. Thanks are also due to Professor Ian Markham, Dr Kenneth Newport, Jean Johnson and Sue Harwood for their immense support. I should like to express my sincere gratitude to my distinguished tutors, Mufti Muhammad Gul Rahman Qadiri, Dr Paul Luft, Dr Edmund Herzig, Dr Norman Calder (d.1998), Dr Jawid Mojaddedi and Hadrat Sahibzada Muhammad Zahid Sultani Sahib for all their help and guidance. The Graduate Research Centre and the Librarians at Liverpool Hope University and John Rylands at the Victoria University of Manchester also deserve a mention for their kind assistance. The assistance of Shaykh Muhammad Sulayman al-Shami, Afdal, Abbas, Siraj, Mufti, Hassanat, Ghulam Mujtaba, Alex [Sikandar], Sayyid Amjid, Sayyid Nasir, Sayyid Sajid, Sayyid Abid, Mussarat, Iftikhar and Ishfaq is much appreciated. Above all thanks are due to God without whose help nothing can be accomplished.

Dedication

هو

This study is dedicated to *Mian* (master) Muhammad Ishtiaq's mother Aziz Begum, who is the heart and the soul of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's family, in the hope that her children/grandchildren find and nurture their 'roots' and become worthy spiritual successors of their pious ancestor.

Map of Jammu and Kashmir

(Courtesy of Haqqi Brothers 2006)

Map of District Mirpur

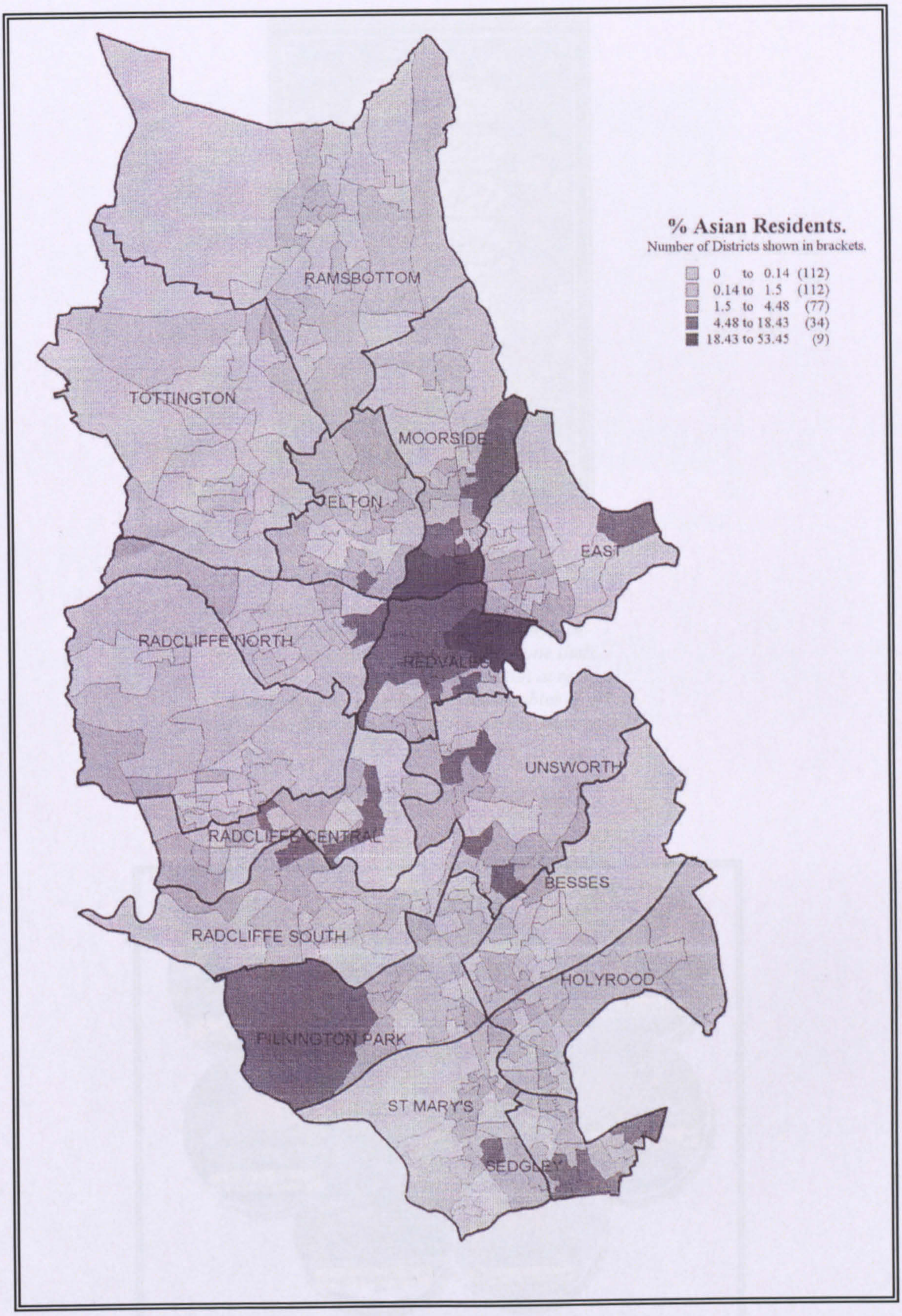
(Courtesy of Kifayat Ali, 1999)

Map of Lancashire

(http://www.manchester2002-uk.com/maps/lancs-map.html)

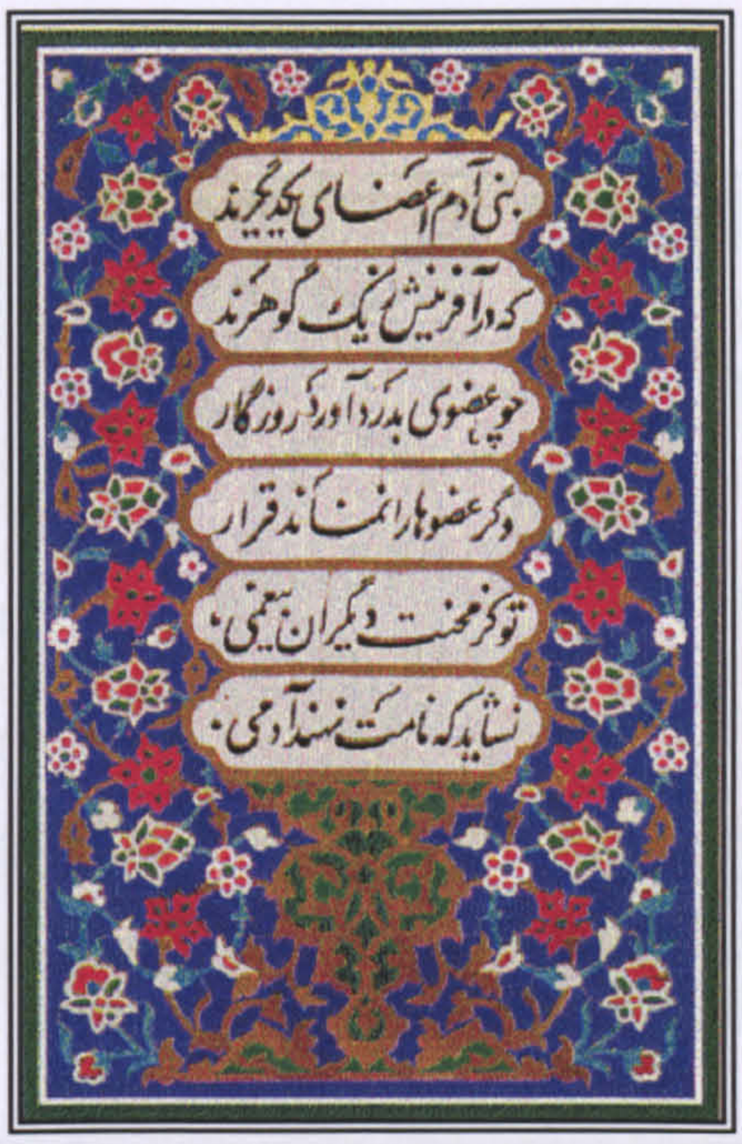
Bury Wards

(http://www.bury.gov.uk/bury/default.asp)



Percentage of Asian residents within Bury by enumeration district

(http://www.bury.gov.uk/bury/default.asp)



Sons of Adam

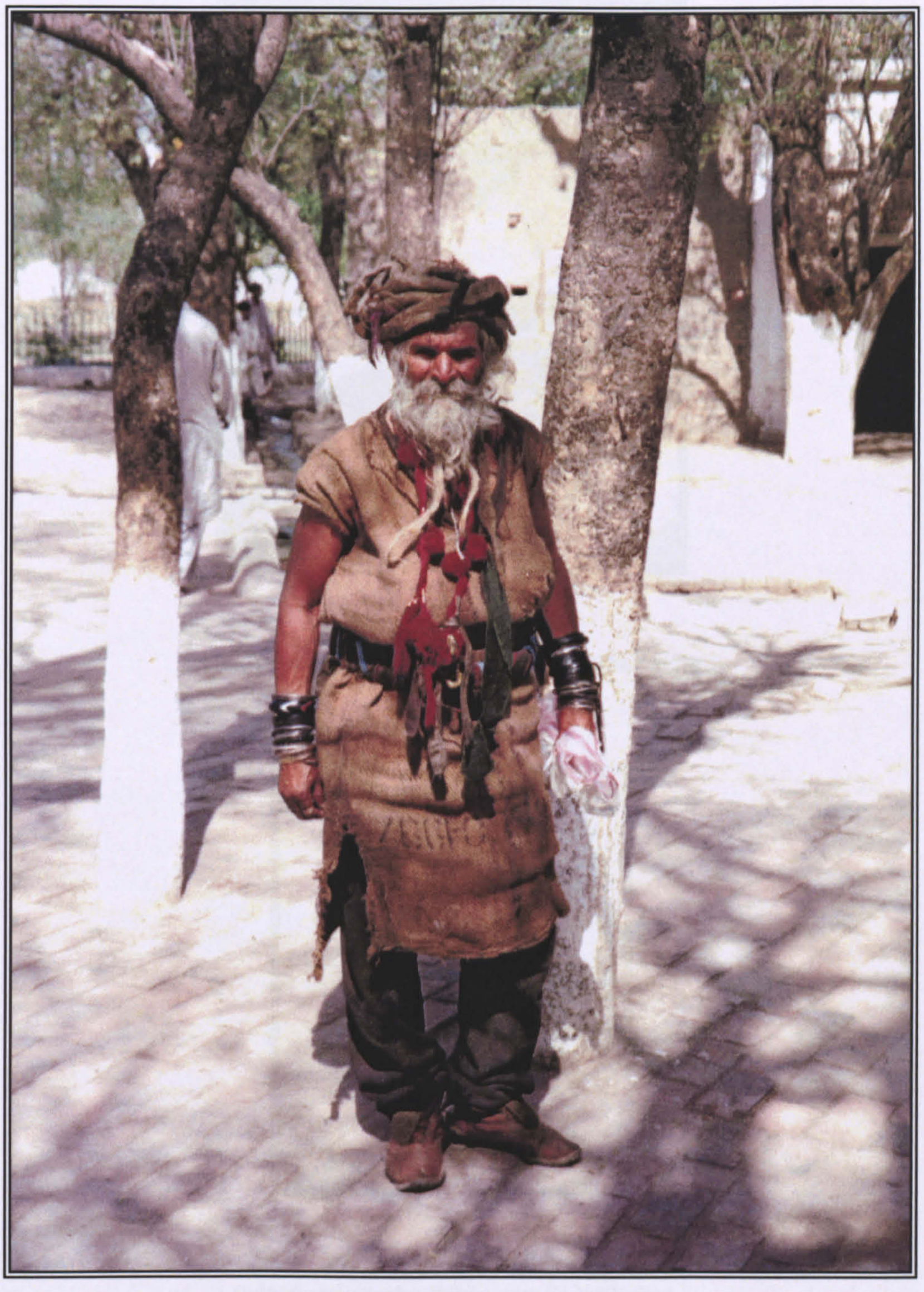
The sons of Adam are limbs of each other,
Having been created for one essence.
When calamity of time afflicts one limb,
The other limbs cannot remain at rest.
If thou hast no sympathy for the troubles of others,
Thou art unworthy to be called by the name of man.
(Sa'di of Shiraz)

(http://farrid.20m.com/images/sadi.gif)

Famous Sufi Shrines in India and Pakistan
(Courtesy of Sayyid Ghulam Muhammad 2004)

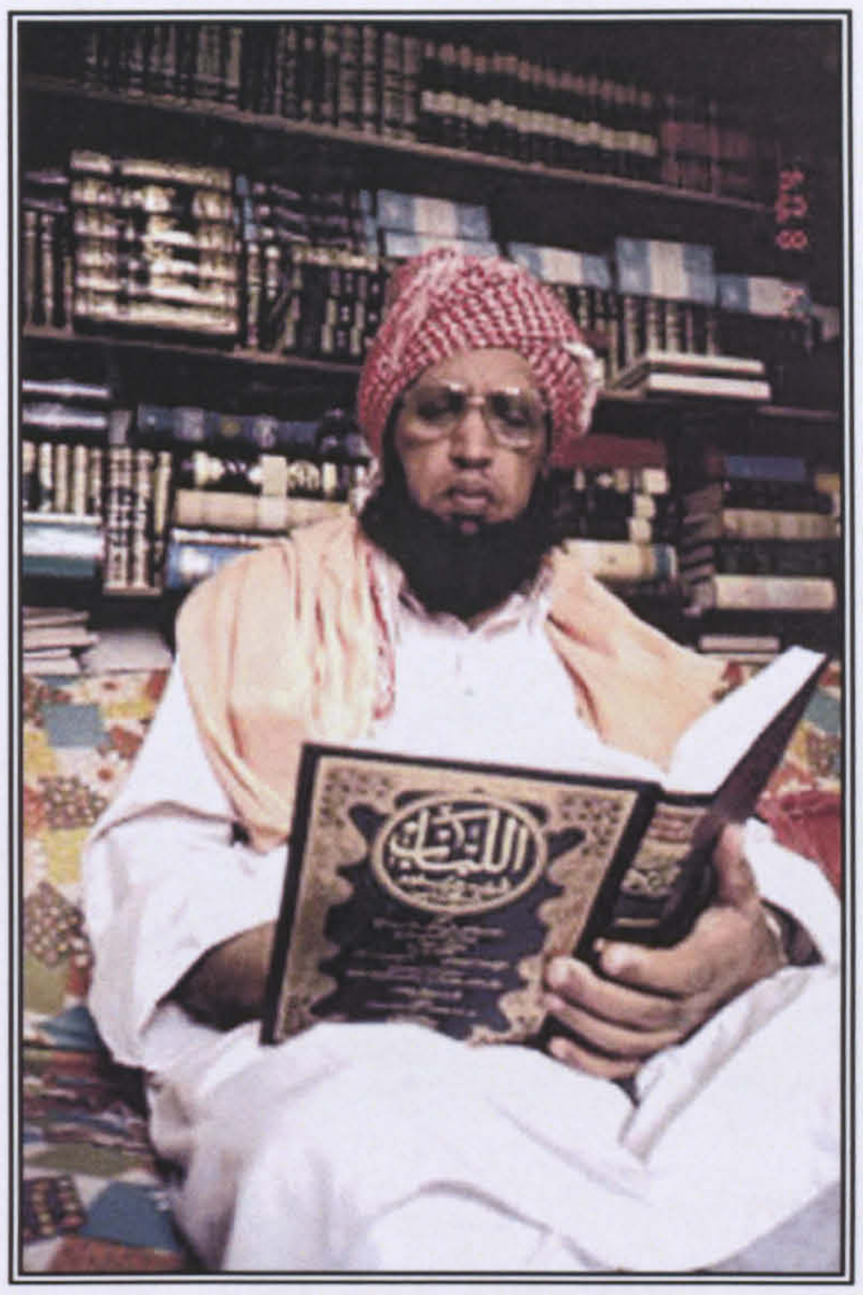
Shrine of Pira Shah Ghazi , Kharri Sharif
(Photo courtesy of Dr Sean McLoughlin 2000)

Shrine of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, Kharri Sharif
(Photo courtesy of Sayyid Nasir Shah 2002)

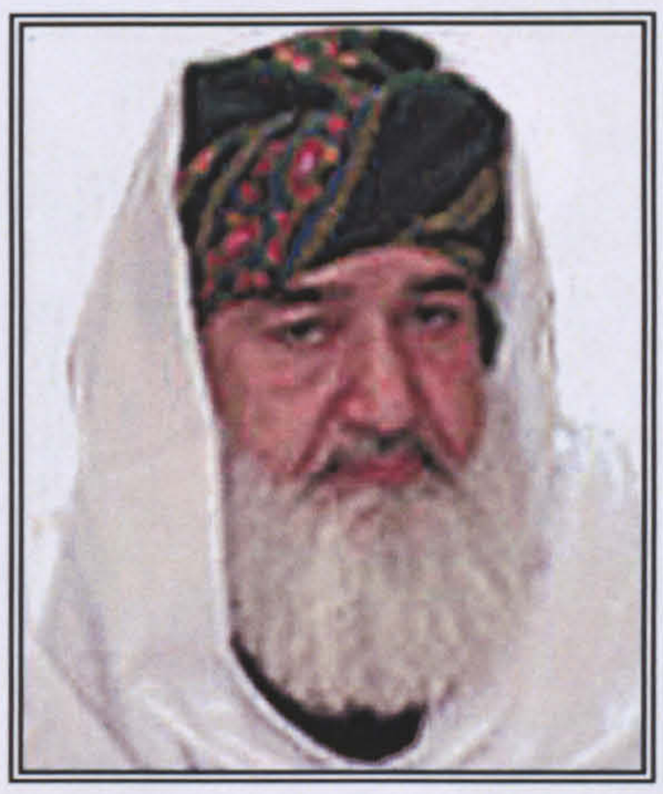


A Qalandar in Kharri Sharif

(Photo courtesy of Dr Sean McLoughlin 2000)

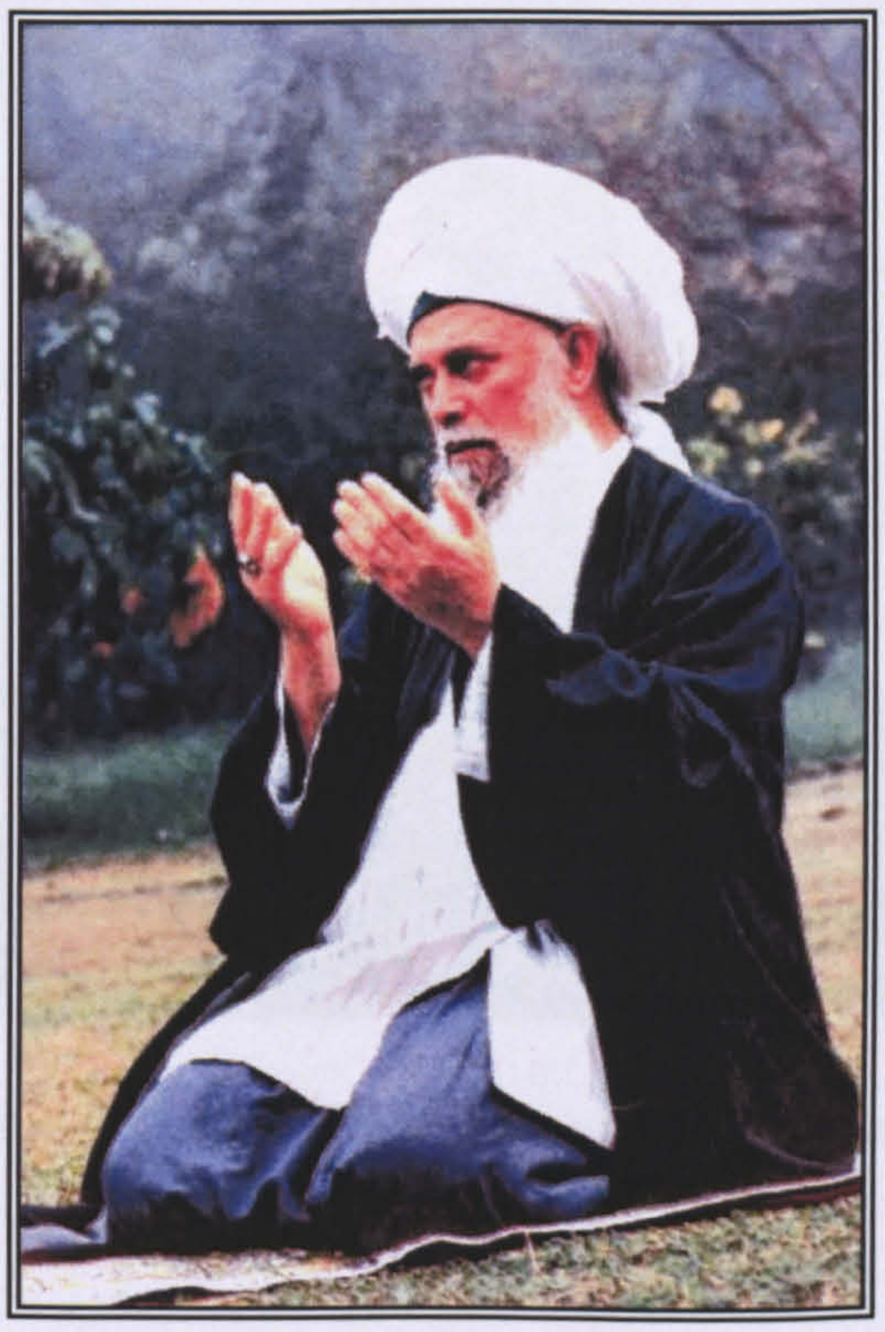


***Pir* Maruf Husayn**
(http://www.jamiyattablighulislam.com/hazrat.htm)



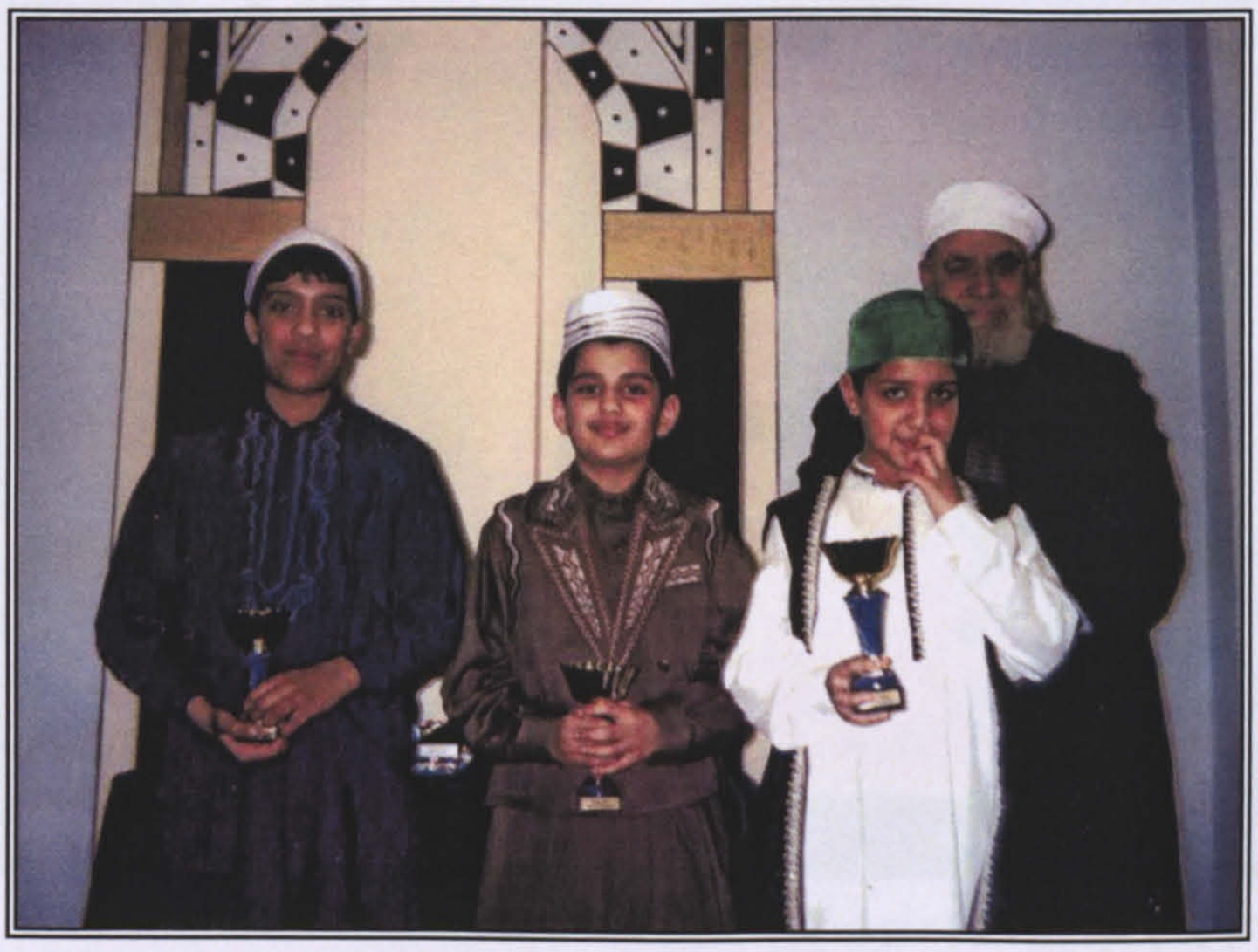
***Pir* Ala al-Din Siddiqi**
(http://www.mohiulislam.com/index2.php)

***Ta'widh* worn by Shaykh Nazim's followers**
(Courtesy of Kabbani 1995)



Shaykh Muhammad Nazim al-Adil al-Haqqani
(http://www.naqshbandi.org/)

Two Generations of *Imams*
(Photo courtesy of Barakat Ahmed 2002)



Awards Ceremony, Nur al-Islam Mosque
(Photo courtesy of Hassanat Ahmed 2002)

Gate of the Prophet's Mausoleum

Inscription from Busiri's *al-Burda* reads:

He is the Beloved, whose intercession is sought,
against every trial and tribulation.

(Courtesy of Yamani 1998)

A gathering in honour of Shaykh Ibn Arabi

Guest speaker, Celia Twinch from Ibn Arabi Society, Oxford

(Photo courtesy of Richard Twinch 2005)

Chapter One

Introduction

> Wear new clothes, buy new cars, build new houses, but retain the devotional Islam of your ancestors (Sayyid Jama'at Ali Shah Naqshbandi, d.1951, quoted in Qasuri 2003:518).

In Mirpur where I was raised, we lived and breathed the Islam of *pirs* (saints) and *mazar*s (shrines). There was a *mazar* at the end of our village and Thursdays, especially, were very much occupied with *ziyarah* (visitations). In addition, in times of difficulty, people sought help from 'bigger' saints such as the great Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani (d.1166) or the patron saint of all Mirpuris, Baba Pira Shah Ghazi (d.1743). Occasionally, a travelling *pir* would also visit our village. Every night he would make *dhikr* (remembrance of God) in a different house but everyone was invited, especially the young people who, like myself, enjoyed the sessions immensely. In these gatherings we all sat in a circle. The *pir* led the *dhikr* by chanting the name of God and we repeated it after him. It was a simple but very effective method of remembering God and I really felt close to Him whilst performing *dhikr*. I would close my eyes and envisage the Prophet in the image of the *pir*. The *pir*, in my view, was the epitome of the Prophet's characteristics; loving, kind, handsome and of generous nature.

When I came to Britain I still sought to meet *pirs* who would remind me of the Prophet. But to my regret *pirs* and shrines were virtually non-existent in Britain. However, in the mid-seventies, I met a few visiting *pirs* from Pakistan and 'Azad' Kashmir. My heart felt totally at peace in their presence. Meeting these *pir*s brought back childhood memories. However, none of these *pir*s were resident in Britain and

thus, when they went back, I eagerly awaited their return. It would also be fair to say that the speeches of the local mosque Barelwi *imams* (religious functionaries) only gave me a headache. It is the norm for most *imams* from the Indian subcontinent, including the Barelwis, to shout during sermons. In my view the *imams* generally lacked the dignity and the sophistication of the *pirs*. The *pirs* had charisma whereas most of the *imams* did not.

However, I soon became aware of the fact that not every Pakistani in Bury believed in *pirs* and *mazars*, including the *imam* (prayer leader) of our new mosque. I heard conflicting views on *pirs*, and whlist my own family members expressed extreme devotion for them, the *imam* and some of the other Mirpuris (previously followers of *pirs*) were not so complimentary. Some Mirpuris had become critical of the *pirs*, and especially *mazars*, and some Mirpuri families who had traditionally given offerings of *giyarvin sharif* (a monthly gathering in honour of the great Sufi saint of Baghdad, Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani) no longer believed that it was an 'orthodox' practice. This, for me, was an example of how religion and culture 'travel' and change as people move, mix and resettle in a different environment and in the process how some things are 'preserved', 'lost' or 'gained' (McLoughlin 2005a:1).

What brought these tensions to the fore was the so-called 'Barelwi/Deobandi' debate that was taking place in British towns, including Bury, during the late 1970s. The Deobandis are a reformist scholarly Sufi movement of late nineteenth century colonial India whereas, their opponents, the Barelwis, sought to use their own scholarship to defend a number of devotional practices associated with *pirs* and visitation at *mazars* (Metcalf 1982:39; Sanyal 1996:231). In Mirpur, like most other

people, I had not been familar with either the Barelwis or the Deobandis. However, in Britain, the movements have come to dominate a majority of the 1000 or so mosques now established amongst South Asian and other Muslims (Lewis 2004; McLoughlin 2005b).

After working for twenty years in textiles, during which period I also did voluntary work with the Muslim youth in Bury, in 1990 I went back to full time education as a mature student. Eventually I gained a 2.1 Bachelor of Arts degree with Honours in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Manchester. It was during this period of study, and my subsequent job as a part-time lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Manchester Metropolitan University, that I began to realise how little had been written on 'devotional Islam' in Britain. The Islam I had grown up with, the Islam of the Mirpuri people, had generally been neglected in the many studies completed mainly by Western academics. There was no shortage of literature on Islam but, ultimately, it portrayed a stern and uncompromising religion, something that was further caricatured in the media. I hope I speak for many British South Asian Muslims, and especially the Mirpuris, when I say that this is radically different from the Islam we *believe* and *practise*.

Beginning so autobiographically, it should be clear that this thesis is not merely an academic exercise for me; my interest in the area is longstanding. However, due to study in British academic institutions, I have learned to look at my community with something of an outsider's perspective too. It is evident that as people migrate and find themselves in a foreign community with differing values they start to reflect upon and adapt their own values to the new environment. Moreover, Britain is a pluralistic

society which is home to Muslims with many different ethnic identities. The uniting thread of all Muslims in Britain is Islam, yet there are many differences in the practice of Islam. As second and third generation British-Mirpuris begin to interact with Muslim 'others', say from the Middle East, the particularities of their parents' practices became more obvious (Mandaville 2001:87). Questions were raised: "What is Islam and what is not?" Discarding some aspects of the Islam of the 'old country' as unnecessary 'Hindu baggage', they are challenging the unquestioned relationship between religion and culture.

Although Mirpuri Muslims have often been mentioned in several studies of British South Asian Muslims, thus far, no one study has been dedicated exclusively to the religious life of these people. I aim to rectify this imbalance. There is, in my view, a need for a study that gives a detailed account of the religious beliefs and practices of the Mirpuri Muslims. Thus, against this background, the main purpose of this study is to examine how Islam that the ordinary people actually believe in and practice, has been reconstructed and transformed in a British context. What I call 'devotional Islam' can be characterised by specific ritual practices including *milad sharif* (Prophet's Birthday), *giyarvin sharif*, *urs sharif* (death anniversary of a saint), *qawwali* (devotional music), *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *khatam al-khawajgan* (Conclusion of the Masters), *khatam* (in honour of a deceased relative), *na't sharif* (devotional poem in honour of the Prophet), distributing *langar* (blessed food) and so forth. The argument of the thesis is that this remains the underlying dynamic of the British Mirpuris' faith and practice; it is still what people 'do' but it has been transformed as part of the social change associated with the process of migration.

This study is an attempt to analyse the Mirpuris' endeavour to reproduce 'devotional Islam' in Britain, firstly for themselves and subsequently for their children/grandchildren. It will to try to understand *what* is taking place amongst Mirpuris in Lancashire and in particular my hometown of Bury, and *why*? What impact did migration have upon the Mirpuris? How did it affect their religious views or practices? Which Mirpuri devotional practices have survived in Britain and which have been lost? Have the British Mirpuris become less religious? What role did the *pirs* and Barelwi *imams* (prayer leaders) play in the transformation and of the Mirpuris in Britain? Have the Mirpuri parents been able to transmit devotional Islam to the second and third British born or raised generation? What role do the mosques and the Barelwi *imams* play in the lives of the British Mirpuri youth? Outside the realm of the home and mosque what sort of Sufi or 'anti-Sufi' movements are the young Mirpuris turning to? What is the future of devotional Islam in Britain for the Mirpuris? This study will attempt to answer these and other related questions.

Devotional Islam, Sufis and Barelwis

Although the term 'devotional Islam' has been used by Sanyal (1996) to describe the character of the Barelwi movement I do not restrict it here to Barelwis. Rather, 'devotional Islam' is used in a broader sense to include the multi-faceted mystical tradition within Islam known as 'Sufism'. What is devotional Islam? Although Sanyal does not give a clear definition, I would say it is an acute awareness and devotion to the sacred, that is sacred place, time and persons. To define this further

in terms of Islam, it most often represents devotion to *pirs* and *mazars* as well as fulfilment of daily, monthly or annual Sufi rituals.

One of the main features of 'devotional Islam' is the veneration of the Prophet. This has a long history in Sufi literature, both in Arabic and Persian. For example, Persian Sufi poets such as Sana'i (d.1131), Attar (d.1221), Rumi (d.1273) and Jami (d.1492) have all written beautiful poems in honour of the Prophet (Schimmel 1985: 181-215)[1]. However, veneration for the Prophet, 'the beloved of God' is more evident amongst the Muslims of the Indo-Pak subcontinent than other Islamic countries: "In short, after God you (Prophet) are the greatest" (Schimmel 1985:5). Love for the Prophet is of paramount importance and South Asian Muslims believe that everything connected with the Prophet contains *barakah* (blessing) to the extent that even drawings of his sandals are kissed and placed upon peoples' heads, symbolising their devotion to him. This also explains the veneration for the Prophet's descendents, *sayyids*, in South Asia (Bredi 2005).

Apart from the *sayyids,* the *pirs* (many *pirs* happen to be *sayyids* as well) and *mazars* are also viewed as possessors of *barakah* and are also greatly revered. Thus, the Prophet is seen as a means to God and *sayyids, pirs* and *mazars* are viewed as a vital link to the Prophet to channel his *barakah* to the masses. Liebeskind rightly observes that during the *urs* ceremony:

> The followers of the spiritual tradition gather to remember how the divine light of understanding came down from the Prophet through the saints of the past to burn brightly in their midst (1998:i).

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[1] In Arabic, such veneration has reached its greatest expression in Muhammad al-Busiri (d.1298), author of *Qasidat al-Burda* (Mantle of the Prophet) (2000), one of the most widely recited Sufi poems in the Islamic world.

In order to attain, and then transmit, this *barakah* to people, the Indian Sufi orders such as the Chishtiyya, Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya have developed the devotional practices mentioned above. It is from these three Sufi orders and their sub-orders that Mirpuris take their religious identity. Mirpuris are of the view that it is not feasible for a common person to direct his request to God. Keeping the Qur'anic injunction in mind: "*And seek the means of approach to Him*" (5:35), they ask God through the intercession of the Prophet, *sayyids, pirs* and *mazars* and believe such a request would be fulfilled quickly as God would not reject any plea that is made in their honour. Moreover, for the majority of Mirpuris there is no clear division between culture and religion. What Mirpuris have inherited from their ancestors is a way of life that blends culture and religion which was never separated to the extent it is now by the young people.

Having briefly outlined 'devotional Islam,' I want to discuss the term 'Barelwi' which is widely used in the literature on British South Asian Muslims (Shaw 1988; Raza 1993; Lewis 1994; Geaves 1996; 2000). Initially the term 'Barelwi' was used in a derogatory manner to describe the 'followers' of the nineteenth and early twentieth century Indian Sunni scholar, Mawlana Ahmad Riza Qadiri (d.1921). However, nowadays being a 'Barelwi' is no longer viewed in so negative or narrow a manner. Although one might want to contest its utility in this respect. It has become a generic term to describe all those Muslims of South Asian heritage whose beliefs and practices exhibit some measure of continuity with the subcontinent's pre-modern past.

The Muslim 'others' of the Barelwis in Britain, as elsewhere, are the so-called 'Wahhabis'. The label 'Wahhabi' was used for the followers of the eighteenth

century Arab reformer Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d.1792) (Sirriyeh 1999: 23). Geaves (2000) argues that the Barelwis' use of the term 'Wahhabi' is wholly inaccurate as it aims to describe a wide range of movements that have little in common from the militantly anti-Sufi to the moderately reformist Sufi. For example, I maintain that the arch rivals of the Barelwis, the Deobandis, are also supporters, to a greater or lesser extent, of many aspects of devotional Islam. In my thesis, following the likes of Oberoi (1994) on the emergence of 'Sikhism', the term 'Barelwi' will be used mainly to describe one of the ways in which the traditional ambiguities of Mirpuri religiosity have been gradually transformed along neo-orthodox lines in the context of modernity in general and diaspora in particular.

Religion and Diaspora: a conceptual framework

> Diasporas arise from some form of migration, but not all migration involves diasporic consciousness; all transnational communities comprise diasporas, but not all diasporas develop transnationalism (Vertovec 2000:12).

What happened to the devotional Islam of the Mirpuris when they migrated to Britain? This is the key question that this study will attempt to investigate. However, such an investigation requires some sort of conceptualisation of the processes of migration, diaspora and transnationalism and how they relate to the study of religion[2]. Vertovec suggests that although 'migration', 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' are three separate terms. 'Migration' involves movement of people from one country to another and, in the process, migrants 're-construct' their worldview in a new setting. Vertovec argues that, by contrast, 'diaspora' should be viewed as the continuation of 'consciousness' of a 'real' or 'imagined' homeland that a particular dispersed community shares with other people in the world. In the

age of the 'global village, social, economic, political, cultural and religious 'circulations' between 'home' and 'abroad,' mean that diasporas can become *trans-national*.

Having made this distinction, we need to look at 'diaspora' in more detail. The term diaspora was generally used for the dispersal of the Jewish people in Biblical times, when they were defeated and kept in Babylonian captivity (Juergensmeyer 2002:2). Nevertheless, Cohen suggests the origin of the word diaspora comes from the Greek verb *sperio* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over). The ancient Greeks viewed diaspora in terms of migration and colonisation (1997:ix). However, today diaspora has a much wider meaning as Vertovec explains:

> 'Diaspora' is the term so often used today to describe practically any population which is considered 'deterritorialised' or 'transnational', that is, whose cultural origins are said to have arisen in a land other than which they currently reside and whose social, economic and political network across the borders of nation states or indeed, span the globe (1996:1).

Cohen provides a very useful list of types of 'diaspora' such as *victim diasporas, labour diasporas, trade diasporas, imperial diasporas,* and *cultural diasporas*. The focus of this study is the Mirpuri Muslim 'labour diaspora' (1997:x). South Asians came to Britain in search of work, and initially sustained a 'myth of return' (Anwar 1979), which has gradually diminished as communities have become 'here to stay'. Nonetheless, the Mirpuris have maintained an especially strong diasporic and transnational 'ethnic' group consciousness, continuing to mark their distinctiveness in terms of cultural and religious practices especially.

In terms of the study of religion, Knott, one of the foremost scholars of religion in Britain, rightly asserts:

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[2] McLoughlin (2005a) provides a recent summary of many of these issues.

> There have been relatively few accounts of migration and settlement in which religion has been described as having any significance for individuals and communities beyond its role in assisting them to organise, to reap material benefit or to enter dialogue or competition with the wider society...religions do perform these functions in many situations. However, they also have their own dynamics which, though related to social, political and economic contexts, are explained from within rather than from without (with recourse to their historical development, texts, value systems, ritual practices, socio-religious organisation etc) (1992: 13).

Commenting upon on the work of sociologists and anthropologists, Knott states: "With a few notable exceptions, they have failed to provide plausible accounts of the role and significance of religions in the lives of the groups they have described" (1992:4-5). However, she acknowledges that thus far, 'Religious Studies in Britain have not formulated a 'coherent perspective on ethnicity' (1992:11). Writing just after the Rushdie Affair, this, in her view, is due to the study of 'migrant religion' being in its initial stages and the 'social context of religion' not being taken sufficiently seriously. For Knott, most studies on religion usually see it 'as the passive instrument of ethnic identity' or 'in the service of ethnicity' (1992:12). However, she argues that religion often 'plays a more active role in the definition of an ethnic group's identity and behaviour than many of these accounts suggest' (1992:12).

McLoughlin (2005 a) suggests that an emphasis on religious 'tradition' amongst migrants represents no simple 'refusal to change', as sometimes suggested, but rather 'a dynamic adaptation strategy in the undeniable face of change'. Indeed, Hinnells observes that "migrants are more rather than less religious after migration" (1997:683). Moreover, there is an inclination towards the 'Protestantization' (1997: 829) of religion. According to Hinnells (1997) diaspora would seem to involve a process of religious 'standardization' whereby practices not commanding 'universal' allegiance do not 'travel' very well and can be 'eroded' or even 'lost'.

For example, one of the main arguments of this thesis is that modern 'neo-orthodox' textual traditions of Islam have become increasingly important amongst the Mirpuri diaspora.

This is especially marked amongst second and third generations, socialised and educated in the diaspora, who are attempting to make a clear distinction between 'universal' religion and 'localised custom'. Born and bred in a different environment to their parents, they produce their own 'local-global interpretations of traditions' (McLoughlin 2005a:19). Part of this process of the separation of religion and ethnic culture concerns transnational contacts between British-Mirpuris and the wider Islamic world. According to McLoughlin, diasporas have had an important role in helping political movements in their homeland, but also in the wider world (2005a:19), something that is increasingly important in understanding the 'predicament' (Werbner 2002) of British-Muslims today.

Devotional Islam and the Literature on South Asian Muslims in Britain

One of the leading academics of the South Asian diaspora, Hinnells, acknowledges that:

> Those of us who were active in the study of diaspora religions in the 1960s did not foresee the vitality, and strength, of the religions that would charactercize these groups at the end of the millennium (2000:10).

It would be fair to say that studies of South Asians in Britain during the 1970s, for example (Dahya 1970; Saifullah 1974; Anwar 1979) primarily focused on the issues of race and ethnicity. Although religion is mentioned in these studies, it has not been given the serious consideration it deserves (Knott 1989:3-4). Saifullah's

(1974) study is an excellent analysis of the Pakistani Mirpuri community in Bradford. However, apart from a general statement that the Mirpuri villagers are mostly Sunnis, she says nothing about Muslim belief and practice and despite her fieldwork in Mirpur, she does not mention popular Sufi shrines such as Kharri Sharif. Similarly, Anwar's (1979) study provides a useful account of the Pakistanis in Rochdale. However, despite being an insider's account, it says little about migrants' religiosity. Sectarian conflicts such as the Deobandi/Barelwi debate, which certainly existed among the Pakistani community in Rochdale during the 1970s, are totally ignored.

Both Saifullah (1974) and Anwar (1979) did little to make the religious life of Pakistani Muslims 'visible' to the 'outsider'. At their time of writing, race and ethnicity (but not religion) dominated the academic agenda of social scientific accounts of migration. However, into the 1980s, Religious Studies began to have an impact on the study of migration and ethnic minorities, with Barton's (1986) study of the Bengali Muslim community of Bradford, in particular the role of the mosque and *imam*. Barton acknowledges the fact that, historically, the Bengali Muslims, like the Mirpuris, come from a Sufi background[3]. However, Barton provides little account of devotional practices amongst the Bengalis in Bradford, which either suggests that he was unable to overcome their suspicions of him as an 'outsider' or perhaps that the Bengalis have 'lost' devotional practices in Britain.

As Pakistani communities matured, religion also became of increasing interest to anthropologists. In her excellent study of the Panjabi Pakistani-Muslim community

[3] The presence of thousands of Sufi shrines in Bangladesh is living testimony to this. Indeed, Shah Jalal, who is revered by Hindus and Muslims alike in Sylhet, played a decisive role in the conversion of the people of Sylhet. Barton asserts: "*Pirs* are accredited with spiritual powers, *baraka*, which is held to be present at their shrines and a source of blessing to those who worship there" (1986:40).

in Oxford, Shaw (1988) gives a good account of the Deobandi/Barelwi dispute that took place in the city between 1982 and 1984. She was possibly one of the first academics to mention these issues. However, although she provides a useful account of Barelwis in Oxford, she does not really do justice to the subtleties of the Deobandi position on the Prophet and *pirs*[4]. In fact, detailed accounts of the impact of South Asian heritage Islamic movements in Britain only really began to emerge after the Rushdie Affair of 1989, although Shaw (1988) is an exception. The Religious Studies scholar, Lewis, asserts:

> Most discussions of the South Asian presence in Britain paid only the most perfunctory attention to the religious dimension of the settlers' personal lives, and still less to the extent to which Islam might provide them with a vehicle for the expression and mobilisation of their collective interests (1994:58).

However, following the Rushdie Affair, many more studies (Raza 1993; Lewis 1994; Geaves 1996) came forth which examined the religion of Muslims in Britain more carefully. For example, Raza's (1993) was the first study to be written by a British Barelwi *imam* and, as such, it presents a biased account of the Deobandis and Jama'at-i Islami amongst others[5]. However, surprisingly, Raza has very little to say about Sufism in Britain. This fact underlines, that while the Barelwi *imams* generally support the devotions of the Sufi orders and their associated popular practices, they are not always in total agreement with all the *pirs*. Indeed there is considerable tension between the two groups, something that will become clear in the course of this study.

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[4] Some Deobandi scholars, such as Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanavi (d.1943), have actually expressed great devotion for the Prophet and the saints. For example, in his article *nayl al-shifa bi-nahl al-Mustafa* (*Cure Through the Prophet's Sandals*), Thanavi advises the reader to place the drawing of the Prophet's Noble Sandals on his head and ask God to grant him his wish in honour of the Prophet (1990:46).

[5] For example, Raza claims: "The teaching of the Deobandi seminary was so superficial that it did not produce any Muslims fit enough to challenge the secularist and modernist ideas penetrating into the country"(1993:11-12). He also alleges that Jama'at-i Islami's main aim is to spread the 'Wahhabi' doctrine and maintain support for the Saudi Royal family (1993:16).

By contrast, Lewis' (1994) study is one of most informative and interesting additions to the literature on British Muslims of South Asian origin. Lewis spent six years in Pakistan and gained insight into South Asian Islam. Working in the same tradition of Religious Studies at Leeds as Barton, unlike earlier studies, he does not sideline Sufism with just a few passing references. Lewis shows great awareness of the significance of Sufism and rightly highlights the role of the *pirs* in the lives of Muslims from Kashmir and Panjab. He observes that many mosques teaching Urdu in Bradford use books produced in Pakistan, the contents of which reflect the Sufi character of the Indian subcontinent (1994:27). There are stories of visits to the Sufi shrines, including the famous eleventh century Sufi, Ali Hujwiri (d.1075), who wrote a treatise on Sufism, *Kashf al-Mahjub* (the Uncovering of the Veiled) (1994: 27-28). However, Lewis is principally an historian interested in institutions of learning. So, arguably, one of the weaknesses of Lewis' study is his general lack of first hand ethnography. Most of his material seems to come from well-educated informants. It is not clear what the common British-Muslim's views on devotional Islam might be. For example, Lewis does not cite a single gathering of *milad sharif*, *giyarvin sharif* or *urs* that he personally attended during his research in Bradford.

Werbner's (1990) study of the Pakistani Panjabi Muslims in Manchester is one of the finest accounts of Muslims in Britain today. In contrast to Lewis (1994), Werbner provides an account of devotional practices such as *khatam-i Qur'an* (completion of the Qur'an), which normally takes place in the home as opposed to the mosque and thus affords Pakistani women the opportunity to take control of the proceedings. Werbner observes that the *khatam-i Qur'an*:

> Is performed by a congregation composed mostly of women who are gathered in the house of the ritual convener. Between them the assembled guests read the entire Koran in one sitting. The whole house assumes, temporarily, certain features of a mosque. Shoes are taken off... and people read the Koran seated on the ground. Along with the burning of incense, these observances serve to define the space as holy or sacred (1990:156-157).

Building on this, Werbner's (1996) study of Sufis in Birmingham provides a detailed account of the *urs* ceremony held in honour of a Pakistani Naqshbandi Sufi saint, Khwaja Muhammad Qasim Mohravi (d.1943), led by Sufi Abd Allah Khan. Werbner demonstrates that as Pakistani migrants march through the shabby streets of Britain's decaying inner cities, they glorify Islam and stamp the earth with the name of God[6].

Again in the Leeds tradition of Religious Studies, Geaves (1996), like Lewis (1994) provides a comprehensive account of different Islamic sects in Britain, namely the Barelwis, Deobandis, Tablighi Jama'at, Ahl-i Hadith and Jama'at-i Islami. In terms of 'devotional Islam', he acknowledges that the three major South Asian Sufi orders, namely the Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya and Chishtiyya, are all playing a significant role at a local level in Britain (1996:65). In addition, he provides a good account of the tension between the *pirs* and Barelwi *imams* (1996: 102). However, it is in his second book that Geaves' (2000) gives the most elaborate account of Sufism in Britain to date.

Geaves wants to correct two misconceptions; firstly, regarding the way Sufism is viewed and studied as an extinct tradition and, secondly, the way Muslims are

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[6] In addition, Werbner (1998) has edited an excellent study of modern day Sufism in South Asia and produced a paper (2001) which deals with three manifestations of spiritual leadership: a female Pakistani *pir*, a Shia astrologer and a strict British Naqshbandi Sufi Shaykh. Her most recent study *Pilgrims of Love*: *The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult* (2003), on the life of a Pakistani Naqshbandi Sufi Shaykh, Zindapir (d.1999), is partially based on her earlier studies and thus repeats many of the same themes.

depicted within Britain. Against the domination of media coverage of the radical reform movements, Geaves states that Sufism is actually *the* driving force of the majority of Muslims all over the world. To ignore this is a serious distortion of the living tradition of Islam including Islam in Britain. Moreover, he argues that separating 'Islam' from 'culture' as the reformists seek to, has never been a major concern of Sufism. In fact, the acceptance and reshaping of certain cultural practices and ideas is exactly how Islam was accepted and proliferated. Nevertheless, Geaves also explores new manifestations of Sufism in contemporary Britain. In particular, his research suggests the emergence of Sufi orders which transcend particular ethnic groups and allegiances.

Most recently, Ballard (2004) has written an excellent paper, 'Popular Islam in northern Pakistan and its reconstruction in urban Britain'[7]. 'Popular Islam' here has some significant overlap with what I call 'devotional Islam'. Ballard states that his main aim is to explore the range of:

> Ideas, beliefs, and practices which the broad mass of Muslims resident in the northern parts of Pakistani Punjab, together with those of their kinsfolk who have settled in the UK, deploy as a matter of routine in the course of their everyday lives (2004:3).

In many ways, Ballard's paper builds upon his earlier (1996) account of four dimensions of Panjabi religion: *panthic, kismetic, dharmic* and *qaumic*. He uses *panthic* to describe a group of people who share a common interest in the teachings of a living or a dead spiritual master (1996:8). *Kismetic* religion is defined as "those ideas, practices and behavioural strategies which are used to explain the otherwise inexplicable and having done so to turn adversity in its tracks" (1996:9). *Dharmic*

[7] As this thesis was being prepared for submission, Ballard's paper was published in Malik, J. and Hinnells, J. (eds.) *Sufism in the West*, (London: Routledge, 2006). My references refer to a pre-publication draft circulated by the author on http://www.art.man.ac.uk/CASAS

religion refers to "the divinely established set of rules to which all activities in the existent world, whether amongst humans, animals or even the Gods themselves, should ideally conform" (1996:12). Finally, *qaumic* religion refers to "the set of ideas and activities by means of which a body of people set about closing ranks as a community, and to use their enhanced sense of mutual solidarity to advance their collective interests" (1996:15).

The *kisemtic* dimension of religion most aptly summarises the popular function of *pirs* and their *mazars*[8]. When faced with adversity from the hidden dark forces such as Jinns, *churails* (witches), *bhut* (poltergeist) and *jadu* (black magic), Panjabi Muslims do not view their fate as irrevocable, they believe one's *qismet* (fortune) can be changed for the better through the intervention of a living or a dead saint. Thus, many people who claim or believe that they are affected by evil in its various forms, flock to *pirs* and *mazars* in large numbers. Yet, significantly these people may not formally or even informally have any association with the *pir* previously. People usually hear of the *pir* and his miraculous powers through family or other people whom he has helped to cure. Hence, this link of the lay person with the *pir* is conducted from a '*needs only basis*'; if he/she is cured of his *kismetic* problems he/she will move on and may never need to come back to the same *pir*

Following Eaton (1978; 1993; 2000), Ballard (2004) rightly asserts the important role of the Chishtiyya Sufi order in popularising the centrepiece of Sufi cosmology-

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[8] The Arabic word *qismet* has a whole range of meanings: fate, fortune, destiny, portion and so forth (Ferozsons n.d: 545). It is a common saying amongst Panjabi Muslims: "*qismet ni gal hi*- It was destined to happen".

Ibn Arabi's (d.1240) concept of *wahdat al-wujud* (Unity of Being) to India[9]. However, the Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya played equally important parts in the spread of devotional Islam in the Indo-Pak subcontinent and have arguably been more influential in Britain. Moreover, Ballard chooses not to mention the widely performed practice of *dhikr* which takes place at the shrines, mosques and homes and is part of all Sufi orders. The monthly gathering of *giyarvin sharif* is not mentioned and neither is the annual celebration of *milad sharif.*

Moreover, given his focus on 'popular Islam', Ballard does not attribute much significance to the 'Delhi-based' modern reform movements such as the Barelwis. However, part of the argument of this thesis is that while these movements spread only relatively late to Pakistan and especially Mirpur after Partition, in the modern context 'neo-orthodox' constructions of religion (Oberoi 1994) have gained increasing power over all sections of society. This has been accentuated in the diaspora. In this respect, Ballard fails to mention modern Barelwi movements such as *Dawat-i Islami* (Call to Islam) and *Idara Minhaj al-Qur'an* (Organisation of the Way of the Qur'an). This underestimates the significance of Barelwi propaganda in spreading particular devotional Islam practices both in the subcontinent and in Britain.

Mirpur and Mirpuris in Britain

> The District of Mirpur in Azad Kashmir or 'free' Kashmir is the term given to the western portion of the old state of Jammu and Kashmir. The majority of Azad Kashmiris are Muslims but there are considerable variations in culture and language. The Mirpuri is essentially Punjabi in culture and his language is a dialect of the Punjabi tongue (Saifullah 1977:59).

[9] Ballard attributes the key term of *ishq* (passionate love) to Ibn Arabi but this concept is more usually associated with the famous Persian Sufi poet Rumi (d.1272).

> No other District in Pakistan has seen a higher proportion of its population engage in transnational migration than Mirpur, and from nowhere else have a higher proportion of such migrants successfully established themselves in Britain (Ballard 2003:1).

The history of Kashmir is a story of invasions by the Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs and finally the British. Prior to Partition it was a princely state ruled by autocratic Hindu Maharajas (1846-1947) (Charpentier quoted in Drew 1976:v). As Mirpur was not directly under British-administered territories and not deemed significant by the Maharaja of Kashmir it remained largely under-developed. Indeed, since the local administration was both exploitative and inefficient, this region was denied basic human necessities such as schools, roads and other public services. In addition, despite the fact that most of his subjects were Muslim, the Maharaja of Kashmir chose to affiliate with the Indian government. Consequently a civil war broke out and as a result the region was divided into two parts, the larger part coming under Indian rule and the smaller, and less significant, part coming under the newly formed Pakistani government. The Pakistan administrated area of Kashmir became known as *Azad* (Independent or Free) Kashmir and 'Azad' Kashmir has effectively been run by the Pakistani government ever since (Ballard 1991).

'Azad' Kashmir is routinely divided into seven districts: Bagh, Muzaffarabad, Punch, Bhimber, Sudhanti, Mirpur and Kotli. Mirpur is dominated by substantial areas of reasonably flat plateau, split up by occasional rocky outcrops and precipitous ravines. This seems to have made the whole area into something of a haven. As the terrain offers a considerable degree of shelter it has always been densely populated. However the consequence of high population density has been that over the last century or so large numbers of Mirpuris have sought work outside

their own District[10]. The earliest significant movement of migrants away from Mirpur seems to have begun just before the turn of the century, as men sought jobs on the dockside in Bombay. As every year passed the port became busier, and soon Mirpuris began to seek work afloat. Within a few years they began to establish a niche for themselves as engine-room stokers. This was one of the hardest and most uncomfortable jobs available. Not only was it extremely dirty, but in tropical conditions engine room temperatures could easily reach 140°F. Yet from a Mirpuri perspective the job offered good money, so there was no shortage of such a workforce. The most usual pattern of recruitment was for a *serang* (the engine-room foreman) to return to his village to recruit the men he needed from amongst his neighbours' and kinsmen's families. Those villages with several *serangs* soon gained a reputation for wealth (Ballard 1983:25).

As Ballard (1983) also suggests the dynamics of the Mirpuri diaspora in Britain were further catalysed by the building of the Mangla Dam in the 1960's. Around 110,000 people were displaced in the early 1960's due to its construction. Around 250 villages were submerged underwater and the government offered people partial compensation in the way of cash and land in the Panjab. Some Mirpuris used the compensation money to migrate to Britain (Saifullah in Watson 1977:66-67; Ballard 1994:6; Kalra 2000:67). Single male migrants moved between their homes in South Asia and Britain intent on making enough money to settle permanently back home. However, due to the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, there was a shift in

[10] Mirpuris are normally divided into two social groups, those who own land and those who work for them. There are further sub-divisions in both of these groups as the group who provide services to others are categorised by occupation and the landowners are further categorised by their *baradari* and the size of their estate (Khan 2000:4; Ballard 2003:15; Junawi 2004:53).

the way the Mirpuri migrants saw themselves. They no longer viewed themselves as 'transients' and were now becoming 'settlers' (Dahya 1970). Gradually, they began the process of bringing their families to Britain.

Despite the fact that Mirpur has been a major source of revenue for the Pakistani economy-for example, in the 1980s the Mirpuris provided 50% of Pakistan's foreign exchange earnings through remittances-Pakistani officials have invested very little in the development of the region. Industry is virtually non-existent, and agriculture both in terms of the area ploughed, and of yield, is in decline. The whole area is becoming ever more dependent on migrant remittances. Mirpur does not lack money for almost every village has a bank where overseas migrants have left vast sums on deposit. Nevertheless, the economy of the whole area is now largely dependent on the continued flow of migrant remittances, and without them extreme poverty would soon follow. Moreover, in recent times, Azad Kashmiris have also troubled the government of Pakistan because of their demand for an independent Kashmir. This movement has strong support in Mirpur District and Pakistan is accused of exploiting Azad Kashmir and its people. For example, the building of Mangla Dam in Mirpur resulted in the loss of the most fertile land in the District and yet the greatest beneficiary of this project is Pakistan and not Kashmir. Moreover, the Pakistani government has not compensated Mirpuris as promised and thus ill feeling exists between the people of this region and the central government (Ballard 1991:2-6).

Presently, around 400,000 people of Mirpuri origin live and work in Britain. However, largely because of the underdeveloped context of their migration, many

Mirpuris have struggled to adapt to working life in Britain now that the unskilled manual work the first generation migrated for no longer exists. Thirty-five years ago Dahya argued:

> While all societies can be said to be transitional in some sense, the Pakistani migrant community is in the very real sense a traditional society going through the phase of development from a rural to an urban industrial society (1970:275).

Indeed, more recently Modood has defined the British South Asian Muslims as: "A semi-industrialised, newly urbanised working class community that is only one generation away from rural peasantry" (1992:261). However, whilst Modood's characterisation may hold true for most South Asian Muslims, it is particularly true of the Mirpuris.

A substantial number of Mirpuris live in towns such as Bradford, Birmingham, Sheffield and Halifax. According to the 2001 Census Report there are 38,968 Muslims in Lancashire (http://www.statistics.Gov.uk/census). A significant number of these are Mirpuris. Kalra reports that it was during the 1960s and 1970s that a significant number of Mirpuris settled and worked in the Lancashire cotton mills, in particular in Oldham (2000:103). For the early migrants the search for employment in the 1960s was characterised by movement from the Midlands and Yorkshire to Lancashire. One of the main factors that contributed to the emergence of early migrants to Lancashire was the demand for workers on night shift in textile mills. Another reason for this change was the arrival of young male dependants. As a direct result of the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1968, the voucher system was terminated, and primary migration to Britain effectively ceased. By 1970 two

generations of Mirpuri migrants were working the night shift side by side in the mills[11].

Moving to the main location of the study, my home-town of Bury, presently there are 5,410 Pakistanis in Bury, the majority of who come from Mirpur. Mirpuris mostly live in the Redvales ward that has the highest percentage of Pakistanis in the Metropolitan Borough of Bury (http://www.statistics.Gov.uk/census). It is from this ward that a Pakistani Panjabi councillor, Dr Choudary Faruq, has been elected to the Bury Council since 1998. In Bury, most of the Mirpuris worked in two of the leading cotton mills in the town. This is not to suggest the Mirpuris had no other form of employment; indeed, there were a number of Mirpuris, who worked on the buses and train stations. The Mirpuris in Bury also own a number of small businesses such as garages, takeaways, taxi ranks, grocery and clothes shops. In addition, they manage one of the main mosques in the town and also play an important part in the management of the local Asian community centre.

Methodological Issues

i) Insiders, Outsiders and Standpoints: Similarities and Differences

> Primarily, religion is an area which is not easily accessible to the outsider, foreigner or non participant. The inner meaning of a religion unfolds only through participation; by following the prescribed path and discipline (Singh 1991:3 quoted in Knott in Hinnells (2005).

> In a nutshell the problem is whether, and to what extent, someone can study, understand, or explain beliefs, words, or actions of another. In other words, to what degree, if any, are the motives and meanings of human behaviours and beliefs accessible to the researcher who may not necessarily share these beliefs and does not necessarily participate in these practices? (McCutcheon 1999:2).

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[11] However, this is not to suggest that all Mirpuri migrants were uneducated or unskilled. Indeed, there were some clerical workers, lower level accountants, policemen, secretaries, lawyers, clerks, shopkeepers and businessmen (Allen 1977:148 quoted in Kalra 2000:107-108).

The 'insider/outsider' debate is key in the study of religion. Can an outsider really get 'into the skin' of the community he or she is studying? Can one leave one's presuppositions at the door? Can an outsider understand another's world-view? The phenomenological method-holding back, 'bracketing out' value judgements-was dominant in Religious Studies until very recently and aimed to overcome the problems associated with the 'insider/outsider' debate by arguing thus:

> We first need to free ourselves of preconceived theories and interpretive frameworks into which, if we are not careful, we will try to squeeze our data. We can all too easily mould our material, whether textual, or anthropologically observed to fit our own views (Bennett 2002:94).

While Knott cites Heilman who is of the opinion that an insider can provide "through both introspection and a sense of the relevant questions to ask, information about dimensions of inner life not readily available to other researchers", she also cites Collins:

> The distinction between insider outsider becomes irrelevant when we recognize that all those who participate, whether of faith or not, contribute the co-construction of the story (Knott in Hinnells 2005).

Therefore, it is now commonly acknowledged that there cannot be a 'value free' study as each writer, whether insider or outsider, invariably brings something from his/her own perspective into the research (McLoughlin 2000:176).

As an 'insider' (Muslim and Mirpuri) I have been involved with a wide range of activities as a member of the Mirpuri community in Lancashire, and particularly in Bury, for several years. I have taught Muslim children in the local mosque for ten years, represented 'Islam' on numerous occasions in schools, colleges and inter-faith meetings. Since 1986 I have also served on the management committee of *Nur al-Islam* (Light of Islam) mosque and presently hold the office of president. Evidently I

have access to a great deal of information on the Mirpuri community. Indeed, there is an established trust between my respondents and accordingly, it was comparatively easy for me to have access to their personal and inner feelings, which arguably, are not normally available to an 'outsider'.

I have various overlapping and intersecting networks of contacts available to me within the Mirpuri community in Lancashire, especially in Bury, Bolton, Nelson, Oldham, Rochdale and Burnley. As suggested above, these have been built up over a period of more than twenty years-probably fairly unprecedented for a doctoral student. My 'Sufi' network of contacts consists of many friends who have taken part in *dhikr* gatherings across Lancashire. This assisted greatly in producing contacts to the 'big' and 'little' *pirs* in Lancashire and beyond. At the same time, I was able to make contact with Barelwi mosques in Burnley, Nelson, Accrington, Rochdale, Bury, Radcliffe, Manchester and Oldham in my capacity as president of Nur al-Islam mosque in Bury.

Other contacts have been made through friends, teachers, lecturers, *imams* and assistant *imams*. I had no previous contacts with the new 'Barelwi' movements such as *Dawat-i Islami* (Call to Islam) and *Idara Minhaj al-Qur'an* (the organisation of the Way of the Qur'an). Thus new contacts had to be made with the respective activists and arrangements made to take part in their activities.

This went smoothly as I had the outward religious appearance of a 'good' Muslim, something which put them at ease from the outset. It is doubtful that an outsider would be able to gain their trust in such a short time[12].

In terms of exploring the issues with those not directly involved with religious orders or organisations, my *baradari* contacts have also been useful; in Rochdale, Nelson and Bury there is a substantial community of *Rajputs* (land owning caste) from the Mirpur region. Finally, in terms of access to younger people, I know, or know people who know, students from the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, UMIST, Salford University and colleges of further education such as Bury College, Holy Cross College and Stand College, Whitefield.

However, the outsider has a distinct advantage over an insider when it comes to asking respondents questions, "that are stupid or blunt, that are not allowed of insiders" (Bailey 1996:15 quoted in Draper 2002). For example, as an insider I could not ask a young female respondent whether she had a boyfriend or ask an *imam* why is it necessary for him to have a beard. An insider might also be reluctant to publicise some of the problems of his community and may practice damage limitation in terms of scrutinising the society. As an 'insider' continually in touch with the Mirpuri community I am studying I have had to self-consciously wear a number of different hats. In many ways that has been a hindrance as well as a help. I have frequently encountered the problem of some respondents confiding their personal and confidential matters to me. However, I have not used any of that

[12] However, this very appearance meant that I was not allowed to interview the controversial Mirpuri writer, Mirza, during August 2002 (See Chapter 3). The authorities in Mirpur felt that I looked liked

information, as I believe it would be ethically wrong to do so. I was constantly aware of where to draw the line, however some of my respondents could not. Occasionally I had to remind them that I was speaking to them as a student conducting research and not as a 'counsellor' of the local community. Thus, if they wanted to discuss matters of a private nature it would have to take place at another time. Indeed, even as an academic, one is mindful that one must not compromise one's integrity merely to subtract information from respondents.

Morcover, for all these points of connection with the majority of Mirpuris, unlike most *babas* (elders) I am fluent in English and have some understanding of Western culture and history. I have studied in British schools, colleges and universities and thus I am used to constantly socialising with a whole range of people of different cultures, ethnic backgrounds, genders and faiths or no-faith. Since my youth, I have had friends from different faiths and cultures: Christian [mostly Catholics], Jewish and Buddhist; Arab, Iranian, Malaysian, Central Asian, Indian and American. Thus, sometimes, I find it very difficult to empathise with the narrow worldview of the *babas*, who say things like, "You can not trust English women," the sense being that all British women are unfaithful.

At the same time, I have grown up in Britain but, unlike a substantial number of *kakas* (youth), I have no practical knowledge of the drug and drink culture, which is major part of their life. In this respect I have been an 'observer' but not an active 'participant'. Although I do not come from a family of scholars or Sufis, compared to most *kakas* I have had greater exposure to 'devotional Islam' both in Britain and

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a *mullah* (cleric) and might attack him to due his 'heretical' views, whatever one's appearance, belief or political views, one cannot claim to reach every section of the community.

Azad Kashmir. I am literate in Arabic, Farsi, Urdu and Panjabi and have been very fortunate to travel to Saudi Arabia [Hajj/Umra] Iran, [University of Manchester year abroad] Turkey [*ziyarah*] and India [*ziyarah*]. By contrast, most *kakas* are not fluent in any of the above languages apart, perhaps, from Panjabi (if they have stayed in Pakistan for a long period of time). Similarly, some *kakas* have never gone outside Britain and never been to a shrine or taken part in *dhikr* activities that are common in my way of life. Thus I would argue that most *kakas* in Lancashire are effectively 'unconscious' followers of 'devotional Islam'.

ii) Participant Observation

Participant observation is central to any anthropological fieldwork. As a technique, it was developed primarily by the likes of Malinowski (d.1942), who argued that:

> The anthropologist must relinquish the relative comforts of the chair on the veranda...The data that would be obtained would then be based on first-hand observations rather than second-hand accounts that had been squeezed out of reluctant informants (Cited in Burgess 1993:13).

Indeed, some of the best descriptions and analyses of the devotional life of British Pakistani Muslims are based upon participant observation by anthropologists. Werbner's (1996) account of Zindapir in Ghamkol Sharif and Sufi Abd Allah Khan in Birmingham is a case in point. Taking part in the events one is observing, describing, and analysing, one gains insight beyond any gained from more distant surveys. Some behaviours and beliefs can only be understood on the basis of more intimate, day to day, relationships and just by being 'there' when things happen. The researcher is thus able to observe the underlying dynamics of a community in different contexts. Living amongst a community, a researcher can see first hand what people say and what they do (Haralambos, Holborn and Head 1995:845).

With this goal in mind, I spent many days and nights participating in devotional functions such as *dhikr*, *giyarvin sharif, khatam al-khawajgan, baradari khatams, urs, qawwali* and *milad sharif.* It is these functions, which have provided an ideal opportunity to observe the Lancashire Mirpuri community. However, participant observation also has some practical disadvantages. It is very time consuming, for example, and when I participated in events organised by 'The Ten', a Mirpuri youth group in Bury (discussed in Chapter Six), I would have to stay up with the group until the early hours of the morning. Moreover, the data collected through participant observation relies upon the particular and subjective interpretations of a single individual, and is specific to a particular place and time. It is quite possible that a different researcher would have reached quite different conclusions as 'results' cannot be checked or duplicated.

iii) Interviews:

While participant observation lends information about behaviour in action, interviews provide a chance to learn how people reflect directly on behaviour, circumstances, identity, events, and other things. Therefore, I supplemented what I learned through participant observation by interviewing eighty plus *pirs,* activists, youths, parents and *imams* at various points in the research (see appendix). Having tape-recorded most of my interviews, normally I would listen to the interview several times over, transcribing what had been said and writing notes on what new insights were being gleaned. I found this very beneficial as it gave me the opportunity to absorb the information I had collected in great depth.

As interviews can be useful in gaining access to an insider's deeper reflections, an essential part of the interview is establishing a strong rapport with the respondent. Therefore, in order to make my respondents feel at ease, I chose settings where they could relax and talk freely and frankly. Thus I conducted most of my interviews with the *babas* (elders) in the safety and comfort of the respondent's homes. However, the youth preferred to be interviewed in small groups in places such as the mosque, a friend's home or at my own house. As I had my respondent's trust there was no objection when I wanted to interview women of the house. My male respondents made every effort to grant us privacy to conduct the interview with their wives or daughters. Such a privilege would be denied an 'outsider' male researcher[13]. Nevertheless, overall, I interviewed fewer women than men.

Sometimes, interviewing also requires that one be a good listener. For example, when I interviewed Pir Maruf from Bradford I gained a great deal of insight about the pioneers by not interrupting his detailed accounts of the period. As a Mirpuri Muslim 'insider', and a practitioner of 'devotional Islam', I was also aware of the etiquette that was required with different respondents. For example, when I interviewed *pirs*, as an Asian Muslim, I would kiss their hands out of respect, sit lower than them and address them with due respect. This would not have been expected of a white 'outsider'; however, as an 'insider' doing research I had to signal my standpoint on such matters. Indeed, I conducted all my interviews with *pirs* in Panjabi and deliberately avoided using English terms, as I knew it would make them uncomfortable. By contrast, when interviewing the youth I would use popular English slang in order to persuade them to

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[13] For example, McLoughlin's (1997; 2000) study of the Muslim population in Bradford suggests that, as an 'outsider', most of his research amongst women took place in public spaces such as community centres, schools and colleges and not in the homes of his respondents. Moreover, he had only limited

talk frankly about issues that concerned them. My use of humour was also greatly appreciated as some youth were under the impression that anybody with a beard would always be serious.

iv) Ethics

> An ethical field researcher should not: (1) harm those being studied, (2) harm the setting, (3) harm the researcher himself or herself, (4) harm the profession represented, or (5) harm the reciprocal relationships formed in the setting. (Bailey 1996:13 quoted in Draper 2002)
> Ethical research involves getting the informed consent of those you are going to interview, question, observe or take materials from. It involves reaching agreements about the uses of this data, and how its analysis will be reported and disseminated (Blaxter 1996:146).

As ethnographic research takes place amongst real human beings, there are a number of special ethical concerns that need to be addressed before beginning such research. From the outset my respondents were informed in the language of their choice (Potahari, Panjabi, Urdu or English) that the interview was for research purposes. They were asked whether they understood the implications of being interviewed. It was also important for me learn whether the individual or group would prefer to be named in the written report of the research or given a pseudonym.

Throughout my study I have also continually shown revised chapters to selected respondents in order to get a sense of the 'authenticity' of my accounts. Some of my young respondents were especially keen to read what I had written about them and their parents. Occasionally, I did make alterations to my representations before presenting a draft of work to my supervisor. For example, in an earlier draft of Chapter Five, I had mentioned the events surrounding the suicide of a young man in

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fluency in Urdu and was unable to benefit from those respondents who could not speak English such as old men and women.

Lancashire. On reflection it seemed insensitive to use such a tragic incident and so I removed it from the final draft of the chapter.

v) Fieldwork in Mirpur / Translations of works in Urdu/Panjabi

It was my firm conviction that fieldwork at the Sufi shrine in Mirpur known as Kharri Sharif would greatly enhance an understanding of the devotional life of British Mirpuris both in Mirpur and Lancashire. As Mirpuris have not established any Sufi shrines in Britain a visit to Kharri Sharif had been envisaged from the outset of the research. Therefore, as part of my fieldwork and a project organised by my supervisor, Dr Sean McLoughlin, I also conducted fieldwork in Pakistan and 'Azad' Kashmir during April 2000. A British Mirpuri Sufi friend, Mian Ishtiaq, from Burnley who is related to the family of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, one of the saints buried at the Kharri Sharif shrine was very enthusiastic about the whole idea. He promised to provide accommodation for Dr McLoughlin and me during our stay in Kharri Sharif. Mian Ishtiaq's family had been the custodians of the shrine for many generations; however, in 1961, it lost control of the shrine to the government.

At present, there is not a single detailed study of Kharri Sharif shrine. However, as I am fluent in the local Potahari dialect, I was able to speak with local people, academics, custodians of the shrine, the family of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh and *Qalandars* (mystics), as well as British-Mirpuri Muslim visitors. This was important as I wanted a cross-section of responses and intended not merely to write a eulogy of the shrine and the saints buried in it. I gathered a substantial amount of material in the form of taped interviews. Those interviews that were taped then had to be transcribed and translated into idiomatic English, a task that took many months.

Moreover, the main documentary sources for the third chapter for example, Qalandari 1985; Pervez 1985; Jafari's 1987; Zhaigham 1993 were all originally published in Urdu/Panjabi. Clearly, these too, had to be translated into English to a greater or lesser extent. The same is true of couplets from Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's epic, *Saif al-Muluk (The Sword of the Kings*). *Saif al-Muluk* has the distinction of being the most popular and most recited Sufi poems in the Panjabi language. However, anyone who is familiar with the task of translating classic works of poetry will agree that it is almost an impossible task to convey the beauty and the sweetness of the original in another language. The flair and eloquence may be missing, but I hope to be able to convey something of the underlying universal message of the book.

An Overview of the Thesis

Finally, in this chapter, I want to give an overview of what will be discussed and analysed in the rest of the thesis. Chapter Two will look in more detail at 'devotional Islam' in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. In particular it will focus on the three leading Sufi orders: the Chishtiyya, Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya that have played a key part in the formation of the characteristic devotional practices mentioned earlier. The influence of Sufi thinkers such as Shaykh Ibn Arabi (d.1240) and Mawlana Rumi (d.1273) on the Indian Sufis and especially the Chishtiyya and Qadiriyya Panjabi Sufi poets will be analysed. A summary is also given of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi reformers and their links to modern reform movements such as the Barelwis' main opponents, the Deobandis.

Moving from the general to the particular, Chapter Three will examine a Qadiriyya Qalandariyya shrine, Kharri Sharif in Mirpur. I will analyse it in terms of the biography of the saints buried there (Pira Shah Ghazi and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh), Bakhsh's epic Sufi poem *Saif al-Muluk*, as well as key rituals and some comment on the control of the shrine. I will suggest that while Mirpur was generally unaffected by the modern reform movements until the Partition, thereafter things began to change and the Barelwis, in particular, began to exert their influence.

Chapter Four focuses on the Mirpuri diaspora and how the religiosity of the first generation of migrants began to be transformed when they moved to Britain. The focus is on three 'big' *pirs*, various 'little pirs' and the Barelwi *ulama*. Overall, the argument is that during the 1960s and 1970s single male Mirpuri migrants did not suspend their religious practices to quite the extent that the existing literature tends to suggest. Moreover, in the absence of shrines, there was a general shift towards the mosque as the centre of diasporic Mirpuri Islam. This gave the *ulama* and a more textual understanding of Islam new power and increased authority, at least amongst the first generation.

Chapter Five focuses on the dominant discourse by assessing the success or failure of the Barelwi *imams* and mosques, in reorienting young Muslims to Barelwism in Britain. The role of both qualified and unqualified *imams* is investigated which suggests that despite many obstacles, such as lack of fluency of English language, these *imams* have reproduced devotional practices such as *milad sharif, na't sharif, giyarvin sharif* and *urs*. However, instead of a mystic such as Mian Muhammad

Bakhsh the source of authority and emphasis is on neo-orthodox scholars such as Mawlana Riza. This chapter explores the manifestations of Barelwi Islam amongst the Mirpuri community in Lancashire, its implications for the community and also its limitations, especially amongst the youth. The Modern Barelwi movement *Dawat-i Islami* (Call to Islam) now operates in Britain and offers the youth an alternative to the reformist Tablighi Jama'at. The movement has won the approval of the *babas* with its orientation in Pakistan. Yet it is this orientation on Pakistan, which has failed to attract the British youth.

Chapter Six explores the post-Barelwi manifestations of devotional Islam in Lancashire. One of these representatives is a post-Barelwi movement *Idara Minhaj al-Qur'an* (Organisation of the Way of the Qur'an), which aims to offer a broader, intellectual vision of Islam to the youth. An account is given of non-Asian *pir*, Shaykh Nazim who offers a mystical and tolerant view of Islam encouraging an interactive relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Barelwi *imams* have little attraction to the youth, in this chapter accounts are provided by the youth of their opinions and feelings on Shaykh Nazim and his influence on them, which has a lot also to do with his charismatic personality. And finally we analyse the *kismetic* dimensions of Mirpuri religiosity.

Conclusion

The need for literature on the religious beliefs and practices of the Mirpuri community has long been overdue. The Mirpuris come from a background which venerates sacred time, place and people. Thus, Mirpuris are great believers in the

power of faith and practices connected to *pirs* and their shrines and aware of their role in asking God through these saints. In the British diaspora Mirpuris have undergone significant changes in terms of economic, social and religious position. It has been stated earlier how religion in the diaspora changes, practices are 'retained', 'adapted' or 'lost'. This thesis will investigate how and what has remained, adapted or been lost from Mirpuri religion in the British diaspora and the factors affecting this. Vertovec's theory on religions in the diaspora and Hinnells' observations will prove helpful in understanding the Mirpuri diaspora in Britain.

Literature on South Asian Islam in Britain has often focused much on race and ethnicity and not enough on the religion of these people. Due to the lack of material on the South Asian community and assumptions were made on behalf of the South Asian community which still resonate today and need to be challenged from a more concrete premise. A common assumption and misconception is the religiosity of Muslim migrants from South Asia, which was seen to be lax. Yet no research was done to examine what 'religious' meant to Mirpuri migrant from a village in Kashmir. Was it the fulfilment of the religious obligations such as praying the prescribed prayers and fasting or was it the belief and practice of something else? Scholars such as Lewis, Werbner, Ballard and McLoughlin have provided fresh research and an insight into the religious lives of the Pakistanis in Britain. This study builds on this research providing first hand accounts of Mirpuri's religious practices. Migrants in Britain account for a substantial number of the Pakistani migrants within Britain. Originally Mirpuri migrants came to Britain to earn enough income to support families living in Mirpur to try and improve living conditions. So was born the 'myth of return'. Most Mirpuri migrants brought their families over to

Britain later and then settled here. Hence second and third generation Mirpuris of these early migrants were born and raised here. In order to assess what changes have taken place in the Mirpuri religiosity in Britain we explore the differing worldviews of the early Mirpuri migrants the *babas* (elders) and the second and third generation Mirpuris, the *kakas* (youth). But before all this we need to locate the underlying Sufi cosmology of the Mirpuris and thus we turn to the Indian Sufi orders in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Mast (Intoxicated) and *Ba-Hosh* (Sober) Sufis: the Influence of the Chishtiyya, Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya in India, 1300-1900

Introduction

Muslim mystics have sought to achieve union with God through direct contemplation of spiritual or divine realities, passing through different *ahwal* (states) and *maqamat* (stations) on the *tariqah* (way). In its early stages Sufism consisted of devout individuals who spent their lives in continual worship such as Hasan al-Basri (d.728), one of the earliest Sufis of Basra in Iraq (Lapidus 1991:110). During the tenth century there was an underlying tension between some of the upholders of Islamic orthodoxy, the *ulama* (scholars) and the Sufis. The gulf was widened by fierce orthodox reaction against the individualistic intuition of the Sufis, when Mansur al-Hallaj (d.922), who declared *Ana al-Haqq* (I am the Truth) was executed for blasphemy in Baghdad in 922 CE. Thereafter most of the vocal Sufis tried to reconcile Sufi practice with traditional orthodox Islam.

Sufi brotherhoods began to emerge during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and spread Islam throughout the Muslim lands (Arberry 1989:xv; Trimingham 1973:9). The followers of these brotherhoods attributed their practices and beliefs to the famous earlier Sufis master such as Abu Yazid al-Bastami (d.875) and Junayd al-Baghdadi (d.910) who originated from Khurasan and Baghdad, two of the major sites of learning (Trimingham 1973:4; Lapidus 1991:169; Mojaddedi 2001:18). Inclined members of the community acted as a counterbalance against the influence

of hair-splitting arguments of the *ulama* that had little in common with the needs of the masses. These brotherhoods provided an opportunity to the masses for an emotional outlet in events such as festivals and death anniversary celebrations of saints in which they participated in devotional music and dance.

The devotional Islam of the Mirpuri Muslims is intrinsically linked with the so-called *mast* (intoxicated: drunk with the love of God) and *ba-hosh* (sober) Indian Sufi orders of the Chishtiyya, Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya. These are the most popular Sufi orders in Panjab and Kashmir. The overall aim of this chapter is to illuminate the cosmology and associated institutions and rituals of these orders as a way of contextualising their influence upon the religion of the Mirpuris. This chapter begins with an account of the intoxicated Chishtiyya order and its characteristic ritual practices, from the *urs* (death anniversary of a saint) to *qawwali* (devotional music). Although this chapter discusses the 'characteristic' devotional practices of particular orders, of course, such practices are now common across the various orders. It also assesses the impact of such major mystical figures as Shaykh Ibn Arabi (d.1240) and Mawlana Rumi (d.1273) on this order and the role of vernacular poetry in transmitting their cosmology to the Indian masses in a simple and comprehensible form. Indeed, the Chishtiyya tended to avoid contact with the government of the time and attracted criticism from the *ulama* for its practices.

In contrast to the Chishtiyya, the Naqshbandiyya in India upholds the cosmology of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d.1624). Both Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi and the later Sufi reformer Shah Wali Allah (d.1762) sought to reform Sufism from within, reconciling the teachings of the *shari'ah* (Islamic law) and the *tariqah* (mysticism).

In contrast to the Chishtiyya masters, both Shaykh Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah emphasised the need to keep close contact with the government. Indeed, the Naqshbandiyya is an elitist order, which requires more commitment from its members. While the Chishtiyya is responsible for introducing the devotional practice of *qawwali*, it is the Naqshbandiyya who played an important part in the practice of celebrating *milad sharif* (Prophet's Birthday), a fact which has largely been ignored in the literature. Linkage of this practice to the *shari'ah* by the Naqshbandiyya has won the approval of the *ulama*, unlike the use of *qawwali* by the Chishtiyya.

After comparing the Naqshbandiyya and the Chishtiyya, I provide an account of the Qadiriyya. Studies on South Asian Islam have mainly focused on either the ecstatic practices of the Chishtiyya or the reforms of the Naqshbandiyya and as a result the Qadiriyya has often been neglected. Despite this, it has played a significant role in the spread of devotional practices such as *giyarvin sharif* (a monthly gathering in honour of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani, d. 1166) and the veneration of *sayyids* (descendants of the Prophet). The Qadiriyya's transformation in the Panjab region, from a sober to an intoxicated order, is best exemplified by the poetry of Bulleh Shah Qadiri (d.1758), a firm advocate of Shaykh Ibn Arabi's teachings. A brief discussion of his work provides the immediate context for the form of devotional Islam popular in Mirpur prior to large-scale migration to Britain that is discussed in the next chapter.

Finally, we analyse the contrasting attitudes of the modern 'Sufi' and 'anti-Sufi' reform movements which emerged in nineteenth century colonial India. The Ahl-i

Hadith, the Deobandis/Tablighi Jama'at (Preaching Party) and the Barelwis all took different positions on the desirability of different devotional beliefs and practices although it would take much longer for them to impact religious life in Mirpur than pre-partition India per se. Once again, it is worth repeating that while the Barelwi *ulama* are often seen as defenders of devotional Islam, they do need to be distinguished from Sufis per se.

The Chishtiyya, its Cosmology and Shaykh Ibn Arabi

Sufi brotherhoods were to play a key role in the spread of Islam in India especially during the Delhi Sultanates (1206-1526). Trimingham states:

> Indian Islam seems to have been essentially a holy-man Islam. These migrants in the Hindu environment acquired an aura of holiness, and it was this, which attracted Indians to them, rather than formal Islam (1973:22).

One of the most influential Sufi brotherhoods in India is the Chishtiyya. It is named after Shaykh Abu Ishaq Chishti (d.940); however its founder in India was Khwaja Muin al-Din Hasan Sijzi (d.1236), one of the most outstanding figures of this period (Rizvi 2002[1]: 115; Schimmel 1980:345; Lapidus 1991:444). Khwaja Muin al-Din was renowned for his love for the poor and became known as *Gharib Nawaz* (Patron of the Poor). He was of the view that "to bring one moment of joy to the heart of a poor person is worth years of religious observances in the eyes of God" (Sharib 1990:65).

The Chishtiyya was popularized in India by subsequent masters such as Baba Farid al-Din Ganj-i Shakar (d.1265) and Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya (d.1325) (who are

[1] Rizvi provides an excellent account of the 'intoxicated' Sufis in his *A History of Sufism in India* (Vol, 1), however for criticism of Rizvi, see Khan in Troll (1992:275-291)

both seen as major exemplars of piety). "In them are displayed the characteristic elements of Indian Sufism: mystical, magical, poetic and tolerant expression of faith" (Ahmed 2002:94). Baba Farid settled in Pakpattan Sharif in Panjab (Pakistan) and was the founding father of Panjabi devotional poetry. It was due to Baba Farid's efforts that Panjabi mystical poetry began to flourish and as a result many folk songs and ballads were composed though not written down (Schimmel in Akhund 1993:91). After his death, Baba Farid's shrine became one of the major sites of Sufi pilgrimage in Panjab. Visitors believe that his grave possesses *barakah* (blessing) and the gate to his shrine has gained fame as the *bihishti darwaza* (Heaven's Gate). His death anniversary is celebrated by approximately a million people annually (Lapidus 1991:445; Clancy-Smith 1995: 199; Masud 1987:278).

Baba Farid's successor, Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya, affectionately known as *Mahbub-i Ilahi* (Beloved of God), represents in many ways the pinnacle of the Chishtiyya. Baba Farid said to him: "You will be a tree under whose shadow the people will find rest..." (Rizvi 2002:157). This might explain why he admitted so many people into the Chishtiyya as his disciples. Shaykh Nizam al-Din welcomed all kinds of peoples into his discipline including nobles and plebeians, rich and poor, learned and the illiterate, citizens and villagers, soldiers and warriors to free-men and slaves. Consequently the wisdom of his open-ended policy led to the spread of the Chishtiyya to far-flung areas of Uttar Pradesh, Rajputana, Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal, Kashmir and the Deccan states. He sent disciples who were well versed in the Chishtiyya teachings, yet sensitive to the needs of the local populace (Lawrence 1992:3). Shaykh Nizam al-Din was known to offer comfort and solutions to his visitors' problems daily alleviating their grief, reducing their anxiety

and lifting their faltering spirits. One day he was informed that some people thought that he had no worries in life because whatever others longed for came to him unasked. Upon hearing this he remarked:

> Nobody in this world has more worries than I. So many people come to me, confiding in me their woes, their worries. All these accounts of misery and sorrow sear my heart and weigh down my soul (Lawrence 1992:41).

Since his death, Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya occupies a special place in the history of institutional Sufism in South Asia. Kings, conquerors, nobles, scholars, saints and all sections of the populace, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, have visited his tomb in search of *barakah (*blessing). Pinto's (1995) study of his shrine suggests that it is still a place of popular veneration.

Eaton rightly suggests that the cosmology of the Chishtiyya owed much to the Spanish Sufi theorist Shaykh Ibn Arabi's (d.1240) doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* (Unity of Being) (1978:47-48). Shaykh Ibn Arabi, affectionately known to the Sufis as *al-Shaykh al-Akbar* (the Greatest Master), is without a doubt one of the most important and influential thinkers in later Islamic intellectual history (Chittick 1989: x; Affifi 1979:x). His mystical philosophy, which he did not name and only later became known as the doctrine of Unity of Being, dominated all cultural spheres of the later Muslim world (Takeshita 1987:1). Shaykh Ibn Arabi states:

> That which is worshipped by every tongue, in all states and at all times, is the One. Every worshipper, of whatever kind, is the One. Thus there is nothing but the One... and there is no existence for other than the One. ... This Oneness of God the Real: by the Oneness of the Real we are manifest. If He were not, we would not be, but our existence does not necessitate that He, glory to Him, is not (Hirtenstein 1999:25).

As the above quote suggests, Shaykh Ibn Arabi wrote in a very elevated Arabic style and his ideas and the concepts he discussed were very complex even for the

educated. So, how were his intricate thoughts translated for the illiterate Indian masses? Schimmel (1997) perhaps provides the answer:

> The Sufis wrote their poetry in the language of the people of their lands. They taught the love of God, love for the Prophet, love of mankind to the illiterate, simple people who were unable to understand the Arabic of the theologians (http://www.as-sunnah).

For example, one of the earliest (Chishtiyya) Panjabi Sufi poets (of whose significance more in due course), Baba Farid (d.1265) writes:

Faridaa khaaliq khalq meyn khalq wasey rab manh
Mandaa kis noon aakhyey jaan tis bin koee naanh

Farid, the Creator lives in the creation and the creation dwells in the Creator,
Since You are the essence of all creations, therefore none should be condemned.
(Ahmed 2004:21).

And

The Lord is He Who's,
Manifest in me,
I am not Masud (Baba Farid's first name),
By Allah I am Him.
Light of the Universe,
I am, you see,
The sun I am, atom of dust I am not.
(Rabbani 1995:290-1).

The above verses of Baba Farid artfully illustrate the cosmology of the Chishtiyya which revolves around the concept of 'Unity of Being'. This maintains that the reality of human beings is not their physical form but the light of God that is manifest in them. Human beings are the lamp through which God can be seen. Chittick asserts:

> Ibn al-Arabi's teachings come together on the issue of human perfection, which is none other than for human beings to be fully human. Humans are different from other creatures because they are forms of the whole, while other creatures are parts. " God created Adam in His form," and likewise created the cosmos in His form. Both the cosmos and the human being are integral forms of God (1998:xxiii).

The Chishtiyya hold the view that all creation is the manifestation of God and one should live in 'peace with all' as ultimately *hama ust* (All is He) (Rizvi 2002:210).

However, it could be argued that whilst Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of *wahdat al-wujud* encouraged people to achieve direct mystical experience and advocated peaceful co-existence between Indian Muslims and followers of other faiths it inadvertently undermined the authority of the *shari'ah* and thus attracted criticism from the *ulama*. Rahman, a modernist Muslim commentator, is of the opinion that Sufism had compromised its Islamic beliefs and practices with those that had no connection with Islam. He argues:

> Besides Sufism's 'appeal to the heart' at the higher level, it unfolded a disconcerting tendency of compromise with popular beliefs and practices of the half-converted and even nominally converted masses...it allowed a motley of religious attitudes inherited by the new converts from their previous backgrounds, from animism in Africa to pantheism in India (Rahman 1966:154).

Shaykh Ibn Arabi's theory of *al-insan al- kamil* (the perfect man) is also worth discussing as it might explain why the Prophet and the saints enjoy such extreme devotion in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. The concept of 'perfect man' dates back to early Sufi masters such as Abu Yazid al-Bastami (d.875) who had used the term *al-kamil al-tammam* (the complete perfect one) for a mystic who had attained perfection. Indeed, Mansur al-Hallaj (d.922), considered himself to have accomplished all the stages of perfection, so becoming a manifestation of the perfection of the Divine Attributes (Nicholson n.d:79; Jahangiri 2003:454). However, Shaykh Ibn Arabi was the first Sufi writer to apply the term *al-insan al-kamil* to humanity per se in his works such as *Fusus al-Hikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) (1975) (Burckhardt 1975:12; Nicholson n.d:81).

In Shaykh Ibn Arabi's view the 'perfect man' acts as an intermediary between God and creation. In a position to receive spiritual outpourings from God, he can transfer

them to creation. His relation to God is like the pupil to the eye. The perfect man is the cause of existence and the source of the nobility, spirituality and the perfection of the Universe. He is the soul that is connected with God and thus he is the only one deserving of the exalted station of being the deputy of God, the true slave of God, and the manifestations of all the Names (Jahangiri 2003:454-57).

Shaykh Ibn Arabi states that the *hadith*: "I was prophet when Adam was still between water and mud", affirms that *al-haqiqa al-muhammadiyya* (the Muhammadan Reality) was always in existence, and subsequently manifested itself in all the prophets sent to humanity and achieved its most perfect manifestation in the person of Muhammad (peace be upon him). Therefore aspects of it have continued to appear in the *awliya* (saints), the heirs of the Prophet, either directly from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) or the earlier prophets. Prophethood ended with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and left its heritance in the form of *wilaya* (sainthood) to disseminate spirituality till the end of time (Addas 2000:76-77).

Pirs and Devotional Practices at their Mazars: the Chishtiyya, Urs and Qawwali

At this stage we need to say something on the role of *pirs* (saints) who are viewed as the inheritors of the Prophet of Islam and who have effectively translated Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of *wahdat al-wujud* and *al-insan al-kamil* to the masses from generation to generation. In praise of his beloved *pir*, Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya, Khusrau writes:

Bal bal jaaon mein toray rang rajwa,
Apni see kar leeni ray mosay naina milaikay

I give my life to you, oh my cloth-dyer;
You've dyed me in yourself, by just a glance.

Khusro Nijaam kay bal bal jayyiye
Mohay Suhaagan keeni ray mosay naina milaikay

I give my whole life to you Oh, Nizam;
You have made me your bride, by just a glance.
(http://www.angelfire.com/urdumedia/lyrics.html).

The role of the *pir* has been described as a 'bride-dresser' (*mashata*) (Baldick 1989:97). As the bride is made up to look her most beautiful, in the same way the *pir* prepares the *murid* (novice) for his meeting with his Beloved (God). Khusrau acknowledges that his master has made him a 'bride'. The idea that the spiritual power of the *pir* is in his glance is a common one. For example, in a *qawwali*, Nusrat Fateh Ali (d.1997) sings: "*Yeh jo halka, halka, surur hai, yeh teri nazr ka, qasur hai* (Your glance is at fault for this delirious intoxication)" (Album 13, Time Linc Records 2002). The *pir* is 'drunk' on the wine of Divine love and that is reflected in his intoxicated eyes and if in his state of drunkenness he happens to look upon someone then that person also experiences a measure of Divine love. Indeed, what would have taken the *murid* a lifetime to accomplish is attained by a mere glance from the *pir*.

Ballard asserts that even the deceased *pir* is in a sense still 'present' to the devotees and hence accessible to them. As the *pir* has achieved his union with his Lord, he is in closer proximity to God than the living and able to intercede on behalf his devotees (2004:6). Hence numerous Sufi shrines are to be found throughout the Indian subcontinent. Indeed, thousands of village shrines are known only through local legends, sometimes confined only to that village and often substantially

apocryphal (Green 1997:8). Thus in most cases the Sufi saints of India gained greater popularity after their death, with the result that their shrines have emerged as centres of pilgrimage.

For example, the cult of the Ajmer shrine emerged centuries after the death of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz, although the tradition of visiting shrines in India was well established before the Mughal period. However it gained greater significance during Emperor Akbar's (d.1605) rule. Akbar was a devotee of Shaykh Salim Chishti (d.1571). On several occasions Akbar visited and made offerings at the shrine of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz in Ajmer. Following Akbar's visit it became a royal tradition and his son Jahangir (d.1627) and grandson Shah Jahan (d.1658), who built the Taj Mahal, also visited the Ajmer shrine to pay their respects to Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (Troll 1992:50-1; Currie 1992:98-110).

The *mazar* thus plays an important socio-religious role, and has done since early medieval times. The form that the *ziyarah* (pilgrimage) to the *mazar* takes, including the offerings of flowers and sweetmeats, is reflected distinctly in the Hindu custom of making offerings to the gods in the temple. Possibly it is for this reason, that even today, many non-Muslims visit Sufi shrines. For example, most of the devotees at the shrine of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz are Hindus (Green 1997:9; Ahmed 2002:96). This would no doubt have pleased Shaykh Ibn Arabi who sought to show equality of all people and creeds before the one Creator.

In describing the main characteristics of a *pir/mazar* based devotional Islam in the Indo-Pak subcontinent the practice of *urs* and *qawwali* need to be considered

alongside *pirs* and shrines. An *urs* is generally organised by the followers of a *pir* to commemorate his death anniversary. For the saint, death is the culmination of a life-long yearning to meet God and the Prophet. *Urs* in literary terms means a 'wedding'. The Prophet said that the angels say to the deceased: "Sleep like one newly married (*arus*)" (Robson 1994:34). Hence the term *urs* is traced to the above *hadith.*

Annually, on the day on which the saint left his earthly existence to be in the Divine presence, the followers gather at the grave, recite the Qur'an and *dhikr* (remembrance of God) and dedicate the *isale-i sawab* (merit) to the soul of the saint. The life of the saint is presented as an example for other Muslims to follow. People are encouraged to emulate the *taqwa* (piety), sacrifices and *khidmat* (service) of the deceased saint. The grave is then sprinkled with perfume and covered with flowers. To place flowers and other fresh branches on the graves is also a *Sunnah* according to the tradition of the Prophet (Robson 1994:73). Perfume is sprinkled onto the grave, as perfume has a certain degree of affinity with the spirit of the dead. The Prophet was renowned for his love of perfume. The sprinkling of perfume in the sacred precincts of a saint's tomb generates calmness and serenity amongst the visitors. The hope is that this will lead to purity of thought and action. It also displays recognition of the achievement and success of the departed soul who has reached the ultimate goal of nearness to God. On this occasion a new *ghilaf* (cover) is spread on the grave of the saint (Desai in Troll 1992: 89).

Some of the most elaborate ceremonies of *urs* take place at the shrines of Data Ganj Bakhsh (Lahore), Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (Ajmer), Baba Farid (Pakpattan) and Shaykh Nizam al-Din (Delhi), which annually attract hundreds of thousands of

devotees from all sections of the community. The emotionally charged atmosphere of the *urs* ceremony is difficult to resist and when the experience overwhelms the visitors they forget their problems and enjoy a moment of rare spiritual bliss (Lamb 1991:130).

Qawwali plays an important part in the *urs* celebrations and, according to Ballard, its whole philosophical and theological structure is based upon Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of *wahdat al-wujud*. The *qawwali* repertoire consists of praise for God and the Prophet, a eulogy of Imam Ali and homage to a saint. The cosmology behind this is that God sends His blessing upon His beloved Prophet who in turn passes this blessing to his successor Imam Ali and from him the blessing is transmitted to the saint in whose honour the *qawwali* performed. Although the Chishtiyya is predominately Sunni however, their veneration for Imam Ali brings them very close to the Shia.

The central theme of *qawwali*, then, is the idea of divine love known as *ishq* and, in this respect, the contribution of *Mawlana* (our master) Jalal al-Din Rumi (d.1273), one of the greatest representatives of the 'Sufi path of Love', has to be acknowledged. The principal theme in Mawlana Rumi's writing is *ishq* (love) (Chittick 1983:194). He writes:

How much I may explain and describe love,
When I reach love, I become ashamed.
Although the commentary by the tongue is illuminating,
Love without tongues is more radiant.
(Schimmel 1993:333).

Qawwali originated with the foundation of the Chishtiyya in Khurasan in the early tenth century and was brought to India in the twelfth century. However, it was

during Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya's period that *qawwali* became popular in India and his disciple, Amir Khusrau (d.1325), is rightly regarded as the founding father of *qawwali* (Qureshi 1995:1). Khusrau wrote and composed many devotional songs in honour of his beloved master, which are still part of the *qawwali* repertoire today (Nayyar 1988:2).

The Qadiriyya: Shaykh Jilani, *giyarvin sharif* and intoxicated Sufi poets in Panjab

The Qadiriyya is named after Shaykh Sayyid Abd al-Qadir Jilani (d.1166), a Hanbali jurist of Baghdad, who traced his genealogy to the Prophet. The Qadiriyya was brought into India by Sayyid Muhammad Ghawth (d.1517), a descendent of Shaykh Jilani. It is said that both the governor of Multan, Shah Husayn and the Sultan of Delhi Sikandar Lodhi (d.1517) were his followers (Trimingham 1973:97; Lahuri 1990:190). Therefore, in sharp contrast to the Chishtiyya, who avoided contact with the government, the Qadiriyya in India established links with the ruling class from the outset. Moreover, the numerous suborders also continually shift between the 'sober' and the 'intoxicated' traditions of Sufism because of its loose structures and lack of any centralisation.

Shaykh Jilani was born in the Gilan (in Arabic, 'Jilan') province in Iran and later migrated to Baghdad, the Abbasid capital. Rizvi summaries the Qadiriyya cosmology well:

> To all intents and purposes, the Qadiriyya advocated the deification of their founder and all his descendants, both of the blood and spiritually. To some extent this developed from Shaikh Abdu'l-Qadir's saying, 'My Foot is on the neck of every saint of God,' which his followers interpreted as implying the superiority of the Qadiriyya order (2002:54).

The Qadiriyya propagated Shaykh Jilani as the *Ghawth al-Azam* (the Greatest Helper) and hence the supreme leader of all saints:

Ust dar jumla awliya mumtaz,
Chun payembar dar ambiya mumtaz.

He (Shaykh Jilani) is superior to all saints,
As the Messenger is the greatest amongst the prophets.
(Rahi 1997:230).

Moreover, as a direct descendant of the Prophet, Shaykh Jilani was credited with miraculous powers and numerous miracles. The Qadiriyya also viewed the *sayyids* (descendants of the Prophet): "To be immaculate beings who, with their children deserved the most servile deference" (Rizvi 2002:54). Hence, veneration for the *sayyids* became a major feature of this order.

During the Mughal period, Qadiriyya scholars such as Shaykh Abd al-Haqq Dihlawi (d.1642) wrote many books which propagated the worldview of this order. In his account of Indian Sufis, *Akhbar al-Akhyar fi asrar al-Abrar (Reports of the Righteous on the Secrets of the Pious)*, he begins with a description of Shaykh Jilani despite the fact that the great master never set foot on Indian soil. Shaykh Abd al-Haqq did this because any account of the Sufi masters would, in his view, be incomplete without mentioning the 'leader of Saints', Shaykh Jilani. Shaykh Abd al-Haqq Dihlawi also attributes the following saying to Shaykh Jilani: "Whenever you ask God anything, ask in my in name and your wish will be granted. If anyone seeks my help during time of affliction he will receive help" (n.d:50). Hence, Qadiriyya masters advise their devotees to seek help from Shaykh Jilani during adversity by chanting: "*Ya Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani sha'in lillah hazar shu* (O, Shaykh Abd al-Qadir, for God's sake come to my aid)" (Bahu 1995:124).

Like the Chishtiyya, the Qadiriyya were great proponents of Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of *wahdat al wujud* and *al-insan al-kamil*. This is very evident in the writings of the Mughal prince, Dara Shikuh (d.1659), a member of the Qadiriyya who tried to infuse Islamic and Hindu mysticism. Indeed, writers such as Lahuri claim that Shaykh Ibn Arabi actually belonged to the Qadiriyya (1990:185). Yet Shaykh Ibn Arabi's own writings do not support this view. Nonetheless, he does express great admiration for Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani as well as many other Sufi masters.

The Qadiriyya successfully propagated the idea that its founder Shaykh Jilani is the 'leader of all saints,' a notion which is firmly established in the hearts and minds of South Asian Muslims. This was mainly done through devotional poetry in praise of Shaykh Jilani written by Qadiriyya poets such as Shah Abu Ma'ali (d.1615), who writes:

gar kasay wallah be'alam az mae irfani ast,
az tafail-e shah abd al-qadir gilani ast.

By God if any one in the world tastes spiritual wine,
It is due to Shah Abd al-Qadir Jilani's blessing.
(Rahi 1997:300).

Moreover, the Qadiriyya attributed countless miracles to Shaykh Jilani which are still popular in oral tradition in India. For example, Barakati (1985) writes that a sinner who was a contemporary and a devotee of Shaykh Jilani, died and was questioned about his beliefs by the angels in the grave. Instead of answering the questions, the sinner cried: "O, Shaykh Abd al-Qadir help me for God's sake." The angels were told by God to leave the sinner alone as he had love for His beloved (Shaykh Jilani) and that was sufficient for his salvation (1985:292).

In terms of the distinctive devotional ritual practices of the Qadiriyya, the monthly *giyarvin sharif* (literally 'the eleventh') is an attempt by South Asian Muslims to seek assistance from the 'Greatest Helper'. This important Qadiriyya ritual provides further insight into the cosmology of the order. According to Hashmi (n.d.), a member of the Qadiriyya, the origin of *giyarvin sharif* is as follows. During his lifetime Shaykh Jilani held a gathering on the tenth of every lunar month, primarily because it was a holiday. It was on this day that the Abbasid government paid its officials. Hence, it was a day of festivity and a local market emerged at the site and gradually Shaykh Jilani built his *zawiya* (Sufi retreat) there. Once the trading was over people would gather at Shaykh Jilani's *zawiya* and offer their evening prayers and partake *langar* (blessed food) as part of the Shaykh's hospitality. Following this, the night prayers would be offered and then Shaykh Jilani would address the gathering. He chose this particular occasion on the basis that it was an opportunity to reach out to both the civil servants and the commoners and thus this date became an important monthly event in Baghdad (Hashmi n.d:52-53).

Whilst Hashmi's attempt to justify the origins of *giyarvin sharif* is not without interest, it is not based on any historical evidence and does not explain why an activity that started in Baghdad should have a Hindi name. I have been unable to find any historical evidence that deals with the origins of *giyarvin sharif.* I would suggest this ritual evolved under the Qadiriyya in India, during the Mughal period when it was known in Farsi as *yazdum* (eleventh) and following the decline of the Persian language it was later given a Hindi name of *giyarvin sharif* (Ali 1892:16; Dihlawi n.d:496; Ferozsons 1969:587).

Ali (1892) observes that Indian Muslims celebrated the annual ceremony of Shaykh Jilani in a similar way to the Prophet's Birthday. Prayers were offered on this occasion for the soul of the saint, charity was given to the poor in his honour, his virtues and miracles were related to the gathering. The similarity with the Prophet does not end there for it is claimed in this gathering that as the Prophet was the leader of all messengers, in the same way Shaykh Jilani is the leader of all saints and no one can attain the rank of sainthood without his approval (Ali 1892:16). In conclusion the following petition is addressed to Shaykh Jilani:

Imdad kun imdad kun az ranj o gham azad kun
Dar din o dunya shad kun ya Ghaush-i azam dastgir

O, helping hand, give help, give help, and free us from pain and sorrow,
Make us successful in all our endeavours.
(Barakati 1985:319).

At the end of the gathering, *langar* (blessed food) is distributed among the attendees.

The motivations behind *giyarvin sharif* are twofold. One is to consolidate the position of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani as superior to all other Sufi masters and the second is to increase veneration and also revenue for *sayyids*. According to the Prophet's ruling his family which includes the *sayyids* were not allowed to accept *sadaqa* (charity) or *zakah* (alms) as it was considered unclean for their lofty rank and thus they were given a fifth from the spoils of war (Qur'an 8:41; Sabiq 1995: 374). However, in India the *sayyids* did not receive any special income from the state. So I propose that some *sayyids* invented the concept of *giyarvin sharif* which does not fall into either charity or alms category and therefore it must have seemed a heavenly solution to the plight of the poor *sayyids*.

How much (if any) of this monetary offering actually goes back to Shaykh Jilani's shrine in Baghdad is suspect.

Earlier in this chapter, in the context of the Chishtiyya, we discussed one of the first Panjabi Sufi poets, Baba Farid. However, mystics such as Shah Husayn Qadiri (d.1599), Sultan Bahu Qadiri (d.1691) and Bulleh Shah Qadiri (d.1758), who all wrote 'intoxicated' poetry in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, respectively perhaps surprisingly belonged to the Qadiriyya (Shackle 2000:56; Ghaffar 2005:12). It seems that in Panjab at least, the suborders of the Qadiriyya dramatically shifted towards the 'intoxicated' tradition within Sufism and it became difficult to separate them from the Chishtiyya (Makki 1977:8).

Ballard rightly suggests that most Sufi masters agree that it essential for the mystic to detach himself from the transient world if he is to follow the mystical path of the Prophet's teachings. Thus these masters have devised numerous severe ascetic disciplines that seek to achieve the desired result: detachment from the world. Poetry and music are examples of methods Sufis used to entice the state of *ishq* (passionate love) in order to purify the *nafs* (ego) from earthly desires. Like the moth the seeker must have no other wish than to lose himself in his Beloved (God):

> It follows that just as ecstatic moths lose control of themselves as they dance ever more passionately around the flame which will absorb them, so for the sufi devotee the stern behavioural prescriptions of the *'ulema* become ever more insignificance the further he or she proceeds down the path of gnostic awareness. Whilst only a small minority of those who take this path suggest that it is therefore legitimate to entirely ignore the prescribed norms of behavioural conformity, virtually all would agree that the pursuit of gnosis puts all other priorities in the shade (Ballard 2004:3).

It could be argued that the intoxicated Sufis saved Islam from being over-influenced by 'legalism', for there is always the temptation for people without

understanding to concentrate on mere observance of rules and rituals, as if that was sufficient for salvation. These Sufis fought to keep the love of God and the Prophet alive. Their humility, sincerity, devotion, character and conduct had a great impact on those who observed them. As a result, the needs of the inner qualities and intentions were emphasised more by the intoxicated Sufis in order to balance the outer orthodox rituals. It is this emphasis on personal and internal commitment to Islam that explains the religion of the Panjabi people and also the Mirpuris (see Chapter Three).

Baba Farid's influence is evident in the Panjabi Sufi poetry of the mystics mentioned above. Of these, Bulleh Shah emerged as the most popular poet of Panjab and versified Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of *wahdat al-wujud* more forcefully than any other (Puri and Shangari 2002:76). Rutuki's (2003) excellent commentary on his poetry also rightly links it with the Persian Sufi tradition of Rumi, Jami and Hafiz. Born in Uch, in Multan, Bulleh Shah belonged to a family which traced its genealogy to Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani and to the Prophet. Following a traditional Islamic studies course with Maulvi Ghulam Murtaza, he became a follower of Shah Inayat Qadiri (d.1728).

Bulleh Shah explained the concepts of Shaykh Ibn Arabi by giving concrete examples from everyday life from which the mainly illiterate masses could grasp the 'higher' concepts of the great master through the immediate world around them. For example, he skilfully summarises Shaykh Ibn Arabi's doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* thus:

Sab ikku rang kapain da,
Tai tanah patta nalyain.
Peith natra teh chayin chalian,

Apo apney naam jatwan,
Wakkuh wakkhi jain da.
Sab ikku rang kapain da,
Chunsi peinsi kaddar dotar,
Mal mal khasa ikka shutar.
Puni vichun baher away,
Bugwa behis go sain da.
(Faqir n.d:143).

There is only one thread of all cotton.
The warp, the woof, the quill of the weaver's shuttle,
The shuttle, the texture of cloths,
The cotton shoes and hanks of yarn,
All are known by their respective names,
And they all belong to their respective places,
But there is only one thread of yarn.
(Duggal 2004 http://www.apnaorg.com/poetry/).

For Bulleh Shah, the common people did not need to engage in philosophical debates because everything around them indicated the validity of such a statement. Indeed, while the genius of Shaykh Ibn Arabi is not in any doubt, perhaps the genius of the Panjabi Sufi poets in conveying his complex ideas in such simple terms ought to be recognised. However, notably, Ballard argues that the Panjabi masses were already familiar with most of these concepts due to historical contact with Buddhism, which also advocated the notion of seeking spiritual meaning in everyday experience (2004:14).

Another major feature of Bulleh Shah's poetry, and indeed that of many other Panjabi poets, is a critique of the *ulama*: Bulleh Shah lived during the decline of the Mughal Empire which was characterised by religious intolerance. In sharp contrast to the government sponsored clerics who preached the message of communal hatred, Bulleh Shah advocated the policy of 'peace with all' and gallantly set out to challenge the clerics of the day. "His outright rejection of any formal authority of religious institutions in regulating the affairs of society, in particular the role of the

mullahs and religious scholars, became the subject of many of his famous poems" (Rahmah 2002:5). For example, Bulleh Shah writes:

> *Bullah, mullah ateh mashalchi dohain ikku chit,*
> *Lokan karday chananh ap andery nit.*
>
> Bulleh the cleric and torch-bearer are from the same breed,
> They give light to others, yet themselves remain in the dark.
> (Faqir n.d:367).

Indeed, Bulleh Shah was considered a heretic by the local *ulama*. When he died they refused to lead his funeral or allow his body to be buried amongst the ordinary Muslims (Puri and Shangari 2002:23). Nevertheless the critique of the *ulama* did not diminish the popularity of Bulleh Shah as a *pir* amongst the Panjabi masses and his grave became a place of pilgrimage. His mystical poetry spread throughout Panjab and he became a household name in this region and remains so to this day (Shackle 2000:56-57; Rizvi 2002:446).

The 'Sober' Naqshbandiyya: Cosmology, Ritual and Reform

> Emphasizing silent *dhikr* in contrast to more emotional orders that could attract large crowds of followers and friends by means of common loud *dhikr*, religious music and whirling dance, the Naqshbandis stress the purification of the soul and the strict adherence to the practice of the Prophet (Schimmel 1980:90).

In contrast to the 'liberal' Chishtiyya, the Naqshbandiyya is a strict Central Asian Sufi order. It is named after Khwaja Baha al-Din Naqshband (d.1390). The Naqshbandiyya was introduced into India during the rule of Babur (d.1530), founder of the Mughal Empire, but the real breakthrough for the order came during the later part of Emperor Akbar's rule, when it began to emerge as a popular Sufi order there. This was mainly due to the efforts of Khwaja Muhammad Baqi Billah (d.1603), who firmly established the Naqshbandiyya in India (Trimingham 1973:95; Buehler 1996:208; Ikram1998:357).

In India, the Naqshbandiyya has some features that distinguish it from the Chishtiyya. Firstly, this order emphasises a spiritual genealogy that goes back to Abu Bakr. This is "a feature that serves to immediately to distinguish the Naqshbandiyya from the majority of Sufi orders that trace their descent through Ali" (Algar 1976:128). The Shia hold the view that Ali and not Abu Bakr was the rightful successor of the Prophet but as this belief is contrary to Sunni belief, the Naqshbandiyya made a deliberate attempt to distance themselves from the Shia by tracing their spiritual genealogy to Abu Bakr. However, in reality the Naqshbandiyya have a dual lineage that ends with both Abu Bakr and Ali (Bukhari 1975:12-13).

In addition, the 'sober' Naqshbandiyya did not participate in the ecstatic gatherings of *qawwali*. Instead, it promoted silent *dhikr* in which there was no outward display of emotion. In contrast to the Chishtiyya, who held events such as *urs* and *qawwali* which attracted the masses, the Naqshbandiyya were intent on keeping their activities within a select circle and were thus more unlikely to create controversy. For example, they held a short, simple gathering of *khatam al-khawajgan* (Conclusion of the Masters) on a daily basis in which some chapters from the Qur'an and salutations to the Prophet were read in a low voice. At the conclusion of the *dhikr* a silent supplication was made by the master (Kabbani 1995:423). This is one of the ways that the Naqshbandiyya has reconciled certain ritual practices such as *dhikr* with the *shari'ah* so as not to attract scandal or controversy.

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d.1624), known as *Mujaddid-i Alf-i Thani* (Renewer of the Second Millennium), succeeded Khwaja Baqi Billah at the head of the Naqshbandiyya and emerged as a major religious figure of the period. Notably, in some of his letters Shaykh Sirhindi challenged Shaykh Ibn Arabi's widely accepted doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* (Unity of Being) and proposed the doctrine *wahdat al-shuhud* (Unity of Witnessing) which, in his view, was more in line with the *shari'ah*. The principal difference between *wahdat al-wujud* and *wahdat al-shuhud* is that whilst the former states that God and creation can be understood as two aspects of one Reality, the latter does not accept that the essential union between man and God is possible (Schimmel in Akhund 1993:84-85).

Unlike Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of Unity of Being, Shaykh Sirhindi's cosmology revolves around the *shari'ah*. He is of the opinion that Islamic law consists of three things: knowledge, deeds and sincerity and unless one possesses all three qualities one cannot be seen to be completely following the *shari'ah*. In reality all Sufi efforts are an attempt to fulfil the third obligation of the *shari'ah*, namely sincerity, and thus the mystical ecstasies and raptures are mere child's play and not the goal of Sufism. The real goal of Sufis is to attain the stage of contentment through sincerity. The role of the *shari'ah* is of fundamental importance as it contains all that the Sufis need to gain the pleasure of God. In summary Sufism is subservient to *shari'ah* and not vice versa (Ansari 1986:221).

Shaykh Sirhindi was able to win the support of the *ulama* who found his concept more compatible with the *shari'ah* than Shaykh Ibn Arabi's. However, as Chittick rightly observes: "Although he (Shaykh Sirhindi) was critical of certain ideas that

he attributed to Ibn Arabi, his own writings are full of the terminology and concepts of Ibn Arabi's perspective, as he often acknowledges" (in Lewisohn and Morgan (eds). 1999:247). Thus it would be incorrect to suggest, as some writers such as Faruqi (1989) have done, that Shaykh Sirhindi rejects all of Shaykh Ibn Arabi's ideas.

In addition, Shaykh Sirhindi is associated with open opposition to the syncretic policies of the Mughal emperor Akbar. According to Trimingham: "His reaction against Akbar's tentative move towards religious syncretism earned him the Emperor's disfavour, but his reformist outlook won the support of subsequent Mogul emperors" (1973:95; Ahmed 1976:214). By contrast Rizvi, a modern Indian scholar of Sufism, is of the opinion that Shaykh Sirhindi was unable to perform any role of politico-social significance and, moreover, that he expressed extreme religious hatred for both Hindus and the Shia (Ter Harr 1991:v). Friedman argues that this image of Sirhindi as an intolerant figure masks the true significance of this seventeenth century mystic. He concludes: "The core of his [Sirhindi's] interest lay in the explanation of Sufi mysteries and any account of his thought that does not give due weight to this basic fact is necessarily distorted" (1971:113-115). In the absence of a complete English translation of Shaykh Sirhindi's works, and in particular his *Maktubat* (letters), an overall assessment of his thought may not yet be possible.

Another important Naqshbandiyya Sufi reformer was Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi (d.1762), who introduced a new spirit into the Indian Islamic thought and tried to reconcile the dichotomy between the *ulama* and Sufis (Trimingham 1973:128).

Shah Wali Allah received his early education from his illustrious father, who was his teacher as well as his spiritual guide. Following his father's death Shah Wali Allah left for Arabia for higher studies. During his stay in Arabia he studied with the scholar and mystic Shaykh Abu Tahir Muhammad (d.1733) of Madinah. It was from him that he obtained his *sanad* (diploma) in Hadith and initiation into several Sufi orders including Chishtiyya and Qadiriyya (Hermansen 1995:312-3; Buehler 1998:73; Ikram 1998:478).

The reign of Aurangzib had created an aversion to Sufism amongst the *ulama* and had led to the advent of extreme Puritanism in the form of banning Sufi works such as *Maktubat* (Letters) of Shaykh Sirhindi (Rizvi 2002:223). Shah Wali Allah attempted to strike a balance between the two extremes. By giving an orthodox interpretation to the Sufi doctrines, he removed the aversion, which the *ulama* had felt for Sufism and the Sufis. He achieved relative success in bridging the gulf between the Sufis and the *ulama* (Rizvi 1980:262). Shah Wali Allah's devotion to the Prophet, which played a major part in his thought and practice, is often absent in modern Muslim analyses of his work.

Shah Wali Allah and many other Naqshbandiyya masters took part in *milad sharif* (the celebration of the Prophet's Birthday). While not compulsory for Muslims, it is widely celebrated throughout the Muslim world (Kaptein 1993:1). The ritual of *milad sharif* was well established in the seventeenth century. However, it is in the writings of the eighteenth century Naqshbandiyya, Shah Wali Allah that we get the most elaborate accounts of this ritual. For example during his stay in Makkah and Madinah he attended gatherings of *milad sharif* which he describes in the following

words:

> The light of Mercy (*rahmat*) is strongest and is very apparent. Before this I had attended the blessed *maulid* in Makkah in honor of the birthday of His honored Presence, may the peace of God be upon him. People were reciting salutations and memorialising the remarkable signs which surrounded his noble birth and the visions which preceded his mission. Then I saw lights which flashed once and I cannot say whether I perceived this with my physical sense of sight or with my spiritual insight, and God knows better which of them it was. I reflected upon these lights and I found that they came from the angels who are in charge of such apparitions and gatherings and I saw that the lights of angels are mixed with the light of Mercy (Hermansen 1997:2).

During the eighteenth century *milad sharif* became widespread in India and was not necessarily confined to a single Sufi order. However, the role of the later nineteenth century Naqshbandiyya masters such as Shah Ahmad Sa'id Mujaddidi (d.1860) of Delhi in both defending and celebrating this event is also worthy of mention. This is something not highlighted by Buehler (1998) or Rizvi (2002). Shah Ahmad Sa'id Mujaddidi, wrote a treatise defending *milad sharif* entitled *sayid al-bayan fi maulid sayyid al-ins-i wa-al-Jan* (*An Excellent Account of the Birth of the Leader of Men and Jinn)* (Fusefeld in Ewing 1988:214; Faruqi 1985:3) in direct response to Maulvi Mahbub Ali Jafari's (d.1863) treatise criticising *milad sharif* and his accusation that Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi used to forbid such gatherings. Mujaddidi asserts that Shaykh Sirhindi did not forbid *milad sharif:* "This heretic group has found a new way of misguiding the simple folk...by attributing false statements to our masters" (1980:39).

Although Mujaddidi does not name the 'heretic group' it seems clear from his other writings that his criticism is directed at the Indian followers of the puritanical pre-modern Arabian revivalist, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab: the Ahl-i Hadith (discussed later) (Fusefeld in Ewing 1988:213-18). In the seventeenth and eighteenth century the Naqshbandiyya avoided holding large public gatherings favouring smaller, intimate sessions with their followers. However, by the nineteenth century the masters of this

khanqah felt the need to propagate *milad sharif* in the centre of the capital, Delhi. The Naqshbandiyya in Delhi probably felt that *milad sharif* had to be defended in the face of such criticism. Other Sufi orders such as the Qadiriyya had little influence in the city while the Chishtiyya, with a strong presence in the shape of shrines, lacked the scholarly authority to engage in academic debate. Hence, it was the Naqshbandiyya, more active in intellectual and political circles, that would have most impact on the modern reform movements of British India in the nineteenth century.

Sufis and Anti-Sufis: the Barelwis and other 19th Century reform movements

The fall of the Mughal Empire in the nineteenth century and the emergence of British colonial power was a deeply unsettling experience for Indians especially Muslims. Consequently, during this period Muslims began the process of re-evaluating their ideals, organisation, priorities and practices (Robinson 1988:4). Prior to this period: "Religion was basically a highly localized affair, often even a matter of individual conduct and individual salvation."(Oberoi 1994:14)

The Ahl i-Hadith (literally, 'People of the Hadith'), was the first modern reform movement to systematically challenge the cosmology of the Indian Sufis orders, in particular Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of the Unity of Being. Like the later Jama'at-Islami (Islamic Party) of the Islamist Sayyid Mawdudi (d.1979, see Chapter Six), these 'anti-Sufis' were of the opinion that Muslims needed to go back to the primary textual sources of Islam: the Qur'an and Hadith, rejecting not only the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence (Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali) but also all

aspects of devotional Islam. Rahman rightly argues that the Ahl-i Hadith "constitute almost a complete break with the medieval past and seek to resuscitate the pristine Islam of the earliest centuries" (1966:205).

The Deobandi movement was founded in 1867 in search of a more neo-traditionalist means of being Muslim in British India that accepted a reformed vision of Sufism. Aiming for as limited a relationship to the non-Muslim state as possible, in their emphasis on personally regulated religiosity for the upwardly mobile, Metcalf (1982), argues that the Deobandi *ulama* successfully produced a synthesis of both *shari'ah* and *tariqah,* the two main streams of Islamic tradition. Interestingly, both founders of the Deobandi movement, Mawlana Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi (d.1877) and Mawlana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d.1905), were members of the Chishtiyya. In addition, both Nanautavi and Gangohi were students of the Hadith teacher, Shah Abd al-Ghani Mujaddidi (d.1878), brother of the master of the Naqshbandiyya *khanqah,* Shah Ahmad Sa'id Mujaddidi. Hence the two founding fathers of the *Dar al-Ulum* (college) at Deoband had close contacts with at least two Sufi orders (Faruqi n.d:241). Nevertheless, although they do not reject Sufism outright like the Ahl-i Hadith, the Deobandis (and their more popular 'preaching' arm *Tablighi Jama'at*, founded 1926, see Chapter Six) are critical of many of the traditional devotional practices discussed in this chapter: *milad sharif, giyarvin sharif, urs*, and *qawwali.* Only *dhikr* do they find acceptable.

The Deobandi *ulama* were greatly influenced by the writings of both Shaykh Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah discussed earlier. Hence, the Deobandi *ulama* in effect propagated Naqshbandiyya cosmology in favour of that of their own

Chishtiyya order. As a result, Naqshbandiyya reformers, Shaykh Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah, have emerged in modern times as the pillars of 'orthodoxy' in India, with the teachings of Shaykh Ibn Arabi generally ignored by most Deobandi *ulama*. However, as mentioned above, Naqshbandiyya masters such as Shah Wali Allah and Shah Ahmad Sa'id not only took part in the Prophet's Birthday ceremony but also derived a great deal of benefit from it. Ironically, this very act of veneration was condemned by the Deobandi *ulama* as *bid'a* (innovation).

Having looked briefly at the anti-Sufi reformers and the reformers of Sufism that first emerged in British India, finally we must examine the scholarly movement claiming to 'defend' 'correct Sunni belief', also a product of this period. The *Ahl-i Sunnat wa al-Jama'at* (the People of the (Prophetic) Tradition and the Community), is more commonly known as the 'Barelwis'. The movement takes its name from Mawlana Ahmad Riza Khan Qadiri (d.1921) of Bareilly. Like the other movements discussed here, the written word was of prime importance in the formation of the Ahl-i Sunnat movement, and Mawlana Riza's writings are said to number about a thousand, consisting in the main of *fatawa* (religious decrees). These were distributed in manuscripts, newspapers, *risalas* (pamphlets) and fully-fledged books. It was as a result of these writings that the views of the movement were transferred from the local level to the national and thus propagated throughout British India.

In late colonial India, the Barelwis wrote mainly against, and debated with, the Deobandis, Tablighi Jama'at and Ahl-i Hadith. What brought them into such conflicts was the Barelwi vision of the Prophet's attributes. These attributes

included his ability to see into the past and future, to have *ilm al-ghayb* (Knowledge of the Unseen), to be *hazar o nazar* (to be both spiritually and physically present if the Prophet so wished) and to be invested with Allah's *nur* (Pre-eminent Light). Mawlana Riza argued on the basis of certain verses of the Qur'an, as well as Hadith and *fiqh* scholarship, that God had invested the Prophet with these and other qualities (Sanyal 1995:201-2). Therefore any denial of the Prophet's attributes was understood by Mawlana Riza as denial of some of the *daruriyat al-din* (fundamentals of the faith). Sanyal explains:

> These fundamentals, which fall under the rubric of *aqa'id* (articles of faith), broadly interpreted, were indivisible: one could not accept some and reject others, as some *ulama* in his view had done, for denial of even one of these fundamentals was heresy (1995:201).

Mawlana Riza often referred to himself as *Abd al-Mustafa* (Slave of the Prophet, literally. 'Chosen One'). In his opinion being a slave of the Prophet would lead one to salvation, he would sign himself as *Abd al-Mustafa*: Ahmad Riza:

> Don't worry Riza, you, you are the slave of Mustafa,
> For you there is protection, for you there is protection.
> (Barelwi 1976:370).

Unlike Mawlana Riza the Deobandi *ulama* consider it blasphemous to refer to someone as a 'Slave of the Prophet'. According to Thanavi, to keep names like *Ali Bakhsh* (Gift of Ali) *Husayn Bakhsh* (Gift of Husayn) *Abd al-Nabi* (Slave of the Prophet) is an act that amounts to *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk* (polytheism) (Saroji 1991:19).

Interestingly, Sanyal (1996) considers the fierce debates and lavish invective between the Ahl-i Sunnat and the Deobandis to have been a reaction against the common ground that they shared. Initially, the points of difference between the two were very minor, and there was a very real danger that the two movements would

have been unable to continue their existence as separate entities, had they not chosen to highlight and exaggerate these points of disagreement. In fact, despite the fact that they wrote relatively little against them, the real 'other' of the Ahl-i Sunnat was the Ahl-i Hadith. Of all the groups that the Ahl-i Sunnat referred to as 'Wahhabi', i.e. followers of the extreme Arabian anti-Sufi mentioned above, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the Ahl-i Hadith were perhaps the only ones that truly deserved the name in an Indian context.

In fact, in terms of Barelwi's own attempts at the reform of 'popular' Sufism, Mawlana Riza was actually rather selective in what he considered to be permissible. It seems surprising, for example, that he rejected *qawwali,* arguably the most popular devotional practice in India, on the basis that he considered it to be *haram* (n.d:168). Belonging to the Qadiriyya, it is noticeable that he defends all the orders practices such as *giyarvin sharif.* However, had he been a member of the Chishtiyya, would he have rejected *qawwali*? Unfortunately Sanyal's study does not provide an answer.

Conclusion

To illustrate the underlying cosmology of devotional Islam in India we have analysed three prominent Sufi orders; the Chishtiyya, Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya respectively. Accounts of *pirs* and their *mazars* have also helped us to establish a sense of the main practices associated with devotional Islam: *urs* (death anniversary), *qawwali* (devotional music), and *giyarvin sharif* (monthly gathering in honour of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani); *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *khatam al-*

khwajagan (gathering in honour of Naqshbandiyya masters), and *milad sharif* (Prophet's Birthday). Visitation at *mazars*, *urs* and *qawwali* were mainly spread by the Chishtiyya. Arguably these rituals increased love for *pirs* and shrines. In particular *qawwali* played a major role in the development of the veneration of the *pir*s and shrines while also expounding Shaykh Ibn Arabi's doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* through an accessible poetic medium. Visitation of *mazars* and participating in *urs* ceremonies supported the concept of the *pir* attaining perfection, and hence belief in *al-insan al-kamil*. Both *wahdat al-wujud* and *al-insan al-kamil* form part of the cosmological world of Shaykh Ibn Arabi, a controversial figure in Islamic history and these practices sparked condemnation from the *ulama*.

The Qadiriyya's main characteristic ritual, *giyarvin sharif*, has not been much discussed in the literature on South Asian Islam. It established the superiority of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani over all other saints but also increased the veneration of *sayyids* and provided much needed revenue for them. With the Qadiriyya in Panjab, we witness the transformation of a 'sober' order into an 'intoxicated' one. This is evident in the writings of Panjabi Sufi poets such as Bulleh Shah who forcefully expressed the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* although he belonged to the Qadiriyya order. For the illiterate Panjabi masses Bulleh Shah and other Sufi poets acted as a bridge to the highly intellectualised concepts of Shaykh Ibn Arabi and it was through Panjabi poetry that the common people came to understand Shaykh Ibn Arabi's cosmology.

In contrast to such intoxicated Sufism, the Naqshbandiyya is considered to be a 'sober' order. The account here focused on private rituals such as silent *dhikr*,

khatam al-khawajgan, thus winning approval of the *ulama*. The order produced reformist personalities such as Shaykh Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah who reformed Sufism from within and these Naqshbandiyya thinkers produced many works that sought to re-establish the supremacy of the *shari'ah*. However, Shah Wali Allah and the Naqshbandiyya *khanqah* in Delhi also played an important part in the propagation of *milad sharif* in India and influenced all the major reform movements of the nineteenth century.

Although the Ahl-i Hadith and Deobandis rejected certain Sufi practices on the basis that they were 'un-Islamic', their leaders still valued certain personalities associated with the Sufi orders, for instance Shaykh Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah. However, they did deny some of the practices which these reformers were known to practice themselves. For example Shah Wali Allah took part in the Prophet's birthday ceremony whereas the Deobandi *ulama* declared it unlawful. The Barelwi movement defended most traditional devotional practices with the exception of *qawwali*, which Mawlana Riza viewed as unlawful. However, the main debate between the Deobandis and Barelwis was based around the question of the Prophet's 'knowledge of the unseen'.

While both the Deobandis, and especially the Barelwis, have links with traditional Sufi belief and practice in India, neither group is fully representative of devotional Islam as discussed in this chapter. As Lindholm suggests, despite all attempts to reform devotional Islam in South Asia, its continuing power reveals that "the assertion of saintly purity still has a deep appeal to the public at large, who hope for

salvation from the corrupt world through the personalised intervention of a charismatic redeemer" (Lindholm 1998:229). Oberio rightly argues:

> In the case of the subcontinent, the either/or dichotomy is not to be taken for granted, for the religious life of the people, particularly in the pre-colonial period, was characterized a continuum. There was much inter-penetration and overlapping of communal communities (1994:12).

Ballard, for example, argues forcefully that:

> It is in my view, analytically inappropriate to use the term 'Barelvi' as a means of identifying popular practice in rural Punjab, even if its practitioners have begun to use that label of themselves (2004:12).

Undoubtedly, there is difference between Barelwism and Sufism and one should not be substituted for the other. At the same time, I am also interested in why Mirpuri Muslims traditionally associated with the devotions of 'popular' Islam 'have begun to use that label of themselves' in the context of a British diaspora. Before tackling such matters, however, I want to look more closely at the traditional religious context in Mirpur and not least at the intoxicated Sufi tradition associated with the shrine of Kharri Sharif.

Chapter Three

A Sufi Saint and Shrine of Kashmir: Kharri Sharif

Ilahi ta be abd astana-i yar rehy
Yeh asara gharibun ka barqarar rehy
Oh God, may this shrine of the beloved exist till the last day,
May this refuge of the poor remain forever!
(Moini in Troll 1992:71).

Introduction

Every year on the fifteenth of *sha'ban* (Islamic month) on the night of *shab-i barat* (Night of Salvation), around a hundred thousand people from all over Pakistan and Azad Kashmir gather in a place called Kharri Sharif in Mirpur to celebrate the *urs* (death anniversary) of Pira Shah (d.1743). It is perhaps the most widely anticipated event of the year for most people in this region. People from all walks of life come to participate in the *mela* (carnival), with the hope that their fortunes will improve in the near future. It is their belief, along with all other Muslims in the world, that this night is the Night of Destiny, when God commands the names of those that will die, be born, or receive substance of any kind in the following year. These commands are given to the angels who will carry out His decree. Overnight destinies can change; a person might come as a beggar and leave a wealthy person. In all of this the role of Pira Shah as a mediator between these visitors and God is crucial. For one to make the transition from being poor to rich is not possible without the help of the saint. When some people's *qismet* (luck) does change for the better, they are quick to see this as an intervention by Pira Shah on their behalf. It is not a matter of the saint giving but God giving through the saint.

These visitors consider themselves as guests of the saint. It is considered bad manners for the host, in this case the saint, to let his guests go home empty handed.

The principal aim of this chapter is to understand what the Mirpuri Muslims 'do'. Chapter Two provided a background to Mirpuri Islam by analysing the cosmology of the Chishtiyya, Naqshbandiyya and the Qadiriyya in India. Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of *wahdat al-wujud* (Unity of Being) which greatly influenced the Chishtiyya policy of 'peace with all' was discussed in detail. The *ba-hosh* (sober) practices of the Naqshbandiyya were also analysed. We also witnessed the transformation of the Qadiriyya in the writings of the Panjabi Sufi poets such as Bulleh Shah Qadiri who advocated a more *mast* (intoxicated) form of spirituality. Hence in the Panjab the Qadiriyya order moved from 'sobriety' to 'intoxication' and became known as the Qalandariyya. It is this Qadiriyya Qalandariyya tradition that takes centre stage at the Kharri Sharif shrine. With this knowledge of the three orders, we can now move further, exploring the manifestations of these orders or their influence in Mirpur.

In Mirpur we see the continuing shift of the Qadiriyya towards a more intoxicated form of ritual practice. The main saint buried in the Kharri Sharif shrine is Pira Shah who became famous through the writings of a modern Mirpuri Sufi poet Mian Muhammad Bakhsh (d.1907). Both Pira Shah and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh were members of the Qadiriyya but as this order reached Mirpur via Panjab it had already been transformed in the process to Qalandariyya. In practice the Qalandariyya shared the same world view as the Chishtiyya, hence Shaykh Ibn Arabi's cosmology still prevails. It is against this background that we will endeavour to

explain and perhaps be able to appreciate the ritual practice of the Mirpuri Muslims.

We will begin with an historical account of the shrine and a summary of the biographies of both Pira Shah and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. In addition, the role of *Saif al-Muluk* (*The Sword of the Kings*), a Panjabi poem written by Mian Muhammad Bakhsh and the Kharri Sharif shrine in the lives of Mirpuri Muslims will be analysed. This is followed by an account of Baba Dawud, a living mystic who continues to spread the message of Pira Shah and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh in the twentieth first century. We also look at non Qalandariyya *pirs* especially the Naqshbandiyya whose influence in this region has grown steadily. In the next section we explore the Sufi and 'anti-Sufi' polemics taking place within Mirpur today, noting the presence of Modern Reform Movements and the diverse views of Mirpuris regarding the shrine-related practices at Kharri Sharif. The final of aim of this chapter is to investigate whether Mian Muhammad Bakhsh and Mawlana Ahmad Riza Barelwi (d.1921) share a common cosmology which would help us to understand the gradual influence of the Barelwis in this remote part of the world.

Qalandars: Fools of God

It has been noted in Chapter Two that the Qadiriyya Panjabi poets such as Shah Husayn, Sultan Bahu and Bulleh Shah were deeply influenced by the writing of Shaykh Ibn Arabi and hence propagated a more liberal attitude towards the *shari'ah* that effectively links them with the Qalandariyya Sufi tradition (Ghaffar 2005:13)[1]. Trimingham, in his classic study on the Sufi orders, defines the Qalandar as "a Sufi

[1] An excellent study of Shah Husayn's (d.1599) poetry

who shows total disregard for norms and customs and flouts public opinion" (1973: 267). Trimingham quotes the author of *Awarif al-ma'rif,* Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d.1234):

> The term *qalandariyya* is applied to people so possessed by the intoxication of 'tranquillity of heart' that they respect no custom or usage and reject the regular observances of society and mutual relationship. Traversing the arenas of 'tranquillity of heart' they concern themselves little with ritual prayer and fasting except such as obligatory (*fara'id*). Neither do they concern themselves with those earthly pleasures, which are allowed by the indulgence of divine law... a *qalandari* seeks to destroy accepted custom (1973: 267).

During the colonial period, as in the past, the Qalandars were viewed by the *ulama* as *bi-shar* (heterodox) as opposed to *ba-shar* (orthodox) and thus they faced criticism for their lack of conformity to the rules of Islamic Law. The Qalandars made no attempts to justify any of their practices according to the Qur'an and Hadith. When one considers the wandering lifestyle of the Qalandars it seems uncharacteristic of them to write down their theories concerning Sufism. The Qalandars saw themselves as people of *hal (*state) and referred to scholars as people of *qal* (speech). As a Panjabi poet writes (author unknown):

Nah qil o qal vich pasa sanu
Koi yar di gal sana sanu

Do not entangle us in intellectual discourse,
Speak only of the Beloved.

One may surmise from this that the way of the Qalandars was to experience mystical states of ecstasy and not to take part in the pedantic debates of the *ulama.* Consequently there are hardly any works written from the Qalandari perspective. Therefore the dominant image of Qalandars has been produced from an outsider's viewpoint. Notable exceptions are the *Qalandar Nama* (*Tale of the Qalandar*) attributed to Shaykh Abd Allah al-Ansari (d.1089). According to Ansari the Qalandar must be humble, modest, unselfish, self-denying and detached from the

world (de Bruijn 1991:24; Farhadi 1996: 23; Rizvi 2002:301). Another exception is the *Ruba'iyat of Baba Tahir Hamadani Auryan* (*Quatrains of Baba Tahir of Hamadan: the Naked*). Baba Tahir (d.1032), was one of the earliest Sufi poets of Iran. Known as 'The Naked' for his disregard for outward show, Baba Tahir writes:

Man an rindam ke namam bi qalandar
Neh khun deram neh mun deram neh langar
Chu roz aya begirdam gard geeti
Chu sho gardeh bakhshi wanam sar

I am a wastrel called a Qalandar,
I have no home, country and no lair (abode),
By day I wander aimless over the earth,
And when night falls, my pillow is a stone.
(Heron-Allen 1979:60).

One of the earliest Sufis of the Qadiriyya/Qalandari tradition in Panjab was Sayyid Baha al-Din also known as Bahul Sher Qalandar (d.1595). Bahul Sher Qalandar was born in Baghdad, in the family of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani, discussed in the previous chapter. His father and aunt travelled to India and settled there. Following their deaths he wandered from place to place, and eventually settled in Okara in Panjab in present day Pakistan (Lahuri 1990:198)[2]. Lahuri's (1990) study suggests that Bahul Sher Qalandar was a member of the Qadiriyya, and as his name indicates, he was an 'intoxicated' mystic (1990:199). According to the Qadiriyya/ Qalandariyya viewpoint, worship that is devoid of love is meaningless (Saqib 1996:197). Hence, mere observance of religious rituals has little value in the eyes of the Qalandars. Bahul Sher's legacy continues in Mirpur. This is mainly due to one of his spiritual sons, Pira Shah, who was born more than a century after his death.

[2] A well written account of Sufi biographies

Pira Shah: Patron Saint of Mirpuris

Who was Pira Shah? It must be stated at the outset that no historical document exists of Pira Shah's period; his life is shrouded in mystery that cannot fully be unravelled. What we have is a single hagiographical account of his life written in *Farsi* (Persian) by his spiritual devotee Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, *Tazkira-i Muqimi* (*Memoirs of the Saints of Muqim*) and translated into Urdu by Qalandari as *Bustan-i Qalandari* (*The Garden of the Qalandars*) (1985)[3]. This was written over a century after the death of Pira Shah. As it was not possible for Mian Muhammad Bakhsh to have met Pira Shah then one can assume, perhaps, these accounts were passed down orally through the adherents of Pira Shah that included the family of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh himself. Nothing is known of Pira Shah's place of birth or his childhood. As Pira Shah's *pir* was from the Panjab, perhaps he belonged to that area. In any case there is little evidence to suggest that he was a native of Kashmir. Pira Shah's spiritual genealogy links him with Bahul Sher in whose footsteps he also followed the intoxicated Qadiriyya/Qalandariyya tradition.

The turning point in Pira Shah's life came when he met the mythical and spiritual figure Khidr. Mystery surrounds Khidr who is believed to be either a prophet or a saint. He is mentioned in the Qur'an (18:61-83) as the teacher of Moses. In Sufi hagiographical literature Khidr appears to the seeker of the path at a critical point of his journey (Tooraw 1996:45). Pira Shah's first meeting with Khidr is as follows:

> Pira Shah was sitting near a river one day reciting the Qur'an, when suddenly he let out a cry and jumped into the river, taking the Qur'an with him. His followers dived in the river after

[3] Translated into Urdu with additional biographies, the one and only source on Pira Shah

> him but were unable to find any trace of him. Eventually they gave up the search, thinking it a Divine mystery, which they could not comprehend. Nevertheless they would come to that particular spot every day, in the hope that they might find him one day. After twelve years passed, Pira Shah came out of the water with the same Qur'an in his hand, both his body and the Qur'an were dry. His followers recognised him and kissed his feet and began to wonder whether this was a dream or reality. He stated that, "in all this time I was the guest of Khidr and Ilyas (Elijah)" (Qalandari 1985: 42).

According to the Sufi tradition Khidr and Ilyas are living prophets who are in charge of the land and sea. Following his meeting with Khidr, Pira Shah became totally intoxicated and aimlessly wandered in the forests (Jhelumi 2000:33)[4]. Ahmad is of the view that the practice of wandering in the forests by Indian Sufis especially the Qalandars was a feature of Hindu-Buddhist asceticism (1969:135). In his intoxicated state Pira Shah's hair had grown long and when he would utter the name of God, his hair would stand up on end possibly due to his intense spiritual *hal* (ecstasy) (Qalandari 1985:35).

Eventually Pira Shah was instructed by his *pir* to go into seclusion in a cave on a hill in the Mirpur region. It is said that Pira Shah carried out his devotions sitting on a rock. On one occasion he is said to have ordered the rock "*Kharri ho ja*" (stand up). The rock stood up and Pira Shah rested against it during the rest of his seclusion, which lasted for twelve years. When Pira Shah completed his seclusion he came down and settled in the village now known as Kharri Sharif where he lies buried. Following this incident his devotees named the area Kharri Sharif. The rock is still preserved in the cave and has become a site of pilgrimage (Qalandari 1985: 42). It is said that Pira Shah had a substantial following, which consisted of local farmers and the ruling class, the *Rajputs* (land owning caste). Indeed, the local ruler, Raja Sarkhruh Khan, was a devotee of Pira Shah. A later Rajput ruler, Raja Bandu Khan, is said to have begun the *urs* ceremony in Pira Shah's memory.

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[4] Not an academic study

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh

Although Pira Shah had two sons, he nominated his adopted son, Din Muhammad, the great ancestor of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, as his successor. Thus the family of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh had been the *sajjadahnashin* (successors) of Pira Shah for many generations. Indeed, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh inherited immense reverence for Pira Shah from his parents. He was born in 1830 in Chak Takara, a village near Kharri Sharif in Mirpur. It is said that he was an exceptionally gifted child and began to sing poems at the tender age of six (Pervez 1985:12)[5]. In line with his pious ancestors he studied the traditional religious sciences such as principles of Traditions, Jurisprudence, Logic and Poetry under the guidance of Hafiz Muhammad Ali and Hafiz Nasir, a *majdhub* (intoxicated mystic) at Samwal Sharif, a village a few miles from Kharri Sharif (Afaqi 1986: 472; Pervez 1985:17). Mian Muhammad Bakhsh is said to have possessed such good manners that in his childhood he would not turn his back to his teachers or to the mosque where he studied. When he returned home after his lessons he would walk backwards until he could no longer see the mosque (Pervez 1985:17). According to Pervez (1985) Mian Muhammad Bakhsh had a melodious voice and would sing poems of great Sufi poets such as Mawlana Abd al-Rahman Jami (d.1492) and in particular from his love story *Yusuf and Zulaykha*.

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[5] Provides a good biographical account of Bakhsh

He was a lover of music and poetry and often sang his own poems. Passages in his own major work the *Saif al-Muluk* that discuss musical instruments allude to the fact that Mian Muhammad Bakhsh had great understanding of musical compositions of India, Arabia and Persia (Pervez 1985:17).

Although Mian Muhammad Bakhsh did not physically meet Pira Shah, he viewed him as his 'real' *pir*. In his *Saif al-Muluk* he writes: "My *pir* is Pira Shah Qalandar" (Zhaigham 1993:35)[6]. In addition, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh had a physical *pir*, Sain Ghulam Muhammad who traced his spiritual genealogy to Pira Shah. Like Pira Shah, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh spent most of his life wandering in forests and meeting Sufis and visiting shrines in the Panjab (Jhelumi 2000:64). Again like Pira Shah, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh finally settled in Kharri Sharif. One of his closest followers, Malik Muhammad Takedar Qalandari (d.1928), describes his first meeting with him:

> He lived in a hut outside the shrine area, when I met him he was sitting in total silence on his prayer mat with a few followers. He was wearing a thick blue cotton dress and had a black shawl around his waist (Pervez 1985: 86-87).

Despite the lifestyle of a wandering mystic, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh was also a prolific writer. Shackle (2000)[7] rightly considers him as the last master of the *qissa* (story: romantic verse) genre, however he fails to mention his most popular work in this field namely *Saif al-Muluk: Safar al-Ishq* (*The Sword of the Kings: the Journey of Love*). In the words of Pervez: "It can rightly be said the people of the mountains (Kashmir) have become Muslims by reciting the creed of Faith but became Believers by reading Mian Muhammad's *Saif al-Muluk*" (1985: 5).

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[6] To date the best academic study on Bakhsh's *Saif al-Muluk*
[7] The only Western academic to cite Bakhsh's writing, albeit briefly

Afaqi asserts:

> When the local Mirpuri people are heard chanting and singing this saint's (Bakhsh) verses it seems as if they are calling out to their long lost beloved wounded with separation. His spiritual poems seem to be engraved in people's hearts (1986: 471).

Saif al-Muluk: the Journey of Love

One of the finest academic studies of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's *Saif al-Muluk* is by Sayyid Sibt al-Hasan Zhaigham (1993) *Qissa-i Saif al-Muluk* (*The Tale of Saif al-Muluk*). Zhaigham has produced a critical edition of *Saif al-Muluk* that is still unmatched. In his comprehensive introduction he mentions each of the 43 editions of *Saif al-Muluk* and the variant readings of the text. The variant readings generally are attempts by the publishers to explain some old words by replacing them with new ones, which makes it easier for the modern reader to understand the book. However, Zhaigham (1993) acknowledges that the original manuscript mentioned by Qalandari (1985) in his Jhelumi edition (1898) has not been found. Thus it is an impossible task to compare and contrast with the original text. All we have are the various prints ranging from good to pitiful editions published by the printers who wanted to cash in on the popularity of the book. I have translated all the verses that appear in this and other chapters directly from *Saif al-Muluk*:

Kisay hor kisay deh ander dard apne kuj howan
Bin peeran tasiran nahin beh peray kadrowan

A story of strangers tinged with personal pain,
Without suffering there is no gain.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh informs his readers at the outset that although the story of *Saif al-Muluk* is fictional the pain in it is real, as it comes from his personal

experience. Thus, he has instilled the local Panjabi language, culture, Sufi concepts and his personal pain into this retelling of a mythical tale which is loosely based on a story from *The Book of Thousand and One Nights* (Burton 1885). Sufi Mazhar (49), an official at the shrine of Kharri Sharif, who is very familiar with the life and works of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, explains:

> When Mian Sahib (Bakhsh) was a young man an attempt was made by his family to arrange his marriage with a woman from his own *baradari*. He must have had deep feelings for the woman in question, as when she rejected the proposal, he was devastated. He carried this pain of rejection throughout his life and never got married. This is evident in all of his works and especially in the *Saif al-Muluk*.

Saif al-Muluk is the story of an Egyptian Prince, who, on his birthday, receives a portrait of a beautiful woman, *Badi al-Jamal* (extremely beautiful), from his father. Immediately, he falls passionately in love with the portrait and becomes obsessed with the idea of meeting her. During this very long and arduous journey he faces countless trials, tribulations, temptations and dangers. None of his trials deter him from his quest for his beloved *Badi al-Jamal*. The story of *Saif al-Muluk* can be interpreted in many ways. *Saif al-Muluk* could represent the seeker of the Truth (and possibly the author himself) and *Badi al-Jamal* could represent God with reference to the tradition of the Prophet that states: "*In Allaha Jamilun yuhib al-Jamal* (God is beautiful and loves beauty)" (An-Nawawi 1999:536).

In this treasury of beautiful and inspiring poetry is embodied the centrepiece of Sufi belief, the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* (Unity of Being). And from this central concept flows the Qalandariyya message of universal humanity, love and respect for all creation. Thus God, in Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's view, represents a Oneness perceived as Universal Beauty, from which all creation emanates, just as light radiates from the sun. If one cultivates the love of God, the Divine presence can be

seen in all creatures, including in one's own self. His aim in relating this story is to present Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concepts to the Panjabi speaking masses. He writes of his work: "A fable with hidden meaning, a sword hidden in a stick" (Zhaigham 1993:21). Evidence suggests that Mian Muhammad Bakhsh was extremely successful in channelling his beliefs of *wahdat al-wujud* through his poetry and thus influencing the religion of the Mirpuri Muslims. Consequently the Mirpuri belief that saints have the power to change destinies owes more to *Saif al-Muluk* than to the Qur'an and Hadith.

In *Saif al-Muluk* Mian Muhammad Bakhsh acknowledges his debt to earlier Panjabi Sufi poets such as Baba Farid, Shah Husayn, Sultan Bahu, Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah (d.1790) and so forth. We have discussed Bulleh Shah in the last chapter but his younger contemporary, Waris Shah, needs to be analysed here, as Mian Muhammad Bakhsh might have gained some inspiration from his famous Panjabi folk tale of Hir and Ranjah. It is said that both Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah studied under Maulvi Ghulam Murtaza in Qasur. After completing his studies Waris Shah visited the shrine of Baba Farid in Pakpattan and become a member of the Chishtiyya. Unlike Bulleh Shah whose only love was his master, Shah Inayat, Waris Shah had a passionate affair with a village lady called Baghbahri and it was during this intense emotional period that he wrote *Hir,* which tells the story of two lovers Hir and Ranjah (Pirianditta n.d:370)[8]. It is possible that there are autobiographical accounts of Waris Shah in the fictional romance of Hir and Ranjah. In *Hir,* Waris Shah paints a very vivid picture of the Panjabi society which fuses Hindu and Muslim cultures.

[8] Provides an excellent glossary of Waris Shah's *Hir*

For example, Ranjah who is a Muslim takes Balanath the Hindu Jogi as his master. All the Panjabi poets mentioned above were critical of the *ulama* and perhaps none more so than Waris Shah:

> They are blind men, lepers and cripples,
> always waiting greedily for a death in a house
> so that they may take the dead one's raiment.
> (Usborne 1973:3-4; Pirianditta n.d: 75).

However, such sentiments have no place in Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's *Saif al-Muluk* or other works. I would argue that the *ulama* did not wield much power in a remote area like Mirpur where Mian Muhammad Bakhsh lived and hence there was less tension between the two. By contrast, in Panjab, and especially Lahore which was the centre of the intelligentsia, the *ulama* had the backing of the government. Hence there was greater emphasis to uphold orthodoxy and 'rebellious' poets such as Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah had to be condemned to maintain stability. The situation in Mirpur was completely different as there was no government intervention in the religious life of the Muslims, principally because they did not pose a threat to the authorities. The *ulama* never viewed Mian Muhammad Bakhsh as a threat to their position yet Bulleh and Waris Shah were feared because their writings challenged the *ulama*'s role in society. Perhaps it is for this reason that the *ulama* have given preference to Mian Muhammad Bakhsh over Waris Shah. Hence, *Saif al-Muluk* is continuously recited by the *ulama* in the mosque, whereas *Hir* does not enjoy such a privilege. Nonetheless, for the Panjabi speaking people, Sikhs as well as Muslims, both *Hir* and *Saif al-Muluk* continue to be popular.

Saif al-Muluk and the Mirpuri Muslims

Before the advent of television, cable and satellite, in Mirpur the common way of evening relaxation was that a person with a beautiful voice would recite verses from *Saif al-Muluk* and people would sit around him and listen attentively. He would provide brief commentary on the verses and this would often lead to a discussion about the subject of the verse in which most people would take part. These gatherings were held throughout the villages of Azad Kashmir and in the Panjab. During harvest time people would come back from a hard day's work and sit down together, both men and women, and enjoy listening to somebody reciting *Saif al-Muluk*. People who recited *Saif al-Muluk* would be deeply immersed in the poetry. It was not done for commercial gain but for one's own spiritual enlightenment. Inayat (69), from Kotli, now living in Bury, tells:

> Nowadays nobody has time for one another but in the old days before we came to Britain, we would sit down together and listen to *Saif al-Muluk*. *Bahai* (brother) Afzal had a beautiful voice; he was one of the few people who could read in our village.

Sayyid Zamir Jafari (1987),[9] the author of *Man Mela* (*Union of the Heart*), a partial translation of *Saif al-Muluk* in the Urdu language, describes the influence of *Saif al-Muluk* upon the Mirpuri people including his own family. Jafari's family come from a village near Old Dadyal and one of his ancestors, Pir Sayyid Muhammad Shah (d.1884), was a poet and a contemporary of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. Jafari states:

> *Bai Ji* (mother) used to wake up early in the morning and after reading *nafal* (non-obligatory) prayers, she would grind some flour for four to six chapattis and separate the milk from the curd before the Morning Prayer. After performing her morning prayer she would remain seated on her prayer mat and read on her rosary of a thousand beads and then make supplications in Arabic and Panjabi. As children we could not understand Arabic but we could make sense of some words in Panjabi. The prayers were read in such a beautiful melodious way that it seems to us that it was part of her worship. She had memorised these

[9] A well known Pakistani humorist and the author of several academic works on Sufi poetry

> prayers from our grandmother. As I grew up I learned that these Panjabi prayers were from Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's long poem *Saif al-Muluk* (1987: 12).

These are just some of the prayers said by Mian Muhammad Bakhsh in *Saif al-Muluk*:

Rahmat da minh pa khudya bagh suka kar harya
Buta as amid meri da karday meway barya

O God, shower Your mercy upon this garden,
Let the seed of my aspiration blossom into a fruitful tree.

Meta mewa baksh ejah qudrat de gat sheri
Jo kahway rog us da jaway dur haway dilgiri

O, Lord grant me a fruit so fresh,
May anyone who partakes of it never experience distress.

Bal chirag ishq da mera roshan karday sina
Dil de devey de roshni jaway vich zamina

Ignite a passion in my heart,
A passion that is everlasting.

Rehmat da darya illahi har dam wagda tera,
Je ek qatra mainnun devian ke janda tera

O Lord, the river of Your grace flows continuously
Were I to receive a drop would it become any less?

In adult life Jafari discovered that *Saif al-Muluk* was not only read in his home but also in most of the houses, mosques, shrines, festivals, *melas* (carnivals/fairs) and sung by numerous folk singers, throughout the Jammu and Kashmir region. In Jafari's words: "I discovered Ghalib and Iqbal (famous Urdu poets) at college through books, but I found Mian Muhammad and Pir Muhammad Shah from my home soil" (1987: 13).

Arguably, *Saif al-Muluk* has played a major role in the continuing veneration of the Prophet amongst the Mirpuris. There are many passages in *Saif al-Muluk*, which express the deep love Mian Muhammad Bakhsh had for the Prophet, he writes:

Jay lakh wari itar gulabun duyay nit zabana
Nam unahian day lahiq nahian ke qalami de kana

Washing the tongue a thousand times with perfume,
Does not make it worthy to utter his blessed name.

And

Nur-i Muhammad roshan aha Adam jadoan na hoya
Awwal akhir dohain pasay oho mal khiloya

The light of Muhammad shone brightly before Adam was created,
He is both the Alpha and the Omega.

The Mirpuris might not know the source of these beliefs in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, but the fact that these beliefs are mentioned in *Saif al-Muluk* is proof enough in their view. The popularity of *Saif al-Muluk* shows no signs of diminishing as the following account illustrates. Akram (49), from Dadyal now living in Nelson relates:

> On my visit to Azad Kashmir as I was travelling on a bus to Kotli, a middle aged bearded man who boarded the bus began to ask people for *chanda* (donations) for a mosque that was being built in the local vicinity. Initially, he got a lukewarm response from the passengers, only a few people gave some rupees, but when he began to read verses from *Saif al-Muluk* money started to pour in from all directions. Within minutes he had collected a substantial amount of money, following this he got off this bus to board another travelling in the opposite direction.

This account thus illustrates that *Saif al-Muluk* still touches the heart of the common people inspiring them.

Kharri Sharif and the Mirpuri Muslims

In the Mirpur region, Thursdays, as in the rest of the Muslim world, are reserved for visiting Sufi shrines. For Muslims all over the world Thursdays and Fridays are the holiest days of the week. Prayers are offered for the deceased, especially family members, and people visit shrines to make their offerings. Indeed, people from

different villages visit a particular shrine depending on what they are seeking. For example, if someone suffers from an eye ailment then the Pir Ghanoi shrine near Chak Sawari is believed to have the cure for this illness. For skin ailments Bin Sain shrine near Dadyal is notable. However, without a doubt Kharri Sharif attracts the largest number of visitors. Sufi Mazhar (49), an official at the shrine tells:

> On Thursday people start coming to the shrine as early as four o'clock in the morning. It stays busy until seven o'clock then it is quiet for a few hours and after nine o'clock it really gets busy until midday prayer. Women especially come in large numbers and from all over Pakistan as far as Karachi but mainly from the Panjab. This continues until nightfall when it takes the form of a festival. Such is the popularity of Pira Shah Ghazi that every day, we, the servants of the shrine, witness the arrival of so many new people.

As soon as the visitors enter the shrine women cover their heads out of respect for Pira Shah who is viewed as a grandfather figure. The visitors do not consider his shrine as a grave but as an audience with Pira Shah himself. Pinto (1992: 95), in his study of the shrine of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya, met devotees of the Shaykh who maintain that "he is not dead. He has only put a veil between himself and us, ordinary mortals. That is why we cannot see him" (Pinto in Troll 1992:118). I would suggest this is a common belief of the devotees regardless of which shrine they visit. The devotees of Pira Shah enter the shrine with this view in mind and whilst they are in the shrine area they are on their best behaviour.

Normally the *ziyarah* (visit) takes place in the following manner. Firstly people remove their shoes and some kiss the entrance door for *barakah* (blessings). Then they enter the shrine with their head lowered out of respect. There are two entrances, one for men and one for women, but once in the shrine women and men sit opposite one another as they make supplications at the shrine. The first shrine is

that of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh his grave is covered in a green cloth *ghilaf* (cover). Abu Zahra in her study of the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab in Cairo explains:

> Green is the colour of Islam, Paradise and vegetation. It therefore expresses the quintessential attributes of saints, namely that their *barakah* (blessing) promotes the increase of bounty and growth (1997:143).

Abd al-Quddus (65) from Mirpur now living in Bury, explains why people put a *ghilaf* on the graves of saints:

> We cover the graves of our *pir*s with a *ghilaf* just as we cover *Qur'an-i Pak* and Ka'bah Sharif. Even now during the Wahhabi (Saudi) government the walls housing the grave of the Prophet are laden with the *ghilaf* bearing *kalima sharif* and other Qur'anic verses which can be clearly seen outside the Prophet's grave (*rawda sharif*). A Wahhabi once said to me: "Why do you people put a *ghilaf* on the graves of your *pir*s, are they feeling cold"? I said: "Our *pir*s are in paradise where there is cold breeze, so they need a *ghilaf* whilst your lot are in the other place where it is very hot, so they do not need a cover."

The next shrines are of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's mother, grandmother and his great ancestor Baba Din Muhammad and finally the main shrine of Pira Shah. Inside the shrine most people kiss the feet of Pira Shah's grave and rub the crystal balls, which are placed at the top of the *ghilaf*, all over their body for blessing. Following that they sit down near the grave and read *Fatiha* (opening chapter) or *Ya Sin* (chapter 36) from the Qur'an. Both of these chapters are recommended by the Prophet to be read for the deceased. Following the prayer they ask for a range of things from the profane to the sacred.

Visitors also make offerings of *dammari* (a coin no longer in use) in the name of Pira Shah. The origin of this popular practice is unclear. However, it is well known that prior to Partition both the Hindus and Muslims made offering of *dammari* at Kharri Sharif (Qalandari 1985: 35). As the *dammari* coin no longer exists, nowadays people make their offerings to Pira Shah in the different currencies of the

world; rupees, riyals, dinars, dollars and pounds sterling. Giving a *dammari* is still a very popular practice amongst Mirpuri Muslims, as Sajida (39) a Mirpuri housewife, now living in Bury suggests:

> My mother always makes the intention to give *dammari* for every little matter; even if her grandson goes to the doctor for an injection she quickly makes a vow to give *dammari*, so that he is not harmed. By the time she goes to the shrine she has a substantial amount of money that she gives at the Kharri Sharif *darbar*. I also make the intention to give *dammari* in times of difficulty.

The people who visit the shrine range from the destitute to the highest-ranking officials in the government. Indeed, the Maharaja of Kashmir who was Hindu would come to pay his respects at the shrine (Dhrampal quoted in Zhaigham 1993:11). In the post-partition period (1948-1962), the shrine was managed by the family of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh but the government officials were anxious to gain support from Pira Shah's devotees and to show active interest in the administration of the shrine. As a result of this involvement the shrine is now under government control. A number of plaques in remembrance of official visits made by the prime ministers of Azad Kashmir both past and present are an acknowledgement that the shrine is far too important to be neglected. Moreover, it is a source of large revenue for the government with an annual income of millions of rupees given as offerings. Thus association with the shrine is prized highly in the eyes of would be political leaders. The political leaders from the Pakistani government are also seen to have sought favours from the shrine. For example, when the military rulers imprisoned Nawaz Sharif (former Prime Minister) in 1999 his parents came from Lahore to seek help from Pira Shah.

For some the shrine provides an ideal opportunity to take part in a spiritual experience that cannot be felt elsewhere. Habiba (26), a young Mirpuri housewife

tells:

> There is no 'trouble free' zone. Everywhere you go people are caught up in their problems. I think that for your own sanity sometimes you have to escape from this vicious circle. Kharri Sharif is the only place I feel is 'trouble free'. Whilst I am there I feel that all my worries and problems have been left behind. I feel a sense of tranquillity at the shrine.

My observations of activity at the shrine suggest that there are no attempts by the attendants to police the visitors. There are hardly any serious incidents that require their intervention. Generally it is a very relaxed atmosphere where men, women and children feel at ease. When the visitors have said their prayers they normally put some money in the box situated at the feet of the grave. The box is intentionally placed near the foot to illustrate that the 'world' is at the feet of Pira Shah. Out of respect the visitors walk out backwards so as not to turn their backs on the grave of Pira Shah. Outside the shrine sit some attendants who give *tabarruk* (blessed food), which, normally consists of sweets and flowers. If nothing is left from the offerings then a pinch of salt is given to the visitor; the emphasis being that no one should go away empty handed. Feeding the visitors is a common feature of Sufi shrines including Kharri Sharif. The *langar,* which normally consists of *dal roti* (lentils and chapattis) or *pulau* (rice cooked with meat), is served to hundreds of people daily. People from various backgrounds sit together and share the simple food. Some of the poor Afghan refugees who work in the local area come and eat their lunch and supper at the shrine. Even some wealthy people in Mirpur send their servants to collect some food from the *langar* because they believe that it is a form of *tabarruk.* The *langar* is believed to contain healing powers as some take it in the form of medicine. Azad (33), a tax collector from Dadyal explains:

> I was suffering from abdominal pains for months. I tried all the medicines I could lay my hands on but without any success. A friend suggested that I should eat the *langar sharif* at Baba Pira Shah Ghazi's *darbar* and it would heal me. I said 'why not'. Eventually when they put the *dal* and *roti* in front of me I had no appetite but once I began to eat I could not stop. I

> do not know what they put in it, but it tastes delicious and in less than an hour I began to feel much better.

Some visitors walk around the shrine complex visiting the graves of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's family, beginning with his father Mian Shams al-Din to Mian Sikandar (d.1999) This part of the cemetery is reserved for the Mian family. However, devotees who desire to be buried near the shrine for blessing are allocated space in other parts of the shrine complex.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's family has lived in his shadow and no major spiritual figure has emerged from the family since his death. Mian Muhammad Abid (46), a member of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's family who still lives in Mirpur, explains:

> The truth is, soon after Mian Sahib died our elders moved away from his pious ways and devoted their energies in attaining material things. They spent their lives fighting over land and property and neglected to bring us up in the proper way. Perhaps someone from the younger people might bring the spiritual legacy back to the family.

One figure who is viewed as a spiritual successor of Pira Shah and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh is Baba Dawud (67), a wandering Qalandar, who claims that Mian Muhammad Bakhsh spiritually guides him. Baba Dawud has been coming to Kharri Sharif for nearly twenty years; he has close ties with a British Mirpuri, Mian Muhammad Iqbal's family, descendants of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. Baba Dawud is keen to bring the family of Bakhsh back to their original position of *sajjadahnashin*. Indeed, Baba Dawud insisted that Mian Muhammad Iqbal put a plaque on his Land Cruiser that proclaims, '*Sajjadahnashin* of Kharri Sharif.' Baba Dawud does not approve of the Azad Kashmir government's management of the shrine. In his view the government officials are corrupt and exploit the income of the shrine. Thus the holy shrines of Pira Shah and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh are

seen as tools in the hands of greedy politicians. As a free spirited Qalandar he is not willing to compromise his independence by becoming part of the corrupt system that manages the shrine or governs the country.

Baba Dawud is constantly on the move and it is difficult to know when and where he can be found. By mere chance, we met him on the way to our first visit to the shrine in 2000. He greeted us as if we were his long lost friends and in a typical Sufi manner offered us hospitality in the form of cold drinks straight away, which we gladly accepted. The interview took place in (2000) outside the shrine complex. He said:

> Sire, we people are like the Smoker who, when he has the urge, lovingly kisses the cigarette, then sets it alight. But when he sucks the life out of it and he sees no further benefit in it, he disposes of it by trampling it under his feet. Sire, I have been everywhere, I have become free of everyone as God is independent from all His creation I have become independent of people.

Baba Dawud's account suggests that he has been hurt by many and has eventually turned his back on the world and its people. Subsequently he has been 'liberated' from both. As he says, he has become 'independent' of everyone, a further indication that he is truly a Qalandar. According to Mian Muhammad Ilyas (47), a British businessman from Burnley and son of Mian Iqbal, Baba Dawud commands a great deal of authority among the Rajput families near Kharri Sharif and also the family of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. Indeed, Baba Dawud is the living example of Pira Shah's teaching which focuses on the experimental dimension of faith rather than mere observation of religious rituals. However, his influence is very limited because he does not have a power base (shrine) to promote his ideas to the younger generation of Mirpuris.

Non-Qalandariyya *Pirs* in Mirpur

Apart from the Qalandariyya tradition there are other manifestations of Sufism in Mirpur such as the 'sober' Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya that presently exerts considerable influence in the region. For example, one of the leading present day *pirs* in Kotli belongs to this tradition, which was propagated in Mirpur by Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's contemporary and close friend, Pir Sayyid Neyk Alam Shah (d.1899) (Shah 1995:84;[10] Husayn n.d: 52)[11]. Pir Sayyid Neyk Alam was also a gifted poet; he translated the classical Sufi devotional poems such as the *Qasidat al-Burda* of Busiri and the first eighteen verses from Mawlana Rumi's *Mathnawi* into Panjabi (Shah 2002:5). In sharp contrast to the Qalandariyya tradition, with its liberal attitude towards the *shari'ah*, Sayyid Neyk Alam in line with his predecessors Shaykh Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah, emphasised the need to adhere strictly to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. He writes:

Sach haqiq tahqiq ghyat rah rasul amin da ei
Jis chura rah rasul wala ta'be nafs shaitan l'ain da ei

The Way of the Prophet is the true path,
He who abandons it is misguided.

Banwain lakh reyaztain kasfh usday marya us be- din da ei
Alam sarak matlub puchanwali sunnat Ahmadi ra yaqin da ie

He is deceived by his own pious acts,
Indeed, salvation is in following the Prophet.
(Shah 2002:28).

The ability to perform miracles and acts of piety that do not conform to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet are viewed by Sayyid Neyk Alam as acts of self-delusion. Moreover Sayyid Neyk Alam was a great advocate of Shaykh Sirhindi's concept of *wahdat al-*

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[10] Provides a useful account of local history of Mirpur prior to 1947
[11] Biography of a Mirpuri Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya saint, Hafiz Hayat Muhammad, contemporary of Pir Sayyid Neyk Alam

shuhud as opposed to Mian Muhammad Bakhsh who favoured Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of *wahdat al-wujud*. However, despite these differences Sayyid Neyk Alam and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh were dear friends. Whenever Mian Muhammad Bakhsh received a letter from Sayyid Neyk Alam, he would stand up out of respect and kiss the letter and place it on his eyes (Shah 2002:12).

A more recent, non-Qalandariyya but nonetheless a 'sober' Qadiriyya Mirpuri *pir* was Shah Ji, Pir Sayyid Karam Husayn (d.1992), from Jarahi Sayyidan near Kotli. I have met Shah Ji, however, he died before I began my research thus this account is based upon an interview with his close follower Hasan Muhammad (66), a farmer who lives in Kotli. According to Hasan Muhammad, during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s Shah Ji used to tour the villages around Kotli to visit many of his followers, who were mostly poor peasants. Shah Ji would travel through several villages in a day attending to people as he went. He would rest in someone's house for the night and continue the tour in the morning. People from the surrounding villages would gather there for *ziyarah* and would make offerings of money, goats and chickens to Shah Ji. A typical day would start before sunrise when Shah Ji's followers would gather for the morning prayer. Many people would volunteer to bring water and collect wood for cooking. Although some villagers did not know how to read *namaz*, they would merely imitate Shah Ji's movements, as they believed that in itself was a form of blessing. Prayers would normally be read in the village mosque if there was one, otherwise Shah Ji would lead the prayer in the house or courtyard.

The host normally served *qahwa* (black tea) for breakfast; the local villagers would bring milk, rusks, *prat'ay* (buttered chapattis), eggs and curry. Once breakfast was

served people would gather from the different villages. Shah Ji would be accessible to the people throughout the day. Hasan Muhammad asserts:

> We are *saday teh jahil* (simple and ignorant people). We would pester Shah Ji about anything and everything. Some people would ask Shah Ji to do something about their children who were disobedient. Some would ask to be wealthy, or for a better harvest season. Some would even ask for remedies for a headache. However, Shah Ji would never get angry or turn anyone away. He would always pray and give them hope.

Women would come in large numbers to see Shah Ji, they would normally sit to one side away from the men and wait for Shah Ji to call them. Once the men were dealt with, women would begin with their predicaments and dilemmas. Shah Ji did not make speeches during these gatherings. Often he would merely listen to the people. This by itself was a source of comfort for the deprived people of the mountains. However, not everyone gathered for *ta'widh* and prayers; some people wanted his help to resolve tribal disputes and both parties would accept Shah Ji's decision as final. In addition, Shah Ji would arrange marriages, give advice and instruct people on matters relating to work, land and travel.

Hasan Muhammad's account suggests that people around Kotli were informed about Islam by 'touring *pirs*' such as Shah Ji. Haji Nur Alam (83) in Bury, who comes from Sensa near Kotli, describes the activities of a Naqshbandiyya Kashmiri *pir*, Khwaja Ghulam Muhyi al-Din (d.1975) who would also tour this area. He recollects:

> Pir Sahib (Khwaja Ghulam Muhyi al-Din) was a deputy of Baba Ji of Mohra Sharif; he would tour many villages in Azad Kashmir including our village in Sensa with hundreds of his followers carrying green banners and reciting *La ilaha illallahu* (there is no god but God). Wherever Pir Sahib went he held gatherings of *dhikr* as Baba Ji had instructed him: "*Bacha* (son) feed people and teach them to remember God."

Geaves rightly suggests that whatever the Mirpuris know about Islam "had been gleaned from wandering religious teachers" (1995:6).

Dissent and Social Change

It would be incorrect to assume that everyone in Mirpur is a devotee of *pir*s and shrines per se. With the emergence of the modern printing press the Ahl-i Hadith critique of devotional practices such as visiting shrines reached the area during the nineteenth century. It was this, which prompted Mian Muhammad Bakhsh to write *Hidayat al-Muslimin* in response to these criticisms. Recent events suggest that this debate between the Sufis and non-Sufis still continues. A modern critic of Sufism, Zahid Husayn Mirza (67), a former lecturer from Mirpur College, is of the opinion that shrine culture has undermined the concept of *tawhid*, by turning every shrine into a place of worship of false gods (Mirza 1989:212)[12]. Mirza wrote a book entitled *Ahl-i Haram ke Somnath* (*The Idols of Muslims*) in which he strongly criticised Kharri Sharif and other shrines and labelled them 'Idols of Muslims'. Mirza argues: "Conversion to Islam had made little difference to the Indian Muslims, who previously made their requests from the Hindu idols and now they do the same from *pir*s" (1989:163). Mirza's criticism of the shrines is neither new nor original as he represents the views of a radical reform movement. Due to his criticism of devotional Islam Mirza has been charged under the blasphemy law and is currently serving a sentence in Mirpur jail. According to Sa'id (37), a British Mirpuri businessman, there is strong support for Mirza Husayn from the Ahl-i

[12] A critique of Sufi shrines in Pakistan including Mirpur. The book is officially banned

Hadith, who have approached the finest lawyers in Azad Kashmir to fight in his defence. However, Sa'id tells:

> The main reason why the top lawyers will not defend his case is due to political reasons. Choudary Nur Husayn, [father of the former president, Sultan Mahmud of Azad Kashmir] lives in Mirpur and is a great devotee of the Kharri Sharif shrine. He is not in favour of Mirza being released. Mirza does not have the political support to force the hand of the government.

When outspoken people like Mirza raise an issue, he is unlikely to find much support from the masses that do not want to question their religious beliefs. However, people like Nazir Maqsud (67) do question such logic and describe it as 'following blindly'. Nazir comes from a village near Kharri Sharif and now lives in Bury. He does not accept the view of most Mirpuris who claim that the *Saif al-Muluk* is the message of the Qur'an in Panjabi (Nizami 2003:69)[13]. Nazir states:

> Our people (Mirpuris) *lakir ney fakir hain* (follow blindly) and are ignorant of their faith. They follow blindly the practice of their ancestors and never stop to think whether it is Islamic or not. Some people claim that *Saif al-Muluk* is the translation of the Qur'an in Panjabi. God forbid. Most of these people have never read it, I have and I find some passages very offensive as they contain sexual references. These people seem to know more about this book than they do about the Qur'an. These people are intent on carrying on the Hindu customs of their forefathers and when someone tries to stop them they declare him as a Wahhabi. Once there was a Sikh shopkeeper, who was approached by the local Barelwi *imam* for a loan, the Sikh refused. The *imam* went to the mosque and said: "O, people the Sikh has become a Wahhabi." Consequently nobody bought food from him; such was their hatred for the Wahhabis. Eventually the Sikh made the loan to the *imam* and the *imam* declared that the Sikh had converted back to the Sunni Barelwi faith.

Umar Nawaz is the *amir* (leader) of the Tablighi Jama'at in Bury. He comes from Chechcheyan, a village near the Kharri Sharif shrine. Umar feels much more comfortable with the reformist Tablighi Jama'at than the devotional practices that take place at the Kharri Sharif shrine. Umar Nawaz (53) asserts:

> Many people from our area accuse our family of becoming Wahhabis. Our people's religion is what the *pir*s say and not what the Qur'an and Hadith say. If you ask these people: " Where is the proof for your practices?" They reply: " You do not understand *ahl-i ishaq* (people of love)." People visit the shrine and commit all kinds of *shirk*, where does it say in the Qur'an that you go to a grave and say: "*Ya Hadrat Baba Pira Shah Ghazi* give me a son." I mean it is

[13] A travelogue of a British Pakistan

> all right respecting *buzurg* (holy people) but when people start worshipping them that is *shirk*. That is why our family have stopped going to the Kharri *darbar* and now follow the Tablighi Jama'at who invite people to Islam and do not do anything against the *shari'ah*.

The views presented by Umar Nawaz are far more common in Mirpur than those of Nazir or Mirza. Whilst both the Ahl-i Hadith and Tablighi Jama'at seek to reform devotional practices at Sufi shrines, their approach is quite different. For example, the Ahl-i Hadith totally reject the concept of sainthood whereas the Tablighi Jama'at only criticise the practices and not the saints. Hence, people like Mirza and Nazir would deny the existence of *pir*s whilst people like Umar would say there are only few 'real' *pir*s. The Tablighi Jama'at is popular amongst the well-educated people who take their beliefs from the books written by Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya (d.1982), author of the popular *Tablighi Nisab,* rather than home grown soil.

In the view of these people the Kharri Sharif shrine attracts all the wrong sort of people who make changes in Islam whenever it suits them. They are *ahl-i marzi wa al-Jama'at* 'do as you please' (a pun on *Ahl-i Sunnat wa al- Jama'at*). The young people are accused of turning the shrine into a 'lovers point'. This type of behaviour, it is argued, would not be tolerated anywhere else. Khalida (30), a former teacher in a secondary school in Mirpur tells:

> No *sharif* (respectable) person in his right mind should go to Kharri shrine with his wife or daughter with all these *badmash* (hooligans) people hanging around eyeing up all young women who visit the shrine. Nothing takes place in the form of guidance, indeed, the very people who manage the shrine hardly go to the mosque to pray which is only a minute's walk from the shrine. Shrine worship has made the people leave the house of God. In the view of these *jahil* (ignorant) people, do a *ziyarah* of the shrine and your sins are forgiven, if your sins are forgiven at the shrine then what is the point of going to the mosque?

All the above accounts suggest that in recent times reform movements such as the

Tablighi Jama'at and the Ahl-i Hadith are well represented in the Mirpur region, in particular amongst the well-educated classes, whose view of Islam is that of a universal nature rather than a particular devotional religion.

Barelwis in Mirpur

Presently all of the Reform Movements discussed in Chapter Two are represented in Mirpur. Hence, we need to analyse what has changed in the last fifty years that has lead to the strong presence of all the Modern Reform Movements and especially the Barelwis in Mirpur. Shah's (1995) study suggests that prior to the Partition, the Modern Reform Movements such as the Barelwis and the Deobandis remained invisible to the Mirpuri Muslims. According to Yunis (67), a Mirpuri British Muslim in Bury, a young Mirpuri villager was asked whether he was a Deobandi or a Barelwi, he replied, 'Neither, I am a *Gujjar* (farmer)." As Yunis' account suggests, most people from Mirpur were not aware of the Barelwis or Deobandis. The young man quoted above assumed that it was some sort of a *baradari,* thus he identified himself as a member of the farming *Gujjar* caste. Pir Maruf, a Mirpuri British *pir* now resident in Bradford (discussed in Chapter Four) admits that despite coming from an educated family he himself was not familiar with the Barelwis or Deobandis during his childhood (1940s) in Chak Sawari near Mirpur. However, during his studies in Panjab in the late 1950s Pir Maruf was introduced to the Barelwi Deobandi polemics. Pir Maruf argues: "If I did not know of these debates then I am sure that most people in the Mirpur area would not have heard of them."

None of the academic studies on Mirpur: Saifullah (1974), Ballard 1983 et al and

Kalra (2000) explain the emergence of the Barelwis in Mirpur. In the absence of such a research I would propose that the death of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh in 1907 had a devastating effect on the living Qadiriyya Qalandariyya tradition in Mirpur. Following his death the Qadiriyya Qalandariyya did not produce any great figure in this tradition. The successors of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh had neither the charisma nor the religious authority of their pious ancestor and hence none of them became bona fide *pirs* in their own right. However, it would be unfair to state that Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's successors did not exert any influence in Mirpur. Indeed, they were venerated by the illiterate masses but at the same time they proved weak and ineffective against the criticism of Ahl-i Hadith. Hence the void left by Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's demise made it possible for the Modern Reform Movements to gradually have greater influence in this area.

By the early 1960s the Barelwi *ulama* began to assume the role of *imam* in two of the leading mosques in Mirpur and many other mosques around the city. Initially the presence of the Barelwi *ulama* was seen as blessing to the uneducated and ineffective Qalandariyya *pirs* in Mirpur. However, these *ulama* were not merely defending the local *pirs* and *mazars*, but propagating the idea that the figurehead of Barewlism, Mawlana Ahmad Riza was the *mujaddid* (renewer) of the fourteenth Islamic century and viewed him as the 'saviour' of Sunni Islam in India and Pakistan, if not the whole Islamic world. In 2005 the Barelwis control almost all the mosques in Mirpur which practice devotional Islam, including the large mosque adjacent to the Kharri Sharif shrine. It seems a strategic partnership has been formed between the caretakers of the Sufi shrines in Mirpur and the Barelwis. The *pirs* control the shrines and Barelwis the mosques.

However, in places like Dars Sharif or its affiliated mosques in and around Kotli, the influence of Barelwis is virtually non-existent, because for the followers of this Naqshbandiyya centre, the spiritual and religious authority firmly rests with the living Naqshbandiyya *pirs* in this tradition. I would argue that as long as the livings *pirs* are able to adapt to the needs of the time, the Barelwis are less likely to influence such religious centres. The presence of Barelwi *ulama* was very evident during my fieldwork at the Kharri Sharif shrine in April 2000. In this final section of the chapter we will investigate if a link exists between the Kharri Sharif shrine and the Barelwis.

Two Faces of the Qadiriyya: Mian Muhammad Bakhsh and Mawlana Ahmad Riza Compared

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh and Mawlana Riza never met or had any correspondence. However, as they both belonged to the same Sufi order they shared certain ideas and beliefs. For example, both viewed Shaykh Jilani as being superior to all saints Mian Muhammad Bakhsh asserts: "He did not remain far behind the prophets in any aspect" (Zhaigham 1993:9). In addition both greatly revered the Prophet and *Sayyids* and supported *milad sharif* and *giyarvin sharif* and so forth. Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's *Taufa-i Rasuliyya* (*The Prophetic Gift* 1978) in which he discusses the miracles of the Prophet and extols the virtues of the Prophet's sandals known as the *nahlaian sharifain* (Noble Sandals) clearly illustrates his devotion for the Prophet. He asserts that anyone who places the drawing of the Prophet's sandals on his head will enjoy success in both worlds (1978:170). Indeed, all of his works

contain the utmost reverence for the Prophet, *sayyids* and Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani. Addressing the Prophet, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh pleads:

> *Ahl ulad teri da mangta mein kangal zaiyani,*
> *Paho khayr Muhammad tahin sadaqa shah-i Jilani.*
>
> I am a humble and a worthless servant of your family,
> Grant me your grace in honour of Shaykh Jilani.
> (Zhaigham 1993:8).

Veneration of *sayyids* plays a major role in the life and teachings of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh as the following two accounts from his family illustrate. Sara Begum (67), a descendant of Muhammad Bakhsh's sister Mehtab Begum explains:

> Once Mian Sahib visited Gujarat and as he slept he did not spread his feet. A devotee asked: " Master why you do not spread your feet"? He replied: "There are some graves of *sayyids* in the village and I do not want to turn my feet towards them. "

Another relative, Mian Muhammad Zulfiqar (29) relates:

> During his illness, Mian Sahib instructed his family and followers not to carry his body on their shoulders, in case a *sayyid* was present in his funeral. He did not want his body to be higher than a *sayyid* even after death.

There are numerous stories related in Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's biography about his unconditional love for the descendants of the Prophet. For example, on one occasion he would not speak to a government officer who had sacked a *sayyid* employee for embezzlement. It was only after the *sayyid* (who was guilty as charged) had been reinstated that Mian Muhammad Bakhsh forgave the officer (Zhaigham 1993:15).

In his only polemical work *Hidayat al-Muslimin* (*Guidance for the Muslims*) (reprint 1980), Mian Muhammad Bakhsh strenuously refutes the claims of the Ahl-i Hadith and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab that seeking help from the Prophet and saints is

shirk. Both he and Mawlana Riza defend the beliefs of *Ahl-i Sunnat wa al-Jama'at* in a similar manner. Mian Muhammad Bakhsh does not mention any Barelwi or Deobandi personality in his writings, which suggests that unlike the Ahl-i Hadith, these two movements had not reached Mirpur during his lifetime.

Despite these similarities Mian Muhammad Bakhsh and Mawlana Riza also reflect diverse outlooks. For example, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's work (with one exception) has an overwhelmingly mystical character and hence shares features with the Chishtiyya's policy of 'peace with all'. In short, his work is devotional, written without any concern for disapproval or criticism from anyone not sharing his worldview. By contrast Mawlana Riza's writings suggest that he was an intolerant figure, who was extremely 'generous' in branding 'other' Muslims as disbelievers. However, his devotional poetry does reflect a softer side but even that is tainted by his obsession to criticize his opponents at every given opportunity. Moreover, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh was a *pir* with a considerable following. Mawlana Riza only had a few followers who were basically his students. Whilst Mian Muhammad Bakhsh is unanimously viewed as the 'Rumi of Kashmir', Mawlana Riza by contrast never emerged as a bona fide *pir*.

Conclusion

Pira Shah has enduring appeal to the Mirpuri Muslims and his death anniversary is one of the most eagerly awaited events of the year. Mirpuris view him as a patron saint and his help is invoked in many matters ranging from the sacred to the profane. His shrine known as Kharri Sharif continues to be a source of comfort and

support for most of the Mirpuri Muslims and thus it would be fair to say that it is the nucleus of Mirpuri belief and ritual practice. The traditional background of Pira Shah and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh indicates that both were adherents of the intoxicated Qadiriyya/Qalandariyya tradition which shares its cosmology with the Chishtiyya and hence Shaykh Ibn Arabi's doctrines of *wahdat al-wujud* and *al-insan al-kamil* are reproduced from generation to generation. It is not difficult to see why the Kharri Sharif shrine holds such enduring appeal to the Mirpuris as it offers them solace during their darkest hours. Perhaps, more importantly the shrine makes no demands upon the visitors, they come and leave out of their own free will and there is no one to question their commitment to Islam in their everyday life. Indeed, as long as the Mirpuris keep visiting the Kharri Sharif shrine they can easily blend culture and religion and preserve the way of their ancestors.

Evidence suggests that Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's epic poem *Saif al-Muluk* enjoys a special place in the hearts and minds of the Mirpuri people. It is recited on different events: religious and secular. Generation after generation seems to 'connect' with Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's mystical 'journey of love'. Although *Saif al-Muluk* belongs to the long established genre of Panjabi Sufi poetry, however, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh differed with the earlier Panjabi Sufi poets such as Bulleh and Waris Shah in that he did not criticise the *ulama*. Principally because Mian Muhammad Bakhsh lived in remote area the local *ulama* did not exercise much authority and hence he was never labelled a 'heretic' as Bulleh and Waris Shah had been done previously. This might explains why Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's poetry is often recited in the mosques whereas poems of Waris Shah are not. Outside the

realm of the *ulama* both Waris Shah's *Hir* and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh' *Saif al-Muluk* are equally popular.

There is little evidence to suggest that during Mian Muhammad Bakhsh' lifetime (1830-1907), the Qalandariyya tradition or the devotional practices at the Kharri Sharif shrine were reformed by the writings of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah. However, it would be incorrect to assume that Shaykh Sirhindi's concept of *wahdat al-shuhud* did not exert any influence in the Mirpur region. On the contrary the 'sober' Naqshbandiyya it seems was discreetly operating alongside the more ecstatic 'intoxicated' Qalandariyya tradition as the account of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's contemporary Sayyid Neyk Alam illustrates. Nevertheless the Mirpuris it seems have a close affinity with the 'intoxicated' mystics as opposed to the 'sober' and it is the Qalandariyya tradition that prevails in Kharri Sharif.

Reform movements such as Ahl-i Hadith and Tablighi Jama'at are well represented in Mirpur. Both movements are critical of shrine related practices and evidence suggests that compared to Ahl-i Hadith, Tablighi Jama'at has a larger following in this region. Mirza's critique of the shrines clearly illustrates the ineffectiveness of Ahl-i Hadith, who were unable to prevent him being sentenced for blasphemy. The presence of these reform movements in Mirpur does not mean they have the power to change the ritual practice at Kharri Sharif.

In the final section we compared and contrasted the ideologies of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh and Mawlana Riza. Although both belonged to the Qadiriyya and their writings evidently illustrate veneration for the Prophet, *sayyids* and Shaykh Abd al-

Qadir Jilani, their outlooks differed. For example, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh was principally a Sufi and his writings mirror his mystical outlook which centres on the concept of Shaykh Ibn Arabi's *wahdat al-wujud*. In addition, he was also a *pir* who was visited by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Mian Muhammad Bakhsh it seems advocated the Chishtiyya's policy of 'peace with all', the same cannot be said of Mawlana Riza, who was not a mystic in the Qalandari sense and thus favoured a more rigid view of Islam. It is true that he defends many devotional practices however mere defence of these practices does not necessarily mean that he was a mystic. As Mian Muhammad Bakhsh writings were void of the critique of *ulama*, the Barelwi *ulama* were able to use this to their advantage. In summary, as long as the Mirpuri people followed the Islam of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh they were generally tolerant towards other faiths and when they came under the influence Mawlana Riza they became intolerant not only to non-Muslims but also to other groups within Islam. In the next chapter we analyse what happens to the Mirpuri religion when it is transformed from the broader tolerant worldview of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh to the narrower more sectarian world of Mawlana Riza.

Chapter Four

Big *Pirs*, Little *Kismetic Pirs* and the Transformation of British-Mirpuri Religiosity

Introduction

Barton's study of the Syhleti Bengali community of Bradford suggests that, "when they originally migrated most Bengalis suffered an almost total lapse of religious observance" (1986:177). It has subsequently become an academic norm to accept Barton's observation without question and most writers have repeated the same view. For example, in a more recent study, Ballard asserts that during the pioneer period: "Collective prayer was virtually non-existent, and even the personal performance of *namaz* (prayer) was rare" (2004:20). However, such a view seems somewhat speculative. In his early work Geaves expressed a similar view (1996:100). However, his more recent research on the Sufis of Britain acknowledges that, even in the 1960s and 1970s, both Sufi Abd Allah and *Pir* Maruf (discussed later in this chapter) had organised their own Sufi groups and activities: "These powerful groups of Muslims were thus able to maintain the practices and beliefs of Islam in an alien environment" (Geaves 2000:67).

One of the main aims of this chapter is to challenge the widely held view that there was a "lapse of religious observance" amongst the early migrants. In the first part of the chapter I investigate the period of the early 1960s onwards, assessing what religious activity was taking place amongst the Mirpuri male migrants. What aspects of devotional Islam were being reproduced and who were the key players in

this respect? The second part of the chapter focuses on the reunification of families and the impact this had on the religious life of Mirpuri migrants. The role of big *Pirs* such as *Pir* Maruf, *Pir* Siddiqi, Sufi Abd Allah and the Barelwi *ulama* in the transformation of traditional Mirpuri religiosity will be analysed. While the complex life of shrines such as Kharri Sharif cannot be imported in its entirety to Britain, mosques, by contrast, can be more easily reproduced in a new environment and gave the Barelwi *ulama* a greater platform than they had back in Mirpur. Moreover, given the general absence of Sufi shrines in Britain, how have the devotional practices such as *milad sharif, urs, giyarvin sharif, khatam al-khawajgan* and *dhikr* been reproduced in Britain? It will also be argued that, from the very beginning of the migration process, there were some 'little *kismetic Pirs*' resident in Lancashire such as Mian Iqbal and *Pir* Ji whose activities have gone unnoticed in the literature. I want to highlight the work of these *kismetic Pirs* to give a fuller picture of the devotional life of the Mirpuri Muslims in Britain during this period. Finally, the role two female *kismetic Pirs* are also discussed.

The Religiosity of the Early Muslim Migrants

According to Geaves, the first known Sufi traveller in Britain was a thirteenth century Qalandar called Najam al-Din Ghawth al-Dahr (2000:63). He left no legacy in Britain and perhaps urban Britain is not suited to the Qalandariyya way of life. However, other mystical traditions, such as the Yemeni Sufis were to have greater success as they, unlike the Qalandar mentioned above, adapted to the 'new' environment.

During the late nineteenth century the opening of the Suez Canal led Muslims from Yemen to join the British merchant navy and some of the seamen eventually settled in Britain near seaports such as South Shields and Cardiff (Nielsen 1995:4).

The 'big *Pir*' of the early Yemeni Arab community was Shaykh Abd Allah Ali al-Hakimi (d.1954) who had a profound effect on British Yemenis. Initially, al-Hakimi spent some time in Rotterdam but after a brief stay in Cardiff, he went to South Shields in 1936. This was home to the largest British Yemeni community outside Cardiff. Al-Hakimi was responsible for organising religious and educational activities in the *zawiya* (Sufi lodge) that he helped to establish (Halliday 1992:27-30; Ansari 2004:138-142). Sufi lodges became the centres of social and religious life for the Yemeni migrants and also provided a nucleus for their British Muslim wives (Nielsen 1995:4). Indeed, the Yemenis played an important part in the development of devotional Islam in Britain, although British Mirpuri 'big *Pirs*' such as *Pir* Maruf and *Pir* Siddiqi do not acknowledge this.

Before we further analyse the theory of the 'lapse' of religious observance amongst early Mirpuri migrants in Britain, it is appropriate to reflect further on the religiosity of the Mirpuri Muslims per se. In the previous chapter we have seen that devotional practices normally took place at Kharri Sharif and other shrines and it would be fair to say that most Mirpuri men and women did not pray five times a day. Indeed, many Mirpuris did not know how to pray the formal daily prayers which require some knowledge of Arabic, as they were generally uneducated villagers who had never gone to school or the village mosque. Faruq (39), originally from Mirpur and now living in Bury, owns a grocery shop in Salford. He relates:

> My father went to a shrine in Mirpur before Partition and wanted to recite the Qur'an. However there was no Qur'an at the shrine. Consequently he went to thirty houses before he found someone who had a copy of the Qur'an.

Yet even if many Mirpuris were not literate in the ways of 'formal' Islam, that is not to say that the people were not religious. Indeed, as Baba Halim (79), a pensioner from Rochdale, explains: "It was a common practice for a villager in Mirpur who was coming to England to do *salami* (visit) at the Kharri Sharif *darbar* and offer prayers." Before departure, the local saint's blessing was sought to protect one from harm whilst in *pardes* (foreign country) as the following account of Mian Ishtiaq (32), from Kharri Sharif and now resident in Burnley, illustrates:

> I was eight when we got our visa for England, my mother took my brothers and I to meet Sayyid Mubarak Shah who is our family *Pir*: his family have been our family *Pir*s for centuries. My mother asked Sayyid Mubarak Shah to give *ba'iya* (oath) to my elder brothers and to pray for them and the rest of the family. My mother was of the opinion that we were going to a non-Muslim country where so many immoral things took place and for this reason she wanted protection for her children to grow up as good Muslims, following the ways of their pious forefathers such as Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. I remember before we set off my mother went to give *salam* (bid farewell) at the shrine of Hadrat Baba *Pir*a Shah Ghazi and Hadrat Mian Sahib (Mian Muhammad Bakhsh). She made a *manat* (vow) to give a goat as a sacrifice if everything went well on the journey.

Mian Ishtiaq's account suggests that his mother gave a great deal of thought to the journey to Britain. In order to protect her children from evil influences she not only sought help from the living *Pir,* Sayyid Mubarak Shah, but also from deceased saints such as her ancestor Mian Muhammad Bakhsh and *Pir*a Shah.

Arguably, the Mirpuri people were Muslims by virtue of being born into a Muslim family: "Being a Muslim in Pakistan is no big deal" (Ballard 2004:4). Once they arrived in Britain, it seems likely that the early migrants practised most of their religious observances indoors. Muhammad Sarwar (66), a Mirpuri migrant living in Bury recollects:

> From 1965 until my redundancy in 1981, I worked a twelve-hour shift in a factory in Radcliffe. I could not offer my prayers at work so I used to read them *qaza* (postponed) at

> home. I would keep *roza* (fast) in *Ramadan Sharif* and also read the daily *wazifa* (litany) Hadrat Sahib gave me before I came to Britain.

To an outsider Sarwar might not be doing anything remotely religious in public but his account suggests that religious observance was performed in the home. However, this is not to suggest that all early Mirpuri migrants prayed as the following account indicates. Hajji Buta Khan (75), a pensioner from Panjeri in Mirpur and now resident in Bury, admits:

> *Namaz shamaz ta koni parn honise* (I was not able to pray *namaz* (formal daily prayer). But when I felt very lonely and distressed I would go into the *cellar* [basement] and get out my copy of *Saif al-Muluk* and sing it loud. It would give me so much peace. Sometimes my friends would say read it quietly the English neighbours might complain.

Hajji Buta's account illustrates that he did not pray *namaz*. However *Saif al-Muluk* was a source of solace for him. In addition it implies that the migrants were very sensitive about their English neighbours and perhaps feared upsetting them. As a result they tried to conduct their activities in private. However, as we shall see, the religiosity of Mirpuris in Britain was gradually transformed by resident and non-resident *Pir*s and it is to those key figures that we must turn our attention now. It is due to the efforts of these *Pirs* that the Mirpuris were able to preserve, and in many ways saw transformed, their traditional links with devotional Islam.

Three 'Big' *Pirs*: *Pir* Maruf, *Pir* Siddiqi and Sufi Abd Allah

i) Pir Maruf

During the 1960s *Pir* Maruf Husayn was to emerge as a leading religious figure amongst the Mirpuri Muslims. Lewis has suggested that any comprehensive account of Muslims in Britain must not overlook the contribution of people like *Pir* Maruf in Bradford and beyond (1994:81). In an interview, *Pir* Maruf told me that he was born on 20 June 1936 in Chak Sawari near Mirpur and came from a devout

religious family that traces its lineage to the seventeenth century Sufi saint of Gujarat, Sayyid Naushah Ganj Bakhsh Qadiri (d.1654). Following the completion of his religious studies in a Barelwi college in Rawalpindi, at the age of 26, *Pir* Maruf came to Britain in 1961 to join a large number of fellow migrants from the Mirpur region settled in Bradford. *Pir* Maruf explained:

> Initially I stayed at 15 Carlisle Street, Bradford, with my friend Choudary Farman Ali and around 25 to 30 people from near Old Mirpur. Only one or two prayed *namaz*, this was not unusual, as back home most people did not pray *namaz*.

According to *Pir* Maruf, after he purchased 18 Southfield Square in Bradford for £750 in 1962, he began to hold classes to teach both young and old men from Mirpur as most of them had not learned how to read the Qur'an before they migrated to Britain. What motivated *Pir* Maruf to hold these classes? According to *Pir* Maruf, back in Mirpur despite the fact most people do not pray *namaz* regularly, their faith was not under threat, as they heard *adhan* (call to prayer) five times a day. In addition, people visited shrines so they were constantly aware of their religion. By contrast, during the 1960s in Britain, a year might pass without one hearing *adhan*. Thus there was genuine fear in the hearts of people like *Pir* Maruf that if attempts were not made to redeem the situation, Mirpuris might move away from their culture and become westernised or, worse still, come under the influence of the Tablighi Jama'at and become 'Wahhabis'[1].

In order to prevent this from happening, *Pir* Maruf held a small gathering on Sundays, as it was the only day off from work. *Pir* Maruf would give a short speech

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[1] Pir Maruf's first love is Sufism, which is reflected in his devotional poetry in praise of God, the Prophet, Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani and Sayyid Naushah Ganj Bakhsh. The following is an example of his Persian devotional poetry: "His eminence Ganj Bakhsh, a fortress for the world and a generous king for the beggars, I am *Arif* [Pir Maruf's pseudonym] who has no other preoccupation than crying and cold sighs" (Recited by Maruf during his interview with me).

on the basics tenets of Islam and two of his companions, namely Jan Muhammad and Muhammad Latif, would recite the Qur'an and read a *na't sharif* (poem in honour of the Prophet). Moreover, *Pir* Maruf held *giyarvin sharif* every month in his house with an 'inner circle' of Qadiriyya Naushahiyya Sufis, followers of his elder brother *Pir* Abu Kamal Barq. *Pir* Maruf also began to celebrate the *urs* of his great ancestor Sayyid Naushah Ganj Bakhsh.

With the advent of an Urdu weekly newspaper *Mashriq* (East) in the 1960s, *Pir* Maruf was able to publicise his activities to other migrants in Britain. He considers the publication of *Mashriq* as a major breakthrough as it helped him to reach out to like-minded people across Britain including in Lancashire. *Pir* Maruf travelled to different towns at the weekends-he worked during the week-in order to visit people he knew from back home and also to meet those who contacted him through the newspaper. *Pir* Maruf states:

> My first and foremost concern was to encourage the Muslims to set up a mosque in their towns. In my view this was the best way of educating about Islam and also it would safeguard their children. When people had purchased a place for a mosque I would provide them with an *imam*. As Mirpuris are *saday banday* (simple people) there was no need for great scholars to teach them, all we needed was an *imam* who had a nice voice and could sing *Saif al-Muluk* occasionally.

Pir Maruf's account suggests that educating Mirpuris in Britain meant a shift from the shrines to mosques, although *Saif al-Muluk* was still being used to lure people to the latter. This emphasis on mosques was altogether something new for some Mirpuris.

As a result of his attempts to guide the Mirpuris in buying/building mosques and arranging *imams* to educate them and their children, over the next twenty (1963-1983) years *Pir* Maruf would become one of the most influential religious leaders

of the Muslim community in Britain, especially in Yorkshire. However, in recent times *Pir* Maruf has suffered numerous setbacks due to rival *Pir*s who have set up their own mosques and colleges in and around Bradford. As a result *Pir* Maruf has busied himself with travelling to his followers in Europe, Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. He has built a number of religious schools in Chak Sawari and Jhelum. *Pir* Maruf is contemplating publishing his memoirs in the near future which would hopefully shed more light on a wide range of contributions he has made to the Muslim community in Britain. We now analyse the activities of a Mirpuri Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya non-resident *Pir* named *Pir* Ala al-Din Siddiqi who is Chancellor of the Muhyi al-Din Islamic University (named after his father, discussed in Chapter Three) in Azad Kashmir (http://www.miu.edu.pk).

ii) Pir Siddiqi

Pir Siddiqi was born in 1938 in Neyarian Sharif near Kotli (Kotli was a sub-division of Mirpur district until 1975). His father Khwaja Ghulam Muhyi al-Din Ghaznawi (d.1975) was a well-known Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya *Pir* who had migrated from Ghazni in Afghanistan (Samdani 1997:187). *Pir* Siddiqi was possibly one of the earliest Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya *Pir*s from the Mirpur region to play an active role in the transformation of the Mirpuri community in Britain. Some of the Mirpuri migrants who came to Britain were followers of *Pir* Siddiqi's father and hence he sent his son to guide and instruct them (Athar 1998:10). According to *Pir* Maruf, *Pir* Siddiqi initially stayed in Bradford and addressed many gatherings organised by him. However this co-operation did not last long as *Pir* Siddiqi was keen to establish himself as an independent *Pir*, suggesting some *Pirs* are not above rivalry.

In 1967 *Pir* Siddiqi began his eighteen-month tour of British cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Bolton to meet his father's followers. According to *Pir* Siddiqi he usually met people in their houses, as there were few mosques at the time. *Pir* Siddiqi would lead *dhikr* and *khatam al-khwajagan* in his followers' houses and *langar* was served at the conclusion of the gathering. In addition *Pir* Siddiqi would give a short talk on a subject such as the need for having a *Pir* and keeping the beliefs of *Ahl i- Sunnat wa al-Jama'at.* He would warn people about the 'heretic' groups such as the Tablighi Jama'at, Deobandis, Jama'at-i Islami and Ahl-i Hadith. He would also recite poems of the great Sufi masters such as Rumi but rarely Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, possibly because his mother tongue was Farsi and not Panjabi. *Pir* Siddiqi explains the lack of Islamic education amongst Mirpuris:

> Generally our people lacked a basic knowledge of Islam. For example, once I asked some old people in the gathering that I was addressing to recite *dua kanut* (supplication made in night prayer); none of them knew the prayer. I concluded that if the older people who prayed did not know this prayer what possibility is there that the young people will know it?

Compared to *Pir* Maruf during the late 1960S [1967-69] *Pir* Siddiqi was relatively unknown in Britain. However, within a short period of time, due to his charismatic personality and excellent oratory skills, he emerged as a serious rival to *Pir* Maruf in Bradford. Similar to *Pir* Maruf, *Pir* Siddiqi's main concern was for his followers and admirers to buy a mosque and *Pir* Siddiqi would provide them with an *imam* of his choice, which effectively meant he would have control of the mosque. As a result, the control of mosques became a matter of contention between *Pir* Siddiqi and *Pir* Maruf. The dispute over the running of the Hanafiyya Mosque in Bradford is a case in point (Lewis 1994:86).

However, *Pir* Siddiqi's biggest following was in Birmingham where he established 'the Naqshbandiyya Trust' (Samdani 1997:379). Subsequently, rivalry between him and other *Pir*s in Birmingham such as Sufi Abd Allah (discussed later) intensified. From the late 1970s *Pir* Siddiqi often visited Bolton and Bury where he had a few followers. However, he was unable to have much influence on the choice of *imam* in the local mosques. Consequently his following has not grown in these particular towns, although he was liked and respected by most of the Mirpuris.

This account of *Pir* Siddiqi suggests that many Mirpuri migrants had maintained close contact with their *Pir*s back home. In addition, some migrants such as *Pir* Siddiqi's father's followers wanted to be guided while in Britain. *Pir* Siddiqi's followers would give him *niyaz* (offerings) and also send money to his father back home. Thus contact between the followers and the *Pir* was maintained through gift offerings. In recent times, due to ill health, *Pir* Siddiqi has reduced his number of visits to Britain and he has lost some of his prestige. However, he still exerts influence on the British Mirpuri Muslims as I witnessed during his visit to Britain on the 6 July 2003, when around sixty people came to receive him at Manchester Airport.

iii) Sufi Abd Allah

Another personality worthy of mention is Sufi Abd Allah Khan, leader of a Sufi group in Birmingham. Although Sufi Abd Allah is not a Mirpuri a substantial numbers of his followers are from that region. Sufi Abd Allah was born into a farming family on 15 March 1923 in Chakwal in Panjab, Pakistan. During army service he met and became a follower of a Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya *Pir*,

Hadrat Shah (d.1999), known as Zindapir 'the Living Saint', who also served in the Pakistan armed forces (Athar 1998:110). Unlike *Pir* Maruf and *Pir* Siddiqi, Sufi Abd Allah is not an *alim* and therefore was not aware of the debate between Barelwis and Deobandis. Sufi Abd Allah's argument was that "*eh maulvin ney maslay* (these are matters for the *maulvis*)" and in line with Zindapir he viewed himself as a *faqir* (mystic), although not in the Qalandariyya sense. According to *Pir* Maruf:

> Maulvi Salim Naqshbandi (also follower of Zindapir) and I spent many hours trying to convince Sufi Abd Allah that the Deobandi *ulama* he used to invite to his gatherings were 'Wahhabis'. He just could not understand what the differences were and it took us considerable time to educate him in these matters.

In the tradition of the early Yemeni Muslims, Sufi Abd Allah converted one of the rooms in his house into a *zawiya* (Sufi lodge) and held regular gatherings of *dhikr, khatam al-khwajagan* and *giyarvin sharif.* Sufi Abd Allah was acutely aware that Zindapir's greatest emphasis was on *dhikr*. Akbar Dad (77), a Mirpuri migrant and ex-soldier now resident in Cheetham Hill, North Manchester, was stationed near Zindapir's *khanqah* in Ghamkol Sharif and often visited Zindapir (although he is not a follower) during and after his service in the Pakistan Army. He recalls:

> One of the most striking features of Zindapir's *khanqah* was the constant *dhikr* that could be heard throughout the day and night. It seemed that everyone and everything around the *khanqah* was making *dhikr*. The people who prepared the food were continually occupied in dhikr reciting *la ilaha illallahu* (there is no god but God).

Thus *dhikr* also played a crucial role in Sufi Abd Allah's efforts to remind people of God. As it is human nature to 'forget', 'remembrance' [*dhikr*] was the way to link people back to God[2].

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[2] Werbner is of the opinion that the practice of *dhikr* is central to the journey towards God. *Dhikr* transforms both the body and the *nafs* (lower self). The spiritual power of God enters the body of those who do *dhikr* to purify the soul (1996:175-178).

In addition Sufi Abd Allah has played a major role in reproducing the procession of *urs* and *milad sharif* in Britain. Irfan (29), self-employed, was born in Bury but his parents come from Kotli. He explains why he attended the *milad sharif* procession in Birmingham:

> During the holy month of the Prophet's birthday I do not get time to take part in most gatherings held in the Prophet's honour in Lancashire and I really feel guilty about that. So, when I am able go anywhere to celebrate *milad sharif*, I go to Sufi Abd Allah Sahib's *jalus* (procession) because my father used to take me to these processions when I was a teenager and I really enjoyed walking through Birmingham, it gave me a lot of self pride. Taking part in the *jalus* (procession) gives me a sense of having done something in honour of the Prophet.

Such was the popularity the *milad sharif* processions that many young people such as Irfan, who were neither followers of Zindapir nor Sufi Abd Allah, took take part in the *jalus*. The reason most people gave for participating in the event was in order to express their love and devotion for the Holy Prophet.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Sufi Abd Allah's gatherings sometimes attracted Sufi groups such as the followers of a British convert Shaykh Abd al-Qadir as-Sufi from Norwich. Occasionally a Muslim convert would be allowed to give a short talk in English. Once Shaykh Abu al-Samad Zam Zami (a British convert) was given the opportunity to speak. In his speech he highlighted the difference between the Sufis and scholars, stating that whilst the Sufis sought to build bridges and bring people together, in contrast, the *ulama* were doing the opposite. Although Sufi Abd Allah does not publicly criticise the *ulama*, in private he shares Shaykh Zam Zami's sentiments. Needless to say, the speech by a Western convert criticising the role of the scholars did not go down too well with the *ulama*. In future they made sure that such views were not echoed in these gatherings. Speeches in English have continued but they avoid open confrontation with the *ulama*.

It would be fair to say that the Mirpuris are the backbone of Sufi Abd Allah's group. I have attended his gatherings since 1978 and I have always observed that the reciting of *Saif al-Muluk,* insofar as the Mirpuris were concerned, was often the highlight of the programme. People like Maulvi Ghulam Rasul from Birmingham, an excellent reciter of *Saif al-Muluk,* would be covered in pound notes. This is a popular custom in Mirpur and has been reproduced in Britain. When someone experiences ecstasy they throw money on the reciter of a *na't* (poem in honour of the Prophet) or *Saif al-Muluk.* Sufi Abd Allah's role is that of the host. He never makes a speech but concludes the programme with his long prayers. Sufi Abd Allah has also built one of the largest mosques in Europe (Geaves 2000:120). Hajji Qasim (69), a Mirpuri migrant and a caretaker, of the Ghamkolviyya mosque asserts: "*Eh sara paisa mirpurian na laga hoya*" (this mosque was built with the money of the Mirpuris).

On the 12 January 2001 I took part in *dhikr* led by Sufi Abd Allah at the above mosque. The *dhikr* lasted for two hours and out of the 10-12 people who were present most were old men. Werbner's study suggests that Sufi Abd Allah has a large following amongst the young British Pakistanis, who are primarily children of his followers in Birmingham (2001:28). However, my research indicates that a substantial number of children of Sufi Abd Allah's followers have become followers of both resident and non-resident *Pirs* who communicate in English. For example, Kabir (27), a shop owner in Birmingham, whose father is closely linked with Sufi Abd Allah, asserts:

> In Sufi Abd Allah's gatherings there was hardly any activity for young people. When I was very young my father used to force me to attend *giyarvin sharif* in Sufi Abd Allah's mosque. As an adult, I met a number of non-Asian visiting Shaykhs who were surrounded by young

> British Muslims like myself. I felt very comfortable with their open intellectual approach to Islam compared to the rigid and uncompromising attitude of Sufi Abd Allah and his followers.

There is no doubt that Sufi Abd Allah, along with *Pir* Maruf and *Pir* Siddiqi, has played an important part in reproducing many devotional practices in Britain for the early migrants. However the same cannot be said of the British-born or raised born generation.

The Mirpuris and the Barelwi/Deobandi Debate in Britain

> Over the past forty years Islamic movements and groups of Asian origin have come to be established in Britain. They offer different ways, although not always markedly different ways, of being Muslim. Their relationships with each other are often extremely abrasive (Robinson 1988:2).

Back home, the Mirpuris' belief in *Pirs* and *mazars* was something taken for granted. They did not return to the Qur'an and Hadith when explaining why they did what they did as majority of Mirpuris were illiterate. Thus they explained their practices according to what they knew of them through the customs of their uneducated parents. Following the influx of Deobandi and Barelwi *ulama* into Britain, the debate between the Barelwis and Deobandis began to surface in Britain during the 1970s.

As most Mirpuris were not fully aware of the Deobandi/Barelwi conflict, *Pir* Maruf and *Pir* Siddiqi faced the task of 'educating' them in this respect. They state that, one of the main reasons for this was that the Tablighi Jama'at was targeting Mirpuris. Indeed, a few Mirpuri families in Bradford and Lancashire, who were traditionally followers of *Pirs,* had moved away from devotional Islam. This caused a great deal of anxiety and *Pir* Maruf and *Pir* Siddiqi began to inform the 'simple' Mirpuris about the dangers of 'sugar coated' forms of 'Wahhabism':

Deobandis and Tablighi Jama'at. They argued that although the Tablighi Jama'at generally talked about *namaz*, its main aim was to convert people to 'Wahhabism'.

Pir Maruf and *Pir* Siddiqi travelled to different towns such as Birmingham, Manchester and Bolton and began to inform the people of the 'heretical views' of the Deobandis and Tablighi Jama'at. *Pir* Siddiqi recalls:

> It was very difficult to convince our *saday* (simple) Mirpuri people that Deobandis and Tablighi Jama'at were Wahhabis in disguise. When we tried to explain to them the difference between Sunnis (Barelwis) and Deobandis, they would respond *oh ve Qur'an parnaey* (they [Deobandis] read Qur'an as well). Meaning how can anyone misquote the Qur'an.

On the 12 August 1973 a debate took place in Bolton between the Barelwis and Tablighi Jama'at. The Barelwis, led by *Pir* Siddiqi, argued that the *imam* of the mosque in Bolton was a 'Wahhabi' and thus should be sacked and replaced by a Barelwi *imam*. However, *Pir* Siddiqi and the Barelwi *ulama* failed to convince the congregation at the above mosque, which included a substantial number of Mirpuris, that the *imam* was a 'Wahhabi' (Shahid 1980:16). Nevertheless, these debates provided an ideal opportunity for a strategic partnership of Barelwi big *Pirs* and *ulama* to take centre stage in Britain and gain an increasingly strong hold over the Mirpuri community.

The accounts of both *Pir* Maruf and *Pir* Siddiqi suggest that they were educated by Barelwi *ulama*. However, this is not necessarily the case with all the *Pirs* in Britain. Thus there is a need to make the distinction between the Barelwis and *Pirs* explicit. Nielsen rightly points out that the term 'Barelwi' is not necessarily the correct description when referring to *Pirs*. The *Pirs* are "often generally subsumed under the heading Barelwi, although not always correctly" (Nielsen 1996:10).

Generally the relationship between the *Pir*s and Barelwi scholars is that of co-operation. Werbner rightly observes:

> The link between the saints and doctors among Barelwis means that the movement is a powerful urban, as well as rural, organisation. Indeed, it creates organic links between town and village, and its lodges and mosques provide welcoming havens and communal centres for migrant travellers (1994: 113).

However, behind this mutual co-operation lies a tension that has gone unnoticed by many 'outsiders' such as Joly (1988:38), Rex (1988:209) and Lewis (1994) to mention but a few. In the words of Werbner: "On the whole, however, the saints disdain the maulvis while relying heavily upon their services" (1994:111). Sulayman (59), a 'little' *Pir* in Blackburn, argues:

> The Barelwis and Deobandis have the monopoly in most mosques in Britain; one has to be either one or the other. In my view this is grossly unfair, as I do not wish to be part of either group. What were Muslims before the advent of the Barelwi and Deobandi movements?

Moreover there are some Sufi-related activities, which would never be allowed in a Barelwi mosque, such as *qawwali*. As I have stated in Chapter Two, Mawlana Riza saw himself as an *alim* not a Sufi; therefore he did not support devotional practices such as *qawwali*.

Lancashire Muslims: *Pir*-Less?

During the 1970s 'big *Pirs*' such as *Pir* Maruf and Sufi Abd Allah did not have a significant following in Lancashire towns. Presently, Sufi Abd Allah has influence over a large mosque in Manchester and a small one in Rochdale, while *Pir* Maruf's following has remained constant in Lancashire. *Pir* Siddiqi, however, was always a popular figure amongst the Mirpuris in Bolton, Bury, Oldham and Manchester. However, due to the absence of a resident big *Pir* in Lancashire, the Tablighi Jama'at gained popularity amongst the Mirpuris. Towns like Blackburn and Bolton

became Tablighi Jama'at's strongholds in Lancashire. In 1973, in Bolton, where there is a sizeable Mirpuri community and *Pir* Siddiqi has a few followers, an attempt was made to replace the Tablighi *imam* of the Zakariyya Mosque. This proved unsuccessful due to the fact that the Tablighi Jama'at was well established and had the support of some Mirpuris. Indeed, the Tablighi Jama'at had played an important role in the religious education of the Mirpuris in Lancashire and thus gained considerable support from them during these conflicts. A similar attempt was made in Bury, which I witnessed along with many other people in the town. The following account is based on my personal observations.

Sufi Sadiq and Sufi Imtiaz, who knew *Pir* Siddiqi well, approached the *imam*, Dawud Isa Patel, and said that they wanted to have a *jalsa* (gathering) of *Pir* Siddiqi. Until this time Dawud Isa had claimed that he was a staunch 'Sunni', by which the Mirpuris assumed that he believed in *Pirs* and *mazars*. However, Sufi Sadiq and Sufi Imtiaz were convinced that he was a 'Wahhabi' and they wanted to use this *jalsa* to expose him to the masses. Dawud Isa was very apprehensive and held the view that, in light of what had taken place in Bolton, this *jalsa* would cause *fitna* (discord) amongst the Muslims in Bury. At the time the Muslim community in Bury had only one mosque and Dawud Isa was the *imam*. He was well aware that following the *jalsa* the community could be split into two groups, Deobandis and Barelwis, and a second mosque was likely to emerge. The Deobandi monopoly in the Bury mosque would come to an end and Dawud Isa wanted to prevent this if at all possible as his own job was in jeopardy. However, Sufi Sadiq and Imtiaz were intent on exposing Dawud Isa as a 'hidden Wahhabi' and, during several violent outbursts, the Mirpuris tried to take control of the mosque. Eventually, the Mirpuris

in Bury, like those in Bolton, did indeed have to purchase a new mosque in order to carry out devotional practices such as *milad sharif, giyarvin sharif, khatam al-khwajagan* and *dhikr*.

In the absence of 'big *Pir*s' in Lancashire, some of the Barelwi *imams* took on the main mantle of leadership amongst the Mirpuris. For example, during the early 1980s, two of the largest processions of *milad sharif* were held in Blackburn and Manchester. This was mainly due to the efforts of Barelwi *imams* such as Sayyid Hamid Ali Shah, *imam* of Riza mosque (named after Mawlana Riza) in Whalley Range, Blackburn. Sayyid Hamid Ali Shah was an excellent orator and could easily motivate Mirpuri people to attend these processions. I have taken part in one such procession in Blackburn and during the 1980s it was one of the biggest events of the year, often attended by a few thousand people from neighbouring towns such as Preston, Bury, Accrington, Rochdale and Bolton. In Manchester, the *milad sharif* procession was organised by *Jami'at al-Muslimin* (Organisation of Muslims) of Victoria Park Mosque in Rusholme. This was also led by a Barelwi *imam*, Mawlana Ahmad Nisar Baig. His *milad sharif* procession would start in the city centre at St Peter's Square and proceed through the 'curry mile' of Rusholme, culminating in Victoria Park mosque. As in Blackburn, this event was attended by Muslims from neighbouring towns such as Bury and so forth.

'Little' *Kismetic Pirs* in Lancashire

Apart from the well known 'big' *Pir*s like *Pir* Maruf, *Pir* Siddiqi and Sufi Abd Allah, there were many, less well known, but arguably equally important, local

'little' *kismetic Pir*s who were just as effective in terms of reproducing devotional Islam in their own respective communities (for *kismetic* religion see the Introduction). Ballard observes that it is impossible to know for certain how many 'low-key *Pir*s' are presently active in Britain. However, he suggests that their numbers have increased in recent times (2004:26). Geaves also acknowledges that it is not possible to include every such manifestation of Sufism in Britain (2000:vi). I aim to correct this situation somewhat by giving an account of two 'little *kismetic Pir*s', Mian Iqbal and Sayyid Karam Shah, this is not to suggest that they are the only ones, indeed such people exist in most British Muslim communities.

Mian Muhammad Iqbal (80) was born in Kharri Sharif and is a member of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's family. Mian Iqbal's son, Mian Ishtiaq (32), relates:

> A*ba Ji* (father) came to England in 1960. Initially he stayed in Slough and then gradually moved to Birmingham and then to Bradford. Some people would travel many miles just to meet him because he was a relative of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. Everyone who met him would give him *niyaz* (offering), and every weekend someone would come and take him to their house where people would gather to meet him. As *Aba Ji* says, wherever he went it became a party of some sort. The old men would never sit on the same sofa as my father, always preferring to sit on the floor. They would cook for him and wash his clothes; in fact whilst he was with them they would not let him do anything. The people from Mirpur generally had so much love for Mian Muhammad Bakhsh that whoever was informed about my father's presence in the area, they would come and sit in his company. Father never lectured people about Islam but instead conversed with them about their day-to-day matters. If there was some dispute within the Mirpuri people, my father's presence was enough to settle the dispute. People felt guilty to turn down the efforts of a member from Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's family. Even to this day people constantly come to our house and if my father is in Pakistan then my elder brother, Mian Ishfaq, is the focus of their veneration.

Mian Ishtiaq's account suggests that the migration process did not dampen the spirits of the Mirpuris' veneration of local saints such as Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. However, as Mian Muhammad Iqbal belongs to the Qadiriyya Qalandariyya tradition, one would also expect him to re-produce something of this worldview in Britain. His son, Mian Muhammad Ishtiaq remembers the advice his father gave him as teenager: "*Beta* (son), learn about Islam from the *maulvis* but follow the

way of the *faqirs* (Qalandars)." By this he meant that it is fine to go to the mosque and learn the basics of Islam from the *imams* but one must not adopt their worldview because compared to the Qalandars it is very narrow and sectarian: "A true mystic is like an ocean whilst most *imams* are small ponds, the former is always fresh and the latter mostly stale. "

However, Mian Iqbal faced a real dilemma. If he was to discourage his children and friends from associating with the *ulama* it would limit their access to 'Islam', for in Britain one does not have the choice between the *mazar* and mosque. To deny one the opportunity to pray and learn about Islam in Britain would be unforgivable. Mian Iqbal concluded that, as long as he could impart his Qalandariyya message to his close friends and family, it would be better than nothing in a foreign country. In the face of overwhelming odds, Mian Iqbal chose to keep his views fairly private because the 'sober' mosque atmosphere demanded more restrained behaviour than a shrine. One could not let one's 'hair down' amongst the *imams* in the mosques.

In Mian Muhammad Iqbal's account we see a pragmatic but very un-Qalandariyya like approach. Such 'strategic rationality' and the Qalandariyya are 'strange bedfellows'. Indeed, the main characteristic of the Qalandar is his carefree attitude and when he starts to conform to convention he loses this distinction. Had 'little *kismetic Pirs*' like Mian Iqbal defended the Qalandariyya way as other more radical groups have protected their ideology, perhaps Islam in Britain would have taken a somewhat different shape.

Another 'little *kismetic Pir*' is *Pir* Sayyid Karam Husayn Shah Qadiri (80), known as '*Pir* Ji', who comes from Shahpur Sayyidain, a village in Kotli, Azad Kashmir. He belongs to the 'sober' tradition of the Qadiriyya. *Pir* Ji recollects:

> I came to Britain in 1962 and lived at 22 Howard Street in Bradford for a few years then moved to Bury. Compared to a major city like Bradford, Bury is like a village. The two main *baradaris* from Kotli in Bury are the *Rajput* and *Gujjar* who have always respected our *sayyid* family. Thus I would be called upon to do *dam* (blow) or give a *ta'widh* in time of misfortune or need. Some people would give me *niyaz* or offerings of *giyarvin sharif.*

According to Sayyid Jama'at Shah (50), son in law of *Pir* Ji, for fifteen years *Pir* Ji worked a twelve-hour shift in a local textile factory. Despite his long working hours he had made it known to the local people that if anybody wanted to learn about Islam they should come to his house and wake him if he was asleep. Sometimes he would come back from a night shift and a person might turn up for a lesson in the morning. *Pir* Ji never expressed any anger for being disturbed; he would teach the person in question and then try to get some sleep. Among *Pir* Ji's many students in Bury is Sufi Muhammad Abid (50). Abid comes from Kaini, a village in Kotli. He came to Britain in 1967 to join his *chacha* (paternal uncle) in Aylesbury and later moved to Bury. He is married with five daughters and two sons. Speaking about his upbringing in Azad Kashmir, Abid explains:

> As a young boy, I loved listening to mother reciting by memory the *nurnama* (story of Light) early in the morning before she began milking the cows. Although she was illiterate some how she had memorised this long poem. The *nurnama* relates the story of creation. It tells how God created the Prophet from His *nur* (light) and that everything else was created from that light. Even without trying I memorised the *nurnama* in its entirety.

Abid's account suggests that he was familiar with the concept of the Prophet being made of God's light through his mother who perhaps learned the *nurnama* from her elders. Ballard rightly suggests that it is the mothers who transmit devotional ideas and practices from generation to generation (2004:24). Abid had little contact with

formal religious education, something which becomes clear in the following account:

> When I came to England in the late 1960s there was no mosque in our town (Bury). The only way that we kept in touch with Islam was through *Pir* Ji, who belonged to a respected Sayyid family near our village. He used to work in the same factory as me and often invited young people like myself to his house to learn the Holy Qur'an and pray *namaz*. Most young people from Azad Kashmir could not read the Holy Qur'an and did not know how to pray *namaz* properly. We used to visit *Pir* Ji's house frequently and whilst one of us was learning others would attend to the household chores. This was as a gesture of gratitude on our part as *Pir* Ji never charged any money for teaching us. *Pir* Ji guided us in matters of the world and also religion. Since his retirement he has settled in Pakistan permanently, but we still keep in touch with him.

Abid's account is typical of many young men in Bury who came to Britain as teenagers during the 1960s and 1970s. People like *Pir* Ji provided them with a role model and served multiple functions of teacher, advisor and counsellor. *Pir* Ji was also responsible for the establishment of the Panjera Death Committee. As its name suggests, it took care of funeral related services and also paid for the cost of sending bodies back home. The committee has a membership of two hundred that mainly consists of migrants from the Kotli region. Although *Pir* Ji has moved back to Azad Kashmir, in recognition of his valuable contributions to the local community, he still holds the post of chairman in the Panjera Death Committee. As I have known *Pir* Ji since I was a teenager myself, I am well aware that his influence was not confined to young people. Indeed, the *imam* of the local mosque in Bury, an Indian Gujarati, Dawud Isa Patel (mentioned earlier), would visit *Pir* Ji for advice and respected him for his knowledge of Islam and the local Muslim community.

Emergence of 'Little' *Kismetic* Female *Pirs*

Thus far we have only examined the efforts of the Mirpuri men responsible for reproducing a number of devotional practices in Britain. However, it would be

incorrect to suggest that women did not play a significant role in this process too. Back home women were the backbone of devotional Islam as illustrated in Chapter Three.

Although women generally came to Britain later than their male counterparts, it could be argued that it was the women who consolidated the earlier efforts of the men to reproduce devotional Islam in the diaspora. Shaw asserts:

> Religious practice slowly began to change, however, since the arrival of women and children was accompanied by a gradually increasing awareness of the need to preserve the community's Islamic identity (1988:49).

With the exception of the work of Shaw (1988) and Werbner (1990; 2001), such women generally remain invisible in most studies on British Muslims. Earlier we discussed *Pir* Maruf's work amongst the Mirpuri men in Britain. It is equally important to mention the significant role of his wife, Sayyida Radia Fatima. She has not been mentioned in the studies on Bradford Muslims by Saifullah (1974), Lewis (1994) and McLoughlin (1997). However, she has tirelessly served the Muslim community in Bradford for over thirty years teaching Qur'an and the basic articles of faith to young girls and women. Whilst the Mirpuri men visit *Pir* Maruf for guidance, the Mirpuri women seek guidance and support from Sayyida Radia Fatima. In addition she is viewed as an excellent counsellor on domestic issues and has helped many couples overcome marriage problems. Indeed, in this respect, her contributions outweigh those of her illustrious husband.

Another woman, worthy of discussion is Sayyida Shamim Fatima (61), who has also played a significant role in the reproduction of devotional Islam in Britain and particularly in the town of Bury. She comes from a 'sober' Qadiriyya family in Kotli and now lives in Bury. Sayyida Shamim Fatima has been the inspiration

behind numerous devotional practices being reproduced in the town: *khatam al-khwajagan, niyaz, milad sharif, langar* and so forth. I will focus on the practice of *giyarvin sharif.* The success of this practice in Bury is indebted to the love and dedication of Sayyida Shamim Fatima.

The practice of *giyarvin sharif* is very widespread in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir especially in rural areas. In times of difficulty people often make a *manat* (vow) to give eleven rupees towards the *langar* of *giyarvin sharif* and when their wish is granted they give this amount to their *Pir* or a pious *sayyid* (descendent of the Prophet) family in the vicinity. Often the *Pir* also happens to be a *sayyid.* On receiving the *niyaz* (offering) the *Pir* or *sayyid* makes a supplication for the benefit of the donor, who feels happy that he/she has honoured his/her pledge to God. Hence, the donor receives instant gratification from the *Pir* or *sayyid* and feels that his/her offering has been accepted by both Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani and ultimately God.

In Azad Kashmir the practice of *giyarvin sharif* was principally performed by the *sayyids*, who benefited from its performance both in terms of revenue and as the legitimate heirs of the great Shaykh Jilani in whose honour the practice takes place. With regards to *giyarvin sharif,* Sayyida Shamim Fatima asserts: "Our real inheritance is *giyarvin sharif.*" Indeed, some Mirpuri people believe that a *giyarvin sharif* without a *sayyid's* presence is void. Sayyida Shamim's son, Sayyid Nasir Shah (30), a teacher in Business Studies in Bury, explains:

> Every month on the eleventh of the lunar calendar we do *giyarvin sharif* in our house. We sit down, spread a white cloth and place 111 beads on it. Then we read the *khatam-al ghawthiyya* in honour of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani and *khatam al-khawajgan* in honour of Khwaja Baha al-Din Shah Naqshband. At the conclusion my father makes the supplication

> and we eat *zarda* (yellow sweet rice). Initially only a few men used to come to the gathering and they would give offerings to my father, normally £1.25 and sometimes more.

Sayyida Shamim Fatima was respected by the women who knew her from the village back home and these women would ask, and still do, for *ta'widh* (amulets) *du'a* (prayers) and would consult her on a wide range of *kismetic* matters. Nasir describes her role in the local Mirpuri community:

> Women from the local community usually came to visit my mum and relate their problems, concerning their husbands, children and the *baradari.* I think at that time we were the only *sayyid* family in Bury and people from our area (Azad Kashmir) showed a lot of respect to the *sayyids*. It seemed to me that the main reason that these women came to visit mum was that they needed to talk to someone. My mum would always offer them refreshments as it is part of our family tradition never to let anyone leave the house without offering them food or drink. When these ladies had spent some time with mum they usually left with a smile on their faces. As these ladies were about to leave, they would give *giyarvin sharif* to my mum.

Nasir's account suggests that some of the *sayyid* families played an important role in reproducing devotional Islam in their respective communities. It also highlights the role women played in the process. In this case Nasir's mother was arguably the 'real' *Pir* as far as the local women were concerned; it was to her that women turned for guidance. The account also suggests that the devotional practice of *giyarvin sharif* was not only being reproduced by the likes of big *Pir*s such as *Pir* Maruf, *Pir* Siddiqi and Sufi Abd Allah but also by little women *Pirs* such as Sayyida Shamim Fatima.

Conclusion

It can be said that Barton's (1986) observation, that there was lack of religious activity amongst the early Bengali migrants, holds true to a degree for the Mirpuris. However, it could also be argued that there were early Mirpuri migrants, both big and little *Pirs* such as *Pir* Maruf and as *Pir* Ji, who not only maintained their

religious duties but also acted as catalysts for other 'less practising' Muslims in their respective communities. Indeed, it is interesting that the Mirpuri migrants have generally succeeded in reproducing devotional Islam in Britain whilst their counterparts, the Bengalis of Syhlet, have not. Further evidence of the Bengali community's failure to reproduce devotional Islam in Britain is the fact that not a single Bengali *Pir* has emerged in Britain. In contrast there are dozens of Pakistani and Kashmiri *Pirs* who have primarily made their names in Britain.

In the early, 'pioneer', period, a Mirpuri migrant's religious observance was mostly confined to the private sphere. This, alongside public behaviour such as going to pubs, perhaps explains why they were generally considered by 'outsiders' to have neglected their religious obligations. It would be incorrect to suggest that every Mirpuri became a 'practising' Muslim following the migration. However, it is equally unfair to suggest that they 'lapsed' in their religious observance. It is generally acknowledged that *Pir* Maruf and Sufi Abd Allah were active during the early period and gradually reproduced devotional practices such as *dhikr*, *milad sharif khatam al-khwajagan* and *giyarvin sharif* (Geaves 2000). However, it is equally true that little women *Pirs* such as Sayyida Shamim and Sayyida Radia Fatima played an important role amongst the Mirpuri women and children, so they also merit recognition.

It could be argued, following Hinnells (1997; 2003), that as a result of the migration the Mirpuris have become more 'religious'. However, the argument here is that their 'religiosity' is being transformed with some traditional practices gradually being 'lost' and other (increasingly neo-orthodox) attitudes being 'gained' in

diaspora. The Mirpuri migrants have been unable to reproduce the Qalandariyya tradition in Britain primarily because the Barelwi *imams* were able to capitalise on the general shift in significance from shrines to mosques. As a result, the Qalandariyya tradition is neglected in Britain although it continues to thrive back in Mirpur. Although *Pir* Maruf belongs to the Qadiriyya like Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, he was 'Barewli-ised' through his religious education outside Mirpur and hence had little interest in sustaining the Qalandariyya tradition overseas. His contribution to the spread of 'Barelwi' thought in Britain is immense. Indeed, the conclusion of this chapter is that 'sober' forms of Sufism have become dominant in Britain and, as a result, such orders are far more popular than the Qalandariyya, which functions best in a shrine setting. It could be argued that the cosmology of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh is being eclipsed by that of Mawlana Riza.

Chapter Five

Barelwi mosques, *imams* and the Mirpuri youth: the 'dominant' neo-orthodox discourse?

Introduction:

> Do you have difficulty in speaking English? Did you enter Britain with a false passport? Are you living in fear of being deported? Are you a firm advocate of corporal punishment? Then this is the job for you! Salary: Good quality dates (who said we pay peanuts). Apply to your local mosque committee. (Please note that the mosque committee is definitely not an equal opportunities employer and reserves the right to fire you after giving you five minutes notice) (*Trends*, Volume 7, Issue 3 1997:22).
>
> There is a widespread perception in Muslim communities that *imam*s are not equipped by their own training to help young British Muslims cope with issues such as unemployment, racism, drugs, the attractions of the Western youth culture and so on (The Runnymede Trust 1997:11).

It was suggested in the previous chapter that early Mirpuri migrants to Britain were not aware of the 'Barelwi-Deobandi' sectarian conflict, as they had received little formal religious education in Kashmir. However, in Britain, to a greater or lesser extent, many Mirpuris became associated with the 'Barelwi' position due to the influence of 'big' *pirs*, especially those with close links to Barelwi *imams* and mosques. This chapter focuses on an assessment of the extent of 'Barelwi' influence on second and third generation Mirpuri Muslims, examining in particular the role of selected Barelwi mosques and *imams* in Lancashire in their attempts to inculcate Barelwi ideology.

The chapter evaluates some of the criticisms of *imams* advanced by both 'insiders' and 'outsiders', in particular, the idea that they are failing the second and third

generation of British Muslims. In the diaspora, *imams* are expected to perform a whole of range of activities that would be unheard of in Pakistan. However, most have neither the training nor the skills to transform themselves from a rural Kashmiri to an urban British *imam* overnight. For example, Pirzada, a Barelwi *imam,* acknowledges that[1]:

> It is true that the *ulama* who came to Britain from Pakistan and India could not fulfil the requirements of the new Muslim generation because ninety percent [of the] *ulama* were ignorant of the language of the new generation which is English (Athar 2002:118).

Despite these 'shortcomings', Pirzada asserts that due to the efforts of the Barelwi *imams* there is a 'greater awareness' of Islam, (or at least the formalities of Islam), among British Muslims than many of their counterparts in Pakistan (Athar 2002:117).

Certainly, Barelwis in the UK have instilled a love for the Prophet in their young students. They do this, for example, through ritual practices such as kissing the thumbs when the Prophet's name is mentioned. Similarly, the *salat o salam*, that is, 'salutations' upon the Prophet, is sung in congregation especially after the Friday prayer and seeks to give the 'Barelwi' youth a specific identity that sets them apart from 'other' Muslims[2]. Other selected devotional practices such as *milad sharif, urs sharif, giyarvin sharif, dhikr* and *khatam*, all of which take place in the mosque in diaspora, also provide an ideal opportunity for Barelwi *imams* to criticise the rival beliefs and practices of other schools such as the Deobandis, Tablighi Jama'at and Jama'at-i Islami. There is no hesitation in sectarian labelling of detested Muslim

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[1] See also, Raza, a Barelwi *imam* himself, who acknowledges that most of the *imams* in British mosques are not well-educated (1993:25).

[2] For example, Mawlana Riza's famous poem, *mustafa jan-i rahmat peh lakun salam* (millions of salutation be upon the 'chosen one', 'the source of mercy'.

'others' as 'Wahhabis'. Ultimately, in Barelwi mosques, Muslim youth are taught to revere Mawlana Riza as the saviour of 'correct' Sunni belief.

General background on mosques and *imams* in Britain, including a short case study of a Barelwi mosque in Lancashire, is followed by a discussion of an '*imam*-less' arena where children are now taught by second generation British educated Mirpuris. Although not *imams*, the latter aim to fulfil the educational, social and religious needs of Muslim youth. The final section examines the extent to which Barelwis have sought to transmit and reproduce their ideology through English language literature and seminaries and youth group activity. In this latter regard, the activities of a Barelwi youth movement fairly new to Britain, *Dawat-i Islami* (Call to Islam), are evaluated.

Mosques and *Imams* in Britain

Mosques occupy a central position amongst the British Muslims and continue to grow in every decade. The first mosque in Britain, the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking, built in 1889, is named after the ruler of Bhopal, Shah Jahan Begum (ruled 1868-1901)[3]. However, Nielsen is of the opinion that the later growth of mosques is closely tied to the different phases of the post-war migration process (1995:44). In 1963, thirteen mosques had been registered with the Registrar General and over the next three years seven mosques were registered annually. This increase was a direct consequence of the immigration policies that led to the reunification of families (Nielsen 1995:44). By the 1980s, the mosque had become a major symbol of Islam in Britain and the rest of the world. It was the most 'visible' Muslim claim for space

in Britain (Eade in Metcalf 1996:217). Into the 1990s, Raza estimated that there were over a thousand mosques in Britain (1993:37).

Sayyid Mutawwali Darsh, a British Islamic scholar, describes the mosque as a place where the Muslim: "Rekindles his spirituality, strengthens his relationship with his creator, meets his fellow Muslim brothers and renews his sense of belonging" (1996:7). The mosque is not only seen as the 'House of God', a place of worship, but in Islamic history, it has also been used as a centre for learning, a place for receiving dignitaries and delegates, a charity distribution centre, a shelter for the homeless, a nursing home and a venue for special occasions. In Muslim societies today, however, the functions of this institution have been somewhat limited as the state and other bodies perform some of its historic functions. Schools are responsible for the provision of education, hospitals and health centres for the sick (Darsh 1996:13).

In diaspora, the mosque is used to fulfil the required needs of the Muslims in more than one aspect. Given the mosque's importance in the British Muslim community, it came as no surprise when Barton (1986) chose to focus on the role of the *imam* and mosque in his study on the Bengali Muslims of Bradford. He observes:

> The mosque is always of central importance in a Muslim community. It is both the place where the Qur'an is taught and also a focal point of a social activity. Moreover, to a group of migrants, it may be the source of new life from the traditions that may otherwise appear to have no place in a non-Muslim society (1986:23).

Without a doubt, one of the most important functions of the mosque is to provide education for Muslim children. Thus the role of the *imam* is of paramount importance as he provides young children with the opportunity to study Islam

[3] NB not the famous Mughal emperor who built the Taj Mahal.

outside the informal socialisation that takes place at home. The teaching that takes place in the mosque is usually seen as 'primitive', because *imams* are seen to be using the same methods they used in the Indo-Pak subcontinent (Geaves 1996:124). Mufti (29), who as a child attended a Barelwi mosque in Bury, recollects that: 'My experience of going to the mosque was like going to the dentist. You know it is for your own good but you do not enjoy it.' Most young people's reflections on their time spent in the mosque is equally negative.

Ballard describes the rural *imam* in North Pakistan as the person who calls and leads the faithful in prayer, delivers a sermon on Friday and teaches the Qur'an to children and whose knowledge of the Islamic Law may be rudimentary (2004:11). In addition to his duties in the mosque, the *imam* plays a vital role in commemorating the rites of passage: birth, marriage and death (Ballard 2004:10-11). In terms of social order, a village *imam* is not considered a high ranking individual in the community. Financially, the *imam* is always at the mercy of the local landlords and thus always deemed inferior to other professions. Ali, a modern Pakistani scholar, asserts that the *ulama* were routinely divided into two distinct groups, the highly educated upper class who mainly served the interests of the ruling class and the lower class village *imams* who are normally despised by the poor and illiterate masses (1996:17-18).

According to the official Pakistani government figures, out of fifty six thousand central mosques in the country, only eight thousand are led by qualified *ulama*. This means that forty eight thousand are unqualified (Mirza 1989:63). More recent research suggests that the Deobandis control 65% of the religious seminaries in

Pakistan whilst the Barelwis have just 25%, Ahl-i Hadith 6% and Shia 3% (Arshad 2004:14). Thus compared to the Deobandis, Barelwi *imams* are more likely to be unqualified. These findings indicate that even in a Muslim country like Pakistan there is a severe shortage of 'qualified' *ulama*. One might ask, how many of the 'qualified' *ulama* have come to Britain? As there is no regulating body on *imams* in Britain, it is impossible to provide an answer. If we cannot determine how many qualified *imams* are presently working in British mosques, is it possible to offer a fair assessment of their achievements or failures?

Imams in British mosques have been severely criticised by 'insiders' such as Raza (1993) and Darsh (1996) for being ill-equipped to deal with the experiences of British Muslims, in particular the youth. The main criticism of the *imam* is his failure to communicate in English: "They (*imams*) can neither speak the English language nor are acquainted with the socio-political context of the dominating British culture" (Raza 1993:25). Darsh argues:

> An *imam* who does not speak one single English word is a hindrance to the function of the mosque, he is a sad reflection upon the community, and he is a disservice to the Islamic cause (1996:18).

'Outsiders' such as Lewis also assert that the *imams* continue to be brought from the Indo-Pak subcontinent and generally: "Lack the linguistic and cultural skills to connect with young British Muslims" (2001:10). One can safely assume that most British Muslim youth are not fluent in Urdu, the language normally used by the *imams* in the Friday *khutba* (sermon). Sabir (29), a bus driver from Bolton, speaks for many young people, when he says:

> I think the *imam* only looks at the first two or three rows, that are occupied by the old people and as long as they nod in approval, he thinks he is getting his message across. He does not see all the young people sat in the back rows, who do not have a clue what he is talking about. The young people might understand a few Arabic phrases but that is about it, I mean what do we get out of this? We go to mosque hoping to be guided to the straight path and instead come away frustrated. I think we should have *imam*s who speak English and understand issues that concern the young Muslims in Britain.

Sabir's account reflects the disillusionment that many young Muslims feel at the present situation in mosques. Some youth can no longer contain their frustration and openly confront *imams* who cannot speak English as the following account indicates. Barakat (20), a Mirpuri undergraduate in Salford University, relates that during Friday prayers in a Manchester mosque, a young man walked up to the *imam* and shouted at him: "Speak in English, I do not understand what you are saying!"

Until recently, studies on British South Asian Muslims, such as Barton (1986), Raza (1993), Lewis (1994), Werbner (1994) and Geaves (1996), have not ventured to suggest the possibility that a number of 'unqualified' *imams* might be working in British mosques. In theory, all the *imams* in the Indo-Pak subcontinent must possess a *sanad* (diploma) of *dars-i nizami* (Nizami Syllabus) named after Mullah Nizam al-Din (d.1748) (Rahi 1978:15-16). In the words of Lewis: "This syllabus enhanced the importance of the rational disciplines of logic and philosophy alongside the traditional subjects of Qur'an and Hadith " (1994:131). Ali is of the opinion that the main purpose of the *dars-i nizami* was to prepare Muslim students for the post of local judges and other similar religious functions which were needed at the time by Muslim rulers in India (1996:134). Although the social, political and economical situation of Muslims in the Indo-Pak subcontinent has radically changed since this syllabus was compiled in the eighteenth century, both the Deobandi and Barelwi

colleges still teach this syllabus, albeit with minor additions. Thus, it is compulsory for an *imam* to at least have completed the *dars-i nizami* syllabus.

However, I would suggest that this basic requirement is not met in some mosques in Britain. Indeed, a number of Barelwi *imam*s in Lancashire do not possess a degree/diploma from a recognised religious institution. For example, Sufi Nazir (56), from Mirpur and an unqualified *imam* at a Barelwi mosque in Heywood, came to Britain in 1966 to join his uncle in Rochdale. Sufi Nazir began attending speeches by visiting Barelwi *imams* from India and Pakistan and also read polemical literature by the Barelwi *ulama*. Sufi Nazir admits that back home:

> We did not know about *Ala hadrat* [Mawlana Riza] or the Deobandis; in fact a number of ladies in our village had Thanavi's *Bihishti Zewar* [Heavenly Ornaments, a book about the duties of the Muslim woman] without realising that it was a 'Wahhabi' book. If it were not for *Ala hadrat* we [Mirpuris] would not know about heretics like Thanavi, who have written many derogatory things about the Prophet.

During one of his visits to Pakistan, Sufi Nazir became a follower of a famous Pakistani *pir*. Within a few years he had acquired a rudimentary knowledge of Islam and in his community he became respected for his knowledge and piety. Sufi Nazir has lived in Britain since he was a teenager and has never attended any Islamic college; he is not fluent in English and does not possess any qualifications, religious or otherwise. Apart from teaching Qur'an to thirty children, Sufi Nazir leads the *dhikr* during *milad sharif*, *giyarvin sharif* and *urs sharif* gatherings held in this mosque. The main event in this mosque's calendar is the *urs* of Sufi Nazir's *pir*. Arguably, even unqualified *imams* like Sufi Nazir contribute to reproducing selected ritual practices traditionally associated with 'devotional Islam' in a British context, certainly for the *babas* and, to some extent, for the *kakas* as well.

However, despite demands from the youth to replace Sufi Nazir with a 'qualified', English-speaking, *imam*, the *babas* who manage the mosque continue to employ him, not least for economic reasons. Lewis rightly maintains that elders on the mosque committee normally select an *imam* from their homeland: "Who is more familiar with their home country and traditions, or, less charitably, one who is more malleable and who will cost much less!" (2001:19). Barkat Ali (63) from Panjera in Kotli, a member of the mosque mentioned above, defends the committee's decision to employ an unqualified *imam*. He argues:

> What degrees did the *maulvis* who have been teaching in our villages for generations possess? Nowadays it has become a fashion for the *maulvis* to be 'qualified' but, after all, they will only be teaching little children the Arabic alphabet. What degree is needed for that?

Barkat Ali's views are shared by many uneducated people in the Mirpuri community in Lancashire for whom the *imam* is merely a teacher with a basic knowledge of Islam and Arabic. The fact that he possesses no qualifications is not an important issue in their view. Indeed, as Barkat Ali points out, in Azad Kashmir there is no tradition of only employing qualified *imams*.

By contrast, the Mirpuris in the Madinah mosque in Nelson are now unwilling to appoint an *imam* who does not possess a degree in Islamic studies. Indeed the mosque committee recently obtained the services of Professor Ghulam Ahmad, a lecturer from the University of Islamabad. Mubarak (39), a former secretary of the mosque, explains:

> In Britain all the kids go to school and are told many concepts that are un-Islamic. However, when they ask the *maulvi* in the mosque about evolution or sex education these matters are not explained to them in a logical manner. The *maulvi* neither has the time nor the knowledge to deal with such matters and after a while the kids stop asking these questions and start believing what they are told at school. We need *imams* who are well educated and can explain the role of Islam in the modern world. We have decided that in future we should not employ the typical *imams* who do not understand youth related issues, but someone with a sound knowledge of Islam and the modern world in which we live in.

Whilst the 'Heywood' mosque is dominated by the Mirpuri *babas,* the Nelson mosque has a mixture of second and third generations in the mosque committee. According to Mubarak, such changes took place due to rivalry amongst the *babas* which meant that they were unable to resolve issues concerning Islamic education at the mosque. There was growing criticism from the parents of the children attending the mosque that the Deobandi mosques in Nelson had a good education system whereas the Sunnis (Barelwis) spent most of their time fighting over matters of no consequence. A general meeting of the mosque members was convened at which it was decided that young people should be given the opportunity to have their say in the management committee. Consequently, a few educated young people were elected. However, ultimately, these young men became disillusioned when none of their reforms were approved by the *babas* and they left the committee to concentrate their efforts on representing Muslims in local schools and to the local Council.

Barelwi Mosques and *Imams*/Teachers in Lancashire: Two Case Studies

1) <u>A mosque in Bolton and a traditional 'Barelwi' *imam*</u>

The 'Riza' mosque (first established 1973) in Bolton was named after Mawlana Riza and a plaque outside stated that it followed his teachings. A plaque on a new, purpose-built mosque, also clearly states that all members must adhere to the 'correct belief as expounded by Mawlana Ahmad Riza Barelwi'. The Riza mosque, then, has never preached the Sufi message of 'peace with all.' The mosque committee consists mostly of Panjabi *babas*; there are some Mirpuris too but they have little power. The Panjabis in Bolton were better informed than their Mirpuri

counterparts about the sectarian conflict between the Barelwis and Deobandis, so they employed a Panjabi Barelwi *imam,* Mawlana Qadiri Rizvi (d.2002). As his name suggests, the Mawlana belonged to the Qadiriyya and strictly adhered to the teachings of Mawlana Riza and all the children who studied under him were given a detailed account of the 'Barelwi/Deobandi' debate. For example, he taught from the Barelwi textbook, *Hamara Islam* (Our Islam), as everything in it conforms to Barelwi beliefs. All matters of Barelwi faith, such as the attributes of the Prophet to possess 'knowledge of the unseen', celebration of *milad sharif, giyarvin sharif, urs sharif, khatam,* reciting of *salat o salam* and so forth, are discussed and highly recommended as pious acts. Critics of the above practices are labelled as 'misguided' and even *kafirs* (disbelievers) (2001:19-54).

To give one example in more detail, it is notable that Barelwis such as Mawlana Rizvi also use *na't sharif* as a very effective tool in labelling critics as *gustakh-i rasul* (blasphemers of the Prophet). Indeed, during the late 1970s, Mawlana Rizvi, for example, formed one of the first and most popular *na't* groups in Britain, the *Jami'at-i Hassan* (Hassan's group). As *na't* makes a clear distinction between the 'lovers of the Prophet' and the 'enemies of the Prophet', and as most *na'ts* nowadays are written by Barelwis, the latter can claim, however spuriously, that they alone are the 'lovers' of the Prophet. However, Mawlana Riza's devotional poetry, written in classical Urdu, has limited appeal to the mainly Panjabi speaking public. Therefore, Barelwi *imams* like Mawlana Rizvi have had to introduce Mawlana Riza's poetry to the Panjabi masses, for example, through Friday sermons. Ironically, Barelwi *imams* like Mawlana Rizvi often skilfully used the *babas'* familiarity with the devotional Panjabi Sufi poetry of Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah and

especially Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, as a starting point for underlining the pre-eminence of Mawlana Riza.

However, Mawlana Rizvi forbids his students to read translations of the Qur'an other than Mawlana Riza's own Urdu translation, *Kanz al-Iman* (Treasure of Faith). He argues:

> There are several verses in the holy Qur'an where most translators such as the Ahl-i Hadith Qur'anic scholar, Junagardhi, have fallen into serious error. For example he translates verse six from the sura *al-Duha* (The Forenoon-After Sunrise): "Did He not find you astray and guided you" (1998:1414). This translation suggests the holy Prophet was misguided before the revelation, God forbid; this is blasphemy as we believe all prophets are sinless and were never misguided. Look at how beautifully *Ala hadrat* [Mawlana Riza] translates the same verse: "And He found you overwhelmed in His love and guided you to Him" (n.d:869). In the past fourteen centuries I do not think anyone has translated the Qur'an with as much respect for the Prophet as *Ala hadrat*.

In Mawlana Rizvi's view, most of the literature written on Islam by non-Barelwis lacks proper *adab* (respect) towards the Prophet. One of his former students, Ayub (33), a sales person, explains the influence of Mawlana Rizvi:

> When I used to study with 'Qadiri Sahib', he always used to stress the contribution of *Ala hadrat* [Mawlana Riza] to Islam. We students grew up with the belief that *Ala hadrat* was the greatest scholar of Islam and anyone who disputes this, a 'Wahhabi'.

The *kakas* who regularly attended the Riza mosque were told that Mawlana Riza is the champion of 'correct' Sunni belief. Indeed, no action could be considered 'correct' unless it had the approval of Mawlana Riza. This staunch belief lead to some intoxicated Chishtiyya *pirs* being turned away from the mosque due to Mawlana Riza's critique of *qawwali* and other related devotional practices.

2) A 'Barelwi' mosque in Radcliffe and younger part-time teachers

In a second case study we turn now to the role of British-born or educated part-time teachers. One such part-time teacher, Mahfuz (21), is an undergraduate at Manchester Metropolitan University and teaches in his local 'Barelwi' mosque, in Radcliffe. According to Mahfuz, when he studied in the mosque as a child (1990-1998), only two male teachers were responsible for over 100 children:

> The *imam* and his assistant were limited as to what they could teach and the amount of attention they could pay to each child within the two-hour teaching time. The teaching material and method of teaching was the same for everyone, regardless of his or her age or ability. As neither the *imam* nor his assistant could speak or read in English, using English as a medium to teach was out of the question.

However, the current situation is very different. Changes have taken place as the mosque committee is now managed by second generation Muslims who wanted to bring education in the mosque in line with the needs of British-born children. A consultation process took place in which three qualified British teachers were asked by the president to recommend strategies to improve education in the mosque. As a result, ten part-time teachers, all fluent in English, were appointed. Each teacher uses the English medium. Mahfuz asserts: "The introduction of English into the teaching system of the mosque has had a profound effect as the children understand and relate to what they are reading and are no longer merely memorising texts."

Efforts are made to design lessons to make the transmission from school to mosque much easier. Children have been divided into groups according to their age, something unheard of when Mahfuz was studying. Children are free to ask questions and encouraged to relate their own experiences to the text. Mahfuz feels that the children in his class find the new method much more enjoyable and they seem to attend the mosque much more regularly now. Things appear to have

improved with the emergence of British-born, English-speaking, part-time teachers, like Mahfuz.

In order to encourage competition amongst the children, Mahfuz and his colleagues organise an annual award ceremony that takes place during the summer holidays. My observation of this ceremony in July 2002 suggested that it was well attended by parents and grandparents of the children; around two hundred people including children were in attendance. The whole programme revolved around the children who sang *na'ts*, read stories and had a question and answer session. At the conclusion of the programme everyone stood up and offered *salat o salam* upon the Prophet. Following this, the *imam* did *isal-i sawab* and food was served to everyone.

While methods may be changing, it is interesting that, perhaps in more subtle ways, Mahfuz and his colleagues impart a 'Barelwi' 'hidden' (and not so 'hidden') curriculum and socialisation to their students. For example, Mahfuz translates passages from the Urdu Barelwi textbook, *Hamra Islam* (Our Islam) into English for his class. Children are taught all the Barelwi related practices mentioned earlier. Moreoever, students in Mahfuz's mosque also hold annual celebrations of *muharram* (the first Islamic month, commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn), *milad sharif, miraj sharif* (Ascension of the Prophet) and so forth.

Mahfuz's account suggests that, in this particular mosque at least, progress is being made in terms of making a distinctively 'Barelwi' interpretation of 'devotional Islam' relevant to children via an English language medium. This is partly due to

young people like him being in a position to make the difference. In the absence of British trained and educated *imams*, they go some way to bridging the gap. Interestingly, state schools seem to provide inspiration for many of the changes taking place in mosques. However, perhaps no such changes can take place unless the attitudes of the mosque management are first transformed.

'Barelwi' textbooks in English, UK seminaries and the electronic media

Generally, Barelwi literature in English is substandard, especially when compared to Jama'at-i Islami's production of excellent textbooks such as *Studies in Islam* (1996). Barelwis have produced a number of textbooks in English for the youth such as *Islamic Beliefs* (1999), *Teachings of Islam* (1999) *Aqa'id Ahl-e- Sunnat* (2001) and so forth. Belief in saints and their miracles, which find no expression in Jama'at-i Islami's literature, are mentioned here. Various examples of devotional Islam are given, such as conveying the reward of virtue. For example, Pirzada shows how and why members of the Ahl-i Sunnah perform actions which accrue *isal-i sawab* (merit). This is presented to the Prophet and previous prophets, the Prophet's Family, Companions, Saints and ordinary Muslims too with the specific intention of attaining the Prophet's pleasure (1999:75).

As far as Barelwi magazines in English are concerned there is only one that merits discussion: *The Islamic Times*. The *Islamic Times* was founded in 1985 by Sufi Muhammad Ilyas Kashmiri from Mirpur. He too admits that he was not aware of the 'Deobandi/Barelwi' debate when he arrived in Britain during 1964. However, during a visit to Pakistan in 1969, he came under the influence of Barelwi *ulama*. In

Britain, Sufi Ilyas formed the Raza Academy [named after Mawlana Riza] in 1979.

However, Sufi Ilyas asserts:

> The Barelwi *ulama* are big on ideas but low on commitment. I went to almost every learned Barelwi *alim* and asked them to write articles for the Raza Academy but to my disappointment not a single *alim* gave me his co-operation.

Undeterred by the lack of co-operation from Barelwi *ulama* in Britain, Sufi Ilyas began to publish the *Islamic Times* in 1985. He was unable to sell the magazine and so decided, with the help of a few supporters, to distribute it free of charge. Until the Rushdie affair in 1989, only a few committed English-speaking Barelwis in Manchester and Bradford were aware of the magazine. However, thereafter, Sufi Ilyas began to gain support from Barelwi youth who became conscious followers of devotional Islam partly due to the articles they read in the magazine. Barakat (20), mentioned earlier, asserts:

> The 'Wabsters' ('Wahhabis') at the University were always on my case and used to give me a lot of grief about *milad sharif* and *khatams* and many other devotional practices that we Sunnis celebrate. Obviously, I could not defend these practices from the Qur'an and Sunnah as I only read the Qur'an in Arabic when I was a young boy and did not understand it. Once I was in Rusholme and picked up a copy of the *Islamic Times* from a takeaway there. Reading it I began to realise that '*Yes*! I can now answer the Wabsters'.

Presently, five thousand copies are printed every month at the cost of twelve hundred pounds. However, in comparison to Jama'at -i Islami's more colourful and broadly-based *Trends* magazine (see Lewis 1994), the *Islamic Times* still has little or no appeal to non-Barelwi youth.

By far the most the most successful seminaries in Britain have been run by the Deobandis and Tablighi Jama'at (Lewis 1994; Birt 2005). A prime example is the *Dar al-Ulum al-Arabiyya al-Islamiyya* founded in 1975 by Mawlana Yusuf Motala in Bury; it has established strong links with al-Azhar University in Cairo and Madinah University in Saudi Arabia (Lewis 1994:135). Presently, there are a

number of Barelwi seminaries in Greater Manchester such as *Jamia al-Karimiyya* (Manchester) and *Jamia Alawiyya* in Bolton. However, these seminaries are unlikely to provide *imams* of the calibre needed to guide and instruct the next generation of British Muslims. This is primarily because these so-called seminaries are no more than mosques managed by *imams* instead of *babas*.

The only successful Barelwi seminary is *Jamia al-Karam* (founded 1985). It began its activities in 1985 in Milton Keynes, but has since moved to Nottingham. Pirzada, the principal and author of some of the textbooks mentioned above, asserts:

> I strongly felt that in terms of education the Muslim community was under achieving. This is the main reason why our community is not respected by mainstream society. By contrast, in terms of crime, Muslims lead the way. So I decided to create an institution that would provide secular as well as religious knowledge (Athar 1998:190).

There is evidence to suggest that *Jamia al-Karam* has begun to provide English-speaking *imams* in Barelwi mosques. Arshad Misbahi (31), assistant *imam* at Victoria Park mosque in Manchester, who also represents Islam on numerous TV programmes such as Channel Four's *Shari'ah TV* (April/May2004), is a prime example. Nevertheless, *Jamia al-Karam* has yet to produce a notable British-born Barelwi scholar.

It is generally acknowledged that most trans-national Muslim movements readily make use of the electronic media to promote their message. Hence the Barelwis in Lancashire have set up local radio stations such as *Crescent Radio* during the month of Ramadan and also *Rabi al-Awwal* (third Islamic month: Prophet's Birthday). Even mainstream radio stations, such as *Asian Sound Radio*, broadcast *na't* programmes. In addition, Barelwi *imams* such as Raza, Misbahi, and Sulaymani are invited to express their views on a number of satellite channels such as *PTV Prime*

and *Vectone* and also on terrestrial TV. Without a doubt, Barelwis in Lancashire display a willingness to utilize the electronic media to spread their ideology. However, as yet, they have been unable set up a national or local Barelwi satellite channel, although the *imam* of Victoria Park mosque, Shah has been campaigning for such a channel for the past few years. This is in direct response to the *mta-muslim tv* satellite channel, which broadcasts the views of the Ahmadiyya movement.

Dawat-i Islami: the Barelwi 'preaching' response to Tablighi Jama'at

1) Dawat-i Islami in Pakistan:

Having sketched some of the possibilities and limits of UK Barelwi transmission initiatives in the previous section, here we look in more detail at a modern Barelwi revivalist movement, Dawat-i Islami (hereafter DI, 'Call of Islam'), which no other study in English has yet referred to[4]. This movement aims to promote Barelwi ideology to the Muslim youth both in Pakistan and its diaspora. The popularity of the Tablighi Jama'at (hereafter TJ), as a pious grassroots Deobandi preaching movement, created great anxiety amongst Barelwis in Pakistan, as it did in Britain. Arshad al-Qadiri, a Barelwi scholar, argued in his book, *Zalzala* (Earthquake), that the TJ was a 'sugar coated' form of 'Wahhabism' as its real purpose was not to 'preach Islam' but to convert 'simple-minded' Muslims (i.e. ordinary rural folk much associated with *kismetic* religion) to 'Wahhabism' (2002:264). Therefore, to combat the growing influence of TJ amongst the masses, a modern Barelwi movement was formed in 1981. DI's birthplace was Karachi, a traditional TJ

stronghold. However, the principal difference between TJ and DI is that whilst the former is influenced by the writings of Deobandi scholars and the latter firmly adheres to the rulings of Mawlana Ahmad Riza.

A young, devout, follower of Mawlana Riza, Muhammad Ilyas Qadiri (b.1950), former president of the *Anjuman Tulaba-i-Islam* (the Organisation of Muslim Students), was appointed as *amir* (leader) of DI (Zaman 1997, http://www.karachipage.com). In Mawlana Ilyas' view, the whole life of the Prophet is an ideal example for Muslims and they should lead their lives according to his *Sunnah*, rekindling love for Him in their hearts. Muslims, in his view, should not follow the trends of the Western world. He writes: "Alas, the accursed Satan has destroyed the whole society. Today Muslims proudly imitate the fashion of unbelievers and show no concern for the *Sunnah* of the beloved Prophet" (1988: 19).

According to his official, and very brief, biography by Sulaymani (1988), Mawlana Ilyas comes from an important business family in Karachi. They are the 'Memons', who migrated from India during the Partition. His father, Haji Abd al-Ghani, was a great admirer of Mawlana Riza and visited his deputy, Shaykh Zia al-Din Qadiri (d.1981), in the holy city of Madinah. Mawlana Ilyas shared his father's love for Mawlana Riza and subsequently became a *murid* of Shaykh Zia al-Din. Following the latter's death, he has kept in close contact with the descendants of Mawlana Riza in Bareilly, India. Nevertheless, Mawlana Ilyas is himself authorised to give

[4] For example, Geaves' (2006) account of the 'traditionalist' counter-attack against anti-Sufi revivalism considers Minhaj ul-Qur'an (see next chapter) but not DI.

ba'iya (oath of allegiance) in four Sufi orders: the Qadiriyya, Naqshbandiyya, Chishtiyya and Suhrawaradiyya (Sulaymani in Qadiri 1988:30). However, most of his thousands of followers in Pakistan have taken *ba'iya* from him in the Qadiriyya order.

One of the success stories of the TJ was the compilation of the hugely popular *Tablighi Nisab* (Preaching Manual) by Mawlana Zakariyya Kandhlavi (d.1982). This is used by the TJ to promote their movement and has become its single most important work. In order to present effectively a challenge to TJ, Mawlana Ilyas decided to write a book which would be an alternative to the *Tablighi Nisab*. The book in question, *Faizan-i Sunnat* (The Blessing of the Sunnah, 1988), begins with a prayer written by Mawlana Riza, leaving no ambiguity about Mawlana Ilyas' affiliation to the Barelwi faith. Simply written, the book retains the core beliefs of Mawlana Riza: love for the Prophet, *sayyids*, Saints and especially Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani. The book has become the bible of the DI activists and it would be rare to find an activist who does not possess a copy of *Faizan-i Sunnat*.

Like Mawlana Riza, Mawlana Ilyas expresses sincere love for the Prophet and the city of Madinah and normally refers to himself as *sag-i madinah* (Dog of Madinah). During his visit to the Prophet's grave in Madinah, Mawlana Riza also wrote:

> Riza! Why should anybody ask you about your welfare?
> Thousands of dogs like you are roaming everywhere.
>
> (Qureshi 1996:43).

Similarly, like Mawlana Riza, Mawlana Ilyas also displays a great deal of veneration for the descendants of the Prophet, the *sayyids*. For example, in his

gatherings he asks the *sayyids* to come forward so that the supplication can be made in their honour and in his gatherings he is perturbed if a *sayyid* is seated below him (Sulaymani in Qadiri 1988: 36). Mawlana Ilyas strictly adheres to the rulings of Mawlana Riza, and thus considers it *haram* (forbidden) to have his photo taken and never gives interviews to the press. He is of the opinion that early Muslims spread Islam without the aid of technology and therefore he forbids the use of any living image to promote his movement. Nonetheless, Mawlana Ilyas' speeches are released on audiocassettes and also broadcast on DI's website (http://www.dawat-e Islami.Net). But what is the relationship between the Barelwi *ulama* and Mawlana Ilyas?

Mawlana Ilyas is viewed as a genuine successor of Mawlana Riza among the Barelwis in Pakistan; hence his title of *Amir-i Ahl-i Sunnat* (the leader of the Ahl-i Sunnat). For example, Abu Dawud, editor of *Riza-i Mustafa* (the Pleasure of the Chosen One), one of the most zealous Barelwi magazines published in Pakistan, gives his wholehearted support to Mawlana Ilyas. This monthly publication observes of a DI event: "The sight of thousands of young people with beards and wearing turbans was very uplifting" (Abu Dawud 1993:15).

<u>Dawat-i Islami in Britain</u>:

> Since we have established a Dawat-i Islami centre in Dewsbury, we have renamed the town *Madinah Nagar* (Madinah Town). (Iftikhar, 35 DI activist, Accrington)

DI began its activities in Britain during the mid-1990s, firstly in Birmingham (Alum Rock) and then elsewhere. Presently there are DI activists in a number of towns across Lancashire: Accrington, Bolton, Oldham, Bury, Nelson and Manchester, for

example. This new presence was very evident when, on 26 May 2001, an *International Na't Conference* was held at Victoria Park Mosque in Manchester, to commemorate the birth of the Prophet. Approximately five to six thousand British Muslims attended this gathering (*The Daily Jang* 28th May 2001:1). However, one of the most striking features of the conference was the presence of DI activists, dressed mainly in their distinctive white *shalwar qamis,* green turbans and wearing long beards.

The group was there in large numbers and its members ranged from young children to old people. It had a number of bookstalls at which books, *na't* audiocassettes, posters, stickers and many other items were on sale. In particular, badges bearing the Prophet's footprint and stickers with the message "*asalatu wasalam alayaka ya Rasul Allah* (peace and blessing be upon you, O Messenger of God)" were very popular. All of these items had one thing in common - the evident veneration for the Prophet. It intrigued me to see so many young British Muslims dressed in a similar manner, something which gave them a strong sense of identity and unity.

Bashir (31), a taxi driver, is the regional *amir* of DI in Accrington; he comes from Dadyal in Mirpur. He has been actively involved with DI for five years. Bashir's group travels every weekend to spend Friday and Saturday at a particular mosque in the region. Activists pay towards the cost of travel and food as no money is collected from the teenagers who come with the group. DI do not approach Ahl-i Hadith, Jama'at-i Islami or Deobandi mosques. According to Mawlana Riza: "A Sunni [Barelwi] Muslim is not allowed to pray behind Wahhabis and Shias" (Riza n.d: 142). This effectively means that DI is confined to Barelwi mosques. DI

activists guarantee the mosque committee that they will provide their own food and will not seek to collect any *chanda* (collection). However, not all UK Barelwi mosques welcome DI activities. For example, in a Bolton mosque, Bashir reports that DI representatives were told: " If we let you stay in the mosque then how can we stop the TJ from coming to this mosque?" Despite repeated attempts by DI to visit, the Bolton mosque committee has continually refused their requests. A similar situation exists in Cheetham Hill where the Barelwi *imam* refuses to let DI stay in his mosque.

Once inside the mosque the DI activists address the worshippers after the daily prayers with the following words: "*Metay Islami bhaiyo* (sweet Muslim brothers), the *qafilah-i-Madina* (caravan of Madinah) has arrived in your town to spread the, *meti sunnat* (sweet traditions of the Prophet)". They then read a few pages from *Faizan-i Sunnat* which enumerates the virtues of doing *tabligh* (preaching). Occasionally, an activist will say a few words in English for the youth but primarily most of the discussions are in Urdu. Bashir (31) explains the reason for this:

> Our strategy is firstly to win over the *babas* to our cause and although they rarely go out with us to do *tabligh* but they can still encourage their grandchildren to take part in DI's activity. Without the help of *babas* it would be difficult to hold our sessions in the mosque and without the mosque we would lack a stage to conduct our activities.

How is DI viewed by *babas* in the mosques? Bashir claims: "In some mosques the *babas* look at us with disapproval and say, *eh kara nawan firqah kadya nehn* (what is this new sect you have created?)." Presently there are few *babas* in DI as they see it as a 'new group' and are suspicious of its aims. However, some *babas* seem happy with that DI emphasises continuity with Pakistani culture, language and dress.

Sikandar (33), a computer analyst from Jhelum, and now a DI activist in Bury, spends much of his free time preaching to Muslim youth in Bury. This actually takes place outside the mosque which is still mainly seen as the *babas*' space. He explains:

> Young people nowadays ask many questions, which they would never ask the *imam*. For example, questions regarding drugs and sex including use of condoms, oral sex and so forth. I try to encourage young people to ask questions of this nature as I feel that if I do not tell them the correct Islamic way they will keep on doing *haram* things.

Such openness and frankness is practically non-existent amongst Barelwi *imams* and this has made Sikandar well-known amongst the youth. However, despite his best efforts to use this engagement to 'convert' young Muslims to the ways of DI, hardly any have joined the movement. Zubayr (19), a shop assistant in Bury, asserts:

> I have attended a few DI meetings in the mosque. These guys expect you to keep a beard, wear *shalwar qamis*, stop drinking, watching T.V, listening to music and pray five times straight away. What they are asking is too much and too fast, it's like taking on a full-time job, which you can't handle. Plus, these people speak too much Urdu, which, although I understand most of the time, I don't really connect with. Do not get me wrong, I respect guys like Sikandar but honestly I do not think I could give up these things overnight.

Sikandar's wife, Samina (33), is also an active member of DI and she holds classes for girls in her house on the basic teachings of Islam. *Faizan-i Sunnat* is used extensively and the *na'ts* of Mawlana Ilyas are also translated from Urdu into English for the benefit of those girls who cannot read Urdu. The girls are taught to memorise short speeches that are based principally on Mawlana Ilyas' talks for occasions such as *milad sharif* and the month of Ramadan. However, Samina's teaching method remains in line with the traditions of the Barelwi *imams*, consisting mainly of memorising texts without any attempts to analyse them. In addition, she

leads a weekly gathering of DI women in the local mosque. Nazia (25), a nurse in Bury Hospital, describes these gatherings:

> On Sundays around 15 to 20 women attend the women's DI gathering in our mosque and I normally go with my aunt. Sister Samina gives a talk based on a chapter from *Faizan-i Sunnat*. I have learned a lot by coming to these gatherings and am often deeply moved by her talks. But I find her approach very strict and uncompromising, there is no middle ground, it is either be a 'perfect' Muslim or do not bother. For example, she always tells me off for not wearing a *hijab* (veil) - I get enough of that at home from my mum! I don't need her to be on my back as well. I work in a hospital and have to deal with all sorts of people, if I were to become member of DI, I probably would have to sit at home and have little contact with the outside world.

Although their pious intentions cannot be doubted, DI activists seem to have little interest in a fairly traditional Pakistani way of doing things to the reality of British Muslim youth's needs. Looking at the way Mawlana Ilyas expresses some of his ideas, it is perhaps not surprising that the movement does not 'travel' as well as it might. For example, he advises Muslim youth to observe what he calls the 'Twelve Flowers of Madinah'[5]:

1) Offer *salam* (greetings) upon entering and leaving the house.
2) Stand up and show respect for your parents.
3) The boys should kiss the hand of their father and girls should kiss the hand of their mother.
4) You must lower your voice before your parents and never make eye contact with them.
5) Carry out any task set by your parents as long as it is not against the *Shari'ah*.
6) You must pay respect to your mother and indeed everyone else. (Praise be God this dog of Madinah (Ilyas) always treats his children with respect)
7) After the night prayers one must go to sleep early.
8) If you are beaten by your parents then remain silent.
9) If your family are not practising Muslims they should be encouraged to listen to my audio cassettes.
10) Do not have a bad attitude.
11) If possible read a daily portion of *Faizan-i-Sunnat* at home.
12) Pray for success in both worlds for your family, as *dua* (supplication) is the weapon of a true Believer (http://www.dawat-e Islami.Net).

The majority of the 'Flowers' counsel youth not to question the authority of their parents but in saying number eight he does seem to advise them to suffer parental abuse in silence. This does not play very well in a UK context. Indeed, although DI has become a trans-national movement in recent years, it needs to be more sensitive

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[5] The number twelve corresponds to the birth of the Prophet on 12 *Rabbi al-Awwal*.

to non-Pakistani idioms if it is to operate successfully outside the subcontinent. However, the fact remains that it represents one of the few 'Barelwi' attempts to accommodate Muslim youth in the diaspora.

As a consequence youth are increasingly looking beyond the 'Barewlism' so dominant in the mosques for inspiration. For example, in April 2002, a one-day *Islamic Global Village* event was organised at the Armitage Centre, University of Manchester. This was attended by around a thousand people, the majority of whom were young people. The speakers at the event included Sufi 'converts' of Western cultural origins, such as Aishah Bewley, Ahmad Thomson and Peter Sanders. Devotional singers such as Zain Bhikha (from South Africa) and the British Pakistani group *Ashiq al-Rasul* (Lover of the Prophet) from Birmingham, performed poems in honour of the Prophet, both in Arabic and English. More 'cosmopolitan' devotional Islamic events such as this are becoming quite common in Lancashire and bring together people of Pakistani/Kashmiri and non-South Asian heritages. For example, a similar event at Victoria Park mosque in 2003 was organised by Islamic Relief and was attended by around 400 youths. Not surprisingly, no *babas* or Barelwi *imams* participated in the programme. Even university students who do not normally attend this 'Barelwi' mosque came to listen to the lectures in English. The speakers ranged from a Syrian Sufi scholar, Shaykh al-Yaqubi, to a British Sufi convert. Many Muslim youth in Manchester are no longer looking towards their *imams* or mosques for guidance. Instead, they are reaching out to a world-wide Sunni Sufi tradition[6].

[6] Other examples of this trend can be seen at www.masud.co.uk.

Conclusion

It has been acknowledged thus far that the mosque is the centre of the British Muslim community and the main centre of Islamic teaching. The mosque plays a vital role in reproducing devotional practices such as *milad sharif*, *giyarvin sharif*, *urs*, *dhikr* and *khatam al-khawajgan*. Barelwi *imams* have used the mosque and especially Islamic education as a tool in seeking to re-orientate Mirpuris to the neo-orthodox tradition of 'Barelwism'. However, the latter are coming under severe criticism for not being able to provide for the social needs of the community, especially the youth. Youth feel alienated from the Pakistani-orientated world of the *imams* and the *babas*. Indeed, most of the Barelwi mosque committees are dominated by *babas* and sometimes they employ 'unqualified' *imams*, whereas only a few are managed by *kakas*, who favour more formally 'qualified' *imams*. For the meantime, some of the most progressive developments surround the ad hoc improvisations of younger part-time mosque teachers.

Presently, it is impossible to calculate how many qualified *imams* are employed in British mosques. There is need for a study that would categorise *imams* in British mosques and thus provide a more realistic role of the *imam*. Although some Barelwi *imams* have no formal qualifications, they have generally succeeded in reproducing numerous devotional practises in Britain, certainly amongst the Mirpuri community, as my research suggests. The Barelwi *imams* have also proven successful in instilling love for the Prophet amongst the youth. However, perhaps the lasting legacy of the Barelwi *imams* in Britain is that they have increased knowledge of the sectarian conflict between themselves and other groups although many ordinary

Muslims do not necessarily label themselves as 'Barelwis' or 'Deobandis'. In Chapter Four I argued that the early Mirpuri migrants were not aware of the conflict between these neo-orthodox reformist groups prior to migration. However, the second and third generations, who have attended mosques in Britain, are more aware of such differences than their parents and grandparents were.

The most visible manifestation of 'Barelwism' among the youth in Britain is the DI movement. DI is proud of its links with the teaching of Mawlana Riza, evident in the refusal of DI activists to pray behind non-Barelwi *imams* and in each of their gatherings beginning with *asalatu wasalamu alayka ya Rasul Allah* (peace be upon you, O Messenger of God). These are deliberately ritualised attempts to set DI apart from TJ and other such groups. DI does not ask for any monetary contributions and is not viewed as a threat to Barelwi *imams*. Moreover, the movement is distinctly Pakistani, evident through its choice of dress and language, something that pleases the *babas*. However, DI's main aim is to make the youth good 'Barelwis'. It has reached some of those who had been neglected by the *imam*s and mosques but it is of limited appeal to those born in Britain. British Mirpuri youth live in a multi-cultural society and engage with fellow Muslims from all over world and as such they find DI's approach very limited. Thus, they are finding other alternatives for religious inspiration and are reaching out to a transnational Sunni Sufi tradition to provide them with spiritual and intellectual stimulus. This is one of the 'devotional' alternatives to 'Barelwism' to be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Alternative discourses: 'anti-Sufism', 'post-Barewlism', 'transnational Sufism' and the persistence of '*kismetic*' religion

Introduction

In the diaspora especially, many youth seek to distance themselves from what they see as the 'Hindu' cultural associations of their popular 'Muslim' devotional heritage (Ballard 2004:36). As Geaves rightly argues:

> Both generations are affirming the values of religion. The earlier migrants use Islam to affirm their cultural inheritance and allegiance to life in the subcontinent. Old customs and traditions are reinforced by sanctifying them as prescribed by religion...the later generation are developing a religious awareness which has little to do with ethnic solidarity. There is an attempt taking place to discover Islamic identity that is based on the universals of the faith (1996:59).

Moreover, while it has been suggested in the last chapter that, with some interesting exceptions, many Barelwi *imam*s have failed to respond to the needs of the youth, anti-Sufi groups have been at the forefront of using a familiarity with English language and culture to convey their message. South Asian heritage Islamist movements such as Jama'at-i Islami (JI, the Islamic Party, founded 1941) and Arab heritage Islamist movements such as Hizb al-Tahrir (HT, the Liberation Party, founded 1952) target young Muslims of South Asian heritage in British colleges and universities especially (Lewis 1994; Taji-Farouki 1996).

The early Mirpuri migrants were 'educated' about Islam by 'big and little *pirs*' and the Barelwi *imams*. Beliefs such as seeking help from saints, both living and dead, and practices, such as visiting Sufi shrines, were taken for granted.

> Most of the first-generation migrants were uneducated villagers, and the religion, in which they practice and believe, has been passed on to them from generation to generation. There has been little reason to analyse or challenge that which they have received. They have attempted to reproduce their faith in Britain, but not without criticism from their children (Geaves 1996:122).

For the youth, however, born and bred in a diasporic context and exposed to 'modern' ideas through the education system, and British society in general, there is a characteristically 'modern' desire to clarify the ambiguous relationships between religion and culture: "A younger generation of Muslim men and women are not prepared to accept the unquestioned beliefs and assumptions of their parents" (Ansari 2003:15). *Babas* (elders) and *kakas* (youth) have grown up in totally different environments, thus 'conflict' between them is somewhat inevitable. *Babas* come from a background where culture and religion are not separated, while many *kakas* increasingly want to distinguish culture from religion.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the plural devotional world of British South Asian youth, especially the Mirpuri youth in Lancashire. Having outlined the limits of Barelwi attempts to dominate this scene, a range of alternative religious orientations and possibilities are detailed. The chapter begins by investigating something of the appeal of anti-Sufi movements against a discussion of the conflict between modern constructions of Islamic boundaries and more ambiguous traditional Mirpuri distinctions between religion and culture. Then attention turns to *Idara Minhaj al-Qur'an* (Organisation of the Way of the Qur'an), a 'post-Barelwi' religious and political movement that aims to challenge the hold of 'anti-Sufi' movements such as Jama'at i-Islami over Muslim youth. This will be followed by an account of a universalistic non-Asian *pir,* Shaykh Nazim, who has hundreds of

young British Asian Muslim followers in Lancashire towns including Bury. Finally we look at the persistence of popular, including *kismetic*, dimensions of Islam amongst young Mirpuris in Lancashire.

Babas and *Kakas*, Religion and Culture, Sufis and Anti-Sufis

In many ways, the issue of 'arranged' marriage encapsulates all the problems encountered between *babas* and *kakas*. If a son or a daughter is 'seen' to have disregarded parents' wishes, it leads to humiliation in the *baradari*. However, Nadia (24), from Bury, a graduate from Salford University, argues:

> As a young British Muslim my beliefs unlike my parents are not influenced by the Hindu customs. Marrying within the *baradari* is a Hindu tradition that aims to keep the barbaric caste system alive. The concept of a caste system is totally against the teachings of Islam.

Nadia's views are shared by many young people especially those who are studying in universities and have contacts with Muslims from around the world and in particular the Arab world. Nadia's close contact with Arab students and their anti-devotional literature is one of the reasons that she is opposed to arranged marriages. In her view the Indian Muslims have adopted the Hindu custom of arranged marriages whereas Islam offers a person an opportunity to choose his/her own partner.

From an outsider's perspective there seems to be no involvement of the *pir* in the arranging of marriages. However, a majority of families from Azad Kashmir contact their *pir* back home to gain blessing for the marriage. If the young person refuses the arranged marriage, pressure is applied on him/her, suggesting that the

family *pir* would be upset if they did not obey their parents. This in most cases is emotional blackmail and the parents, it seems, will not leave any stone unturned in order to get their way. Many *pir*s do not want to get entangled in family matters but do so due to persistent requests from the young person's parents, particularly the mother. The *pir*s send *ta'widh* to bring harmony in the house and it is hoped by the parents that it will bring the young person to their senses. Failing that, some parents ask the *pir* to talk to the young person and convince them of the virtues of marrying within the *baradari*.

The *baradari* system, which is a common denominator between the *babas*, has little value in the eyes of *kakas*. Azhar Matlub (29) shop assistant who was born in Bury but whose family is from Gorsian near Kharri Sharif, Mirpur, asserts:

> The *baradari* system does not appeal to me at all; in my view it acts as a barrier, as people use the system to raise their own status and degrade others. How can one define which caste is better than the other? Who decides? We always accuse the British people of being racists, what would you call the concept of *kammis* (low caste)? Young people like myself do not even understand the concept of *baradari;* it is an alien concept in this day and age and the sooner we get rid of it the better.

By contrast, Jamil Akhtar (62) from Nelson, who was born near old Dadyal and came to Britain in the 1960s, had no formal education, religious or otherwise, and still remains illiterate. He is a strong advocate of emphasising one's caste:

> When I buy a horse or a dog I ask of its pedigree and the value of the animal increases accordingly. Animals are categorised by pedigree, why is it considered wrong to have different castes amongst human beings? If every horse cannot be an Arab stallion then how can all the people be equal? I think young people in Britain have been brainwashed into thinking that *har nathu khyra* (every Tom, Dick and Harry) is equal. In the past people were respected for their caste but nowadays *kutian tey bilian nah eka pa* (dogs and cats are selling at the same price): There is no class distinction.

Jamil's views are typical of many *babas* living in Bury and Nelson. Debates on the changing nature of the *baradari* in Britain are under constant discussion amongst

the *babas*. He is not happy with the situation in Britain where the *baradari* is under attack from young people like Azhar. Whilst *babas* such as Jamil and *kakas* like Azhar have different views on *baradari* the fact remains that the *baradari* still plays an important part in their lives. Indeed, the *baradari* promotes group self interest and gets things done. For example, the *baradari* offers invaluable support both financial and moral during such occasions as marriages and deaths.

Mirpuri youth therefore come from a background where religion and culture are blended into the fabric of society standing as one entity. A good example of how Mirpuri religion has interwoven religion with culture is the *baradari khatam* held after the death of a family member. Both Shaw (1988) and Werbner (1990) have discussed the devotional practice of complete recitation of the Qur'an known as *khatam-i Qur'an*, yet no mention was made of the *baradari khatam*, a major event after the death of family especially an elder. Sirin (21), unemployed, who was born in Bury and whose parents hail from Kotli, describes his father's *khatam*:

> On the third day of my dad's death, hundreds of people came to his *khatam*. The women sat in our house and recited sura Yasin or a *para* (chapter of Qur'an) each and the men gathered in the mosque where they also read the Qur'an. In addition some people read *kalima sharif*, (Islamic creed: There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) *durud sharif* (salutations on the Prophet) and *ayat-i karima* (There is no God save You. Be You Glorified! I have been a wrong doer (Qur'an 21:87) on either their rosaries or on *kajuran* (date stones). My cousin had ordered food for five hundred people and I think it cost him around £1200. After the *dua* (prayer) food was served to both men and women and the food that was left was distributed amongst friends and relatives. We had a similar *khatam* on the fifteenth and are hoping to have even a bigger *khatam* on fortieth, *insha Allah* (God willing).

Thus, following Sirin's father's death his *baradari* held a *khatam* on the third, fifteenth and fortieth day after his death. On each occasion around five hundred people attended these *khatams* and food was provided for the deceased's relatives. In addition people recited chapters or verses from the Qur'an, Islamic creeds and made salutations on the Prophet. The belief that the deceased receive benefit from

the actions of the living is well established in Sunni theology and not restricted to the Mirpuri people.

However, for Ilyas (36), director of a manufacturing firm in Manchester, and a member of Ahl i-Hadith, the concept of *baradari khatams* like *baradari* 'arranged marriages' is wrong:

> Tell me, where is it written in the Qur'an or Hadith that you have to do *khatam*? I think these *khatams* are nothing but a waste of money. The amount of money that is wasted on the *khatam* could help feed so many poor Muslims in Palestine or Afghanistan. Although I am dead against it but my mother still holds my dad's *khatam* every year. All the *baradari* turns up for the *khatam* but I never see these guys come to mosque. Is it more important to attend a *khatam* than to pray *namaz*? What can you do with these *jahil* (ignorant) people?

Ilyas' account illustrates that not all families from a devotional background will continue the practice of *baradari khatams* as some people like Ilyas do not seem intent on continuing this tradition.

It is usually in colleges and universities where youth will come into contact with 'anti-Sufi' movements critical of Pakistani culture; the students manage many of the Islamic Societies on the university campuses across Britain. Some young students have never met a *pir* or visited a shrine and do not easily relate to concepts held dear by their parents including the veneration of saints and shrines. Mufti (29), a customer advisor in Manchester, who comes from Rawalpindi and now lives in Bury, states:

> I was at Peel College (Bury) when I first came into contact with HT. The HT party preached that the religion of our parents was wrong because it was not based on the Qur'an and Sunnah but on *kufffar* (disbelievers) customs. Unlike the mosque, the HT talks were in English and they always sought to cause friction between Muslim and Jewish students.

The situation was not any different in Salford University as Mufti recalls:

> At Salford University I became involved with the Islamic Society that comprised students from different ethnic backgrounds. The more I attended the talks organised by the Islamic Society, the more I began to question the customs my parents followed.

Mufti did not dare question his parents on the subject, as he knew they would be extremely upset by the suggestion that the religion they followed was 'wrong'.

Another young person, who studied at Manchester University, is Afzal (30), a pharmacist in Bury, comes from a family who are devout followers of *pir*s and conduct all matters with their advice. Until Afzal went to study at university, he had no 'problems' with the faith of his parents. However, the consistent criticisms of the Islamic Society made Afzal disagree with many of the things that his family had done for generations, such as asking the *pir*s for prayers. Afzal was exposed to views which suggested that it was incomprehensible why anyone should ask another human being for prayer: "What is wrong with asking God directly? After all, even *pir*s must pray to God", Afzal argues. However, his reasoning failed to convince his parents and tension began to mount in his household.

Kamran's parents have close ties with *pirs* in Pakistan. However, Kamran (32), a customer service advisor in Bury, is an active member of the HT. He argues:

> My family keeps going on about how powerful the *pir*s are. Well if they have so much power, why don't they do anything to help Muslims who are being killed in Kashmir and Palestine? As soon as there is a problem in the house dad starts ringing a *pir* here and a *pir* there. I usually ask dad where is your trust in Allah, can He not help you? What has all this got to with Islam?

For young people like Kamran the role of the *pir* undermines the concept of *tawhid* (Unity) as he feels they are held equal to God by his family and other 'ignorant Muslims', an idea he strongly rejects. Kamran spent a few years studying in Mirpur

and occasionally visited Kharri Sharif with his student friends. According to him, drug abuse is a common feature of most shrines including Kharri Sharif. Moreover, since September 11, Kamran's views have gained more currency amongst the dissatisfied youth of Bury. Some accept his claim that it was "Our lot [HT] and not the Sufis who could carry out such a task." Omar Bakri (formerly of HT), repeated such a view when he boasted that even thousands of Sufis together can do nothing but sing and dance while only a handful of Muslim brothers can achieve such "amazing" results. As Ballard (2004) argues, aggressive and puritanical 'anti-Sufi' movements can be a good vehicle for the feelings of anger and exclusion experienced by many young British Asian Muslims. Next we look at an example of a 'post-Barelwi' response to such movements.

'A Post-Barelwi Movement'? Idara Minhaj al-Qur'an

During the early 1980s, General Zia al-Haqq's rule greatly benefited the Deobandis, Tablighi Jama'at and Jama'at-i Islami as they all supported his efforts in Afghanistan against the Russians. By contrast, his regime had a devastating effect on the Barelwis who did not support his policies (Siddiqi 1988:144). Consequently, the Barelwi political faction split into five groups all under a different leadership: The Sunni Movement; the Panjab Sunni Movement; the Jama'at Ahl-i Sunnat; Dawat-i Islami (discussed in chapter five); and Idara Minhaj al-Qur'an (hereafter MQ) (Rashid 1998; http://members.tripod.com). It is the last of these that concerns us here.

MQ was formed in 1981 in Lahore (the headquarters of Jama'at-i Islami) by a young Barelwi scholar named Mawlana Muhammad Tahir al-Qadiri (b.1951) (Arshad 2004:14). According to Butt, as a young boy, Qadiri took part in local gatherings of *dhikr* and often visited shrines of the local saints in Panjab. However, Qadiri spent most of his early educational life studying under Barelwi scholars and his religious views are still deeply influenced by the writings of Mawlana Ahmad Riza (d.1921). In 1966, Qadiri became a follower of the Qadiriyya master, Sayyid Tahir Gilani (d.1991) (Javed 1987:13), and was also greatly influenced by Dr Faruqi (d.1996), an expert in Islamic Philosophy at Panjab University Lahore. Dr Faruqi taught him a broader view of Islam than that which he had encountered under his Barelwi teachers. Under Dr Faruqi's supervision, Qadiri gained his Ph.D from Lahore in 1986 with a thesis on Islamic Law entitled 'Punishments in Islam: their Classification and Philosophy'.

Subsequently, Qadiri dropped 'Mawlana' from his name preferring to be called 'Dr' or 'Professor', suggesting that his aim was to represent a broader, more intellectualised, and modern worldview of Islam. He has attended Islamic seminars around the world and met many prominent intellectuals, both religious and political. The author of many books both in Urdu and English, Dr Qadiri also established the Minhaj al-Qur'an Islamic University in Lahore in 1983. Since the late 1980s Dr Qadiri has become well known among Pakistani Muslims due to his lectures on Pakistani Television (PTV) and he is very popular amongst young educated Muslims. Whilst the Barelwi and Deobandi *ulama* were debating the legality of the electronic media, Dr Qadiri was releasing videotape after videotape to this previously untapped audience.

In many ways, MQ represents a response to the particular challenges posed by Jama'at-i Islami. Sardar Mansur (43), president of the Jammu and Kashmir Pakistani Awami Tahreek (MQ's political wing) in AJK, stated in an interview with me:

> Prior to the establishment of Idara Minhaj al-Qur'an educational institutions in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir were dominated by the Jama'at-i Islami. Barelwi *ulama* were no match for the well educated lecturers and school teachers who were influenced by the writings of Mawlana Mawdudi.

Dr Qadiri never denies the debt he owes his Barelwi teachers and the figurehead of Barelwism, Mawlana Ahmad Riza, however he views himself as part of the larger Ahl-i Sunnat wa al-Jama'at (Sunnis world-wide) movement and does not want to restrict himself to the term Barelwi (see www.minhaj.net). Thus, Dr Qadiri contends:

> Fundamentally there is only one *maslak* (way) that of Ahl-i Sunnat wa al-Jama'at and in reality there is no such thing as a Barelwi or Deobandi way: Bareilly and Deoband are merely two places in India. Apart from the Indo-Pak subcontinent, no one knows either the Barelwis or Deobandis, whereas the Ahl-i Sunnat wa al-Jama'at is well known throughout the Muslim world. Indeed, I would describe myself as a follower of the Ahl-i Sunnat, Hanafi fiqh and the Qadiriyya Sufi order (Choudary 1987:12).

The Barelwi *ulama* were quick to respond to Dr Qadiri's attempts to distance himself from Barelwism. Abu Dawud (1998), the editor of *Riza-i Mustafa*, warns his readers: "Beware! Tahir al-Qadiri follows in the footsteps of Mawdudi". For example, Mawdudi was initially against the rule of a woman but eventually he supported Fatima Jinnah (sister of Muhammad Ali Jinnah) in national elections during the 1960s. Likewise, Dr Qadiri was also initially opposed to the idea of a woman's rule. He had categorically stated during the Zia al-Haqq regime that a woman could not become a ruler under any circumstances. However, he now works

side by side with Benazir Bhutto. Mawdudi was also of the opinion that one could pray behind any *imam*. Similarly, Dr Qadiri is an advocate of praying behind any *imam,* be it a 'Shia' or a 'Wahhabi' (Abu Dawud 1998:18). Consequently, he is viewed with suspicion and most Barelwi *ulama* have withdrawn their support from his movement. In their view, he is trying to please every group.

The relationship between most Barelwis and Dr Qadiri is therefore one of 'non co-operation' and as a result he has moved further away from the rulings of Mawlana Riza. For example, he openly promotes *qawwali,* a practice that Mawlana Riza had declared unlawful. Dr Qadiri's attempts to go beyond Barelwism have earned him the support of the educated youth who view him as a modern Islamic thinker who is able to speak with a great deal of confidence on science, politics, history, religion and spirituality. He also appeals to the middle aged professional who feels unable to engage with the *imam*s of the mosques on in-depth debate concerning modern issues such as surrogate parenting, birth control and so forth. Indeed, MQ's membership is open to all: Jama'at-i Islami, Deobandis, Tablighi Jama'at, Ahl-i Hadith and Shias.

In 1987 Dr Qadiri toured the UK, holding the *Minhaj-al-Qur'an International Islamic Conference* at Wembley Arena in June 1988. However, while the conference had little impact on the lives of British Muslims, before his TV and Satellite appearances on channels such as TV Asia, Pakistan Channel and Prime TV, Dr Qadiri remained popular, especially amongst women who were generally neglected by the Barelwi *ulama.* Tahira Sayyid, (21), a British-born young woman from Bury, who works at a local call centre, states: "Our parents are very religious

and do not want us to watch 'improper' television programmes and so they normally advise us to either watch Professor Tahir al-Qadiri or a *na't* programme". Dr Qadiri is well aware of the impact that *na'ts* have on people. In his view it is imperative that love for the Prophet is awakened in the hearts of the youth, for without this love one's faith cannot be revived. Dr Qadiri argues: "In my view the best way to achieve this is to hold more gatherings of *milad sharif*" (Choudary 1988:29).

Ramzan Qadiri, (27), is the principal of MQ's centre in Manchester called 'Madinah Hall'. He admits: "In Britain MQ's main target are the youth, so we publish two magazines in English: *al-Minhaj* (quarterly) and *The Revival* (monthly) and also have several websites[1]. A prime example of MQ's efforts to reach out to the youth is the following 'mock' interview in the *Revival* (April 2002:6-7) with the youth icon 'Ali G'. The article starts with basic questions concerning Islam and Muslims, and presents the answers in a concise, easy to understand, format. 'Ali G' initially asks what a Muslim 'is'; he also likes the idea of having four wives, but thinks all Muslims are potential 'suicide bombers'. The questions are phrased, in a 'streetwise' Ali G style to reach out to the youth but the answers become more in-depth and cover a wide range of issues.

> What is Islam? Cos me uncle Jamal says you has to be from Bradford and run a kebab shop or be a taxi driver to be part of it, is this true?
>
> Whenever me watch Trev on the Big Ben news at ten he is always banging on about Muslim Terrorists. Me sees a guy with an AK47 who goes and blows himself up and mashes loads of other people. Is that part of your religion?

The use of a famous 'celebrity' and humour allows the youth to relate to the article but still gets its message across. The whole approach is very light-hearted. The

[1] These are MQ inspired magazines which seek to spread its message to the youth

article goes on to explore the portrayal of Islam and Muslims from various parts of the world in the media. The answers reflect a 'moderate' view. For example, *jihad* is described as: "Any struggle done in day-to-day life to please God." Speaking the truth is represented as: " One of the highest levels of *jihad*." The definition of a Muslim is that he is neither a fanatic nor an extremist but who practises Islam in moderation. The article ends with the issue of stereotyping Muslim women in the western media. It does this with a few questions. 'Ali G' asks:

> Why does you make your women cover their faces? Is it "cos they is well mingin and you is embarrassed to be seen with them?"
>
> But does you not use your woman – aii, cos me mate Dave he says they is not allowed to do anything otherwise theys gets a slap, is that right?

Significantly, most of the issues discussed in the article would not find an expression in Barelwi mosques and few Barelwi *imam*s could speak on the above issues with any degree of authority. Until fairly recently, young Muslims wanting access to such material would have to turn to 'anti-Sufi' movements such as those discussed above.

Again following in the footsteps of JI related youth movements such as Young Muslims UK (see Lewis 1994; Geaves 1996), MQ has held three-day 'Spiritual Training Camps' for youth. For example, on 24/25 and 28 July 1998, such a camp took place at a high school in Burnley. One of the reasons why the event took place in a school rather the local mosque was that the *babas* were not comfortable with the idea of a mixed gathering of youths. Indeed, MQ sought to reach youth who normally do not attend the mosque. During the first session of the gathering, Tariq, *amir* of MQ in Scotland, gave a talk on the 'Need for Sufism and Spirituality'.

Later that evening Dr Qadiri himself gave a talk on the 'Beliefs of Ahl-i Sunnat wa al-Jama'at'. He concluded: "The only way to salvation is to have love for the Prophet." In addition, Dr Qadiri had a two and a half-hour question and answer session in English with the youth. Many young people were impressed by Dr Qadiri's knowledge and appreciated his answers on a whole range of issues. More recently, MQ has also hired Ramee Muhammad, an African-American convert, as *imam* in its centre in Burnley, further evidence that the movement is devoting its energies to accommodate the English-speaking youth, more so than DI discussed in the previous chapter.

Representing something of a 'post-Barelwi' position, then, through his talks and lectures, in person, on tape and TV, Qadiri and MQ are also reaching out to 'non-Barelwis'. For example, Sagir, (58), Justice of the Peace and a director of 'Namak Foods', was until recently a regular in a Deobandi mosque. However, he is now an MQ activist. He explains:

> I have been going to the local mosque (Deobandi) for nearly twenty years. The Tablighi Jama'at often brings groups who stay in the mosque and normally emphasise one's obligation to perform *namaz*. There is no discussion of what is taking place in the world. I gained the impression from the Tablighi Jama'at that as long as I offered my five time prayers, I would be classified a 'good Muslim'. So when my friend introduced me to talks of Professor Tahir al-Qadiri, I had never heard anyone speak about Islam as eloquently as he does. He is not like other Barelwi *ulama* who only talk about the *nur* (light) and *bashr* (human) debate. [Is the Prophet a mere human or light?]

Dr Qadiri impresses people such as Sagir because he is a 'knowledgeable' person, who in some ways transcends the narrow-minded world of both the Deobandis and Barelwis and engages the modern world.

MQ also attempts to engage with wider society as well as bringing new converts into the fold of Islam. In this respect, JI once had a monopoly on young, smart, professional, politically astute, English speaking Muslims (Lewis 1994). However, the following example illustrates that this is no longer the case. At a *milad sharif* celebration that took place in 2000 at the Mosses Centre in Bury, an event organised by ADAB (Asian Development Association of Bury), an organisation formed by the young people of Bury, the guest speaker was a police inspector from Oldham, who had recently embraced Islam. In his talk he praised Qari Shakir, a MQ activist in Coppice, Oldham: "Who helped and supported me in embracing Islam and I thank him for everything that he has done for me." MQ activists were parading the new convert for all to see, especially the officials from Bury Metropolitan council.

Shaykh Nazim: a trans-national, universalistic, Naqshbandi *Pir*

> The Naqshbandi master Nazim al-Qubrusi offers a warm presentation of desirable human qualities, again rooted in a perspective that stresses love and often discusses the Shariite basis of Sufism (Chittick 2003:31).

If MQ represents the 'modernist' end of the devotional Islamic continuum, a transnational, universalistic, neo-traditional, Sufi spirituality finds expression in one of the most successful non-Asian transnational *pirs* with an Asian following in Britain. Shaykh Sayyid Muhammad Nazim al-Adil was born in Larnaca, Cyprus, on April 23, 1922. He is a descendent of two renowned Sufi masters, Shaykh Jilani (paternal line) and Mawlana Rumi (maternal line). After completing his high school education in Cyprus, he moved to Istanbul in 1940, where he studied Chemical Engineering and Religious Sciences (Kabbani 1993:376-77). In 1945 Shaykh Nazim became a follower of a Naqshbandiyya Sufi master, Shaykh Abd Allah al-Daghestani (d.1973) who lived in Damascus. Shaykh Nazim was ordered by his

master to spread the teachings of the Naqshbandiyya in the Middle East: Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt and Saudi Arabia (Kabbani 1993:383; Geaves 2000:145-146).

Following his master's death in 1973, Shaykh Nazim began to promote the message of the Naqshbandiyya order in Britain to his Turkish and Cypriot followers in Peckham. Initially, he would stay in a Turkish grocery shop and offer his prayers at the Peckham mosque. Gradually he began to attract western followers who found his charismatic personality and Sufi teachings to be the most tolerant version of Islam they had ever encountered. In addition, he attracted many of the British Asian Muslim youth who felt he possessed the charisma they had not seen in the *imams* in their mosques. Hence during the month of Ramadan the Peckham mosque became a centre of multi-cultural activity. Young Asians were surprised to see that Shaykh Nazim's appeal extended beyond ethnic divides. Indeed, he had followers from across the globe (Kabbani 1993:387-408).

In 1984 a small number of youths from Bury first became followers of Shaykh Nazim; now the numbers have increased to 150 followers. One of his followers, Babar Shah (28), Manager at a Bury Call Centre, describes what attracted him to Shaykh Nazim in the first place and how, at his invitation, Shaykh Nazim came to Bury in 1993:

> As a teenager my initial attraction to Shaykh Nazim was due to his charismatic personality. For some reason, each person was able to 'connect' with him. I saw people from the four corners of the earth in Peckham mosque and yet no one seemed out of place. As a Pakistani I was taught to be proud of my ethnic background and so in Bury I had never experienced such sense of belonging to a global Muslim community.
>
> Mawlana (Shaykh Nazim) came to Bury; food was served, and everyone was given an opportunity to meet him. As he went into the hall, he saw me and said: "He is bringing us here." Mawlana's comments were a source of great joy for me and I was on cloud nine. Now when I think back to this event it makes me feel very special.

Zaynab Batul (27), customer service advisor in a mobile phone company, was born in Bury; her parents are from Kotli. Her father invited Shaykh Nazim for breakfast during his visit to Bury in 1989. Zaynab vividly recollects Shaykh Nazim's visit to her house:

> Initially Shaykh Sahib sat in our front room with fifteen of his male followers. After breakfast he was invited to meet the women in the living room. As soon as I saw him he reminded me of my late grandfather, who was also a *pir*. Apart from the physical resemblance, there was an aura around him that made you feel at peace. My mum was in tears, I suppose for her it was as if her father had come back to meet her. Mum touched Shaykh Sahib's feet out of respect and told all the children in the family to do the same and gain his blessing.

Zaynab's account suggests that her mother has taught her children the traditional way of greeting *pir*s as her parents had taught her. To touch the feet of an elder person in the family and *pir*s is a family tradition in Zaynab's parents' village and continues to this day.

Another follower of Shaykh Nazim in Bury is Azhar, (29), a shop assistant whose father has no links with *pir*s despite the fact that he comes from a village near Kharri Sharif. His father is of the opinion that "anyone who hangs around *pir*s, becomes *nikamma* (useless)". Azhar heard about Shaykh Nazim through one of his followers, Shaykh Muhammad Sulayman from Preston, who always came to his house bearing sweets in a white turban and green cloak. At first Azhar had no idea that Shaykh Sulayman was English as he spoke fluent Urdu and it was many months later that he found out the truth. Occasionally Shaykh Sulayman used to conduct *dhikr* in Azhar's house but when his father found out, he recalls: "He threw a *Benny* [became angry] and had a go at my elder brother for hanging around with Shaykhs." Azhar would constantly hear about Shaykh Nazim from his elder

brothers and finally met him in 1989 with twenty other youths from Bury at the Sheffield City Hall. It was an experience that Azhar remembers vividly:

> The first time I laid my eyes on Shaykh Sahib [Shaykh Nazim] I began to cry. Shaykh Sahib said in his speech: "I am enough for everybody" and someone stood up who was startled by this and asked: "Everyone?" Shaykh Sahib replied: " Yes, everyone." After the speech Shaykh Sahib met everybody and asked where we were from. We said: "Bury" and he instantly said: "*Ma sha' Allah*" (what God wills)

According to Azhar, there were hundreds of Muslims and non-Muslims, mostly youths at Shaykh Nazim's talk at the City Hall. Thus, unlike 'big *pirs'* such as Pir Maruf and Sufi Abd Allah who have few dealings with non-Muslims, Shaykh Nazim seems to relish the opportunity to address non-Muslims. Both Kose (1996) and Geaves (2000) are of the opinion that Shaykh Nazim has been remarkably successful in attracting non-Muslims to Sufism. This success is principally attributed to his charismatic presence, which is such that he is able to transcend ethnicity. Individuals invariably describe their meeting with Shaykh Nazim as a transformative experience. Similar to the South Asian big *pirs* Shaykh Nazim is a devout Sunni Muslim. However, unlike them he shows a willingness to engage with mainstream society and in the classical Sufi tradition is able to adapt; hence his appeal to the youth. However, very few *babas* are followers of Shaykh Nazim as his books and talks are mainly in English and most *babas*, it must be said, still do not feel comfortable with the English language as a medium for Islamic instruction.

Shaykh Nazim's growing influence upon the Bury youth can be illustrated in more detail with a case study of the *Nur al-Islam* (Light of Islam) mosque. I serve as President (1991-present) at this mosque which was created out of a 'Deobandi' / 'Barelwi' split in 1977-78. Most members of Nur al-Islam mosque trace their roots to either Kotli or Mirpur District in 'Azad' Kashmir. One of the many activities

initiated during the last decade has been the formation of a group simply called 'The Ten'. It was established in 1993 and seven of the Ten are *murids* of Shaykh Nazim. This group consists of ten young men: Sayyid Amjid, (32), teacher; Nasir, (30), teacher; Shabbir, (40), accountant; Afzal, (31), accountant; Afzaal, (30), pharmacist; Sa'id, (27), and Irfan, (29), both customer service advisors; Abbas, (29), shop assistant; Salim, (32), youth worker and Sayyid Sajid, (28), teacher. 'The Ten', are good friends and share many leisure activities such as football, going to the cinema, hiking, holidays and so forth. Sayyid Amjid was unanimously elected as the *amir* (leader) of the group.

All members of 'The Ten' are followers of the Naqshbandiyya order. Sayyid Amjid, explains the reason behind the formation of the group:

> Our primary aim is to instil love for the Prophet and saints in the hearts and minds of young people and protect them from groups that attack Sufism and *pirs*. We also want to build a network of Sufi brotherhood amongst the followers of Mawlana Shaykh Nazim in Greater Manchester and surroundings towns.

In order to achieve this goal 'The Ten' decided to hold a bi-monthly *khatam* in honour of great Sufi masters such as Bastami, Junayd, Ghazali, Rumi, Ibn Arabi, Baba Farid, Bulleh Shah and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. It was seen as a way of introducing Sufi teachings to the youth in plain English. This is done by concentrating on basic Sufi ideals that can be implemented in one's daily life, for example, the concept of Sufi chivalry: to put the needs of others before oneself. Irfan, a member of 'The Ten', explains how he personally tries to follow this concept in his daily life:

> I know I am not capable of making great sacrifices like the Sufi masters but at least I try and do something at my level. One day as I was walking past our bus stop I saw an old Indian woman standing there. I don't whether she was a Hindu or a Muslim but she seemed a bit worried. I enquired if she was 'alright'. She explained that she came from Bolton to do some

> shopping at a leather factory in our area and had been waiting for an hour for the bus to take her to Bury town centre. I felt sorry for her and stood there chatting to her. When the bus finally arrived, I sat with her and paid her fare and once we got to town, I walked her to the Bolton bus and made sure she was safe and sound. I know its no big deal but I really got a buzz from doing this little act of chivalry.

There is a lack of Sufi literature dealing with the basic concepts such as service to humanity, sincerity, compassion, and so forth in English. Hence the *khatam* programmes are specifically designed to explain the Sufi message of 'peace with all' to the youth and re-enforce love for the Prophet and saints. Apart from the short talks which highlight the teachings of a particular Sufi master, a display stand is also set-up in the main hall which contains an English article especially written for each *khatam*. Habib (22), an undergraduate at the University of Manchester, who attended the *khatam* dedicated to Amir Khusrau, asserts:

> Being a member of the Chishtiyya, of course, I knew something about Amir Khusrau, but I was amazed by how much research these guys (The Ten) had done on him. Although the article was not written in an academic style, nonetheless, by reading it one fell in love with Amir Khusrau and his ideas.

The Rumi Spiritual and Educational Centre was officially opened on 24 March 1995 by Shaykh Nazim. It is based on the top floor of Nur al-Islam mosque. The centre's name 'Rumi' was chosen because youth studying in the mosque were made familiar with the life and teachings of Mawlana Rumi and especially his *Mathnawi* through stories told by a former teacher at the mosque. The tales from the *Mathnawi* were immensely popular with the children and went some way to creating love for the Prophet and the saints in the hearts and minds of those children who now are adults. The fact that most of the youths attending the Rumi Centre are followers of the Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya order is expressed by the names of Khwaja Baha al-Din Shah Naqshband and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi beautifully written on the ceiling. In addition, the large *ta'widh* normally worn by Shaykh Nazim's followers around the neck, is depicted on the wall of the centre (see image on page 19).

However, the centrepiece remains the painting of Rumi's shrine in Konya, beautifully painted by Abbas, one of 'The Ten'. It contains the inscription in Arabic, '*Ya Hadrat Mawlana* (Oh, our eminent Master)'. In recent times, a small library has also been added to the Rumi Centre. Most of the books are in English but literature in other languages such as Arabic, Farsi Urdu and Panjabi is also available.

In addition to the above activities, every Thursday night at 8pm, around 100-150 people, about 80% young males and 20% young females, gather in the mosque to perform *dhikr*, which is led by Sayyid Amjid. All the people sit in a circle and chant the *dhikr* known as *Khatam al-Khawajgan* (Conclusion of the Masters). This gathering of *dhikr* also attracts young people from the local Deobandi mosque who do not hold such gatherings. As most of the youths from both mosques know one another there is no sign of tension or conflict. After the *dhikr*, young boys such as Shua'ib (11), Ghulam (13), Faizan (12) and Zubayr (14) recite English, Panjabi, Urdu and Arabic *na'ts* in honour of the Prophet. The young boys have memorised these poems simply by listening to famous devotional singers such as Sami Yusuf, Yusuf Islam, Zain Bhika and so forth.

The short talk after *dhikr* never mentions the polemics between the 'Barelwis' or 'Deobandis'; however there is critique aimed at 'anti-Sufis'. The talk normally revolves around love for God, the Prophet and *pirs*. People are encouraged to 'correct' themselves before attempting to 'correct' others. Other faiths such as Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity are mentioned with respect. Hence some

Christians and Jews who attend these gatherings never feel unwelcome. One such attendee is Reverend Keith M Trivasse, Christian priest (Church of England). He writes:

> I am one of those non-Asian participants, and, as far as I am aware, the only Christian to regularly attend the mosque. I began attending as part of my work to initiate and develop stronger connections between the Christian communities and the Muslim minorities in our area. I am also charged with providing a resource to the local churches on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations. I attend the Thursday evening *zikr* (remembrance of the names of God) and occasional other gatherings... To my surprise and delight I have become a part of the Thursday evening gathering and am regularly invited to lead part of the prayers comprising the *zikr* (2003:6).

Because of his contributions Reverend Trivasse is sometimes asked to conclude the *dhikr* gathering by offering a prayer, which he does with a great deal of sensitivity. As a result, both the Christian and Jewish groups have visited this mosque on a number of occasions. A Christian-Muslim and a Jewish-Muslim forum have been established in Bury, holding meetings every 4-6 weeks. These developments are mainly due to the tireless efforts of Keith and Hafiz Hasanat (the son of the *imam*) who work together on a whole range of inter-faith related issues in Bury.

This account of Nur al-Islam mosque suggests that its activities self-consciously reflect the feel of a traditional *khanqah* where people are made welcome and food is provided. There is little evidence of 'Deobandi'/'Barelwi' polemics, despite the mosque's origins. Instead, there is a more clearly Sufi orientation, in particular, a Naqshbandiyya influence. The main beneficiaries of these gatherings are youths and women, both groups that are normally marginalised in most British mosques and have not been much catered for in the face of 'anti-Sufi' critiques.

The persistence of popular and *kismetic* religion in Britain

Outside particular 'anti-Sufi' and 'post-Barelwi' movements and organisations, and even outside formal attachment to Sufi orders such as the Naqshbandiyya, popular 'devotional Islamic' beliefs and practices associated with veneration of the Prophet, *pirs* and *sayyids* is still common in Britain. In Chapter Four I discussed the role of a Mirpuri lady, Sayyida Shamim Fatima, and the 'little *pir*', Mian Muhammad Iqbal from Burnley, in reproducing devotional Islam amongst Mirpuri migrants. Here, I want to focus first on their children, in particular Sayyid Nasir and Mian Muhammad Ishtiaq (mentioned in Chapter Four) and their role in maintaining something of the world of popular devotion discussed in relation to Pakistan and Azad Kashmir in Chapters Two and Three.

Nasir's parents have reproduced a number of devotional practices: *giyarvin sharif*, *langar* and *milad sharif* for their children. According to Sayyid Nasir *milad sharif* is celebrated annually in his house. Prior to the *milad sharif* gathering the living room is decorated with banners, flags and stickers with devotional poetry in honour of the Prophet. Around seventy people, mostly males, attend the gathering, and both local and regional *na't* singers recite devotional poetry. Then there is a reading of the *milad* in Arabic by Shaykh Bashir Idrisi and Sayyid Aydrus, both from Saudi Arabia and now resident in Rochdale.

To conclude the gathering everyone stands up and reads the *salam*: "*Ya nabi salam alayka, ya rasul salam alayka* (peace be upon you, O, Prophet, O, Messenger of God)." At that moment a relic, a strand of hair belonging to the Prophet, is unveiled.

It is wrapped in many layers of perfumed clothes and is kept in a glass box. People read *salam* and process past the hair and, out of reverence for the Prophet, kiss the cloth and the box that contains the hair. Most young people look at the hair with a great deal of curiosity but not suspicion, as there is hardly anyone in the gathering who doubts its authenticity. The hair belongs to an Indian Gujarati Muslim, Dawud Namazi, (72), from Preston. Upon request he brings it to different towns such as Rochdale, Bury and Preston for *ziyarah*. Dawud does not charge for bringing the hair; nonetheless, most people give him *niyaz* (offering) for affording them the opportunity to do *ziyarah* the Prophet's blessed relic.

Veneration for *sayyids* is also reproduced in Bury from one generation to another as the following account by Nasir illustrates:

> When I was a kid I used to call for my friend 'Junior' and go to the library and every time I went to his house, his mother would lovingly call me *piro* and kiss my hand and never turn her back towards me. 'Junior's' father would often come and sit with my dad and take part in the *giyarvin sharif* held in our house every month. Over time I noticed that no matter how long Junior's dad stayed at our house he would never use our bathroom. When I asked him why, he explained it was *be-adabi* (disrespect) to use the same toilet as *sayyids*. Junior has picked these traits from his parents and treats my children with utmost love and respect because they are *sayyids*.

Mian Muhammad Ishtiaq, son of Mian Muhammad Iqbal (discussed in Chapter Four). Ishtiaq works in the local council and was born in Kharri Sharif. Mian Ishtiaq recalls his mother's advice: "Live your life according to the way of your forefathers." He continues:

> My mother would not quote the Qur'an or Hadith but she would tell me stories of Baba Pira Shah and Mian Sahib and all her values were based on the sayings of these two, I suppose you could say these were her Qur'an and Hadith.

Mian Ishtiaq's accounts highlight the role of mothers in the reproduction of devotional Islam in their household. Indeed, Ballard rightly argues that *madri mazhab* plays a crucial part in reorienting children towards devotional Islam

(2004:24). It could be argued that despite the attempts of 'anti-Sufis', and even the Barelwis to influence Mirpuri youth, the contribution of mothers requires greater research and acknowledgement.

More obviously *kismetic* (Ballard 1996; 2004) dimensions of Mirpuri religion are also deserving of attention. They were evident in the 1960s amongst the early migrants and continue to be manifest in the diaspora forty years later, even amongst the British-educated youth. In contrast to transnational *pirs* like Shaykh Nazim, *kismetic pirs* or 'needs-only' *pirs*, are also widespread in Lancashire to this day. Similarly, when faced with overwhelming odds, Panjabi and Mirpuri Muslims still believe that one's *qismet* can improve and a *pir* is the one who can reverse fortune. As the Mirpuri poet, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, writes:

Qalam rabbani hath wali deh lekkhy jo man bahway,
Marday nuhan rabb qudrat bakhshi lekkhy laykh mataway

The Divine Pen is in the hand of the saint, he writes what he wills,
God grants the saint the power to overwrite destiny.

(Zhaigham 1993:151).

Despite the critiques of the 'anti-Sufis', this idea that *pirs* have the ability to change destiny is well established amongst Mirpuri youth in Bury as the following short accounts suggest. For example, Safina (28), a Mirpuri housewife who lives in Bury, relates her personal experience:

> I am married to my cousin Dilshad and we have two young children aged 5 and 3. He was on very heavy drugs and I was very frightened, thinking what might happen to him. I begged him to stop and when I finally succeed, he became unstable and was hospitalised and subsequently went into a coma. For weeks I sat at his bedside but he showed no sign of improvement. In despair I could not think of anyone who could help me except a *pir* because I believe if anyone changes destinies he can. So I contacted a *pir* Sahib who was renowned for such miraculous acts. He told my uncle to read some *surahs* from *Qur'an-i Pak* and blow them on an egg and then smash the egg. My uncle did this for many days and one day as I went to visit my husband I could not believe my eyes, he was awake and eating an ice cream

Similarly, another young Mirpuri housewife in Bury, Farzana Begum (25), explains

how a female *pir* came to her aid:

> My two children died due to a genetic illness. When I became pregnant again, you can imagine my fear of losing the child. My mother-in-law advised that we should visit a lady saint known as Mai Sahiba in Luton. She wrote a *ta'widh* for me and instructed me to tie it around my waist in the final stages of my pregnancy. Two weeks before the baby was due I had to untie the *ta'widh*. Mai Sahiba also gave me some *ta'widh* which I had to soak in water and drink every day. *Alhamdu lillah* (God be praised), I gave birth to a healthy boy.

Halima, (23), is a housewife and has two children and has been married for five years:

> I tell my *pir* all my problems and turn to him whenever I need help. I was having marriage problems last year, things were so bad that I turned to *pir* Sahib and was phoning him all the time for advice. He also spoke to my husband and gave us both some *tawi'dh* to drink everyday to calm us down and bring blessings into our family life.
>
> My children are always catching the cold or the 'evil eye' and whenever this occurs I take them to Sayyid Ji's house for them to recite something and blow on them for *shifa* (cure). My mother used to do this when my brothers and I would fall ill and I have carried it on with my children.

Even those in higher education, like Karima, (25), who is studying for her PGCE at Manchester University, turn to *pirs* in times of need and distress:

> I went through many problems while I was at university and suffered from physical and mental stress. My mother had a dream in which a lady told her that your daughter (me) has problems due to black magic. I got in contact with a Shaykh and he asked me certain questions to try and pinpoint the problem. He gave me some *ayahs* (verses) to recite which would protect me from any form of evil influence especially black magic. Initially the thought of reading these verses meant I would be overcome with tiredness and it would take me great willpower to recite them. However, straight after reading them I felt better and I still read them now as part of my daily *wird* (litany).

Zakiyah, (25), is studying to become a nurse at the University of Salford. Her fourteen-year brother is blind from his right eye and the sight in his left eye is also deteriorating:

> My mum has visited nearly every *pir* around our area in Pakistan and whenever she hears of any *pir* in Britain who may be able to help she will go to seek help for my brother. When Shaykh Hisham came to visit in Bury I went to get *tawi'dh* for him also and some *dam shuda pani* (blessed water)

So who are these *pirs*? One example would be Sain Gulzar Chishti (64) from Rawalpindi now resident in Prestwich near Bury. He came to Britain in 1971 and

worked as a conductor and later as a bus driver for a local bus company. Since his voluntary redundancy in 1997, he spends most of his time at home meeting people who come to him seeking help. Sain Gulzar explains:

> People believe that I have powerful (good) Jinns under my control and seek my help in exorcising those who are possessed by evil Jinns. My master advised me: "*Jo adami tumhare pass ahy mumim ho ya kafir usko namid mat karna*, (Anyone who seeks help from you be it a Muslim or a non-Muslim do not send him away empty-handed). People contact me for a whole range of things: *taw'idh*, prayers, *dam* and Jinn possession.

Sain Gulzar's ability to help people who suffer from Jinn possession is well known. Sometimes he has to perform exorcism of Jinns from a particular house. Aqil (24), a Taxi driver in Bury who comes from Mirpur tells of such an incident:

> I was possessed by a powerful black Jinn who used to visit our taxi base. He tried to kill me several times. For many months I could not sleep properly because I was afraid that he would kill me in my sleep. My wife heard about Sain Gulzar from her friends and she contacted him to help me.

Sain Gulzar admits that not all cases of Jinn possession are genuine. Nonetheless, they do take place and it is his duty to help people in these circumstances. None of his clients view Sain Gulzar as their *pir* because they come to him on a 'needs-only' basis. Once they are cured, normally no further contact takes place between the two parties.

Sain Gulzar's account suggests that the *kismetic* dimension of Panjabi Islam has travelled to Britain. He represents a *pir* who satisfies the needs of people with *kismetic* problems through his spiritual powers. It would be fair to say that compared to Shaykh Nazim, Sain Gulzar's appeal is very limited and hence he has no contact with British converts who probably would be unwilling to discuss or observe Jinn exorcisms. Nevertheless, he provides an important function within the Pakistani community in Greater Manchester.

Conclusion

The debate between 'Sufis' and 'anti-Sufis' has a long history and now it is being re-produced amongst the Muslim youth of Britain. Although the Barelwi *imams* have generally failed to 'defend' the Sufi tradition amongst the youth-mainly because of a lack of central organisation nonetheless, more obviously 'modern' 'post-Barelwi' movements such as MQ have emerged, leaving behind much of the narrow sectarianism associated with traditional Barelwi scholarship. However, some regard MQ as too political and, for all their emphasis on devotion, too close to the JI model.

Another alternative to the seeming predominance of the Barelwi movement in the mosques is the connection being made by British Asian Muslim youths to non-Asian, transnational *pirs* with a universalistic Sufi message. Shaykh Nazim, whose charismatic personality has endeared him to hundreds of youth across Britain, has had a significant impact on the emergence of groups such as 'The Ten' in Bury.

Finally, even outside such 'organised' developments, popular devotional beliefs and practices do persist in the UK Mirpuri diaspora. There is tension between *babas* and *kakas* over religion and culture, but respect for the Prophet, *pirs* and *sayyids* persists. Moreover, in times of trouble many people of all ages still turn to *kismetic* religion, religion associated with easing people's distress in times of need, thus underlining the sheer plurality of ways in which devotional Islam in represented in Britain today.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Studies by Ewing (1988), Oberoi (1994) and Ballard (1996; 2004) have forcefully argued that the boundaries between religious traditions in South Asia have traditionally been characterised by a great deal of 'ambiguity'. Oberoi, for example, rightly asserts:

> It is very well for historians of religion to think, speak and write about, Hinduism and Sikhism, but they rarely pause to consider if such clear-cut categories actually found expression in the consciousness, actions and cultural performance of the human actors they describe. (1994:1)

Similarly, in his account of the various dimensions of Panjabi religiosity, Ballard argues that despite:

> Contemporary processes of religious polarisation, there is a powerful sense in which Punjabi religion has historically manifested itself in a sense of spiritual inspiration which flows freely across current ethnic and religious divisions, and is consequently quite specifically *unbounded.* (1996:5)

In contrast to the 'unbounded' and 'ambiguous' religiosity of pre-modern South Asia, scholars of diaspora such as Hinnells (1997) have argued that in contexts of modern migration especially processes of religions 'standardization' become more common and certain religious practices are either 'eroded' or 'lost'. Thus, the main aim of this study was to highlight the underlying dynamics of Mirpuri religiosity and to illustrate how these might have changed in the diaspora.

Despite the fact that it is generally acknowledged that a substantial number of 'Pakistanis' in Britain are in fact 'Mirpuris', none of the major studies of South Asian Muslims has thus far focused primarily on the religious life of this

community. A study exclusively devoted to the religious life of British Mirpuris is therefore long overdue. I have argued that the religious beliefs and practices characteristic of many Mirpuris can reasonably be described in terms of 'devotional Islam'. 'Devotional Islam' here reflects a belief in the power of the Prophet and *pirs* as intercessors with God and the practice of certain rituals which provide access to this sacred power. The central argument of this thesis has been that, in diaspora, Mirpuris have had a greater exposure to modern 'neo orthodoxy' in the form of the Barelwi modern reform movement. However, in many ways, the religiosity of Mirpuris in Britain today, and in particular their ways of following forms of 'devotional Islam', is much more pluralised than I had originally anticipated.

Chapter One established that 'devotional Islam' has been rather invisible in the academic literature on Muslims in Britain until relatively recently. Early studies on South Asian Muslims, (Dahya 1970; Saifullah 1974; Anwar 1979) were not concerned with religion per se. The Religious Studies tradition (Barton 1986; Lewis 1994; Geaves 1996; 2000), gave much needed recognition to religion in the lives of British South Asian Muslims. Lewis' (1994) study showed the first major sign of recognition of devotional Islam in the lives of Pakistani migrants in Britain. Geaves (1996; 2000) provided useful ethnography and the first full study specifically devoted to Sufis in Britain. However, anthropologists have also contributed immensely to the study of devotional Islam in the UK diaspora. Werbner (1990; 1996; 1998; 2001; 2003) is in many respects key in this regard although Ballard (1983; 1991; 1994; 2006), who has the most longstanding interest in Mirpuris in Britain, has in recent times also turned his attention to religion.

Chapter Two suggests that the study of Mirpuri devotion needs to be located in both 'universal' and 'local' contexts from the wider mystical tradition of Islam to the more particular South Asian Muslim tradition and specifically to developments in the Panjab. Indeed, the cosmology of Mirpuri religiosity is closely linked to that of the three most prominent Sufi orders to become established in India: the Chishtiyya, Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya. The 'intoxicated' Chishtiyya, for example, transmitted Shaykh Ibn Arabi's doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* to the illiterate masses through the medium of Farsi-Urdu and Panjabi poetry and music. Similarly, one of the foremost 'intoxicated' Qadiriyya Panjabi Sufi poets of the eighteenth century, Bulleh Shah, was also a great advocate of Shaykh Ibn Arabi's concept of *wahdat al-wujud*. However, despite their popular appeal to the masses, none of the Chishtiyya's devotional practices had the whole hearted support of the *ulama* who deemed *wahdat al-wujud* as contrary to the *shari'ah*. The 'sober' Naqshbandiyya, by contrast, produced famous Sufi reformers such as Shaykh Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah who most influenced the neo-orthodox reform movements of the nineteenth century.

The Ahl-i Sunnat movement, commonly known as 'the Barelwis', came to the 'defence' of the Sufi orders and their associated rituals. However, there is underlying tension between the Barelwis and the Sufis in the sense that the former's founder, Mawlana Riza, was primarily a scholar and ultimately concerned with a (modern) (re)construction of the certainties of religious boundaries that Sufis have sought to transcend.

Despite the critique by reformist-Sufi and anti-Sufis scholars and movements, undoubtedly the *kismetic* dimension of religion (Ballard 1996) still holds great appeal for the masses. In this regard, Chapter Three is an original account of the Qadiriyya-Qalandariyya tradition associated with Kharri Sharif shrine in Mirpur. It draws upon the translation into English of Urdu and Panjabi literature as well as participant observation and interviews both in Mirpur and the UK. Mirpuri religiosity was described in some detail in an account of visitation at the shrine of the patron saint of the Mirpuris, Pira Shah Ghazi Qalandar. According to the Qalandariyya, without *ishq* (passionate love), conformity to religious laws and rituals has no meaning. However, notably, Pira Shah's devotee, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, who composed the famous Sufi epic poem, *Saif al-Muluk*, produced no successor. Against this context, in post-Partition Mirpur, the Barelwi *ulama* gradually began to gain greater influence. Both Mian Muhammad Bakhsh and Mawlana Riza belonged to the Qadiriyya order. However, whilst Mian Muhammad Bakhsh advocated a policy of 'peace with all', Mawlana Riza and the Barelwis reflected a nineteenth century neo-orthodoxy that was much less tolerant of Muslim 'Others'. For various reasons, the latter ideology was given a further lease of life in the Mirpuri diaspora that was beginning to establish itself in the UK.

In Chapter Four it was argued that Barton's (1986) observation, that there was a lack of religious activity amongst early Muslim (Bengali) migrants to Britain, holds true to a degree for the Mirpuris. During the 1960s, the religious life of migrants was confined to their homes and thus 'invisible' to outsiders. However, those with a tradition of religious learning -'big' and 'little' 'sober' *pirs* such as Pir Maruf and Pir Ji not only maintained their own religious obligations but also began to

'educate' other, less devout and less literate, Muslims in towns such as Bradford and Bury. Therefore, in diaspora, the 'religiosity' of migrants was 'transformed' with some religious practices 'lost' and others 'gained'. Despite their continuing transnational connections with Kharri Sharif, in Britain, many Mirpuri migrants have 'lost' something of the 'intoxicated' Qalandariyya tradition. This is partly due to the modern urban setting but partly due, too, to the shift in emphasis from shrine to mosque. As a result, the attitudes of mystics such as Mian Muhammad Bakhsh are being replaced by the sectarian neo-orthodox attitudes of Mawlana Riza especially amongst the younger generations with little access to the tradition of popular Panjabi Sufi poetry. This has also led to the popularity in Britain of 'sober' orders such as the Naqshbandiyya, which were less popular than the Qalandariyya in Mirpur.

Chapter Five examines some manifestations of 'Barelwism' in Lancashire and the role of the mosque and *imams* in reproducing sectarian attitudes and devotional practices such as *milad sharif*, *giyarvin sharif*, *urs*, *dhikr* and *khatam al-khawajgan*. There is widespread criticism of 'imported' *imams* in Britain and, in many ways, the Barelwi tradition is least well adapted to the needs of British-born youth. While, in Barelwi mosques at present, it is often part-time teachers who are most active in making such changes on an ad hoc basis, it was also argued that it is important to consider the demands on the *imam* in Britain against his much more limited role in Pakistan. The continuing 'Pakistan-orientation' of Barelwis in Britain was underlined in a case study of DI, a Barelwi movement which seeks to bring the youth back to devotional Islam but has limited appeal.

Chapter Six shows that the debate between 'Sufis' and 'anti-Sufis' has taken place in Muslim countries for centuries and is now taking place amongst the youth in Britain. The Barelwi *imams*' shortcomings have been made evident in their unsuccessful attempt to 'defend' devotional Islam from the attacks of groups such as Hizb al-Tahrir and Jama'at-i Islami. Even what I have called post-Barelwi inspired 'modern' movements like MQ, which present a broader view of devotional Islam than Barelwism per se, has not made the same impact on the youth as its anti-Sufi rivals. This has led British Asian Muslim youth to look beyond Pakistani and Kashmiri circles in search of spiritual guidance in the modern age. For example, the universal Sufi message of Turkish Cypriot Shaykh Nazim's has made a deep impression on some Mirpuri and other Muslim Asian heritage youth in Lancashire. At the same time, despite all the social, educational, cultural and linguistic differences between the *babas* and *kakas* of Mirpuri heritage in Britain, veneration for the Prophet, *pirs* and *sayyids* is still widespread. Moreover, the youth continue to turn to *kismetic* religion to alleviate their problems on a 'needs' basis.

In summary, the Mirpuri community in Britain has been heavily exposed to the rapid processes of social change. Traditional Mirpuri religiosity was 'enchanted' and 'mystical'. However, due to the onset of a rationalising modernity, and accelerated by globalisation, in a diasporic context especially, reformist 'neo-orthodox' ideas about religion seem to be in the ascendancy. Religion in the modern West is generally conceived as something that is 'sober', highly organised and generally more 'Protestant'. Indeed, a concern for the maintenance of strict religious boundaries has come to characterise something of a 'dominant discourse' about religion amongst Muslims in Britain. Moreover, the contemporary global

political setting tends to create more boundaries than it builds bridges. The colonial crisis of the British Raj is replaced with a generalised 'clash of civilisations'.

Arguably Mirpuris are now more exposed to neo-orthodox views due to both education and wealth. There is an element of social mobility as people move from a rural to an urban setting, people who were illiterate are now educated. However, all such Mirpuri Muslims have not been made 'Barelwis'. Despite, their prevalence in the literature, most ordinary Muslims still do not use reformist labels to define their religiosity. One can be exposed to a dominant discourse, a sectarian environment, without it necessarily resulting in conformity. Despite the attempts of the 'reformist-Sufis' and 'anti'-Sufis to distance youth from the devotional and *kismetic* religion of their ancestors, and despite *imams* and mosques' efforts to 'Barelwi-cise' Mirpuri youth in the sectarian image of Mawlana Riza, my research suggests that 'devotional Islam' is still, and even increasingly, a plural and diverse tradition that is being further transformed in the modern British context, a process that is likely to continue in future generations.

Finally, it must be stated that this study raises many new questions and certainly more than I can answer here. For example, the work I have begun could pave the way for further studies of the relationships between i) *pirs* and their associated institutions and rituals (*urs*, *qawwali*, *mazars*, *giyarvin sharif*, *dhikr*, *khatam al-khawajgan*, *milad sharif*, *ziyarah*), ii) the *ulama*, *imams* and their associated institutions and rituals (such as mosques) and iii) 'ordinary Muslims' with multiple identities and social positions - *babas*, *kakas* and women. Indeed, a study of Mirpuri women, their relationships to *pirs* and *imams*/mosques, and their role in the

reproduction of devotional Islam in Britain, would be very interesting indeed. Religious activities performed by Mirpuri women such as *mu'jiza bibi Fatima* (the Miracle of Lady Fatima), *durud tanjina* (Salutation of Salvation), *ayat-i karima* (the Nobel Verse), and *nur-nama* (the Story of Light) are all worthy of investigation. At the same time, my thesis is a localised time-bound study of Mirpuris in Lancashire and it would be interesting for others to conduct similar studies of the Mirpuri diaspora in other UK towns, five, ten, fifteen and twenty years hence.

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Glossary

Abbreviations

A* Arabic
F* Farsi
H* Hindi
P* Panjabi
U* Urdu

Term	Language	Meaning
Aba Ji	(U)	Father
Abd al-Mustafa	(A)	Slave of the 'Chosen One'
Abd al-Nabi	(A)	Slave of the Prophet
Adab	(A)	Etiquette
Adhan	(A)	Call to prayer
Ahl-i ishq	(F)	People of Love
Ahl-i Marzi wa al-Jama'at	(U)	People who follow their desires
Ahl-i Sunnat wa al-Jama'at	(A)	The People of the (Prophetic) Tradition and the Community
Ahwal	(A)	States
Ala Hadrat	(A)	'His High Eminence': Title given to Ahmad Riza
Ali Bakhsh	(F)	Gift of Ali
Al-haqiqa al-muhammadiyya	(A)	Muhammadan Reality
Al-Insan al-kamil	(A)	Perfect man
Al-kamil al-tammam	(A)	Complete perfect one
Alim	(A)	Scholar
Amir	(A)	Leader
Amir-i Ahl-i Sunnat	(U)	Leader of the *Ahl-i Sunnat*
Ammi Ji	(U)	Mother
Ana al-Haqq	(A)	'I am the Truth'
Anjuman Tulaba-i Islam	(U)	Organisation of Muslim Students
Aqa'id	(A)	Articles of Faith
Arus	(A)	Bride
Ashiq al-Rasul	(A)	Lover of the Prophet
Awliya	(A)	Saints
Awrad	(A)	Daily Litanies
Ayahs	(A)	Qur'anic verses
Ayat-i Karima	(F)	The Noble Verse
Baba	(H)	'Old man': early migrant

Badi al-Jamal	(A)	Extremely Beautiful
Badmash	(U)	Thug
Bahai	(U)	Brother
Ba-hosh	(P)	Sober
Bai Ji	(P)	Mother
Ba'iya	(A)	Oath taking
Baradari	(U)	Extended family
Barakah	(A)	Benediction/ blessing
Bashr	(A)	Human
Ba-shar	(F)	In compliance with the *shari'ah*
Beta	(U)	Son
Bid'a	(A)	Innovation
Bihishti darwaza	(U)	Heaven's Gate
Bismillah	(A)	In the Name of God
Bi-shar	(F)	Not in compliance with the *shari'ah*
Bhut	(H)	Poltergeist
Chacha	(U)	Uncle
Chanda	(U)	Donation
Chilla	(F)	Spiritual retreat
Churails	(H)	Witches
Dal roti	(H)	Lentils and Chapatti
Dam	(F)	Breath/blow
Dammari	(P)	Offering made at Pira Shah's shrine
Darbar	(F)	Court-Shrine
Dargah	(F)	Sufi shrine
Dar al-Ulum	(A)	Colleges
Daruriyat al-Din	(A)	Fundamentals of faith
Dawah	(A)	Inviting people to Islam
Dawat-i Islami	(U)	Call to Islam
Dhobi	(H)	Laundryman
Din	(A)	Religion
Dua	(A)	Supplication
Dua Qanut	(A)	Supplication in Night prayer
Dum shuda pani	(F)	Blessed water
Dunya	(A)	World
Durud Sharif	(F)	Salutations on the Prophet
Faqir	(A)	'Poor':Mystic
Farsi	(F)	Persian
Fatawa	(A)	Legal Rulings by a qualified scholar
Fatiha	(A)	Opening chapter of the Qur'an
Fiqh	(A)	Jurisprudence
Fitna	(A)	Discord

Fuqaha	(A)	Jurists
Gharib Nawaz	(H)	Patron of the Poor
Ghawth al-Azam	(A)	Great Helper
Ghilaf	(A)	Cover
Giyarvin Sharif	(H)	Monthly gathering
Gujjar	(H)	Farming caste
Gustakh-i Rasul	(F)	Insolent towards the Prophet
Hadith	(A)	Tradition of the Prophet
Hajj	(A)	Pilgrimage
Hal	(A)	Ecstasy
Hama ust	(F)	'All is He'
Haram	(A)	Unlawful
Har Nathu Khyra	(P)	Every Tom, Dick and Harry
Hazar o Nazar	(F)	To be spiritually and physically present
Hijab	(A)	Veil
Hizb al-Tahrir	(A)	Liberation Party
Hujra	(A)	Chamber
Husayn Bakhsh	(F)	Gift of Husayn
Ijtihad	(A)	Independent interpretation
Ikhlas	(A)	Sincerity
Ilm	(A)	Knowledge
Isale-i sawab	(F)	Merit
Ishq	(A)	Love
Jadu	(F)	Black magic
Jahil	(A)	Ignorant
Jalsa	(A)	Gathering
Jami'at-i Hassan	(F)	Group of Hassan
Jami'at al-Muslimin	(A)	Organisation of Muslims
Jihad	(A)	Holy War
Juma	(A)	Friday prayer
Kafir	(A)	Disbeliever
Kalima	(A)	Islamic Creed
Kammis	(H)	Low-caste
Khanqah	(F)	Sufi retreats
Khatam	(A)	Conclusion: Prayer for the deceased
Khatam-al Ghawthiyya	(A)	Conclusion of the Qadiriyya
Khatam-al Khawajgan	(A)	Conclusion of the Masters
Khatam-i Qur'an	(U)	Completion of the Qur'an
Khidmat	(A)	Service
Khutba	(A)	Sermon
Kuffar	(A)	Disbelievers
Kufr	(A)	Disbelief

Langar	(H)	Food offered at shrines
Madrasah	(A)	Religious School
Madinah Nagar	(H)	Madinah Town
Madri Mazhab	(U)	Mother Faith
Mahbub-i Ilahi	(F)	Beloved of the God
Majdhub	(A)	Attracted to God
Maktubat	(A)	Letters
Manat	(H)	Vow
Maqamat	(A)	Stations
Mari'fat	(A)	Gnosis
Mashata	(A)	Bride-dresser
Mashriq	(A)	East
Maslak	(A)	Creed/Way
Mast	(F)	Intoxicated
Mawlana	(A)	Our master
Mazars	(A)	Shrines
Mela	(H)	Fair
Milad Sharif	(F)	Birthday of the Prophet
Minhaj al-Qur'an	(A)	Way of the Qur'an
Miraj Sharif	(F)	Ascension of the Prophet
Muharram	(A)	First Islamic month
Mujaddid	(A)	Renewer
Mujaddid-i Alf-i Thani	(A)	Renewer of the second Millennium
Mullah	(F)	Cleric
Mu'min	(A)	Believer
Murid	(A)	Disciple
Murshid	(A)	Guide
Nafs	(A)	Ego
Nahlian Sharifian	(A)	Nobel Sandals
Namaz	(F)	Prayer
Na't khwn	(F)	Reciters of poetry in honour of the Prophet
Na't Sharif	(A)	Poetry sung in praise of the Prophet
Nazar	(A)	Glance
Nazar-i bad	(F)	Evil eye
Nikkama	(F)	Useless
Niyaz	(F)	Offering
Nur	(A)	Light
Nurnama	(F)	Story of Light
Nur al-Islam	(A)	Light of Islam
Para	(F)	A chapter of the Qur'an
Par'athy	(H)	Buttered Chapattis
Pardah	(F)	Veil

Pardes	(H)	Foreign land
Pulau	(F)	Rice with meat
Pir(s)	(F)	Sufi Saints
Qahwa	(A)	Black tea
Qa'id-i Inqilab	(F)	Leader of the Revival
Qal	(A)	Speech
Qalandari	(A)	A wandering mystic
Qasidat-al Burda	(A)	Poem of the Cloak
Qawwali	(A)	Devotional music
Qaza	(A)	Postponed/delayed
Qismet	(A)	Fortune
Rabi al-Awwal	(A)	Third Islamic month
Rahma	(A)	Mercy
Rajput	(H)	Land owning caste
Rak'ahs	(A)	Units of prayer
Rawda Sharif	(A)	The Prophet's grave
Risala	(A)	Pamphlet
Riza-i Mustafa	(F)	Pleasure of the Prophet
Roza	(F)	Fast
Ruh	(A)	Soul
Saday	(F)	Simple
Sanad	(A)	Diploma
Safa	(A)	Purity
Sajjadahnashin	(F)	Successor
Salam/salami	(F)	Visit
Sama	(A)	Devotional music
Serang	(F)	Engine room foreman
Shab-i-barat	(F)	Night of Salvation
Sha'ban	(A)	Eighth Islamic month
Shari'ah	(A)	Islamic law
Sharif	(A)	Respectable
Shaykh	(A)	Master
Shaykh al-Akbar	(A)	The Greatest Master
Shifa	(A)	Cure
Shirk	(A)	Polytheism
Silsilah	(A)	Chain of authorities
Suluk	(A)	Path
Sunnah	(A)	Practice of the Prophet
Tabarruk	(A)	Blessed offerings
Tabligh	(A)	Calling people to Islam
Tajdid	(A)	Renewal
Taqwa	(A)	Piety
Tariqah	(A)	Path
Tasawwuf	(A)	Sufism

Tawassul	(A)	Intercession
Turuq	(A)	Sufi Orders
Ulama	(A)	Scholars
Ummah	(A)	Nation
Umra	(A)	Lesser pilgrimage
Urs	(F)	Death anniversary of a Saint
Wahdat al-Shuhud	(A)	Unity of Witnessing
Wahdat al-Wujud	(A)	Unity of Being
Wasila	(A)	Means
Wazifa	(A)	Daily litany
Wilaya	(A)	Sainthood
Wird	(A)	Daily litany
Ya Sin	(A)	36th Sura of the Qur'an
Yazdum	(F)	Eleventh
Zakah	(A)	Alms
Zarda	(F)	Yellow sweet rice
Zat	(A)	Caste
Zawiya	(A)	Sufi Lodge
Ziyarah	(A)	Visit to a shrine

Respondents

	Name	Age	Gender	Profession	Location	Date
1	Sajida	39	Female	Housewife	Bury	15/03/1999
2	B. Dawud	73	Male	Mystic	Kharri Sharif	24/04/2000
3	Inayat	69	Male	Pensioner	Bury	12/11/2000
4	Akram	49	Male	Unemployed	Nelson	02/04/2000
5	S. Mazhar	49	Male	Official	Kharri Sharif	24/04/2000
6	A.Quddus	65	Male	Pensioner	Bury	10/09/2000
7	Hasan. M	70	Male	Farmer	Kotli	01/05/2001
8	Habiba	26	Female	Housewife	Mirpur	19/09/2001
9	M.Ilyas	47	Male	Businessman	Burnley	15/05/2000
10	Azad	38	Male	Tax Collector	Dadyal	11/05/2000
11	Sa'id	37	Male	Businessman	Bury	03/01/2001
12	H. N.Alam	83	Male	Pensioner	Bury	09/10/1999
13	M.Abid	46	Male	Clerk	Kharri Sharif	25/04/2000
14	Khalida	35	Female	Teacher	Mirpur	26/04/2000
15	N. Maqsud	70	Male	Pensioner	Bury	03/10/2000
16	U. Nawaz	53	Male	Worker	Bury	23/03/2000
17	S. Begum	67	Female	Housewife	Kharri Sharif	26/04/2000
18	M. Zulfiqar	29	Male	Cashier	Kharri Sharif	27/04/2000
19	Faruq	39	Male	Grocer	Salford	12/02/2001
20	B. Halim	79	Male	Pensioner	Rochdale	11/02/1999
21	M.Ishtiaq	32	Male	D.Officer	Burnley	23/03/1999
22	M. Sarwar	66	Male	Pensioner	Bury	24/05/1999
23	H. Khan	75	Male	Pensioner	Bury	06/07/1999
24	P.Husayn	69	Male	*Pir*	Bradford	12/12/2002
25	P.Siddiqi	67	Male	*Pir*	Bury	06/07/2003
26	A.Dad	77	Male	Pensioner	Cheetham	30/05/1999
27	Irfan	29	Male	S. Employed	Bury	13/02/2006
28	H.Qasim	69	Male	Caretaker	Birmingham	12/01/2001
29	Kabir	27	Male	Shop Owner	Birmingham	12/01/2001
30	Yunis	67	Male	Pensioner	Bury	25/01/2001
31	P.Qadiri	80	Male	*Kismetic Pir*	Bury	17/08/2002
32	S.Shah	50	Male	Taxi Driver	Luton	26/06/1999
33	S.Abid	50	Male	Unemployed	Bury	27/06/1999
34	S.Fatima	61	Female	Housewife	Bury	25/12/1999
35	S.Shah	30	Male	Teacher	Bury	29/12/1999
36	B.Faqira	68	Male	Pensioner	Rochdale	15/09/1999
37	H.Sahib	32	Male	*Pir*	Kotli	22/08/2002
38	N. Zubayr	27	Male	Lecturer	Panjab	25/08/2002
39	Nadia	24	Female	Student	Bury	29/05/2000
40	Tahir	29	Male	Shopkeeper	Bury	12/10/2000
41	A.Matlub	29	Male	Assistant	Bury	03/10/2000
42	B. Shah	28	Male	Manager	Bury	26/09/2001

43	Ilyas	36	Male	Director	Bury	24/09/2001
44	Barakat	20	Male	U-graduate	Bury	17/05/2001
45	Shaista	21	Female	Student	Rochdale	27/06/2001
46	Fiza	22	Female	Student	Bury	30/07/2001
47	J. al-Din	30	Male	C.S. Advisor	Radcliffe	07/10/2001
48	Z. Batul	27	Female	C.S. Advisor	Bury	21/09/2001
49	D. Namazi	72	Male	Pensioner	Preston	22/09/2001
50	Kamran	32	Male	C.S. Advisor	Bury	18/12/2001
51	Mufti	29	Male	C. S. Advisor	Bury	18/05/2000
52	Afzal	30	Male	Pharmacist	Bury	11/12/2000
53	Sabir	29	Male	Bus Driver	Bolton	13/03/1999
54	S. Amjid	32	Male	Head of IT	Bury	06/08/2002
55	Ayub	33	Male	Salesperson	Nelson	14/03/2002
56	Mubarak	39	Male	Secretary	Bolton	12/01/2003
57	H. Rizvi	60	Male	*Imam*	Bolton	30/03/2001
58	M.Kashmiri	56	Male	S. Employed	Salford	18/07/2002
59	F. Begum	25	Female	Housewife	Bury	03/03/2006
60	Mahfuz	26	Male	Manager	Bury	11/12/2000
61	Sikandar	33	Male	PC Analyst	Bury	15/08/2000
62	S. Mansur	43	Male	Politician	Kotli	15/03/2001
63	Samina	33	Female	DI activist	Bury	30/08/2004
64	Safina	28	Female	Housewife	Bury	14/01/2006
65	Zubayr	19	Male	Student	Bury	28/02/2002
66	S.Nazir	56	Male	*Imam*	Heywood	15/01/2001
67	Bashir	31	Male	Taxi Driver	Accrington	15/02/2002
68	B.Ali	63	Male	Unemployed	Heywood	2702/2002
69	T. Sayyid	21	Female	C.S. Advisor	Bury	06/04/2000
70	Ramzan	30	Male	*Imam*	Manchester	18/07/2000
71	Sagir	58	Male	J.P.	Bury	11/01/2001
72	Samandar	53	Male	*Imam*	Rochdale	16/08/2005
73	S. Gulzar	64	Male	*Kismetic Pir*	Prestwich	11/12/2005
74	Aqil	24	Male	Taxi Driver	Bury	15/12/2005
75	Nazia	25	Female	Nurse	Bury	10/02/2006
76	Habib	22	Male	Student	Manchester	17/01/2006
77	J. Akhtar	66	Male	Pensioner	Nelson	19/03/2000
78	Sirin	21	Male	Unemployed	Bury	01/02/2006
79	Karima	25	Female	PGCE	Bury	18/03/2006
80	Halima	23	Female	Housewife	Bury	12/03/2006
81	Zakiyah	25	Female	Student	Radcliffe	23/03/2006

NB Majority of the respondents granted me permission to identify them, however, for those respondents who were unhappy for me to use their real name, I have used a pseudonym.