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Inherited Charisma and Personal Qualities: Sayyids and religious reform in nineteenth century Multan

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Abstract

It has generally been acknowledged that Sayyids, through their real or imagined connection to the Prophet, have represented a key trans-regional dimension of Islam. In the Punjab, the status of the Ashraf has been reinforced by their role as custodians of the Sufi shrines. In the Multan region, Sayyids and Qureshis acted frequently as pir *and* sajjada nashin *for many Sufi* dargahs*. Their position, however, did not go unchallenged. The Chishti Nizami revival in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century saw the growth of an alternative religious network that competed with older families both religiously and socially. This process directly challenged the idea of inherited charisma and the established social hierarchy. Although reform movements are often considered to represent a shift towards a universal dimension of Islam, connected symbolically to Arabia and to the figure of the Prophet, the Chishti Nizami revival in Multan can be seen rather as a vernacularisation of Islamic authority. The movement favoured the social ascent of local tribes and non-Arab Ashraf families. The alliance between these groups would become a stable feature in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and contributed to the social status of Sayyid families being questioned.*

Keywords: Vernacularisation of Islamic authority; Ashraf families; Sayyid families; Qureshi social hierarchy in Islam

Introduction

One of the central concepts of Muslim societies has been that proximity to the Prophet, in a geographical, chronological or familial sense, corresponded to proximity to a model of perfection. This idea, which developed from the Quranic indication of Muhammad as a 'good example', has been variously expressed by Muslim intellectuals in different contexts.[1] Perhaps one of the best examples being the statement of Maulana Abd al-Razzaq of Farangi Mahall, quoted by Francis Robinson: "Our predecessors were better than we are, because

[1] "Surely there was a good example for you in the Messenger of Allah, for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much" (Quran 33:21).

they lived closer to the time of the Holy Prophet".[2] This sentence illustrates the basic nature of social hierarchy in Islam, which in some way contradicts the ideal equality of all believers. Over the centuries, Muslims have built social structures based on the idea that true or presumed descent from the Prophet, or from his Companions, was the basis for a high status. This has been particularly significant in non-Arab Muslim societies.

The literature on Islam in South Asia has devoted much attention to defining the nature of social stratification. Various authors have pointed out that hierarchy among the Muslims of India has been heavily influenced by colonial categories. In particular, it has been argued that during the nineteenth century there was a tendency for previously fluid social categories to become more rigid, a process in which genealogy received a much greater emphasis than other aspects connected to nobility, such as etiquette and education. For example, David Lelyveld has suggested that in South Asia *sharafat* (being noble) was more "a matter of cultural style associated with the heritage of the Mughal court, in dress, manners, aesthetics, and above all, language and literature" rather than simple ethnic categorisation.[3] With reference to Indian society more generally, Christophe Jaffrelot has observed that "British orientalism gave purely racial connotations to caste and linguistic groups in the nineteenth century".[4] Other scholars, while admitting that the colonial milieu affected the social stratifications in India, have argued in favour of a continuity between pre-colonial and modern categories. Analysing the popular perception of Pathan and Baluchi identities in north-west Pakistan, Paul Titus has minimised the relevance of the "internalisation of orientalist and colonialist notions", arguing instead that the British "adapted and reified" essentialist categories that were already current in South Asia.[5]

The impact of the colonial conceptions must not be overestimated. It is important to emphasise that well before the Western impact there had been a tendency in Islamic societies to build social hierarchies based on the idea of religious 'purity'. With the expansion of the Caliphate beyond the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, and the gradual Islamisation of non-Muslim populations, there emerged among recent converts social distinctions based on the antiquity of conversion. Perhaps one of the best-known cases is that of the Persian clients—or *mawali*—under the Abbasid Caliphate. The *mawali* often assumed the ethnic name of their patrons in order to attain a position equal to the Arabs.[6] A further classic case is the Islamisation of the Afghan Pashtuns, whose mythical ancestor Qays (Abd ar Rashid), according to local tradition, accepted Islam directly from the hands of the Prophet. This narrative indicates the process through which a non-Arab Muslim community—while

[2]F. Robinson, 'The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and their Adab', in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, (ed.) B. Metcalf (Berkeley, 1984), p. 152.

[3]D. Lelyveld, 'ashraf' in *Keywords in South Asian Studies*, (ed.) R. Dwyer (School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 2005) https://www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/keywords/file24799.pdf, p. 5 (accessed May 2019); see also D. Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Oxford, 1978), Chapter II.

[4]C. Jaffrelot, 'Sanskritization vs. Ethnicization in India: Changing Identities and Caste Politics before Mandal', *Asian Survey* 40, 5 (2000), p. 759.

[5]P. Titus, 'Honor the Baluch, Buy the Pashtun: Stereotypes, Social Organization and History in Western Pakistan', *Modern Asian Studies* 32, 3 (1998), p. 658.

[6]R. W. Bulliet, 'Conversion to Islam and the Emergence of a Muslim Society in Iran', in *Conversion to Islam*, (ed.) N. Levtzion (New York, 1979), pp. 32–33; E. Urban, 'The Foundation of Islamic Society as Expressed by the Qur'anic Term mawla', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 15, 1 (2013), pp. 23–45.

not claiming a Sayyid or Shaikh origin—built its own special relationship with the Prophet in order to claim a higher social status.[7]

The relation between nobility and holy descent may also explain the centrality in Islamic culture of genealogical records and biographies. This tradition is represented primarily by the classical genre of *tazkirah*. This collective biography would typically record a person's ancestors, and, in the case of scholars, his teachers and pupils.[8] The recollection of an individual's biography and education was a way to establish and maintain a person-to-person system for the transmission of knowledge.[9] In a similar manner, the biographical historiography or *tarikh* emerged among *hadith* scholars with the aim of studying the reliability of the chains of authority.[10] There is, therefore, a connection in Islamic contexts between recording past lives so as to establish religious authority and building genealogies for improving one's own social position.

In South Asia the phenomenon of constructing a noble past has been frequently termed 'ashrafisation'.[11] While the process of sanskritisation in Hindu society has been the object of detailed studies, the analogous phenomenon among Indian Muslims has attracted less attention from scholars. However, while the classical definition of sanskritisation has placed emphasis on the imitation by lower castes of the ritual of the higher castes, ashrafisation involves two possible, though not mutually exclusive, models: the construction of genealogies and imitating the customs of the Ashraf.[12] Either way, the available evidence suggests that ashrafisation may have been significantly widespread in the subcontinent, albeit with wide geographical variations.[13] For example, in Bengal the high difference in the numbers of Ashraf recorded by the British Census between 1872 and 1901 points to an ongoing 'invention of tradition'.[14] In western Punjab the phenomenon seemed to have had a lesser impact. In the Multan region—which constitutes the focus of this article—according to the 1901 Census the Ashraf constituted 5.8 per cent of the total population and the Sayyids only 2 per cent.[15] This fact obviously cannot lead us to exclude the possibility that the dynamics of ashrafisation were still present in the region. Indeed, the British compiler of the Gazetteer for 1901–2 observed that while many Sayyid families were "held in considerable reverence by the people who… look up to them as pirs [Sufi saints]", others were "of comparatively obscure position", concluding that it was "impossible to say how many of the persons claiming to be Syad [could] establish their descent".[16]

[7] O. Caroe, *The Pathans* (London, 1958), pp. 7–8.

[8] F. Robinson, 'Technology and Religious Change. Islam and the Impact of Print', *Modern Asian Studies* 27, 1 (1993), p. 238.

[9] *Ibid*., pp. 237–239.

[10] G. Makdisi, 'The Diary in Islamic Historiography: Some Notes', *History and Theory* 25, 2 (1986), pp. 179–181.

[11] The term has been introduced by Cora Vreed-de Steuers, *Parda. A Study of Muslim Women's Life in Northern India* (Assen, 1968); see also B. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India. Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton, 1982), p. 256. The process is exemplified by the famous proverb: "The first year I was a butcher, the next a Shaikh; this year, if the prices fall, I shall become a Sayyid", quoted in E. A. H. Blunt, *The Caste System of Northern India* (London, 1931), p. 184.

[12] M. Boivin, *Le Pakistan et l'Islam: Anthropologie d'une république islamique* (Paris, 2015), p. 121.

[13] See, for example, M. N. Srinivas, 'The Dominant Caste in Ranpura', *American Anthropologist* 61, 1 (1959), pp. 1–16; L. Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus. The Caste System and its Implications* (Chicago, 1970), pp. 192ff. See also Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, p. 256.

[14] Lelyveld, 'ashraf', p. 6.

[15] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II, Punjab (Calcutta, 1908), pp. 229–230 (henceforth *IGI*); E. D. Maclagan, *Gazetteer of the Multan District 1901–02* (Lahore, 1902), pp. 126–129 (henceforth *MDG* 1901–02).

[16] *Ibid*., p. 128.

This article, therefore, first argues that the position of the Ashraf and especially of Sayyids in a specific locale depended on a variety of factors, among which were connections with the Muslim state and the position with regard to holy genealogies. In regions where the Ashraf were often linked to Muslim courts, such as in the Indo-Gangetic region, Sayyid-ness seemed to provide an appropriate space for etiquette and education. In more peripheral regions as the Punjab, and in particular in the southern and western areas of the province that had never been fully integrated into the distant Muslim state, social hierarchy instead came to depend much more on family descent and inherited charisma than on behaviour. In this environment, Sayyid-ness rested much less on manner, education and behaviour than on descent and lineage.[17]

Second, this article underlines that the emergence of new concepts of correct religious practice, from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century onwards, together with the expansion to the Punjab of reform movements originating in the Indo-Gangetic area, shifted the emphasis from descent to personal behaviour. The reference here is to the critique of Punjabi popular religious life offered by the reform movements, especially the Chishti Nizami revival.[18] This process put pressure on the traditional idea of inherited charisma, as represented by the old-established Ashraf and Sayyid families of Multan, and challenged the established social hierarchy.

Sayyids and their environment

In Multan, as in much of western Punjab, Sayyid authority was connected not only to Prophetic genealogy but also to Sufi traditions. Sufism in Multan was represented by the high culture of 'orthodox' Sufi orders (*tariqah*) such as the Suhrawardiyya and the Qadiriyya, but also by a shared religious culture characterised by an interaction between Sunni and Shiʿi beliefs and also non-Muslim religious ideas. The Sayyids of Multan—together with other families belonging to the Ashraf—took part in this social and religious environment. This was certainly not unique to Multan: as Harjot Oberoi has demonstrated, in nineteenth-century rural Punjab more generally, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs participated in a folk religion made of shrines' festivals, pilgrimages to holy sites and beliefs in the supernatural.[19] Sayyids were an integral part of this religious milieu.

However, a peculiarity of popular Islam in Multan was the presence of a variety of Muslim ideas and practices beyond the Sunni, which derived from the nature of the processes of Islamisation taking place in the lower Indus Valley. From the tenth century, Multan had been influenced by Ismaili missionaries coming from Sindh, who established religious centres in the region. From the thirteenth century, Ismailism was represented in particular by the famous *pir* Shah Shams Sabzvari (1165–1276), who is credited with the expansion of the Ismaili faith further north towards Kashmir.[20] Due to the central importance given by

[17]For a discussion of the relevance of education and etiquette in Muslim culture, see especially Metcalf, *Moral Conduct and Authority*, and Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*.

[18]On the overall process, see K.W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (Cambridge, 1989).

[19]H. Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries. Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 139–148.

[20]S. Ansari, 'Sind', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IX (Leiden, 1997), p. 634; A. Bausani, *Islam in India: Tipologia di un contatto religioso* (Rome, 1973), p. 6. On Shah Shams Sabzwari, see H. Chand, *Tarikh-e-Multan* (Multan, 1884), p. 85;

Ismailism to devotion for the Prophet's family, its spread in the region created the ground for the particular reverence attributed by the population to those claiming an Arabic lineage and especially to Sayyids.[21] Many Sayyid families in western Punjab were Shiʿa, and Shiʿi elements were present in the symbology and architectural themes of various shrines of Muslim saints, especially in the fourteenth-century Suhrawardi *dargah* of Shah Rukn-i-Alam (d. 1335) as recently demonstrated by Hasan Ali Khan.[22] In the early twentieth century, the Census recorded the Ismaili Khoja community in Multan as one of the largest in the province together with those in Lahore and Montgomery.[23]

However, Sayyids were not the only holy families in the region. Religious authority in Multan was distributed among families claiming an Arabic lineage. Sayyids were connected with two main traditions: the Gilani Qadiri, centred on the *dargah* of Musa Pak Shahid Gilani (ca. 1534–92), and the descendants of Shah Yusuf Gardezi (d. 1136).[24] Apart from the Sayyids, Qureshis were the custodians of the *dargah*s of Bahauddin Zakariya (d. 1262) and Shah Rukn-i-'Alam (d. 1335). While both groups were highly revered, in social interactions the former emphasised their superior status through endogamy and *baradari* (patrilineage network) relations. They did not give their daughters in marriage to other members of the Ashraf, but only to Sayyid families of the region.[25] In the early twentieth century, marriage alliances existed with other Sayyid families of Jalalpur Pirwala and Sher Shah, to the west of Multan. The Qureshis would give their daughters in marriage to Sayyids, thus symbolically accepting the latter's higher social position.[26]

Among the upper level of Muslim society, other Ashraf groups were represented by a stable Afghan presence that was connected to the ancient trade route that passed through Multan. A well-rooted community of Pathans had migrated to the region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries following the various waves of invasions of north-west India. Moreover, the Baluchi community could trace back its local presence to the mid-fourteenth century and was connected to the long-term interaction between Baluchistan, the Derajat and the Indus Valley.[27] At the other end of social spectrum were the Ajlaf (lowborn Muslims) mostly belonging to Jats and Rajputs converted to Islam as well as to lower castes of artisans and workers.[28]

The climate of the region, being extremely dry and arid, meant that ecological realities, especially the course of the rivers and the availability of water, were crucial factors

F. Multani, *Awliya-e-Multan* (Multan, 1980), pp. 189–193; H. Ali Khan, *Constructing Islam on the Indus. The Material History of the Suhrawardi Sufi Order, 1200–1500 AD* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 58–95.

[21]M. Gaborieau, 'Les ordres mystiques dans le sous-continent indien: Un point de vue ethnologique', in *Les ordres mystiques dans l'Islam. Cheminement et situation actuelle*, (eds.) A. Popovic and G. Veinstein (Paris, 1990), p. 106.

[22]H. Ali Khan, *Constructing Islam on the Indus*, pp. 169–241. One of the most important Shiʿi Sayyid families of Multan is the Gardezi. On this family see Chand, *Tarikh-e-Multan*, pp. 72–74; S. A. H. Gardezi, *Tarikh-e-Multan* (Multan, 1990), pp. 49ff; E. D. Maclagan, *Gazetteer of the Multan District 1923–24* (Lahore, 1926), pp. 107–108 (henceforth *MDG* 1923–24); L. H. Griffin and C. F. Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol. II (Lahore, 1910), pp. 313–316.

[23]*IGI*, p. 744.

[24]Shah Gardezi was apparently not connected to any Sufi lineage and in the late nineteenth century the shrine had a mainly Shiʿi following. Chand, *Tarikh-e-Multan*, pp. 72–83; S. Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sind, 1843–1947* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 17–20; Multani, *Awliya-e-Multan*, pp. 29–47, 81–86, 97–102.

[25]*MDG* 1901–02, pp. 128–132.

[26]*Ibid*., pp. 94–98.

[27]R. Maclagan, 'Fragments of the history of Mooltan, the Derajat, and Buhawulpoor, from Persian MSS', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* II, 17 (1848), pp. 559–560.

[28]*MDG* 1901–1902, pp. 133–141.

influencing the geographical distribution of the population. In the Bari Doab, where the region was located, most of the villages were situated in the riverain (*hithar*), while the arid (*bar*) lands at the centre of the *doab*s were mainly uncultivated. Until the introduction of large-scale irrigation, the *bar* was mainly inhabited by nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoral communities. Many tribes of Sindhi origin, for instance, had settled in south-western Punjab in the nineteenth century. Some of them had founded the riverain villages while others still lived in the *bar* lands. Although they had converted to Islam, they had not totally abandoned pastoralism and nomadism. Therefore, in Multan the difference between riverain and highlands corresponded largely to a distinction between settled and nomadic worlds.[29]

While the older methods of artificial irrigation were put in place in the sixteenth century, and later improved in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, this did not make cultivation the favoured economic strategy for most of the population of the region. Rather, a combination of cultivation and pastoralism was the predominant lifestyle. In the British colonial period, it was not unusual to hear complaints by the British that the people of Multan were "in general…but poor cultivators: their hearts are still given to their cattle rather than to their crops".[30] The maintenance of animals—generally goats and camels—was a constant feature even of the landed families of the region. In particular, this fact is indicated by the evidence of the tax-free grants of land used for pasture that were given by the different holders of power to the influential families of the region. Local Muslim shrines were, therefore, important centres of interaction between tribes and the sedentary population of the region.

In western Punjab, as observed by Richard Eaton, the interdependence between the settled and nomadic worlds was a basic condition underpinning the relevance of the Sufi shrines.[31] The interaction of pastoral tribes with the settled population was motivated by the need to exchange the products of pasturage and by participation in the religious life of *dargah*s. According to a late nineteenth-century source, there were more than fifty annual celebrations in the walled city and its surroundings.[32] The religious nature of such events frequently mixed with secular and commercial functions, as indicated by the fact that many of the celebrations specialised in the exchange of specific goods. The centrality of pastoral tribes explains the important trade of camels that took place at many of these festivals.[33] The connection between *dargah*s and the tribes of the region also entered the popular narrative and was absorbed in various ways by the local culture. It was symbolised by the traditions of conversion to Islam at the hands of the region's Sufi saints, or sometimes represented by oral narratives in which the saints themselves appeared as founders or purchasers of villages.[34]

[29]D. Gilmartin, *Blood and Water: The Indus River Basin in Modern History* (Oakland, 2015), pp. 27–32, 91–96; R. Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Baba Farid in Pakpattan, Punjab', in *Moral Conduct and Authority*, (ed.) Metcalf, pp. 341–345. See also D. Abenante, 'Islam, Irrigation and Religious Identity: Canal Colonies and Muslim Revivalism in Multan', in *Colonialism, Modernity and Religious Identity: Religious Reform Movements in South Asia*, (ed.) G. Beckerlegge (Oxford, 2008), pp. 53–56.

[30]H. W. Emerson, *Final Settlement Report of the Multan District* (Lahore, 1921), p. 2.

[31]Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority', pp. 333–356.

[32]Chand, *Tarikh-e-Multan*, pp. 513–514.

[33]*MDG* 1923–24, p. 139.

[34]Some of these narratives were gathered by the British authorities during the preparation for the district gazetteers (see E. Maclagan, 'Notes on Village Names and History', ca. 1900, manuscript, District Records Room, Multan).

While the role of Muslim shrines was one of mediation in a highly mobile environment, it was also connected to the commercial life of the region. The city of Multan was located near one of the oldest trade routes from Kandahar to Delhi.[35] Mid seventeenth-century sources describe Multan as a major economic centre in the Punjab, and the important role played by its merchants in trade between India and West Asia. The dynamism of merchants coming from the city was such that the word 'Multani' became synonymous for 'trader' in market towns stretching from Persia to north India.[36] According to nineteenth-century sources, the Afghan trading community was a particularly viable presence in the city. They tended to reside there for part of the year, returning to their homes at the end of each commercial season.[37] Just as semi-nomadic Afghan tribes had established connections with the city's *dargah*s, so too the tomb of Musa Pak Shahid Gilani was known for its large following of Pathans.[38] From the above description, we may infer that the primary role of Sayyids in Multan lay in their ability to provide spaces of interaction for a still largely mobile society, and to integrate it within an Islamic framework. Some of the families involved were more able to do this due to their pan-Islamic connections. This was true especially for the Gilanis who had family links with the descendants of Abdul Qadir Gilani in Baghdad.[39]

Another important aspect was the location of Multan in relation to centres of Muslim power in the subcontinent. Although the city had been a provincial capital under the Delhi Sultanate after 1228 and that of a Mughal *subah* (province) from 1528, it always had enjoyed substantial autonomy from Delhi, being generally governed by local dynasties.[40] Multan was thus never fully integrated in the political system of Muslim India. Rather it was a frontier region between different worlds: Afghan, Punjabi, Sindhi and Baluchi. It was also open to invasions from Afghanistan, Persia and Central Asia.[41] As in the case of the *pir*s of Sindh studied by Sarah Ansari, the social position of Ashraf families of Multan has to be analysed in the context of a highly volatile environment. In order to survive they had to build their own semi-autonomous structures of authority that combined religious charisma with political influence and economic resources.[42] This circumstance together with the great influence of the shrines' custodians explains the policy followed by Muslim rulers to grant *jagir* lands and other financial concessions to many of these Sayyid and Qureshi families.

[35]W. P. Andrew, *The Indus and Its Provinces. Their Political and Commercial Importance Considered in Connexion with improved means of communication* (Karachi, 1986; First edition 1858), pp. 145–148.

[36]E. D. Maclagan, 'The travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique in the Panjab, 1641', Chapter LXVII, *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society* 1, 2 (Lahore, 1912), p. 151; see also J. B. Tavernier, *Travels in India*, translated from the 1676 French edition by V. Ball, vol. 1 (London, 1976; First edition 1889), pp. 90–91; C. A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian society in the age of British expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 160.

[37]Andrew, *The Indus and Its Provinces*, p. 148.

[38]Chand, *Tarikh-e-Multan*, pp. 82–83.

[39]*Ibid.*

[40]During the reign of Akbar the *subah* of Multan extended into southern Punjab, part of Baluchistan and northern Sindh. See A. F. Allami, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III (Calcutta, 1939), p. 329; H. F. Dasti, *Multan: A Province of the Mughal Empire (1525–1571)* (Karachi, 1998), pp. 83–84; A. M. K. Durrani, *History of Multan (From the Early Period to 1849 A.D.)* (Lahore, 1991), pp. 41–47.

[41]*Ibid.*

[42]Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power*, pp. 29–35; see also C. Liebeskind, *Piety on its Knees. Three Sufi Traditions in South Asia in Modern Times* (Delhi, 1998), p. 273.

The earliest evidence being the grants in land obtained by the Gardezis during the Delhi Sultanate, and those of the Gilanis under Mughal rule.[43]

Unlike other areas of northern India where "adherence to the 'great tradition' of Islam was…a mark of being *ashraf*",[44] Muslim elites in Multan were seen mainly as the representatives of a popular religious culture centred on mediation and spiritual intercession. This context, however, partially changed with the expansion from the Delhi region to the Punjab of the Chishti Nizami revival from the late eighteenth century.

Sayyids and religious reform: the Chishti Nizami revival

The Chishti Nizami revival is generally viewed as a religious response to the decline of Muslim political authority in northern India.[45] Its aim was to purify popular religious practices and to elaborate a devotion that combined spiritual teaching with the centrality of the *shari'a*. In Multan, the movement was represented mainly by Hafiz Muhammad Jamal (1746?-1811), a disciple of Khwaja Nur Muhammad Maharvi (d. 1790). Maharvi was himself a disciple of Shah Fakhruddin of Delhi (d. 1784), and one of the founders of the revival of the Chishtiyya order. Khwaja Maharvi and his *khalifa*s (chief followers or deputies) were responsible for the diffusion of the movement towards the Punjab. Besides Hafiz Jamal, Shah Muhammad Suleiman of Taunsa (d. 1850) and Khwaja Muhammad Aqil (d. 1813) of Chachran established other *khanqah*s (centres where Sufis gather) in the Lower Indus Valley.[46] These *khanqah*s were aimed to spread a reformist Sufi vision in an area where the process of Islamisation had been previously influenced by older Sufi traditions, as the Suhrawardiyya and the Chishtiyya Sabriyya. It is to these older traditions that many of the tribes of the area connected their conversion to Islam, especially to Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariya and to Baba Farid of Pakpattan.[47]

The difficulty of establishing a new order in a region where the religious space was already occupied by old established Sufi orders, deeply rooted in the social environment, emerges clearly from the biographies of Hafiz Jamal. This point might be important to explain a certain attitude of tolerance by reformist saints towards local religious life. According to the tradition, Khwaja Maharvi himself was questioned by some of his disciples about the decision to establish the order in an area where the Suhrawardiyya was so influential. To this, the Khwaja is reported to have replied that, until then, the Suhrawardiyya may have been the most important order, but now the Chishtiyya was going to be influential as well.[48]

[43]Gardezi, *Tarikh-e-Multan*, p. 376; 'Copies of certificates and testimonials of Makhdum Pir Sayed Mohammad Sadruddin Shah Gilani and his ancestors' (n.d., Gilani Library, Multan).

[44]Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, p. 256.

[45]K. A. Nizami, 'Chishtiya', *Encyclopaedia of Islam* XX (Leiden, 1997), pp. 51–57; M. Zameeruddin Siddiqui, 'The resurgence of the Chishti silsilah in the Punjab during the eighteenth century', *Indian History Congress*, proceedings of the thirty-second session (New Delhi, 1971), pp. 408–412; D. Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (Berkeley, 1988); T. Kamran and A. K. Shahid, 'Shari'a, Shi'as and Chishtiya Revivalism: Contextualising the Growth of Sectarianism in the Tradition of the Sialvi Saints of the Punjab', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, 3 (2014), pp. 481–482.

[46]Siddiqui, 'The resurgence of the Chishti silsilah', pp. 408–412; on the spread of the Chishti Nizami order in the Multan region, see also C. Shackle, *Nur-e-Jamal* (Multan, 1984), pp. 8–12; C. Shackle, *The Teachings of Khwaja Farid* (Multan, 1978), pp. 4–14.

[47]R. Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Baba Farid in Pakpattan, Panjab', in *Moral Conduct and Authority*, (ed.) Metcalf, pp. 333–356.

[48]M. S. Jamali, *Zuhur-e-Jamal* (Multan, n.d.), pp. 36–37.

Among others, Hafiz Jamal was one of the *khalifa*s chosen by the *shaikh* for the task of spreading the Chishti message in the region. The fact that Jamal was a native of Multan, and belonged to a local Muslim tribe, does not seem to be irrelevant as regards this decision.

Hafiz Jamal was born in Multan from a family belonging to the Awan tribe, a group originally from the Salt Range claiming Arab descent, but probably having its roots in a Hindu tribe converted to Islam. According to some accounts, in the early years of the twentieth century Muslim Awans still retained some Hindu customs.[49] Although the sources on Jamal's early life and family are scanty, his ancestors are said to have held positions of influence in the local Mughal administration.[50] However, this claim seems difficult to support in the light of the overall history of the Awans. The tribe—according to colonial reconstructions—did not have a high social status outside their heartland in the Salt Range. Jamal's family had probably a connection with land as small *zamindar*. However, it is interesting to note that his tribe usually did not intermarry with other tribes, except for with Sayyids, a fact that suggests that it was trying to attain a higher social status.[51]

The revival of the Chishtiyya order was not a purely religious phenomenon. It was also connected to other economic and political changes as the extension of irrigation into the Bari Doab, and the establishment in the area of a further wave of Pathan and Baluchi clans.[52] The new political scene created by the crisis of Mughal power and the annexation of the Punjab by the king of Kabul Ahmad Shah Durrani, who occupied southern Punjab in the mid-eighteenth century, brought with it the rising of local tribes of Afghan and, to a lesser extent, Baluch origin. This was the case of the Saddozais, who became de facto autonomous governors of Multan from 1752 to 1818. Ethnic Afghans at the time already comprised the Mughal nobility in Multan, as the names of the governors of the *subah* would testify, and, as we have seen, Afghans were also influential in the local trading community. The establishment of the Saddozais was crucial to induce other groups to settle in the region where they received *jagir* lands along the rivers Chenab and Ravi.[53] The Pathans of western Punjab gradually left their traditional military occupation to become a wealthy landed class,[54] a process that had already taken place for the Baluch tribes on the west bank of the Indus.[55] During the second half of the nineteenth century, Pathan and Baluch families had become some of the more well-to-do groups of the society.[56] These families produced the earliest attempts of artificial irrigation into the Doab, which anticipated the British Canal Colonies.[57] Pathan and Baluchi families gradually got involved in the land economy and took the distance from the tribes of the *bar*.

[49]H. A. Rose, *Lesser known tribes of North West India and Pakistan, based on the census report of 1883 and 1892*, vol. 1 (reprint New Delhi, 1991), pp. 25–26; J. Wikeley, *Panjabi Musalmans* (New Delhi, 1991, First edition 1915), pp. 50–51.

[50]See Shackle, *Nur-e-Jamal*, pp. 14–15.

[51]Wikeley, *Panjabi Musalmans*, p. 51.

[52]Durrani, *Multan under the Afghans*, pp. 165–168.

[53]*Ibid*.

[54]*MDG* 1923–24, pp. 46–47, 111–114.

[55]Maclagan, 'Fragments of the history of Mooltan, the Derajat, and Buhawulpoor', pp. 559–560.

[56]*IGI*, pp. 2–13.

[57]David Gilmartin has argued that the Baluchis of the Lower Indus were the first to attempt artificial irrigation on a large scale, anticipating the canals of the Multani Pathans. See Gilmartin, *Blood and Water*, pp. 28–40. See also Abenante, 'Islam, Irrigation and Religious Identity', pp. 53–56.

The religious dimension of this process was the establishment of close links with the new movement of Sufi revival in the late eighteenth century. The sedentary communities were less attracted to the mediatory style of the old Sufi shrines than the pastoralists had been. The ceremonial of non-reformist *dargah*s was centred on the life of a mobile society.[58] As in other South Asian regions, changes in social patterns and economic strategies influenced religious devotion.[59] Settled Pathan and Baluchi families were attracted to Chishti Nizami *pir*s rather than to the old established traditions. In fact, many of the members of these families established connections with Chishti saints through marriage or *piri-muridi* (saint-disciple) relations: the Khakwani Pathans with the *pir*s of Taunsa; the Nawab of Multan, Muzaffar Khan Saddozai, with Hafiz Jamal; the Nawab of Bahawalpur with Khwaja Ghulam Farid of Chachran (1845–1901).[60] The patronage offered by local Muslim dynasties to the Chishti Nizami shrines marked a distinct shift from the early attitude of the non-reformist, medieval Chishti saints, who are associated with having avoided establishing links with political power.[61]

The *pir*s themselves generally belonged to local tribes, a fact that marked a considerable difference from the old-established Sayyid genealogies.[62] This fact did not pass unnoticed by the British: the compiler of the 1901 Census, for example, wrote that the Chishti revival was "an indigenous revival of Muhammadanism".[63] Therefore, while the Sayyid families were identified with the popular religious practices and with the pastoral tribes' life, such as the giving of *ta'wiz* (amulets) and the rites aimed to protect the animals, Chishti Nizami shrines were connected to families of lower social status and local tribes recently converted to Islam. By contrast, Multani Sayyids though theoretically the representatives of a greater Islamic tradition were associated with popular Islamic practices.

The establishment of the network of Sufi revivalist *khanqah*s in the region was supported —financially and politically—by a rising class of Pathan and Baluch families who, from the late eighteenth century, were rapidly transforming into a wealthy landed gentry. They were able to strengthen their economic position with political power. Together with social change, these families were also gradually changing their religious view, moving towards an Islamic vision more compatible with their new world-view, based on the centrality of the *shari'a*. In fact, reference to Islamic law—however superficial it might be in reality—

[58]For example, Chand (*Tarikh-e-Multan*, pp. 85–100) writes of offerings of animals and breeding products for the *dargah*s of Pir Ghaib Bukhari at village Halalvaja, and of Qazi Muhammad Issa at Khanpur, both in the Shujabad *tehsil*.

[59]The reference here is to the association between sedentarisation and change of religion developed by Richard Eaton with reference to Bengal and Punjab. See Richard Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority', pp. 345ff; and Richard Eaton, 'Who are the Bengal Muslims? Conversion and Islamization in Bengal' in *Essays on Islam and Indian History*, (ed.) R. Eaton (Oxford, 2000), pp. 249–275.

[60]D. Gilmartin, 'Shrines, Succession, and Sources of Moral Authority', in *Moral Conduct and Authority*, (ed.) Metcalf, p. 335; U. Kamal Khan, *Fuqaha-e-Multan* (Multan, 1984), p. 30.

[61]On this point, see K. A. Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (reprint, New Delhi, 2002), chapter VI; K.A. Nizami, "The Suhrawardi Silsilah and Its Influence on Medieval Indian Politics", *Medieval India Quarterly* III, 1–2. (July-October 1957), pp. 109–143.

[62]Shackle, *Nur-e-Jamal*, pp. 14–15.

[63]Government of India, *Census of India,* 1901, Vol. XVII, "The Punjab, its feudatories, and the North-West Frontier Province", pp. 156–157. It is noteworthy that the British, who were generally aware of the dangers represented by waves of Islamic reform and of 'wahabi' tendencies, in this case, having recognised the local roots of the movement were not apparently alarmed by it.

was, for many tribes of south-western Punjab, a mark of social status.[64] The Chishti Nizami revival was as much a process of religious reform as it was the religious dimension of a social change. While the Mughal crisis in south-western Punjab meant the emergence of local dynasties, the spread of the Chishti shrines followed and reinforced the process of the re-localisation of political authority. If this were true, it would be difficult to consider the movement of revival as a process towards a 'high' Islamic tradition, and therefore towards a pan-Islamic dimension; rather it should be seen as a movement towards local forms of Muslim religious and political authority.

Hafiz Jamal and the content of religious reform

According to the biographies, the young Hafiz Jamal, having finished his formal studies, decided to take the *bay'ah* (spiritual initiation) not from a local holy man, but from the 'revivalist' Khwaja Nur Muhammad Maharvi. As noted above, the relationship between the 'old' and the 'new' traditions appears to have been crucial. It is, therefore, noteworthy that Jamal's decision is depicted as a long and painful process: the search for the "perfect spiritual guide" (*murshid-i kamil*).[65] Interestingly enough, Jamal's decision to look outside the local Sufi environment is explained in line with tradition through the story of a mystical experience, which in some way is legitimised by the old Suhrawardiyya order. The story goes that Jamal used to spend hours, night after night, at the *dargah* of Shah Rukn-i-ʿAlam, praying him to suggest the name of the perfect spiritual guide. One night, the saint appeared to him in a dream and ordered him to become a disciple of Khwadja Nur Muhammad of Maharvi. "Nur Muhammad"—he said—"is the spiritual master (*murshid-i kamil aur shaikh-i tariqah*) you are looking for". The morning after Jamal left for Mahar, where he took *bay'ah* from the Chishti saint.[66]

In the story of Jamal's initiation to Sufism, as well as in his own Sufi style, we find a sort of religious eclecticism. Not only did he become involved with the path at the Suhrawardi *dargah*, but also he was apparently initiated in all the four main Sufi orders of South Asia: Qadiriyya, Suhrawardiyya, Chishtiyya and Naqshbandiyya. While this fact cannot be considered unusual in South Asia, it is nonetheless significant that a reformist Sufi leader such as Jamal continued to initiate his disciples into the same four orders. In any case, Jamal seemed to acknowledge openly the superiority of the Chishti Nizami *silsilah*.[67] Thereafter, Jamal spent his days partly in Multan, partly in Mahar, at the feet of his *pir*. In Multan, Jamal founded a religious seminary, with the financial assistance of Nawab Muzaffar Khan, who was devoted to him. In his *khanqah*, Jamal taught a mystical path that was supposed to combine formal Islamic knowledge and Sufi thought. In the later part of his life, he became

[64]Abenante, 'Islam, Irrigation and Religious Identity'; H. W. Emerson, *Customary Law of the Multan District* (Lahore, 1924), pp. 13, 54, 74.

[65]Jamali, *Zuhur-e-Jamal*, p. 30.

[66]*Ibid*.

[67]*Ibid*., pp. 35–38. It is also worth emphasising that in his refusal to accept the Punjabi custom of choosing his family's *pir* as his own spiritual guide, Jamal was closer to the reformist view. For Deobandi '*ulama*, for example, the choice of a *pir* had to be made individually, and on the basis of the religious and human qualities of the *shaikh*; see the suggestions on finding a spiritual master in B. Metcalf, *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi's Bihishti Zewar* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 199–203. The mystical experience of the dream, however, would not have probably been accepted by a Deobandi.

personally involved in the defence of the city against Sikh military pressure. This became the basis of a well-known legend that presented the saint as a formidable obstacle against the advance of the Sikhs in the Punjab. In fact—causally or not—it was only seven years after the saint's death, in 1818, that the kingdom of Ranjit Singh annexed the city.

There are two sources for establishing Jamal's ideas. One is provided by his vernacular poetry in Saraiki. The second is the classical Sufi genre of *malfuzat* (conversations). While poetry was, to a large extent, the principal instrument of Muslim revivalist discourse prior to the nineteenth century, thereafter it was prose that tended to become more relevant. Many saints associated with the Chishti revival taking place in the Indus Valley used local languages to express their thought, as indicated not only by Hafiz Jamal, but also by other saints of the region such as Khwaja Farid.[68] The poems that Jamal produced, and which represent most of his reformist *ethos*, belong to a style that became a classical literary model of the Indus Valley. It is a genre that Christopher Shackle has termed "of warnings and counsels": namely, a form of poetry based on the theme of the temporary nature of life and the need to correct one's behaviour and character.[69] The interesting point is that Hafiz Jamal wrote poetry in Saraiki as well as in the more 'cultivated' languages of South Asian Islam. However, when composing in the vernacular, Jamal chose to write only with the latter content.

This was a literary genre that warned of the inevitable brevity of life. In it we see some of the typical topics of Muslim reformist literature. Let us compare this work with Maulana Ashraf ʿAli Thanawi's *Bihishti Zewar*, probably the most famous text for educated women of early twentieth-century South Asia and a typical example of broader reformist ethics.[70] Here, too, we find an insistence on the theme of the brevity of life, the coming of the Day of Judgement, and on the believer's urgent need to conduct a proper Muslim life. This theme was derived from Shah Waliullah's family, and was connected to the concept of individual responsibility for the construction of an Islamic society that lay at the core of the Deobandi view of Islam.[71] Indeed, Thanawi's vivid description of the Day of Judgement is one of the most touching passages of the book.[72] It is tempting to suggest that the theme of warning may be typical of nineteenth-century Sufi reformist poetry more broadly.

Hafiz Jamal's *malfuzat* give us the depiction of an 'ideal' Muslim person according to the reformist ethos, in terms of everyday behaviour and in their adherence to the *shariʿa*.[73] They describe Jamal's way of sitting according to the correct posture, the one used during prayers.[74] We are given details of his way of behaving, walking and interacting with people.

[68]See C. Shackle, *The Teachings of Khwaja Farid* (Multan, 1978); D. Matringe, 'Écoute ce que dit Bullhe Šāh: la tradition orale de la poésie soufie en panjabi aujourd'hui', *Le Monde Musulman Périphérique, Lettre d'Information 11* (1991), pp. 22–31; D. Matringe, '"The Future has come near, the past is far behind": A Study of Šaix Farid's Verses and their Sikh Commentaries in the Adi Granth', in: *Islam and Indian Regions*, (eds.) A. L. Dallapiccola and S. Zingel Avé-Lallemant (Wiesbaden, 1993), pp. 417–443.

[69]Shackle, *Nur-e-Jamal*, pp. 41–47.

[70]Metcalf, *Perfecting Women*.

[71]F. Robinson, "Religious change and the self in Muslim South Asia since 1800", *South Asia* 1 (1997), pp. 4–6.

[72]Metcalf, *Perfecting Women*, pp. 222–230.

[73]Jamali, *Zuhur-e-Jamal*, pp. 36–37; see also Shackle, *Nur-e-Jamal*, pp. 15ff; D. Abenante, "Nineteenth century Sufi reform and religious boundaries in south-western Punjab", *18th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies*, Lund, 6–9 July 2004.

[74]Jamali, *Zuhur-e-Jamal*, p. 16.

Muslims were advised not to agitate their hands or to speak too loud. His way of discussing with his companions was marked by the need not to speak too much, or to say things that were irrelevant to the subject. The overall description clearly recalls the reformist *ethos*: like the ideal person offered by the *Bihishti Zewar*, it is the image of a controlled, dignified person, sober in their words and acts, eating little, speaking little.[75] A similar image emerges from the description of the methods used by the saint to correct the religious practice of his disciples. Jamal never expressed clearly his disapproval; rather, he manifested it silently, with his facial expressions. If he wanted to be sure that a message did not go unnoticed, he used the way of allegory (*tariqah-i tamsilah*), in order to make it clear what the suggested behaviour should be.[76]

The advice to follow the *shari'a* and the example of the Prophet, of course, is a major topic of the narrative. "The greatest way (*tariqah*) towards the knowledge of God"—Jalal is reported to have said—"it is the path of those *shaikh*s who follow the example of the Prophet, those who externally (*zahir ko*) follow the *shari'a*, and remain firm on this point; while, in their intimate self (*batin ko*), purify themselves from the evil habits". The need to combine *zahir* and *batin*—the external respect of the *shari'a* with one's inner cleaning of evil sentiments—is certainly not surprising in this religious vision. In this context, we may note, *batin* is not seen as mystical union with God, but as the private effort against bad instincts, something very much in line with the reformist view.[77] The idea that Sufism should be practised within the limits of formal Islamic knowledge is part of Jamal's biographical tradition. For example, in the account of the very first meeting with his master Nur Muhammad, the latter is reported as saying that as a mystic he would prefer the company of the *'ulama*, rather than that of ignorant (*jahili*) people. The reason was that only persons with a formal religious education would understand his teachings.[78]

Besides the advice to follow the Law, the narrative also set out many practical injunctions regarding the everyday life of the Muslims. Of particular interest were the rules on marriage. Here Jamal's teaching was concerned with discouraging the practice of marrying only within one's *baradari*. He appears to emphasise proper conduct and to order his disciples to avoid "what ignorant (*jahili*) people say".[79] Endogamous marriage was of primary importance for Sayyid families in order to maintain social hierarchy. The open criticism by Hafiz Jamal of its practice, which in Multan was followed especially by Sayyids, emphasised the overall aim of the Chishti Nizami revival to offer an alternative to traditional social practices.

It should be noted, however, that while providing an alternative religious model and a critique of customs linked to the high social classes, Hafiz Jamal's *malfuzat* also betray an effort to compromise with non-reformist Sufi traditions, at least on religious terms if not in the social sphere. This point seems to be symbolically represented by the fact that Jamal did not hesitate to use his supernatural power, for example to prevent a disciple

[75] *Ibid*., pp. 22–23; see B. Metcalf, 'Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi and Urdu literature', in *Urdu and Muslim South Asia: Studies in honour of Ralph Russel*, (ed.) C. Shackle (Delhi, 1991), pp. 93–100.

[76] Jamali, *Zuhur-e-Jamal*, p. 23.

[77] *Ibid*., pp. 22–23. Compare, again, Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi's discourse on the constant need to fight against the lower self in Metcalf, *Perfecting Women*.

[78] Shackle, *Nur-e-Jamal*, p. 10; Jamali, *Zuhur-e-Jamal*, pp. 35–36.

[79] *Ibid*., pp. 22–23.

from committing a sin. In one such story, Jamal miraculously appeared to a *murid* (disciple) who was dangerously close to having an illicit relationship with a woman. The saint's intervention ensured that the two avoided breaking the Law and were properly married. At the end of the story, the *murid* could say with relief: "Thanks to God, from a servant of Hafiz Jamal nothing bad has happened".[80] Elsewhere, the *barakah* (charisma) of the saint would also manifest itself to help a student of religion who had difficulties in learning his lesson. This was the case of another of Hafiz Jamal's disciples (who later became a successor of the saint), Abdul Aziz Parharvi:

> Hazrat said: come with me, and let's read the lesson together. Abdul Aziz and the saint began reading the lesson together. For the grace of the saint, after having read the book only once, he was able to remember the most difficult details [of the text].[81]

In these episodes, we can detect no breach between the reformist vision and the popular image of the saint of rural Punjab. Some of the manifestations of the saint's *barakah* take forms that are similar to wider Punjabi popular concepts of the *pir*. In all these instances, the supernatural intervention of the saint appears to be an extension of his function to protect his followers from the uncertainties of life. Particularly significant are the stories in which a saint shows his power of commanding the natural elements, reproducing a Sufi approach that could well have attracted rural people of the region, both peasant and pastoralist:

> It is said that one night the saint [Hafiz Jamal] was seen walking towards the old fort… The saint came out of the outer door of the fort, and reached the shrine of Bahawal Haq Zakariya and read the *fatihah*. Then he went to the *dargah* of Shah Rukn-i-'Alam and sat there…then the saint, having come out of the fort …reached the river; here there was little water, yet when he had reached the bank, the water started dashing against the bank, then the saint made his ablutions, offered his prayers, and then sat in the *khanqah*. Coming back, the saint saw the man [the witness who is telling the story], and ordered him not to tell anyone about what he had seen.[82]

In another story, we see the saint making a bird fly down and perch, with a small gesture of his finger. It is interesting to compare such instances to the older tradition of the twelfth-century Shah Yussuf Gardezi, who is depicted by his disciples as challenging a lion, with a snake in his hand.[83] In both cases, emphasis is placed on the ability of the saint to control nature. Again, in similar fashion, we see Jamal using his *barakah* in order to purify the water of a well:

> One disciple of Hafiz Jamal had excavated a well, [but] its water was unpalatable, Hazrat also sat there, and the *murid* said: "Oh Hazrat! The water of this well has a bad taste". Then Hazrat put his grace on it. With his saliva he touched the well, [then] immediately the water of the well became sweet.[84]

The belief in the healing power of the saliva of the saint is a common feature of the popular literature of unreformed Sufism. In another episode, Jamal's power is manifested to help a

[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 46
[83] See Chand, *Tarikh-e-Multan*, pp. 22–24.
[84] Jamali, *Zuhur-e-Jamal*, pp. 48–49.

group of believers when the wall of a crowded mosque disappears at the order of the saint, in order to make the space for them to say their prayers:

> It is said that once Hazrat *sahib* went to the mosque to say his prayers. He saw that the courtyard of the mosque was narrow and that there were many people offering the prayers. Hazrat, too, joined the prayer. [But] there was not [enough] space. For the omnipotence of God, the back wall of the mosque moved back and the courtyard of the mosque became…spacious. Then the people were able to perform their prayer undisturbed.[85]

Another very common manifestation of the power of the saint is the ability to protect disciples from the dangers of travel. This concept underlines the idea of *wilayat*, the territory under the spiritual control of the *pir*. We learn that Hafiz Jamal was able to protect a group of pilgrims who were assaulted by robbers during their journey from Dera Ismail Khan—on the west bank of the Indus—to Multan to visit the *khanqah* of the saint. After the *murid*s had begun praying to the saint, stones suddenly hit the robbers, saving the pilgrims.[86] Such narratives present a picture which contains no clear breach between the reformist and the popular image of the saint of rural Punjab.[87]

As noted by Shackle in relation to Khawaja Ghulam Farid's poetry, the Chishti Nizami tradition in western Punjab indicated an effort to mediate between the reformist message and the more traditional roles performed by the old-established Qadiri and Suhrawardi shrines in the region.[88] At the same time, this case confirms the very important role played by Sufi traditions in the lower Indus Valley, which was to integrate at least symbolically the local environment within a universal Islamic imagination.[89]

Reform and social hierarchy

While this article has highlighted the effort of compromise between a traditional and a reformist way of understanding regarding how to live as good Muslims, one cannot fail to note the importance of the novelty represented by the reform of the Chishti revival. From the early nineteenth century, it offered an alternative style of religious leadership based on correct behaviour, personal example and strict adherence to the *shari'a*, rather than inherited charisma. Moreover, the Chishti Nizami movement challenged Shi'i influences on the religious life of Multan's old-established shrines.[90] On the level of social relations, the case of Hafiz Jamal represents the criticism, typical of the reformist environment, directed towards traditional social hierarchies and the position of the Ashraf, as expressed in particular by the rejection of endogamy.

It is also important to consider the limits of this process, from both a religious and social perspective. From this point of view, the reformist critique did not fundamentally alter the

[85] *Ibid*., p. 49. This is the only instance where the miraculous power of the saint is directly represented as a manifestation of God, rather than of the saint himself.

[86] *Ibid*.

[87] *Ibid*., p. 46;

[88] Shackle, *Nur-e-Jamal*; C. Shackle, 'Urdu as a Sideline: the Poetry of Khwaja Ghulam Farid', in *Urdu and Muslim South Asia*, (ed.) Shackle, pp. 78ff.

[89] Compare with C. Shackle, 'The Pilgrimage and the Extension of Sacred Geography in the Poetry of Khwaja Ghulam Farid', in *Socio-cultural Impact of Islam in India*, (ed.) D. A. Singh (Chandigarh, 1978), pp. 159–170.

[90] Kamran and Shahid, 'Shari'a, Shi'ias and Chishtiya Revivalism', pp. 492ff.

'traditional' religious life that took place at the tombs of the saints. For example, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the customary display of the relic believed to be the footprint of Imam 'Ali besides the tomb of Shah Yussuf Gardezi still continued to attract thousands of mainly Shiʿa followers.[91] Yet, as we have seen with reference to the Chishti Nizami movement, the financial support provided by Pathan families to reformist institutions became an established practice throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth century: for instance, the Madrasa Nu'maniyya founded in 1905 thanks to a donation from the Khakwani family, became the main Deobandi school in the district of Multan until Partition in 1947.[92] Similarly, various schools originating from amongst other reformist currents were set up in Multan. In 1875, a *Maktab-i-Fikr-i-Ahl-i-Hadith* was founded by Maulana Sultan Muhaddith Derwi (d. 1909). His son Abdul Haq Muhaddith Multani (d. 1945), established a *Jamiat-i-Ahl-i-Hadith* in 1910, and reorganised the existing *madrasa*, renaming it *Arabiyya Dar-al-Hadith Muhammadiyya*. Many of these *'ulama*, such as Maulana Abdul Haq, had studied in the *Ahl-i-Hadith madrasa* in Delhi.[93] These developments point to the tendency of Multan's non-Sayyid families to support visions of Islam that openly criticised the religious life of the *dargah*s, thus challenging the religious and social position of the most important local Sayyids.

Conclusion

The relevance of the above discussion lies in the possibility of redefining the relationship between Sayyids and 'high' Islamic culture. Although reform movements of this period are often considered to represent a shift towards a universal dimension of Islam, connected symbolically to the central Islamic lands and to the figure of the Prophet, the *Chishti Nizami* revival in Multan can be seen rather as a vernacularisation of Islamic authority. The movement favoured the social ascent of local tribes and non-Arab Ashraf families. Hence, the alliance between these two groups, which would become a stable feature in the region for much of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, has contributed to the questioning of the position of social privilege held by local Sayyid families.

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[91] Chand, *Tarikh-e-Multan*, p. 62.
[92] Kamal Khan, *Fuqaha-e-Multan*, p. 44.
[93] *Ibid.*, pp. 51–54.