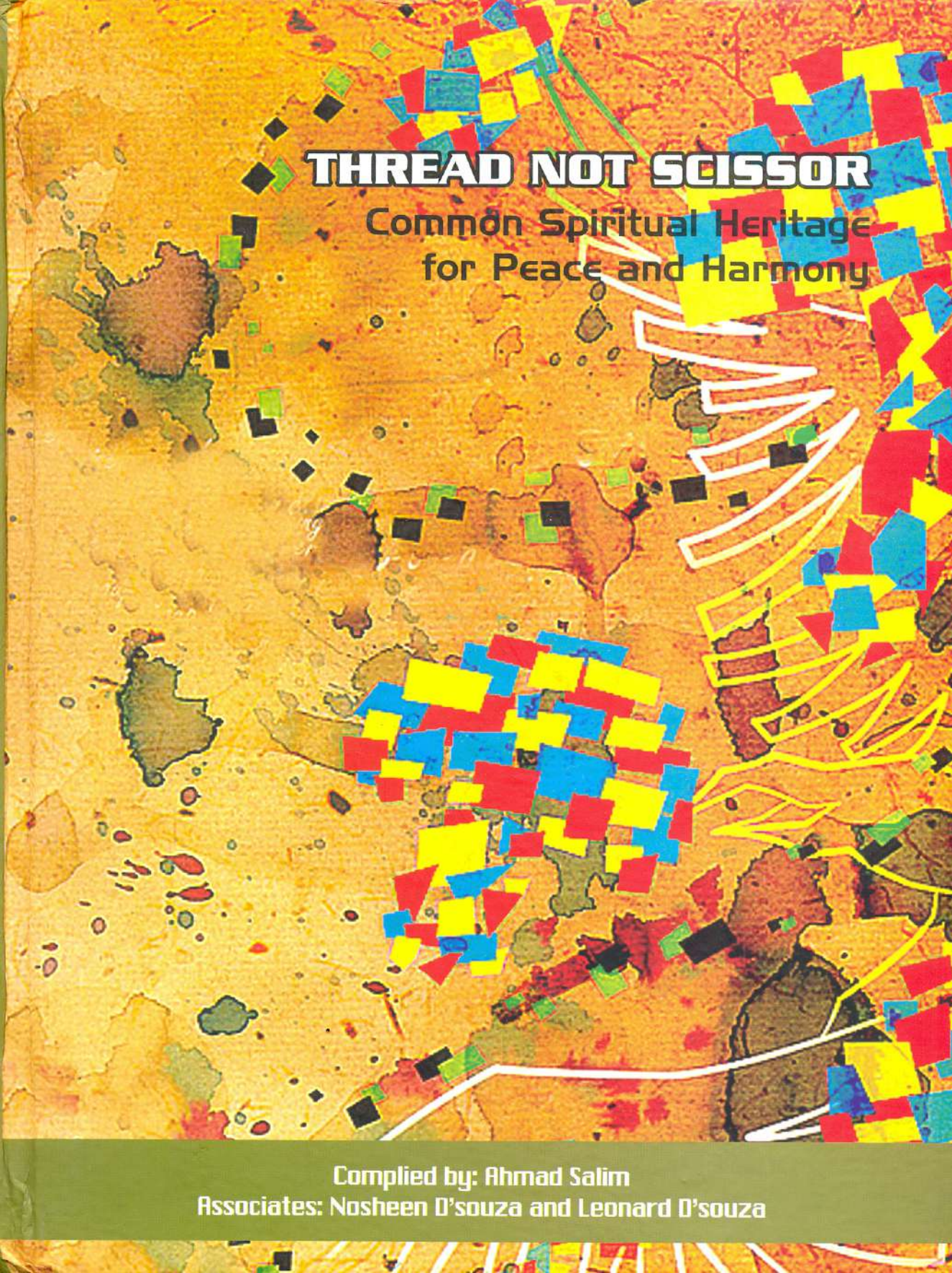


The background of the cover is a complex, abstract composition. It features a base of warm, earthy tones (yellows, oranges, browns) with watercolor-like washes and splatters. Overlaid on this are numerous small, irregular geometric shapes in primary colors (red, yellow, blue) and black. On the right side, there are larger, white, hand-drawn outlines of geometric shapes, possibly representing stylized letters or symbols. The overall effect is one of vibrant, textured energy.

THREAD NOT SCISSOR

Common Spiritual Heritage
for Peace and Harmony

Compiled by: Ahmad Salim
Associates: Nosheen D'souza and Leonard D'souza

THREAD, NOT SCISSORS

COMMON SPIRITUAL HERITAGE FOR PEACE AND HARMONY

Compiled by: Ahmad Salim

Foreword
Muhammad Khalid Masud

HBF Acknowledgement

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Research Team:

Main Investigator	Romana Bashir
Compiled by:	Ahmad Salim
Research Assistant:	Waqar Ahmad
Edited by:	Ambrin Hayat
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Book Street, 46/2 Mozang Road, Lahore, Pakistan.
Phone: +92 42 37355323. Fax: +92 04 37323950
e-mail: sanjhpk@yahoo.com, sanjhpk@gmail.com
Web: www.sanjhpublications.com

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Last, but not the least, I am deeply indebted to Ms. Romana Bashir, who put her heart in the whole project, from the earliest concept to finalization of the study.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has a rich history of religious diversity that imbues it with a strong presence of mysticism. For centuries, the mystical and spiritual aspect of religions has served as a pillar of multi-ethnic, multi-religious peaceful society, where propagation of religious and ethnic diversity, inter faith harmony prevailed.

Different religions present different schools of thought and the underlying concepts vary even within one religion. Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other religions have a diversity of beliefs yet their core concept is the same: the human aspect. This aspect becomes the basis of establishing a social life where human values such as respect for each other's traditions and desire for peace are strong.

The major religions in Pakistan are Islam 95.51 percent, Christianity 2.82 percent, Hinduism 1.88 percent, Sikhism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and the Baha'i Faith. All these religions have prospered in harmony. This harmony was apparent in the celebration of festivals, shared cultural practices, and peaceful coexistence. The message of love and brotherhood was outstanding and was expressed by all religions and cultures.

This galaxy of faiths has given birth to a spiritual heritage that teaches the concepts of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect of fellow human beings and their respective religious philosophies. Whether it is Sufism or Budhism, Aahsna or self scarifies, all existed collectively. Whether it's the gathering of the faithful bowing in prayer in the courtyard of a mosque or the gathering of lamps that lit up houses at Diwali; the joy of Christmas or the brotherhood of Baisakhi, all were celebrated with shared emotions. This sharing brought people together uniting them in the common brotherhood and amity of mankind.

Inter-religion harmony and mutual appreciation are connected as the core of every religious tradition as respect for others, humility and embracing the basic unity and diversity of all religions. This tradition of respect develops a mutual understanding among followers of different faiths.

The foundations lay down by our ancestors for unity and peaceful coexistence should be built upon. The South Asian region that was dominated by Sufism and other spiritual movements for centuries should be celebrated.

The history of social and communal harmony, religious tolerance and love of humanity is much older and more widespread then the history of hatred and conflict, and so it should be presented with elaboration and focus.

By focusing on spiritual ideologies and inclusive practices of all religions, the book aims to explore the attraction and the impact of spiritual heritage on Pakistan's culture. The work intends to respond creatively to the profound social changes and scientific technologies making the world into a global village while its people are puzzled with dual and often divided identities.

A particular focus is given to the religious diversity of Pakistan and to the long-established and ongoing developments for the revival of peaceful coexistence by reclaiming the spiritual heritage of Pakistan, and by building trust and cooperation among people of different faiths and traditions.

We hope that the joint venture of HBF and SARRC partnership will highlight the centuries old interfaith harmony of the region.

Ahmad Salim

FOREWORD of the Second Edition

At a time when media and world opinion about Pakistan focus mostly on terrorism, extremism, fundamentalism and religious violence, the book *Thread, Not Scissors*, Common spiritual heritage for peace and harmony invites its readers to this country's centuries old spiritual heritage of peace and harmony. Scholarly written ten chapters in this book argue that it is in the context of the current geo-political conflicts in the world that the focus of attention have shifted to ongoing conflicts and divisions rather than age old traditions of harmony and peace in Pakistan. It is modern ideas of nation-state and global hegemony that has turned peaceful spiritual traditions of religion into exclusivist ideologies. Religious affiliations have been used to justify fundamentalisms, intolerance, extremism and terrorism to the extent that it is hard to believe that peace and harmony is the common heritage among the religious communities. Focus on conflict in world politics has totally obviated the universal spiritual and moral heritage of tolerance and peace. Collection of scholarly articles in this book offers a different non-political outlook; centuries old shared tradition of harmony with focus on peace and universal human values.

The title of the book *Thread not Scissors* signifies the theme of the book. Ahmad Salim, the compiler of this work tells a story to explain the title. Someone presented a pair of scissors to Khwaja Fariduddin Masud Ganjshakar (1173-1266) to cut cloth for his garment. The preacher of religious harmony returned the scissors and said, "I am a weaver, give me thread". The weaver is not only a symbol for weaving a cloth of peaceful cooperation but also for weaving a garland that symbolizes harmony and unity in diversity. Unlike a bouquet of flowers that highlights plurality garland suggests pluralism. Thread links individual flowers to produce a garland. The thread that weaves ten chapters of this book pertains to the common values of spirituality, self-control and sacrifice found in the living religious traditions in Pakistan.

The first two chapters underscore the historical context that brought the masses in this part of South Asia closer to each other; the rest of the book offers focused studies of religious communities in Pakistan. In the opening chapter by Hasan Gardezi explains how Sufi mysticism built bridges between various religious communities in south Asia. Indus valley has been promoting cultural exchange between peoples of this valley and Western and Central Asia for centuries. Pakistan as periphery of the world of Islam always stood for peace and freedom of religion and welcomed migrant minority Muslim groups. The Sufi tradition of spirituality was critical of exclusivist and literalist orthodoxy that divided the masses and their universal human values. The orthodoxy opposed popular spirituality. Disregard of this common heritage by the ruling elite is the main cause for the rise of sectarianism and violence in Pakistan.

The second chapter by Ahmad Salim studies Bhakti movement as an example of building bridges between religious communities during 800-1700. This movement operated largely in Punjab and North India where wars of conquest and orthodoxy kept dividing the people. The Bhakti movement challenged orthodoxy and ideologies of supremacy, sectarianism and violence. It criticized Muslim and Brahman religious leadership that preached divisive social orders and hierarchy of casts and supported the supremacy of elite against the masses. This movement for devotional spirituality brought humans as

individuals personally closer to God. It introduced spiritual brotherhoods using the media of poetry and music. Consequently this heritage continues to unite religious communities in Pakistan, even today.

The following eight chapters offer scholarly studies of Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jews, Muslim and Sikh communities in Pakistan, tracing their history, introducing their teachings and details of rituals and festivals. Among these nine communities, Muslims are in majority and Christians and Hindus are larger among the minorities; the rest are very small in number. The Jains and Jews are represented only by their temples and graveyards. Scholarly articles on minority religious communities also tell us the impact of global economy and divisive politics that has reduced the space for certain minorities.

The Baha'i community lays emphasis on unity of mankind, appreciation of diversity and purposefulness of religions. Buddhists define their religion as a message of enlightenment and moral purification that channelizes diversity. Buddhist message of unification is expressed in the unique confluence of Hellenic civilization and Buddhist spirituality in Pakistani Gandhara culture. The Buddhist spirituality also paved the way for Islam as it liberated the masses from Brahman supremacy and hierarchy.

Christians, Jews and Islam are Abrahamic religions. Christian community in Pakistan is also unique as it was introduced by Saint Thomas who visited Taxila and met the Parthian king. The Taxila cross discovered from Sircap is an evidence of links between early Christianity and Gandhara Buddhism in Pakistan. Similarly Jewish graveyard in Karachi and stories of Jews migrating into Northern areas of Pakistan indicate Pakistan linkages with Jewish people centuries ago.

The Sindhi origins of Hinduism, existence of ancient Hindu temples in Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab are evidence of shared sacred history of Hinduism in Pakistan. Exchange of scholarship between Muslims and Hindus is epitomized by Al-Beruni in the medieval period. Conjunction of art and culture among Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities under the Mughals and the existence of Jain temples in Pakistan signify peaceful diversity. These articles warn the readers that the rising tide of fundamentalism and extremism is fast eroding the spiritual heritage of peace and harmony in Pakistan. It has impacted not only the non-Muslim communities but is also dividing the Muslim majority into sectarian groups. It invites the readers to preserve the common spiritual heritage.

I congratulate South Asian Research and Resource Centre for publishing the second edition of the book. It not only confirms the determination of the Centre to promote peace and harmony in South Asia but also suggests the public interest in the subject. I hope for a wider readership of the book in South Asia, particularly among those who take interest in religious and political subjects, policy and strategic studies.

Muhammad Khalid Masud*

* Muhammad Khalid Masud is M.A (Punjab), M.A. Ph.D. (McGill, Canada), Formerly Professor, Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, Professor, Leiden University, The Netherlands, Academic Director, 151M, Leiden and Chairman, Council of Islamic Ideology, Islamabad

FOREWORD of the First Edition

I would like to congratulate South Asian Research and Resource Center for bringing out such a useful book highlighting the mix of historical and cultural values, well depicting the immeasurably rich and varied heritage of Pakistan that epitomizes the Sufi thought of Unity in diversity. The book beckons us to peace and harmony between religions and cultures, and highlights the wisdom of harmony. Below are excerpts from a lecture I gave to the Asian Study Group in Islamabad on 25 April, 1998, with the hope that they may help us focus on the crying need for greater understanding between shades of cultures, and lead us to the path of peace.

In 460 BC, Heraclitus, a philosopher, was reported to have said that the same man never enters the same river twice. When he enters the river the second or third or any number of times after the first, neither is he the same man nor is the river the same. This is self-evident because we are told that every seven years our body renews itself down to the smallest cells. The river is such because the body of water is confined and contained within the two banks. Yet, not one drop of water is ever in the same place on its journey downstream. In its manifested form only, it may appear to be the same man and the same river. A favourite Buddhist simile of change and continuity is the flame, ever the same, yet never the same. And continuity, or the appearance of sameness is also illusory. It is but a succession of phenomena, like a movie film that is a series of single shots. An individual is a composite, a coming together of material phenomena and immaterial faculties, and is designated as Name and Form. The faculties of sensation, perception, volition and consciousness combine with the elements of earth, air, fire and water and we have the individual. In the 2nd Century B.C., in the famous debate with the Greek King Menander, held in Charsadda in the present day North West Frontier Province, the monk Nagasena describes an individual as being like a chariot, or a flame. The individual does not have a permanent soul and is subject to the law of constant change and transformation. Life is an unceasing flow, a succession of thought moments.

Life manifests itself in the world of animals and mankind, in the world of gods and angels, in the higher spheres of the formless world, and in the world of spirits and in hells. An individual travels up and down the wheel of life according to one's actions. "Just is the law, swerving not a hair". This saying means that Karma is a self-sufficient and self-executing law in which one is responsible for one's own actions and not anyone else. One is one's own prosecutor, defence lawyer and judge. There is no intervention by external forces between action and consequence. So then how should we conduct ourselves? How can we overcome the negative forces of greed, hatred and delusion? We can, by and with equity and justice, compassion and generosity, moral and ethical conduct, contemplation and meditation. What is the so called noble eightfold path? The path consists of right view, aspiration, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration. Monks and ascetics that have renounced the world practise more precepts but lay folk are advised to observe five. They are enjoined to abstain from taking life, from taking anything unlawfully (stealing), wrongful sexual conduct, telling untruths (or indulging in slander, hateful or

mischievous making words), and intoxicants. One is advised to inculcate an amicable and helpful attitude, sympathy and compassion, cheerfulness and equanimity.

To overcome greed, hatred and delusion, to evade the tentacles of ignorance and craving and to proceed towards self-improvement, we are advised to avoid extremes and inculcate a balanced attitude and mode of life by adopting the golden mean. Too much courage is equated with rashness, too little with cowardice. The happy mean is bravery. Similarly, too much spending would constitute being a spendthrift, too little, a miser. The attribute used most often to describe the Buddha is "compassion". He said that one should feel towards all sentient beings as a mother feels for her only child. Just as a mother would do all she could for the welfare of her child so should one for any living being. We should strive to cultivate such an attitude so that we progress through the four stages; the stream winner, the once returner, the non-returner, then the final stage leading to the ineffable bliss of Nirvana – in poetic terms, "the Peace that Passeth Understanding".

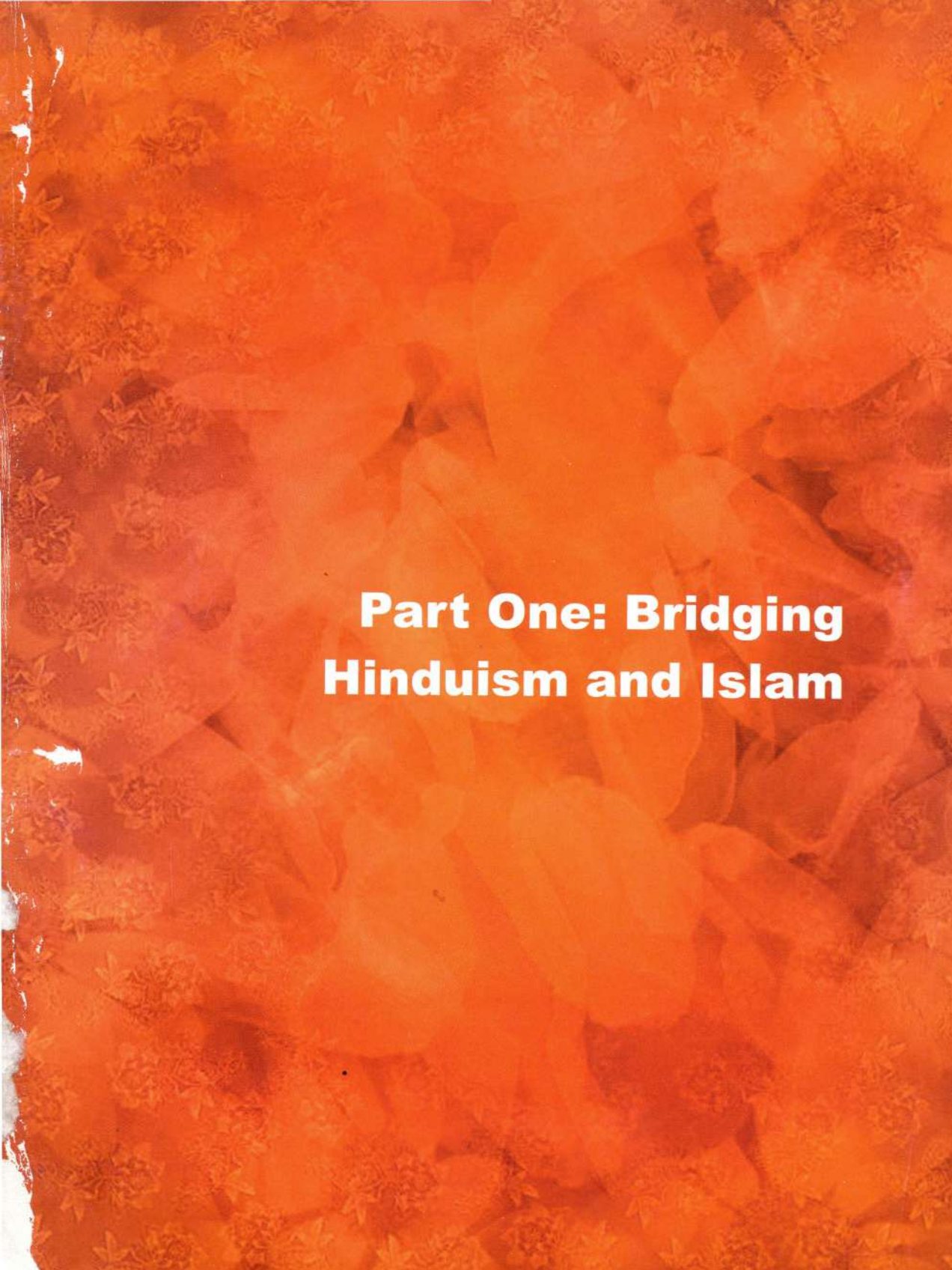
External conflicts are often manifestations of the interactions between pride, lust, anger and greed in and between individuals, institutions and nations. If Costa Rica can exist without an army why not so many other countries which spend huge sums of money purportedly for defending their territory, even at the cost of denying their citizens food, clothing, shelter and education? In February 1923, 60 countries met in Geneva for the first Disarmament Conference. Today, after World War II and so many other armed conflicts, the Conference still takes place every year. Half a dozen of the world's most powerful nations are active exporters of arms, earning billions of dollars every year, and the figure is on the rise. Since they themselves are so active in this death selling business, how do they propose to achieve disarmament and promote peace among nations?

Peace between peoples and nations cannot be preserved merely by arming themselves or by the balance of terror or the threat of war. History shows that a mere balance or imbalance of arms has never resolved conflicts nor preserved peace. Otherwise we would not have had the two world wars or wars before or since. The Hutus and the Tutsis are a case in point. Even if they were denied guns they would still slaughter one another with machetes or bows and arrows. If they couldn't find even these implements they would go for each other with sticks and stones. In the olden days when humans lived in caves they killed. Even before, Cain killed his own brother, Abel.

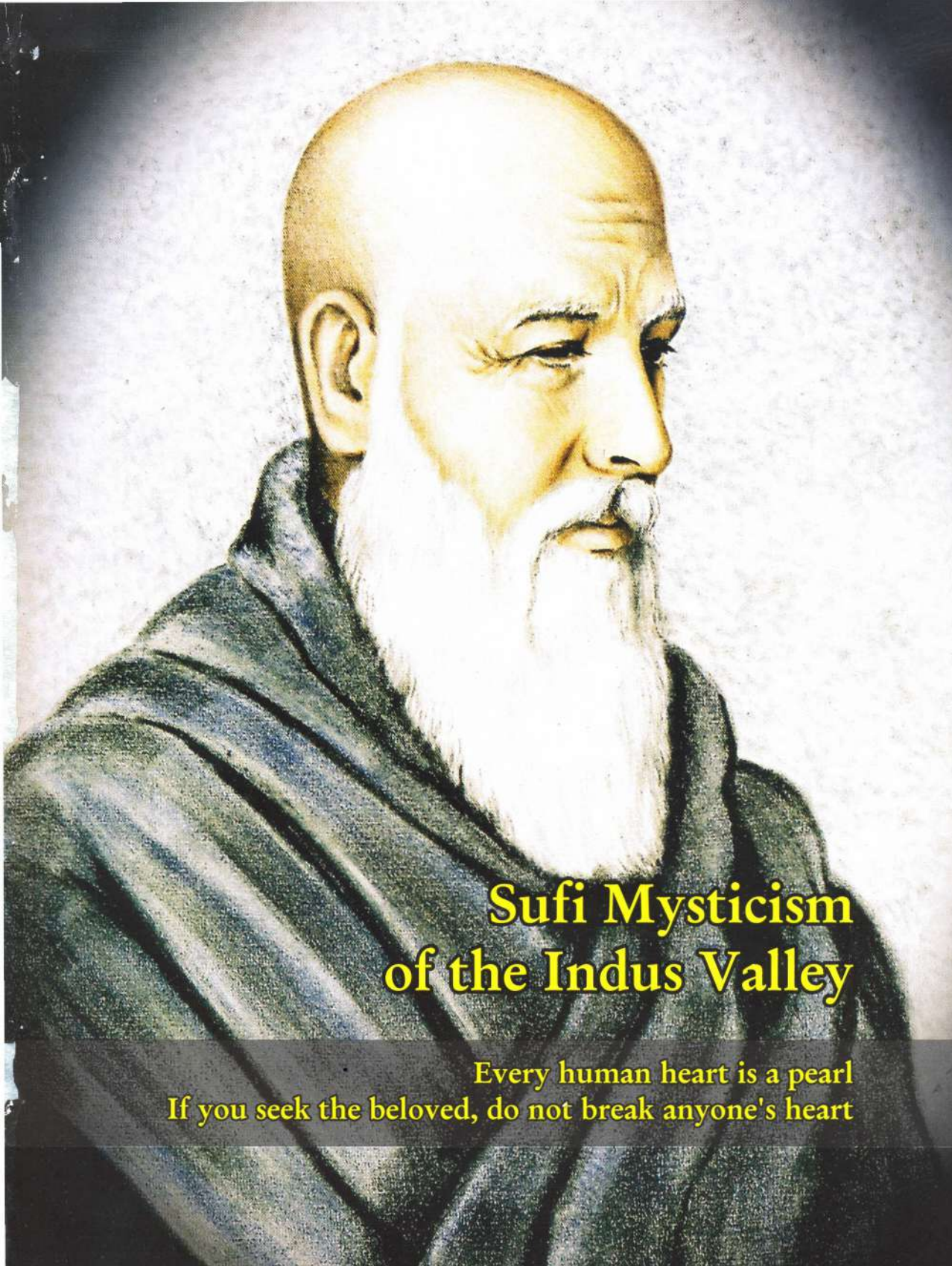
Should not there be some balance, some sobriety in an individual's and a society's pernicious spending sprees and styles? Obviously strong remedial measures are called for. If we do not act now, we are all doomed – the rich and the poor. Everyone knows that only a small fraction of the existing nuclear arsenal is more than enough to wipe out all forms of existence on earth for many years to come. With the increased knowledge in technology we are now at a stage in the history of human development when we are too powerful for our own good and might self-destruct at any moment by accident or by design. For a more just world order, and a chance of survival, and peace, we need to strengthen the United Nations and related international organizations like Amnesty International and Green peace. Governments must give up some of their arbitrary and absolute powers over their citizens and their institutions. Nation States require to be more receptive to effective international monitoring and supervision, as well as strengthening of regional and a wider and more equitable international trade and co-operation. Some measures that may be considered for adoption are:

1. Ban on the export of armaments;
2. Establishing an International Criminal Court of Justice for trial and punishment of human rights violators, anywhere in the world;
3. An international body of Ombudsmen to protect citizens' rights against their governments, as well as to try the corrupt, anywhere in the world;
4. A mechanism to promote fair and equitable international trade and necessary modifications in the functioning of WTO and allied international institutions;
5. An international body of experts to supervise the use of funds of IMF, World Bank, Regional Development Banks, and all internationally aided projects worldwide;
6. The setting up of a UN Force for rapid as well as preventive deployment anywhere in the world.

Late Raja Tridiv Roy
Former Federal Minister,
Sri Lanka Ranjana Award by Govt. of Sri Lanka,
Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Award by Govt. of Union of Myanmar,
Founder President All Pakistan Buddhist Society
27.1.2009

The background of the entire page is a vibrant orange color with a complex, textured pattern. It appears to be a close-up of a surface with many small, overlapping, petal-like or leaf-like shapes, creating a rich, organic feel. The lighting varies slightly, giving it depth.

Part One: Bridging Hinduism and Islam



Sufi Mysticism of the Indus Valley

Every human heart is a pearl
If you seek the beloved, do not break anyone's heart

1 Sufi Mysticism of the Indus Valley

Hassan N. Gardezi

*From the tyranny of religious dogma
Love will set you free.*

Fakir Bedil (A Sindhi Sufi)

The rise of militant Islamic fundamentalism in conjunction with geo-political conflicts in different parts of the non-Western world has become the major focus of media and scholarly comment for the last few decades. What is being lost sight of in the process is the existence of a vibrant tradition of Islamic Sufi mysticism which still informs the daily lives and shared understandings of millions of ordinary Muslims around the world, with its message of love, tolerance, peace, equality, and respect for all creation.

The association of the words Sufi and Sufism with the English usage of the term mysticism often leaves the impression on those not too well acquainted with the Sufi way that it is some kind of a mysterious cult centred around enigmatic figures called Sufis. This impression may be reinforced if one approaches Sufism as a system of abstract ideas, but when encountered in real life the Sufi way turns out to be a body of practical wisdom or knowledge employed by people to live harmoniously with one another, with their natural environment and the world beyond. In contrast to the monolithic and doctrinaire projection of orthodox Islam the Sufi tradition exists in a rich variety of real life expressions blended with local cultures, and their semiotics, imagery and symbolism. The way of the Sufi can be best understood by looking at how it is articulated within a specific culture, country and climate (Shah, Idries, p.9)

This paper will attempt to introduce the Sufi way by exploring one of its specific traditions that has taken shape over centuries, outside the mosque and the academy, in the Indus valley which now constitutes the heartland of Pakistan. The exponents of this tradition are a long line of Sufi poets of few pretensions but much wisdom who have made a creative use of the native languages of their land to establish a shared universe of discourse which brings close together people of different religions and ethnic backgrounds. But before we explore the content of this poetic tradition and its significance for the contemporary human communities, a few words about the geophysical and cultural history of the Indus Valley will be helpful to visualise the setting.

The Indus Valley The hing from the north-western foothills of the Himalayas to the Arabian sea in the middle of which the mighty Indus river has for centuries run a meandering course in a multitude of channels. The shifting landscape around the Indus also varies greatly ranging from verdant farmlands and orchards to forbidding deserts and barren mountain folds. In these constantly changing natural habitats have flourished and blended many cultural traditions since time immemorial. There are scattered throughout the land several sites of a neolithic urban civilization dating back to c3000 B. C. Mass migrations and invasions since 1500 B. C. brought into the Indus valley a great diversity of human races and cultural traditions including the Vedic Aryans, Greeks, Mongols, Turks, Persians, Afghans and Arabs. During the middle ages of Islam many contemplating and religious minded persons were attracted to the towns and cities of the Indus valley for their reputation for peaceful life and respect for the learned, thus setting the stage for the emergence of a rich tradition of Sufi poetry that has served to unify and synthesise the diverse cultural heritage of the people and their folk wisdom.

A Pioneer

A pioneering sage to compose Sufi poetry in Siraiki, one of the oldest native languages of the Indus valley was Shaikh Faridudin Shakarganj popularly known as Baba Fareed. A Sufi of the Chishti order, Fareed was born in c. 1175 A. D. of parents who had immigrated from Persia. Today a substantial part of his verse is incorporated in Adi Garanth, the most sacred book of the Sikh religion. He preached that the path to Divine Union that all Sufis seek lies in love of fellow human beings irrespective of colour creed or status. The following verse in Siraiki captures the motto of his life and the essence of his spirituality.

Every human heart is a pearl

If you seek the beloved, do not break anyone's heart

No religion has monopoly of the path to God, neither do prestige and status make one human being superior than the other. This theme finds expression in a verse with much simplicity which is the hallmark of his style.

In conceit, I have kept the turban on my head free of dirt

Forgetful that my very head is to be consumed by dirt one day.

The metaphor of a clean turban is used here to debunk the illusion of prestige and superiority over others in the face of a common fate awaiting all human beings.

The Golden Age

What might be called the Golden Age of the Indus valley Sufi poetry spans some three hundred years beginning with the verse of Madhu Lal Hussain or Shah Hussain (c. 1539-1594 A.D.) who lived during the time of Moghal Emperor Akbar. From here on a succession of renowned Sufis composed poetry of rare beauty in the native language of the valley, Sindhi, Siraiki, Balochi and Punjabi to spread their message of love and tolerance.

Although many of these poets came from a background of rigorous instruction in orthodox Islamic tradition and were well-versed in Persian and Arabic, they chose native languages of ordinary peasants and workers, as a medium of their literary expression. Unlike the Arab and Persian Sufi poets who use a great deal of complex symbolic expression, these poets use the straight idiom of their people. Their poetry is composed in lyrical forms set to the tunes of local folk music. Their mission is to reach the hearts of ordinary men and women. The similes and metaphors that they do employ are drawn from the vocations of the largely rural people, their domestic industries, kinship relations and social customs. For example, charkha, the spinning wheel, is a common symbol for this world, and the poets's persona is represented as a maiden whose work of spinning cotton stands for good deeds. The "good deeds" in turn represent any time spent in contemplation of the Divine Beloved, the "God" of the monotheistic religions or the supreme deity of any religion, also represented as Truth or Eternal Reality. It should be noted here that the male Sufi in this tradition uses the female gender for himself or his surrogate and male gender for the object of his love. This tradition is consistent with the conventions of the ancient Indus Valley civilization where females were not dominated by men. Down the ages Hindus have celebrated the love of Radha for Krishna, and the legendary heroic lovers in the Punjabi and Sindhi folk-tales have been women; Heer pursued Ranjha, Sasi and Sohni gave their lives trying to unite with their male beloveds, Punnu and Mahiwal. Symbolically the beloved stands for God, the supreme deity of any religion or Universal Spirit, but in its human manifestation the male beloved in the Sufi poetry is a highly sensuous person of real life. This extends the appeal of Sufi love poems much beyond the circles of the initiated. The love of another human being and divine love

are not mutually exclusive. The love of another human being can be conceived as a bridge that leads to love of the Divine. Conversely a person who hates other human beings is devoid of true religious or spiritual experience and can never hope to receive divine blessing, no matter how much time spent on ritual prayers and worship.

Central to the understanding of the content of Sufi poetry being reviewed here is the unique cosmology or the theory of origins of the universe in which it is embedded. The centrepiece of this cosmology is the Sufi belief in *wahdat-ul-wajud*, the oneness of all beings. The poet's message of universal fraternity, love and respect for all creation is firmly rooted in this pivotal concept. The God of the Muslims, according to this view is the symbol of this Oneness, variously perceived as Universal Beauty, Truth or Eternal Reality from which all creation emanates, just as light radiates from the sun. If one cultivates the love of God, or the Beloved of the Sufi poetic parlance, His reflection can be seen in all creatures including in one's own self. Conversely, it is the destiny of all creation to be reunited with Him, the source of all beauty, growth and knowledge. Shah Hussain, for example, portrays such a union with the Beloved through a poetic rendering of the famous Punjabi folk tale celebrating the love of Heer for Ranjha. Says Heer in the words of Shah Hussain:

I have become Ranjha.

Call me Ranjha everyone

Not Heer any more.

For so long have I yearned for my beloved

Called his name so many times

Now I have become Ranjha myself and Heer is no more

Through this rendering of the folk tale the poet is conveying the idea of union with the beloved. The religious act becomes the act of love for the Beloved, rather than ritual prayer offered to an impersonal deity. Shah Hussain, the most latitudinarian of these Sufi poets used to drink, dance and sing freely in the streets of Lahore and was deeply in love with Madhu Lal, a handsome Brahman boy whose name he appended to his own to become known as Maddhu Lal Hussain. The strict moral code of Islamic shari'a would of course prohibit such acts, yet to this day his shrine is the site of an annual pilgrimage and fair where Muslim villagers from far and wide gather to celebrate his vision and sing his poems.

All Sufi poets portray the pangs of separation from the Beloved with whom all creation was once united, but none excels the pathos of a rare poem composed by Madhu Lal Hussain. He says in the voice of a young maiden separated from her beloved

O' Mother to whom shall I tell the story of my separation's grief.

The fire lit inside me by the teacher smolders and smokes

*As I stir the ambers, I see the red Jewel
 The pain of separation has driven me mad
 Suffering is the bread I eat
 Pain is my curry dip, sighs of grief my cooking fire
 I roam the jungles and deserts in vain
 Says Hussain, the God's fakir:
 How happy I will be to find my prince*

Shah Hussain's antinomianism is matched by the anti-authoritarianism of another Sufi poet, Sultan Bahu (c. 1631-1691 A. D.). Bahu's father was a strict Muslim and a noble who was warded a jagir (estate) by the Moghal court, yet Bahu exhibits a special aversion to the secular and religious authorities. The religious clerics and priests come under censure in particular as Bahu says

*Lofty are the gateways to religions
 But the way to God is a narrow path
 Better to bide from the pandits and mullas
 They kick their heels and stir up conflicts
 For the compassionate is the song of union (with the Beloved)
 The place to live is where no pretenders be*

Bahu reminds those who are enchanted by this-worldly power that religious rituals will not wash away their heartless deeds, as in the following verses

*Gone are my worries since the teacher handed me the cup
 What good are your unguided nightly vigils?
 What use your nights of prayer and days of tyranny?
 The vocation of the fakir is true kingship
 This-worldly throne is only an illusion*

Here the poet is alluding to the actions of the reigning Emperor Aurangzeb, known in history as a staunch orthodox Muslim and a ruthlessly cruel ruler who used to spend his nights in prayer. As for Bahu himself who was brought up with rigorous religious instruction and was known for his scholarship in Arabic and Persian, we get only a few disclaimers in his Siraiki poems, such as

*I am not knowledgeable, nor a learned man
 Neither a Jurist, nor a qazi (judge)
 No desire for hell in my heart, nor heaven do I seek
 I do not keep the thirty fasts or say the five prayers
 Without union with Allah, this world is an illusory game*

According to the Sufi belief, God as Truth and Beauty is the Eternal Reality. Eventually emanated from this Reality the infinite physical forms found in the universe today ranging from the lowliest of all creatures to the most elevated saints, prophets and deities of all religions. Another Sufi poet, Bulhe Shah (1680-1758 A. D.) captures this thought in the following Punjabi poem

*Now I see the beautiful Friend
When the One was alone by itself, sending no light to view
There was no God, Prophet or Allah
No Omnipotent or the Wrathful
The One was without any likeness or simile
Without any shape or form
Now he appears in shapes galore
Now I see the beautiful Friend*

These poets articulate a cosmology which bridges gaps between Greek Gnosticism, Judaic- Christian-Islamic-monotheism, Hindu Vedantism and ancient animism. Sufi's God is not the God of institutionalized religions, feared more often by humans for their sins than loved. Neither is the Sufi God, a mere metaphorical abstraction. Sufi God or Beloved is the all pervasive spirit which manifests its glory in the physical beauty of a human face or body, now in the person of a murshid, (the teacher), again in a Hindu deity, Krishna, or the various attitudes of Lord Buddha. Sufi God is a playful beloved who appears so close at times, yet evades one's attempts at union. Bulhe Shah, perhaps the greatest of the Punjabi Sufi poets, sees his beloved appearing at various times as Krishna, Rama and Allah as visualized in the following verses

*How long this hide-and-seek
You are the Cowherd in the Jungles of Bindrahan
You are the Victor in the land of Lanka
You are the Pilgrim coming to Mecca
How lovely the colours you change
How long this hide-and-seek*

Bulhe Shah finds the conventional labels of good and evil, clean and unclean too static and perverse to describe different forms and levels of existence, for all existence reflects the same Divine Beloved. Pondering his own being Bulha muses:

*Bulha, how can I tell who I am?
Neither am I a true Muslim in the Mosque
Nor am I in the ways of paganism
Neither among the pure, nor the unclean*

Neither am I the Moses, nor the Pharaoh
What do I know who I am? Neither in happiness, nor in sorrow
Neither in sin nor in purity
Neither of water, nor of earth.
Bulha, how can I tell who I am?
I am the first and the last
None else do I recognize; none wiser than me.
Bulha who is the true master here?

After all the questions, the state of being defined in the last lines of this poem points to the ultimate stage of union with the Beloved or Eternal Truth. No Indus valley Sufi poet claims to have reached that state of union in this life, although Buhla comes very close. Mansur Al-Hallaj of Baghdad was one of the first to claim such a union by declaring *annal-haq*, I am the Truth (God). The Qazis (Muslim judges) of Baghdad convicted him of blasphemy and he was hanged in the 9th century A.D. only to make him immortal in the folklore of the world of Sufis. It is this concept of oneness of all manifest reality, even in its apparently contradictory forms, out of which flows the Sufi poet's message of fellowship, tolerance and love transcending colour, caste, creed and status.

For Shah Abdul Latif. (1689-1752), one of the most popular of the Indus valley Sufi poets who composed highly lyrical poems rich in local imagery and always set to the tunes of prevailing musical notes, the many different ways in which the supreme Deity is conceived in different religions makes little difference because in their own ways they have visualised the same One. He illustrates this by invoking some familiar sensory experiences as in the following verses:

The echo is the call itself
If you understand the puzzle
One sound but heard twice
Many doors and windows opening into one palace
Where ever I look, the same God I see

Latif, just as the other Indus valley poets, draws upon the many popular folk tales of love and passion that abound in the region. The belief that one can see the reflection of the beloved in one's own self, if freed from false illusions, is conveyed in the following lines of a poem about the love of Sasui for Punnu. Latif addresses Sasui, who is said to have scorched herself to death while in hot pursuit of her beloved's camel on foot on the mid-day sands of the Sindh desert, in the following verses:

The loved one that thou suffereth for
Of very sooth resides in thee
Why go to Wankar, if not here

*Thou searchest thy Belov'd to see?
Go with thy heart towards thy love
Cease, Sasui, wanderings of thy feet
Ask not the sand how lies the path
To travel soul-fully is meet*

(Translation in verse by H. T. Sorley)

None other among these Sufi poets has had as deep and as pervasive an influence on the character of the ordinary people among whom they lived as did Latif. A senior British civil servant who worked in the province of Sindh for a long time and translated Latif's poems into

English, observed a widespread "conviction of the tenets of tolerant Sufism" and noted the extraordinary fact that Latif's poems steeped in Islamic mysticism were "loved in Sind by Hindus as much as Muslims (Sorely, H. T. , p. 216).

The list of renowned Sufi poets of the Indus valley is very long, but we will refer to only one more of their line who carried this tradition into the dawn of the 20th century. Khawja Ghulam Fareed (1845-1901) who composed poems in Siraiki is unique in using a highly sensuous imagery for his Beloved. In one of his poems Fareed speaks as a female lover who attempts to lure her beloved into her house by extending compelling temptations. Says Fareed

*If for once you stepped into my humble place
I'll pull down the shades and serve your pleasure
I'll surround you with flowers and feast you to your heart's content
Will bathe you in rose water and massage your body
Make you colourful with applications of henna
Dress you as a bridegroom and seat you in front
If just for once you stepped into my humble place*

Timeless Ethics

Whatever the poetic style, the Sufi believes that without the spark of love no true knowledge of oneself or the external reality can be achieved, and above all it is love that teaches higher values, cures alienation of humans from themselves, their fellow beings and all that exists in nature. Although the Sufi way, as knowledge and practice, predates the breath-taking scientific discoveries and mechanical and social innovations that have modernized and changed the face of the planet Earth, much can still be learned from some of the insights found in the simple poems of the Indus valley sages composed centuries ago and transmitted as an oral tradition which is still part of the daily social life of the people of the region.

What is notable is that the Sufi cosmology articulated in these poems is not incompatible with the modern science of astrophysics and evolutionary biology. Both point to the essential unity and time-mediated interconnectedness of all existence and life forms. However for modern scientists no moral precepts flow from this central maxim, while the Sufi invites people to read into it a message of profound reverence and love for all manifestations of life and nature. The pursuit of dispassionate, value-free knowledge has created a spiritual void in the institutions of formal education. Scientific knowledge in our commercialised world has become a mere tool of exploitation of the Earth's resources and promotion of consumerism at the expense of environmental integrity and human development.

On the other hand the onslaught of globalization is leading to an unprecedented trend of people withdrawing into the shelters of their narrowly defined ethnic and religious identities, breeding prejudice and triggering wars of mutual hatred. Under these circumstances the Sufi message of respect for all creation, tolerance and love articulated in the little known Indus valley tradition assumes a real contemporary and global relevance. The assessment of the place of people in our universe elucidated clearly and coherently in the Sufi poems reviewed shows how important it is to live in harmony with nature and how un-divine and destructive of human spirit are the many lethal conflicts still being waged in this age of enlightenment and mastery over nature in the name of religious and ethnic loyalties.

Lessons For Pakistan

It is ironic that Pakistan's ruling elite have had to rely on the very hypocritical, power hungry, orthodox clergy against whose spiritual bankruptcy and political ambitions the Sufi poets of the Indus valley have warned for centuries. The sectarian bloodshed, honour killings of women, abuse of blasphemy laws, repression of labour and authoritarian rule are only a few consequences of abandoning the values inherent in Pakistan's own indigenous spiritual heritage, and instead following an alien Islamic orthodoxy in the name of national ideology. It is a sad situation that the power elite of Pakistan are not even literate in the native languages in which the Sufi poets of the land expressed their wisdom.

Notes

Since the Indus valley Sufi poets quoted in this paper rarely, if ever, wrote down their verse for publication, the existing anthologies of their poetry give different versions of the same poems. This, however, is a matter of diction, rhyme and style rather than content.

Not all poems quoted here are in their entirety.

The English translations are literal as far as possible. Closest English idioms have been used where a literal translation from the original language of composition would make little sense in English.

The following anthologies and critical works have been used as source materials:

1. Kafian Shah Hussain, Islamabad, National Institute of Folk Heritage, 1977.
2. Kalam Bulhe Shah, Lahore, Pakistan International Printers Ltd., n.d.
3. Kafian Buhle Shah, Islamabad, National Institute of Folk Heritage, 1975.
4. Kuli-at-e-Bahu, Lahore, Aina-e-Adab, 1978.
5. Devan-e-Farid, Bahawalpur, Maktaba Azizia, 1963.
6. Lajwanti Rama Krishna, Punjabi Sufi Poets, Karachi, Indus Publications, 1977 (Reprint).
7. Syed Ali Abbas Jalalpuri, Wahdat-ul-Wajud Te Punjabi Shairi, Lahore, Pakistan Punjabi Adabi Board, 1977.

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- Shah, Idries, *The Way of the Sufi*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974.
 Sorley, H. T., *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit: His Poetry, Life and Times*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1966.



Partners in Bhakti Movement

Pag Ghunghroo Bandh Meera Nachi Re



2 Partners in Bhakti Movement

Ahmad Salim

Introduction

Legend has it that Baba Farid Shakar Ganj was once presented with a pair of scissors. He returned them saying:

"I am not a divider, I am a weaver. Give me thread."

In those days the Indian Subcontinent was at a crossroads. Sufi saints from Arabia and Central Asia settled in India to spread their message of love of God. They promoted tolerance between believers of different faiths. They were like weavers whose tapestry were societies at peace with themselves. Kabir a great Bhakti saint said

"This body is like a garment which must wear out with use. So why be attached to it?"

With the Bhakti movement begins the history of communal harmony in India. Across the country the Bhakti doctrine diversified into several movements. In North India, Bhakti movement was in many ways similar to the Chisti Sufi movement of Muslim saints. Both Muslims and Hindus followed identical objectives of peace and tolerance, but through different paths. One of the prominent Sufi saints of the Chisti order was Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj, the first sufi saint of Punjab.

The Bhaktas promoted peace and harmony amongst various communities of the sub-continent. There is no evidence of animosity between different communities. The interpretations of situations that form the basis for the present day frictions between Pakistan and India stand in sharp contrast to the beliefs and convictions of Bhaktas.

The Indo-Pak conflict is far more than complex than its understanding at the popular level suggests. Its simplified popular version is an expediency designed to

serve the political and economic interests of segments of both societies. Should the media and governments on both sides of the border play a positive role and highlight the traditions of tolerance, communal harmony and shared history and culture of the peoples of the region, they will find that the people will respond positively to the legacy of the Sufis and Bhakats. Their values and beliefs still lie latent among the people of the two countries.

The Bhakti Movement (800-1700) lies at the centre of communal harmony. The Movement had a profound impact on the society. It became part of the popular culture and is the basis of many religious traditions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Indian Subcontinent. Kirtan at a Hindu Temple, Qawalli at a Dargah, and singing of Gurbani at a Gurdwara are derived from the Bhakti Movement. Bhagats like Kabir, were the leaders of this spiritual movement which relentlessly fought against dogma and orthodoxy. The Bhaktis did not believe in either Hindu or Muslim ritualism or the caste system. There was equality between genders. Women saints were as revered and popular in the masses as their male counterparts. The Muslim stereotype symbolised by the likes of Aurangzeb is a more recent creation and formed a very small minority; as were Hindu extremists such as Shiva ji Maratha.

These stereotypes were created during the British India period. Communal disharmony clearly served British imperial interests in India. After loosing the War of Independence in 1857, Indian Muslims were demoralized. They drifted away from society's mainstream and increasingly withdrew from it. Their resultant backwardness and rampant unemployment was hardly surprising. For obvious reasons they were not inclined towards British education. This attitude alienated them even further and the community continued to suffer. Such a state was ripe for any degree of manipulation by vested interests. While the Hindu elite easily adopted western ways, Muslims remained locked up in their isolation. The community thus became vulnerable.

In 1920s, as Indian nationalism gained street power, Hindu-Muslim riots started. Many politicians welcomed the situation, and pursued their own agenda of a separate communal identity. Differences and suspicion of the other were drilled into the minds of ordinary people--- the same people who had lived without rancour in a multi-religious society for centuries. By instigating riots and provoking retaliatory violence, the Hindu and Muslim leadership strengthened their electoral support. Unsurprisingly, this newly instilled hatred among the people brought large scale misery with it. The people paid a heavy price during Partition, which resulted in extreme violence and one of the largest migrations in history. The combined death toll from the riots caused by partition is estimated at between 500,000 to one million lives. Ten to twelve million people moved across the new borders in Punjab and Bengal. In addition, tens of thousands of girls and women were raped and/or abducted. The responsibility for this genocide lies with the callous rhetoric of those days.

In pre-British India days, religious bigotry of Hindus and Muslims and communal antagonism did not exist in any significant way. In fact, the period is known for its communal integrity and a sense of tolerance for each other practiced in the lives of ordinary people.

Bhakti Movement

A powerful development in medieval India was the Bhakti movement. It began in the sixth or seventh century in south India and gradually spread throughout the country. Bhakti movement lasted until the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries. The movement became prominent by its rejection of the Brahmin imposed religious hierarchy. By design, the Brahmins used Sanskrit for all religious purposes which the lower castes, not literate in the language, from participating in religious practices or discourse. Such exclusion from mainstream of a majority of the population gave birth to a movement led by low caste "non-literate" people. Ramanunj Dasar, Pillai Uranga Villi Dasar and Kanaka Dasar in the south and Kabir and Dadu in the north emerged as their spiritual leaders.¹

Harbans Singh suggests in *Heritage of the Sikhs*, that the word Bhakti is derived from Bhakta meaning to serve, honour, revere, love and adore. In the religious idiom, it symbolises attachment or fervent devotion to God. It is defined as "that particular affection which is generated by the knowledge of the attributes of the Adorable One."

By the fourteenth century, the Bhakti movement became a dynamic force in north Indian society. It filled the vacuum that emerged when Buddhism's importance in India diminished. The Movement had a profound effect on the Indian way of life, culture and history. This was the time of transformation of the Indian society. Muslim Sufis began to attract attention and people of all religions went to hear them in large numbers. 'People's saints' emerged all over India--- Guru Nanak (1469-1539) in the Punjab; Ramanand (1400-1477) and Kabir (1440-1518) in Uttar Pradesh; Chaitanya (1485-1533) in Bengal; Dadu (1544-1603) in Rajputana ; Nama Deva (1400-1450 in Maharashtra) and many others in other parts of the country. Kabir and Dadu preached of a personal God, condemned idol worship and were against caste restrictions and social prejudices. The result was that regional culture was given a new dimension. This also gave birth to a new kind of religious revival. The followers of these reformers organized themselves into brotherhoods (panths).² Bhakti Movement became more popular in Northern India simply because of greater Hindu Muslim interaction as Muslim merchants and Sufis had settled in these areas.³

¹ Vijaya Ramaswamy, "Anklets on the Feet: Women Saints in Medieval Indian Society", *The Indian Historical Review*, Volume XVII Nos. 1-2 (Madras 1933) p.60

² S.F. Mahmud, *A Concise History of Indo-Pakistan* (Karachi 1988) p.114

³ Sibte-e-Hassan, *Pakistan Mein Tehzib ka Irtaqa* (Karachi 1977) p.208

Historical Overview

Between 850 and 950 the Bhagavata Purana was compiled by some Bhagavata Brahman community in south of India. It made Bhakti movement popular among intellectuals as well as non-intellectuals circles. The translation of the Bhagavata Purana from Sanskrit into regional languages made the Bhakti movement predominant in Hinduism. In short, the deification of Krishna, Rama, or Shiva and the devotional religion of the saints of the Bhakti movement shook the foundations of Brahmin dominance in Hindu religion. Bhaktas ('devotees') adopted gurus or spiritual leaders, many from lower castes as their supreme authority. The twelfth- and thirteenth-century Hindu mystics, such as Madhva (1197-1276) and the Telegu Brahmin Nimbarka (c. 1130-1200), greatly influenced the Bhakti movement.⁴ Namdev (1270-1350), who was a tailor by profession, composed the hymn:

Come, God, the Qalandar wearing the dress of an Abdal.

Nama's Lord is the searcher o all hearts,

And wandereth in every land.

The sufi terminologies such as 'Qalandar' and 'Abdal' used in these verses suggest that, even before the conquest of the region by Sultan 'Alla-ud-Din Khalji, Sufi ideas were already entrenched in the thought process of the bhaktas. The most remarkable feature of Namdev's leadership was his indomitable courage in abolishing class and caste distinctions. This was decidedly an Alvar legacy, but the Sufi traditions also contributed to opening of doors of devotion to the Lord who belonged to all classes of the society.⁵

Jainism and Buddhism had greatly influenced a new form of religious thought. These are represented by the devotional cults of Tamil saints, which were among the early expressions of what later came to be called the Bhakti movement.⁶ Bhakti Movement embodied a pattern of association of these two heterodox sects. Buddhism and Jainism had much in common; both were started by members of the Kshatriya caste. Buddhism and Jainism were opposed to, and perhaps a reaction, to the exclusionary orthodox beliefs of Brahmins. They denied the authority of the Vedas. Both opposed the practice of animal sacrifices. Their message appealed to the socially disadvantaged; the Vaishyas who were economically powerful, but were not granted corresponding social status, and the Shudras who were the most oppressed. Buddhism and Jainism did not directly oppose the caste system. They preached a philosophy that was devoid of the caste system. To a certain extent the two religions can be described as movements which believed in the equality of humankind. These religions provided an opportunity to those who were from the lower castes to become part of the society.

⁴ S.A.A. Rizvi, The Wonder That Was India, Vol II, 1200-1700 (Rupa, New Delhi) p.356

⁵ Ibid., p.358

⁶ Romila Thapar, A History of India (Penguin Books, Delhi 1977) p.263-4

They provided the freedom to worship God whenever you want irrespective of an intervention on your behalf from the upper castes. It also gave an opportunity to worship without the sacrifice of an animal, a custom that was put in order by the Brahmins and which restricted the not so economically affluent people of the society. The pattern of association of Buddhism and Jainism with urban centres and largely with the lower castes was repeated in later centuries what came to be called the Bhakti movement. The leaders of reformist religious sects often drew their strength from lower caste urban groups. The social content of their teaching was an essential part of their religious doctrine.⁷

The advent of the Arabs, Turks, and Afghan introduced Islam to India. Muslim mystics came down from Persia and settled in Sindh and Punjab. Their message of love and equality spread to all regions of the sub-continent. Though initially the Sufis in India were an extension of the Persian school of mysticism, later the amalgamation of Indian and Islamic ideas produced a distinctive Indian School of Mysticism. The Sufis lived an isolated life, devoted entirely to spiritual attainment of the highest kind. Muslim theologians generally did not approve of liberal Sufi beliefs. However, the Sufi philosophy attracted a large following in India. Sufism greatly influenced Indian society, especially on the devotional cults that emerged among all religions.

The Sufis, saints and mystics believed in the doctrines of spiritual union with God attained simply through whole hearted devotion to God. To attain such a situation the devotees and the saints would establish a system of worship under a pir or shaikh, who could be the equivalent of a Hindu guru. The members of such an order were called faqirs (mendicants) or dervishes. These orders evolved special rituals such as dancing, often hypnotic in character, until the individual went into a trance. India, with its strong beliefs in asceticism, the philosophy of the Upanishads, and the devotional cults, provided an ideal environment for the Sufis to flourish. There were three main schools of Sufism in India; the Chishti order with Al-Bairuni and Amir Khusrau among its followers was popular in and around Delhi and the Doab, the Suhrawardi had their followers mainly in Sindh, and Firdausi, whose order was popular in Bihar.

India was already familiar with the existence of ascetics living away from their followers. The Sufi way fitted well with an established tradition. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Sufi pirs were as much revered by Hindus as were the gurus and ascetics.

Islam's stress on equality was respected by the Sufis far more than by the Ulema, and this brought the mystic orders into contact with common folk such as artisans and farmers. For the peasants and artisans, the Sufis became more effective religious leaders than the distant Ulemas. Sufi and Bhakti thought and practice coalesced at various points. But not all Bhakti saints encouraged the mysticism of the Sufis.⁸

⁷ Ibid., pp.67-69

⁸ Ibid., p.305-8

Philosophy

The fundamental philosophy of the Bhakti Movement is that all men are equal before God, and the merits of each man's religious devotion are measured by the degree of bhakti, i.e., his personal dedication to God.⁹

Bhakti devotion was not confined to a simplistic, singular attitude, or the bhava to god or gods. It could assume the form of a servant's attitude to his master; that of a friend to a friend; a parent's attitude to his or her child; a child's attitude to his or her parent; a wife's attitude to her husband; the beloved's attitude to her lover; or even the attitude of hatred, such as that of an atheist or god-hater towards God. The attitudes in the Bhakti Movement is of self-abandonment to a personal God..¹⁰

Kabir equated Ram with Rahim (the Merciful), Hari with Hazrat, and Krishna with Karim, but it was his frequent identification of Ram with Rahim that went a long way in making the Bhakti movement a unique religious experience in the Indian subcontinent. Kabir's god transcends both Islamic monotheism and Hindu polytheism. He is Allah and also Ram, and more.

Kabir asks:¹¹

For Turks in mosques and for Hindus in temples

Both Khuda and Ram are there;

Where mosque and temple is not

Who rules supreme there?

Denouncing idolatry, Kabir wrote, if God is found by worshipping a stone, he would worship the stone in a hand-mill, which grinds corn for the world to eat. For Kabir, the rituals of prayers, pilgrimages, and fasting adhered to by Muslims were equally illogical. Kabir like a true Bhakta, was absolutely devoted to the Supreme Being. Kabir did not consider rituals or religious chauvinism and feared possible Hindu and Muslim friction in the future. Ironically, he was prescient. After his death, his Hindu and Muslim disciples could not agree on which religion's rituals should be applicable to his corpse. The Hindus wanted to cremate him; whereas the Muslims fought to bury him.¹²

According to legend the Supreme Being in the form of an old ascetic came to Dadu and initiated him into the divine truth. Dadu was born in 1544, he was also known as Dawud. He Spent his life in Sambhar in Rajasthan. He was a disciple of Kabir.¹³ Raja Bhagavan Das, become his disciple and introduced him to Emperor

⁹ Ibid., p.25

¹⁰ Rizvi, op.cit., p.358

¹¹ Gyanasagar, p. 631

¹² Ibid., p. 363

¹³ Harbans Mukhiya (Rashid Malik, tr.), Ahd-e-Wasta Ka Hindustan (Lahore 2003) p.76

Akbar .After a short stay in the capital, Dadu eventually went back to Rajasthan. In 1630 he died in Nara'ina in Rajasthan.

Dadu was deeply influenced by Kabir. In his hymns, Dadu reiterates that Ram, Govind, and Allah are his spiritual teacher .Hee occupies a distinctive place in the galaxy of saints such as Namdev, Pipa, Sena, Raidas, and Kabir. Dadu's cosmology and the stages of the soul's pilgrimage are markedly Sufi. Later, like the Kabir Panthis, Dadu Panthis became predominantly Hindu.¹⁴

As a social reformer Kabir claims the attention of modern radicals. Like Buddha before him, he too denounced the folly of social inequity and the injustice perpetrated in the name of caste. Kabir ridiculed the orthodoxy of both Hindus and Muslims and challenged them to justify the sham and hypocrisy they practiced. He denounced hoarding and show of wealth. He was against any kind of luxury and the indulgence in intoxicants. He preached simplicity and contentment. He believed that every one should do physical labour and stick to his own profession. He did not spare royal greed and political aggrandisement. Kabir was a bitter critic of all kinds of sectarian and conservative views. "Neither the Brahmin is high-caste, nor is the Shudra low. Why hate one another? Hatred is folly." In those days when rationalism was rare and an attack on established traditions was deemed the worst type of heresy, Kabir challenged the religious orthodoxy boldly and effectively .In the end the Hindus honoured him as a saint and his way as Kabir-panth.¹⁵ The leaders of the Bhakti movement, who were to make a deeper impact on social rather than religious ideas, were those who had been influenced by Islam, and more particularly by the teachings of the Sufis.¹⁶

In the fifteenth century the area which may loosely be called 'the land of Hindi' saw a new turn in the Bhakti movement under the influence of Ramananda (c. 1360-1470). He advocated devotion to the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of Rama and his consort Sita, and worshipped their close companion, the monkey god Hanuman. Ramananda firmly repudiated the injustices of the caste system. Among his twelve close disciples were an outcaste, a woman and a Muslim. Raidis was a chamar (shoemaker) by caste, he too was a disciple of Ramananda, and he wrote songs condemning Brahmin rituals and caste prejudices.

Kabir and Nanak (1469-1539) also gave a new turn to the Bhakti movement. They did not attempt to reform institutionalized Hinduism, nor did they preach to submerge consciousness in devotion. The new attitude can perhaps best be understood in the idea of God as described by Kabir and Nanak. Kabir denied the Hindu and Muslim

¹⁴ Ibid., p.360

¹⁵ Prabhakar Machwe, *Makers of Indian Literature*, Kabir (New Delhi, 1989) p.22-32

¹⁶ Thapar, *op.cit.*, p.304-5

ideas of God. He equated them by stating that they were identical.¹⁷ The ideas of Kabir and Nanak were drawn from both existing philosophy of Hinduism and newly introduced Islamic traditions. This interaction of variety of ideas from different philosophies made these two leaders different from other leaders of the Bhakti movement.¹⁸

The objective of poets, saints and preachers of the pre-Nanak age seems to have been to mix the various elements of Buddhism, Pauranism, Upanishadism and Sufi asceticism so that the resultant philosophy can serve the needs of changed political and social situations.¹⁹ This contribution of the Bhakti Movement was partly original and partly derived. Islam with its externalization, mass-subordination, theocracy and institutionalism could not have rendered any help here. It was Buddhism and the reaction to external political or religious subjugation which supplied the yeast.

Writers on the Bhakti Movement have failed to notice its rise and spread among the Muslim population of India. The movement filled the emotional needs of the masses, particularly of converts who sought comforts that could not have been achieved through theology alone. When Islam came in contact with Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Pauranism a complex philosophy emerged similar to what happened in mediaeval Hinduism. The necessity and supremacy of love, practice of Shabad Yog, power of Grace, and the dynamics of Intellectualism and Emotionalism are found in the teachings of Daud, Burhan, Khusrau, Bu-Ali Qalandar and Baba Farid, Shah Latif, Miranji Shah and in host of other saints and poets.

The leadership passed from the Brahman and the Mulla to the Guru or the Saint hailing often. They are the real gift of the Bhakti movement to the composite Indian civilization.²⁰

Trends

The voices of Bhakti Movement and Sufism expressed themselves in the language of the common man. Amir Khusrau (AD 1253-1325) was the first poet of a vernacular language. He wrote in the indigenous dialect rejecting the language of the court. He was perhaps the first naturalist poet, using allegorical references to the nature and to local customs. Indeed, in this sense, he was also the first nationalist.²¹

¹⁷ Thapar, op.cit., p.332-4

¹⁸ Ibid., p.332-4

¹⁹ Mohan Singh, A History of Punjabi Literature, 1100 – 1932 (Lahore 1982) p.13

²⁰ Ibid., p.14-8

²¹ Aitaz Ahsan, The Bhaktis, Nanak, and the Sufis (OUP Karachi) p.139

Mirabai, besides writing in Hindi and Gujarati, has freely borrowed expressions from Braj, Avandhi, Marwari, Bhojpuri, Maithili, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and even Punjabi.²²

Bhojpuri, Magadhi, and Maithili of modern Bihar, Avadhi, of the Avadh region, Braj Bhisha of the Mathura region, and Ra'asthini, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, and Gujariti, assumed new forms and meaning through Bhakti poetry. The love ballads of Radha and Krishna written by Vidyapati (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries) in Maithili, are a legacy from Chandidas. Their vigour and refined diction made them popular even in Bengal, Assam, and Nepal.

Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Marathi - were established languages although some of the literature in these languages, excluding Tamil, consisted of adaptations from Sanskrit such as the Epics and the Puranas. These became the media of cultural transmission during the Bhakti movement. In Deccan the Bahmanis had introduced Persian and Arabic, which made this region closer to the Sultanate. In Malabar, another language had acquired an independent status - Malayalam which is a dialect of Tamil. In northern India, Sanskrit remained the language of learning in certain sections of the society. However contribution of such writings to the advancement of social institutions was small.²³

The emergence of regional cultures resulted in the growth of local loyalties. People who spoke Bengali could not understand those who spoke Kannada, but the underlying similarities of thought of these separate vernacular languages were quite similar. On the religious side, the Bhakti movement had generated similar forces in all parts of India. The teachings of reformers such as Shankara and Ramanuja had in one sense unified the whole of India through the general diffusion of common beliefs. To the pious Hindu the seven sacred sites of pilgrimage included Badrinath in the Himalayas and Rameshvaram in the far south. Coastal trade encouraged mobility of traders, so that Gujarati merchants were not stopped from competition with those from Malabar. Despite ethnic diversity people shared a common ethos.²⁴

Two diverse trends emerged in the Bhakti movement in response to its interaction with Islam: a conservative thought which wanted to go back to the roots of Hinduism and a democratic line of thought which was anti-feudal in nature and was also in some ways influenced by Islam. Kabir and Nanak, instigated a spiritual movement which relentlessly fought against ritualism, fanaticism, sectarian, class or colour distinctions. They were the devotees of an omnipotent and omniscient God and loved all living beings.²⁵

²² V.K. Sethi, *Mira the Divine Lover* (New Delhi 1988) p.46

²³ Thapar, *op.cit.*, p.334

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.335

²⁵ Serebrayakov, *Punjabi Literature - A Brief Outline* (Lahore 1975) p.25

The earliest Sufi traditions refer to Kabir as Unitarian, a follower of the *Wahdat-al-Wujud*, who was not an orthodox Hindu or an orthodox Muslim. According to the 17th century Mir`atu'l-asrar, he was a Firdawsiyya Sufi, but the Iranian author of the *Dabistan-i Mazahib* places Kabir against the background of the legend of the Vaishnavite mendicants.²⁶ Kabir's mysticism was of the same as that of the Vedantin or the Sufi. Kabir believed in the physical totality and the infinity of the Supreme Being.²⁷

Sikhism

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) initiated a new movement in the Punjab called Sikhism. Nanak's teaching is a manifestation of the Hindu-Muslim cultural synthesis. It intertwines the most prominent aspects opposing orthodox tendencies in Hinduism and Islam. Without challenging the authority of Vedas and Puranas, he claimed that there is just one Divine Being which is the truth evident in the various aspects of the universe. The gods and the sacred writings of all the worldly religions are but separate manifestations of the same all-embracing deity. There is no distinction between human beings on the bases of caste or social status. Nanak's ideas are a direct continuation of those of Kabir. Most of Nanak's disciples or Sikhs as they were called were from the Jat tribe.

Guru Nanak's teaching are not about the the hermit but about the grihasth – head of a family, engaged in a craft, trade or agriculture.²⁸

Guru Nanak gave a stern ethical paradigm. He also gave a practical approach to everyday problems of life. He advocated a pious and just life. He condemned the social prejudices of the caste system. He believed that those who are humble attained salvation.²⁹

Guru Arjun Dev (1567-1606), was a poet with clear political views. He compiled the works of Guru Nanak in a book, *Adi Granth*. The *Adi Granth* can also be called a literary record of invaluable importance in Punjabi literature. Much like the era in which it was created, it was multilingual and marked the beginning of a new stage in Punjabi literature. This is when its language becomes standardised and widely adopted.³⁰ Leading authors include Baba Farid, Mian Mir, Kabir, Namdev, Ramanand, Mirabai and so on. Their writings stem from folklore.

Gender Perspective

All the conflicts including Kashmir seem to be overshadowed by attempts to dominate each other which stem from the concept of male chauvinism. This is evident in the anthems and war songs. For example, a composition by Rashid Anwar during 1965 war runs thus:

²⁶ Rizvi, op.cit., p.362

²⁷ Prabhakar Machwe, op.cit., pp.21-2

²⁸ Serebrayakov, op.cit., pp. 27-9

²⁹ Rizvi, op.cit., p.364-366

³⁰ Serebrayakov, op.cit., pp. 29

*Maharaj ey kbed talvar di he
Jang kbed nahi bondi zananian di*

Women reformers especially those of the Bhakti Movement had a profound impact on the social patterns. Their teachings widened the mental horizon of the masses and brought in greater tolerance and inter-communal harmony. Indian society was largely patriarchal, the position of women was considered inferior to men. In the Bhakti movement, emergence of women saints was unprecedented. The spiritual path helped a woman to breakout from the stereotypes, reject orthodoxy and convention. As a Bhakti saint, she could transcend gender boundaries and could seek God as a naked saint – Lalla and Akka Mahadevi – or skeletal being – Karaikkal Ammaiyar.

The women saints in medieval Indian society although product of an age of discrimination and suppression blossomed into scholars and saints. Their lives and works constitute high intellect in sophisticated forms of self-expression. They broke away from the traditional role assigned to a woman. These women saints departed from the established norms of social behaviour, they overcame limitations imposed on them by their family and society. Their writings had overtones of protest against the society; their emergence was in itself a social revolt.

There was a wide spectrum of women saints. They can be classified on the basis of their choice of spiritual path and their interaction with the traditional society. If at one end of the spectrum were rebels like Meera and Akka Mahadevi, at the other end were pious and chaste housewives. The ideals of womanhood like Vasukiya, the wife of Tiruvalluvar, Gangambika and Nagalochane, Basava's wives, Vishnupriya, wife of Chaitanya, and Bahinabai and Tilakavatiyar who elevated karpu or chastity to such an extent that she began to live as a widow when Kalaippagaiyar to whom she had been betrothed, died in a battle. In between are those women saints who gave up their home and conventional way of life only when they were left with no option. The best examples are Karaikkal Ammaiyar, Lalla and Rupa Bhavani.³¹

Lalla and Meera were reluctant brides. Lalla was married to a Brahman at the age of twelve and Meera married Prince Bhoj Raj of Mewar. Both walked out of their homes because they were not treated well by their husbands. Their husbands were sceptical of the wife's unconsciously manifested supernatural powers.³² Lalla believed that her husband was actually her son in a previous birth and claimed in one vak:

*"I have not been confined nor have I borne a son"*³³

Meera, Akka Mahadevi, Andal and Nanga Pennu, Muktabai, Janabai and Goggave all believed that they were married to the God. The "bride of the Lord concept" was not restricted to women only, male saints of the Bhakti movement too believed Jivatman (individual soul) and paramatman (supreme soul) relationship was as that of a

³¹ J.S. Hawley and D.M. Wulff, ed, *The Divine Consort: Radha and the Goddesses of India* (Berkeley, 1988)

³² Vijaya Ramaswamy, op.cit., p.76-7

³³ Jayalal Kaul, op.cit., p.11

husband and a wife. Tirumangai Alvar, a male saint, preferred to assume femininity and looked upon Krishna as his bridegroom.³⁴

Total transcendence of normally regarded feminine virtues of beauty, modesty and gentleness is another feature of the Bhakti movement. Several women saints showed complete freedom from inhibitions and flagrantly defied all notions of women's sexuality. Akka Mahadevi went naked with her body covered only by her long hair.

Meera flouted social conventions in her own way. She was a Rajput queen who should have observed purdah, but she publicly danced and sang in complete abandon in the motley company of devotees.³⁵

pag ghunghroo bandh meera nachi re

(Meera dances with anklets on the feet)

dancing in public was associated in the society with courtesans or devadasis, Meera's dancing in public showed the extent of her defiance.

Despite the limitations and constraints of the society most women saints contributed significantly to the religious and social developments of the period.

Ofcourse the bhakti women saints were beyond the restrictions of the caste system. Bahinabai, a Brahman adopted low caste Tukaram as her guru. Meera, belonged to a Rajput family, Raidas her guar was an untouchable. However these two women did not make a conscious effort to overturn the existing social system. Several other women saints, however, provide concrete examples of rejection of the existing social structure. Akka Mahadevi, for example, asserted:³⁶

O brothers, why do you talk to me?

Who has given up her caste and sex?

United with Chenna Mallikarjuna.

Lalla, a disciple of Srikanta and the companion of such Muslim dervishes as Sayyid Ali Hamadani and Sayyid Husain Samnani, declared in her vak:³⁷

"The idol is but stone, the temple is but stone."

It is interesting that like Kabir, Lalla is revered by Hindus and Muslims both. Muslim chroniclers like Pir Ghulam Hasan call her Lalla Arifa and Rabia the saint.³⁸

³⁴ Vijaya Ramaswamy, op.cit., p.78

³⁵ Barsanelal Chaturvedi, Meera Padaali (Sahitya Snagam, Mathura, 1965), p.66

³⁶ H.T. Tipperudraswami, op.cit., p.163

³⁷ Prem Nath Bazaz, Daughters of the Vitasta, p. 132

³⁸ Vijaya Ramaswamy, op.cit., p.88

Conclusion

The Brahman superiority, foreign invasions and various superstitions and convictions inherent to Indian society created antagonism between communities. However, emergence of Bhakti and various other similar movements which were initiated by common people are a testimony that the communal antagonism was only in the interest of the ruling and the religious elite. The discontentment experienced by the masses created hostilities in the society. The elite propagated such a situation to their own benefit. The Bhakti movement provided an opportunity for strong communal bonds and peace and harmony in a society. Bhakti Movement celebrates equality, peace and unity amongst a community. Similarly the Sufi saints spread their message of love. Sufis and Bhakats believed that to attain unity with God, you have to love him in totality. Kabir and Guru Nanak liberally propagated Islamic as well as Hindu traditions of Love. Guru Arjan Dev (1567-1606) asked his contemporary, Hazrat Mian Mir, also known as Sai Mian Mir, to lay the foundation stone of the Golden Temple. Mian Mir according to the oral Sufi traditions, barred Emperor Aurangzeb from entering his abode. When Aurangzeb arrived at Mian Mir's house to pay him a visit the doorkeeper stopped him at the entrance. Furious Aurangzeb sent a letter to him saying

Dare Darvesh Ra Darbaan Naa'yad

(There shouldn't be a doorkeeper at a dervish's door)

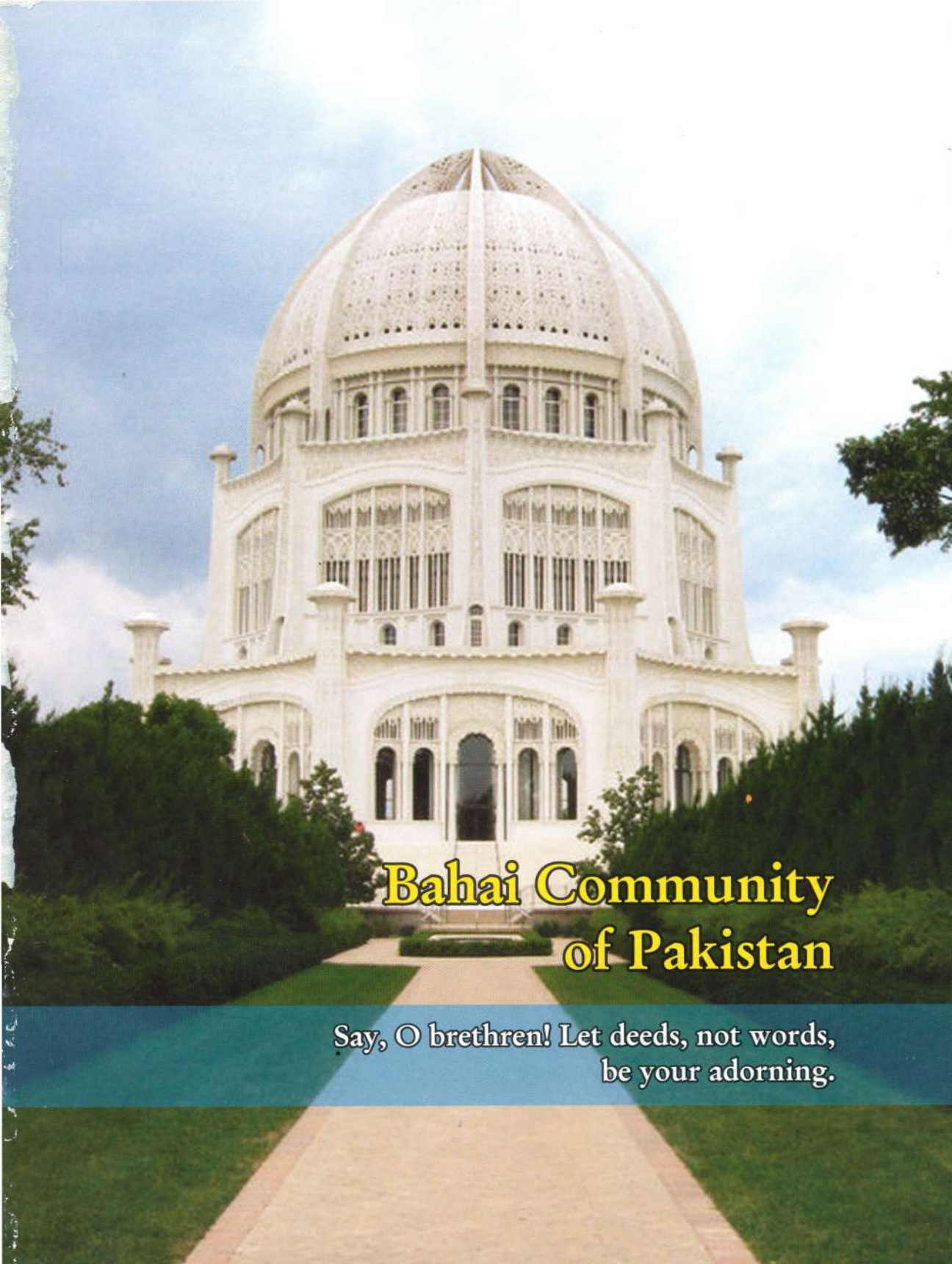
Mian Mir sent a prompt reply:

Ba'ayad Ta Sage Duniya Naa'yad

(There should be one so as to prohibit the entrance of the dog of the world)

In Nov 2004 in order to celebrate the memory of communal integration in medieval India, the fact that Mian Mir laid the foundation stone of the Golden Temple, Indian Punjab Government has established Hazrat Mian Mir Chair at Guru Nanak Dev University. It is continuation of a tradition which spans over a thousand years when Kabir's Ram was also Rahim.

**Part Two: Religious
Communities of Pakistan**



Bahai Community of Pakistan

Say, O brethren! Let deeds, not words,
be your adorning.

3 Bahai Community of Pakistan

Waqar Ahmad

The Faith

Bahaism traces its roots to a shia sect called Babism. Babism was founded by Mirza Ali Mohammed. He was born in a house of a trader in Shiraz in Iran. On May 1844 he declared himself to be a messenger of God in response to the divine command. Ali Mohammed & Haji Mohammed Karim Khan appointed themselves as his successors. On May 23 of the same year Mirza Ali Muhammed declared himself as the 'Bab'. Bab in Arabic means gate. He was able to gather 18 followers & sent them to different places in Iran to propagate of his sect. He himself went to Makkah to perform Hajj. According to reports this is where he proclaimed himself as Imam Mahdi. Due to this, the Islamic scholars severely criticized him & this led to clashes between the two. He was arrested, but he escaped only to be caught soon after. He was put to death on 9th of July 1850. His follower hid his body somewhere in the outskirts of Teheran & it was later sent to *Akka* in Palestine¹.

During his lifetime, Mirza Ali Muhammed had appointed a man named Mirza Yahya as his successor. He was given the title of Subhe Azal, meaning 'everlasting morning'. Yahya was also given Ali Muhammed's personal belongings & the clear authority to explain & comment on Ali Muhammed's writings. Despite of these clear instructions of Ali Muhammed regarding his successor, many other people rose for the claim of successor ship of Ali Muhammed. Mirza Abdullah from Tabriz in Iran was one of them. But soon he was drowned in a river by some Bahais. Soon after Yahya went into recluse & made Nuri the supreme leader.

¹ Viqar Zaman, Gul Afroz Zaman, *Religions of Asia-Unity in Diversity*, Karachi, 2007, pp. 81-82

The followers of Yahya came to be known as Azalis after the Azal in his title & the followers of Nuri came to be known as Bahais. He named himself '**Baha'ullah**'². The Azalis continued to follow the Bayan, written by Ali Muhammed, whereas the Nuri made many changes & alterations in the earlier teachings, which were accepted readily. Later he even extended contacts with Russian Czar, Queen Victoria, Napoleon, the Pope, etc. He praised the Russian Government when it sentenced two Iranians who were charged with the murder of two Bahais to death. He justified it by presenting two 'divine inspirations' in this regard. He later died in May 1892.

After his death, his eldest son, Abbas Effandi succeeded him. He claimed that he was the successor in the wake of continuation of revelation. But many people point out that Baha'ullah himself had stated in his book 'Al Aqdas' that anyone who claimed divine inspiration before the completion of 1000 years of Bahaism was a **liar**. Nevertheless, Abbas quickly overcame these allegations & attained the title of Abdul Baha. He was later conferred the title of 'Sir' by the British government. He died on the 28th of November 1921.³

He was succeeded by his grandson Shoghi Effandi Rabbani. He wrote many books in several languages. He expired in 1957 in London. The 32 Bahais he had appointed during his lifetime took control & established 'The universal house of justice' in an attempt to solve Bahai problems. It has its headquarters in Mount Carmel in Israel.

Baha'ism is said to be the youngest of the world's independent religions. It was founded in Iran in 1863 and incorporates tenets of both Christianity and Islam. The Baha'i faith is open and tolerant when it comes to other religions and belief systems.

According to Bahaism the founders and prophets of the prominent religions of the world (Mohammad, Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus Christ etc.) were all sent to earth by one God to offer spiritual guidance to humanity. In addition to these prophets Baha'ism recognizes the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, seeing them as the most recent spiritual teachers that have walked on earth. Participants in the Baha'i faith believe that the earth will continue to see new and different prophets in the years to come who will continue to offer guidance to humanity.

In Principle the Baha'ism teaches that, all forms of prejudice should be abandoned, Men and women should be equal, all religions are as one, extreme wealth and extreme poverty should be eliminated, education should be compulsory and universal throughout the world, religion should be in harmony with science and reason, it is the responsibility of the individual to search independently for truth and a world federal system should be established to facilitate collective security

² Ibid

³ Ibid

Fundamental Principles and Belief System

Baha'is believes that all the major religions of the world are worshipping one God. From their perspective, the Bahai faith is like the Lord of the palace, helping the blind men (other religions) to understand their common ground. Baha'is believes Jesus was a great prophet/manifestation...but they fail to recognize Him as their God and Savior. For Bahais Jesus is the only 'Bab' (door) to heaven.

Following are the main features of their belief system;

Baha'is believe in the oneness of God, the oneness of religion, and the oneness of mankind. "The Earth is but one country and mankind its citizens."

Bahai's believe that founders of the major religions in the world were all manifestation of the one true God. This includes Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Zoroaster, Buddha, the Bab, Baha'u'llah and others. It is said that "These ... have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of one Light."

Baha'is believes God is one. God is unknowable. Incarnation is not possible. "The door of the knowledge of the Ancient Being [God] hath ever been, and will continue to be, closed in the face of men."

Baha'is do not believe mankind has a sinful nature. They are saved through proper belief and good works. They believe in God's unconditional forgiveness. "From the law man discovers what he owes to God and only in striving to fulfil this law does he come into the right relationship with God."

Baha'is don't say much about the end of the world or afterlife. They believe that heaven and hell are more likely states of mind than they are actual places, "These are not places. Heaven is to know about God and doing what He wants. Hell is not knowing about God or not doing what He wants."

In Baha'ism there are twelve principles for the social and spiritual uplift of man which have more or less become the tenets of this faith, they are;

Unfettered search after truth and the abandonment of all superstitions and prejudice.

The oneness of mankind. All men are 'leaves of one tree and flowers in one garden'

Religion must be cause of love and harmony, else it is no religion.

All religions must go hand in hand with science. Faith and reason must be in full accord

All religions are one in their fundamental principles.

Universal peace: the establishment of a federated international order.

The adoption of an international secondary language which shall be taught in all the schools of the world

Compulsory education and useful training

Equal opportunities for development: equal rights and privileges for both sexes.

Work for all: no idle rich and no idle poor. "Work in the spirit of service in worship"

Abolition of extremes of poverty and wealth, care of the needy

Recognition of the unity of God and obedience to His commands as revealed through His divine manifestations⁴.

The Baha'i pride themselves on the Twelve Principles or twelve teachings, which they promulgate. Baha'i speakers focus heavily on these principles considering that these are the best that can be found in any religion. Seven out of the twelve Principles revolve around Unity. They are:

Unity in the political realm.

Unity in the worldly matters.

Unity in freedom.

Unity in religion.

Unity in the nation.

Unity in the tongue.

Unity in genealogy.

Scriptures

Baha'is treats the writings of Baha'ullah as sacred . The most important of these writings are: The Most Holy Book, The Book of Certitude, The Hidden Words, The Seven Valleys, and Epistle to the Son of the Wolf. On making claims of Prophethood, Bah'ullah and his family were banished from Persia. He lived in Baghdad for some time and then left for Constantinople and publically proclaimed his mission in Adrianople in 1863.

"The most significant book in the Babai faith is the Book which was written by Bahaullah while he was in Palestine. The book Kitabl-I-Aqdas (the holy book), which is the one of the main scriptures of the Bahais. Like other religious books it

⁴ Dr. Hira Lal Chopra, *Baha'ism in India: The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. X-I, Calcutta University Calcutta, April 1976, pp. 87-82

*has obligatory prayers and fasting, condemns backbiting, idleness and cruelty to animals. It forbids the use of intoxicants, gambling, slavery, begging and monasticism. It ordains monogamy and equal rights to women. Every Bahai is commanded to be good citizen wherever he lives and to practice cleanliness, trustworthiness, sexual morality, hospitality, courtesy and justice.*⁵

Baha'is have their own principles of scripture but also accept the Qur'an as the word of God, and the Bible as divinely inspired. However because of the quantity of texts, Baha'i scriptures cover a wide spectrum of topics and have well developed doctrines.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Haziratul Quds

As far as the famous and sacred places of Baha'is in Pakistan are concerned, the Haziratul Quds, occupies famous and historical role in the Bahai faith. On the 2nd April 1930, out of money generously contributed by the believers a piece of land was purchased. Funds were collected and a plan was prepared for the approval. The foundation stone was laid on the 6th November 1931 and the beautiful structure was completed in March 1932. The Hizratul Quds occupies a signifying and dwelling place of the spirit of service which gives life to the Baha'i community

Spiritual Assembly

Another significant place in Baha'I faith is the Spiritual Assembly, which is constructed in Karachi, during 1936. A piece of land close to the Hizratul Quds was endowed to the Spiritual Assembly by Mr. I. K. B. Bakhtiari. In January 1937, Mr. F. Schophlocher, arrived in Karachi on a lecture tour. He delivered three lectures to large audiences, which helped in bringing awareness about the faith in Karachi.

PILGRIMAGE IN BAHAIISM AND PLACES OF WORSHIP

The Hajj

Baha' Allah mandated a *hajj* 'pilgrimage' for Baha'is which involves visiting either the house of the Bab in Shiraz or the house of Baha' Allah in Baghdad and performing a number of rites. Given the difficulties Baha'is face in the Muslim world, the *hajj* is not currently being performed. 'Abdu'l-Baha included visitation without rites to the tomb of Baha' Allah as an obligatory pilgrimage for those who are able and can afford it. In Bahaiism women are exempt to perform this pilgrimage but are allowed if they wish to perform.

⁵ Viqar Zaman, Gul Afroz Zaman, Op, cit, pp, 82-83

The nine-day or three-day pilgrimage to Haifa, which involves visiting the tomb of Baha' Allah as well as buildings and shrines associated with the holy figures of the faith, is the form of pilgrimage with which most Baha'is are familiar with. Strictly speaking either nine-day or three-day pilgrimages could be performed at any time, although Baha'i authorities in Haifa regulate the pilgrimage season and permission is required. Consequently, the waiting list for the nine-day pilgrimage is long.

Houses of Worship

In al-Kitab al-Aqdas, Baha' Allah specified that houses of worship should be built in every locale.⁶ The mashriq al-adhkar 'Dawning-place for the Mention of God' is a special building or place where Baha'is gathers for prayer. 'Abd al-Baha' further described the mashriq al-adhkar as a religious complex which includes a house of worship; hospital; pharmacy; travellers' hospice; school and university. Furthermore the mashriq al-adhkar is open to all faiths, not just Baha'is. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkar is one of the most vital institutions in the world, and it has many subsidiary branches.

- To date, a number of formal houses of worship have been built around the world in Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan (which was demolished in 1963); Wilmette, Illinois; Kampala, Uganda; Sydney, Australia; Frankfurt, Germany; Panama City, Panama; Apia, Samoa and New Delhi, India.
- Similar to mosques, houses of worship may not be decorated with images nor musical instruments be played within its walls.

The burial places, or Shrines, of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and other sites associated with their lives are revered as holy places. The Shrines are located at the Bahá'í World Centre in the Haifa/'Akká area in northern Israel and are the object of pilgrimage for thousands of Bahá'is annually. Bahá'u'lláh designated Bahá'í Houses of Worship as gathering places for prayer and meditation round which will cluster social, humanitarian, educational, and scientific institutions. This conception exemplifies the broad context in which the worship of God, according to the Bahá'í teachings, is to be expressed. So far, seven Houses of Worship have been built, on a continental basis.

The Shrine of Bah'u'llah, the holiest place on earth for Baha'is and the point toward which they turn in prayer each day, is located in Bahj, just north of Akka. It is situated along the road to Nahariyya near the Bustan Hagalil bus stop. The Ben-Ami Army Camp adjoins the Baha'i property. The room in which Bah'u'llah was laid to rest shortly after sunset on the day of His Ascension, 29 May 1892, had been the northernmost room in the home of His son-in-law, Siyyid 'Ali Afnan. Shoghi Effendi, as Head of the Faith, was awarded permanent custody of the Shrine in the early 1920s.

⁶ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas* 29.

He improved the entrance of the Shrine and added the portico in 1940, and erected the carved oak door in 1957. Over the years, this Holy Place has been beautified with formal gardens extending in a large circle around the shrine.

The Shrine of the Bab, one of Haifa's most prominent landmarks, is the Faiths second holiest Shrine. It is the resting-place of the Bab, regarded by Baha'is as a messenger of God whose primary mission was to prepare the way for the coming of BahaAllah. The terraces of the Shrine of the Bab, opened to the public in June 2001, were designed to provide an appropriate setting and approach for pilgrims and visitors to this Baha'i Holy Place.

Because of His challenging teachings, which called for spiritual and moral renewal, the Bab was publicly martyred in 1850. His remains were preserved and concealed for almost 60 years, eventually transferred to the Holy Land, and in 1909 interred in a mausoleum on the slopes of Mount Carmel. The colonnade and golden dome over the mausoleum were completed in 1953. Their design, by a Canadian architect, William Sutherland Maxwell, harmonizes eastern and western proportions and style. The Shrine is a place for quiet prayer and meditation where no ceremonies or religious services are held. A special prayer used by Baha'is when visiting the Shrine, known as the Tablet of Visitation is hung on the wall in both the original Arabic and an English translation.

Historical Roots

The Bahais are prominent minorities of Pakistan. They originated in Iran in the 19th Century, spread and progressed in that century, and that very century witnessed their culmination. Bahaism is not a sect of Islam but a completely different religion. Its adherents hold the belief that faith is simply a natural result of the Law of Human Evolution, therefore which comes later is better and improved form. That is why they believe their religion to be superior to all others. With their migration to India in the 19th Century they got opportunity of a secluded and peaceful existence.

Shiekh Saeed Hindi was the first Indian nominated to tour India to promote and published the teachings of the Bahai faith. During this tour he also visited Multan, where he met Syed Baseer. Although sightless, Syed Baseer, with spiritual insight, imbibed the message that Sheikh Saeed had brought from Iran, and soon afterwards left for that country, to meet Bahaullah.

On 7th July, the same year, for example 1850 Ali Mohammad Bab was assassinated in a square of Tabriz cantonment. At the behest of Bahaullah, an Iranian scholar, Jamal Effendi, toured India after Shiekh Saeed Hindi and came to Bombay in 1872-73. Although a number of Bahais had been living in that city and had made good as traders and businessmen. They had never received any advice or instruction from their centre for propagation of the faith. In any case they proved useful for this purpose. A

business firm by the name of Haji Mirza Suyed Mahmood Co, made arrangement for the stay of Jamal Effendi in the Hussainia Guest House which had been constructed by one Baber Ali of Lucknow.

Mir Syed Mohammed, a Shia was deeply impressed by Jamal Effendi. However, the latter's activities in Bombay were found to be provocative and led to indignation in some circles. For his own safety the Bahais packed him off to Rampur State. There too he continued to preach the faith and manage about a dozen followers. In 1876, Jamal Effendi came to Delhi, and had a meeting with Swami Dayanand Saraswati founder of the Hindu reformist Arya Samaj Movement. Later he went to Hyderabad Deccan where he left a fine impression on Sir, Salar Jang. With Salar Jang's help he also toured Burma. In the meantime he received an urgent request to return to Rampur, where the Nawab's brother renounced the faith to become an atheist. Jamal Effendi, succeeded in prevailing upon him to return to the fold. Now success seemed to crown whatever he did he visited Kashipur, Muradabad, Lucknow, and Banaras. In Banaras he was able to meet many Irani leaders from Calcutta. He then went to Calcutta too and consorted with the number of Bahai Businessmen from Hongkong.

In 1878, Jamal Effendi went again to Burma from Calcutta and travelling through Rangoon and Mandalay went on to (present Indonesia). On his return he made an extensive tour of India and then in 1886 returned to Iran. However, Bahaullah sends him very soon to India again and this time he had Mirza Farjullah Qureshi with him. This time he also paid a visit to Lahore where he achieved quite a bit of success in popularizing the Bahai doctrine. From here, passing through Jammu and Srinagar he journeyed up to Ladakh, Pamir, Yarkand and Bulkh where, because of the bitter cold, he lost some of his toes due to frost bite. After the death of Bahaullah in 1892, Abdul Baha pronounced himself the Messiah and Trustee of God. In order to spread the teachings of the faith he sent out numerous missionaries to India, some itinerant and some permanent. Among the first to go were Mirza Muharram and Mirza Mahmud Zarqani. Spiritual Congresses of the Bahais were held in Karachi as well in Bombay, Puna and Calcutta.⁷ Syed Mustafa of the Madras played a leading role in taking the faith to Burma. Thus, at the turn of the century, Baha'ism had a considerable foothold in Sindh and Punjab and other areas of Pakistan.

As mentioned earlier before the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the Baha'ism organized its teachings and faith during 1872, when Baha'ullah and its author commissioned Jamal Effendi came to Bombay. During their visit they travelled many cities and towns, including Lahore. Wherever he went he delivered fearlessly. Finding college students more receptive to the call of the New Message, they paid special attention to them and won over the faith. Mr. Mohammad Raza Sherazi, who had gone from Karachi to Bombay to complete his studies, embraced the faith there. After

⁷ Dr. Hira Lal Chopra, Op, cit, pp 91-93

completing his studies he returned to Karachi and was appointed as a professor in Karachi. His considerable contribution for the propagation of the faith is significant. The first spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Karachi was established in 1921.

In the beginning the Assembly met at the residence of Messer. I.K.B Bakhtiari and late Khodadad Mondegar. The first Baha'i Monthly in India, 'Al-Basharat' was published in Bombay and from the second year it was published under the editorship of Prof. Sherazi from Karachi. As a result of the activities initiated by Prof. Sherazi, the zeal and courage of believers swelled to such proportions that Karachi was honoured to be the venue of the Third Annual Convention of the Baha'is of India and Burma.

Pakistan: Our Homeland

There are approximately 30,000 Baha'is in Pakistan. After the death of Baha'u'llah and the inauguration of the ministry of Abdu'l-Baha, the Baha'i community in Indian-subcontinent was split as a consequence of the activities of the followers of Mirza Muhammad Ali who had challenged his half-brother's right to legitimate leadership. As a result, Abdu'l-Baha directed a number of prominent emissaries to India, both Persian and Western, to guide the community and encourage teaching. Among these were Mirza Mahmud Zarqani, Aqa Mirza Mahram, Mirza Hasan Adib, Ibin-i-Asdaq, Lua Getsinger, Mrs. H. Stanndard, Sidney Sprague, Hooper Harris and Harlan Ober. By 1908 the work of these individuals along with a small group of local converts had produced functioning communities in Bombay, Calcutta, Aligarh and Lahore.

The Babi movement, the predecessor to the Baha'i faith, had some connections with Pakistan. Two of the most important Babi histories mention of several prominent Indian believers. The major Baha'i historian for this period, Muhammad-i Zarandi, Nabil-i Azam, informs us that one of the Bab's original disciples was an Indian known as Shaykh Sa'id-i-Hindi. Following instructions he took the Bab's claims through several provinces of Iran and into his own homeland. The fruits of this latter venture, however, were far from productive, as his only success was the conversion of some sayeds in the town of Multan.⁸

The Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahai's in Pakistan dates back from 1904, when Lahore, the ancient historic and cultural capital of Punjab was first visited by Mirza Mahmood in 1904 he brought Prof. Pritam Singh with him who later on stayed in Pakistan and started preaching the faith. He also started publishing Bahai Weekly. By 1941 three new local communities with functioning assemblies had been established: Hyderabad, Kota and Bangalore. The next year saw three more local spiritual assemblies established, and several Baha'I groups (communities with less than nine members) were also formed. The rigorous teaching efforts continued during the final

⁸ Nabil-i A'zam (Muhammad-i Zarandi), *The Dawnbreakers*, trans.and ed. By Shoghi Effendi, (Baha'i Publishing Committee, New York, 1932), p. 652.

years of the plan, and by its completion date in 1944 the Indian community was comprised of twenty-nine local spiritual assemblies. 1947 Partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, the Four Year Plan met with much the same results as its predecessor. By April, 1947, an additional eight local spiritual assemblies had been created and the same number of groups established⁹. In 1944, Karachi Spiritual Assembly sent out pioneers to Lahore and as assembly was formed.

Between 1945-50 Spiritual Assemblies in Multan, Hyderabad, Sukkur, and Rawalpindi were established. The chronology of the establishment of these assemblies as follows;

- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Layllpur 1952
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Sargodha, 1955
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Joharabad, 1956
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Nawabshah, 1956
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Montgomery, 1956
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Abbottabad, 1953
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Gujranwala and Mirpur Khas April 1956
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Sialkot, 1949
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Chittagond 1950
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Dacca, 1950
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Mastug, 1955
- Establishment of Spiritual Assembly in Peshawar, 1947

After the creation of Pakistan, the international Bahai community resolved to develop 13 new National Spiritual Assemblies across the world. The name of Pakistan was also included in those countries. This news was appreciated by the Pakistani community. They rose with the determination and started their efforts for the cause. During 1956 their consecrated endeavours resulted in rise in the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies from 13 to 16.

Convention was held in Pakistan, in which participants from Pakistan, Burma and India participated. Mr. Isfandiar Bakhtiari, President of the sponsoring National Spiritual Assembly then called the convention to order and the election of office bearers for the convention. Mr. Isfandiar was elected as President and Mr. Nawazish Ali Shah as Secretary. Following this election was held on 29th April – the 9th day of Ridwan for the National Spiritual Assembly.

⁹ *The Baha'i World*, vol.IX, 1940-1944, (Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, 1945), p. 60.

Following were the elected to constitute the First National Spiritual Assembly of Pakistan:

- a. Mr. Isfandiar Bakhtiari
- b. Chaudhri Abdur Rehman
- c. Mr. Faridoon Yazameidi
- d. Mr. A.C. Joshi
- e. Mr. M. H. Ilmi
- f. Mr. Abdul Abbas Rizvi
- g. Dr. M. A . Latif
- h. Mr. Nawazish Ali Shah
- i. Mr. Mehbood Illah Qureshi

CUSTOMS

Purpose of Religion

The religion occupies a very important role in the community. For Bahais the fundamental purpose of the religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst its followers.

The concept of unity occupies very prominent and dominant role in the Bahaism. For the Baha'is the religion must be the cause of unity, harmony and agreement among the mankind.

The Bahais believe that if the religion is the cause of discord and hostility and if it leads to separation and creates conflict, the absence of the religion would be preferable in the world.

Prayers and Fasting

There are no initiation rites, priesthood or sacraments in the Baha'i religion. However, Baha'is has certain duties, and are obliged to pray every day. Their prayer differs from that practiced by Muslims. Baha'is also meets on the first day of each Baha'i month for celebration; to fast from dawn to sunset during the month of 'Ala (while Muslims fast in Ramadan). They fast every ear, from March 2 to 21. They also avoid drugs or alcohol, avoid membership of political parties, and observe particular holy days such as the birth of Baha'ullah and the martyrdom of the 'Bab'. Emphasis is placed in their propagation on the unity of humanity and the absolute equality of men and women, and the Baha'is see themselves as working towards the establishment of a world government which will eradicate extremes of wealth and poverty. Baha'i *salat* 'compulsory ritual prayer' will be recognisable to those familiar with Islamic prayer although the content and form of the *salat* differs considerably. Baha'is are obliged to pray *salat* daily after performing ablutions by washing the hands and face and standing in the direction of Baha' Allah's tomb which is the Baha'i *qiblah*. To fulfill the

obligation of *salat*, which may only be performed individually and not in congregation, the believer is given a choice of performing at least one from three prayers composed by Baha' Allah. The prayers can be performed in whichever language the believer chooses.

As well as *salat*, Baha'is are required to recite al-ism al-a'zham 'the Greatest Name' ninety-five times daily after ablutions. Baha'is are also encouraged to pray using supplications and devotions penned by the major figures of the Baha'i religion. The prayers of the Bab and Baha' Allah have particular significance, a number of which are held to have a special power when recited by the believer. The concept of ritual impurity has been abrogated in Baha'i shari'ah. Instead ablutions, consisting of washing the hands and face, are performed preceding each time ritual acts of worship are to be performed.¹⁰ Baha'is are encouraged to say special fasting prayers composed by Baha' Allah, and the spiritual meaning of the fast, as an obligation performed for the sake of God.

Marriage

To start up with the very first and one of the basic fundamental customs that occupies very important place in Baha'i faith is the social law of the Marriage. The Bahai faith has made marriage conditional upon the consent of both parties and of their parents. Baha'is take marriage very seriously as they believe it is intended to be a spiritual relationship which will last for eternity. Baha'is is expected to be completely chaste before marriage and totally faithful within marriage. The couple must be free to choose one another and the parents have no right to interfere. When the couple have made their choice, they must get their parent's approval. Once approval has been given, the marriage should take place within 3 months.

Divorce

As far as divorce is concerned, it is permitted in the Baha'i faith, but is strongly discouraged in the Bahai society. The Bahaism is against the divorce and strictly dejects the evil of divorce in the society. Marriage is considered such an important bond that although divorce is allowed between Baha'is, it is to be avoided if at all possible. It should only be considered if the couple develop a real dislike for each other. If the couple decide that they can no longer stay together, they must announce their intention to divorce and then live apart for one year.

¹⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1992) p.47

Festivals

The Baha'i calendar consists of 19 months of 19 days each, with the remaining 4 days devoted to a celebration called Ayyam-I-Ha. A feast is celebrated on the first day of each month combining community worship, a business meeting and socialising. Baha'is celebrates 11 holy days each year. With the exception of Naw-Ruz, all of these holidays commemorate key events in the lives of the central figures of the faith.

Being the youngest of the world's religions the Baha'i faith has introduced a calendar which it would like to see universally applied. At the centre of the Baha'i faith is a desire for oneness. "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens" (Baha'u'llah).

- Festival of the New Year - March 21st
- Festival of the first day of Ridvan - April 21st
- Festival of the ninth day of Ridvan - April 29th
- Festival of the twelfth day of Ridvan - May 2nd
- The festival of the declaration of the Bab May 23rd at 2 hours and 11 mins after sunset
- Commemoration of the Ascension of Baha'u'llah - May 29th
- Commemoration of the Martydom of the Bab - July 9th
- Celebration of the Birth of the Bab - October 20th
- Celebration of the Birth of the Baha'u'llah - November 12th
- Day of the covenant - November 26th
- Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha - November 28th
- Period of the Fast - 19 days beginning the 2nd March ends on festival of the New Year

Naw Ruz is a famous celebration which is observed in March 21. It is a new years Day, celebration Since Naw-Ruz calls for celebrations for, it marks the end of fasting, the Báb permitted the use of musical instruments and other luxuries prohibited at other times.

First Day of Ridvan. The Festival of Ridvan is a 12-day period to commemorate Baha'u'llah's declaration on the eve of his departure from Baghdad for Constantinople in 1863. Local and National Spiritual Assemblies are elected on this day. The Bahais commemorates this day and suspend all works on this day.

Ninth Day of Ridvan. The Bahais celebrate this day on April 29. This day commemorates the arrival of members of Baha'u'llah's family in the Najibiyyih Garden. All work and activities are suspended on this day.

Twelfth Day of Ridvan, in commonly observed in May. This day commemorates the departure of Baha'u'llah for Constantinople and bring to a close the Festival of Ridvan.

The Declaration of the Bab: May 23. The Bab declared his mission to Mulla Husain on this day in 1844, marking the inception of the Baha'i era.

The Ascension of Baha'u'llah. This day is observed on May 29. This is the day when Baha'u'llah died in 1892. They hold commemoration and suspend all of their activities¹¹

The Martyrdom of the Bab – July 9. This day occupies very important place in Bahaism, it was considered as the Martyrdom of Bab, when he was executed by firing squad on this day in 1850. At noon they hold commemoration ceremony

The Birth of the Bab – October 20. This date commemorates the birth of the Bab in 1819.

The Birth of Baha'u'llah – November 12. This date commemorates the birth of Baha'u'llah in 1817.

The Day of the Covenant – November 26. Abdu'l-Baha did not permit the celebrations of his birthday, as it falls on May 23 as it is the same day as the Declaration of the Bab so he designated this day for the celebration.

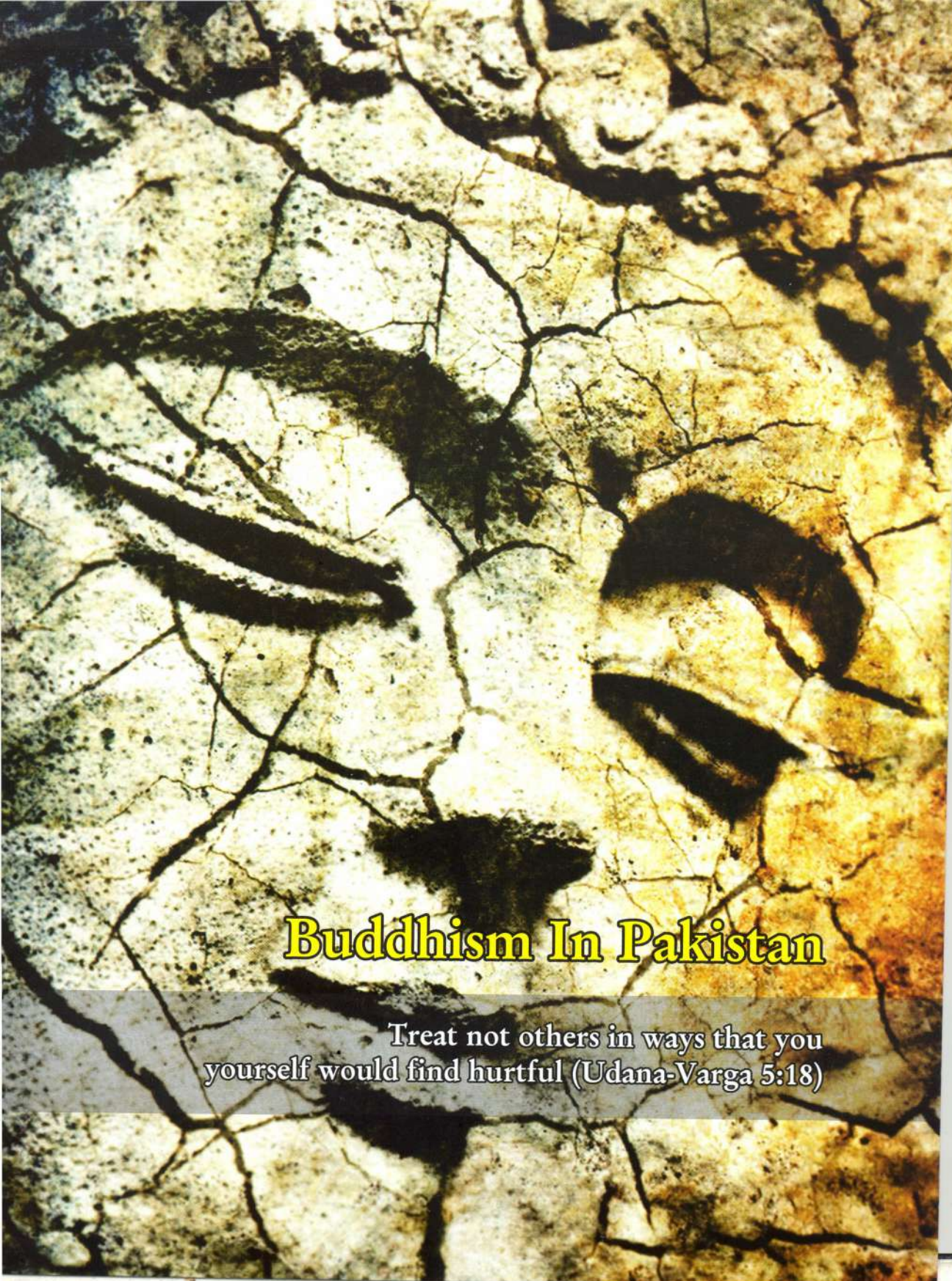
The Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha – November 28. Abdu'l-Baha died on this day in 1921.¹²

Towards a Composite Culture

Bahaism as discussed in detail is religion which is strictly monotheistic but accepts all religions as revealed truths. The main purpose of this religion is to bring unity of mankind in and through God. The Bahai teachings regard the unification of mankind as the paramount issue both in religious and political terms. The diversity of race and culture are seen as worthy of appreciation and tolerance. Doctrines of nationalism, caste, racism and social class are regarded as impediments to the unity of mankind. Every human is required to recognize God and his manifestations through service to fellow humans, this is the message of Bahaism, and this is the fact parallel to the teachings and basic tenants of Islam.

¹¹ Christian Roy, *Traditional Festivals: A Multicultural Encyclopaedia*, ABC-CLIO Publication, 2005, p, 392
395

¹² Ibid



Buddhism In Pakistan

Treat not others in ways that you
yourself would find hurtful (Udana-Varga 5:18)

4 Buddhism in Pakistan

Ra'ana Dilruba Yasmin

Buddhism is the teachings of Gautam Bhuddha, it beliefs that suffering is inherent in life and that one can be liberated from it by mental and moral purification.

The word Buddha means awakened, enlightened, the one who knows all and wise. This is a title for the teacher of the ultimate truth. Lord Buddha is therefore the enlightened teacher, and his followers are known as Buddhists.

Exact date of Prince Gautama Siddhartha's birth is not known. However, it is said that he was born on a full moon night in the month of May around 560 B.C to Queen Maya of Kapilavastu while on her way to her mother's home in the Lumbini forest, in the Southern part of Nepal. His father was King Shuddodhana of Kapilavastu; he belonged to the Shakya clan. Gautama Buddha died around 400 B.C. 1

The story of Buddhism is approximately 2500 years old and had a tremendous impact on the human civilization. It was a revolt against the caste system of which Gautama Siddhartha was an integral part; he was born and raised in the Kshatrya or the warrior caste. He brought in a new epoch where all men were equal. His teachings brought about an egalitarian society where a man was not judged by the wealth he was born into. The criterion for success was what he made himself to be, by his thoughts, words and actions. Buddha said that human birth was suffering and torture, but there was an escape from this suffering and the cycle of rebirth. If a man is able to follow Buddha's philosophy there is a way he can avoid this suffering.

¹ Raja Tridiv Roy, Buddhism and Gandhara Civilisation, International Conference on 'Pakistan the cradle of an ancient civilisation' Islamabad- November 2005 p 30,

THE FAITH

Fundamental Principles

In order to understand Buddhism one needs to address the basic tenets of its philosophy; the four essential noble truths put together making one whole. It can be best expressed as follows:

"There is suffering in this world and there is a way out of it; there is Nirvana."

According to this philosophy, suffering is inherent and omnipresent. Birth, old age, death, diseases, unpleasant situations, separation from the loved one, anguish, not realizing one's desires and wishes, lamentations, being distraught, all of these constitute suffering. Thus, he taught that suffering was only a realistic view and the truth of life.

Buddha taught that nothing is permanent or *anicca*, *anatta* and full of suffering or *dukkha*. These are known as the three *lakshanas* or marks, at a later period one more was added to these marks and it was *shunya* or void. This mark was the most fundamental doctrine of one of the most important schools of Buddhism named Madhyamika, founded by Acharya Nagarjuna (Nagarjuna is considered the greatest dialectician after the Buddha). In addition, 'self' in Buddhism is insignificant; 'self' must be annihilated to attain enlightenment. It is this attachment to 'self' that leads to unending miseries and sufferings in life.²

It emphasizes on the Four Noble Truths that a man must accept and these were part of the first Sermon at Sarnath, after his Enlightenment at Bodhi-Gaya, that Gautama Buddha delivered: a) The Noble Truth of Suffering, b) The Noble Truth of Arising of Suffering, craving *Trishna* or *Tanha*, c) The Noble Truth of cessation or *Nirodha* of Suffering, or *Nibanna*, d) The Noble Truth of the Path or *Magga*(*Marga*), leading to the cessation of Suffering which would be the Noble Eight-fold Path.

Buddha was a spiritual teacher. If Buddhism is a religion, there is no concept of God in it. The state of suffering was not because a God or any higher power willed it to be so. He taught that every cause has an effect; every action caused by us has an opposite and equal reaction. Thus the cause of suffering was our own selfish craving (*Tanha*), leading to wants, desires, lust and seeking the pleasures of life. Craving is unending and it manifests in many ways; apart from a desire for power, wealth, position or status, it is also attachments to ideas, beliefs, theories, views and opinions.³ All of this leading to countless births, re-births and re-incarnations. However, Buddhism is not pessimism, in pessimism there is no escape from suffering. Buddha teaches that one can get away from the suffering by doing good deeds and following the Eight-Fold Path leading to Cessation of Suffering, and evidently, circumventing the cycle of reincarnation, thus attaining the ultimate Truth and Bliss. This path is

² Buddhism Part-1, p 4, 5,6

³ Ibid - p2

recognized as *Ariya-Attangika Magga* or *Ashtangika Marga*; this is spiritual in nature and has eight *angas* or elements:

- a) Right Understanding
- b) Right Thought
- c) Right Speech
- d) Right Action
- e) Right Livelihood
- f) Right Effort
- g) Right Mindfulness
- h) Right Concentration

"In Buddhism, morality is at the very core of its teachings, not something apart" said Dr B.R Ambedkar; he also says "With other religions", "morality is like a wagon which can be attached or detached at will. In the case of Buddha Dharma morality is the very basis of it."

Like the religions of Hinduism and Jainism, Buddhism also believes in the theory of *Karma*, however Buddhists do not believe that any higher power, God or omnipotent, omniscient deity intervenes and rewards or punishes man for his or her wrong or right actions. Buddhism believes that one's good *Karma* will result in good and bad *karma* or evil actions will result in similar effects on one's life. Every action in life creates an impression or imprint, and based on this impression or imprint it's determined what life is to give us in return.⁴

In the stories of *Jataka* about the five hundred and fifty previous lives of Buddha it gives illustrations of the inexorable law of *Karma* or cause and effect, non- ego, compassion and sacrifice for the welfare of others. Nothing is permanent, it is a constant flow of phenomenon, in a perpetual flux and thus dynamic. There is coming into being, existence and then dissolution. There is no durable ego or self. Buddha's last advice to his followers was: 'Be islands unto your selves. Take no external refuge. Subject to decay are all compounded things, strive with diligence'.⁵

Buddha rejected the caste system totally and spoke against it vehemently. He said that man is to be judged by his actions and not by his status at birth. His council (the Sangha) of followers consisted men of high birth such as Ananda, Devadatta, and his son Rahula. His chief disciple Sariputta was a Brahmin but his council also consisted of the humble born such as Upali, a barber by birth. He reached a high position and earned great respect in the fraternity of monks.⁶

⁴ Buddha – Part 1 – p7

⁵ Raja Tridiv Roy, Op. cit. p 32

⁶ Ibid

Buddhism believes in re-birth, but does not believe in the permanency of soul or *atman*. It believes that man will go through cycles of re-birth until such time that he is liberated by his good thoughts, words and actions. The Buddhist idea of *Nirvana* does not have a place for life or death, nor existence or non-existence. There is no concept of Heaven or Hell as such.⁷ The idea of *Nirvana* simply refers to ultimate peace, bliss, truth and reality. This reality is transcendental, and cannot be touched, felt, known or imagined by humans and it is not like anything that has been seen. This is beyond one's imagination, conception or understanding. The true nature of *Nirvana* can only be understood by experiencing it and realizing it. An enlightened one, like the Buddha, can only understand this phenomenon because he perceives and comprehends what *Nirvana* really is. Therefore, for human beings to understand, *Nirvana*, they first have to have inner enlightenment.

Buddha taught that travelling the middle path was the way to ultimate peace and liberation.⁸ One must avoid any extreme, the view that the world exists externally is an extreme view; viewing the world is annihilated eternally is also an extreme view. The right view would be to leave these views and aspire to achieve Nirvana. As mentioned earlier, the way to achieve Nirvana is to follow the eightfold middle path in deeds and thoughts.

Thus Buddhism is the way of knowledge. It attempts to seek right knowledge, not only intellectual and scientific knowledge but it lays emphasis on gaining knowledge through intuition. The mysteries of the spirit are penetrated by intuition. However, Buddha's teaching supports a rational way of looking at things, this attitude is based on reason and experience. It discourages acceptance of any doctrine just because it is written in books. It encourages the follower to think deeply, reflect and accept a teaching only when convinced. He also advised not to accept his teachings only because of respect for him, but to accept them after critically examining them. The fundamental experience of Buddha's teachings is based on the experience of enlightenment that Buddha had. After the enlightenment, the Buddha referred to himself as *Tathagata*, "Thus come" or "Thus gone". In the Buddhist commentaries, there are various meanings of *Tathagata*, like the previous Buddhas.

Although the Buddha was referred to as *Bhagavan*, or blessed with all power, splendour, fame, wealth and knowledge, it does not mean that he was God because in Buddhism there is no concept of God. It is used as a term of reverence and respect. Currently the English dictionaries give the meanings as 'Lord, Blessed One' and, 'Exalted One'.⁹

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Harban Singh Lal Mani Josh, An Introduction to Indian Religions – The Buddhist Religion – p 164, 165

⁹ Buddha, op. cit, Part 1 – p 4

Schools of Buddhism

There are two main schools of thoughts evolved from Buddhism. One is known as Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle; later it has come to be known as Theravada, and the second one known as the Mahayana or the Greater Vehicle.¹⁰ Most Buddhists in Burma, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Laos, Cambodia, and in the hill tracts of Chittagong, Bangladesh follow the Theravada. Whereas, the Mahayana school of teaching is followed in China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, Mongolia, Bhutan, Sikkim and Vietnam. The Mahayana school of thought is considered as a later but expanded version of the Orthodox Theravada teachings which the Mahayanas referred to as Hinayana meaning the Lesser Vehicle. However, the Theravadians consider the Mahayana teachings as extrapolations. In the Mahayana teachings, the Bodhisttava Ideal is greatly emphasised encouraging one to postpone achievement of Nirvana and dedicate oneself to the service of all living beings; and the three Bodies of Buddha.

In both these schools of thought, the Bodhisttava is the Buddha who is to come in the future.¹¹ This future Buddha is said to be Moitri or Mettye (the Benevolent the Compassionate) and presently is at the Tusita Heaven. In Buddhism, Buddhas appear from time to time as guides for humans; they are not gods or divinities.

Gautama Buddha had established an order of monks known as Sanghas. These Sanghas comprised of monks who were elected and were very knowledgeable. They helped to chronicle and revise the texts from time to time. Under these a number of Buddhist Councils took place. The first such council was held soon after Buddha died during the reign of Ajatashatru. It was held in Maghada where Buddha's cousin and attendant Ananda who had an extraordinary memory, reiterated what he had heard from Buddha himself. Thus the Pali texts always begin with Ananda's "Thus have I heard".¹²

There were six different Councils or synods held to revise and record Buddhist texts. The second council took place in Vaisali in 383 B.C., hundred years after Buddha's passing away. The third Buddhist Council was held at Pataliputra under the president ship of Moggaliputta

Amongst the six different Councils held, the fourth one was held in the 1st century AD under the patronage of King Kanishka, the most illustrious of the Kushana Kings. This was held at Pushpapura or modern day Peshawar in Pakistan. It is during this time that he moved his capital from Pushkalavati, modern day Charsadda, to Peshawar. Kanishka had Buddha's teachings engraved on copper plates.

¹⁰ Raja Tridiv Roy, *Buddhism and Gandhara Civilisation*, International Conference on 'Pakistan – the Cradle of an Ancient Civilisation' Islamabad – November 2005

¹¹ Raja Tridiv Roy, *op. cit.* p. 34

¹² *Ibid* p. 33

In 1956, Raja Tridiv Roy an eminent Buddhist, represented Pakistan for a similar Council held in Rangoon, Burma. This was the sixth Buddhist Council to record.¹³

After Buddha, eighteen different schools of thought evolved.

Scriptures and Languages Used

The Buddha's teachings can be classified in two main groups. The first consisted of teachings on moral and ascetic discipline meant especially for the monks and nuns. The second group contained discourses on fundamental doctrines; these were meant for laymen and monks alike. The early Buddhist Scriptures are collectively known as *Tripitaka* or the three baskets; they are the sacred literature of Buddhists of the *Theravada* School, the *Tripitaka* preserves words of the Buddha and is divided into three parts:¹⁴

- a) Vinaypitaka
- b) Suttapitaka and
- c) Abhidhammapitaka

The Vinaypitaka contains the rules of conduct as taught by Buddha regarding the monks, many episodes and events associated with the functioning and development of the Sangha and the two Buddhist Councils.

The Suttapitaka contains the collection of Buddha's sermons and dialogues on Dhammas or Dharma. They are five in number and they are known as Nikayas. They are as follows:

- Dighanikaya (a collection of long discourses)
- Majjhimanikaya (medium discourses)
- Samyuttanikaya (mixed discourses)
- Anguttaranikaya (graduated discourses)
- Khuddhakanikaya (miscellaneous small and big texts including Jatakas and the Dhammapada or Dharmapada)

The Abhimmapitaka (the higher or additional explanation of dharma) contains seven texts which enumerate and explain Buddhist concepts and technical terms. These seven texts discuss matters of philosophical and psychological interest.

The most popular texts are the Dhammapada or Dharmapada (verses on the Buddhist doctrine) the Jatakas (stories relating to the former lives of Buddha) and the Suttanipata, (collection of verses of Buddha's sermons interspersed with few introductions of prose). The Khuddakapatha (short verses in other parts of the scriptures) are also recited in Buddhist ceremonies by the monks.

¹³ Ibid p. 34

¹⁴ Buddhism op. cit. -p 8, 9

The Mahayana Schools have their own sacred scriptures the Mahayana sutras, it is also known as Valpulya sutras or large discourses; these sermons are supposed to have been delivered in various places in the early part of his career. They are discussions between the Buddha and the bodhisattvas or future Buddhas or ones in the making on different doctrinal matters. Prajnaparamita sutras are the most important Mahayana scriptures; they contain Gautama Buddha's discourses on the perfection of wisdom or prajnas.

Gautama Buddha's words are the basic sources of Dharma or religious teaching, rules, laws and disciplines. His teachings were learnt by heart with great care and to the minutest of details and accuracy. The Buddhist monks and sages preserved them as they were for a very long time. But as the spread of Buddhism continued, it was difficult to interpret them into different languages. Therefore He encouraged the Buddhavani to be made available in the local languages.

Buddha delivered his sermons in at least three languages. In his discourses with Brahmins, he spoke Vedic Sanskrit. To commoners his discourses were in their own dialects. When he travelled through Koshala he used the language spoken there and while journeying through Magadha to spread his message he spoke in Maghadi. He apparently, refused to allow two Brahmin Buddhist monks to versify his teachings into Vedic language. Thus, the Buddhist sacred scriptures were written in many different languages, and there was no special language to sanctify the religious texts. It was open to all who wanted to have access to the message of Buddha. As a result, the message of the Buddha in ancient India was written in Pali, Prakrit, Sanskrit, Maghadhi, Gandhari and Brahmi. The Dharmapada, an anthology of sacred verses was written in Gandhari, a form of Prakrit. This language is assumed to have been used by the people in living in Gandhara, which is modern day Peshawar and Rawalpindi areas and Uddiyana, modern day Swat. However, much of these scriptures in these languages no longer exist. Pali was the most used language for Buddhist literature in ancient India, the other language was Sanskrit. Sanskrit used in Buddhist scriptures was different than Sanskrit used by the Bhramins; the Buddhist Sanskrit is even used today. Much of this written in birch barks was discovered in Gilgit, Pakistan. Very recently, archaeologists in Pakistan also discovered some ancient Buddhist manuscripts near Taxila. These fragmented manuscripts, have been dated to the 1st century; they have been compared to the Dead Sea Scrolls and have been given the same importance.

The Milindapanha (questions of Milinda) an important Buddhist text written in Pali, composed around 100 BC, consists of the dialogues between Menander, the Greek ruler of Punjab and Nagasena, a Buddhist sage. King Menander converted to Buddhism.

Places of Worship

Buddhism is a philosophy which believes in improving the quality of one's life and of the others around. Its aim is to eradicate conflict and suffering. This can be achieved by cultivating good thoughts, speech and deeds. A human being can thus achieve Nirvana, the Ultimate Truth and Bliss of being and not being. Buddha himself never spoke about any gods, goddesses or a Supreme Being. When he was asked about it he remained silent; he did not deny or acknowledge the existence of a Higher Being.

Based on this philosophy Buddhists do not worship any idols in the general sense of the term, however, they do revere the 'Tathagata' the Buddha by visiting stupas or Pagodas where the Buddha's relics are preserved. Here they may bow to the Buddha's statue, light incense or candles, and place 11 bowls in front of Buddha. This is in reverence to the Enlightened One, known as the compassionate and the Benevolent. This is how Buddha is depicted in all the Gandhara sculptures in the North and Northwest Pakistan and to the South as far as Sindh.

Ashoka, the great Mauryan King of Pataliputra, Maghada had built 84, 0000 stupas all over his empire. In the seventh century AD, Hsuan-Tsang observed several thousand stupas and caityas in the Sub-Continent. Al Beruni in the eleventh century AD saw remains of a great stupa built by Kanishka near Peshawar. Worshipping a stupa came into Buddhist culture, after five hundred years after Buddha. The Bodhi tree or the peepal (banyan) tree is also revered. In Gaya, Buddha sat under a banyan tree and meditated, this is where he received Enlightenment. One tree an offspring of the original tree was seen by Hieun Tsnag, a Chinese traveller in Peshawar during Kanishka's reign. When Babar the Mughal King came to India almost a thousand years later, he also found a sapling which belonged to the same tree.

Pilgrimage

A Buddhist must go on a pilgrimage to places which have significance to the events in the life of Gautama Buddha. Travelling to the birthplace of Buddha, Lumbini, at the foothills of Nepal, Budh Gaya where Siddhartha received enlightenment and became Buddha the 'Tathagata' (thus come and thus gone), to Sarnath where Buddha delivered his first sermon and to Kushinagar where the Buddha had his Mahaparinirvana where he died. In the Mahaparinirvana, Sutra/Sutta, the Tathagata are recommended to his devotees to make pilgrimage in order to cultivate detachment and refresh their spirituality.

In Pakistan, the Swat Valley is very important for the Buddhists. This area was known as Uddyana, or the Garden; it was included in the Gandhara region, which was the cradle of Buddhist civilisation. Travellers and monks came from all over to pay homage to where once Buddha, as the legend goes, was said to have appeared in person and was reborn as the second Buddha. Swat, acquired fame as a place of Buddhist pilgrimage and learning.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

The Origin in Pakistan and Our Home

Pakistan takes pride in a rich Buddhist heritage; the seat of the Gandhara Civilisation extending from Chinese Turkestan in the North and Central Asia to the Karakorams; the Himalayas, the North West Frontier Province, Kashmir, the Punjab to upper Sindh.¹⁵

Initially, Buddhism was confined to monasteries, but eventually while Buddha was still alive; it spread far and wide from Maghada, Bihar, Orissa and present Uttar Pradesh, to Gandhara in North-West Pakistan. During Ashoka's, Kanishka of the Kushan dynasty, and Harshavardana reigns the message of The Master was spread to China, Tibet Korea and Japan, and eventually to South East Asia and Sinhala (Sri Lanka). In the 3rd century BC, Buddha renounced the royal life, for a life of an ascetic. He wanted to seek the right path to end the sufferings of humanity. He came to the conclusion that the middle path leads to Nirvana, eternal Bliss where nothing existed yet existed, where there was no place for the ego, and there was 'nothing' and there was no attachment to 'self'. Compassion for all living beings are the basic teachings of Buddha. The teachings of Buddha gave a new direction to the philosophical, ethical, moral, social and the religious thoughts.

Alexander came to the Sub continent and the region was introduced to the Graeco-Bactrians. The rulers converted to Buddhism, the Gandhara, according to Greek historians once had the whole lower valley of the Kabul River down to the Indus. It included Bajaur, Swat, and Buner on the north-east and the Kohat Toi in the south; Qandahar, Kabul, Hunza, Skardu, Swat, areas of Hindukush, parts of Kashmir the entire North West Frontier Province, including the Peshawar Valley. The earliest reference to Gandhara was found in the Bihistun inscription of Darius (c.516). This area was a subject of the Achaeminian Empire, until Gandhara was invaded by Alexander the Great in 327 B.C. Under the reign of Selucas Nicator, the successor of Alexander, the Macedonian Dominion began to disintegrate forcing Selucas to surrender all claims to the territories south of the Hindukush region to Chandragupta Maurya, the great Indian Emperor of the Mauryan Dynasty.¹⁶ After Alexander's death, the Macedonian control over their extended territories weakened and this resulted in a continued struggle at the North-Western frontiers of the Hindu Indian Empire of Chandragupta Maurya. This challenge induced a ramification and as a result, this entire region was incorporated as a part of the Mauryan Empire.

After Chandragupta Maurya's death, his grandson Ashoka came to power. He studied under Uppagupta, and converted to Buddhism, Gandhara adopted the

¹⁵ Wikipedia, Hindu and Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan

¹⁶ M.A. Shakur, A Guide to Peshawar Museum, Chapter 1 – History and Art of Gandhara History – p1

teachings of Buddha for the next one thousand years. This had a profound impact on the history of the Sub Continent. The Rock Edicts of Ashoka at Shabazgarhi, in Mardan is a living proof of the proclamation of Buddhist law in the Gandhara Kingdom.¹⁷ During Ashoka's rule Buddhism reigned supreme. Ashoka 'enthusiasm spread the message of Buddha to Central Asia, Tibet, China and as far as Japan. The names of the missionaries who were sent are still preserved. Maddhyantika was sent to preach Buddhism in Gandhara, the entire Kashmir, the North-West Frontier, the North Punjab and the lower Indus Valley which constituted the part of the Mauryan Empire during that period. In the Gandhara area the foundation of Buddhist iconography was laid and consequently was replicated and reproduced wherever Buddhism flourished. Most importantly, Gandhara was the meeting point of Hellenism with Buddhism. Thus the meeting of east and the west gave rise to a unique synthesis of art and culture.

The Mauryan Empire began to disintegrate after the death of Ashoka 231 B.C. Gandhara, being one of the distant provinces, located in a terrain that was not easily accessible, broke away and gained independence. But, this independence was not to last for long. The Bactrian Greeks of the ancient Bactrian province, what is now Balkh, and surrounding areas, under Prince Diodotus, invaded the Seleucid Empire and extended its frontiers up to Gandhara; whereas Arsaces a Parthian, another unknown Greek dynasty who claimed Iran, infiltrated through the northern terrain of the sub-continent and conquered up to the East, as far as the Indus in 250 B.C. In 190 B.C. Demetrius of Bactria, grandson of Diodotus, crossed over the Hindu Kush and annexed the Kabul Valley and Gandhara. The influence, as a result of succession of Hellenic rule in this region, changed the cultural life of the people of Gandhara. The most outstanding of these monarchs was Milinda or Menander; he extended his control farther east than Alexander did. According to Strabo, in the 'Questions of Milinda' or Millindapanha, a Buddhist romance, scribed in Pali, in which, Menander was the major player, Milinda ruled the city of Sagala, modern day Sialkot. As the book Millindapanha states, Menander was influenced by Nagasena, an enlightened Buddhist sage; he eventually converted to the teachings of the Buddha. Menander was highly knowledgeable, eloquent, learned, and well versed in many of the arts and sciences. Milinda's Indo-Greek territory included the eastern dominions of the divided Bactrian Empire from Panjshir and Kapisa into the Punjab province in Pakistan and, the areas of the Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, and extending farther East and South as far as Mathura, Pataliputra, modern Patna, and Bengal. According to Strabo, quoting a Greek historian, he mentions that the Greeks of Bactria were even better conquerors than Alexander the Great. Menander with two other Bactrian Kings, including Demetrius, extended their power to the farthest end of India.

¹⁷ M. A. Shakur, Chapter 1, Ibid p. 2

The period which followed after this was that of invasions and warfare, and the harmony between the East and West did not continue for much long. The Yueh-chi or the White Huns from the North drove the tribes and clans from Bactria and the neighbouring countries. They came down in hordes down to the Indus Valley. After defeating the existing kingdoms and monarchies they established their own territories and principalities. The Sakas and Pehlavas occupied the Northern and North Western regions of the sub-continent soon to be followed by the Yueh Chis, from the province of Kansu in the North-Western China, into the Kabul Valley and on to Gandhara, and what is now the Punjab province in Pakistan. The Kushanas were the Principal tribe of the Yueh-Chis, they added Gandhara to their territories; their monarch was Kujula Kadphises whose successors conquered the entire Indo-Gangetic plain. It was during this time an important commercial and political relationship was established with the Roman Empire of Augustus.

The most important sovereign of the Kushana Dynasty, in the history of Gandhara, was Kujula Kahphises' grandson, Kanishka.¹⁸ He was the most powerful and most renowned of them all. Kanishka of the Kushana Dynasty 78- 102 AD ruled over a vast empire stretching from parts of Chinese Turkestan, the Karakorams, Afghanistan, Kashmir, the Himalayan Range, Punjab, to Sindh and the frontiers of Gujrat the South, South-West, Uttar Pradesh to the North East of the sub-continent and Bengal in the East. Purushapur, modern day Peshawar, was his capital. Kanishka's dynasty ruled over the Punjab and the north-west of the sub-continent till the 3rd century AD; most of it now is in Pakistan. Buddhism flourished and both Mahayana and the Hinayana teachings thrived during this period. Ashvaghosha, Charaka, Nagarjuna, Parshva, Sangharakhsha and Vasumitra belonged to this era; sages, scholars and poets embellished his court. The Buddhist art of Gandhara School flourished during this period. The message of Buddha, art and literature spread to China and Central Asia at this time. Kanishka, very often is referred to as, a second Ashoka because of his efforts in spreading Buddhism with as much zeal as Ashoka. Like Ashoka, he was not a follower of Buddha when he ascended the throne, but after his conversion he became a zealous devotee. The most important monument that Kanishka built was the great tower of Shahji-ke-dheri, which according to the accounts of the Chinese visitors during the 5th and 7th centuries, must have been one of the wonders of the Asiatic World.¹⁹ Dr. D.B. Spooner discovered the relics of Kanishka from this monument in 1908.

Gandhara rose to its highest during the reign of Kanishka and his successors. Art and culture flourished and it's in this period that the Buddhist sculptures reached its zenith. There is a controversy regarding Kanishka's reign, according to Harry Falk it was supposed to have begun in 127 CE. Kushans used Kanishka's era as a calendar

¹⁸ Ibid p. 4

¹⁹ Ibid p. 4

reference from 227 CE as the beginning of the era for about one hundred years until the decline of the Kushan Empire. In 242 A.C. the invasion of Iranian monarch Shahpur 1 ended the reign of the last Kushan monarch Vasudeva. The latter successors held sway over what is now Pakistan, only up to the 5th century A.C. The history of Gandhara, during this era is sketchy however; most of what we know is from the accounts of Chinese pilgrims who via the Silk Route came for pilgrimage to the holy land of Buddhism. We know from the accounts of Fa Hien, who travelled through the Peshawar Valley, a little after 400 A.C. that the foundations, stupas and other monuments were flourishing and well cared for. When his successor Song-yun visited the region 520 A.C., the White Huns and Mihiragulla had overrun the territory. A few years after Song-yun's visit, the barbarians had already destroyed and ruined all the monuments, massacred the population, and Buddhism was almost to the point of being exterminated. Xiantsang, the last of the Chinese pilgrims gives a bleak picture in his accounts when he visited Peshawar, Swat and other areas of Gandhara. According to him, the country was in ruins, depopulated, and most of the Buddhist establishments in total decay. It was only one hundred years after Song-Yung's visit. The Huns destroyed the sculptures in Gandhara, but the style survived in Kashmir and in some isolated pockets in remote areas of Afghanistan. The Muslim invasion led to a new chapter in the history of Gandhara region; it added a different flavour to the art, language and culture of this area.

Although Kanishka was a devout follower of Buddhism, and a patron of all Buddhist schools, he was tolerant towards the non-Buddhist religions such as Shaivism, Vashnavism and Zoroastrinism. The fourth Buddhist council was held under his patronage; this took place at Jalandhara, modern day Jullundur. The participants were five hundred Buddhist scholars of great eminence. The sutras were written in Sanskrit and were engraved in copper plates, which were enclosed in stone boxes and then placed in a stupa, especially built by Kanishka.

The Kingdom of Gandhara lasted from 6th century BC to the 11th century AD.²⁰ The most glorious time in its history was from the 1st century to the 5th century AD under the Kushan Kings. From 2nd century BC to the 12th century AD, Buddhist rule was alternated with Hindu rule in different regions of South Asia. Throughout these times, religious and political wars fought. In 1021 AD after the conquest of Mahmud of Ghazni, the name Gandhara disappeared.

Prior to 1971, the most important minority community in Pakistan was the Buddhist community. At this time, in East Pakistan the population of Buddhists was the largest in Indo-Pakistan; interestingly, it was not in India, the country of its origin.

Buddhism was a dominant religion of the subcontinent and it left a significant mark in innumerable architectural monuments, architectural remains, stupas,

²⁰ Wikipedia, Hindu and Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan

monasteries and temples and a huge variety of sculptures, images in stone and metal. However there was a resurgence of Hinduism and the state religion of Buddhism was replaced by the religion of the rulers.²¹ However, Bengal remained the last stronghold of this faith. Here it developed into a hybrid culture with a complicated and a filtered system of faith, separate from the rest of the sub-continent and it lingered there.

Before December 1971, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) had approximately 376,312 Pakistani Buddhists. They had full freedom to participate in the political system; a Buddhist representative in the Minority Rights Advisory Committee of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly was included by the Government.²²

CULTURAL ROOTS

Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Scene

The country of Pakistan is a kaleidoscope of rich heritage. From the pre-historic sites in Balochistan to Indus Valley Civilisation in Sindh, Harappa in the Punjab, the Muslim monument in the Sindh, the Buddhist Gandhara civilisation in the North, including Azad Kashmir and North West Frontier Province boasts of ancient works of shrines, art, artifacts, sculptures which have influenced the entire history of the region. In Raja Tridiv Roy's words, Gandhara has influenced the entire Buddhist world and its art may be considered as poetry in stone.

Priceless Gandhara Buddhist sculptures are discovered in different regions of Pakistan.

Some Buddhist excavated sites are:

Taxila- was established as great Buddhist University during Ashoka's time. It was the ancient centre of Buddhist art and learning. Buddhist devotees and pilgrims came from far and wide to Taxila. At Taxila three settlements of archaeological interest such as Bhir Mound, Sirkap and Sirsukh are also discovered. A large number of monasteries and stupas are also found in the area.²³

According to local tales and traditions, Bhir Mound is the most ancient of sites in Taxila. The excavations have proved that the settlements here have been destroyed as many as three times and also rebuilt as many times before the Bactrian Greeks built another city at Sirkap.²⁴ The time frame for this site, spanned from 6th century B.C to 1st century B.C. The Mound was located at the entrance of the southern part of the valley; therefore it was only natural for the Dharmaji-ka stupa, the oldest one in Taxila, the most important one to be built here. Later,

²¹ A Pakistani Buddhist, Buddhism in Pakistan – Buddhism in East Pakistan – p 38

²² Minorities in Pakistan – Buddhists in Pakistan - p- 47

²³ Islamabad – The Picturesque Capital of Pakistan- An Archaeological and Historical Perspective – p 42

²⁴ Islamabad – The Picturesque Capital of Pakistan – An Archaeological and Historical Perspective – p 42

there were other monasteries and stupas built in the same vicinity; they were all sacred, to Buddhists. The Dharmaji-ka stupa was very important to Buddhists, because it is said that Ashoka had it built to house the relic and associated articles of the Buddha. One of the side chapels of this stupa, is believed to have held a silver scroll in Kharoshthi inscriptions recording that these relics were indeed of the Buddha's. The scroll inscriptions also gives the date of the enshrinement of the relics and states that the name of the place was Takhshasila we know it as Taxila.

The Bactrian Greeks, in the beginning of the 2nd century, built the Sirkap.²⁵ It is located in extreme western part of the Hathi ridge, included with it is the small well-defined plateau of the northern side. The city was constructed on the Hellenistic pattern. Although this settlement was destroyed many times and rebuilt with designs of individual buildings changed, but the general Greek lay out of the city remained the same and very well preserved till the 1st century.

Sirsukh- the third city stands to the north-east of Lundi stream. It dates back to the early Kushana period, and is very much based on the traditional Central Asian city patterns of which the Kushanas were familiar with.

Jaulian- three miles east- north-east of Sirkap is another well preserved site that dates back to 400-500 A.C.; this represents the Buddhism of the decadent age. The Buddhist monks or Bhikkhus were supposed to lead a life of austerity, but the monastery here was built larger in size, with a full kitchen and other luxuries.²⁶ The introduction of a refectory is a clear break from the past. The Buddhist Bhikkhu's begging bowl is all he was supposed to own; his only major aim in life was to meditate and spend his life praying. But with passage of time, everything began to change. Patronage by wealthy and the Royal Kings ceased, and the monastic life was converted in to a life of affluence and luxury.

The Mankiyala Stupa- This Stupa is one of the most prominent structures of the Gandhara era. Mankiyala is situated about 6 miles from Rewat, near Taxila. The name apparently was derived from the father of Satrap Zeonises, Manigal; corrupted it became Raja Man or Manik. Raja Manikyal is said to have built this Stupa; coins were found near the remains of this Stupa bearing his name.²⁷ The renowned Chinese traveller, HsuanTsang mentions the names of four great stupas in the North West region built on the spot where it is believed that Buddha sacrificed and gave away in charity parts of his body. The location where he sacrificed his head is Bhallar Tope, near Usman Khatar Railway Station, 5 miles North-West of Taxila. At Mankiyala the Buddha had sacrificed his body to feed seven tiger-cubs who were famished. This is why the stupa built here was named the stupa of 'body offering'.²⁸ Many stupas and monasteries were uncovered here by General Cunningham in 1834 and 1863 and 1864. The remains of the area covers about 6 square miles. The village named after the stupa still stands today in the midst of the Buddhist ruins.

²⁵ Islamabad – The Picturesque Capital of Pakistan – An Archaeological and Historical Perspective – p 42

²⁶ Buddhism in Pakistan - Gandhara Art – p 36 by a Pakistani Buddhist

²⁷ Islamabad- The Picturesque Capital of Pakistan – An Archaeological and Historical Perspective – p 46

²⁸ Ibid

In 1830 this stupa was opened by General Ventura who discovered reliquary containing gold and copper coins of Kings of the Kushanas and also Havishka. Included with these were two Kharoshiti inscriptions on the lid of a bronze basket which was cylindrical, and the other on a silver disc. There were silver coins found here of Khusrau from the 632 A.D to 690 A.D. and one gold coin from Yaso Varman of Qannauj 700 to 730 A.D.²⁹ and two silver coins depicting the Sun God of Multan dating 600 to 700 A.D. Major works of repair of the stupa was carried out during Yaso Varman's reign, and while reinstating the reliquary containing the relics and other artefacts, Yaso Varman also included one gold coin of himself and the Sassanian Kings who were his contemporaries.

From this era, General Court discovered, a large stone that covered a small cell which had Kharoshiti inscription on it.³⁰ This cell also contained a copper urn which had a silver one enclosing it which again had a gold one enclosed. The gold urn contained some gold coins of Kanishka two gems and four pearls. The inscriptions revealed, stated that it was the 20th day, of Kartika 18th year of the reign of Kanishka and that his general Lala had recognized a few relics of the Buddha along with a triad. The architect who had repaired the structure, Burita is also included in the inscription.

Pushkalavati - modern day Charsadda is the most important excavation sites in the Gandhara region that has been discovered so far. This city was the oldest site from ancient civilisations and even ancient during the times of the Buddha.³¹ Before the Khyber Pass became the trade route from and into India to Balkh and Bakhtar or Bactria, the route was through the course created by the Kabul River. Charsadda happened to be the first business centre that the Central Asian caravans stopped at, while heading for the Sub-Continent, and was also an equally important export centre. The Buddhist Jatakas added to its importance by marking this as the seat of the Bodhistava, where the Buddha sacrificed his flesh, eyes and his head in his different re-births.

The Historian, Doctor Wheeler attaches a lot of importance to the site of Pushkalavati. According to him, the ancient remains of this region will provide the missing-link between Moenjo-Daro civilisation and Taxila. The Swat River has destroyed and swept away most of what would have been a source of invaluable information.³² According to the Jatakas the Swat River had obeyed the command of the Blessed One and stopped the yearly destruction, but it has forgotten its pledge and has severed the remains of the mound into four different parts. The further excavations of these four parts of the mounds may lead to findings of information from the pre-Kushan days.

Takhte` Bahi- is a fairly a new discovery in the Mardan district, which is the only world heritage site in the NWFP and it attracts thousands of visitors each year. Historically, the Chinese travellers for reasons unknown, has not recorded anywhere, anything about this important Buddhist shrine.³³ Innumerable, ancient Buddhas and Boddistavas have been uncovered from remains of these mounds and placed in the museums across Pakistan. The

²⁹ Ibid- p 47

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Buddhism in Pakistan Op. cit - p 26-27

³² Ibid- p 26

³³ Ibid - p 27-28

main cluster of buildings is on a small plateau, and the stupa is a huge building set within a large court, at the centre surrounded by smaller stupas. To the south, it's adorned by a line of gigantic Buddhas which are 16 to 20 feet high. The most remarkable in design and arrangement are the smaller shrines some of which stupa-like decorations and gabled chaityas.

Sahre` Bahlol – This site too has been discovered recently, after approximately fifteen hundred years. It is believed that this ancient city dates back to the Kushanas who mostly likely had founded it and later to be burned and destroyed by Mihiragula the Hun, worshipper of Shiva.³⁴ The monasteries discovered are in great condition, perhaps it was blessing in disguise to be laid buried low under ashes and the grater structures which fell over and entombed them; it stayed unseen by humans for centuries. The Bodhisattvas found here have a very high standard of excellence and are regarded as the Gandhara art at its best.

Ranigat – this site borders the Swabi district, and is on the hill top in Bunner. It was excavated by the Department of Archaeology, Government of Pakistan and a team of Kyoto University of Japan. Here, priceless sculptures of the Gandhara were found.³⁵

Jamal Garhi- the stupa site here is in the Mardan district situated at Jamal Garhi Village. It was excavated before Pakistan came into being. The sculptures and stone carvings here were of exquisite form and the famous Fasting Buddha of the Lahore Museum came from the neighbouring site of Sikri, close to Jamal Garhi.³⁶

But Kara 3- This huge stupa is located in Swat district, near the roadside close to the village of Shinkardar. It is believed that this stupa is of King Uttarasena who brought in the relics of the Buddha on a white elephant and enshrined them in it.³⁷

Najigram Stupa and Monastery – These two beautiful stupas and a monastery are in the village of Najigram in Swat district. These stupas are larger than the stupa of the Takht-i- Bahi. The Monastic cells still retain their original roofs, but they need immediate attention for proper preservation and excavations.³⁸

Hund- The village within the Mughal Fort is the third and last capital of Gandhara.³⁹ This is located on the right side of the famous Hindushahiyya dynasty of Gandhara. Alexander the Great, Chinese pilgrims Hieun Tsang and Sung Yuu and Babar of the Mughal Dynasty and number of other invaders had crossed the Indus at this point for their onward journey to Taxila and ancient India.

Strangely enough, although Sindh remained a part of the Buddhist Kingdom during the Hun occupation of Gandhara and the Punjab, but there are no outstanding remains of any monuments. It might have been that the geographical condition of that region was not suitable for its structures to survive which perhaps were made of wood and unbaked bricks. However,

³⁴ Ibid – p 28, 29

³⁵ Raja Tridiv Roy, op. cit. p. 37

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid – p 38

a few terracotta Buddhas have been found around a large stupa. Two stupas were found at Sudherange Dhado in Saidpur and Thulmir Rukun in the district of Nawabshah.⁴⁰

In the former East Pakistan, the mound excavated in Paharpur, Rajshahi, uncovered the largest Vihara constructed in the entire sub-continent.⁴¹ It was from the Pala period 8th to the 12th centuries A.D. Numerous Buddhist ruins were also found in Bharat Bhayana in Jessore, dated 5th century A.D.⁴² In Sabhar, Dhaka district, a group of five mounds were uncovered known as Rajasana, and the other Harishchandra's Palace; from where terracotta pieces with figures of Buddha and Buddhist divinities were stamped on them.⁴³ The Vikrampur Vihara, under the patronage of the Chandras was also found at Vikrampur (Rampal). At Chittagong numerous Buddhist viharas belonging to the Tantric Mahayana School has been mentioned in the Tibetan traditions; it specially speaks of the Pandita Vihara which had turned into the headquarters of Buddhism, after the decline of Nalanda. Many Buddhist images of bronze, stone and wood were discovered from this area dating back from the 9th to the 12th or 13th centuries A.D.⁴⁴ This speaks volumes of the flourishing Buddhism in this region at that time. The architectural style of monasteries and stupas of the Somapuri Vihara in the Paharpur district, in what was former East Pakistan, has profoundly influenced the architectural styles of the South East Asian monasteries and stupas, particularly of the present Mynamar (Burma) and also of Java. In Mainamati (Kotila Mura) excavations in 1956, uncovered stupas that were different in character than the ones found throughout East Pakistan which were votive. These were square in shape surmounted by circular drums and hemispherical domes.

In Pakistan, in order to celebrate the Buddhist culture and preserve what had flourished for a thousand years, the Government of Pakistan has been taking keen interest to promote tourism for visitors and Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world. Just to name a few, in the recent years, 2005 and 2006 Gandhara Week was organized, where scholars, writers, journalists, archeologists, anthropologists and historians were invited and tourists from all over the world flocked to pay homage, and visit the sacred historical sites such as stupas, and monasteries in the area. The most famous Buddhist sculpture, the icon of Gandhara art, the fasting Buddha is at Taxila museum.⁴⁵

Festivals

The most important Buddhist festivals are observed in commemoration of the events surrounding Lord Buddha's life; the most important festival being the Baisakhi Purnima; the full-moon day of Baisakh which corresponds with the months of April or May.⁴⁶ This is also Gautama Buddha's day of birth and, the day of attaining Enlightenment or Supreme Wisdom, under the Bodhi tree in Gaya. This is also the day

⁴⁰ Ibid – p 38

⁴¹ Ibid – p 48

⁴² Ibid – p 44

⁴³ Ibid – p 47

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Buddhapia.com – Gandhara Week 2006 in Pakistan – April 2006

⁴⁶ Minorities in Pakistan – op. cit. – p 51, 52

that he achieved Mahaparinirvana or the Great Salvation, meaning there would end to more rebirths and any more sufferings and sorrows.

The Asharhi Purnima, the full-moon day of the third month of Bengali calendar (June-July) would be the next most significant festival observed. This is in commemoration of the Buddha's great Renunciation. Siddhartha Gautama as the Royal prince of the Shakya Dynasty bequeathed the throne of his father's kingdom in quest of truth, knowledge and salvation for the entire humanity. After years of meditation and quest for the truth, on this day also he for the first time enunciated his Doctrines. The Buddhist monks mark this day by beginning a period of meditation, known as the Lent lasting for three months. When this period is completed, the monks have specific missions which they prepare themselves for. Before they set off on their missions, throughout the following month after the meditation, ceremonial robes are offered to them.

There are celebrations on other full-moons as well, such as the Maghi Purnma; the full moon day of (January-February), and the next one being on the Phalguni Purnima, the full-moon of (February- March).

The longest and biggest Buddhist fairs are held at Mahumani, always at the end of April. It was the biggest and most important event for the Pakistani Buddhists from all over Pakistan came to participate and pay glorious homage to the Lord Buddha.

CUSTOMS

Food: The majority of the Buddhist communities are non-vegetarians

Marriage: Buddhists do not recognize any social divisions. Marriage is endogamous at the community level and adult marriage may be performed with mutual consent, exchange, and courtship and or negotiation is advocated. Marriage takes place at the vodh vihar. Official symbol of marriage does not exist, however some may practice their traditions such as wearing a 'mangalsutrya', but in most cases it is not encouraged. Covering of the head is for men and women. Dowry and other ostentations are forbidden. Divorce is permitted but discouraged and widows, widowers and divorcees are allowed to remarry. Sororate and levirate marriages are permitted. While the marriage rules have not changed, the marriage age has increased. They follow the rule of succession by the eldest son. Men and women have equal rights and status with men, and the women have decision making powers, and may also contribute to the family income and can control the family expenditure. In the present scenario, family planning is encouraged and they prefer to have two children.

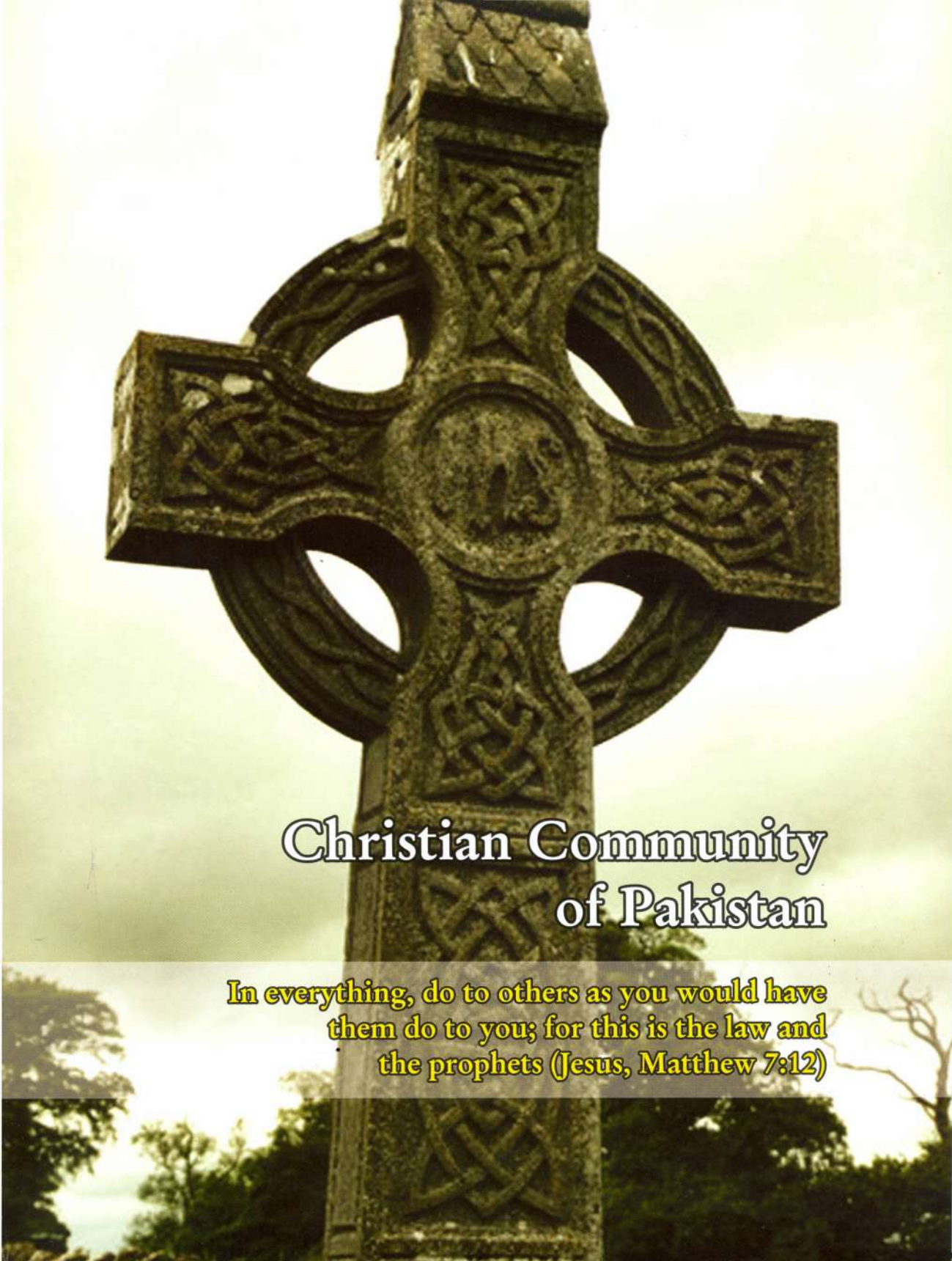
Rituals: The rituals of pre-delivery are practiced by the Buddhists and also the thread-wearing ceremonies observed. Puberty rites are followed by them as well. Buddhists may cremate the dead, it is preferable, but they may bury as well. The naming ceremony (namkaran) takes place at the Bodh Vihara, and the name given to

the child is a Bodhi one. The hair cutting ceremony (kesh katran) of both the male and the female child, and the first reading (vidya sanskar) takes place in the presence of a monk, or bhikshu and or the bodhcharya. Marriage ceremony also takes place at the bodhvihar. A member of the Buddhist clergy performs the last rites of the dead or anything related to it.

Towards a Composite Culture

The confluence of the Hellenic culture with the eastern philosophy and Buddhist spiritualism created a civilisation in Gandhara that was very unique. In Pakistan Buddhists in the Northern areas and Azad Kashmir still follow their religion with the local customs and cultures. Many artists, painters and individuals in Pakistan have been influenced by the ethos of compassion and tolerance that Buddhism teaches, while still practicing their own religious beliefs. The ancient culture that flourished and prospered for at least a thousand years can be traced in the underlying social psyche of the people.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Silent Prayers -Brochure- November 2008 Indus Gallery – by Humera Ejaz



Christian Community of Pakistan

**In everything, do to others as you would have
them do to you; for this is the law and
the prophets (Jesus, Matthew 7:12)**

5 Christian Community of Pakistan

Nosheen D'souza

The Faith

Christianity is an Abrahamic religion. It differs significantly from the other Abrahamic religions by its belief in God the Son. The majority of Christians believe in the triune God consisting of three unified and distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit. There have been significant theological differences amongst the Christians regarding the divine and human natures of Jesus and the trinity of God. These differences continue today. However both the orthodox as well as Chatholic churches belief that the chruch was founded founded by Jesus for the salvation of humanity. Christianity began in Jerusalem in the 1st century AD. It eventually became the state religion of Armenia in either 301 or 314, the state religion of Ethiopia in 325, the state religion of Georgia in 337, and then the state religion of the Roman Empire in 380. The Age of Exploration saw great leaps of spread for the religion. Christianity spread throughout the world, becoming the world's largest religion. Throughout its history, the religion has weathered schisms and theological disputes that have resulted in different ideas and beliefs and consequently different churches. The more prominent branches of Christianity are the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Protestant church.

The Christian faith has existed since the times of Jesus Christ on Earth. Today Christians have had minor differences on different religious issues but all Christians agree that Jesus Christ is a revelation of God in the form of a human being. Christians believe that God came to earth to bring into a relationship with Himself. The first recorded revelations of the God are in the Books of Moses¹. These books reveal God

¹ W. Owen Cole, *Five Religions in the Twentieth Century*, Hulten Educational Publications, Bucks: UK, 1982, pp.26-27

as The Creator, The Lawgiver and The Judge. In the Ten Commandments God has asked to put Him first. He asked us not to lie, steal, murder, lust, speak against God or desire what does not belong to us. If a man is guilty of any of these offences his salvation will not happen until God declares him righteous. That will happen only when a person puts his whole hearted trust in God. The Christian faith is the strong belief in the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus Christ lived 2000 years ago in Palestine, His teachings had a profound impact on the people of Israel.

Yeshua when came into interaction with other ethnic and linguistic groups was changed into Jesus (Yeshua which is also Joshua in Hebrew and is Jesus in Greek); whereas Christ is Greek for "*the Messiah*" or the "*anointed one*." Yeshua was a Jewish itinerant preacher who was born between 7 and 4 BCE. The Roman occupying authorities in Palestine executed him on a Friday in the year 30 CE. Most Christians regard him as the Son of God. They also believe that he is God, one of the second identities in the Trinity. The Trinity consists of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; three separate identities, all eternal, all omnipresent, and all omnipotent, all omnibeneficent who form a single deity.) Most Christians believe that Jesus existed with God before the creation of the world. He was later born on Earth to a virgin Mother. The Christians strongly belief that Jesus Christ after his death was resurrect.

After Yeshua's death, his followers formed the *Jewish Christian* movement, based in Jerusalem. One of Yeshua's followers, Simon Peter, may have headed the group then. Eventually the leadership went to James. It is a little ambiguous whether James was Yeshua's brother, cousin, or friend. They Jewish Christian Movement considered itself as a reformist movement within Judaism; they continued with the Jewish traditions of sacrifice at the temple, circumcise their male children, follow Jewish kosher food restrictions. They viewed Jesus as a human being, who was a prophet of the God, not a deity or part of the Trinity.

Saul of Tarsus persecuted Jewish Christians. However in 37 CE, Saul of Tarsus, while on his way to Damascus had a vision of Christ being resurrected. This incident brought a fundamental change in his belief and faith. He changed his name to Paul and converted into one of the greatest theologian of the early Christian movement. His writings, along those of the author(s) of the Gospel of John, provided much of the theological foundation for Pauline Christianity. This new doctrine spread throughout the northern and eastern Mediterranean basin. Paul's ministry was mainly directed to Gentiles who were not Jews.

A third competing belief system was Gnostic Christianity. They taught that Jesus was a spirit being sent by God to impart knowledge to humans so that they could escape the miseries of life on earth. They regarded the Yahweh of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) to be an inferior, short tempered and vicious creator deity who performed much genocide, and other evil acts.

In addition to Gnostic, Jewish and Pauline Christianity, there were many other versions of Christianity being practiced. Often there would be a number of conflicting versions of Christianity being propagated within a single city. After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Army in 70 CE, the Jewish Christian movement was largely dissipated. Pauline and Gnostic Christianity became the dominant groups. Gentiles within the movement took over control of the former movement.

The Roman Empire recognized Pauline Christianity as a valid religion in 313 CE. Around 387 CE, it became the official religion of the Empire. Church authority became concentrated among the five bishops or patriarchs located in Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Jerusalem and Rome. Gnostic Christianity was severely persecuted, both by the Roman Empire and the Pauline Christian churches. It was almost exterminated, but is experiencing rapid growth today.

With the expansion of Islam in the Middle East during the seventh century CE, power became concentrated in Constantinople and Rome. These two Christian centers gradually grew apart in belief and practice. In 1054 CE, a split was formalized between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches; their leaders excommunicated each other. The split remains in effect today. Efforts are being made to heal the division. However, they are making little progress.

Various schisms including the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century led to a fragmentation within the western church and to a series of religious wars that caused the death of up to 30% of the population of some European countries. The Protestant movement has since splintered into what is now many groups of denominations, and tens of thousands of individual denominations.

Today, about 33% of the world's population -- in excess of 2 billion people -- regard themselves as Christian. This percentage has not changed significantly in many decades. About half are Roman Catholic. Christians are gradually being expelled from the Middle East. Membership has seriously declined in most of Europe. Ireland and Spain were once the most Catholic countries in Europe; they are now largely secular. Christianity is in a state of slow decline in North America, due to the rise in secularism and of minority religions. The religion is experiencing an expansion in South America and Africa.

Fundamental Principles

There are five fundamentals of Christian faith, these include;

1. The verbal inerrancy of scriptures
2. The divinity of Jesus
3. The Virgin Birth
4. Theory of atonement and
5. Physical Return of Jesus

Besides the "Five Fundamentals" given above, there are other doctrines that are important for a Christian to understand, and several of these are the source of division among various Christian groups (i.e. Denominations).

- a. Creation vs. Evolution
- b. Dispensations
- c. Keeping the 10 Commandments
- d. Keeping the Law
- e. Keeping the Sabbath
- f. Baptism, immersion or sprinkling?
- g. Holy Spirit
- h. Speaking in Tongues
- i. Signs and Wonders
- j. Rapture of the Church
- k. Replacement Theology (i.e. Christians taking all the promises given to Israel)

Concept of God

Christians believe that the world including human beings is distinct from God. God is their creator and they are his creatures. God is one, spirit, creator and preserver of the world. The Unitarians adopted the scientific world-view believing that a conscious spirit is working behind the evolutionary events. They believe in God as a personal and spiritual power who takes care of his creatures by his providential act manifested in nature and history, on the universal and personal level alike. In Christianity 'God is Spirit, and only by the power of his Spirit can people worship him as he really is.

*"Christians like the Jews are strictly monotheists. They believe that there is but one God. Their theology holds that He is both transcendent and immanent. This means that He is both beyond us and within us. Moreover God is eternal, self-existent, infinite in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, mercy, truth and joy. He is light without darkness; truth without illusion. At the same time, God is a pure spirit, which means that He does not have any kind of material body. But above all, He is a personal God, possessing consciousness, intellect, and free will. He is father, the word used by Christ himself when he spoke of God as a Father, who loves us and is interested in us with personal and sympathetic care"*²

Christianity shares a number of beliefs and practices with other religions, particularly Judaism and Islam. With Judaism and Islam, Christians believe in one God, who created the universe and all that is in it. All believe that this God is active in history, guiding and teaching his people. All three religions, including Christianity, have been called "ethical monotheism". This term emphasizes the belief in one God, and the fact that following this God commits us to a number of specific ethical rules or principles.

Trinity

The Bible says that the Son and the Holy Spirit are also God, so is the Father. Trinity is that God is one being who exists simultaneously and eternally as three persons: the Father, the Son (incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth) and the Holy Spirit. It is the fundamental concept of Christianity since the 4th century in both the Eastern and the Western Churches. The doctrine

² Gurbachan Singh Talib, *The Main Teachings of Christianity*, Punjab University, Patiala, 2001, p. 158

says that the Son Himself has two distinct natures, one is divine and the other is human. The majority of Christians are Trinitarians that is they belief in the trinity. Trinity is regarded as a test of Christian orthodoxy.

Supernatural Revelation

The Christians believe that God is the first principle and the end of all things. The creation of mankind and the universe in the cosmos are reasons to belief in God. This is termed as Natural revelation. There is a supernatural being that is the creator and is eternal. The invisible God.

Faith and Grace

When man freely commits his entire self to God, making full submission of his intellect and will to God. This is called Faith. Man believes by willingly assenting to the revelation give by Him. But before faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him. At the same time man's response to God by Faith is free and nobody is forced to embrace the faith against his will. The act of faith by its very nature is free act.

Jesus Christ

The Christian faith states that in the person of Jesus Christ god Himself had met mankind and performed His savings act in this world. Convinced by the Holy Spirit and born of Virgin, Jesus suffered, was crucified, died and was buried³.

In Christianity Jesus is fully God and fully man. Jesus was referred as both the "Son of God" and the "Son of Man". Jesus (the man) was born of a woman (Mary) as flesh and blood. In this way he was fully a man. Yet he was and is the Son of God from eternity past. He became man also when he was born to Mary, and as a man he lived and walked the earth, and died, yet all the while he was also God.

Similar to global Christian community, Christians in Pakistan also follow their faith and its fundamental principle with full fervor and religious inspiration. Their fundamental belief system, festivals, ceremonies and other religious activities are deep-rooted in Pakistani society, a society in which they constitute one of the major minority communities of Pakistan. They have preserved their traditional and cultural heritage alive despite of facing some serious challenges.

Scripture

The **Bible** is a collection of writings. It consists of teachings of Jewish and Christian priests, historical accounts and literature. These works were inspired by God but were written by man. This is why each set of writing has the background and the cultural trends of its times. Most valuable part of the Bible is the New Testament, especially the four gospels that deals

³ Ibid p. 159

with life and teachings of Jesus Christ. There are also Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The Old Testament is essentially the history of the Jews and their Prophets. There is a dichotomy of views on the basics principles of forgiveness in the old and new Testaments..

Ten Commandments

Ten Commandments are the foundation of morality .Ten Commandments considered the Document of Divine **Guidance** is an excellent piece of literature. They are part of the Old Testament, which was given to Moses by God Himself. Moses. The Ten Commandments are:

1. Have no other gods before me [the God of the Hebrews].
2. Make no images of anything in heaven, earth or the sea, and do not worship or labor for them.
3. Do not vainly use the name of your God [the God of the Hebrews].
4. Do not work on the seventh day of the week.
5. Honor your parents.
6. Do not kill.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not give false testimony against another.
10. Do not desire another's wife or anything that belongs to another.

The Ten Commandments constitute the ethical code, by which the human race is guided, on the one hand, to believe in the true God, and, on the other hand to sustain the godly society in the attainment and application of God's will on earth. The Ten Commandments were kept undefiled and handed down to us as a treasure and monument of Christian civilization. The Christian Church has embodied the Ten Commandments as a basic moral code of, discipline toward God and toward men.

According to Will Durrant, author of the 'Story of Civilization', the Ten Commandments kept the Jews, united despite every dispersion, proud despite every defeat, and brought them across the centuries to our own time, a strong and apparently indestructible people'.⁴

Places of worship

As is true for every religion that the places of worship are special piece of architecture, Churches too were built especially as beautiful buildings. These buildings vary in size and design. Usually churches have stained glass windows that with scenes from the Bible, or the holy scriptures of Christianity. It is tradition to some that the entrance to a Church should face the west. Some other Churches*face the east. Facing east symbolizes facing away from darkness, and looking into the light. At the opposite end of the entrance is the altar. An altar is a table with a cross in the middle candles placed on either side. Many Christians choose pray in solitude and shun themselves from the world. These monks and nuns give away the mundane luxuries of life.

⁴ Viqar Zaman, Opcit, p. 46

There are many places of worship for Christians in Pakistan. Some famous Churches are;

Punjab

- The Cathedral Church of Resurrection is a Church in the Heart of Lahore, Pakistan across the High Court. It is in the Neo-Gothic style of architecture and is a very impressive structure. Originally built in 1887 out of using pink sandstone however the two towers were added in 1898.
- The Railway Church in Lahore. It was built in 1899 by the British for the Christian employees of the Railways. Today popular as the St Andrews Church it serves thousands of Christians.
- The Christ Church Rawalpindi is situated in the city of Rawalpindi Pakistan. It was built in 1852 in the gothic style. The church is situated in Lal Kurti in cantonment area on Iftikhar Janjua Road beside PC Hotel. The church is considered among the oldest buildings in Rawalpindi.

Among them some other important churches are, Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul Faisalabad, Protestants International Church Islamabad, Cathedral Church of Resurrection Lahore, Church of St. Mary Magdalene Lahore, Immaculate Conception Church Lahore, Presbyterian Church Lahore, Sacred Heart Cathedral Lahore, St. Andrew's Church Lahore, St. Anthony's Cathedral Lahore, St. James Church Lahore. Cathedral of the Holy Redeemer Multan, Cathedral of Resurrection Multan, Church of Seven Sorrows Muree, Holy Trinity Church Muree, Nicoll Memorial Church Rawalpindi, Sacred Heart Church Rawalpindi, St. Andrew's Church Rawalpindi, St. Joseph's Cathedral Rawalpindi, St. Mary's Church Rawalpindi, St. Paul's Church Rawalpindi.

Sindh

The Christian Community in Sindh has contributed tremendously in social and educational sectors. Sindh like other provinces also has prominent Churches built during the British Raj. St. Patrick's Cathedral in Karachi is a city landmark. The impressive building was built almost 150 years ago. There are two renowned educational institutions associated with St. Patrick's Cathedral. The St. Patrick's School and the St. Joseph's Convent School, both the institutions educated and developed generations of Karachites and produced some very prominent personalities in the country. The educational and other social sector institutions of the Christian missionaries imparted their services to the best of their capabilities to every citizen of the city irrespective of their religious affiliations.

Some other important places of worship are, St. Joseph's Cathedral Hyderabad, St. Thomas Church Hyderabad, Brooks Memorial Church Karachi, International Church of Karachi, Our Lady of Fatima Church Karachi, Philadelphia Pentecostal Church Karachi, Sacred Heart Church Karachi, St. Andrew's Church also known as Scotch Church Karachi, St. Anthony's Church, Karachi Cantt, St. Anthony's Church, Manora Karachi, St. Christopher's Church Karachi, St. Lawrence's Church Karachi, St. Patrick's Cathedral Karachi, St. Paul's Church Karachi, St. Mary's Church Sukker, St. Xavier Church Sukker.

N.W.F.P.

*The Christian Community in the Frontier Province is about 100,000. Among these 50% are from the Church of Pakistan, 40% Catholics, and another 10% Brethren, Full Gospel, Bible Church, and Anglican Orthodox. In NWFP Christians are ethnically Punjabis. They are usually the descendants of the camp followers of British Army. They are mainly menial workers and forms about 80% of the Christian community.*⁵

There are many historical building and churches in NWFP, some famous churches among them are, St. Luke's Church Abbottabad, St. Matthew's Church Nathiagali, St. John's Cathedral Peshawar, St. Michael's Church Peshawar, All Saints Church Peshawar

Balochistan

Balochistan has a number of minority populations. Though at times there has been a threat to the religious freedom of some, nevertheless, they have enjoyed more socio-cultural assimilation and political rights.

Christians in Baluchistan belongs to protestant church. They are the urban population living in the Quetta, Loralai, and Sibi. Quetta has three Chruches and every Sunday people from all over Quetta come to them. The Christians community of Baluchistan is economically impoverished. Majority of them belong to lower or lower middle class. They are usually associated with the medical and educational professions.

Some famous places of worship are; Holy Rosary Church Quetta, St. Mary's Church Quetta.

Pilgrimage

Initially the concept of pilgrimage as was not an important part of Christianity. Indeed many Christians, mostly, Protestants, see no worth in such expression of piety. However when the Western Church divided, pilgrimages formed an important aspect of the spiritual, social and economic life of the church. People undertook long journeys to pray at the shrines of Thomas, St. Alban in England and that of St. Peter at Rome.

Though not an important part of the religion, pilgrame in Christaninty can be traced back to the 4th century A.D. Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity. Many followers saw the purification and salvation of their souls by going to holy places such as Jerusalem. The frist pilgrims visited places where Jesus was born, crucified or resurrected., when pilgrimage was encouraged by church fathers like Saint Jerome. Subsequently pilgrims started to Rome and other places associated with the Apostles Saints and Christian martyrs. Another important pilgrimage site became the places where there have been apparitions of the Virgin Mary.. Pakistani Christian community celebrates and participates in such pilgrimages. Usually the Pakistani Christians go to:

⁵ For details see, <http://www.peshawardiocese.org/peshawardiocese.asp>

- The Holy Land, location of many events in the Old Testament and New Testament: Jerusalem, site of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus.
- Bethlehem, birthplace of Jesus and King David.
- Nazareth, hometown of Jesus
- Sea of Galilee, site of Jesus' early ministry.
- Mount Tabor, site of the Transfiguration
- Bethany, site of the resurrection of Lazarus
- Rome on roads such as the Via Francigena. Site of the deaths of Saint Peter, Saint Paul and other early martyrs. Location of relics of various saints, relics of the Passion, important churches and headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Constantinople (today Istanbul, Turkey). Former capital of the Byzantine Empire one of the five ancient Patriarchates and first among equals among the Patriarchs of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Hagia Sophia, former cathedral and burial place of many Ecumenical Patriarchs.
- Lourdes, France. Apparition of the Virgin Mary. The second most visited Christian pilgrimage site after Rome.
- Santiago de Compostela in Galicia (Spain) on the Way of St James (Galician: *O Camiño de Santiago*). This famous medieval pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint James is still popular today.
- Fátima in Portugal. Our Lady of Fatima is the title given to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She appeared to three shepherd children at Fátima on the 13th day of six consecutive months in 1917.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a city revered by Jews, Christians, and Muslims. It reflects the fervor and piety of the three major monotheistic faiths, each of which is bound to Jerusalem by religious traditions. For Christians, Jerusalem is the place where Jesus lived, preached, died, and was resurrected. While it is the heavenly rather than the earthly Jerusalem that is emphasized by the Church there are places mentioned in the New Testament that have drawn pilgrims and devoted worshippers for centuries. Among these sites are the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Site of the Last Supper, and the Via Dolorosa with the fourteen Stations of the Cross.

Christian churches are the custodians of the Christian holy places in Jerusalem. This right was awarded to the Christians while Jerusalem was part of the Ottoman Empire

The Christian community of Jerusalem is divided into Eastern Orthodox, Monophysite, and Roman Catholic, Uniate and Protestant denominations. Apart from the Armenian community, most of whom are descendants of refugees who arrived from Turkey in the 1920's, the overwhelming majority of Christians in Jerusalem are descendants of the ancient Christian communities of the Byzantine period. Constantine the 1st converted to Christianity and his mother, St Helena went on the famous pilgrimage. She subsequently found the True Cross. These events led to the building of the great shrines in Jerusalem.

Rome

Rome has a special status. It is where St. Peter set up a church. He was crucified on the site of St. Peter's Cathedral. Rome was also an important city in the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Christians of the Orthodox Church consider present day Istanbul to be of religious significance. By the late 11th century the seat of the church had begun to draw many pilgrims to Rome.

Santiago

The Way of St James is more than one thousand years old. It was one of the most important Christian pilgrimages during medieval times. Legend has it that St. James's remains were carried by a boat from Jerusalem to northern Spain where they were buried on the site of what is now the city of Santiago de Compostela. There are some, who claim that the bodily remains at Santiago belong to Priscillian, the fourth-century Galician leader of an ascetic Christian sect. Priscillianism, was one of the first Christian heretics to be executed. During the middle Ages the town that grew up around it became the most important Christian place of pilgrimage after Jerusalem and Rome. Traditionally as with most pilgrimages the Way of Saint James began at one's home and ended at the pilgrimage site. During the Middle Ages, the route was highly travelled. However, the Black Plague, the Protestant Reformation and political unrest in 16th-century Europe resulted in the decline of pilgrims. By 1980s only a few pilgrims came to Santiago annually. However, since then, there has been a great revival. The route was declared the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in October 1987; it was also named one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in 1993. *Santiago de Compostela* is the final destination of the legendary medieval way of pilgrimage *Camino de Santiago*.

Christian community of Pakistan travel to traditional Christian pilgrimage sites with religious zeal. However it is also time for them to reflect, a chance for individuals to explore the world and their place within it.⁶ Though some travel on their own, many either belong to a group or become absorbed into a communal experience. This experience of community in an international environment is unique.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

The Origin

⁶ An Interview with Shakeel Masih, Christian Community member, Islamabad, January, 2008.

Christianity in Pakistan dates back to the first Century A.D. The advent of Christians in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent is practically as old as the Christian era. St. Thomas the Apostle came to the subcontinent in the first Century A.D.⁷

St. Thomas when asked to go to India to preach was most reluctant. Indian merchant named Habban had a vision of Christ Habban was an employee of King Gonduphar of Sirkap, near modern Taxila. While Habban was on travels he was offered a slave who was a carpenter. He then bought Thomas for twenty pieces of silver. Jesus thus presented him to his new master and gave him the twenty pieces to give to the poor. Habban took Thomas to India, encountering several adventures on the way, they finally reached the city of king Gonduphar where Habban presented the slave carpenter to the king.

For centuries, Indian kings were engaged in trade. They had trade agents and employed royal merchants. Thus Habban might have been the King's trade agent and met the Apostle during a visit to Alexandria. Besides the story of Gonduphar, as John Rooney in his book *Shadows in the Dark* maintains, there are two further pieces of evidence that seem to suggest a St. Thomas connection with Pakistan: one epigraphically, the other social. The epigraphic evidence is an interesting cross, the Taxila Cross, discovered in Taxila and now lodged at the Anglican cathedral in Lahore. The social evidence is in the form of a fakir community, which is said to have its roots in Thatta, Sindh, and claims it has its origins in St. Thomas.⁸

The Report was carried by The Pakistan Times, Lahore on November 1, 1970: which says,

*"The United Church has taken as its symbol the Taxila Cross which dates back to the Second Century AD and was recovered from the old city of Sirkap some forty years ago. The discovery of the Taxila Cross and some other objects of the same date give clear indication of the Christian Church having been in this part of the world.... Adopting the Taxila Cross as our Symbol, we want to establish the fact that the Christian Church is not a recent addition in this country. Its heritage and past go back to the early centuries of the Christian era."*⁹

The Apostle Thomas, on his mission for preaching visited the Sub-continent. St. Thomas made his way along the established overland trade route towards the city of Taxila in the Indus Valley. Being formerly under Persian control, Taxila and its King, the Parthian Gundofarr, spoke Aramaic, which enabled St. Thomas to preach the Gospel and have time to learn the local Indian language of Prakrit. There was also a Jewish colony in the same city, as was the case with most cities in the Roman and Parthian Empires.

St. Thomas remained in Taxila for several years. He learnt about the native religions. In 50 AD, St. Thomas returned to Jerusalem for Our Lady's Dormition, the council in 50 AD. The new Church was left in the hands of a convert named Gaurasva. Soon afterwards, the Kushans invaded and swept away the Kingdom of Gundofarr and probably the infant Christian

⁷ Minorities of Pakistan, *Pakistan Publications, Karachi, 1964. P.23*

⁸ John Rooney M.H.M., *Shadows in the Dark*, Pakistan Christian History Monograph No. 1, Christian Study Center Rawalpindi, 1984, pp 29-41

⁹ The Pakistan Times, Lahore on November 1, 1970

community with it. Hearing of the disaster in Taxila, St. Thomas was determined to restart his missionary efforts. He decided on Southern India this time.¹⁰

The second important era that signifies the presence of Christian in the Indian-subcontinent dates back to the Mughal Empire. In the 15th and the 16th centuries the Portuguese brought the Christian faith to the sub-continent. St. Francis Xavier spread the Christian Religion in Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, Ceylon and the Far East. Akbar the Great was a model of tolerance. He invited three Missions of Jesuits priests to his court.

The Indian mission of the Jesuits is the founders of this order. Ignatius of Loyola, the Founder of the Society of Jesus, sent his son, Francis Xavier to India. His inspiration and directives became the basis of the Jesuit mission. India is the birthplace of missionary theories and missionary policies. Francis Xavier was the first Jesuit on Indian soil on May 6, 1542, he arrived in Goa with the entourage of the new governor, Martin Affonso De Sousa, from Lisbon. This is the time when India experienced a significant interaction with the missionaries. Akbar, the Mughal Emperor got his first insight into the Christian religion from two Jesuits – Frs. Antony Vaz and Peter Dias, who had reached Bengal in 1576 at the request of the Bishop of Cochin¹¹. Akbar had a very tolerant view on religions. He gave freedom of religion to all his subjects and he encouraged the interfaith dialogue.

It was during Akbar's period when the *Ibadat Khana* (place of worship) at Fatehpur Sikri became the center of inter-religious discussion. Akbar's son Jehangir, pursued the policy of tolerance laid down by his father. During his reign he allowed Christian to build churches at Agra and Lahore. The right of profession and propagation of the faith were secured.

Pakistan: Our home

Christians are the largest religious minority in Pakistan. The total number of Christians in Pakistan was at least 2,000,000 in 2008, or 1.1% of the population at that time. Of these, 1,400,000 in 1998 were Catholic. However, current number of Christians is debatable as i.e. Catholic Church's record of births contains higher figures than this. The 1.1% figure mentioned here is at the lower end of a range of estimates that run as high as 2%. In 1998 there were 1,400,000 members of Protestant Church¹²

The Roman Catholics constitute almost half of the Christian population and the other half are Protestants divided among various Protestant denominations. The Church of Pakistan is the largest Protestant denomination, which is a union of Anglicans, American Methodists, Scottish Presbyterians and Scandinavian Lutherans. It was formed in 1970. The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan is the third largest Christian denomination and the other Christians come from different indigenous and Pentecostal Free Churches.

For centuries Christians are part of this country. According to an estimate more than 90 percent of the country's Christians reside in Punjab, making them the largest religious minority

¹⁰ *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew* I, 10, 57 (398 AD).

¹¹ John Rooney M.H.M, *Shadows in the Dark*, Pakistan Christian History Monograph No. 2, Christian Study Center Rawalpindi, 1984, pp 31-56

¹² Christianity in Pakistan, for details see, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Pakistan

in the province. Approximately 60 percent of Punjab's Christians live in rural villages. The centuries old presence of the Christian community in Pakistan is a proof of their historical roots to the land they lived in harmony and peace.

Christians and Hindus together are 1 percent of the populations of Sindh and Baluchistan provinces. These two provinces also have a few tribes that practice traditional indigenous religions and a small population of Parsis (approximately 7,000 persons). The Roman Catholic diocese of Karachi estimates that 120,000 Catholics live in Karachi, 40,000 in the rest of Sindh, and 5,000 in Quetta, Baluchistan. Foreign missionaries operate in the country. The largest Christian mission group operating in Sindh and Baluchistan engages in Bible translation for the Church of Pakistan, mostly in tribal areas. An Anglican missionary group fields several missionaries to assist the Church of Pakistan in administrative and educational work. Roman Catholic missionaries, mostly Franciscan, work with persons with disabilities¹³.

The history of the churches is an important part of the history of Christianity in the Indian sub-continent. Their beginnings can be traced to the work of several Christian missions from the 16th century onwards. Initially there were four dioceses in the Church of Pakistan, i.e. Karachi, Multan, Lahore and Sialkot, but in 1980, through a special resolution and for better ministerial work, four new dioceses were created: Hyderabad, Raiwind, Faisalabad and Peshawar. There are now 13 dioceses with eight active diocesan bishops with an additional bishop for the Gulf Ministries. This appointment was made to take care of the pastoral and worship needs of Urdu-speaking workers in the Gulf. There is a presiding bishop for the Church of Pakistan who is known as the moderator and is there for a three-year term.

Although Christians form two percent of the population of Pakistan, which is approximately 140 million but their role in civil services and community support is significant. Christian community of Pakistan has always played a vital role in nation building, from the education sector to the health sector from the sanitation services to the useful workforce they have contributed substantially. The Christian community is also involved in business and services sector, including, profession like, Doctors, Engineers, lawyers and scholars. Christian scholars, teachers, social workers and lawyers are appreciated for their work ethics. The Christian community feels that they cannot participate in the political and social aspects of the society as much as they would like as they feel that the society has not given them a sense of belonging. There is no legal bar to evangelistic work, but the propagation of the gospel is not always welcomed. Church of Pakistan has initiated some significant steps to continue its role in education in the light of the policy of nationalization. Schools that were nationalized in 1972 have been returned to the church. The largest, Forman Christian College Lahore, was given back to the Presbyterian Church in 2003. They have also developed some outstanding institutions like the United Christian Hospital, Gujranwala Theological Seminary, St Thomas Theological College Karachi, Edwards College Peshawar, Mission Hospital Sahiwal and Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore, and many other missionary schools and medical centers. Their contributions and passion to serve the country is outstanding.

¹³ Religious Demography of Pakistan: US Department of State document, for detail see, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/14026.htm>

SOCIO-CULTURAL ROOTS

Socio-cultural heritage and contemporary scene

Their socio-cultural contribution and rich architectural heritage in the form of their missionary schools, hospitals and churches dominate Pakistan's major cities. These architectural marvels can be seen in the downtowns of Karachi, Lahore, Quetta and Rawalpindi and even in other parts of the country. After independence in 1947 most of these buildings originally built by the British were given to the native Christian churches.

Pakistan upholds this glorious principle as commanded by the Holy Quran by allowing Christian churches to be run by the various denominations.

The establishment of Pakistan Christian societies and other organizations, for ensuring the upkeep and sanctity of their Churches in Pakistan and other facilities provided by the government highlights the basic human right of every citizen of Pakistan irrespective of their religious beliefs.

CUSTOMS

Christian Wedding

Usually Christians marry in a very traditional way. Christian weddings are always held in a church. The bride usually wears the traditional white gown and the groom wears a black suit. The bride covers her head with a white veil and a crown or a bunch of white flowers. She also holds a flower bouquet in her hand. The wedding ceremony involves the exchange of wedding bands and marriage vows taken by the couple. The wedding rings are blessed by the priest to instil everlasting love and faith.

The ceremony comes to an end with the priest giving his final blessings to the couple. At the end the gathering in the church showers their blessings to the newlywed couple. Another formality involves the couple signing in front of the register.

The wedding ceremony is followed by the wedding reception. Usually snacks and meals are served at the wedding reception. Again the cake cutting ceremony takes place where the bride and the groom jointly cut the cake.

Death, Funeral, Requiem -- Orthodox Christian Traditions, Customs and Practice

For Christians, an earthly death is a gateway to eternal life. Preparing themselves spiritually and making practical arrangements in advance for funeral is very important. Here is some practical information about Orthodox rites and funeral planning. For Christians it is important for following reasons;

- It helps give meaning to a person's life;
- It enables family and friends to come together to express feelings of love, grief and sadness;
- It helps family and friends accept the reality of death, so that they can overcome the emotional pain.

Funeral planning helps ease the pain. For Christian's funeral planning can relieve stress and take away some burden on family and friends later.

Funeral

According to the Holy Canons of the Church, the body of a deceased Christian must be returned to the earth. Cremation is specifically forbidden. The body is placed in a casket and set in a grave. It is necessary to have a cemetery plot, a grave liner or vault (if required by law), and a marker or monument with the image of the Cross. The funeral customs includes;

- The body of the dead person, having been placed in a coffin, is carried -- feet first -- into the church for the burial service and set in the center of the nave -- facing the altar.
- The coffin is opened and an icon of Christ or the patron Saint is placed in the hands of the departed.
- A wreath (with the Trisagion printed on it) is placed on the forehead of the departed.
- The hand-cross is placed in the coffin near the head of the departed.
- Candles are distributed to the worshipers who, receiving the light from the priest, hold them lit throughout the service until near the end.
- After the Dismissal and "Memory Eternal," friends come to say a last good-bye to the departed. They may kiss the hand-cross which is set on the side of the coffin or the icon placed in the hands of the departed. The closest relatives should be given an opportunity to spend several minutes with the departed alone. Then the coffin is closed and carried out from the church to the hearse. The choir sings the Trisagion, and the bells are rung slowly.
- The funeral cortege proceeds to the cemetery where a short grave-side

Festivals

The Christian calendar evolved over a period of about six centuries. During the times of the New testament Sunday, known as the Lord's Day was observed but it was not until the reign of the Emperor Constantine that it was declared a day to rest.

Lent, Easter and Christmas are the main religious festivals of the Christian Year.

The Christian year is divided up with events which remind us of the life of Jesus. It begins with the season of Advent, at the very end of November, which is a period of

preparation for the coming of Christ, and then moves through the story of his life to the important focus of Holy Week and Easter. After celebrating the resurrection of Jesus, the story focuses on the founding of the Church itself, with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, before settling down for a period of teaching and consolidation of the faith during the weeks of Trinity.

The Christian Church grew and expanded under the Roman Empire which followed a calendar controlled by the sun. When the church began to introduce festivals of its very own, they fixed them on dates already in the Roman calendar. The Christian Calendar is thus a dual one, with 'fixed' feasts based on the Roman 'solar' calendar, and 'moveable' ones based on the Jewish 'lunar' calendar.

Advent

Advent is a term from the Latin word 'adventus' which means "arrival". It is a time of waiting for the arrival of Christmas, the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem about two thousand years ago. Advent is the new year of the Christian Church and the church season that leads to Christmas Day.

Clergy typically wear royal purple or royal blue vestments during Advent. Many churches also include an advent wreath (sometimes called an Advent ring or crown) in their Advent services. The Christian year follows the life of Jesus. It begins with Advent Sunday - which is the Christian church, is 'New Year's Day'. The most important day of the year will be Easter Sunday, the day on which Jesus came back to life - but before that festival, there will be other special days to look forward to. At the end of Advent, there will be Jesus' birthday (Christmas Day).

Advent begins on the Sunday nearest to 30th November and lasts until midnight on Christmas Eve. Advent Sunday is the first of the four Sundays before the 25th December

Christmas

Christmas is the time when Christians around the world celebrate the birth of Jesus. Every year in December Christian celebrates the birthday of Jesus Christ. - They celebrate the 'Mass' or church service for Christ. The word Christmas (or Christ's Mass) comes from the Old English name Cristes Maesse - Christ's Mass - and is the celebration of the birth of Jesus. The first recorded observance occurred in Rome in AD360, but it wasn't until AD440 that the Christian Church fixed a celebration date of December 25. Christmas is a season, bringing families and friends together to share the customs and traditions which have been around for centuries. Most people are on holiday and stay at home with their family on Christmas day. It follows a month of preparation (Advent) and involved lots of festivities, school plays telling the story of

the nativity, exchanging Christmas cards and presents, special meals, special decorations.

Easter

Easter is the season in which Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the most important festival in the Christian year. Jesus' resurrection is at the centre of the Christian faith. Jesus died for the sins of humanity and by coming back to life promises eternal life for all those who believe in him. It is the most important festival for Christians. It is a very joyous occasion marked in churches by wonderful music and flowers. Out of church by the exchange of cards and Easter eggs - a symbol of spring and new life as Jesus' death brought new life to Christians.

OTHER IMPORTANT EVENTS

Shrove Tuesday and Lent

Shrove Tuesday is four weeks before Easter. It is celebrated by making pancakes and traditionally having pancake races etc. The idea is to use up all of the rich food - eggs and flour ready for the month long fast to prepare oneself for the Easter celebration.

Palm Sunday - Maundy Thursday

On Palm Sunday - the first day of Holy week Christians remember when Jesus rode into Jerusalem riding on a donkey - people threw palm leaves down on the road like a red carpet might be laid in front of a king. Palm crosses are given to the congregation to help them think about the week ahead. Maundy Thursday is a reminder of the last supper - when Jesus celebrated the first communion with his apostles.

Good Friday

Good Friday is the day Jesus died. There are services in all Christian churches at the time Christ was crucified. These are very solemn occasions quite unlike what will occur three days later.

Whitsun

On the day of Pentecost when the Jews celebrated their harvest festival and Jesus, his apostles and many people who followed him were in Jerusalem. Suddenly it seemed as if a wind rushed through the crowd, nobody could understand what had happened. It was a visit from the Holy Spirit giving power to those who encountered it to go and spread the word of God.

All Hallows' Eve, celebration as a prelude to All Saints Day, All Saints' Day: day for honouring saints and a Holy Day of Obligation in the Roman Catholic Church where saints have special formal status, All Souls' Day: sometimes called the "Day of the Dead", this is always November 2nd (celebrated on November 3rd if the 2nd is a Sunday). A Roman Catholic day of remembrance for remembering friends and loved ones who have passed away, Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: celebration on 25th March of the visit by the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary announcing the coming birth of Jesus, Ascension of Jesus: Celebrates the ascension of Jesus into heaven, where Christians believe he sits at the right hand of God the Father and prays for the world. Ascension Day is a reminder to Christians that Jesus took his humanity into heaven. The festival marks the end of Jesus' post-resurrection appearance and is

perhaps the earliest observed celebration in Christianity. Some other important days are,

- Christ the King: Roman Catholic celebration of the pre-eminence of Jesus over all earthly authorities.
- Christmas Eve: Celebration of the arrival of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. It is observed with worship, often at midnight, candle lighting, manger scenes, and festive meals.
- Christmas Fast: Greek and Russian Orthodox Christians fast to observe the Nativity of Jesus.
- Circumcision of Jesus: Christian recognition of its Jewish foundations. The infant Jesus was brought to the Temple for his circumcision.
- Epiphany: Celebrated by most Christians on January 6 to commemorate the presentation of the infant Jesus to the Magi, or three wise men. Roman Catholics celebrate Epiphany on the Sunday which falls between January 2 and January 8.
- Fast in honour of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus: Orthodox start of a 14 day fast to prepare for the Falling Asleep (dormition) of the Theotokos.
- Feast of St. Basil: Orthodox celebration of the liturgy. Bread is often shared as a symbol of prosperity and good luck.
- Holy Saturday: Saturday before Easter – a time of meditation on the mystery of Jesus Christ.
- Holy Week: Christians observe the week before Easter with solemn ceremonies based on events in Jesus' life, especially on Holy Thursday and Good Friday
- Saint Andrew's Day: Observance of the coming of Christianity to Scotland. The martyrdom of St. Andrew is remembered as Advent is about to begin.
- Saint Francis Day: Catholic recognition of service to the people and appreciation of the natural world, as practiced by St Francis & Franciscan Monastic Order which he founded.
- Trinity Sunday or Day: celebrated the first Sunday after Pentecost, Christians honour the belief in one God with a threefold nature.

Towards a composite culture

Historical and socio-cultural association of Christian community of Pakistan with the Muslim majority has deep roots in Pakistan.

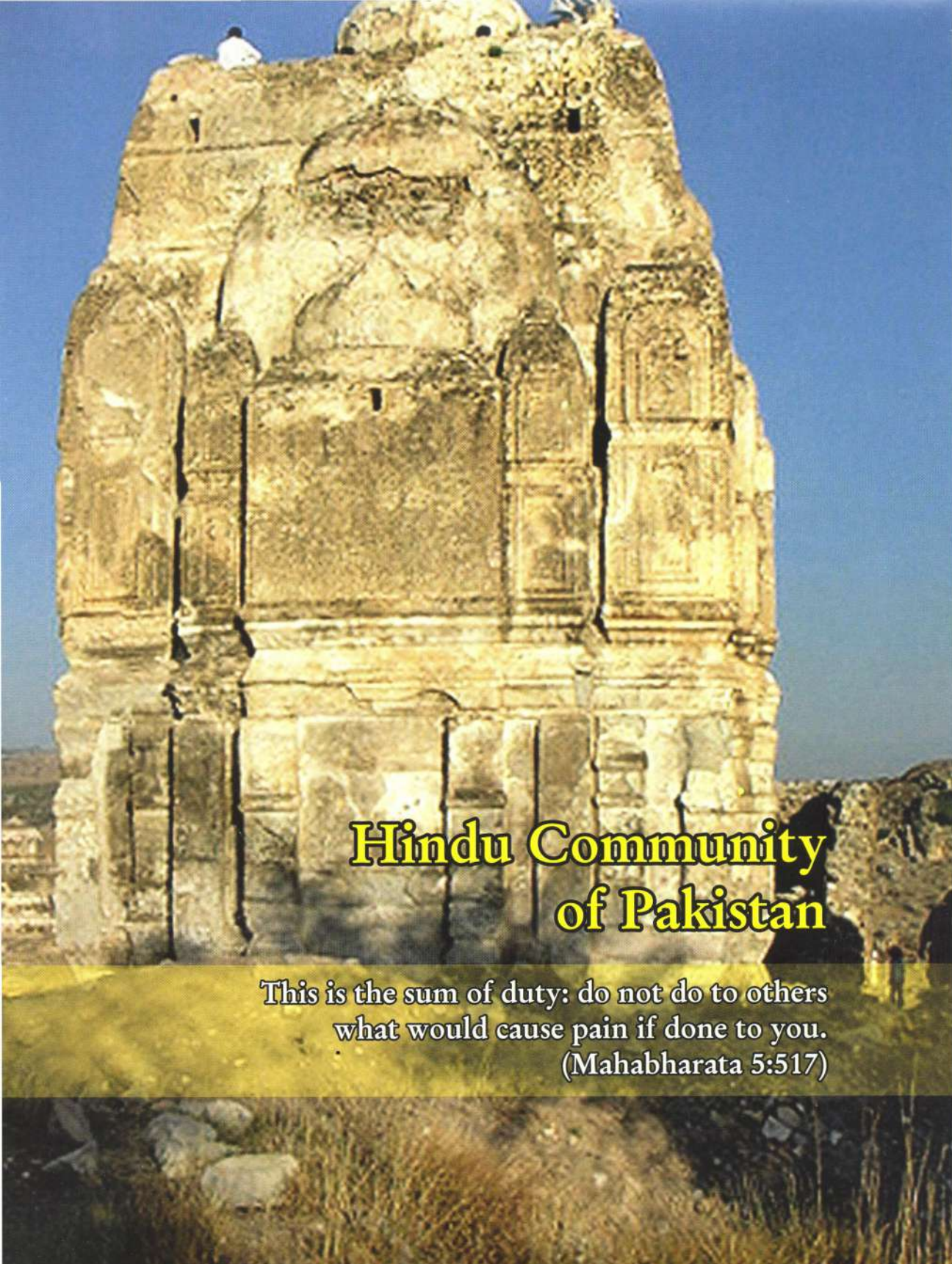
There are two ways of developing a composite culture between the minority-majority relationships in Pakistan. The minorities in Pakistan at large tried to preserve their cultural, religious and ethnic identities. The processes of assimilation resulted in

preparing a road-map for peace, reconciliation and harmony amongst various religions and sects and do away with the misconceptions and enmities being practiced by the followers of different faiths.

Christians living in Pakistan also celebrates some secular festivals, in which Muslim participate. There are many Christians who have adopted some Muslim names, although this trend was developed due to the threat perception in our society but on the other hand it is paving way to communal harmony. Christians in Pakistan used to say Salam as their habit in their relationship with the majority community. Christians celebrates the independenceday and other occasions equally with the Muslim majority, they go to shrines in their daily routine, use the word Allah, it has become part of their culture. However to assimilate in this fashion the cultural and ethic diversity of the country would be affected.

The Christian community of Pakistan has been faithfully serving the country in the fields of education, health and community development. Their role and active participation in domestic jobs, civil services cannot be ignored. Directly or indirectly their existence has a positive impact on the general outlook of the country. Though there have been tensions at times but these are rare some Churches are protected by armed guards. Although the community has been treated badly at times the best part is that the prospects of good Christian-Muslim Relations have developed further. It is important to mention that there are people who are advocates of peace and friendship. There are examples in which Muslims who went to hospital to donate blood for wounded Christians, business men closed their business as a protest against inhumane act against the Christians and honor the religious festivals and places of worship.

There are many examples, in which Muslims share good relationship with their Christian neighbors, greet them on their festivals and special occasions. Civil society organizations and humanitarian agencies in Pakistan also promote the values of justice and peace, love and care for all human beings. It is also imperative to denounce those powers which make people slaves to their economic, ideological and political systems. This task can only be carried out along with our fellow minority communities. Thus the basic mission of both Muslims and Minorities should be to foster Christian-Muslim understanding in order to build a society where everyone's faith is respected and accepted.



Hindu Community of Pakistan

This is the sum of duty: do not do to others
what would cause pain if done to you.
(Mahabharata 5:517)

6 Hindu Community of Pakistan

Ahmad Salim

The Faith

Hinduism is a defining factor in the culture and politics and the history of the region in areas that constitute present day Pakistan. Hindu religion is a product of a long process of evolution of philosophy, culture and ideas. The origins of Hinduism are in antiquity. The earliest form of religion in the Indus Valley was the worship of a three faced male deity with horns, which has been designated as proto-Shiva, being akin to the Shiva of classical Hinduism in some respects.¹ Indo-Aryans migrated from what is part of South Russia in about 15th century B.C. and came down to the Indus Valley. The Aryan tribes which thus occupied Sindh and the Punjab were the Sivas, Parsus, Kekayas, Vrichivants, Yadus, Anus, Turvasas and Druhyus.²

The word Hindu is derived from the word "Sindhu". Sindhu was the river along which the Indus valley civilization prospered in what is now Pakistan. The Sindhu is one of the most holy rivers for Hindus. It is believed that initially, the people who lived along the Sindhu River called themselves "Sindhis" and not "Hindus". Hindu on the other hand was the foreign term for people of the Indus Valley in ancient times. It had no relation with the religion or the region which consists present day India. In the Achaemenian inscriptions at Persepolis and from the Greek texts like those by Herodotus, it is evident that Hindu was used not as a religious definition of a sect but as a people of a certain area. Many centuries later the term "Hind" was used by people from Persia to refer to people from South Asia. Even in Persian scripts it was used as an ethnic term defining no religious identity. The region that comprises present day

¹ Dandekar, R. N., *Insights into Hinduism* (New Delhi, 1979), p.10

² R.C. Majumdar and A.D. Pusalkar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. I, 1951, p.250

Pakistan played an important part in the origins of Hinduism. This was where the germination of ideas happened and a complex form of understanding the relation of the cosmos to the human soul and with the Nature and the Mother Earth evolved and took shape. This was where the human mind labored to comprehend the dynamics of the solar system in relation to human destiny. Today Pakistan has the fifth largest population of native Hindus.

Since Hinduism could be termed as one of the oldest of religions of the world, the information about the origins of Hinduism is scarce. Varying estimations of the origin of the Vedas and whether or not the Aryans were native or foreign to Indian soil can change Hinduism's age from 4000 to 6000 years. It can be said that it is an amalgamation of the Aryans, Dravidians and Harappans religious beliefs and cultural traditions. The vast and varied spectrum of Hinduism subsequently diversified in different religious philosophies. Buddhism and Jainism both have the origins in Hinduism.

Vedas are ancient and are the basis for the development of Saivism and Vaishnavism. Before 2nd c. B.C. there is no historical evidence of Vedic religious culture in India. However, from the period of Pushyamithra, who established Sunga Dynasty in 185 B.C. there is evidence of Vedic religious beliefs in India. In the pre-Christian era, the nomadic songs of worship were only in the oral form, and were later recoded in writing by Veda Vyasa, a Dravidian who lived in the post-Christian era. He compiled, arranged and classified them as 'Vedas'. The Vedas are in Sanskrit and Sanskrit inscriptions became visible in 2nd c. A.D.³

Interestingly the word Hindu predates the reference to Hinduism as a religion; the term in Persian is referred to people who lived on the other side (from a Persian point of view) of the Sindhu or Indus River. More commonly during the British Raj, the term's use was made standard, and eventually the religion which was about infinity and the human soul, a religion which was cosmic as well as nature was given the tag 'Hinduism'.

After independence the percentage of Hindus in Pakistan was perhaps as high as 15-20%, but dropped to less than 2% presently. According to the 1998 Pakistan Census, Hindus constitute about 1.6 percent of the total population of Pakistan and about 6.6% in the province of Sindh. The Pakistan Census separates Schedule Castes from the main body of Hindus who make up a further 0.25% of national population⁴

Fundamental Principles

In order to understand the fundamental principles of Hinduism, most of the people believe that it is important to understand the principles mentioned in the Vedas. There is no one founder of Vedic traditions and no book or source is available.

³ Alexander Harris, 'Holes in Vedic Valley Theory', *The Week*, Aug, 9, 1998

⁴ http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/other_tables/pop_by_religion.pdf

The Four Vedas are 25 recensions of Rigveda, 100 recensions of Yajurveda 1000 recensions of Sama veda and 50 recensions of Atharva veda. 18 brahmanas, 11 aranyakas 108 upanishads, these are the vedas. 18 books each for of the vedangas: siksha, niruktha vyakarana, chandasatra, kalpasastra and jyothisha- which are the Vedic literature.

The study of any religion is an attempt to understand its perspective on the Ultimate Reality. It is about the way in which humans relate to that reality. Understanding such complex ideas should be approached gradually.

Hinduism is a conglomerate of diverse beliefs and traditions, in which the prominent themes include:

- Dharma (ethics and duties)
- Samsara (rebirth)
- Karma (right action)
- Moksha (liberation from the cycle of Samsara)

Dharma is the core concept of Hindu philosophy. All the other principles and values originate from this particular belief. The word Dharma is formed from the root *dhr* and literally means to hold, sustain and maintain a thing in its being. There is no accurate translation of the word into English but we may have a glimpse of its vast scope by translating *Dharma* as right action, right conduct, virtue, moral law, etc. Every form of life, every group of people has its own *Dharma*, which is the law of its being. The concept of Dharma encompasses all aspects of our lives.⁵

Dharma set forth four personal aims, to be realized during the course of one's life time: Dharma, Artha, karma and moksha. Artha implies wealth, prosperity, reputation or fame etc. Karma is sensory and aesthetic fulfillment. Moksha is liberation and salvation. So the basic principles for a Hindu is obligation to practice Artha and Karma with Dharma as the foundation so that the primary object of Moksha (reaching salvation and release from cycles of birth) may be obtained. In Hinduism the Moksha is considered to be a primary principle, and it is believed that the followers must participate in the affairs of the society, raise a family, enjoy the good life and serve the community, all within the framework of Dharma. In Hinduism happiness, prosperity, and good life are considered to be legitimate human experiences as long as they are within the framework of Dharma⁶.

Hinduism like any other doctrine of civil behavior believes in truth, honesty and non-violence. It also beliefs in celibacy, cleanliness, contentment, austerity, perseverance, penance and pious company. According to some believes Hinduism

⁵ Klostermaier, Klaus K.; A Short Introduction to Hinduism, Oneworld Publications, Boston, 1998

⁶ Flood, Gavin; An Introduction to Hinduism, Cambridge University Press, 1996

must have existed even in 10000 B.C. The earliest of the Hindu scriptures – The Rig Veda – was composed well before 6500 B.C. Hinduism cannot be described as a defined belief. Unlike other religions of the world, Hinduism is a way of life, a Dharma, that is, the law that governs all action. It has its own beliefs, traditions, ethics, rituals, philosophy and theology. The religious tradition of Hinduism is responsible for the creation of such concepts and practices as Yoga, Ayurveda, Vastu, Jyotish, Yajna, Puja, Tantra, Vedanta, Karma, etc. According to scholars, the evolution of Hinduism may be divided into three periods: the ancient (6500 BCE-1000 AD), the medieval (1000-1800 AD), and the modern (1800 AD to present). Hinduism is the world's oldest extant religion. With one billion followers, it is the world's third largest religion. Hinduism is a conglomeration of religious, philosophical, and cultural ideas and practices that originated in India, characterized by its belief in reincarnation, a Absolute Being of multiple manifestations, the law of cause and effect, following the path of righteousness, and the desire for liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.

There are some common principles and practices that provide a cohesive tendency to the diverse beliefs and practices that make up the religion:

- There must be faith in the infallible authority of the Vedas – what is Vaidika.
- There must be faith in the cyclic creation, preservation and dissolution of the Universe.
- There must be faith in the transmigration of souls according to the Laws of Karma.
- There must be faith in the possibility of final liberation of the soul through reunion with the Universal Spirit – The Eternal Brahman.
- There must be adherence to the Laws of Dharma that govern all stages of a believer's life as well as all major events like birth, marriage and death that occur in it.⁷

Unlike Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism all of which have human beings as t, Hinduism has no founder of the religion. It does not have one particular book such as the Bible or Koran as its basis. Hinduism acknowledges that true religion or Dharma is what governs this universe and maintains its balance. When Dharma becomes weak and ultimately diminishes to a nonentity the universe is destroyed in one of the periodic cataclysms. The basic principle is that the Dharma is maintained by Karma. Hindus are urged to perform their duty diligently so that their Dharma is maintained.

⁷ Chaudhuri, Nirad, *The Continent of Circe*, Oxford University Press, 1966

The Hindu scriptures are the guiding force to determine the basic principles of the Hinduism that includes the Vedic literature. The four *Samhitas* are a collection of wisdom and comprise the *Rig* (praise wisdom), *Yajur* (sacred formula wisdom), *Sama* (the chant wisdom), and *Atharva* (the magical charm wisdom).

In addition to the Vedas, there are other equally important scriptures belonging to the *Smṛti* tradition. Unlike the *Śruti*s (revealed), *Smṛti*s are regarded as "remembered" and the principal scriptures in this class include *Itihāsas* i.e. the epics; the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* with the *Srimad Bhagavadgita*, (b) *Puranas* containing myths and legends relating to the Hindu Trinity (*Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśwara*) (c) *Dharmashastras*, the principal one attributed to Manu, the universal lawgiver and dealing with the creation of the world, *varnashrama dharma* and civil and criminal law, transmigration of soul and bliss. These scriptures are discussed in details in proceeding paragraphs.⁸

Another fundamental aspect of Hinduism is its tradition of tolerance. Ancient universities and religious centers in India attracted students and visitors from all over the world. They initiated debate and inquiry in religious philosophies. It is with this spirit that modern day Hindus accept all religions to be true.

Scripture

The scripture in defining the Hindu religion has a very significant role. The scriptures as defined by the O.Owen Cole in his book on five religions in the twentieth century says that, 'The sacred writings of Hinduism are divided into two groups, *Śruti* and *Smṛti*.'

The writings which have been heard directly from God are called *Śruti*. The priests who passed them on orally for centuries trace them back to men who heard them from God himself.

Smṛti means remembered. Hindus believe that scriptures which fall into this category represent human recognition of God's message to mankind. Memory can be defective so these writings are not as highly regarded as the *śruti* texts⁹.

Hindu scripture was written in Sanskrit. Indeed, much of the morphology and linguistic philosophy inherent in the learning of Sanskrit is inextricably linked to study of the Vedas and other relevant Hindu texts. Hindu texts are seen to revolve around many levels of reading namely gross/physical, subtle and supramental. Hindu literature is divided into two categories: *Śruti* – that which is heard (i.e. revelation) and *Smṛiti* – that which is remembered (i.e. tradition, not revelation). The Vedas considered *Śruti* by many people thus enjoy a higher status. The post-Vedic Hindu scriptures form *Smṛiti*: the various *śastras* and the *Itihāsas*, or histories in epic verse all come in that category. A study

⁸ Abinash Chandra Bose, *Hymns from the Vedas*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1966

⁹ W. Owen Cole, *Five Religions in the Twentieth Century*, Hultons Educational Publications, Bucks: UK, 1982, p. 44

of the religious epics and Upanishads of the Vedas is the Bhagavad Gita, highly revered by the Hindus.

This allows varied levels of understanding for different individuals. The true meaning of the texts can only be understood with the spiritual advancement of the reader. It is divided into two categories: Shruti- and Smriti.

The Hindu scriptures are extensive and were written between 1400 B.C. and A.D. 500. The oldest of the Hindu scriptures is the *Veda*, which literally means "wisdom" or "knowledge." The Vedas contain hymns, prayers, and ritual texts composed from about 1400 to about 400 B.C.

Shruti

The Vedas are considered scripture by all Hindus. The revealed scriptures are the Vedas, a word meaning knowledge. There are four Vedas, the most important being the Rig, or Royal, Veda.

These books have no single author. The Vedas were perhaps compiled 4000 year ago and are the oldest religions books in existence. The Vedas cover a variety of subjects including various Hindu rituals. Of the many Vedas that may have once existed, four have survived, these are;

1. The Rig Veda or the Hymns of Praise
2. The Sama Veda or the Melodies
3. The Yajur Veda or the Sacrificial formulas
4. The Atharva Veda or the Magic formulas¹⁰.

While the overwhelming majority of Hindus may never read the Vedas, the reverence for the more abstract notion of eternal knowledge (Veda means knowledge) is etched deep into the hearts of all those who follow Veda Dharma. Classed with the Vedas (which specifically refer to the Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva) are their famous commentaries, the Upanishads.

The *Upanishads* are a collection of writings composed between 800-600 B.C. Over one hundred of them still exist. These writings marked a definite change from the sacrificial humans and magic formulas in the Vedas, to the mystical ideas about man and the universe – specifically the Brahman, and the *atman* (the self or soul). The Upanishads had a great influence on Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism.

While the early Vedas lay the foundation for subsequent Hindu ritual, cosmology and developing philosophy, the Upanishads built the edifice of mystic insight and abhorrence for ritual at the expense of spiritual insight. Forming the core of the Vedanta (End of Vedas), they streamline the excessive litany of praise to Vedic gods and capture the essence of the Rig Vedic dictum "Truth Is One." They set Hindu

¹⁰ Viqar Zaman and Gul Afroz Zaman, *Religions of South Asia- Unit in Diversity*, Karachi. 2007, p. 2

philosophy apart with its embrace of a single transcendent and yet immanent force that is native to each man's soul, an identification of micro- and macrocosm as one. It can be said that while early Hinduism is most reliant on the four Vedas, Classical Hinduism, from the Yoga and Vedanta to Tantra and Bhakti streams, was molded around the Upanishads.¹¹

Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita occupies a special position in the hearts of most Hindus. At the beginning one part of the epic probably produced in the second century BC has become the most famous of all Hindu scriptures. Though it was originally written in Sanskrit but later on it has been translated into all the major languages of India as well as European including English. This scripture is composed of Eight Chapters. Technically it is considered Smriti, it has singularly achieved nearly unquestioned status as Shruti, or revealed, and is thus the most definitive single Hindu text, read by millions of bhaktas (devotees) and yogis on a largely daily basis throughout the Sanatana Dharmic world.

The Bhagavad Gita is not only the most sacred book of the Hindus, but it is also the best known and the most read of all Indian works in the entire world, despite the fact it was added late to the Mahabharata, sometime in the first century A.D. The story revolves around man's duty, which, if carried out, will bring nothing but sorrow. The significance this story has on Hindu belief is its endorsement of bhakti, or devotion to a particular god, as a means of salvation, since Arjuna, the story's main character, decides to put his devotion to Vishnu above his own personal desires. The Gita ends with Arjuna devoted to Vishnu and ready to kill his relatives in battle.

The Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna and means the Song of the blessed one. The message in this book speaks about the essence of state in which the highest form of worship is devotion to God as he is revealed in Krishna. Because God's love for him and his love for God, whoever dies in the battle will live eternally, and whoever survives it will achieve the same good through worshipping this loving God.

Smriti

The post-Vedic Hindu scriptures form the latter category, the most notable of which are the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, major epics considered scripture by most followers of Sanatana Dharma, their stories arguably familiar to the vast majority of Hindus living in the Indian subcontinent, if not abroad. Other texts considered important by today's Hindus include the Devi Mahatmya, an ode to Devi, the Divine Mother, and the Yoga Sutras, a key meditative yoga text of Shri Patanjali. There are

¹¹ W. Owen, *Opcit*, p. 44

also a number of revered Hindu Tantras and Sutras that command the respect of various Hindu sects of different persuasion, some including the Mahanirvana Tantra, Tirumantiram and Shiva Sutras.

The Mahabharat, is considered to be world's longest poem and one of the finest poem. This was originally composed in Sanskrit in the ninth century BC. This was later on refined on later stages and was translated into most of the world's languages.

The Ramayana is one of the two major epic tales of India, the other being the Mahabharata. A sage-poet named Valmiki wrote the Ramayana. The work consists of 24,000 couplets based upon the life of Rama, a righteous king who was supposedly an incarnation of the God Vishnu. The Mahabharata is the second epic. It is an the story of the deeds of Aryan clans, and consists of some 100,000 verses and was composed over an 800-year period beginning about 400 B.C.

The Ramayana is the most recent than the Great Epic and shorter – a mere 24000 Sanskrit couplets. It was composed about five hundred years after the Mahabharata and claims to be the work of one man, Valmiki.¹² This scripture contains the story of good and bad, right and wrong, good and evil, courage and loyalty.

Places of worship

Pakistan has ancient temples, historical gurdawaras, synagogues, churches and other such places of worship. Hindu and Bhuddist Kings ruled over the land for centuries. Even during Muslim period, some Hindus Rajas and Maharajas continued to rule. Of course the rulers in each period of history built their own places of worship. These places of worship were later on decayed when that specific religious population would diminish. Centuries later they would be discovered by the archaeologists.

The Hindu cultural heritage in Pakistan is unique. Pakistan has very important places of worship for both Hindus and Sikhs. Recently some of these sites are declared part of the World Heritage.

Katas Raj Temple: Chakwal

The ancient temple of Kataraj¹³ located in the Chakwal district is built on a site believed to have been visited by the Pandava brothers of Mahabharata. Besides the Temple complex there is a sacred pool at the site. According to the legend when Lord Shiva lost his wife Parvati, his tears filled the ponds at the Temple. In Sanskrit it is referred as 'Katak Sheel' meaning flow of tears. The road leading from Kallar kahar to Choa Saidan shah cuts across the temple complex. This temple is of special significance to the Brahmins. Before independence Katar temple complex was an important center of

¹² Ibid, p. 49

¹³ Commonly known as Katar Temple, Katar, or Katarash means raining eyes in Sanskrit.

pilgrimage. Hindu pilgrims would flock to Katas every April. They would also bath in the sacred pool. There were 50 buildings in Katas¹⁴

Mystical Tilla Jogian and Rohtas fort

Tilla Jogian is the highest peak in the Eastern Salt Range in the Punjab. Tilla Jogian in Punjabi means the hill of saints. At 975 meters (3200ft) above sea level, it is about 25 km to the west of Jhelum city¹⁵. The view from the top is rewarding. Rohtas Fort is located in the east of Tilla Jogian. The Hindu Temple at Tilla Jogian has significant importance. For thousands of years it was a place of sun worship for the Hindus. Since this was the highest point in the hills the sun could be seen from here earlier, consequently the sun would set late. Tilla Jogian was founded in 100 B.C. it means the Hill of the Yogis. This is where the Kanpatha Jogis, an order founded by Guru Gorakhnath had a monastery.

Rohtas Fort is near Jhelum. About 20 kilometers from the famous fort the ruins of "Tilla Jogian" are situated on a hill. Rohtas is a garrison fort built by the Afghan King Sher Shah Suri. He named Qila Rohtas after the famous Rohtasgarh Fort in Bihar. Sher Shah had captured the fort in Bihar from the Raja of Rohtas Hari Krishan Rai in 1539. However the history of Rohtas is ancient. From the old texts and inscriptions found near Rohtas, it appears that the fort was at one point in history in the possession of the Hindu king Pratapdhavala of the Japla dynasty. It was built by Harish Chandra of the Solar dynasty. It was named after his son Rohitasva after whom another fort the one at Rohtasgarh was also named. The site is also famous as the locale for the folk story Heer-Ranjha. Tilla Jogian comprises of a complex of Hindu temples housing at least three baths and a network of waterworks with at least two minor dams. The ancient stone pathway leading up to the highest temple are still intact and are still the only way to get to Tilla Jogian. It is believed that the complex of temples was home to a large population of religious elite; the lifestyle was one of luxury and affluence. Though no record can easily be found of the ruin's purpose and position in history, it can be ascertained that this would have been a site of at least some religious significance in its prime¹⁶.

Nandana – the Garden of Indra, is situated a few miles away towards eastern side of Saiden Shah. Nandana is situated near Ketas. History of the Nandana fort and pass can be traced back to 991 when the Raja of Lahore attempted to invade. At Nandana there are extensive remains of Bhuddish Stupas, a Fort, Hindu Temple significant by

¹⁴ A. K Rashid, *opcit*, p. 64

¹⁵ Kitas and Gandhala, *Gazetteer of District Jhelum*,

¹⁶ *Ibid*

the Kashmiri style of architecture and a mosque of a later period. The earliest of these remains are that of stupa which may date not later than the 7th - 8th centuries A.D.¹⁷

Malot Temples

The Malot temples were built of local red sand stones. They are on the road leading to Malot village near Choi village. It is at the height of 3000 feet. Originally the temple was much larger; it was spread in an area 2000 feet from east to west and 1500 feet from north to south. The inside area is 1000 by 500 feet and the radius of 2.5 miles¹⁸. The Temple was named after the King of MalDev or Malu¹⁹. The two present temples were with the Brahman Bali Hindus till 1947. Guru of Bali Hindus, Guru Tarlok Nath frequently visited. Mahan Singh, father of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, also built a small fort at Malot in early 19th century. Another important temple at Malot is the Shiv Ganga temple, which is located at the eastern side of Malot.

Swat Valley

The North West frontier provinces also has very rich heritage of Hindu culture and civilization. This is the land where civilizations like Gandhara flourished. In 8-10 C, Hindu Shahi dynasty ruled the area. **Raja Gira's Fort** was the regional capital of Swat. Over thousands of years the Swat valley was home to different religions and cultures. In area between Chakdara Bridge and Saidu Sharif the presence of numerous cultural remains of pre historic Aryans, Gandhara culture, Buddhist shrines and buildings of the Hindu Shahi Period are a witness to the great cultural evolution that took place. These archaeological sites are concentrated around three towns; Birkot, Udegram and Saidu Sharif. Near Chakdara Bridge there are ruins of Hindu Shahi Period and stupas at Haibatgram, Top Dara and Landakai. Gumbat Stupa is situated 9 kilometers south of Birkot (locally known as Barikot) in the Kandag Valley. This is one of the best preserved stupas of Swat. It consists of a cube of about 12 feet with windows. A narrow passage runs around the building probably with the intention to walk around sacred images while worshipping. In the vicinity of the Gumbat stupa there are remains of the monastery.

Three kilometres from Birkot towards Saidu Sharif is Shingerdar Stupa. 1.5 kilometers from Shingerdar is a large Buddha Carving on a cliff facing the road. The Gogdara Rock Carvings are about 6 kilometers away are 3000 years old. These

¹⁷ Salman Rashid, "The Salt Range and The Potohar Plateau", Sang-e-meel Publication, Lahore, 2001 p. 65-69

¹⁸ Dr. Saifur Rehman Dar, "Malot Temple: An Archaeological Beauty in the Salt Range", Bonjour, Issue no. 25, Vol. 12, Oct- Dec 1996, Karachi

¹⁹ The Rajput history claims its name Malot from the word Malik-Kot as they believed that the title of Malik was given to the one who accepted annexation to the Muslim King of Delhi although in reward the Malik enjoyed the autonomous status with full sovereignty in the assigned area

engraving have different animals. There are some carvings in which humans were driving two wheeled war chariots. These carvings were probably works of ancient Aryans.

One of the most important Buddhist shrines of Swat is **Butkara Stupa** near Saidu Sharif. Butkara was built by Ashoka in 2nd century BC. In 1955 it was excavated an Italian archeological team. Most of the stone carvings are now displayed in museums around the world. Stupa was repaired last in 8th century after that it was abandoned.

Gor Khuttree & Balmiki temple Peshawar

Gor Khutree in the old city of Peshawar, Pakistan was identified by Sir Alexander Cunningham with Kanishka Vihara (the Great Stupa of King Kanishka) while Professor Dr Ahmad Hasan Dani identified it with the place where the famous tower of the Buddha bowl once stood. According to the historical record it was the place of Hindu pilgrimage where they performed the Sardah ritual²⁰. Later during the Sikh occupation of the area they converted the site into the residence and official headquarters of their leader who was governor of Peshawar from 1838-1842. They constructed a temple for Shiva there. The Gorakhnath Temple is situated in the centre, a network of cells and buildings in the southern and western side of the complex and a fire brigade building, which was built in 1912. Almost 150 years old Balmiki temple is located in the Kalibari area of the city. The temple is a classical example of Hindu heritage. In this small area of Peshawar the Hindu community is concentrated. The Kali Bari land originally belonged to one Mehr Chand Khanna until Partition in 1947 when the Hindu community living there assumed control and ownership. The documents are in the possession on the Hindu community's elder Ram Lal²¹. There exists an old Hindu Temple which was built in 1861. This temple is still being used by the local community. Divided into two compounds called Chorasi Ehata and Gaadi Ehata respectively, it comprises of 68 to 70 housing units and a Hindu temple, the Balmiki Mandir, all dating back to 1861. The owner of the property was a Brahman called Mehr Chand Khanna, migrated to India in 1947, but the premises were never vacated as the residents decided to stay on in Pakistan.

The Balmiki is not considered a caste it is outside the three castes recognised by Hinduism. They are the untouchables and still suffer in both India and Pakistan and are consigned to the role of garbage collectors. In Pakistan, the Balmiki have been the 'khakrob' (sweeper) community, but with time their status in society is gradually improving. In Sindh and Balochistan, their population has decreased after 1947. Their largest settlement is in Multan (Punjab) where they are known as the city's oldest community. There are many Hindu Balmiki, families settled in Mardan, Nowshera,

²⁰ Sharda is the Hindu virtual in which the Hindus shave off their heads

²¹ Interview with Mr. Rajesh Kumar, Mardan – May 05, 2007

Peshawar and Kohat. There are some in Swat as well. Muslims in Nowshera are very supportive of this community and they are given the religious freedom.²² In Mardan like other districts of N.W.F.P, Hindu community is settled from so many decades. Their role in politics, social work and other professions is very prominent. Saith Lal Bahadur Shastri was elected as MPA from Mardan. There is a Hindu temple in Cantonment area of Mardan. At one point in time there was also a charity kitchen for Hindu community which was occupied by some local authorities, and still is under their possession²³.

Hindu Temples in Sindh & Balochistan

The magnificent island temple of Shri Sadhbella at Sukkur is revered by Hindus from all over.²⁴ The temple is famous, it was built by Hindu Sadhu Samapardaya in the year 1823 A.D.²⁵ It is an important site of pilgrimage for the Hindu community. Besides this temple there are numerous more like the Guru Shri Chand Temple, Shiva Temple, Ganesh Temple, Devi Temple, Shri Sat Narain Temple, Sabha mandap for religious instructions, Pathshala, library and Gardens which are worth seeing. The Shri Sadhbella is an ideal place to see the ancient great Hindu heritage in Sindh. This is where the great fairs of Sindh were held and where Hindus performed various religious ceremonies. Its historical and architectural status makes it a precious jewel. Among Shri Sadhbella, shrines; there are other holy places which became the property of Shri Sadhbella authorities. For example, Tapoban: It has become the property of the Sadhbella since 1976. It is situated to the south of the Sadhbella on the farther bank of the river. It is an ideal place for solitude and meditation. Another important monument is Rishi Kesh, which is basically a collection of rooms on the North bank of the river and is meant to be the lodging house for pilgrims. It was built from in 1978. Shri Guru Srichand Deve Temple: this temple is situated in the north of the Guru Mandir in the Sadhbella; it contains a large marble statue of Shri Guru Baba Srichand Maharaj. The Sadhbella is a place for festivals such as holi, Janamashtmi, Diwali, Vaisakhi etc. On important occasions Bhagats (minstrels and singers) make the arrangements. This temple is still a famous and important and important place of worship. Recently funds were allocated for its construction and maintenance work²⁶.

²² Interview with Shiyam Babu, Nowshera – May 04, 2007

²³ Interview with Rajesh Kumar – Mardan, May 05, 2007

²⁴ Hazarisingh Gurbuxsingh Ahwani, "A short account of the rise and growth of Shri Sadhbella Tirath", Amar printing press, Sukkur, 1923

²⁵ Ibid, p. 37

²⁶ Interview with, Gyan Chand Kiswani, Advocate, Sukkur.

The Hinglaj Temple

The Hinglaj temple is considered one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage for the Hindus. The temple of Aadh Shakti Devi Maata is situated in a cave called "HINGLAJ". The Hinglaj is in Lyari at the end of the Kirthar mountain range. The Kirthar mountain range runs from Sindh to Baluchistan. The pilgrimage to Hinglaj is considered one of the most sacred. This is a unique temple. The Hindu community who lived in the area belonged to Kashtrya class they have been there atleast since the Chandra dynasty. They are followers of Lord Shiva. The temple is built on a platform of about 3 feet high with two small entrances on either side. They create a room of three feet high ceiling. The platform is open from three sides while the fourth joined the base of the mountain and the figure of Mata on the top with a baby cot. This was built in the depression of 1000 feet high mountain with a stream running through lush green vegetation in the narrow valley²⁷.

Old Institutions: Health Care Centers and Educational Institutions

Most education and health care centers in the pre-partition of India were inextricably infused by religion. They relied extensively on the study of religious scriptures and rituals in order to develop an orientation about the religion. With the advent of British Colonialism the area was introduced western education. Pakistan is a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious society. Non-Muslims have contributed enormously for the development of the society. Names like Dr. Abdul Salam, A. R. Cornelius, Dorab Patel, Sobho Gianchandani, Cecil Choudhry, Bapsi Sidhwa and many others are a source of pride for Pakistan²⁸.

The new model of education minimized the amount of time devoted to religion in the schools, it provided unprecedented opportunities for new indigenous religious movements to reach new publics. Founded in 1875, the Arya Samaj boasted an estimated 1.5 million members in mostly north India 1947²⁹. Between 1886 and 1941 the Samaj founded more than 179 schools and colleges called Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) institutions. The Aryas of the Punjab were very active in the movement. The DAV school system educated thousands of students in in Pakistani Punjab and made a mark on the society.

After the death of the founder of Arya Samaj Dayanand Saraswati, The Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) High School was opened in Lahore in 1886 to honor him, offering classes from the first grade through the college. Till 1941 more than 41

²⁷ Traveler account of Dr. Mohan Lal, 2006

²⁸ A.H. Nayyar, "Islamisation of curricula", sustainable development policy institute Islamabad,

²⁹ Daniel Gold, "Organized Hinduisms: From Vedic Truth to Hindu Nation," in Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 534.

primary schools were opened in the Punjab, including DAV boys' and girls' high schools in Rawalpindi³⁰. The rapid spread of DAV schools in Punjab in the 1890s - 1941 brought remarkable changes in educational practice in the province.

Another important institute is the Seth Khushi Ram Daryanomal Harichan Trust, Shikarpur. The trust was founded in 1937; its aim was to educate the Harichan community in Shikarpur. A considerable amount of money for scholarships was allocated for the community. The trust is still working and serving the cause³¹.

There are many other educational institutes but in this particular chapter few of them will be discussed. Another remarkable contribution of Hindu community in educational institutions in Pakistan is the Dayaram Jethmal Sindh College Karachi; the College was established in 1887. This prominent institution was founded by the some very honorable personalities, among them, Mr. Oodharam Mulchand, Mr. Dayaram Jethmal, Rao Shahab Divan of Hyderabad, Mr. Dayaram Gidumal the Sindhi Civilian Judge. The foundation stone of the college building was laid by Lord Dufferin (Viceroy of India) on 14th November 1887³².

In 1946 the family of Sir Ganga Ram started a project of building a medical college in the name of his son Balak Ram medical College. The project was completed after independence as **Fatima Jinnah Medical College for Women Lahore** and admitted its first batch of 39 students in Oct. 1948. The role of Hindu community not only as a institution developers but also as a good academicians is a very much important. The Hindu community is affiliated with literature and academics in Pakistan. Professor Nag Pal, is a prominent academician³³. The Hindu community in urban areas, especially in Sindh prefers professions like, doctors, engineers, lawyers and teachers. The Hindu community in urban Sindh is also very successful in business ventures. They are part of the mainstream society in rural and urban Sindh. In rural Sindh, there are some prominent Hindu landlords. In the previous elections several members from the community were elected to the parliament and at least one person on a general seat. There are three Hindu ministers in the Sindh cabinet.

Lala Lajpat Rai was a well known figure in the political and social circles of pre-Independence India. His mother, Gulab Devi, died of TB in Lahore. In 1927 he established a Trust in her memory to build a TB Hospital for women. It is said that the Hospital was built on the spot where she had breathed her last. The Trust purchased 40 acres of land in April 1930 from the Government which gave a free grant of an additional 10 acres on Ferozpur Road (now Sharah-e-Roomi) Construction work was started in 1931 and completed in 1934. A marble plaque bears witness to the

³⁰ CMC File 136, n.p., Budgets for the Dayanand Educational Mission Rawalpindi 1938-39 and 1939-40.

³¹ An interview with Heman Kumar

³² L. H. Ajwani, "The Golden Jubilee book of The Dayaram Jethmal sindh College, Karachi", Educational Printing Press, Karachi. 1939

³³ Interview with Mr. Amar Nath Randhawa, General Secretary, Hindu Sudhar Sabha, Lahore

opening of the Hospital on 17th July 1934 by Mr. Gandhi. On the migration of trustees to India in 1947, the Government invited Begum Raana Liaquat Ali Khan, and some other notables and philanthropists to become acting Trustees of the Hospital in July 1948. They constituted a Managing Committee with Begum Raana in the Chair, for running the Gulab Devi Chest Hospital. Before the partition most of the educational institutions were dominated by the Hindus, or Christians in most of country³⁴.

Among places of worship, it is also important to mention that there are several other Temples of Hindus in Karachi and other parts of Pakistan.

- **Ratneshwar Mahadev Temple:** This Temple is situated at the seaside of Clifton. It was constructed about more than 150 years ago in a cave in a hill. Grand Mela (Fair) of Lord Shiva is held for 3 days on Maha Shiva Ratri the day where thousands of Hindu devotees visit the Temple for celebration & rituals on this occasion every year.
- **Laxmi Narain Temple:** This temple was constructed on land facing the sea under the Native Jetty Bridge. It is almost 200 years old. This Temple is famous for the important Hindu Festival of Raksha Bandhan. The Hindu community also celebrates the birth ceremony of God Ganesh.
- **Swami Narayan Temple:** This temple is situated near Jinnah road and is surrounded by residential houses. It is a big Temple complex and is more than 150 years.
- **Guru Nanak Darbar Aram Bagh Karachi.**
- **Panch Mukhi Hanuman Temple:** It is an old Temple constructed in 1927 and was under supervision of Mahant Beldev Das Gadi Nasheen. Annual Festivals of Sri Ram Navmi, Hanuman Jantee, Janam Ashtmi and Deshera are held. Every Saturday and Tuesday, sandur and oil are offered on Panch Mukhi Hanuman, this cures the evil effects of Shanee dev.
- **Seetla Mandir Bhimpura Karachi:** This is an old Temple estate belonging to goddess, Seetla Mata. It is famous for its Puja to cure Small pox and other skin diseases. Annual Fairs of Seetla Mata in the month of Chetra, Thadhiree, and Festivals are held in this Temple.
- **Devi Mata Temple:** This Temple was constructed about 150 years ago in the name of Warhai Mata Devi. On every Wednesday, Devi Puja is performed
- **Varun God (Radha Krishna – Sita Ram) Temple At Manora Cantt:** The temple is situated on seashore of Manora cantt. This temple is about 160 years old and designed perfectly as per Hindu Architecture. The temple is

³⁴ Interview with Mr. M. Parkash, Advocate, Hyderabad

carved from a blackish marble. Apart of Varun Devta temple there is a small temple of Shiv Shanker & statues of Hanuman & Sri Ganesh Mahraj are still in good condition. Sindhi Hindu businessmen built this temple & renovated it from time to time. After partition the temple was abandoned, it was illegally occupied by land grabbers. However recently Pakistan Hindu Council Karachi took a bold step to renovate the temple and make it into an active place of worship. In June 2007 the station Commander PNS Himalaya Manora Cantt handed over the temple to Pakistan Hindu Council Karachi.

- **Hanuman Mandir Frere road Saddar Karachi.** The Festivals of Shri Hanuman & Lord Shri Rama are celebrated every year. Weekly Satsang is held on Tuesday & Saturday. Hanuman Seva Mandal is actively participating in all the functions & programmes & up keep of the Templ.
- Among these important places worships there are some other temples which are of unique significance: *Shiv Mandir Karachi Islamia College, Durga Devi Mandir, Krishna Mandir- Frere town Clifton Karachi, Guru Nanik Mandir Manora Karachi, Radha Damodar / Temple Narayan pura Ranchore Line Karachi and, Hindu Cremation Ground Karachi*, a place where Hindus observes last rituals of cremation, situated at Old Golimar road Karachi.

Pilgrimage

True nature and meaning of pilgrimage is a matter of heart and soul, just as much as understanding a difficult journey. It is in fact human search for peace within and unity with God. It is also a sense community to pray collectively with others who are equally inspired. Pilgrimage to the holy places provides a meeting point between heaven and earth.

There are more than fifty pilgrimage sites for the Hindus. The Hindu pilgrims travel long distances all over the Sub continent to pay homage to these sites. These sites are usually situated on the river banks, seashores, mountains or caves. Some rivers are sacred and are pilgrimage sites. Hinduism is a religion about Nature and the dynamics of the universe and the entire cosmos, thus it is not surprising that the point where the Earth meets the sky and the land meets the sea or where two rivers converge, a religious site is likely to be found.

A pilgrimage is an important part of life. Rivers such as the (Ganga) Ganges and the Godavari are sacred rivers and visited by millions of pilgrims. Holy cities such as Banaras, Puri, Hardwar, are associated with Hindu mythology and attract large number of devotees. The holy sites situated in lofty Himalayas also attract pilgrims seeking peace and a vision of the God. Rivers are sacred since ancient times, Ganges is said to be sent to the Earth by the gods. The Ganges is the most holy at the point where it curves like a crescent. That is where the city of Benares is situated with hundreds of

temples on the river bank of the Ganges. For centuries people have bathed and prayed in the waters of the sacred river and dead are also scattered on the sacred waters. October and November are the festival months at the river banks of Ganga, pilgrims throng to Banaras in these months.

Lord Rama as the seventh incarnation of Vishnu was born in Ayodhya once a capital of Koshla Dynasty. Situated in northern India on the banks of Gogra (Saryu) River, Ayodhya is considered as one of the most holy of cities in Hinduism. The Gogra river is considered as very holy too and bathing in the waters can eliminate any sin even the sin of killing a Brahman. Ayodhya during ancient times was known as Kosaldesa. The Atharvaveda describes it as "a city built by gods and being as prosperous as paradise itself".

Ayodhya is a city of temples. However in accordance with Hinduism's philosophy of tolerance several religions have grown and prospered in Ayodhya. Buddhism, Jainism and Islam are still found in. According to Jain belief, five tirthankaras were born at Ayodhya, including Adinath (Rishabhadeva), the 1st tirthankar.

Pushkar camel Mela is very popular among Hindu devotees. There are over 400 temples in Pushkar. Some of the important temples are dedicated to Brahma, Raghunath, Varaha, Savitri, and Gayatri. The Camel Fair takes place in Oct/Nov. Pushkar is in the Rajasthan desert, 400 km southwest of Delhi.

Lord Brahma's lotus flower fell on three separate spots in the Pushkar area, and at each spot water gushed out. They are located within a radius of six miles. Senior Pushkar, is considered the most holy place, because the lotus flower fell there first. Middle Pushkar is 3 km down the road and has a small Hanuman temple and a 200-year-old banyan tree. New (Junior) Pushkar, 3 km further north, has a small Krishna temple. As Brahma threw the pushpa (lotus flower) with his kar (hand), so the place received the name Pushkar.

Another important pilgrimage is the visit to Triveni Sangam (3 holy rivers). Devotees from across the world visit Allahabad. It is another sacred city and was formerly called 'Prayag' in commemoration of a sacrifice by Lord Brahma. Every twelve years the kumb Mela, a religious festival is celebrated in Allahabad, where millions of pilgrims participate. For the 'Prakrishta Yagna' Lord Brahma chose Prayag, a piece of land where three rivers meet. The most sacred spot in Allahabad (Prayag) is Triveni Sangam, the confluence of three of the holiest rivers of the Hindu mythology, the holy Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. All the sins are washed away by the holy waters at Triveni Sangam. Allahabad is also called Tirtha-Raja, king of all holy places. It is said that Lord Rama visited Allahabad when He was in exile.

The Kumbh Mela is also held at three other holy places -Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik. However because of the Triveni Sangam the one held in Prayag (Allahabad) is considered especially auspicious. It draws about 15 million people and is the largest

attended event in the world. There are several specially bathing days. A huge temporary city is created for the millions of pilgrims. In addition to Kumb, Ardhamela (half mela) is held every six years attended by atleast 7 million pilgrims. As this is one of the most holy places, each year a Mela is organized in the month of Magha to facilitate more pilgrims. Peoples sense of reverence and devotion can be gauged by the fact that even duri two million. One of the most auspicious bathing days is Amavasya, the start of the month when the new moon is seen.

Kumbha-mela is like a "Yogi Convention", where besides the common pilgrims yogis and sadhus come in large numbers. Many sadhus come from the most remote forests, and mountain caves in the Himalayas. The famous are the Naga Babas, who worship Lord Shiva and do not wear clothes. They cover their bodies with ash and wear their hair in long locks. On the most auspicious bathing days there is a big parade, and the bathing order is strictly observed. Not only are there especially auspicious days, there are also especially auspicious times of the day to bathe. Of course the pilgrims would give anything to bathe at the most auspicious time. The Naga Babas are the first to enter the waters who arrive dancing with enthusiasm. Then each group enters the water in a prearranged order.

Hindus also go on many Yatra's, Tirth Yatra, Amarnath Yatra, Chardham Yatra, Jain Tirth Yatra, Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, Puri Rath Yatra are very famous and occupies very sacred place in Hinduism.

Pakistan: Our home

The history of Pakistan and its people is thousands of years old. Indus Valley Civilization is their heritage, the continuity is obvious in many aspects of their culture and race. People of the Indus valley absorbed and adopted many different peoples who came to the subcontinent through centuries. Pakistanis are a blend of the heritage of Harappans, Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Parthians, Kushans, Hephthalites, Arabs, Turks, and Moghuls race, culture and traditions.

There is a significant Hindu community in Pakistan. Presently Hindus make up 2% of Pakistan's population. This is at least five times the number of Hindus in in Britian. Prior to 1947 Hindus constituted 26% of the population in areas that comprise Pakistan. The Partition of India was the biggest forced migration of people in human history. After partition the Hindus population decreased to 15% in this region.

Those who remained in their ancestral homeland were promised protection by the Government of Pakistan. However in some areas the community at times was vulnerable and found it difficult to live in Pakistan.

Today there are 2.5 million Hindus in Pakistan. The largest Hindu population is in Sindh but there are small Hindu communities all over Pakistan. In Sindh Hindus are part of the society. For centuries Hindus and Muslims have lived together in Sindh.

They speak the same language and share the same heritage and history. In other parts of the country there have been occasional threats to their property and lives. The authorities rarely intervene to help Hindus and often make matters worse.

SOCIO-CULTURAL ROOTS

Socio-cultural heritage and contemporary scene

The Hindu culture and traditions have had a great impact on the culture we have today. The great Hindu epics such as Ramayana, BhagvadGita and Mahabharata are the bases of literature in the Subcontinent.³⁵ The roots of the culture of the subcontinent are deeply imbedded in the Hindu traditions. The Hindu religion has contributed extensively in arts, literature and other cultural development of the society.

The Indian-Subcontinent is rich in multifaceted forms of art, architecture, housing, cuisine and traditional dresses of Pakistani society. The culture is an evolution of the interaction of diverse races and cultures that the subcontinent experienced. The influence of Mughal architecture in the form of mosques and tombs were remarkably striking in South Asia. Despite the impact of western style dress and food, there is still a continuity of patterns and tastes through the centuries. Marriage ceremonies in both Hindu and Muslim society presents an interesting and revealing picture. It tells us about customs, traditions, orthodoxy and Muslim and Hindu customs and traditions that dominate the institution of marriage in Pakistan³⁶.

Other festivals, activities, arts, social customs and lifestyles of the region are unique to the world but within the region there are tremendous similarities irrespective of religious affiliations.

In our lifestyle, customs, traditions, beliefs; our history is reflected. It would be a fascinating and enlightening experience to trace the origins of things we see and do today. But certainly it is the cultural heritage and practices which leaves imprints on society, irrespective of religion. In case of Pakistan, Hindu community has had remarkable socio-cultural contribution in Pakistan. The life style of urbanized cities of Pakistan is very much inclined towards the Hindu cultural and traditional outlook, such as in our wedding ceremonies most of the events and practices have taken shapes of Hindu fashioned practices.

For centuries, Hindus and Muslims have lived together peacefully. Fundamentalist ideologies are, however, destroying heritage of communal harmony. From the mid-1980s the divide has deepened because of intolerance. It is the People-to-people relationships which provide the foundation of real peace and respect for other's

³⁵ Malik, Iftikhar H. *Culture and Customs of Pakistan*. Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2006

³⁶ Ibid

religion and culture. Enduring peace can only be achieved through tolerance mutual respect and joint endeavors to build a better future for all citizens. India and Pakistan has produced renowned thinkers, poets, critics, philosophers and men of letters. The literature and creativity of socio-cultural heritage is unique. People of the area has an understanding of literature. During 19th and 20th century this region produced many famous Hindu writers, like Kouro Mal, Prema Lal, Chandan Lal. But the most prominent among them is the Kishan Chand, whose poetry is remarkable³⁷.

In post partition Sindh there are many famous names who have contributed in the field of art and literature. One of the famous among them is Mr. Wali Ram who has translated more than 300 books³⁸. Name of Jehtamal Parsaram Gulrajani, is also very famous in the field of art and literature, born in Hyderabad in 1885 acquired basic education in Sindh, from early life he had a very developed intellec. He formed the Hindu Kumar Mandil, with the aim of spiritual and intellectual development of Hindu youth. He was inspired by the spiritual and religious books, like Geeta, Granth, Bible and Quran. He was also a great admirer of Sufi poets. He laid the foundation of the National College in Hyderabad and was appointed a professor there. He was sentenced to jail for two years under the Rowlet Act, 1920 while he returned he wrote a book titled " Tirang ki Teerath" in which he has elaborated his experiences. He was a noted writer and journalist and started a newspaper by the name of Bharat Vasi, later he also published other periodicals like Sindh Vasi, Rooh Rahan, Sindh Herald and Parkash. He has also set up a Literary Society, under whose aegis countless books in Sindhi were published. He was author of numerous books on religion, spiritual and humanitarian subjects. He also translated Shakespeare into Sindhi.

Bhagat Kunwar Ram, born on October 22 1885, was a saint and singer of his time. It is widely believed that, he was patron of universal brotherhood, he always believed in the universality of humanism just as, Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai and Sachal Sarmast. From early life he started a search for spiritual attainment. Swami Satram Das took him under his guidance and he eventually became a "Bhagat." Kunwar Ram would then sing and dance in ecstasy. He was a saint of love, religious harmony and music. He is still revered by both the Hindus and the Muslims.

Hindu community has played a very vital role in Media, before as well as after the creation of Pakistan. Some people are born with intrinsic ability and talent, while some make their destiny with tireless efforts, continuous struggle and prestigious conviction. Mr. Jagdesh Chand Anand Jee, is one of them. He was born in a lower middle class Hindu family on 22 August 1911 in Karachi. After completing his early education till matriculation he started to support his family. In 1938 JC Anand and his father Lal Yom Raj Ananad) opened a private office near Nishat Cinema as Eveready Pictures. It

³⁷ An interview with Vali Ram Vallabh

³⁸ An interview with Dr. Shankar and Dr. Khatao Mall, Civil Hospital Mitti Sindh

is believed that, Mr. Jagdesh Chand was After a successful experiment of presenting Sohrab movie in Pakistani cinema the journey of his success started. Gradually the Ever Ready Pictures had become so big that they have acquired the copy rights of all the Pakistani movies.³⁹ The contributions of Mr. Jagdesh Chand are remarkable.

Customs

The significant and unique aspect of the Hinduism is its capacity to assimilate the religious beliefs and practices of all who come in contact with him. Many of the customs and annual festivals are connected with worship of particular gods and goddesses. The three most important and universal are: *Holi*, *Dashera* and *Divali*.⁴⁰

The shadows of the influence of the Hindu culture are quite visible on the marriage ceremonies and festivals like "Basant" among many others.

The customs and traditions are dominated by the religious identity and sacred rules of our religion. Customs and traditions are also in transitional phase. The role of customs and traditions is also liked with the assent and blessing of the religious leader, unfortunately the number of religious leaders is fewer in Pakistan. After the partition, the traditional caste system is not as strong as it was before the partition⁴¹. One can observe variety of changes in traditional customs and practices, but the basic of religious believes are still intact. The system of social division on the notion of purity and impurity is still prevailing in Hindu society in different parts of Pakistan, where despite the fact that democracy and egalitarianism are bringing change in social as well as belief systems.

History of Hindu culture did not allow marriages within the family. But as the time passed this particular custom has also experienced a change now inter-marriages between the families and blood relatives are more common⁴². In Pakistan the marriage ceremonies are performed in accordance with religious believes, marriages are exogamous, dowry is common. Girls are married outside the family and and sometimes even the city⁴³. Early marriage is common and marriage is monogamous, widows are not married and divorce is uncommon. Gifts are exchanged on the occasion of birth marriage and religious celebrations.

The caste system is a primal, tribal instinct that moves people to protect their own against the others and in many cases the more powerful trying to dominate the weaker.

³⁹ A personality of the year, in Snantan Diary, Sanatan Business Community, Sanatan Publications Karachi, 2007

⁴⁰ An Interview with Ms. Mangla Sharma, Social Activist, Karachi, Sindh, June 2008

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ See, Akram Mirani, "Religious Tolerance in Balochistan: Myth and Reality", Minority Rights commission of Pakistan

Similarly all religions emanating from Indian subcontinent have had a caste system. Even Christian and Anglo Indian now demand lower caste reservations. Sikhism is fast becoming a caste based religion with Sikhs adopting caste indicative surnames and others seeking caste based reserved seats everywhere⁴⁴

Festivals

Festival is an occasion when a community celebrates something which is important and meaningful to it. The occasion may be secular, like Independence Day, which has patriotic significance, or it may be religious festivals, such as Holi, Devali etc. Hinduism has many festivals throughout the year. Most of the religions have their own calendars. Often these are based on the moon and begin in spring or autumn. The Hindu calendar usually prescribes the dates of the Hindu festivals. They typically celebrate events from Hindu mythology, often coinciding with seasonal changes. There are festivals which are primarily celebrated by specific sects or in certain regions only.

Some widely observed Hindu festivals are,

- Dussera, or Durgā Puja, celebrates events from Hindu mythology concerning the triumph of good over evil;
- Diwali, the festival of lights;
- Ganesh Chaturthi, the festival celebrating Ganesha;
- Maha Shivaratri, the festival dedicated to Shiva;
- Ram Navami, celebrates the birth of Rama, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu;
- Krishna Janmastami, celebrates the birth of Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu;
- Holi, a spring festival of color and light;

Holi is a three to four day celebration marking the arrival of spring. Holi began as festival of fertility. It is significant by it's throwing of colour at each other at times even mud, dancing and singing and the arrival of festivities. Effigies, representing the demons that Krishna killed, are burned in huge bonfires.

Dashera, a ten-day festival, celebrates the triumph of Rama. It is usually celebrated in all parts of the world at the same time as the worship of a goddess Durga. Kali or Durga, the mother goddess, is worshipped with great pomp. On the tenth day, in many towns throughout India, a play is staged portraying the battle between Rama, the hero and Ravana, the demon who abducted his wife Sita. The play ends when Rama shoots arrows into a huge effigy of Ravana which is filled with firecrackers explode and burns.

⁴⁴ Interview with Basant Lal Gulshan – MPA, April 24, 2007

Diwali also called the Festival of Lights as it celebrates the Hindu New Year. Homes are given a thorough cleaning and outlined with tiny clay lamps to welcome Lakshmi the goddess of prosperity. Firecrackers are set off to frighten away evil spirits, businessmen open new account books and everyone eats sweets and cakes. It is a five-day celebration in October-November. The first day is dedicated to Lakshmi and Parvathi, the second day to Shiva and Parvathi, the third commemorates the victory of Vishnu over the demon Bali, the fourth recalls the return of Rama to Ayodhya and his coronation, and the fifth remembers Rama's visit to the home of his sister.

Along these some other festivals mostly being observed in Pakistan are, Makar Sankranti, Vasant Panchami, Ratha Saptami, Maha Shivaratri, Holi, Dhulivandhan, Rang Panchami, Gudi Padwa (Hindu new year), Sri Rama Navmi, Hanuman Jayanti, Vaisakhi (solar new year), Vata Savitri, Guru Purnima, Naag Panchami, Narali Purnima, Raksha Bandhan, Sri Krishna Jayanti, Gopal Kala, Ganesh Chaturthi, Rishi Panchami, Anant Chaturdashi, Sarva Pitri Shraddha, Navratri (Ghat Sthapana), Dassehra (Vijaya Dashami), Sharad Purnima, Karva Chauth Vrat, Dhan Teras (Diwali), Narak Chaturdashi (Diwali), Diwali (Lakshmi Pujan), Vikram New Year (Diwali), Bhaidooj (Diwali), Tulasi Vivah, Datta Jayanti

Hindus observe their religious festivals with complete freedom anywhere in Pakistan. Governments zealously guard their freedom in these activities and see to it that there is no interference with religious and cultural observance.⁴⁵

Grand Mela of Lord Shiva is annually held for 3 days on Maha Shiva Ratri the day where thousands of Hindu devotees visit their Temples for celebration & rituals. Another famous religious festival which is commonly observed throughout the country by the Hindu community is Raksha Bandhan. The Hindu community also celebrates the birth ceremony of God Ganesh.

Hindus of Pakistan also observe the Festivals of Shri Hanuman. They also organize regular weekly ceremonies, which are held on Tuesday & Saturday. There are also some Hindu cremation grounds where Hindus observe lost rituals of cremation of dead bodies at Hindu Cremation grounds.

Towards a composite culture

Pakistan might be a few decades old, but the land and its people have a history dating back to thousands of years. Indus Valley Civilization is their heritage, the continuity is obvious in many aspects of their culture and race, absorbing and/or adopting the many different waves of migrants/invaders throughout the centuries. Pakistanis are a blend of their heritage of Harappans, Rig Vedic Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Parthians, Kushans, Hephthalites, Arabs, Turks, and Moguls. Pakistan---the land and people of Indus directly inherits one of the greatest ancient civilizations of the world

⁴⁵ Minorities in Pakistan, Pakistan Publications, Karachi. 1964, p. 16

We share a common cultural heritage, bonded tightly by a common language. The differences are basically because of fewer economic opportunities that are available.

Our history is a witness to the fact that this is a land had various religious that flourished within its borders. The two major religions Islam and Hinduism also have strong religious connections, because many centuries ago, their forefathers undertook a pledge to follow each other's good practices. This was free of any racial or religious discrimination, and respect for the other religions and religious scholars. That is the tradition many have followed, keeping the word of their ancestors.

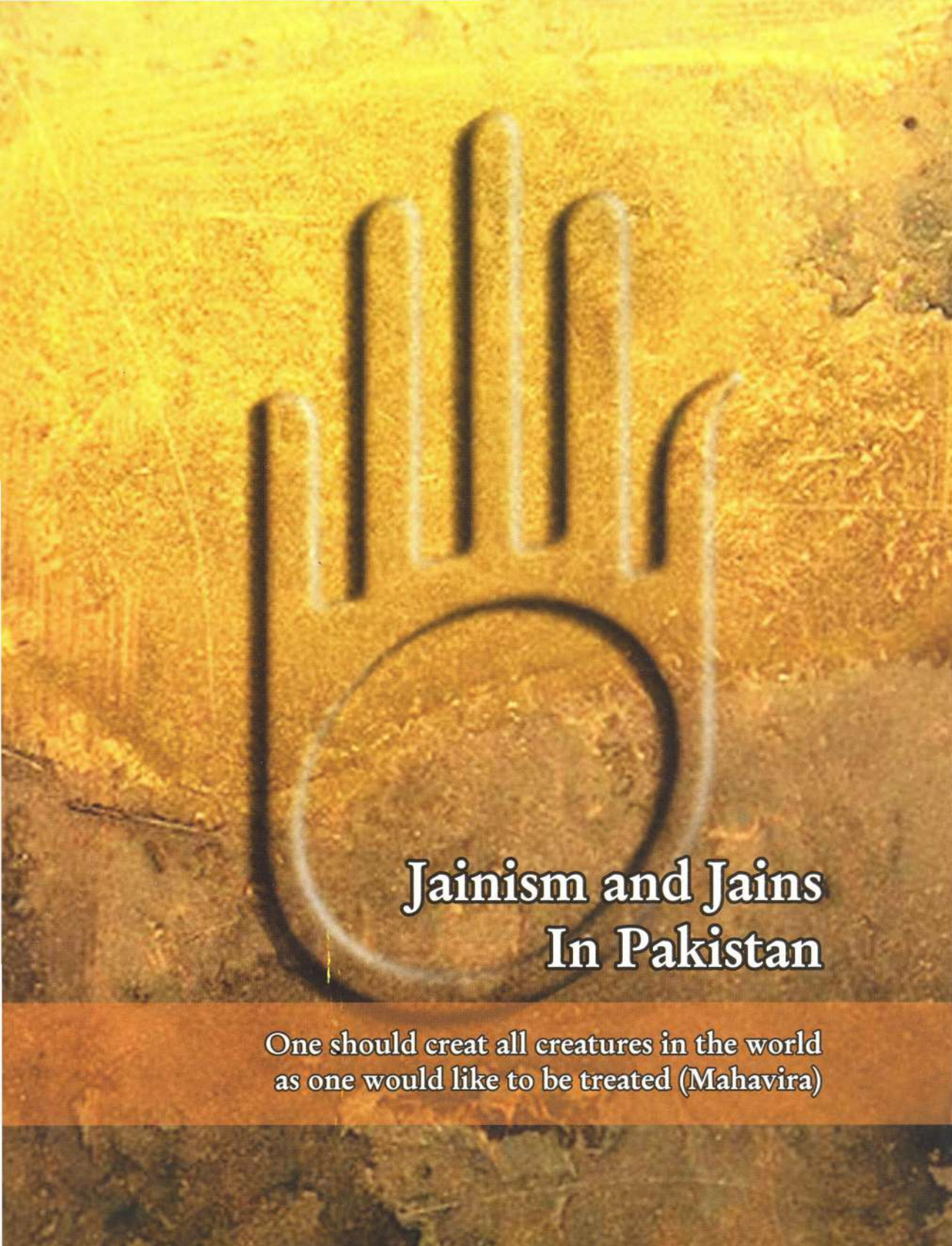
Both Hinduism and Islam conceive the ultimate reality as spiritual experience, which gives human life a purpose it would not have had if reality was confined material things..

Both Hinduism and Islam insist that all aspects of life are related and must be integrated in order to achieve wholeness, which is the goal of Hindu *yoga* and Muslim *salat*. Neither Hinduism nor Islam permits the bifurcation of life into mutually exclusive domains: the secular and the sacred, the public and the private, the inner and the outer. Again, both Hinduism and Islam hold that knowledge of external and internal reality is to be obtained not only through reason but through all other human faculties as well, with emphasis on "the heart," which the mystics regard as the seat of "intuition."

The sufis had adopted local rituals and customs in order to assimilate local culture and their Islam was highly indianised. The majority of Muslims followed the sufi saints rather than the Ulama. Baba Fari whoes masouleum is in Pak Pattan is considered to be the founder of Punjabi poetry. He is greatly revered by the Sikhs and his verses have been in Adi Granth Sahib. Khwaja Nizamuddin Awliya of Delhi used to say that there are as many ways of worshipping God as particles of sand. He used to listen to bhajans along with qawwali (sufi music). Khwaja Hasan Nizami, who was keeper of Mausoleum of Nizamuddin Awliya has vividly described in his book Fatimi Dawat-e-Islam how the sufi saints adopted local rituals in order to popularize Islam

There are several Sufi saints who are revered equally by Hindus as well as Muslims. Their mausoleums are visited by great reverence by members of both the communities. The rituals of offering, vows, tying threads, exorcising evil spirits etc. are common to both the communities.

Hinduism and Islam have put unequivocal emphasis on the idea that human beings are accountable for their actions and that ethical action is the goal of religious striving. In both there is great emphasis on the fulfilment of duty and on the idea that duty to God is inseparable from duty to fellow human beings.



Jainism and Jains In Pakistan

One should treat all creatures in the world
as one would like to be treated (Mahavira)

7 Jainism and Jains in Pakistan

Humaira Ather

Prelude

Quaid-e-Azam envisioned a tolerant and egalitarian society which would rise above religion, caste and creed and give equal rights and privileges to all the Pakistanis. Unfortunately, the leadership after his demise, failed to uphold the vision. Many religious minorities had to migrate, go undercover, convert or disappear.

The research findings show that presently there are no Jains living in Pakistan. Dr. Iftekhar H. Malik in his report "The Religious Minorities in Pakistan" says that the 1998 census showed the minorities to be 13-14 million, but there is no mention of Jains. Jains are present in tiny groups who prefer to remain out of public eye. Moreover in the minority's statistics the ambiguous term "others" is applied to some communities. Before the partition of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent in 1947, Lahore was a cosmopolitan city with Muslim, Hindu, Sikhs and Jain population. There were many temples in Lahore. In 1941, almost 48% of the city population was Hindus, Sikhs or Jains.

Waryam Singh and Sant Singh of Khalsa college, Amritsar in "History of India, Ancient and Medieval," published by Malhotra Brothers, Lahore 1932, say that:

The word Jainism comes from the Sanskrit word for saint "jinah" which derives from "Jayanti" meaning "he conquers" - thus they are conquerors of mortal bondage.

Along with Hinduism and Buddhism, Jainism is one of the three most ancient religions.

The Faith

Fundamental Principles

Some further information has been gathered from Encyclopedia Britannica:

- Non-violence (Ahimsa) not to cause harm to any living beings.
- Truthfulness (Satya) to speak the harmless truth only.
- Non-stealing (Asteya) not to take anything not properly given.
- Chastity (Brahmacharya) not to indulge in sensual pleasure.
- Non-possession/Non-attachment (Aparigraha) complete detachment from people, places, and material things.
- Jainism is a religion of love and compassion above all else. Jains believe that the universe is eternal. They believe in the eternity of the soul. There are thought to be multitudes of souls or life-modas, which are all independent and eternal.
- Practicing the ideals of Jainism results in the souls getting lighter in color and rising to the that of a universal being.
- The goal of the Jains is to achieve liberation and then to float like a bubble to the ceiling of the universe.
- Jainism, which does not espouse belief in a creator god, has as its ethical core the doctrine of ahimsa, or noninjury to all living creatures, and as its religious ideal the perfection of man's nature, to be achieved predominantly through the monastic and ascetic life.

Scripture/Religions Literature

According to the Svetambaras, the sacred literature preserved orally since Mahavira was systematized and written down by a council convened about the end of the 4th century B.C., but it is generally agreed that it was not given its present shape until some 800 years later (454 or 467 A.D.).

- The Svetambara canon (agama) consists of 45 texts:
 - 11 Angas ("Parts"), 12th, the Drstivada, is not extant.
 - 12 Upangas (subsidiary texts). Mula-sutras (basic texts). 6 Cheda-sutras (concerned with discipline), 2 Culika-sutras (appendix texts), and 10 Prakirnakas (mixed, assorted texts). Digambaras give canonical status to two principal works in Prakrit: the Karmaprabhṛta ("Chapters on Karman") and the Kasayaprabhṛta ("Chapters on Kasayas") and accord great respect to several other works and commentaries.

Jain scriptures were written over a long period of time, but the most cited is the *Tattvartha Sutra*, or Book of Reality written by the monk-scholar, Umasvati (aka Umāsvāmi) almost 1800 years ago. The primary figures are Tirthankaras. The two main sects called Digambar and Svetambar, both believe in ahimsa (or *ahinsā*), asceticism, karma, sanskāra, and jiva.

Jain literature

Jains have contributed to India's classical and popular literature. For example, almost all early Kannada literature and Tamil literature was written by Jains.

- Some of the oldest known books in Hindi and Gujarati were written by Jain scholars. The first autobiography in Hindi, [Ardha-Kathanaka] was written by a Jain, Banarasidasa, an ardent follower of Acarya Kundakunda who lived in Agra.
- Several Tamil classics are written by Jains or with Jain beliefs and values as the core subject.
- Practically all the known texts in the Apabhramsha language are Jain works.

The oldest Jain literature is in Shauraseni and Ardha-Magadhi Prakrit (Agamas, Agama-Tulya, Siddhanta texts, etc). Many classical texts are in Sanskrit (Tattvartha Sutra, Puranas, Kosh, Sravakacara, mathematics, Nighantus etc). "Abhidhana Rajendra Kosha" written by Acharya Rajendrasuri, is only one available Jain encyclopedia or Jain dictionary to understand the Jain Prakrit, Sanskrit, and Ardha-Magadhi and other Jain languages, words, their use and references with in oldest Jain literature. Later Jain literature was written in Apabhramsha (Kahas, rasas, and grammars), Hindi (Chhahadhala, Mokshamarga Prakashaka, and others), Tamil (Jivakacintamani, Kural, and others), and Kannada (Vaddaradhane and various other texts). Jain versions of Ramayana and Mahabharata are found in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha and Kannada.

Philosophy

- Jain metaphysics is a dualistic system dividing the universe into two ultimate and independent categories: soul or living substance (jiva), which permeates natural forces such as wind and fire as well as plants, animals, and human beings; and non-soul, or inanimate substance (ajiva), which includes space, time, and matter.
- The next most important concept is that of karma, which, is regarded in Jainism as a substance, subtle and invisible, yet material, which flows into and clogs the jiva, causing the bondage of life and transmigration.

- This inflow can be stopped by many lives of penance and disciplined conduct, resulting in the final moksha, or liberation, the ultimate goal of human endeavour.
- Souls are divided into those that have attained perfection and those still in bondage.

Ethics

- The Jain ethic is a direct consequence of the philosophy of soul and karma. Since the individual's primary duty is the evolution and perfection of his soul and that of his fellow creatures, ahimsa, or the refraining from harming any living being, is the cardinal principle.
- Jains build asylums and rest houses for old and diseased animals, where they are kept and fed until they die a natural death.
- The three ideals of samyagdarsana ("right belief"), samyagjñāna ("right knowledge"), and samyakcarita ("right conduct") are known as the three jewels, or ratnatraya.

Mythology and Cosmology

- Lesser gods are classified into four main groups: bhavanavasis (gods of the house), vyantaras (intermediaries), jyotiskas (luminaries), and vaimanikas (astral gods).
- These are each subdivided into several groups.
- Besides these, certain other gods and goddesses are mentioned in various Jaina texts, including several that suggest Hindu influence or borrowing from some common ancient Indian heritage.
- All these deities are assigned a position subordinate to the Tirthankaras and other liberated souls.
- Time is Conceived as Eternal and Formless.
- The world is infinite and was never created. Space (akasa), all-pervasive and formless, provides accommodation to all objects of the universe and is divided into the space of the universe (lokakasa) and that of the non-universe (a-lokakasa), the latter having no substance in it.
- Through the centre of the universe runs the region of mobile souls in which all living beings, including men, animals, gods, and devils, live.
- Above the central region is the upper world of two parts; below it lies the lower world subdivided into seven tiers.

Places of worships, Shrines Temples and Stupas

The Jains have erected monumental stupas in honour of their saints, and the richness and quality of their architecture and carving in stone have few equals.

Jaina temples generally contain a number of metal images of various types and metal plaques depicting auspicious symbols. Jainism preaches universal tolerance, and its attitude toward other religions is that of no criticism. It is not competitive and has never cared for the spread of its faith. Among its followers are the traders and merchants of Gujarat and Maharashtra states.

Pratikraman Jain rituals

Instincts

Antiquity of Jainism

Yakshas and Yakshinies Lesser Jain deities.

Premchand B. Gada Says something about Jain deities, the worship idols: YAKSHAS AND YAKSHINIES

Jains worship idols of Jinas, Tirthankars, who are reverend as supreme beings but as the time passed by Jains also started worshipping many other deities, Yaksas and Yaksinis, in Jain temples.

They are not same as Jina, Arihant, or Tirthankars who have conquered the inner passions while these deities (Yaksas and Yaksinis) are full of passions and are wandering through the cycles of births and death just like us. They are also called shashandevtas, gaurdian deities. They are heavenly beings of Vyantar group who have supernatural powers including changing capabilities of their form and size.

Jains believe that these Yaksas and Yaksinis were appointed by Indra to look after the well beings of Tirthankaras. Therefore, they were always found around Jinas and reflected their presence in Jain temples around the idols of Jinas. They are found in pairs of a male (yaksha) and a female (yakshini) Yaksha usually found on the right side of the Jina idol while yaksini on left side. In the earlier period they were regarded mainly as devotees of Jina but as the time passed by, people started worshipping them.

Not all Yaksha are benevolent, because some can be malevolent. Just as some Yaksha paid homage to Lord Mahavira and protectd him from some sufferings, Yaksha Sulpani troubled Lord Mahavira in his mediation and inflicted suffering. Similar stories are available where yaksha troubled others too. The residential place (bhavana) of Yaksha is also known as chaitya or ayatana. It could be anywhere, outside the city, on the hill or a mountain, on the tree, by the water reservoir, at the gate of a city, or within a city in a house or a palace. The famous Yaksha Angulimala was living on the tree in the forest and when reformed for better he had a place at the city gate.

The humans are opportunistic and since Jinas would not reward no matter how sincerely one may worship them, Jains looked at yakshas and yakshinis for the immediate returns, and to self serve Jains gave them the places in their temples. Some Yaksha were and are known for bestowing fertility and wealth. Therefore, they had become very popular and their idols had been placed in Jain temples and Jains worship them. Jains offer them different things in favor of boons for children, wealth or freedom from fear, illness or disease.

The earlier scriptures like the Sthanagansutra, Utradhyayansutra, Bhagwatisutra, Tattvarthsutra, Antagadasasasutra, and Paumacariya have frequent references to the Yaksha. Their reference as Shasandevatas in the Harivamsapurana (783 A.D.) marks the beginning of the concept. Among all the yakshas, Manibhadra and Purnabadra yakshas and Bahuputrika yakshini have been the most favored one. Manibhadra and Purnabadra yakshas are mentioned as chief of demigods Manibhadra of Northern horde and Purnabadra of Southern horde. Bahuputrika (having many sons) is named as one of the queen of Manibhadra. Harivamsapurana also describes the capability of yakshas and yakshinis to pacify the harmful power of rogas, grahas, raksasas, bhutas and pisachas.

The people also believed that they bestow favors to those who worship them and because of that became more popular than Jinas for some. Therefore, the people started worshipping them for materialistic desires which could not be fulfilled by the worship of Vitaraga Jina. Due to this, between tenth and thirteenth centuries A. D.2 yaksha Saarvanubhuti, or Sarvahna and yakshini Cakreshvari, Ambika, Padmavati, and Jvalamalini became so popular that independent cults developed around them. Various temples were erected just to worship them and you can see that even now.

The Jaina works from the sixth to the tenth century A. D. mention only some of the iconographic features of Yaksharaja (Sarvahna or Sarvanubhuti) and Dharanendra Yaksha and Cakreshvari, Ambika, Padmavati, Yakshi.

Pramodaben Chitrabhanu adds about the deities:

Chakreshware Devi

She is the dedicated attendant deity of lord Adinath (Rishabhadev). She is also called Apratichakra. This goddess is golden in colour. Her Vehicle is the eagle. She has eight arms. In her four right hands she holds the blessing mudra, arrow, rope and wheel. In her four left hands she holds the rein, the bow, the protective weapon of Indra and the wheel.

Ambika Devi

She is the dedicated deity of Lord Neminath the 22nd Tirthankara. She is also called Ambai Amba and Amra Kushmandini. Her color is golden and the lion is her vehicle. She has four arms. In her right hands she carries a mango and a branch of a mango tree. In her left hands she carries a rein and the hasher two sons.

Padmavati Devi

She is the dedicated deity of Lord Parshvanath, the 23rd Tirthankara. Her color is golden and her vehicle is the snake with a cock's head. She has four arms and her two right hands hold a lotus and a rosary. The two left hands hold a fruit and a rein.

Saraswati Devi

Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, is considered to be the source of all learning. This divine energy is the source of spiritual light, remover of all ignorance and promoter of all knowledge. She is respected and adored by all faiths, worldly persons and saints. She has four arms, one holding a book, the other a rosary and two hands holding a musical instrument Veena. Her seat is a lotus and the peacock is her vehicle representing equanimity in prosperity. In some places it is mentioned that the swan is her vehicle.

Lakshmi Devi

Goddess Lakshmi represents wealth. People worship her as the goddess of wealth, power, money etc. In the upper two hands, she is holding a lotus with an elephant, in the lower right hand a rosary and in the lower left hand a pot.

Manibhadra Dev

Shri Manibhadra is originally a yaksha, worshipped by Indians from ancient times and his introduction in Jainworship is only a later adaptation. It is an image of six armed yaksha with an elephant as his vehicle.

Ghantakarna Veer

This deity is worshipped for protection and for driving away the evil influence created by lower types of negative energy. His arrow indicates penetration of evil forces. The bow gives forceful momentum to the arrow. His symbol is the bell that resounds to create auspicious sounds in the atmosphere. Sometimes people who are not aware of the facts call him by mistake Ghantakarna Mahavira that creates confusion between Lord Mahavira and Ghantakarna Veer. He is not connected to Lord Mahavir in any way.

Nakoda Bhairava

This is the tutelary deity of Bhairava. This deity is usually found near the entrance of the temple. People from far and near, visit the shrine and make offerings to the deity on fulfillment of their material desires. It is the positive force around the temple.

Bhomiyaji

This deity is in the shape of a mountain. It is the natural positive energy of the mountain Sametshikharji. This energy inspires and guides the believer and the traveler.

The origin and History

The Founder of Jainism was Vardhamana Mahavira Mahavira, was born in 540 B. C. His father, Sidhartha was a wealthy baron in the city of Vaisali, which was then the capital of Videha. He was well connected with some of the royal families of his time. His maternal uncle was one of the powerful oligarchs of Vaisali and cousin Chhilara was the wife of king Bimbisara of Magadha. He belonged to the Kashatriya caste. His father was an influential aristocrat. His mother was Princess Tishata, Mahavira was born in Kundgrama. Waryam Singh and Sant Singh of Khalsa College, Amritsar writes in the "History of India-- Ancient and Medieval" 1932 that: It is generally supposed that Mahavira was the founder of Jainism. The fact is that Mahavira was only the last of a series of illustrious teachers to whom this religious sect owes its origin and development. Twenty three of them had preceded Jina (meaning the "All conqueror") and are known in Jain books as 'Tirthankars.' The literal meaning of "Tirthankar" is "Ford Builder". The process of becoming a pure human being after crossing a swift river is patience. We know very little about the first twenty two but the twenty third, Parswa Nath, seems really to have lived and preached. The Tirthankar considered omniscient, a role model. They are referred to as Bhagwan (Lord) such as Bhagwan Rishabha, Bhagwan Parsava etc.

In the beginning of his life Parswa Nath too had lived in pleasures and luxury. He gave up everything at the age of thirtythree. He went into meditation and attained knowledge after three months. He died at the age of seventy somewhere in the eighth century B. C.

The parents of Vardhaman were the members of this order, which he himself joined at the age of thirty. He lived the life of an ascetic for twelve years and at the age of fortytwo 'he reached supreme knowledge and final deliverance from the bonds of pleasure and pain'. Afterwards he was called Mahavira (the great hero), or Jina (the conqueror), or 'Kevalin' (the all-knowing).

His followers came to be known first as Nir-granthas (free from fetters) and later on as Jinas. Then for another thirty years he preached the Truth and died in 468 B. C. in Patna.

Teachings and Scriptures

Parswa Nath's teaching gave him no satisfaction. Only men of noble blood were eligible for admission into it. Mahavira was against such exclusiveness. He agreed with some of the principles of Parswa Nath, some of which were:—

1. Thou shalt possess no property.
2. Thou shalt not injure any living being.
3. Thou shalt tell the truth.
4. Thou shalt not steal.

With a view to making them more perfect, Vardhaman added two more :—

5. Thou shalt observe chastity.
6. Thou shalt not use clothes.

Mahavira was the contemporary of Buddha. Like Buddha he too began his career in the centre of an intellectual movement on the lower Ganges. His life and teaching are marked by many points of resemblance with his better known contemporary. He derived the basic principles of philosophy from the Vedic literature, although denied the authenticity of the Vedas as an infallible authority, and the efficacy of the rites prescribed in them for the purpose of salvation. He used the common language of the people for the propagation of his ideas, which emphasized the need for a pure and moral life and not to harm living things. He believed in the doctrines of Karma and the transmigration of soul, and was opposed to the institution of caste system. He advocated the renunciation of this world and for the achievement of the ideals organized strong communities. He was perhaps the product of the prevailing spirit of the time and followed the methods to seek the truth. He received recruits from the same classes of people as did the Buddha. A real change in the situation was brought by events that happened later. It is strange to notice that Jainism to this day holds the ground in some quarters which are well known both for their intellect and wealth.

Faith and the Philosophy

Philosophy of Jainism believes in the misery of all existence and the desirability of liberation from worldly fetters. Jina believed that soul has a real and self contained existence and during life it remains attached to the base elements of material body and bids them good-bye after death. The soul is then enclosed in a form of ethereal brightness until the Karma, the ethical result of the actions performed in life, obliges it

to become reincarnate and resume the burden of suffering. The Jains believe in the existence of higher and highest beings which are to receive respect from mankind. The Jina or the All Conqueror stands at the top. It is only this class, which is free from birth and death that enjoys absolute peace and purity. There are a greater number of such perfect people in Jainism. These prophets descend on earth at appointed periods twenty four in each of the three divisions of time into the past, present and future. They all show the way to salvation and freedom from all earthly difficulties.

Parswa Nath was the twenty third and Mahavira twenty fourth of his division of time. They all preach 'purity of faith, true insight and virtue undefiled.' All disciples believe in (Tirikathankaras) Jina and in the system of higher beings, and also the eternal objective existence of both soul and the world. The Jains put confidence in ruthless asceticism as an aid to freedom from earthly bondage. Suicide through starvation has been considered desirable.

The teachings

This freedom is possible only through the adoption of the three gems of Jainism 'right faith, right knowledge and right action'. According to Jain teachings man has a dual personality, material and spiritual. The second important feature of Jain teaching is 'that all objects both animate and inanimate have souls with different degrees of consciousness. Jainism soon made progress flourished in the Upper Ganges Valley. Towards the end of the fourth century it counted many followers in the South. It is interesting to note that Jain missionaries have never ventured out of India and Jainism remained confined within the boundaries of India only. Though the sect began in Vaisali and Magadha it later changed its centre of activity to Rajputana, Malva and Gujrat. There Jains enjoy the reputation of honorable and capable men. Their reliability in the commercial industry has enabled them to acquire prosperity and often great wealth. The present day Jains observe caste rules and their priests wear the sacred thread. Most of the banking families in Northern India belong to this faith. These Jains have also played an important part in the history of civilization of Southern India where both in the Tamil and the Kanarese language they produced wonderful literature. The doctrine of no injury to a living being had a great influence on the society. The Great Chandergupta Maurya was a Jain and he patronized the sect. In later life when the dominions of the Mauryan Emperor were struck by famine he abdicated his throne. He retired in the South with Bhadra Bhan the chief minister of the Jaina community and starved himself to death as a Jain Bhikshu in Karnata. Those of them who were left behind continued their existence under the leadership of Sathulbhadra in Magadha.

Sathulbhadra knew the old Jain texts which comprised the fourteen Purvas. The saint called a meeting- at Patliputra to compile the sacred scriptures before they were lost. They were arranged in twelve Angas. There are only eleven Angas left.

The Great Schism: When Bhadrabhan returned to the North he found that corruption had set in among the Jains in his absence. The Magadha Jains had adopted the custom of wearing white clothes, and took the twelve Angas as their authentic sacred scripture. Both these positions were disputed by the followers of Bhadrabhan and this led to the great schism in Jain community. The Digambaras are in favour of going about completely naked while the Svetambaras have taken to wearing of white robes.

Temples and Deities

Tirathankars are larger in numbers. The temples of the order are mostly to be found in beautiful hills and are known for the exquisite designs, rich decorations and the representation of various Jinas with their particular deities such as the ox, the ape, the fish etc.

Jainism was a protest against Brahmin domination and it substituted Karam Marag (practical rule of life) for Gryan Marag (abstract attainment of the right knowledge). All the three faiths desired freedom from earthly bondage. The Hindus have never sought converts and they have no definite organization like the Sangha for such purposes. Buddhism is a congregational faith as is Jainism. Jainism is known for its intense regard for animal life. The theories of rebirth and Karma and toleration have also been derived from Buddhism and Brahminism.

The Jainism attacked the authority of the Vedas and the Brahmins and the institution of caste system. It made wider claims to universality as against Hinduism. Jainism has distinct saints and distinct scriptures and there are basic differences when compared to Buddhism and Hinduism. They commend starvation and suicide. The Jains have many things in common with the Hindus while Buddhism ventured on an independent path. In ceremonial purifications, marriage and caste matters the Jains follow the Brahmins. As a matter of fact Jainism is a compromise between Brahminical Hinduism and Arid Buddhism. Jainism could not flourish because it was only a protest and not a full fledged revolt, which attracted all discontented elements to its side. Moreover, it has the peculiarity that it never extended its influence beyond India.

Later when Hinduism revived it attacked only the more serious of the rivals i.e., Buddhism, while Jainism escaped unhurt. Moreover, the Hindus and later on the Muslim invaders destroyed Buddhist influence and prestige in the North and East of India while the Jains who had shifted their centre of activity to Rajputana and Gujrat, and the South of India were left undisturbed.

The Hindus never dreaded Jainism because it was only a by product of Hinduism.

In reference to the history of Jainism, a renowned historian Dr. A.N. Sinha in the Book "History of India- Ancient and Medieval" says that: In the history of the religious tradition of India, Jainism occupies a place of immense eminence, not

because it is still a living faith of nearly two millions people of India but because of the fact that it has a great impact on Indian thought and culture, Its special contribution to the cultural heritage of India is the doctrine of ahimsa or no-injury to any living being. It received highest appreciation from Mahatma Gandhi for its application in social and political life. It is possible that Mahatma Gandhi's mother was the follower of Jainism. Right from the ancient times to the present day's Anuvrata Movement led by a great Jaina saint Acarya Sri Tulsi, Jainism has always been playing a dynamic role in the social and cultural activities of India.

Jains wrote excellent poetry. They wrote interesting folk tales, Puranas, astronomy and mathematics, besides their master-pieces on logic and metaphysics. Their sacred literature, known as Agamic literature is a vast treasure-house of the social and cultural life of ancient times. In the field of art and architecture their achievements are remarkable. Numerous stupas with beautiful carved railings and gateways, cave pillars and marble temples and magnificent statues are the excellent specimens of the their great contribution to culture. These invaluable contributions and achievements of the Jains, which have enriched the thought process and culture of the country have made them a significant part of the society. Syed Qasim Mehmood in his valuable Urdu Islamic Encyclopedia, writes that some of the Jain temples are rare example of India's indigenous architecture. There is a Jain temple on Mount Abu in the Gujrat Province of India which is graded as one of the seven wonders of India. Dr. A.N. Sinha further analyses the antiquity of Jainism saying that in India man has aspired for high wisdom or perfection for intellectual and spiritual level. Sramanas or Munis of ancient times were the examples who devoted their lives in the attainment of the highest spiritual wisdom and perfection through ascetic discipline and religious meditation. According to them life was full of misery and to get rid of the cycle of birth and death was spiritual emancipation or perfection. Their attitude towards life and the world was quite different from that of the Vedic priests.

Jains did not accept God as Creator of the universe and dispenser of pleasures and pains. They believed that all potentialities are inherent in man. Man is latently divine and has the capacity to uplift himself to divinity and to rise to the highest stage of spiritual development. They did not have desire for long life, good food and drink, wealth, power, and heroic progeny which were the ideals of human life preached by the Vedic priests. Instead they believed in renunciation and abandonment of all wordly pleasures.

The tradition, of Sramanas and Munis has a long history even older than the Vedic Hindu religion. Some fragments of the Sramanic or ascetic cult can also be traced back to the Harappan age. The im-prints on some seals of that period exhibiting nude ascetics in yogic posture remind us of this sect. Even the earliest Vedic literature refers to Munis, yatis and vratyas who were not other than the ascetic sages. The Sramanic or ascetic tradition has pre-Vedic and pre-Aryan origin, which is different from the

Brahman tradition of the Hindu religion. Jainism, Buddhism, Ajivikism and even the Samkhya system of thought represent this Sramanic tradition.

It is difficult to date the origin of Jainas, however, the founder of the faith was Rsabha, the first in the list of the twenty-four tirthankaras. He is regarded as the first man with whom the history of human civilization starts. In Jaina texts we find some mythological legends associated with his life-history. Besides Visnu and the Bhagavata Puranas also give information about him which tally with those recorded in Jaina texts. Parsvanatha and Vardhamana Mahavira, are regarded as historical characters.

PARSVANATHA

Lord Parsvanatha, the twenty third trirthankara lived in the eighth century B.C. He preceded Lord Mahavira by 250 years. He was born in Varanasi and was the son of King Asvasena. At the age of thirty years he left the palace life and wandered as a homeless ascetic. After an intense and rigorous meditation for eighty three days he attained enlightenment. From then on for almost seventy years Lord Parsvantha wandered and preached the Truth. His fundamental teachings were Caturyama Samvara.

1. No-injury to any living being (ahimsa),
2. Not to speak what is not true (Sunrta)
3. Not to take what is not given (asteya) and
4. Not to be attached to worldly possessions (aparigraha).

To the above vows of restraint, Lord Mahavira added chastity {brahmacarya} making the number of vows five (pancavtrata). Lord Parsvanatha attained his final liberation or parinirvana in about 770 B.C. at the age of one hundred years on the summit of Mount Sammeta in Bihar, now known as Parasanatha Hills.

VARDHAMANA MAHAVIRA

Lord Mahavira was the twenty-fourth tirthankara, but according to the Jaina faith he cannot be regarded as the last tirthankara for all time to come, since the succession of tirthankaras does not come to an end with him. Lord Mahavira attained parinirvana in 527 B.C., 250 years after the demise of Lord Parsvanatha. Many legends about his life can be gathered, which are scattered in the texts. He was called Mahavira or Viranatha, because he had infinite courage and power. As a child he brought under control a powerful serpent. He was also able to tame a mad and furious elephant. In the Acaranga sutra it is mentioned that his parents called him Vardhamana, since his birth brought opulence to his family. Several epithets, like Jina, Siddha, Arhat are given to him, which has the same meaning that is spiritual perfection.

Vardhamana Mahavira was born in Kundagrama, now known as Vasukunda, in North Bihar. In the Ardhamagdhī literature he is mentioned as Vesaliya because he belonged to Vaisali. His father was Siddhartha, a very rich Ksatriya belonging to Kasyapa gotra. His mother was Trisala or Priyakarini. She was either the daughter or the sister of King Cetaka of Vaisali. His mother had fourteen dreams that her son either would be a king or a saint. Mahavira was married to Yasoda and had a daughter Priyadarsana or Anavadya who was married to Jamali. However the Digambaras maintain that the Lord was never married to anyone. Though he was brought up and educated in such environment as was prevalent in the aristocratic Ksatriya families of that time, from his early childhood he was totally absorbed in the quest of the highest spiritual knowledge. He did not wish to hurt the feelings of his parents by renouncing his home. Therefore, after the death of his parents and with the consent of his elder brother he left home and became an ascetic at the age of thirty (the Digambaras claim that Vardhamana Mahavira's parents were alive while he renounced his household life, and that his parents persuaded him not to; but ultimately gave their consent seeing his strong determination).

After relinquishing his palatial abode, he first went to Jnatrikhandavana, near Kundagrama. He pulled out his hair with his hands and stripped himself of his princely dresses and ornaments. He fasted for two-and-a-half days and was absorbed in deep meditation for several days. After staying there for sometime he started wandering from one place to another as a homeless ascetic. He generally passed his nights in the groves or forests, in cemeteries, in abandoned houses, in workshops or in assembling places. Only once a day did he would visit a town or a village to accept food offered to him, in accordance with the rules of his vows. In the course of his strict austere practices he even passed several days without food and water, and spent his time in uninterrupted meditation. He never took shelter under a tree or a roof, whether it was biting cold or scorching heat. Sometimes insects and wild animals attacked him, but he bore all this with patience. People even struck him with sticks, fists and lances but he tolerated these patiently and silently. For months he would observe silence and plunged into deep meditation.

Lord Mahavira practised austerity and penances for twelve years in quest for the highest spiritual wisdom and perfection. One day while meditating under a Sala tree he attained kevalajñāna, the highest form of knowledge. This Sala tree was in the courtyard of one Samaga's house in Jambhikagrama on the bank of Rjuvaluka River. Mahavira comprehended the nature of life and the world, the cause of bondage and the way to liberation. He realized the truth that the essential principle of life is the jivatattva or the self which is eternal.

Spiritual Teachings

The self has the capacity to know it and others as its basic characteristic is consciousness. But it is always found associated with matter, accommodated in the body, assuming various forms of life and wandering through different lives in the process of transmigration.

2. Karma or action is the tie which binds the self to the body.

3. Perverted knowledge, i.e. ignorance of truth (*mithyatva* or *avidya*) causes the rise of passions (*kasayas*) which are sticky substances where karmic particles stick. The passions which are anger (*krodha*) greed (*lobha*), pride (*mana*), and deceitfulness (*maya*) are the causes of the attraction of the inflow (*asrava*) of karmic particles towards the self. When these particles enter into the soul and bind it, bondage (*bandha*) takes place. By the practice of right knowledge (*samyag-jnana*), right faith (*samyag darsana*) and right conduct (*samyak-carita*), the stoppage (*samvara*) of the inflow of karmic particles is possible. And by the practice of austere penances (*tapas*) wearing out or exhaustion (*nirjara*) of the accumulated karmic particles is possible. After the last karmic particles being worn out and destroyed, the permanent bondage of the self with body is loosened, and the self shines in its intrinsic nature of infinite knowledge (*anantajnana*), infinite faith (*anantadarsana*), infinite bliss (*anantasukha*) and infinite power (*anantayirya*), and become liberated (*mukta*).

After attaining the highest stage of spiritual perfection, Lord Mahavira gave his first religious sermons to the people at Rajagrha, the capital of Magadha at that time, on mount Vipulacala. Then he travelled far and wide in the eastern part of North India preaching his sermons. The list of the names of the places where he spent one or more rainy seasons (*caturmasa*) has been given in the *Kalpasutra*. He spent the first rainy season in Asthikagrama, the next three rainy seasons in Campa and Prsticampa, twelve in Vaisali and Vanijyagrama, fourteen in Rajagrha and Nalanda, six in Mithuta, two in Bhadraka, one in Alabhika, one in Pramtabhumi, one in Sravasti and the last one in Pava.

Lord Buddha a contemporary of Lord Mahavira, also visited some of the places mentioned above at the same time when Lord Mahavira was staying there, but they never met each other. However, there were occasions when some of their followers worked as intermediaries in the course of the philosophical discussions. It is remarkable that Lord Buddha has never been mentioned in the entire Agamic literature of the Jains, though the early Buddhist records at several places mention Nirgrantha Jnatrputra (*Nigantha Nataputta*) who was no other than Lord Mahavira, because he was also known as Jnatrputra being a descendent of Jnatr clan. From the *Samagamasutta* of the *Majjhima-nikaya*, it appears that Lord Mahavira passed away during the life-time of Buddha.

Lord Mahavira attained the final emancipation (parinirvana) at the age of 72 at Pava. And thus for thirty years since he got the highest realization (kevalajnana) after twelve years of his austere penances he preached the doctrine of non-violence (ahimsa), truthfulness (satya), no-stealing (asteya), chastity (brahmacarya) and non-attachment (aparigraha), which was based on the caturyama discipline of his predecessor Lord Parsvanatha. That is why Lord Mahavira is not regarded as the founder of the faith by the Jainas, but is considered as a reformer or rejuvenator of the faith which was already in existence and had a long tradition.

Mahavira's Successors

Lord Mahavira possessed a unique power of organization. By his wonderful personality and organizational skill, he attracted a large number of people, both men and women, to be his disciples. From them, therefore, grew the four orders (sangha) of his community, viz, monks, nuns, laymen and lay women,

Organization

The chiefs were the fourteen thousand monks placed under the charge of Indrabhuti Gautama. The women followers, some thirtysix thousand, actually renounced the world and became nuns, and were led by Candana. Third order consisted of devout laymen or sravakas, numbering about one hundred and fifty nine thousand with Sankha Sataka as their head. The fourth order consisted of devout laywomen or sravikas, numbering about three hundred and fifty eight thousand, with Sulasa and Revati as their heads. These laymen and laywomen did not actually renounce the world, but they at least observed the five vows (vratas) partially. By forming these two orders of he showed a remarkable genius for organization. This grass root support provided firm roots to his teachings during his life time.

It is believed that the teachings of Lord Mahavira were preserved in the beginning by his principal disciples (ganadharas) and later on by the tradition of learned teachers (acaryas}. It is mentioned that Lord Mahavira himself assigned his eleven learned disciples the status of ganadhara. They were Indrabhuti Gautama, Agnibhuti, Vayubhuti, Vyakta, Sudhar-masvami, Manditaputra, Mauryaputra, Akampita, Acala bhrata, Metarya, and Prabhasvami. Out of these eleven ganadharas, only two--Indrabhuti Gautama and, Sudharmasvami survived Lord Mahavira. Jambusvami was the learned disciple of Sudharmasvami. He is regarded as the last 'omniscient' by the Jainas. He attained his final emancipation sixty four years after the parinirvana of Lord Mahavira. In the present Svetambara Agamas generally Sudharmasvami is seen narrating the discourses of Lord Mahavira to Jambusvami which shows that he was the most learned disciple of Sudharmasvami. After Jambusvami there had been a long tradition of acaryas who were responsible for the reservation and propagation of the teachings of Lord Mahavira. Among those learned acaryas the names of

Bhadrabahuśvami and Sthulabhadra are important. It is said that Bhadrabahu was the only living person of his time who had knowledge of all the fourteen Purvas. But with the lapse of time only ten Purvas were preserved by his successors. Sthulabhadra learnt only the ten Purvas along with their meanings and four Purvas without the meanings from Bhadrabahu who was residing in Nepal at that time. Therefore, Sthulabhadra could compile only the ten Purvas in the first council which was convened at Pataliputra in the time of Candragupta Maurya in the fourth century B.C.

Digambaras believe that women cannot attain moksha in the same birth, while Svetambaras believe that women may attain liberation and that Mallinath, a Tirthankar, was a woman. The difference is because Digambar asceticism requires nudity. As nudity is not practical for women, it follows that without it they cannot attain moksha. This is based on the belief that women cannot reach perfect purity (yathakhyata), "Their lack of clothes can, therefore, be a hindrance to their leading a holy life". The earliest record of this belief is contained in the Prakrit Suttapahuda of the Digambara mendicant Kundakunda (c. second century A.D.).

Preaching and Texts

The preachings of Lord Mahavira were handed down to the acaryas who preserved the tradition and the faith. Later on many acaryas wrote several commentaries and sub-commentaries on the scriptural texts of the canon. Numerous original works on Jaina philosophy, logic, epistemology, and even grammars and lexicons were written by them. Umasvami, Kundakunda, Siddhasena Divakara, Jinabhadragani Ksamasramana, Jinadasa Mahattara, Haribhadra Suri, Silankacarya, Abhayadeva Suri, Hemacandracarya, were the greatest acaryas who continued the study of Jaina philosophy and thought for several centuries.

Dissension, Sects and Sub-Divisions of Sects

The signs of internal dissension in the Jaina monastic order or sangha started appearing during the life time of Lord Mahavira. His two disciples, Jamali who was also his son-in-law and Gosala, created a faction in the Jaina monastic order or sangha. But the two major divisions among the followers of this faith, viz. Digambara and Svetambara, clearly appeared after the first convention of Pataliputra which was convened in the 4th century B.C. It is said that during the time of Candragupta Maurya a great famine broke out in Magadha. Candragupta Maurya with a senior Jaina monk named Bhadrabahu and a handful of his followers went towards South India. Bhadrabahu put his senior most disciple Sthulabhadra in charge of those monks who remained in Magadha. After Bhadrabahu, Sthulabhadra was the only monk left who knew all the fourteen Purvas or old scriptures in which all the teachings of Lord Mahavira were preserved. But Bhadrabahu had told him not to teach the last four Purvas to his successors. Apprehending the danger that could threaten the loss and

distortion of the original teachings of Lord Mahavira, Sthulabhadra held a convention at Pataliputra for the compilation and rearrangement of the teachings of Lord Mahavira which were preserved in the Purvas. But when some disciples of Bhadrabahu came back to Magadha from South India, they did not appreciate the rearrangement of the ten Purvas into Angas. They did not even agree to recognize those Angas as the authentic collection of the original teachings of Lord Mahavira. Moreover, after the convention some monks started wearing white clothes instead of wandering as naked ascetics, while others condemned them seriously. Later on these two groups of monks developed as independent Sects. The naked ascetics were known as the Digambara Sect, while the monks who wore white clothes were called the Svetambaras. These two were the most important Sects of Jainism and even today the followers of both these schools are found. But there is no major difference between them regarding the basic and fundamental doctrines except some minor details of faith and practice, as the Digambaras believe that:

- i. The monks should strictly follow the laws of asceticism;
- ii. One who has attained the stage of perfect knowledge or kevalajnana needs no food to sustain his life;
- iii. Women cannot attain the stage of moksha or liberation;
- iv. Vardhainana Mahavira never married; and
- v. The original scriptures are now no more extant. Later on these two sects were also divided into several subdivisions.

Important sub-divisions of the Digambara Sect are: Dravidasangha, Kasthasangha, Mathurasangha, Yapaniya-Sangha, Terapantha, Bisapantha, Samaiyapantha and Gumanapantha. All these schools originated under the influences of some acaryas or senior monks, which developed from the fifth century A.D. to the eighteenth century A.D.

The major sub-divisions of the Svetamabara Sect are: Sthanakavasi and Terapantha.

These two Sects especially discarded idol-worship and temples. Instead of going to and residing there in the Jaina temples, Sthanakavasi monks built up sthanakas or abodes to live. The Sthanakavasi Sect originated from the Lonka Sect which flourished in the fifteenth century A.D. under the patronage of Lonkasaha. In the eighteenth century A.D. Terapantha a new sect emerged from the Sthanakavasi sect, which was started by Acarya Bhikhanji. Unlike the Sthanakavasi monks, the Terapantha monks do not stay in the sthdnakas or abodes. They also do not believe in idol-worship. The greatest exponent of the Terapantha sect was Acarya Tulasi.

Development

During the life-time of Lord Mahavira the Jaina faith had acquired great popularity in Northern India. Bimbisara, the King of Magadha and his son, Ajatasatru, as the Jains claim, had embraced Jainism. In the Buddhist literature they have been mentioned as patrons of the Buddhist faith. However, it seems proper to accept that both of them were sympathetic to both Buddhism and Jainism.

From the Kharavela inscriptions it appears that King Nanda of Magadha was also a follower of the Jaina faith. It is mentioned therein that the image of Jina which was brought to Magadha from Kalinga by King Nanda was again brought back to Kalinga by Kharavela.

According to Jaina tradition Candragupta Maurya was greatly influenced by a learned Jaina monk named Bhadrabahu. He even abdicated his throne and went to the southern parts of India with Bhadrabahu and his fellow monks. It is said that he died as a Jaina monk in Karnata in South India.

Later South India became a great centre of Jaina learning, and many scholars of this region contributed to the discipline of Jainism by writing invaluable works on metaphysics and logic. Several kings even became the champions of this faith and built Jaina temples. Especially in the time of the Rastrakuta Kings this faith flourished.

Jainism also went to the remote west of India. One thousand years after the nirvana of Lord Mahavira, the third Jaina convention was convened at Vallabhi in Gujarat. In this very convention all the sacred Jaina scriptures were given the final shape.

Syad Qasim Mehmood writes in Islamic Encyclopedia that Jains were so careful of the doctrine of Ahimsa (or Ahinsa) that while walking they held a duster to clean the path so not even a smallest living creature may be killed.

Heaven and Hell

There is an explicit concept of paradise or Heaven and Hell in Jain religious texts. They say there are seven hells and twenty six heavens one above the other. The soul carries weight. When a person commits a sin, the soul gets heavier and falls into hell.

Observances

Mr. K.C. Sogani in his article "Jaina Faith and Morals" in the book "Jainism" writes:

Guided by the incentives to spiritual life, the aspirant devotes his energies to meditation, devotion and svadhyaya along with other spiritual exercises. Before taking up these spiritual practices, he resorts to moral discipline in the form of anuvratas and mahavratas. Without moral observances, the spiritual practices cannot be sustained.

According to the Jaina faith, moral and spiritual discipline finds their completion in the life of the muni, since the life of the householder affords only partial ground for them. The moral and spiritual practices of the muni culminate in the attainment of the religious goal of arhathood and siddhahood.

Spiritual Exercises: The muni performs many types of spiritual exercises, such as (a) guptis and samitis, (b) control of the five senses, (c) six fold essentials, and (d) tapas.

- a) The ideal for a muni is to control his physical, mental and vocal activities and to put himself in the atmanic experience. Such a sublime endeavor is termed gupti. The observance of carefulness in moving, speaking, taking food, keeping and receiving things, evacuating bowels, etc. is termed samiti. It may be noted here that the muni accepts food not for increasing strength, enhancing longevity, gratifying relish, and attaining bright look, but performing spiritual study, pursuing self-control and meditation.
- b) It is a fact that attachment to senses and sensuous pleasures creates enormous difficulties in the spiritual path. Hence a muni controls the five senses from their attachment to colour, sound, smell, taste and touch. A muni should observe proper discipline. The sense of sight should neither be attracted by beauty nor repulsed by the ugliness of things; the sense of hearing should not be led away by any tune whatsoever; the sense of smell should not be seduced by the fragrance of things; the sense of taste should not be overcome by different kinds of juices, and lastly the sense of touch should not be led astray by different kinds of touch.
- c) A muni performs six essentials. (i) Samayika : He develops a state of mind in the midst of life and death, loss and gain, pleasant and unpleasant events, friends and foes, pleasure and pain, (ii) Vandana: He offers salutations to Arhanta and Siddha Pratimas and to those who excel in spiritual attainments, (iii) Stuti : He contemplates on the divine characteristics of the twenty-four tirthnkaras. (iv) Pratikramana: He purifies the faults in spiritual living by resorting to self-criticism, and confession in the presence of his guru, (v) Pratyakhyana: It implies the determination of the muni to renounce in future all that is inconsistent with his spiritual pursuit. Pratikramana has retrospective reference, while pratyakhyana has prospective one. (vi) Kayotsarga: In it the muni practices a formal no-attachment to the body for a prescribed period of time.
- d) Tapa: He eradicates desires from the texture of self. It is the real enemy of self. Consequently, its extirpation is of paramount importance. The tapas are of two kinds:

i) external and ii) internal

- i. External austerities (tapas) are of six kinds. 1. Anasana: It means fasting for a limited period of time, such as for one day, two days, etc. 2. Avamaudaya: It means to take less than the normal quantity of food each day. 3. Vrttiparisamkhyana : It means the pre-determination of a muni regarding the number of houses to be visited, the particular manner of taking food, the specific type of food, the giver or specific qualification,- when he sets out to get food. If the things conform to his norm, he would accept food; otherwise he would go without it for that day. 4. Rasaparityaga: It implies the abstinence from one or more articles of food, milk, curd, ghee, oil, sugar and salt; and from one or more kinds of tastes, bitter, astringent, sour and sweet, 5. Viviktasa-yyasana: It means that a muni abandons the dwellings. 6. Kayaklesa: In it the body is put to certain discomforts through uneasy and stern postures. These external austerities do not aim at the flagellation of the body, but contribute towards the inner advancement of a muni.
- ii. The internal austerities are also of six kinds. 1. Prayascitta: When a muni has committed certain transgressions, he resorts to repentance for the wrong done in order to purify himself. That is the real prayascitta wherein the commission of fault in spiritual life is not repeated, 2. Vinaya: It means the expression of humbleness towards the spiritually superior. A muni is not conceited in his attainments, and behaves modestly with all those who have attained spiritual heights. 3. Vaiyavrttya: It means the rendering of service to other munis through suitable means when they are overwhelmed by disease, affliction and any disturbance whatsoever, 4. Vyutsarga: It implies the relinquishment of internal and external parigraha. 5. Svadhyaya: The study of scriptures is svadhyaya. Its purpose is to enrich the intellect, to refine moral and spiritual efforts, to infuse detachment and fear from mundance miseries, and to purify defects that may occur when one pursues the divine path. For those who are fickle-minded and intellectually unsteady, nothing is so potent to end such a state of mind as the pursuance of svadhyaya. Without the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, there is always a danger of being led astray from the virtuous path .The man with svadhyaya saves himself from being led astray, just as the needle with thread is not lost. 6. Dhyana: It represents the concentration of mind on a particular object. The object of concentration may be profane or holy in character. The mind may concentrate either on the debasing object or on the object which is elevating. The former is aprasastadhyana and the latter is prasasta. In dealing with dhyana as tapa, we are concerned with the prasasta of dhyana, since it is only relevant to spiritual realization. It is the indispensable, integral constituent of right conduct, and consequently it is directly related to the actualization of the divine potentialities. It is the clear and single road by which the aspirant can move

straight to the Supreme good. All the disciplinary observances find their culmination in dhyana. The practice of the fourfold virtue of maitri (friendship with all creatures), pramoda (appreciation of the merits of others), karuna, (compassion for those who are in trouble) and madhyastha (indifference to those who are irrational), are the pre-requisite conditions of dhyana. The aspirants should avoid those places which are inhabited by the vicious, hypocrites, gamblers, drunkards, harlots and the like, and should choose a bank of river, an island, a cave, a summit of a mountain and other places of seclusion for spiritual concentration. For him whose mind is immaculate, stable and detached every posture every place and every time is fit for meditation. Many places in the body have been enumerated for mental concentration, namely, the two eyes, two ears, the foremost point of the nose, the forehead, the place between the two eye-brows etc. Prasasta-dhyana is of two types, namely, dharma and sukla. The best kind of dharma-dhyana is to meditate upon the self by fixing one's mind in it after renouncing all other thoughts. After dharma-dhyana, sukla-dhyana is practiced. In it the mind shortens its field of concentration to the effect that the muni meditates upon one substance, an atom, and the like. In consequence, the muni gains infinite knowledge, bliss and energy.

- iii. Devotion implies sublime affection towards the perfected souls (arhat and siddha) or towards those who are much advanced on the path of divine realization. The Jaina devotional texts regard devotion as of great significance. Vadiraja says that in spite of deep intellectual attainments and great moral accomplishments, the aspirant cannot achieve liberation without profound devotion. Samantabhadra points out that just as iron is turned into gold by a mere touch of the parasa stone, so also the devotee is transformed into an effulgent personality, and what he speaks is regarded as of great importance. Is devotion possible in Jainism? One may say that devotion in Jainism is a contradiction in terms, since devotion conceives the existence of a being who can actively respond to the aspirations of the devotee, and in Jainism the conception of such a being is not there. The reply is that in Jainism arhat and siddha are the objects of devotion. They are not affected by devotion and remain quite indifferent to human woes. By the devotion towards the arhat or the siddha our thoughts and emotions are purified. A great heap of punya is deposited in the self by devotion resulting in spiritual advancement. Those who are devoted to the siddhas and arhants are eventually elevated.

Concept of Arhat and Siddha: By performing spiritual exercises, an aspirant or a muni attains to spiritual perfection. He earns the title of Arhat or Arhanta. Arhats are of two types— tirthankara and non-tirthankara. The distinction between the two is that the former is capable of preaching and propagating religious doctrines in order to guide the mundane souls and his sermons are properly worded by ganadharas, while

the latter is not a preacher of religious principles, but enjoys the spiritual experience. The *Acaranga* tells us that an Arhanta is established in truth in all directions. He is *atmasamahita* (established in the *atman*). He has freed himself from anger, pride, death, greed, hatred, birth and death. In the state of arhathood there are neither sense, nor is there any calamity, nor astonishment, nor sleep, nor desire, nor hunger; there is only nirvana. Secondly, arhantas lead a life of super moralist but not of a moralist. He is beyond the category of virtue and vice, good and evil, *punya* and *papa*, yet he may be pronounced the most virtuous soul, though the pursuit of virtuous life cannot bind him to mundane cycle of birth and death. Thirdly, just as a mother educates her child for his benefit and a physician cures patients, so also the arhat instructs humanity for its prosperity. He has enough spiritual powers to abrogate the miseries of tormented humanity. His presence is enlightening. Fourthly with inner experiences, the conquest over the mind, the senses, and the passions becomes natural to Arhat. By virtue of his self-realization, he has transcended the dualities of friends and enemies, pleasure and pain, praise and censure, life and death, clay and gold. Fifth, the *Acaranga* tells us that the unwise sleep, the sages always stay awake. *Samantabhadra* says that being impelled by the desire to live and enjoy, the ordinary persons work hard in the day and get tired they sleep at night, but the mystic keep awake day and night in the process of self-realization without being overwhelmed by indolence and inertia. Sixth, the Arhanta has attained super sensuous knowledge, infinite potency and unique resplendence. He is omniscient. He neither accepts nor abandons the external objectivity, but only witnesses the world just as the eyes see the objects of sight. Along with omniscience he experiences infinite bliss. Seventh, the spiritual experience of Arhat is ineffable and transcends all the similes of the world. Thus the essence of Arhat cannot be completely described in rational terms. From this point of view the Arhat is the 'wholly other'. At best, the Arhat can be described by negative expressions. The *Acaranga* tells us that the Arhat is neither big nor small, he is neither black nor blue, etc., he is neither cold nor hot, he is neither feminine nor masculine, he perceives, he knows but there is no analogy.

Considered from the perspective of spiritual realization, Arhat and Siddha stand at par. The difference is that the former enjoys embodied liberation and the latter disembodied one. Arhat is the perfect Guru, delivering sermons for general beneficence and is also called perfect Deva on account of the complete actualization of the divinity potential in himself. In Arhat there is the consistent identification of *Devatva* and *Gurutva*, of the inward experience and the outward expression. In Siddhas there is only the *Devatva*. This does not imply that Siddha is inferior in any way, but simply the glorification of Arhat as the supreme Guru.

Morals:

As we have said, the performance of spiritual exercises presupposes the practice of morals. Without moral observances spiritual progress is inconceivable. The conviction of Jaina is that for the man who is spiritually awakened, morality serves as a means to spiritual living, but for the ordinary man, it is an end in itself. The realm of morality is auspicious psychical states resulting in auspicious activities. The obstacles to the achievement of morals are inauspicious activities emanating from inauspicious psychical states. Thus in order to stamp out the inauspicious physical states from the texture of self, the individual must abstain himself from violence, falsehood, theft, unchastely behavior and acquisitions. This negative process of purifying the self necessarily requires the pursuance of the positive process of non-violence (ahimsa), truthfulness (satya), not taking what doesn't belong to you (asteya), chastity (brahmacharya) and non-acquisition (aparigraha). These five virtues replace the five vices. It may be noted here that ahimsa is the central and fundamental of these virtues the rest are regarded as the means for sustenance. When the replacement of vices by virtues is complete, we observe complete morality (sakala) and when it is partial, we have partial morality (vikala). He who observes complete morality is called a Muni, while he who observes partial morality is called a householder. The life of Anuvratas represents partial morality of the householder, whereas the life of Mahdvratas represents complete morality of the Muni. The Anuvratas and the Mahavratas are the ways of overcoming the vices of himsa, steaya, asatya, abrahmacarya and parigraha.

Himsa may be defined as the committing of injury to the physical and psychical aspects of oneself and others through the operation of passion-infected activities of mind, body and speech. This means that if, in spite of the dispassionate activities of mind, body and speech any living being is injured, it cannot be called himsa, since the infecting element of passion is missing. On the contrary, even if the activities of mind, body and speech are passion-infected, and no living being is oppressed, then the actions are called himsa. Here though the soul has not injured others, yet it has injured itself by defiling its own natural constitution. Thus we may say that it is only on the basis of the internal state of mind that the acts of himsa and ahimsa are to be judged. This should not be taken to understand that external behaviour is of no significance since in human life the outward commission of himsa without the pursuance of internal corruption cannot be vindicated. He who exclusively emphasizes the internal at the expense of the external forgets the significance of outward behavior. Thus both the internal and external aspects should occupy their due places.

Himsa is of two kinds—intentional and non-intentional. The latter has again been divided into udyami, arambhi and virodhi. Intentional himsa implies the voluntary commitment of himsa by one's own self along with the provocation and endorsement of the acts of himsa. Besides, himsa which is unavoidably committed by reason of one's own profession, by the performance of domestic activities, and by defending

oneself, one's neighbour, one's country, one's belonging, and the like from one's foes is called udyami, arambhi and virodhi himsa respectively.

Ahimsa (Anuvrata-Mahavrata): Now the householder is incapable of turning away completely from himsa, hence he should keep himself away from the intentional commission of himsa of the two-sensed to five-sensed beings, himsa owing to profession, domestic activities, and defensive measures cannot be counteracted by him. Thus he commits non-intentional injury to jivas, namely, the vegetable-bodied, the air-bodied, the fire-bodied, etc. Even in the realm of one-sensed jivas and in the realm of non-intentional injury he should manage to confine his operations as may affect the life and existence of a very limited number of jivas. The point to note is that of reducing the amount of injury that is apt to be caused and not that of total relinquishment which is not possible without endangering the survival of man. If we reflect a little, we shall find that man is subject to himsa by the very condition of his existence. Yet instead of aggravating the natural weight of himsa by falling foul upon one another and by our cruel treatment of the animal and vegetable kingdoms we should endeavor to reduce this general curse to the possible. The observer of ahimsanuvrata should avoid gambling, hunting, drinking, and eating meat.

The implications of ahimsanuvrata in solving social, national and international problems are that the principle of mutual understanding should be adhered to. Life should be elevated from the plane of force to that of reason, persuasion, accommodation, tolerance and mutual service. The maintenance of universal peace and the promotion of human welfare can only be affected by suffusing worlds' atmosphere with the spirit of ahimsa. War is to be discouraged, exploitation is to be condemned. Besides, a social consciousness is to be developed against the use of wine and the slaughtering of animals.

The muni extends active friendship to all living beings from the one-sensed to the five-sensed without any exception, and consequently all forms of intentional himsa are shunned and the question of udyami, arambhi, and virodhi himsa does not arise in his case. The muni is a world citizen. He, therefore, draws the attention of men to the inefficacy of himsa for solving social, national and international disputes. He himself is the embodiment of ahimsa and exhorts others to develop reverence for life as such.

Satya (Anuvrata-Mahavrata): Let us begin with the meaning of falsehood. It implies the making of wrong and improper statement by one who is overwhelmed by passions such as anger, greed, conceit, deceit and the like. Falsehood is of four kinds. The first falsehood refers to the affirmation of the existent as non-existent, the second refers to the declaration of the non-existent as existent, the third refers to the representation of the existing nature of things as different from what they are, and the fourth is of speech which is disagreeable to others. The Muni avoids all these four forms of falsehood, and therefore, he is said to observe satya-mahavrata. But the householder has to speak harsh, unpleasant words in the course of running the

household and doing professional management therefore he observes satyanuvrata. The observer of satyanuvrata use words which are soothing and gentle. If any speech causes offence it should be withheld. Ultimately the criterion of satya and asatya is ahimsa and himsa respectively. Thus satya speech should lead to ahimsa.

Asteya (Anuvrata-Mahavrata): Steya means the taking of things under the constraint of passion without their being given by the owner. It may be noted here that things constitute the external pranas of a man and he who thieves and plunders them is said to deprive a man of his pranas. This is not other than himsa. The muni who observes mahavrata does not take anything whatsoever without the permission of others, but the householder uses such things freely as are of common use without their being given, such as water from the well. Thus he is observing asteyanuvrata. It may be noted here that the Muni does not use even the common things without their being given by others. The householder does neither take those things which are forgotten and dropped by others nor give them to any one else. Purchasing of costly things at reduced prices is stealing, which is probably due to the fact that one may sell a thing after getting it by improper methods. Adulteration, abetment of theft, receiving stolen property, use of false weights and measures, smuggling come under stealing.

Brahmacarya (Anuvrata-Mahdvrata): Sex-passion is abrahma. He who frees himself completely from sexual inclination is observing brahmacarya-mahavrata. But the householder who abstains himself from the sexual contacts with all other women except his nuptial partner is observing brahmacaryanuvrata. Sex-passion is himsa and brahmacarya is ahimsa. The householder keeps himself away from adultery, prostitution, unnatural methods of sexual enjoyment.

Aparigraha (Anuvrata-Mahavrata): Attachment to things is parigraha. Those who have a feeling of attachment to things in spite of their external renunciation are far from aparigraha; and those who have external things are not free from internal attachment. Thus if one is prone to remove internal attachment, one should correspondingly throw aside external possessions also. Attachment is a form of himsa and those who wish to practise ahimsa should avoid attachment. The householder is incapable of renouncing all parigraha; therefore he should limit the parigraha of wealth, cattle, corn, buildings, etc. This is parigraha-parimananuvrata.

The observance of these five vows is capable of bringing about individual as well as social progress. Thus, the Jaina faith and morals sum up the spiritual and moral living of the individual along with the social upliftment.

Monastic Discipline

Mr. Mohan Lal Mehta of Punjabi University, Patiala, while describing the monastic discipline of Jains says that Jainism accepts the authority of its own Agamas and

Agamic literature. Its animism, atomism, karmism, asceticism; etc. are quite peculiar. All these doctrines are based on the Jaina canons.

Ascetic Vows

Vedic religion divides society in to four classes: The four classes recognized by Jainism are not on the basis of birth but conduct. They are known as Sramanas (monks), Sramanis (nuns), Sravakas (laymen) and Sravikas (laywomen). Jainism gives freedom to all human beings to observe vows. It provides equal opportunity to all persons to practice self-discipline according to their capacity. The observers of vows are divided into two broad categories: ascetics and lay-votaries. The ascetic is variously known as Sramana, Bhiksu, Nir-grantha, Muni, Sadhu, Yati, Anagara, Mahavratin, Sarva virata, etc. The lay-votary is differently designated as Sravaka, Upasaka, Sagara, Anuvratin, etc. Monks and nuns constitute the category of ascetics, and laymen and laywomen form that of lay-votaries.

The ascetic is required to observe five great vows. He is also enjoined to practice the sixth vow of abstention from taking food and drink after sunset (*Dasavaikalika-sutra*). The ascetic is forbidden to commit any sin, i.e. violence etc. in any form. He is enjoined upon to refrain from all the sinful activities—subtle and gross, physical, vocal and mental. He neither commits a sin himself, nor causes others to commit it, nor approves of its committal by others.

Copulation comprises the activity of man and woman promoted by sexual desire. The vow of non-copulation (*maithuna-tiramaṇa-vrata*) forbids the ascetic to embrace man or women or any other creature out of sexual urge. Two reasons are generally advanced for the condemnation of carnal contact. In a moral sense, the peace of mind is disturbed by the increase of the passions of love and hate. In a physical sense, the sexual act is always accompanied by violence, as it is maintained that there are always present in the sexual organ of a woman numerous minute living beings of which many perish during every act of coition.

For the sake of strengthening the vow of non-copulation, continence, chastity or celibacy, the ascetic has to observe the following rules and the like : renunciation of (i) listening to stories exciting attachment for women (or men), (ii) looking at beautiful bodies of women (or men), (iii) recalling former sexual pleasure, (iv) delicacies stimulating amorous desire, and (v) adornment of body.

Correct Behaviour

Monks should live in a burial place or cremation ground, in a deserted house, below a tree, in solitude. They should live in a pure (free from insects, etc.) place which is not crowded and where no woman lives. Nuns should live in a pure and protected place which is not crowded and where no man lives. The ascetic is forbidden to build

house. The same holds good with the cooking of food and drink. He should collect alms in small parts. He is enjoined to eat not for the sake of pleasant taste but for the sustenance of life. Though overcome by thirst, he should not drink cold water, i.e. water with life (sacitta), but try to get distilled water, i.e. water without life (acitta). If he suffers from cold, he should not long warmth. If he suffers from heat, he should not long for a bath. At one time he may have no food and clothes, at another he may have some. Under no circumstances he should complain about it. If he falls sick or suffers any other pain or affliction, he should cheerfully endure it. He is enjoined to travel (on foot) during winter and summer. In rainy season he is required to stay at one place.

The ascetic as well as the lay-votary is enjoined to court voluntary death. It is known as samlekhand, samadhimarana, or panditamarana. When there are situations which render the observance of vows impossible and the end of life is near, one should court voluntary death patiently. Such situations include acute famine, incurable disease, calamity, and the like. The performance of voluntary death begins with a progressive withdrawal of food. It culminates in complete abstinence from food and drink. Voluntary death cannot be called suicide, as it has no passion like anger, fear, disgust, etc. Suicide is always committed under the sway of some kind of passion, whereas there is complete absence of passions in voluntary death (Sarvdrthasiddhi, VII. 22).

Organization

The acarya and the upadhyaya are the chief officers of the Jain religious body. In addition to these two: pravartaka, sthavira, ganin, gandvacchedaka and ratna-dhika or ratnika. The organization of nuns has four officers: pravartini, gandvacchedini, abhiseka and pratihari. All these officers are subordinate to the officers of the order of monks.

The Acarya is the supreme head of certain groups of monks and nuns. He controls and guides the groups under him. He is expected to be a man of high academic and moral qualifications. The juniors have to take permission from him for all the important items of monastic conduct.

The Upadhyaya is next to the acarya. His chief duty is to give proper reading of the canons to the junior monks and nuns. Hence, such a person is expected to be well-versed in the canonical literature. Besides the knowledge of the scriptures, he must possess sufficient self-control and organizational capacity.

The Pravartaka looks after the administrative routine of a particular group. He should be a man of sufficient academic and moral qualifications.

The sthavira consists of three categories: jati-sthavira, sruta-sthavira and paryaya-sthavira. The jati-sthavira is one who is at least sixty years, old. The sruta-sthavira is well-versed in the Sthdnanga and Samavaydnga Sutras. The paryaya-sthavira has at

least twenty years' standing as a monk. The chief duty of the sthavira is to impart basic instructions in monastic discipline to the beginners (Sthananga-sutra, 159; Vyavahara-sutra, 10.15).

The Ganin is chiefly responsible for proper education of the group to which he belongs. He is also known as Vacanacarya or Ganadhara. He is endowed with ideal conduct and scholarship.

The Ganavacchedaka is the head of a part of the group to which he belongs. He controls and guides the monks under his supervision.

The Ratnadhika is a senior monk. Here seniority depends upon scholarship and conduct. A monk with a lesser seniority is designated as Avamaratnika and that with a greater seniority is called Yatharatnika.

The organization of nuns is done under their own officers. The Pravartini is the highest officer in the cadre. She heads a particular group of nuns and controls and guides the group under her. She is person of high moral standard and scholarship. She should have organizational drive and be able to execute stern discipline. Since she heads a group (gana) of nuns, she is also known as Ganini.

The Ganavacchedaka is the head of a part of a group. She controls and guides the nuns under her care.

The Abhiseka is an old experienced nun just like the thavira in the order of monks.

The Pratihari is a senior nun in respect to conduct and knowledge. She is just like the Ratnika among monks.

Thus, the Jaina Church is a well-organized and disciplined institution consisting of various officers, administrative as well as academic. All the officers of the organization are expected to be highly qualified and experienced persons. Their qualifications are related to faith, knowledge and conduct.

Rai Ashwini Kumar writes about the Jains Yoga and Mysticism:

The term yoga, no doubt, occurs in the Jaina Agamas, but it is not widely used there. The later Jaina thinkers have, however, freely used the term yoga in their works on yoga. It is only Haribhadra who defined the word yoga for the first time in the history of Jaina thought. In all his works he defined it in the sense of 'what leads one to emancipation'. He derived the term yoga from the root yuj, 'to bind together', 'to connect', 'union', and 'conjunction'. Thus the literal meaning of the word yoga is connection. This meaning of the term yoga is unanimously accepted and used in the post-Haribhadra literature. According to Haribhadra, all pure religious performance is yoga inasmuch as it connects one with moksa, J.e. lead one to maksa. Every religious and spiritual activity is considered elegant provided it is placed in moksa. The religious

practices should be pure in all respects, viz. object, nature, and result. The idea underlying such meaning of yoga is that the goodness of an action can be gauged solely by its conduciveness to moksa in the long run. That action is good which either leads towards moksa, or which does not deflect from the path towards moksa.

Elements of Mysticism

Mysticism can be defined as the direct experience of the communion between man and God. In the mystical experience the individual experiences perfection and liberation. This implies a certain metaphysical conception of God and of the soul, and also implies further a mystic way of attaining union or identification with God. Mysticism affirms its faith in direct intuition which can immediately and directly apprehend the reality. The aspirants are asked to remain indifferent to worldly things, and hence various rules of conduct are prescribed which they must practice. Mysticism insists upon the help and guidance of a competent guru for the revelation of truth. These are some of the salient aspects of mysticism. We shall now see which of these elements are found in Jainism.

The Jaina mysticism turns round two concepts: atman and paramatman. Each soul is a potential god, i.e. paramatman. But it remains as atman only because of karmic limitations. As soon as the various limitations created by the karmas are removed, the atman realizes its real nature and becomes pure and perfect. The various innate capacities of the soul find their full expression. The soul exhibits its potential divinity. It becomes paramatman. In view of their essential nature, the atman and the paramatman are one and the same. There is no difference between the two. As long as the atman is under the influence of the karmas, it remains oblivious of its true nature and is not as yet evolved into paramatman. By breaking the karmic fetters it realizes its identity with the paramatman. Thus paramatman represents the ultimate point of spiritual evolution of atman. Atman to paramatman is a course of spiritual evolution; and it is the prerogative of every awakened soul to see that it reaches the state of paramatman. Every soul when it reaches its highest perfection becomes paramatman. All perfect souls are divine and there is no rank among them, since all are equal and possess the same essential attributes. Hence they, even on attaining moksa, retain their individuality. The atman has to pass through fourteen stages of spiritual evolution called gunasthanas in order to become paramatman. But this identity or unity cannot be realized with the help of the senses and the mind. The Jains categorically deny the possibility of the apprehension of the reality through the senses and the mind, because it is the senses that have made the atman look outward away from the centre of reality. Only direct intuition leads the soul to the very inwardness of reality, and thus through this extra-sensory perception it gains back the directness of apprehension it had lost.

Jains Art

Mr. L.M. Joshi writes that Jain antiquities have been found from all parts of India.

The tradition of Jaina art and ritual seems to have remote connection with the prehistoric antiquities discovered from the Indus Valley. Some human figures on the seals from Mohenjo-daro resemble the Jina figures standing in kayotsarga posture. A few figures of ascetics sitting in dhyana posture found from Harappa and Mohenjo-daro are analogous to the figures of Jaina and Buddhist sages of historic times. These similarities suggest that the ascetic and moral thought associated with munis and sramanas was of non-Aryan and pre-Vedic Indus origin. The sculptures from Harappan sites, especially those that are of a religious character, show that the tradition of the images is of prehistoric origin. The red-stone statue partly mutilated, from Harappa belonging to the third millennium B.C. is remarkably similar to the torso of a Jina found from Lohanipur in Bihar and assigned to the Mauryan age.

The Jaina literary sources affirm that a sandal-wood figure of Jivantasvami or Mahavira in meditation prior to his renunciation had been made during his life-time. During the age of the Mauryas the images of the Jinas may have been in worship as can be inferred from the red-stone torso of a Jina-figure found from Lohanipur and now preserved in the Patna museum. An image or a seat or some sacred object associated with Jina was brought back to Kalinga from Magadha by the Jaina ruler Kharvela in the second century B.C. This sacred Jaina emblem had been carried off to Magadha by the Nanda King. It is believed by archaeologists that the images of Yaksas had influenced the custom of making the images of the Jinas and the Buddhas. The find-spot of Jina torso at Lohanipur may have been the site of a Jaina temple.

Next landmark in the development of the Jaina art is represented by a series of rock-cut monastic halls in Barabara and Nagarjuni hills in Bihar. These so-called caves had been excavated by Asoka and his grandson Dasaratha for the use of Ajivika monks. Makhali Gosala, the founder of Ajivika sect, was once a disciple and later on a great rival of Mahavira.

The groups of halls on the Khandagiri and Udayagiri hills in Orissa were made during the Sunga period. The inscriptions on these cave-dwellings clearly prove that they had been made for and used by Jaina monks. The most famous among these is the Hathigumpha with a long epigraph of king Kharavela. These cave-dwellings do not have caitya-halls as is the characteristic of the Buddhist rock-cut monasteries. The plastic treatment and relief sculptures on these caves include figures of gods, demi-gods, tree with railing, and a figure of goddess with two elephants, etc. A noteworthy sculpture shows a Greek warrior and a bull-rider in Assyrian fashion.

The two caves at Pabhosa near Kosam in Allahabad District bearing inscriptions of the Sunga age may or may not be associated with Jaina monks. They are dedicated to the Kasyapiya Arhats which may refer either to the followers of Mahavira who

belonged to Kasyapa gotra or to the Buddhist monks of Kasyapiya Sect. Among other relics of Jaina art dating from a pre-Christian period may be mentioned an image of Parsvanatha in bronze now preserved in the Prince of Wales Museum at Bombay, and the ruins of a Jaina stupa at Mathura. The Jaina antiquities at Mathura ranging from B.C. 150 to A.D. 1300 include ruins of two temples, one large stupa made of bricks, tablets of adoration or votive tablets (ayagapatas), gateways (toranas), images of Tirthankaras, railing pillars, and sculptures of gods and goddesses. Some sculptures have scenes from the lives of the Jinas for their subject-matter. The veneration of stupas was common among the votaries of Jainism and Buddhism, and Mathura has yielded not only Jaina and Buddhist sculptures but also Brahmanical sculptures mostly of the time of the Kusanas and the Guptas. The Jaina literature contains legends concerning the great antiquity of a stupa at Mathura and also of another stupa at Taksasila (Taxila) near Rawalpindi.

During the Kusana period, Mahayana Buddhist faith had been fully, developed and widely propagated throughout the subcontinent. This fact seems to have influenced the growth of Devotional Jainism. Jainism also developed during this period the worship of stupa, dharmacakra, ayagapata, caitya-vrksa and auspicious symbols, like srivatsa, svastika, yugmamina, and of course, of the images of Tirthankaras and of goddess Sarasvati along with those of a few demigods. The figures of Tirthankaras are usually found in two poses: kayotsarga-mudra and dhyana-mudra. As a rule the Tirthankaras are portrayed nude; their images are recognized sometimes by their special symbols (lanchana), for example, images of Parsvanatha are recognized by a hooded snake; many images bear inscriptions giving the name of the Jina. Often the parents of the Jinas are pictured on stone along with gods and demi-gods.

A group of about twenty rock monastic caves has been found at Junagarh in Gujarat. In cave B is an early form of caitya-window; cave F is flat-roofed and a rather primitive cell. Cave K has two rooms with sculptures of svastika, srivatsa and yugalamina. An inscription of second century A.D. found here refers to those who have attained supreme knowledge (kevala-jnana), and thus it seems that before that date and originally these caves belonged to Buddhist monks. The presence of a stupa in several of these caves proves their Buddhist origin. For hardly any Jaina cave showing stupa-worship has been found in India, whereas most of the Buddhist rock-cut halls in Western India have stupas as central objects of worship.

One of the early Jaina caves is the Sona-Bhandara Cave in Rajgir in Bihar. It has an inscription of first century A.D. recording that muni Vairadeva caused to be excavated two caves for the use of Jaina monks with images of Jinas installed in them. On the Vaibhara hill in Rajgir have been found ruins of a temple with sculptures including a seated figure of Neminatha with an inscription referring to Candragupta (the second). On the pedestal is curved figure of a standing man hallowed by a wheel suggesting the

conception of a cakrapurusa. He is flanked by conches and seated figures of Jinas in dhyana.

Some of the exquisite examples of Jaina art of the Gupta period belong to the Mathura school of sculpture. These pieces are preserved in the museums at Mathura, Sarnath, and Lucknow. A free-standing pillar at Kahom in Uttar Pradesh has the figures of four Tirthankaras on the top and a figure of Parsvanatha at the base belonging to the Gupta age.

In Karnataka State lies the famous site of Sravanabelagola revered as Candragiri. On this hill is a cave called Bhadrabahu cave. It is believed that the Maurya emperor Candragupta and his spiritual teacher Bhadrabahu spent their last days on this hill. Near Osmanabad in Maharashtra, there are Jaina caves with images belonging to 6th or 7th century A.D. An important rock-cut Jaina monastery lies at Sittannavasal near Pudukottai in Tamilnadu. It is an old cave with an inscription in Mauryan Brahmi script. Other notable Jaina monastery in the South is at Badami, the capital of the Calukya rulers. It was hewn in the 7th century A.D. and is adorned with the images of the Jinas. Some Jaina caves are at Aihole near Badami excavated in the middle of the 7th century A.D. Their style is similar to those of Ellora caves. One of the caves bears the famous epigraph of King Pulakesin (the second) of the Calukya dynasty. Several large and beautiful monastic halls belonging to the architectural wealth of Jainism are found at Ellora in Aurangabad District. At this place are found sacred cave-dwellings and sanctuaries of the Buddhists, the Jainas, and of the followers of Brahmanism. These rock-cut monuments were made in the 8th century A.D.

Mention may be made of a Jaina temple decorated with images of the Jinas numbering thirty near the village of Kujipur in Southern Travancore. This temple dates from the ninth century and is now known as Bhagavati-temple. A group of seven small caves exists at Ankai near Manmad railway station. These are products of early medieval age, and the iconography of the images of Jinas in these caves is fully developed. The Jainas continued to excavate monastic dwellings into live rocks till the 15th century A.D., as can be seen from the caves in the Gwalior fort. Some caves have very large images of the Tirthankaras ranging in height from 20 feet to 57 feet.

There was a Jaina vihara at Paharpur in Bengal from where a Jina image had been found along with a copper plate inscription referring to the worship of the Arhats. A Jaina Stupa seems to have existed at Simhapur in Ketas in the North West of India where Svetambara Jaina monks practised austerities according to Hsiuan-Tsang. A large number of Jaina images in bronze were manufactured during the early medieval period. These bronze icons have been found from Vallabhi in Gujarat, Akota near Baroda, and other places in Western India. Early medieval age also witnessed the building of a large number of Jaina temples, especially in Central and Western India. The Mahavira temple at Osia in former Jodhpur State, dates from the 8th century. One of the master-pieces of temple architecture is the Ghantai temple at Khajuraho in

Madhya Pradesh. A feature of medieval Jaina sculpture is the custom of depicting 24 Jinas or Tirthankaras and 24 Yaksas and Yaksis as attendants of different Tirthankaras. Although Khajuraho is famous for Tantriki sculptures on the Brahmanical temples, the Jaina temples, about six in number, differ but little from Brahmanical group. Finally, mention may be made of the temple city of the Jainas, Satrunjaya in Saurashtra, having hundreds of shrines. The Adinatha temple was built in 1530 A.D. on the site of an older temple. The most famous Jaina temple at Delwada, Mount Abu, was built by Vimalasaha, a Solanki minister. It represents an architectural and sculptural marvel on marble.

The tradition of Jaina painting is nearly as old as that of the Buddhist painting. Faint traces of wall-paintings have been observed on the walls of caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri in Orissa. The earliest specimen of Jaina painting can be seen in the wall-paintings at Sittannavalai in Madras. These paintings are contemporary with those of Ajanta. Examples of Jaina paintings are also found in Ellora caves. Noteworthy also are miniature paintings of Digambara Jaina manuscripts at Mudabidri. Paintings of gods and demi-gods are found in the Jaina temple of Tirumalai. Beautiful examples of painting exist on the walls of temples at Sravanabelagola in Karnataka.

Jain religion in Pakistan

There are several Jain relics spread across Pakistan.

Professor Noel King, Professor Emeritus of History & Comparative Religion of University of California Santa Cruz had visited Pakistan briefly and has forwarded details of his finds of Jain relics. He had made a detailed visit several years ago also.

The so-called Jaina Stupa at Taxila Valley:

Taxila is one of the most important archeological. It flourished during the 1st to 5th century A.D. when it became famous as a major seat of learning of Buddhism. The Stupa is located near the city of *Sirkap* (severed head) along side many other Buddhist relics.

The Lahore Museum has a fine collection of Jain relics mainly of the material collected from the city of Gujranwala and Darkhana. It is believed that Mr Raghavji Virchand Gandhi, the first person to represent Jainism abroad and who attended the first Parliament of World Religions in 1893 in Chicago was supported by the Jain center from this area.

The following murtis are all on display at the Lahore Museum. It is difficult to identify the symbol (lanchan) on any of the murtis. The inscription underneath a figure is in Urdu. On the road from Rawalpindi to Lahore in the Pothohar area, there are so-called 'Kafir Kots', ruins of old temples. No details of these temples are available but the architecture seems to be Jain. On a near by hill top about 2000 ft high

there is a small lake called *Shiva Tears for Sati*. There are ruins along the hillside up to the top and surrounding the lake. Many of the buildings look like monasteries. There is a Shiva statue in the temple, but Prof King suspects that the statue may have been of a tirthankar and that a Jain temple was converted to a Hindu temple.

Just a few dozen meters from the Shrine of the Double-Headed Eagle sits the Jain Stupa, a relic of the Sirkap city period (2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D.). The shrine is badly ruined. Nothing of the superstructure survives. The persepopolitan columns with lion ornamentation that sit on the four corners were brought here from the ruins of the courtyard.

LIST OF JAIN TEMPLES IN PAKISTAN

Punjab Province

S. No.	TOWN	LOCATION OF TEMPLE	PRESIDING DEITY	REMARKS
1.	LAHORE			
	a) Jain Shwetamber Temple with Shikhar	Thari Bhabrian Lahore City		
	b) Jain Digamber Temple with Shikhar	Thari Bhabrian Lahore City		
	c) Jain Shwetamber Dada Bari (Mini Temple)	Guru Mangat in Lahore Cantt.	Foot Prints in stone	
	d) Jain Digambar Temple with Shikhar	Old Anarkali		
2.	KASUR((District Lahore, distance 50, K.M. from Lahore)			
	Jain Shwetamber Temple with Shikhar	Kot Rukun Din	Lord Rishabh Dev	
3.	GUJRANWALA (Distance 70 K.M. from Lahore)			
	a) Jain Shwetamber Temple with Shikhar	Bazar Bhabrian	Lord Chintamani Parshva Nath	
	b) Jain Shwetamber Ghar Mandir Samadhi of Jain Acharya Atamaramji	Opposite Camping Ground i.e. PARARO, G. T. Road	Lord Vasupujya & Foot Prints of Acharya Atma Ramji	Images & Foot Prints & Wood Work since removed to Lahore Museum.

		Maharaj with a large Dome			
	c)	Jain Shwetamber (Ghar Mandir)	Precincts of S.A. Jain Gurukul (School) G. T. Road, Near Village Kangniawaka		
4.	PAPNAKHA (District Gujranwala, Distance 20 K.M. from Gujranwala)				
		Jain Shwetamber Ghar Mandir	Village Proper	Lord Suvidha Nath	
5.	RAM NAGAR (District Gujranwala, Distance 50 K.M. from Gujranwala)				
		Jain Shwetambar Temple with Shikhar	Gali Bhabrian	Lord Chintamani Parshva Nath	
6.	SIALKOT (Distance 115 K.M. from Lahore)				
	a)	Jain Shwetamber Temple with Shikhar	Near Namak Mandi in City		
	b)	Jain Digamber Temple	Cantonment		
7.	NORWAL (District Sialkot, distance 40 K.M. from Sialkot)				
		Jain Shwetamber Temple with Shikhar			
8.	SANKHATRA (District Sialkot, Distance 50 K.M. from Sialkot)				
		Jain Shwetamber Temple with Shikhar			
9.	JHELM CITY (Distance 160 K.M. from Lahore on G. T. Road)				
		Jain Shwetamber Ghar Mandir	Bagh Mohalla	Lord Chandra Prabhu	
10.	PINID DADAN KHAN (District Jhelum via Lala Moosa, distance 160 K.M.)				
		Jain Shwetamber Tempe	Town Proper	Lords Sumati Nath, Rishabh Dev & Shanti Nath	
11.	BHERA (District Sargodha, via Lala Moosa, distance 150 K.M. from Lahore)				
		Jain Shwetamber Temple	Gali Bhabrian	Lord Chandra Prabhu	About 500 years old
12.	KHANGA DOGRAN (District Sheikhupura, Distance 70 K.M. from Lahore)				

	Jain Shwetamber Temple With Shikhar		Lord Shantinath & Lord Parshva Nath	
13.	MULTAN (Distance 250 K.M. from Lahore enroute to Karachi)			
a)	Jain Shwetamber Tempe with Shikhar	Mohalla Choori Sarai		Images shifted to Mumbai
b)	Jain Shwetamber Dadawari	Jain Bhawan Near Ram Kila Ground Mohalla Choori Sarai	Foot Prints in stone	
c)	Jain Digambar Tempe with Shikhar	Mohalla Choori Sarai		Images shifted to Jaipur
d)	Jain Digambar Tempe with Shikhar	Cantonment		

Sindh Province

S. NO.	TOWN	LOCATION OF TEMPLE	PRESIDING DEITY	REMARKS
1.	KARACHI			
a)	Jain Shwetamber Temple with Shikhar	Ranchod Line	Lord Parshva Nath	
b)	Jain Digambar Temple			
2.	VILLAGE DERAWER (Tehsil Dera Nawab, Bhahawlpur State)			
	Jain Shwetamber Dadawari			Crimination site of Jain Samadhi Dada Guru Jin Kushal Suriji on a sand and an Inn.
3.	HYDERABAD			
	Jain Shwetamber Temple	Town Proper		
4.	NEW HALLA (Mirpur Khas Road)			
a)	Jain Shwetamber Temple	Town Proper		
b)	Jain Dadawari	2 K.M. from	Foot Prints in	

	(Mini Temple)	Halla Town	Stone	
5.	GAURI PARSHVANATH VILLAGE			
	Jain Shwetamber Temple	Village Proper	Lord Gauri Parshvanath	

North West Frontier Province

S.NO.	TOWN	LOCATION OF TEMPLE
1.	DERA GHAZI KHAN	
	Jain Digambar Temple	Block No. 2, Jain Mohalla
2.	KALA BAGH (District Mainwali)	
	Jain Shwetamber Temple	
3.	LATAMBER (District Bannu)	
	Jain Shwetamber Temple	
4.	BANNU	
	Jain Swetamber Temple	Bannu City
5.	RAWAL PINDI (Distance 300 K.M. from Lahore)	
	Jain Shwetamber Temple	

Bhabra Community of Jains

A net report says that Bhabra (or Bhabhra) are an ancient merchant community from Punjab who mainly follow Jainism.

They have had a close historical association with Jainism and are believed to be connected with the Bhavadar or Bhavada Gachchha to which the legendary Jain Acharya Kalakacharya belonged to. They may have originated from the Bhabra town. Inscriptions suggest that Bhavada Gachchha had survived until 17th century.

Jainism has been present in Punjab since ancient times. This is where Alexander the Great encountered Gymnosophists and the Chinese traveler Xuanzang met both Digambara and Swetambara monks.

According to Shatrunjaya Mahatmya of Dhaneshwar Suri, Javad Shah of Taxila had restored Shatrunjaya Tirth and brought an idol of Lord Adinath from Taxila and installed it at Shatrunjaya.

Vaaran Bhai Gurdas (1550-1620A.D) says: There are many traders and many Bhabras and goldsmiths.

In "Romantic Tales from the Punjab" Charles Swynnerton relates a folk tale about several girls. It mentions a girl being a Bhabra, and mentions them being strictly vegetarian. Their Jain perspective on God's uninvolved in world's affairs is mentioned.

In 17th century A.D. Fray Sebastien Manrique met them in Amritsar district. Their presence has also been noted in the Mughal period.

The original home region of the Bhabras is now in Pakistan. While practically all the Bhabras have left Pakistan region, many cities still have sections named after Bhabras, such as Bhabra Bazaars.

- Sialkot: All the Jains here were Bhabra and mainly lived in Sialkot and Pasrur. The Serai Bhabrian and Bhabrian Wala localities are named after them. There were several Jain temples here before partition of India.
- Pasrur: Pasrur was developed by a Jain landlord who was granted land by Raja Maan Singh. Baba Dharam Dass belonged to the landlord family who was murdered on a trading visit.
- Gujranwala: Two old Jain libraries managed by Lala Karam Chand Bhabra were present here which were visited by Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar.
- Lahore: There were Jain temples at localities still called Thari Bhabrian and Gali Bhabrian.
- Rawalpindi: Bhabra Bazar is named after them.

Some also lived in Sindh. A few hundred Bhabras in Pakistan have become Muslim. Some Bhabras in Pakistan now follow Hinduism.

Holidays

- Paryushan Parva, 10/8 (Digambar/Svetambar) day fasts, and for observe, 10/8 important principles.
- Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, Lord Mahavir's birth, it is popularly known as *Mahavir Jayanti* but the term 'jayanti' is inappropriate for a Tirthankar, as this term is used for mortals.
- Kshamavaani, The day for asking everyone's forgiveness.
- Diwali, the nirvana day of Lord Mahavira.



The Jews In Pakistan

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour.
This is the whole Torah: all the rest is commentary
(Hille), Talmud, Shabbat 31a)

8 The Jews in Pakistan

Rashid Ahmad Butt

As I started looking for Jewish people I could find just one person, a woman named Rachel living in Karachi. Prophet Yaqoob's (Jacob) wife was also called Rachel. Rachel is actually a Hebrew name, which is translated as Raheel in Arabic. Our Rachel in Karachi is a solitary soul who seems to have gone into oblivion. Few days ago while we were sifting the area to locate her we came upon a shopkeeper in the vicinity of where she lived, on asking about Rachel, this man became obnoxious to the point that we had to retreat. Rachel is said to be a frail woman, of about 89 years old. She considers herself to be the only custodian of Karachi's two Jewish graveyards in Mewashah. Rachel and her brother Ephraim were offered a free of cost accommodation and also some land for a synagogue by some land developers in lieu of their property. Unfortunately Rachel and her brother accepted the offer. A towering structure with residential flats and shops named "Madiha Market" was constructed on the site. However Rachel and Ephraim did not get the piece of land that they were promised. They had no option but to sue the property developers. She ran from pillar to post to plead her case but in vain. She felt the property developers swindled her and her brother. In 2003 Kunwar Khalid Yunus a political leader from Karachi wrote a letter in Daily Dawn pleading Rachel's case.

Rachel Joseph was a teacher by profession. Her brother Ephraim Joseph Awaskar, died in 1987 at the age of 84. He was the last to be buried at the Jewish cemetery in Mewashah.

People in Ranchore Lines area say that Rachel Joseph is still alive. However they were not ready to give information about her whereabouts.

Ms. Reama Abbasi reported in Daily Dawn, "what will it take to keep Rachel alive? A living monument to our collective denial, she has been deprived of her rights to a

comfortable, safe life in her own country and in all these decades not a single human rights organization has come to her rescue. Is it the fate of an individual faulted for her religion?"

The Faith

Fundamental Principles:

The cardinal principal of Judaism is

*"Hear O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is one." Blessed be His name
who's Glorious Kingdom is for ever and ever."*

It calls men to hear the truth that has been revealed, to take it to heart and to live by it, in order to realize the oneness of God in a relationship that demand of a man that be unify his own being.

Jewish religion is a covenant between Yahweh (God) and the descendants of Prophet Abraham, Who sacrificed his own son to God on His command. From this covenant develops the basis of Judaism. This is where the history of the Jewish people start. God appears in His absolute power and direct personal concern for His people.

As the God is called to realize His covenant, so is man called to fulfill the promise of his being. There is no separation between sacred and profane. Everything that exists contains within it a divine spark waiting to be liberated. Man has the same divine energy within him. All depends on intentions; if you seek God you will find him. God dwells (Divine Shekinah) in the whole of creation. Everything is holy, according to the Torah; everything can be brought in union with God.

The concept of God The Creator and mankind carries with it the brotherhood of man.

God had bestowed Prophet Moses with two tablets on the covenants of obedience to the Lord. These were originally kept at Shiloh, and then placed in the Temple at Jerusalem. At the Temple of Jerusalem only the high Priest can see them on Yom Kippoor (the Day of Atonement). After the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C., the fate of these Sacred Tablets is unknown.

The Wailing Wall was the only part of the Temple that remains in the old city of Jerusalem. The Jewish people believe that the Divine presence never departs from there. It is an important place of pilgrimage.

The scripture

The Torah was conferred on Prophet Moses on Mount Sinai. It contains the Five Books of Law. There are 613 guiding rules in the Torah to regulate the daily life of every Jew and this number is symbolized in the threads of Prayer Shawl (Tsisith) that every male adult wear at prayers as a reminder of the obligations religion imposes upon him.

A Rabbi (the Jew priest) named Hillel once commented, "What is hurtful to yourself do not do that to your fellow-man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary". In other words love and social justice are the bases of ethical behavior and so important are they that in the daily prayer "Shema":

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God. With thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might and these words, which I command thee this day shall be upon thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and shalt talk to them when thou sittest in thy house and when thou walkest by the way and then thou liest down and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand and thy shall be frontlets between thine eyes and thou shalt write them upon the doorsteps and upon thy gates".

Jew religion gives high importance to a good moral life. It believes that salvation is attainable only through good deeds. Simply the observance of rituals cannot be a substitute for salvation. Apart from the prayers or feasts and special occasions there is daily discipline of prayers to be recited. In the morning prayers Jews are reminded to be thankful to the God for the great and wonderful gift of life, , one can achieve peace and contentment by counting the blessings rather than lamenting what one does not possess.

Ten Commandments

The importance of the Ten Commandments according to the Old Testament lies in the moral and ethical order it invests in man's existence.

1. I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage
2. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy
4. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in

them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it

5. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee
6. Thou shalt not murder
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery
8. Thou shalt not steal
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbor's.

(Exodus 20:1-14)

When the Jews speak of their being a chosen people they mean chosen to receive and propagate the divine commandments and not being selected for special privileges. The fifth commandment says Honor thy father and thy mother, the importance of which cannot be overemphasized. Love and respect for parents are the cornerstones for a healthy and happy family and Judaism realized these thousands of years ago by making it a religious precept. In homes where this is strictly adhered to there is no room for the idea of a generation gap.

SACRED WRITINGS

Tanak

Torah is known in Hebrew as Tanak the name is derived from the first letters of the three portions into which it is divided.

Torah (Law or Guide)

Nay-Bee-Eem (Prophets)

Key-Tu-veem (Writings-psalms or Hymns, Proverbs etc)

The complete Torah is recited over a period of one year in progressive sections (Sidras) on every Sabbath.(Saturday), on festivals, on every Monday and Thursday in the Synagogues morning services when a quorum (Minyan) of 10 men which include boys of 13 and above, is present. In most Synagogues the prayers are recited in Hebrew and this has ensured a link with their ancient roots. The Rabbis are the qualified teachers and guides but any member of the congregation who has the ability,

knowledge and experience can conduct the religious services. The descendants of the ancient priests (cohanim) usually lead the prayers and perform special rituals.

Psalms

The Psalms are a set of 150 devotional hymns that constitute the foundation of Jewish services throughout the world. They are a source of strength to those who are in trouble, of courage to those who are depressed and of faith to those in doubt.

Proverbs

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’. Fear is not to be interpreted as cowardly behavior but as reverence for the Almighty. The evil qualities and inclinations of mere mortals must be curbed and subdued by a real fear of wrongdoing, without which crimes would be rampant. The philosophy of an eye for eye and a tooth for tooth was never intended to incite revenge but rather to emphasize that there must be apt punishment and retribution for harm done to another. At a time in history it was indeed a leap forward in thinking to ordain that the punishment must never exceed the extent of the sin or error committed.

Talmud

Following the destruction of the Temple, Rabbis who specialized in interpreting the ancient regulations developed the Talmud learning the fundamental code of Jewish civil and religious Law and representing a cultural growth of almost 700 years. It comprises the Mishnah, the 9 oral laws documented around 200 AD and the Gemara (commentaries) recorded during the third to sixth centuries A.D., which are, considered an Encyclopedia of Jewish rules, knowledge and folklore.

13 Articles of the Creed

The 13 principles of the Jewish faith formulated by Rabbi Maimonides (1135-1204 A.D.) are

- Magnified and praised be the living God
- He is One
- He has neither bodily form nor substance
- His existence has no beginning
- He is the Lord of the Universe
- He gave His gifts to His prophets
- Moses was His special Prophet

- He gave us all the Law of Torah
- God's Law is unchangeable
- He knows our secret thoughts
- He is kind to those who love Him but punishes evil
- He will give us salvation in the end
- He will revive the dead

WORSHIP AND PLACES OF WORSHIP

The synagogue

The synagogue is a place of worship, declared so by a religious ceremony before the initial use. It is generally a simple and austere building. It does not have any figurines or statues. The place is often a center for Jewish social and educational activities. It houses the Sefer Torahs (Torah Scrolls) other sacred books and religious artifacts.

The Synagogue originated after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C. and the Second Temple in 70 A.D. when the Jews replaced the Temple rituals and sacrifices by prayer offerings and services.

In Orthodox Synagogues the participants in the prayers are segregated. The men get a better place to sit. This is not out of disrespect for woman since women enjoy a place of honor in the Jewish household but because although historically while the Jewish mother is the queen of the home where many of the personal religious ceremonies are performed the man has to perform the public functions at the Synagogues.

Prayers

Prayers play a very important role in Judaism. They constitute a communal approach to God through meditation, pleas, requests, confessions, praise and thanksgiving, whereby communication can be established between human beings and the Creator. After the destruction of the Temple and scattering of Jews, the Temple rituals were replaced by devotional prayers in the Synagogues in the spirit of sublime teachings of the Prophets. The Rabbis in the course of time formulated there daily religious services, morning, afternoon and evenings. At times even amateurs are able to lead a congregation of prayers at the synagogues. The early Morning Prayer includes a sublime utterance of thankfulness to God for the divine gift of life.

Observances

According to Jewish religious observances, rituals alone are of no value whatsoever when they do not lead to right conduct and moral behavior. Whatever you say has to be translated into practice. Gratitude to the Supreme Creator has to be felt and expressed at every moment. Thus a prayer of thankfulness has to be uttered every morning for the gift of life. Blessings are recited on the occurrence rain, thunder and Lightning. Thanks must be tendered for the pleasures and sustenance derived from the ability to see and experience beautiful sights, pleasant odors, and good news. Even wearing new clothes or just the ability to wake up in the morning should be counted as Gods blessings and thanked for. The divine ties between man and God are emphasized at milestone of a Jew's journey from the cradle to the grave.

The Jew is enjoined to die with recitation of the Shema--the fundamental article of faith in the unity and goodness of God. After bathing the body and before it is sent to the cemetery, hymns and prayers are recited. Prayers are also recited at the cemetery before the body draped in a white cotton cloth is lowered in the grave with the head facing in the direction Jerusalem. In case of a male his Tallith (prayer shawl) is buried with him. In accordance with the injunction in the Torah, "For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return, the body is interred without any coffin or if there is a coffin, the lid is removed so that the dust with which the grave is filled touches the body.

According to Hasidism the Jewish mystical movement people pray before God. But this is not so, for prayer itself is the essence of Divinity".

In modern times, world Jewry has evolved into three broad groups namely Orthodox, Conservative and Reformist.

1. The Orthodox tenaciously clings to all the ancient traditions of worship.
2. The Reformists adopted the Philosophy of changing with the times. Religious services and rituals were considerably shortened in length and time. The use of Hebrew in the Synagogues was replaced by other mediums of expression. Many interpretations of the Torah were liberalized. In some Reformist Synagogues women were given the status of a Rabbi.
3. The conservative Jews follow a middle path and retain many of the main features of orthodoxy but permit relaxations in certain cases. For example, the Conservatives and Reform groups argue that with changing times women have to be given equal status in the meetings of the congregations by being counted in the Miniyam i.e. the quorum of ten adults in the Synagogue for certain ceremonies and prayers.

Among Sepheradi Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin and Ashkenazi who are descendants of Russians there is no such division and they adhere to one standard form of religion

Kabala and Jewish Mysticism

The word Kabala originally meant 'reception' and related to the oral Jewish traditions handed down by Rabbis from generation to generation. It is a deep-rooted belief in a perpetual inter-relationship between God the infinite power and man. In the physical world man can get close to God by complete submission to Him. The spiritual regeneration of mankind can be achieved through prayers, meditation and interpretation of the Divine mysteries hidden in Torah. Kabalists emphasize the importance of mystical formulae in the prayers and hymns.

Pilgrimage

The Wailing Wall or the Western Wall in the old city of Jerusalem is a sacred place of prayer and pilgrimage for the Jews. According to belief, the Divine Presence never departed from this Sacred Place. It is all that remains of the Second Temple built in the 2nd century B.C. and destroyed in 70 A.D.

The Jews – The Origin

Hebrew is the name of a race of people as well as a Language. Its origin and meaning are uncertain. The word Habriu appears in documents of 14th century B.C., describing certain people perhaps semi-nomads who inhabited the northern fringes of the Arabian Desert. Shem's grandson Ebor might be the eponym of the Hebrews.

The early Hebrew was a nomad and tradition tells of the migration of Prophet Abraham from Mesopotamia into Canaan, and area later called Palestine on the Borders of Egypt.

History

Judaism evolved over many centuries before to understand the religion a study and understanding of the Jewish history is important.

Prophet Abraham is one of the earliest prophets of Judaism.. He was born in Urs of the Chaldees (Babylonia-today's Iraq) approximately 4000 years ago. His father was an idol maker and Prophet Abraham spent the earlier part of his life within a community who worshiped the moon. In response to a strong inner voice he decided to leave Babylonia. He was told by the inner voice that God himself will show him where to go. He eventually ended in Canaan, which is present day Palestine.

Prophet Abraham propagated the idea of one God. The God who is invisible God, He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, prophet Abraham demanded absolute obedience of God's will for the benefit of mankind. In the first chapter of the Old Testament, it says God created the man out of the dust of the earth; and he became a

living soul only when God breathed His spirit into that form, implying in other words that it is the divine breath that activated humanity.

Prophet Abraham's grandson Prophet Jacob's other name was Israel, meaning "striver with God" or "slave of God". He had 12 sons from who descended twelve tribes of Bene Israel.

The Bible and later the Quran tell how Prophet Jacob's (or Yaqoob's) sons sold their brother Joseph (or Yusuf) into slavery in Egypt. When famine broke out in Canaan, Joseph who had found favors in Egypt received his father and brothers there. For many years Joseph's brothers lived in Egypt and prospered. However later on they were taken as slaves.

In 13th BC Prophet Moses came as a saviour of these twelve tribes. They escaped slavery and went away with him.

Prophet Moses had a vision from God to save the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt and bring them back to Canaan. The captives escaped across the northern end of the red sea into the desert and went to Mount Sinai or Horeb. Prophet Moses received a revelation from God at Mount Sinai. Revelation was the Ten Commandments or Decalogue, inscribed on stone. It was later kept in an Ark, or chest as Torah "Five Books". Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament is attributed to Prophet Moses and comprises the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. From these books it is evident that although they were a nomadic community too but there was already a settled agriculture community present in those times.

Prophet Moses followed by Joshua had a series of judges and warriors, who eventually invaded and occupied Canaan, the Promised Land. The Prophet Saul (Talut) was anointed as first king of Bene Israel. He was successful in defeating Amalekites.

Prophet David (Daud)---Israel's Greatest King

Prophet David (Daud) succeeded Saul. He is regarded as an ideal, second to Prophet Moses. He was very successful in uniting the tribes. He was an able administrator, as well as a poet. Many Psalms are attributed to him. The God revealed the "Book of Psalms" on him.

Prophet David defeated the Canaan tribes in 1000 B.C. He made Jerusalem his capital. The Ark Covenant which so far with the twelve wandering tribes in the desert was finally brought to Jerusalem.

Prophet Solomon inherited the kingdom; he built the Temple for the Ark in Jerusalem.

However after Prophet Solomon's death the kingdom was divided. Rehoboam Solomon's son was able to hold only the Southern country around Jerusalem, in a

kingdom that came to be known as Judah and Israel in the North. In 700 B.C. Jeroboam I, an Ephraimite, broke away with ten tribes from the northern Kingdom of Israel. The following centuries saw the rivalries of Judah and Israel and the destruction of Israel by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. The small kingdom of Judah survived in a state of semi-independence for more than a century. Finally it fell in 586 B.C. The leaders were taken as prisoners to Babylon. This period is known as the Babylonian captivity in history. The Temple was destroyed but was re-built in 576 B.C. when the Persian King Cyrus the Great conquered Palestine. Cyrus as a good will gesture allowed the Jews to return to the holy land and re-build the Temple. The northern tribes of Israel had been scattered and lost they are referred as the ten lost tribes.

The Hebrew Prophets and Monotheism

The Prophets were inspired men who were often critical of the official religion. One of the first Prophet Samuel was a priest, seer and kingmaker. He chooses Saul to be the first king of Israel and also selected David as Saul's successor. Elijah and his servant and a follower Elisha both denounced the Prophets of Baal and were thus hounded by the rulers.

They were followed by a number of Prophets between the eighth and sixth centuries B.C., whose messages were writhen down. Amos and Hosea preached in Israel whereas Micah and Isaiah preached in Judah. These men declared the unity of God and His demands of just behavior from the people understood as ethical monotheism. During the reign of king Josiah, the Book of Law (probably the Biblical Deuteronomy) was found (621 B.C.) Their exhortation to put down small shrines and concentrate worship at Jerusalem was promulgated by Josiah and other religious reforms were instituted. Jeremiah preached in Jerusalem before its fall in 586 B.C. and then went to Egypt, while Ezikel went to Babylon. Ezekil denounced heathenism and planned the rebuilding of the Temple, where as Jeremiah taught a more inner religion of a new Covenant with God.

In the 2nd century B.C. Jerusalem was conquered by the Syrian emperor who desecrated the Temple. The Macabees revolted and recaptured Jerusalem and the Temple in 164 B.C. According to tradition they found only one cruse of the sacred oil used to light the Temple's eternal lamp and though this was sufficient only for one day, it miraculously lasted for eight. The event is commemorated every year in the Festival of "Hannukah" (Dedication). Another historical event in the Book of Esthe, describes how the Jews of the Persian Empire, which extended from Ethiopia to India, were providentially delivered from massacre at the hands of Haman the villainous and crafty viceroy of the Persian King Ahashverosh (486-465 B.C.). The deliverance and triumph of good over evil is celebrated every year during the feast of Purim. It is called Purim because the date to kill the people was set by throwing a dice (purim).

The Macabees set up a new Jewish state in 142 B.C., which lasted until 63 B.C., when the Romans under Pompey conquered Palestine. The Jews revolted in 66 A.D. and the Romans destroyed the Temple in the year 70 A.D. The Jews were dispersed all over the world and remained politically in exile till their return in 1948 to the newly formed State of Israel after nearly 2000 years. However some Jews continued to live in Palestine throughout the ages.

Jewish people in Pakistan

The search for the 10 lost tribes of Bene Israel continues. As there is no record where exactly they went or what happened to them. They are simply known as the lost tribes of Israel. If we browse through history of the last 25 centuries or more, we find existence of Jews in Iran, Afghanistan, Russia and the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent. Iran got its first Jews almost 2500 years ago during the reign of Persian King Ahashverosh (486-465 B.C.), Afghanistan the Subcontinent and even Russia had a Jewish population for more than two thousand years.

Perhaps they could be decendants of Bene Israel's who entered Iran during 5th century B.C., or of the 10 Lost Tribes of Bene Israel after the northern Kingdom of Israel was invaded by the Assyrians in around 721 B.C. or of the main body of Jews that dispersed around the world after 70 A.D.

There are speculations, that some of the Jews or Bene Israel settled in a remote area of Kashmir refers to themselves as the Bene Israel.

1. Bene Israel or Jews

Jews in the Sub-Continent could be the descendents of the survivors of a group of merchants who were shipwrecked off the coast of Bombay, near the village of Navgaon, about 2300 years ago. There is evidence in the Bible to show that there was some trade between India and Jewish Kingdom of Palestine in ancient times especially during the reign of King Solomon. The local people received the survivors of the ship wreck well with great hospitability. The Jews settled down in the surrounding villages and took up the profession of oil pressing. Because they did not work on Saturdays they were nick-named "Shaniwar telis" or "Saturday oil pressers. They maintained their religious practices, like the observance of the Sabbath, the food restrictions and other religious obligations. The continued presence of Jews in the Sub-Continent is an indication of the complete lack of anti-Semitism in the local culture.

However, being cut off from the mainstream of Judaism, they eventually lost contact with the Hebrew language and teachings till some centuries ago when there was a religious revival inspired by one David Rahabi, who in his travels through India came to the conclusion that a sect of people observing so many rules and laws prescribed in the Torah and reciting the *Shema* on every occasion could not be any

other than a remnant of the Jews who fled from Palestine at the time of the destruction of the second temple in 70 C.E. or even when the first temple was destroyed in 586 B.C., with the revival came a relearning of the ancient Hebrew language the translation of the prayers into Marathi (the local language in Maharashtra where most of them were settled) and the building of synagogues in a number of places where there was a concentration of these people. *The oldest existing synagogue was built in 1797 in Bombay.*

The Bene-Israels adopted as the family names the local practice of adding the word *KAR* (meaning belonging to) to the name of the village where they settled, so the a family settled in the village of *PEN* came to be known as *PENKAR*. The first names, however were chosen from the Holy Book.

While the Bene Israels adopted the language and some of the social customs of the local Maharashtrians, they preserved their religious beliefs and customs without any hindrance from the authorities or the people in whose midst they lived. By the end of the first quarter of the 20th century, scores of synagogues were established in Bombay, surrounding villages in Raigad District (formerly Konkan District) and other towns, including Pune, Ahmedabad New Delhi, Karachi and even Peshawar.

In course of time members of the community took service in the army and defense forces, railways, post & telegraph, as well as in professions like teaching, nursing, medicine and where they worked with dedication. In more recent years, some members of the community rose to highly responsible posts in the Government and also in private firms. Over the years while many moved to other countries by choice, in recent times the emigration has been reduced to a trickle, so that there is every hope that this unique community may not entirely disappear from the Sub-Continent. At present most of the Jews are in Bombay.

There are few hundred Jews in Manipur, and Mizoram who claim that they are descendants of the tribe of *Mennaseh* and recently the Government of Israel has also recognized them as one of the *lost tribes*.

Jews have lived with honour and respect in a land well known for the traditions of tolerance and hospitality, Indian Jewry now numbers not more than 4,700 in the whole country (Mumbai and suburb areas and District Raigad 4000 Jews, Pune 250 Jews, Ahmedabad 250 Jews, Cochin 25 Jews, Delhi 40 Jews, Calcutta 25 Jews and other parts of India 110 Jews) as against about 30,000 in the early forties, most of them having voluntarily emigrated to other countries -- to Israel, the USA and the Commonwealth countries. Indian Jews fall into three main categories – Bene Israel, Cochins and Baghdadi Jews, all following the Sepharadi form of worship and ritual.

2. Baghdadi Jews

The Baghdadi Jews came to India as businessmen during the 19th century from Iraq and other countries of the Middle East, settling in cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Poona. They are quite recent entrants; some of them like the Sassoon are prosperous and contributed generously to philanthropic and developmental projects like the Sassoon Docks, hospitals, Synagogues, libraries and schools. The Baghdadi Jews numbered about 5000 in 1951 but most of them immigrated to other Commonwealth countries and now there are about 70 Baghdadi Jews in India.

3. Cochini Jews

The Cochini Jews or the Jews settled in Cochin, originally came to India from Palestine and later from Spain about 18 centuries ago, according to tradition, and settled in Cranganore and other parts of the Malabar Coast, from where they moved to Cochin in the fifteenth century A.D. They were welcomed warmly by the local Indian rulers and people. While adhering strictly to the Jewish religious tenets, socially they became integrated into Indian culture and, as time went by, spoke Malayalam. They built a beautiful synagogue in Cochin in 1568, known as the *Paradesi Synagogue* which is still there today. It is a unique tourist attraction. Economically they fared well but after 1947 most of them migrated to Israel, their number has reduced from 3000 in 1947 to less than 50 today. Who knows how long the community will survive in Cochin but the magnificent relic of the *Paradesi synagogue* and *Jew street* will always serve to remind the world their happy stay in India for many centuries.

JEWS IN PAKISTAN

History

History of the Jews in Pakistan is old; their presence was recorded in Sindh, Punjab, North Western Frontier Province and in Baluchistan. Jews came to areas that comprise Pakistan in 19th century A.D from Maharashtar. After 1947 most of the Pakistani Jews lived in Karachi while some of them were present in Peshawar too. They were divided into two groups the Baghdadi Jews and Bukharan Jews. There were some Bene Israel also.

At the time of independence, the population of the Pakistani Jews was about 7000. They had one Synagogue in Karachi and probably they had some place of worship in Peshawar too. There were three graveyards in Karachi and one in Peshawar. There were also two Freemason Lodges, one in Lahore and the other in Karachi.

Although a lot of them migrated at the time Israel was formed in 1948, some stayed behind. The Jews or Bene Israel were present especially in the North Western Frontier regions of Pakistan since ancient times. After the destruction of First and the

Second Temple, they migrated to Iran and subsequently some of them came to the subcontinent. It is very interesting to note that the Afghans or Pashtuns also claim their origin as descendants of the lost tribes of Bene Israel. They say that they are the descendants of Afghan, the grandson of King Saul of Bene Israel who was the son of Prophet Irmia or Jeremiah. Naimatullah Harawi in his book "Makhzan-i-Afghani" and Hamdullah Mustaufi in his book "Tarikh-i-Guzida" has dwelt on the subject. "Makhzan-i-Afghani" the history book was compiled for Khan-e-Jehan Lodhi in the reign of Mughal Emperor Jahangir in 16th century A.D. Some sources state that the "Makhzan-i-Afghani" from an oral tradition may be a myth which grew out of a political and cultural struggle between Pashtuns/Afghans and Mughals.

The Afghans/Pashtuns are divided into various tribes such as shinwaris, Mohmands, Afridis, Khattaks, Orakzais, Banuchis, Waziris, Achakzais, Bangash, Yusufzais (sons of Yusuf or Joseph). Some of them still trace their origin to the Jewish tribes. If we scan through the history of Jews settling in the areas such as Azarbijan, Armenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Karghezia, Kashgheria (Kashghar) and Kaifeng areas of China, Emerate (or the part) of Bukhara and other regions of Central Asia, Turkestan (Chinese and Russian) Caucasus and beyond i.e. Caspian Sea they also trace their origin to Persia (Iran) and Mesopotamia, the lands of fertile Crescent, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and even from Greece. They must have traversed the long and tortuous highland, mountain routes to the lands of their settlement. They also must be having staging points and some of them getting settled their leaving others to proceed on ward. It is worth mentioning that the name Afghanistan for the designated geographic entities was first used or declared around 16th century A.D. Before that these territories were generally named after the rulers, domains, kingdoms or tribes up to 14th century A.D.

There is another notable factor that the Jews/Judah or Bene Israel's exodus or exile was not at one particular time only spanned over a period of 700 years starting from 721 B.C. to 70 A.D. The exodus occurred in at least five major waves. And if we take into account the fleeing from Egypt led by the Prophet Moses, to escape Pharaoh's tyranny, it comes to six (6) In that episode on disobeying to God's behest, they were punished to wander for more than 40 years in the desert before reaching the "Promised Land". As the exodus or scattering led the Jews to different lands, some segments of their caravans must have found settlements in the rough and rugged terrains of this land of rising mountains and arduous passes. Almost in the same period i.e. 4th century B.C. onward Alexander the Great trampled the area. These lands were called Bactaria, Gandhara and so on. The geographical entity named "Afghanistan" or the "Land of Afghans," is relatively a recent phenomenon. It was mentioned by the Mughal Emperor Zaheer uddin Babur in his memoirs "Tuzuk-e-Babari" during the 16th century A.D. Referring to the territories south of Kabul that were inhabited by Pashtuns (called "Afghans" by Babur).

Apart from the claim of the origin of Afghans as the tradition stated earlier, there are many other claims supported by the modern researchers and archaeologists like Arrian, J.W. Mc Crindle, S. Martin, J.C. Vidyarnar, Dr. M.R. Singh, S. Kirpal Singh Dr. R.C. Majumdar, Dr. V.D. Mahajan and so on. They referred and propounded the theories/traditions put forward by scholars of the bygone, such as Panini. In Sanskrit word "Ashva" in Iranian "Aspa", in Prakrit "Assa" means "horse" and "Ashvaka" (in Prakrit "Assaka") means "horse man". The people of eastern Afghanistan were referred as "Ashvakas" meaning the "horse men". Since they raised a fine breed of horses and had a reputation for providing expert cavalymen. The 5th century B.C. Indian grammarian Panini calls them "Ashva kayana" and "Ashvayana" (Reference: Excavations of the necropolises found in Western Pakistan and the tombs of the Asvakayana-Assakenoi). Classical writers use the respective equivalents "Aspasios" or "Aspasi, Hippasii" and "Assakennois" or "Assaceni Assacani" etc. meaning the cavalymen stated to be another name for the Kambojas of ancient texts because of their equestrian characteristics. In foregone Pali texts the Kamboja land is described as the "land of horses". In early 7th century A.D., Xuan zhang (Hieun Tsang) the great Chinese traveler also named the area as "Kaefu" (Kambu). He traveled from China through Samarkand, "Afghanistan, and Kashmir to India in search of Bhuddist Scriptures. Arrian the author of "Alaxandras invasion of India" writes that the name "Afghan" evidently derives from the "Ashavakam" meaning the cavalymen.

The great Chinese traveler Xuan Zhang (Hieun Tsang) while heading towards India during 630s A.D., passed through at least three lesser or greater kingdoms i.e. Bamyān, Inado-Scythian kingdom of Kinishka and Kepasi where he writes people used to raise a fine breed of horses.

Even much before that Greek historian Herodotus and several other Greek and Roman historians mention a people called "Paktye", living on the eastern frontier of Iran. By the word "Paktye" they meant the people of the frontier. As it is mentioned earlier, the Afghans or Pathans or Pashtuns are one and the same people divided into different tribes. They are said to be the largest conglomeration of tribal people in the world.

According to Raverty, the term Afghan, Pakhtun or Pashtun is derived from the Persian word "Pusht" meaning "back". Since the tribes lived on the back of the mountains Iranians called them Pashtun which is also pronounced Pakhtun. In Indian languages it was spelt as Pakhtana or Pathan. In Encyclopedia of Islam, it is expressed that the word Pathan is from the Sanskrit word Pratisthana. Muslim historians from Al-Biruni onwards, called them Afghans. As for Afghanistan, until the 19th century the name was only used for the traditional lands of the Pashtuns, while the kingdom as a whole was known the Kingdom of Kabul writes a British historian Mount Stuart Elphinstone. Frederick Engel wrote in 1857 that "Afghanistan is an extensive country of Asia. It lies between Persia and the Indies, and in the other direction between the

Hindu Kush and the Indian Ocean. It formerly included the Persian provinces of Khorasan and Kohistan, together with Heart, Beluchistan, Cashmere and Sinde and a considerable part of the Punjab." It is quoted by Nancy Hatch Dupree in the book "An Historical Guide to Afghanistan."

Dr. H.W. Bellows in his book "An Enquiry into the Ethnography of Afghanistan". Asserts that the name "Afghan" derives from the latin term "Alban" "At bean" used by Armenians as "Alvan" which refers to mountaineers and in the case of transliterated Armenian characters would be pronounced as "Aghvan". To the Persians, it would further be altered to "Afghan" as a reference to the highlanders or "mountaineers" of the eastern Iranian plateau.

There are also a few researchers who link "Afghan" to an Uzbek word "Avagan" said to mean "Original". Still another Persian interpretation, the word "Afghan" means it "wailing" which the Persians have used contemptuously for their "always complaining" eastern neighbours. Literally "Fughan" in Persian language means wailing or complaining or weeping.

As for the characteristic of Afghan or Pashtuns being complaining and wailing is concerned the world renowned Persian poet sheikh Saadi in late 12th century A.D. during his sojourns or travels from Persia (Iran) to Kashmir via the land of Afghans or Pashtuns, was compelled to grieve, placing the Afghans on top of the list, saying as: "Beware of first the Afghans, second the Kambohs and third the wretched Kasmiris."

Pashtuns or Afghans are said to arrive in Peshawar areas by 7th century A.D. The Afghans, Pashtuns or Pakhtuns are one and the same People is further supported by traditional Pashto literature. For example, 17th century famous Pashto poet Khushal Khan Khattak says, "Pull out your sword and slay anyone, that says Pashtuns and Afghans are not one! Arab know this and so do Romans: Afghans are Pashtuns. Pashtuns are Afghans!"

The detailed narration about the origin of Afghans, Pashtuns or Pakhtuns or Pathans was required here because:

Between South Asia Central Asia and the Iranian Plateau of Siestan lies a triangular shaped territory studded by bare and barren mountains covering an area of approximately 250,000 square miles. Starting from Dir in the north, this triangle runs along the Indus, takes a westward turn a few miles south of Dera Ismail Khan, and embracing within its fold Loralai, Sharigh, Degari, Harnai, Quetta, Pishin, Chaman and Qandhar extends up to Herat. From here it curves North-East and following the foothills of Hindu Kush comes back to Dir.

This region includes the major portion of North-Western Frontier Province of Pakistan, a part of Quetta Division of Baluchistan and three forth of Afghanistan. It is also worth mentioning that British India government created the North Western

Frontier Province in 1901, putting together the part of Afghan territory and parts of Sub-Continent's frontier regions for which a 1610 miles border line called "Durand Line" was demarcated in 1893. It was named after Sir Mortimer Durand, the Foreign Secretary of British India. In this triangular shaped hilly area, divided between Afghanistan and Pakistan, lives the world's largest group of tribesmen called Afghans, Pashtuns, Pakhtuns, Pashtuns or Pathans. They are basically an amalgamation or assimilation of various nomadic tribes or nations since antiquity and the name Pashtun, Pakhtuns or Afghan came into existence.

There are remnants of buildings and walls, mountains inscriptions as well as oral traditions that tell of the presence of Jews in this territory since the antiquity. "Tareekh-e-Sher Shahi states that Bakht Nasr (Nebuchadnezzar. 600 B.C.) Who invaded Jerusalem, expelled Jewish tribes from their homeland, one of the tribes traveled a long way and settled in the Hari Rud area of present day South Afghanistan. The western scholars are of the view that there might have been some settlements in the area in 800 B.C. or so. Similarly some Aryans might be present in the inaccessible mountains and that there were some Greek and Iranian colonies there. From the 1st. century B.C. to 5th century A.D. during a span of 600 years, this area witnessed three influxes from Central Asia of gigantic magnitude - those of Sakas, Kushans, Huns and Gujjars---that overwhelmed the local culture and people. This created a massive multi- racial interaction and none of the ethnic groups could retain their pure ethnic identity. Similarly religious beliefs changed with times and environment. However it is very possible that some people retained their religion. Thus the Jews who migrated to Israel in 1948 from the sub continent could be one of the earlier Jews who had come when the tribes migrated.

A former President of Israel Itzhak Ben Zvi in his book "The Exiled and the Redeemed" published in 1975, writes that Jew migrations into Afghanistan began in 719 B.C., from Persia. A Pashtun writer Bakhtawar Khan in his book of universal history "Mirat-ul-Alam" (The Mirror of the World) gives vivid account of journeys of the Afghans from Palestine to Ghor, Ghazni and Kabul. Similarly two historical works on this subject are "Tarikh-e-Afghan" (History of Afghans) by Naimatullah which was translated by Barnard Dorn in 1829 and "Tarikh-e- Hafiz Rahmat Khani by Hafiz Muhammad Sadeek in 1770. These books deal with the early history of Afghans, and their origin, they particularly discuss the Yusuf zais (Sons of Joseph) and their occupation of Kabul, Bajaur, Swat and Peshawar. Bajaur, Swat and Peshwar are now part of Pakistan.

George Moore published his work "The Lost Tribes" in 1861. He charts the route of the Israelites from Medes to Afghanistan and India marked by a series of intermediate stages bearing the names of several of the tribes and clearly indicating the stations of their long and arduous journey. Sir William Jones, Sir John Malcolm, Sir George McMinn "(Afghanistan from Darius to Amanullah.)" Col. G.B. Malison ("The History of Afghanistan from the earliest Period to the Outbreak of the War of 1878.") George Bell ("Tribes of Afghanistan") Sir Henry Yule (Article on Afghanistan in

Encyclopedia Britannica”) independent of each other come to the conclusion that the Jews of ten tribes migrated to India, Tibet and cashemire (Kashmir) through Afghanistan.

The Afghan Tribes retain their traditions which clearly show that they are the descendant of the lost tribes of Israel. A number of explorers, Jewish or non-Jewish, who visited this area from time to time have referred to this tradition which was also discussed in several Encyclopedias in European languages. The nations normally keep alive memories passed by word of mouth from generation to generation and much of their history is based not on written record but on verbal tradition.

“This was particularly so in case of tribes, communities or Nations. For example, the people of Arabian Peninsula, derived all their knowledge from pagan cults which they abandoned in favor of Islam, so did the people of Persia or Iran, formerly worshipers of Zoroaster. The Turkish and Mongol tribes were both Buddhists shamanists and the Syrians were Christians all of them later converted to Islam. Therefore, if the Afghan or Pashtun tribes persistently adhere to the tradition that they were once Hebrews or Jews and in course of time embraced Islam, the matter certainly deserve careful and critical examination as Ben zvi states in his book “The exiled and the Redeemed.”

The above cited a bit detailed explanation seemed necessary in view of the arrival and origin of Jews in the areas which now form Pakistan.

1. There is a hill near Kohat in that has ancient Hebrew inscriptions which stand further evidence of the Hebrew/Jewish origin of Pashtuns.
2. H.W. Bellow in his research work “An Enquiry into the Ethnography of Afghanistan” published in 1891, mentions “Killa-i-Yahoodi” (“Fort of the Jews”), as being the name of the eastern boundary of the country, (area now in the Balochistan Province of Pakistan) and also speaks of “Dasht-i-Yahoodi” (“Plain of the Jews”) a place in Mardan.

Karachi

There were about 2500 Jews living in Karachi at the beginning of the 20th century A.D. The Magain Shalome Synagogue was built in 1893 by Shalome Solomon Urnerdekar and his son Gershone Solomon. There is another account that it was built by Solomon David, a Surveyor of Karachi Municipality and his wife Sheeolabai, but it may be the different names for the same people.

The Synagogue, was in Ranchore Lines in Karachi. It soon became the centre of small but vibrant Jewish community. One of its prominent leaders was Abraham Reuben who became a councilor on the City Municipality in 1936. The community had various social organizations including the Young Men’s Jewish Association, founded in 1903. The

Karachi Bene Israel Relief Fund. The Karachi Jewish Syndicate formed in 1918 and the Freemasons Lodge. There were no educational institutions of the Jewish community and their children attended schools run by either Muslims or Christian missionaries. In 1916 there were some Jew students in this school. The Sindh Madressah record shows that there were Jew teachers till 1930s. Saint Patrick's School was started in 1861 by a Roman Catholic clergyman J. Wily as a co-education school for boys and girls. It had admitted some Jew boys. Church Mission High School in 1916 had 6 Jew Students in 1915-16. D.J. (Dayaram Jethmal) Sindh College had 2 Jew students.

The Jew community in the city though small was educated and close-knit. It was a prosperous and active community comprising of teachers, doctors, businessmen, government servants, artisans, poets, philosophers, stage and film actors, dancers etc. Families like Dulseys and Volkarts are few to be remembered.

The Jews were living here for generations. Some census record shows that in 1881 there were 153 Jews in Sindh Province. By 1919 this figure had risen to about 650. In the Gazetteer of the Province of Sindh which first came out in 1907, E.H Aitkin writes: only 428 Jews were enumerated in 1901 and these were nearly all in Karachi. Many of them belong to the Bene Israel community, who are believed to have settled in India after the destruction of Israel by Titus. In British India, religious minorities were generally not discriminated against. In Karachi they were mostly based in the Lawrence Quarters and even had a Kosher Slaughter House.

At one point in time there were 7000 Jews in the areas forming Pakistan. Before 1947, there were about 2500 Jews living in Karachi. They were mostly the Bene Israel observing Sephardic religious rites. Some of the Baghdadi Jews were also present.

The first wave of migration from Pakistan came soon after the establishment of Israel in 1948. Although Quetta, Lahore and Peshawar also had Jew communities, but Karachi's importance as a Jewish centre was such that the All India Israelite League was convened in 1918. After the inception of Pakistan in 1947, the Jews referred to as Pakistani Jews. Initially some 500 Jews left Karachi for Israel and about 2000 reported to have remained in Karachi. The establishment of Israel on May 14, 1948, saw the Karachi Synagogue set on fire. The Jewish population in Karachi dwindled and ultimately vanished. The repercussions of the political situation in the Middle East were felt in Pakistan. The establishment of Israel in 1948, followed by the Arab-Israeli hostilities, triggered many incidents of violence against Jews. The Karachi Synagogue was set on fire and the Jewish institutions became targets of anti Israel feelings. The Jewish community felt threatened and most of them migrated mostly to Israel but some also to India, United States, Britain and Australia. An estimated number of 200 Jews reportedly remained in Karachi, because of safety concerns; many went underground, sometimes passing themselves off as Parses.

The Jews from Iran also used Pakistan as a transit point to migrate.

Lately and quite surprisingly, in September 2005 the "Jerusalem Post" published a feature "Surprise! There are still Jews in Pakistan". It was a narration by supposedly some Isaac Moosa Akhir a Pakistani "Jew", surfacing in Karachi in more than three decades. He introduced himself as: "I am a doctor at a local hospital in Karachi, Pakistan. My family background is Sephardic Jew and I know approximately 10 Jewish families who have lived in Karachi for 200 years or so. Just last week was the Bar Mitzvah of my son Dowood Akhir". The story runs through email. But the newspaper did not mention any email address.

Dr. Adil Najam a teacher of international Negotiation and Diplomacy at Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, USA, took up the thread of the story and posed a big question mark: Where have Pakistani Jews gone? Initially he was doubtful whether the narrator was in fact who he claimed to be or an over-zealous Pakistani trying to make a point. In this context Mr. Moosa Akhir (if there is such a person) said, "I must convey to the Israeli people that Pakistani society is, in general, very generous and my family have never had any problem here. We live in full freedom and enjoy excellent friendships with many people here in Karachi."

According to Dr. Adil Najam the "Jerusalem Post" had Mr. Akhir's email address (which it did not print) and it seems the newspaper wrote back to him and he added some thoughts. The newspaper reported that Mr. Akhir wrote about holding prayer services in his home for the Jews of Karachi, and that, "although he and his fellow Jews there could practice their religion openly if they wished so "they have chosen to live a life of anonymity. Mr. Akhir is quoted as saying: "We prefer our own small world and since we are happy and content, we never felt there was a need to express ourselves--- we don't want to let anyone make political use of us. We enjoy living in this simplicity and anonymity". He goes on to say that he has no desire to leave Pakistan but would like to visit Israel.

The "Jerusalem Post" expressed its doubts regarding the authenticity of the emailed message. Still it published the report. More than three years have passed since this revelation. Some more Jews out of the original 200 or more who had decided to stay in Pakistan whatever the odds may be, should have surfaced. And in a period of more than three decades, their number must have risen!

Dr Adil Najam had also raised the question of remaining members of the Jewish community in Pakistan. His article was published in a Pakistani Newspaper "Daily Times" on 16.09.2005, a week or so after the feature printed by the "Jerusalem Post". The remaining Jews were in no way the persona non grata. They were the sons of the soil. This scenario poses a very important and interesting question: where are the Pakistani Jews?

Dr. Adil Najam narrates a personal incident when he ran into a Pakistani Jew woman, now living in Massachusetts. USA. She told that her father was a community

and Synagogue leader of the Karachi Jews. She herself had grown up in Karachi and studied at St. Joseph's Girls School. Her family had moved to Israel during Ayub Khan's government in Pakistan.

Mr. Irfan Hussain wrote in Daily Dawn, Karachi during 2003: Karachi had a small Jewish community until the Fifties and I remember having a couple of local Jewish kids with me in school. Now for the average Pakistani (and indeed Muslim), a Jew is a caricature figure to be hated and reviled, regardless whether he supports Israel or not. And it is important to remember that many of them firmly oppose the extremists policies followed by Sharon and his likes, as do many Israelites.

The Karachi Synagogue

The Karachi Synagogue, though extinct now, had a history. The Magain Shalome Synagogue was built in 1893 by Shalom Solomon Umerdekar and his son Gershone Solomon in Ranchore Lines at the corner of Jamila Street and Nishter (Lawrence) Road area of Karachi. There is another account that it was built by Solomon David a surveyor of Karachi Municipality and his wife Sheeolabai. The Synagogue soon became the centre of small Jewish community. One of its leaders Abraham Reuben became a Councilor on the City Municipality in 1936. As after the inception of Pakistan in 1947 and the incidents of discrimination against them in the following years vast majority of the Pakistani Jews migrated. The Synagogue was closed. The wars of 1956 and 1967 made life more intolerable for Jews in Pakistan. During Ayub Khan's regime a large number of Jews migrated. Now it is reported that many of Pakistani Jews live in Ramallah, Israel and have built a Synagogue named after the Karachi Synagogue.

The burnt Magain Shalome Synagogue in Karachi stood there for years, until it was demolished in July, 1988 by order of President Ziaul Haq to make way for a Shopping Plaza.

Karachi Jewish Cemeteries

There are 2 to 3 Jewish cemeteries in Karachi. It is quite interesting that the only living Jew Rachel Joseph is perhaps the last openly Jewish member of an extinguishing community. Rachel could be called the custodian of the Jewish graveyards.

Quite a few people have quite a bit of information on the main Jewish cemetery in Mewashah graveyard in Rexer Lines. Rachel Joseph (if she is still alive!) wants it to stay on as a heritage site and perhaps a symbol of empathy for her community. Reema Abbasi writes in Dawn: "Buried under decades of neglect and untamed vegetation, the Bene Israel graveyard is fiercely guarded by Baloch squatters and indeed a testimony to the city's conflict with its past to this day, it witnesses the visitors who dare not

disclose their identity. They come as either Parsis or Memons to remember a loved one”.

The earliest graves here are from 1812. That means the graveyard is at least 200 years old. The last one to come here for burial in 1987 at the age of 84, was Rachel Joseph's brother Ifraheem Joseph Awaskar. Rachel often visits his and Yashua's graves. In this 200 years old cemetery most of the graves are from 1950s.

Although many graves have disappeared and wild shrubbery makes it impossible to walk the expanse, some splendid and dignified tombs with lyrical epitaphs have survived. A white marble grave is particularly striking. A book made of marble forms its headstone with a prayer engraved on it in English and Hebrew. Another one is held by small Corinthian (Greek) pillars in yellow stone with engravings in Hebrew etched on all sides.

“A light from our house is gone/a voice we loved is stilled” is an oft-repeated verse on many tombstones. Interestingly it not only appears on Jewish sites of families such as Dighorker and Awaskar which spanned the 1800s to the 1950s, but also on the grave of one Mehdi Nassim (a Muslim or Jew?) who died in 1931 in London and his body was brought back to be buried here.

A large enclosure of yellow stone stands in a quite corner. There are two graves. A close look at the faded script revealed that one was the grave of Solomon David who had died in March 1902. He had built the Magain Shalome Synagogue in Karachi. His tombstone reads: “The widely known and highly respected Solomon David always sought welfare of the Jewish community and through his liberality erected at his own expense a handsome Synagogue, Magain Shalome.”

Next to him lies his wife, Sheeolabai who died a year later in 1903. Her epitaph reads: “In loving memory of Sheelo, beloved wife of Mr. Solomon David late Municipal surveyor and President of the Jewish community. Karachi who departed this life on April 27, 1903 aged 56 years.”

One of the Presidents of the Karachi Synagogue, Gershone Solomon Umerdaker (1861-1903) is also buried in this graveyard. The grave is decorated with the evocative prayer inscribed on a slab of concrete: “Mayest thou find open the gates of heaven and see the city of peace and the dwellings of safety and meet the ministering angels hastening joyfully toward thee and may the high preist stand to receive the and go thou to thee end, rest in peace and, rise again unto life.”

The Keepers of the graveyard refuse to let anyone in as they fear that excessive exposure will deprive them of their home. However, when caught off-guard, the Baloch family living there for more than 70 years divulged some interesting information: “A lot of people used to visit in the 1950s, wearing black suits, hats and with beards. There were quite a few Jews here but after General Ayub many left for

London. A few come here even now but they are in Sindhi-Muslim, Khoja or Memon families. They married Muslims or went undercover as Parsis because they fear for their lives. There are about 10 Jewish families all scattered in areas like Ramaswamy, Soldier Bazaar, Ranchore Lines. Rachel is still a regular visitor" revealed the Baloch woman who sells rose petals at the gate of the Cutchi-Memon graveyard, adjacent to Jewish burial grounds.

Bahzad Alam Khan, writes in his "Karachi's Lost Tribe": The main graveyards of Karachi are highly regimented. The Mewashah is the largest graveyard in Karachi. It contains a variegated assortment of small cemeteries demarcated for the ethnic and religious communities such as Bohras, Khojas, Junagarh Memon Jamat, Malabar Muslim, Hindus and Jews. Muhammad Usman Damohi in his book in Sindhi titled as "Karachi Tarikh Jay Ainay man" (Karachi in the Mirror of History) writes: "There was one Jewish cemetery in Karachi that was situated to the South-East of old Haji camp. This graveyard is called Ben-Israel cemetery. There is a non-descript steel door marked with the Magen David (Shield of David or more commonly known, the Star of David). The cemetery is now in shambles. Considering that there is probably no Jews around to take care of the place its condition is not too bad. Needles to say the historical significance of the cemetery is lost on the city government just as much as the general up-keep of the cemeteries. Historical or otherwise, the least the city government can do is to ensure that this section of the Mewashah cemetery is not vandalized.

Arif Hasan, a renowned town planner commenting on the state of the Jewish graveyard and the fact that most of Karachi is either in denial of its existence or oblivious to it, says: "It is vital for it to become a protected area. I have asked for it to be made heritage property. If that does not happen, it will be destroyed like the Hindu cremation ground where many Samadhies of prominent Hindus have given way to the Lyari Express way".

No work is being done to make it a "Protected Site". It is suggested that some NGO adopts it as a monument, the Archaeology Department may extend the necessary technical assistance to protect it.

However the question is who will come forward? The area is said to be in virtual control of local warring gangs of drug mafia. A common man is not allowed to enter the area.

The Second Jewish cemetery has been found at Jamila street, Usmanabad. It is also a part of Mewashah graveyard but a few kilometers away from the first one. This graveyard has been discovered by a Journalist Syed Intikhab Ali of The Nation. He wrote a story of his discovery on August 12, 2008 in his paper. He says: "The graveyard is in dilapidated condition. The Jewish community used to reside in adjoining areas like Ramaswami, Ranchore Lines and Soldier Bazaar till late 1970s and

buried their dead bodies in this cemetery. He traced this cemetery with the help of some old residents of the area.

There are 40 to 50 Jewish graves in the vicinity of Cutchi-Memon graveyard they are separated from those of Cutchi-Memon's graves. These Jewish graves have epitaphs in Hebrew and English; famous yellow stone of Sindh has been used for these epitaphs. The inscriptions are still clear. The boundary wall has been demolished. The custodian of the Cutchi-Memon graveyard, Baboo Bhai said that the Memon community has also directed him to look after the graves of Jewish community. They have resisted the encroachment and demolishing of Jewish graves. He told that this cemetery is around 145 years old. He was a teenager, when he used to see Jewish families visiting the graveyard. They lived in Ranchore Lines where, there was a Synagogue too. The Jew woman, Rachel used to visit this graveyard regularly, but did not talk to anyone.

Another old resident Sharif Musa said that his forefathers had been living near the Cutchi-Memon graveyard for more than 200 years while his father and grandfather worked as sextons there. His fore fathers had told him about the Jewish graves. They used to live in separate blocks in Ranchore Lines. They were peaceful people having limited relation with locals and stayed away from political activities. When the Arab-Israel War broke in late 1960s they were isolated and started migrating silently and only a few Jewish people left in the city. Sharif said that when the Synagogue was demolished, the remaining Jew families also left Karachi for good. The Jew families living in Ranchore Lines, spoke Urdu with locals.

Another sexton said, "We want to level Jewish graves but the elders of Cutchi-Memon community do not allow us to do so, however we don't look after these graves".

The third Jewish graveyard was said to be behind the Adam Khan Market, near Maulvi Musafar Khana (now Jam-e Cloth Market at the dead-end of Burns Road) and where now stands Iqbal Centre (Residential-cum-commercial market) on M.A Jinnah Road. One Maz-hur say on the internet that: There used to be a Jewish graveyard behind Dilpasand Sweet Mart (now located on the ground floor of Iqbal Centre). Dilpasand was a small Mithai (sweetmeat) shop in a Kutcha Jhuggi (slum) whose back door opened into the graveyard. I used to play cricket there with friends in my childhood. Most of the graves had been demolished and the tombstones stolen. However, there still existed 6 or 7 beautiful stone graves at that time. Later some one built the existing Iqbal Centre and the great historical treasure was lost.

Just adjacent to the graveyard was the elegant and well- maintained Baloch Park where I first learnt to catch butterflies. Around the Park were encroachments erected by muhajirs from India. There used to be a Kohlu, a camel driven oil extraction "mill" from where I would buy pure mustard or copra oil. Another such "mill" was opposite

Raja Mansion. There also used to be a Bara (cattle-pen) at Aslam Road from where I would fetch pure freshmilk when I was just 3 or 4! The soap factory 505 was also situated on Aslam Road and whe my mother sometimes sends me there to buy washing soap.

I lived in Ranchore Lines from 1964 till 1973 and visited the place till 1976 but never found or met any Jew in that area! My father's old house is still there, lying vacant. I like to go there but everything seems to have changed. It is not clear whether Maz-hur is a Muslim or Jew! The narration has been colleted from internet through Perma link. Most probably he is a Jew, some other fellow (camber 2k7) while acknowledging his narration says: "Now that you have disclosed the location of this place Kabza group is likely to flex its muscles).

There are many a heart-rending memories of those bygone days there are also some rare photographs on the net.

An Environmentalist comments: "One can see unique architecture. And lot of historic items in the photograph and this massive arch is particularly unique which I never saw any where else."

One Toti Tayar says: "I used to pass by this synagogue two or three times a week from 1982-1985 on my way to Kumharwara in Lyari but it had a big chain and padlock. I (the writer of this report) am also the witness of that smoke-smeared burnt Synagogue with a big lock.

Lately many Karachites are trying to save the vanishing cultural heritage of their city. Thanks to people like Hameed Haroon (Dawn), Yasmeen Lari (architect) and others.

Deborah Dorrian writes from Australia: My father was born in Karachi in 1927 to Jewish parents. He went to the Karachi Grammar School. They all fled Karachi. Why does no one know that there were Jews were in the carpet business for centuries and living in Karachi? An article written two years ago featured the woman who was the last custodian of the Magen Synagogue. Rachel Joseph was my father's teacher. Rachel still holds the keys to the last Synagogue which was pulled down to make way for a shopping Centre. My father was so distressed to read articles in Indian newspapers and on the internet describing her fight with property developers. We now live in Sidney, Australia. A mother I know and her son fled Karachi when India was partitioned in 1947. Five brothers could not get out. They left in 1960 as they could not sell their property. The story of the Karachi Jews will continue.

Peshawar Jews

In Peshawar (and may be in other area of North Western Frontier Province), the Jews community was formed of Bene Israel, Baghdadi and Bukharan Jews. The two

Synagogues (one in Saddar area of Peshawar) catered to the religious and social activities of the local Jewish community. The Bukharan Jews were also found in the neighboring Afghanistan.

Jews in Peshawar started migrating and by 1960s they ceased to exist. In this context, Rachel Khafi an American whose grandfather Benjamin Khafi organized the departure of Jews from Peshawar recounts: "My grandfather went from door to door, from Jew to Jew to tell them that they had to leave the town".

As we have already discussed and narrated the origin and history of different sects of the Jewry, apart from Bene Israel, the Peshawar Jewry was basically composed of Baghdadi and Bukharan Jews. The Baghdadi Jews had migrated possibly from Iraq and other Middle Eastern regions to India in the 18th century A.D., whereas the Bukharan Jews who originally claim to be descendents of Lost Tribes of Israel, had migrated to Central Asian regions via Iran, Afghanistan and other land routes more than 2000 years ago. Since most of them had made Bukhara as their permanent abode, they were called "Bukharan Jews". And they lived in these Central Asian regions for centuries.

They had fled from these areas during the early years of 20th century, when Russia was in the grip of anarchy and civil wars, wherein they were persecuted. It is not ascertained that how long the Jews were present in Peshawar (and other areas of the region). Their major settlement in Peshawar appears to have fled from Russia after the Revolution in 1917. The Jews were merchants and businessmen. Some were rich, some were poor. Their business activity was concentrated in Sethi Muhammah (Sethi Quarters), which flourished under the protection of the Sethis.

The economically less fortunate Jews were generally sold samosas, kulchas, toffees etc. Since the Sethis lived in Khweshgi Quarters, the Jews lived there too. Some also lived in Baqar Shah Quarters and Bazaar Kalan (Main shopping Street). The Jews were also in the Cloth business. They mostly had Muslim names with Russian suffix such as Murad (ov) (Murad of), Abdul Karimov etc. They had long beards and dressed in Kurdish attire with a Jewish cap. The Jew women were strict in observing pardah (veil). They never came out without a burqa which was black in colour and of a different style than the local burqa. The Jews used to speak Hebrew and Persian.

Synagogues

There were two Synagogues in Peshawar. They were closed after the Jews migrated. One Synagogue was situated in Saddar area. Which still exists but is closed for services.

Mr. Humayun Akhund in an article published in the local Urdu newspaper "Akhbar-e-Shehr" (The City News) on January 12, 2008 refutes such claims. He writes that: "There was no Synagogue for worship in Peshawar. The Jews used to offer their prayers and perform other religious rituals at home. Saturday used to be their rest day. The buildings where the "Star or Shield of David" has been traced are not the

Synagogues. If that is to be taken as a Symbol of Synagogues many building could be declared as Jewish Synagogues including the Islamia College, Peshawar! On Fakhre Alam Road, Saddar area the building which houses the clinic of Dr. Yunus, there is a "Star of David" on one window pane, and that does not mean it was a Synagogue. Such window panes were the art of architecture. There was a "Star of David" on Clock Tower. A stone inscription was also placed here in memory of the First World War soldiers, All these buildings and monuments were erected by the British and the Hindus, the Jews had nothing to do with these monuments or "Star of David".

Could it be said then that all these buildings that he mentioned with the Star of David on them could have a Jewish history?

Jewish Grave yard

There was, of course, a Jewish graveyard on the banks of Jue Sheikh, on Charsadda Road, Peshawar. The Peshawar Jewry had purchased the land from a Khawaja family in 1932. (The plot of land was measured at 4 Kanal and 2 Marlas). After the Peshawar Jews migrated, the Khwaja family retrieved the land through a Court Decree in 1973. The place is still commonly known as "land of Jews" or "cemetery of Jews". But there is not a single grave left.

It is quite interesting that some Jews remained in Peshawar even after the establishment of Israel. They were living peacefully and nobody harbored any grudge against them. But soon after the fateful incident of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Israel, they felt frightened and left Peshawar. Nobody had forced them to quit.

According to 1941 census issued by Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, there were 1000 Jews in Peshawar.

Mr. Humayun Akund states that most of the stories on net about Peshawari Jews are simply false and mis-leading.

What does it tells us about Mr. Akhir? Not much, but it does offer some lessons that we might want to learn as a nation. First it tells us that there used to be a small, vibrant community of Jews in Pakistan and that most of this community migrated. Secondly, it tells us that despite the mass migration, a small number of Jews still remain in Pakistan and are forced to lead a life of anonymity or even camouflage. Mr. Akhir may well be who he claims himself to be. Even if he is not what he says he is, there are likely to be others who have been forced into anonymity for long and who need to be brought back into the mainstream. We need to recognize and make peace with our own Jews.

Jew societies and Association

Jews living in Pakistan were treated with tolerance and respect and various associations and societies existed to serve the community such as:

Young Mans Jewish Association

It was incepted in 1903 aimed at encouraging sports, religion and social activities.

Karachi Bene Israel Relief Fund

Its main objective was to support poor Jews in Karachi.

Karachi Jewish Syndicate

This Syndicate was formed in 1918 to provide homes to poor Jews at reasonable rents.

Freemason Lodges

We have confirmed evidence of two Freemason Lodges in Pakistan. There is one in Lahore and the other is in Karachi. Before we dwell upon the fate of these two Lodges, it would be interesting to go through the background and origin of the Freemason. The Freemason Lodge Order has always remained shrouded in mystery. Freemasons were skilled stone workers in the mediaeval period. The objective of the society was to help each other, promote brotherly relations amongst the masons and to develop a fraternity. The Freemason Order has its origins in the middle ages. Freemason Guilds, was first established in England in 1717 in a Grand Lodge. It gradually expanded to other countries; the Freemason Lodges were also created in the Sub-continent, at least two were there in Lahore and Karachi. Later on these two Freemason Lodges decided to be not very prominent after the creation of Israel. The one in Lahore was at the Mall and is still there. Both were sealed by the government years ago. The one in Karachi is located on Stretchen Road, now Din Muhammed Wafai Road, it is a majestic Roman style building. This Freemason Lodge now houses Department of Wild Life Government of Sindh. This building was sealed since late 1960s. In November 1978, the officials of Department of Information and Archives Govt. of Sindh ordered the opening of the building in their presence. The building had rare artifacts, ceremonial swords and traditional garments, precious paintings, crockery and expensive furniture. They were divided between the two departments. Since the fixed pieces of furniture etc could not be removed they were given to the Department of Wild Life which was housed there. Initially, the Department of Information also occupied part of the building but later handed over the entire building to the Department of Wild Life. On visits to the offices of the Department of Information &

Archives, Government of Sindh, wooden chests of drawers, cabinets and other pieces of furniture stamped as Freemason Lodge can be seen.

Reminiscences

On the cultural front Karachi had a liberal environment in 1960s and early 1970s. There were night clubs, pleasant cinema halls, theaters and a thriving film industry. I was working in a newspaper in Karachi so I had an opportunity to visit these places. In those days there were at least three Jewish girls performing in the night clubs, film Studios and theatres. They were known as Deborah Daniel, Suzie Daniel and Lily Solomon. Deborah switched over to film acting while Suzie remained a cabaret dancer.

But during early 1970s Daniel sisters disappeared's from the scene.

Lily Solomon's family lived in Nazimabad. Lily was very fond of theatr. She acted in several plays with one Khurshid in 1963-64. They acted in a stage play titled as "Nizam Saqqa." The drama was directed by one Syed Aldul Wahab. In early 1970s, her parents migrated to Israel and died there. Lily embraced Islam and married Khurshid. She has two children, a son and a daughter. She lives in Keamari.

In late 1978, I boarded a train at London for Dover. It was a night train and I had been allotted a seat in a multi-seated coupe. As I entered the coupe about ten passengers were already seated. There was a woman in her 30s sitting in the corner seat. She seemed nervous, and by her complexion she looked Asian. When she looked at me I felt a streak of composure come onto her face. I was sitting just opposite to her. She asked me in Urdu that where did I come from. I told her from Pakistan. I shall never in my life time forget the countenance and complacency coming up on her face. She said she was feeling distressed surrounded by so many Europeans. She talked non-stop, but did not tell anything about herself. I invited her for a cup of tea to the dining car and there she narrated her story.

"When you said you are from Pakistan, I fancied my self roaming through the Karachi's Saddar area. I am Mariam, a Jew by birth. My forefathers had migrated from Bombay to Karachi and I was born there. We had never thought that after the creation of Pakistan that we were living in a new country. It was our land. Our birth place. I was the daughter of that beloved land. But unfortunately, by mid 60s, when I were in my teens, we could not withstand the situation there. We first migrated to Bombay and then to Israel. But I am not happy there. Jews of South Asian origin generally face racial segregation. I still miss and remember my home town, Karachi. When I saw you in the coupe I felt I am now safe and secured, because someone from my home is here with me. How you feel about it I don't know. A South Asian woman is alive within me. I had been to London for a job interview and now going back to Israel. Thank you for being with me, protecting me. Remember me to my home soil when you reach Pakistan.

"But I am not going back to Pakistan right away. My destination is Beijing, China. I have a job there."

"Ok. I entrust you with my 'Salam' to my home town, when ever you go there."

The train had arrived at Dover, we parted ways, perhaps never to meet again. And for a while I kept reflecting on the modesty and traditions of the South Asian culture are really deep-rooted!

Late Jauhar Meer was a well known journalist and writer of Pakistan. During General Zia's dictatorial regime he had to flee and live in exile in New York where he died.

In one of his letters from New York dated May 26, 1992, Jauhar Meer reflected upon two episodes regarding Pakistani Jews. It was probably 1946. I was in 5th class in Mission School, Peshawar. A Jew boy Patrus was my class mate; a sturdy, fair complexioned, polite and taciturn. Our friendship was limited to class room and to and fro the school.

He lived in Sethi Muhallah (Sethi Quarters). It is quite interesting that they were known as "Russians" more than "Jews". There wasn't any animosity towards Jews unlike nowadays. It is true that our elders when quarreled frequently used the word "yehudi" to hurl disgrace on each other. These Russian Jews had migrated to Peshawar during the post-Soviet Revolution period. They were very good at making cookies and "kulchas". They were Photographers on Cinema Road, using black cloth covering on the cameras. After the establishment of Israel in 1948, they suddenly disappeared. I work at a hotel in New York. Just a few years ago, I had a strange experience. A guest named Yaqutel was stayed in the hotel. In appearance he looked like a South Asian. He was a regular customer and usually had a long stay but never talked much. He would just walk up to the front desk; ask for the keys, any message and leave. One day, God knows why he did not leave the front desk in his usual manner and instead asked me: "are you from India or Pakistan?" the guests generally used to ask such a question and I used to tell them that I was from Pakistan.

"What part of Pakistan?"

I realized that he knows a bit about Pakistan. Pondering over the question, I said, "Peshawar", suddenly he cut me short, "Yes. I know where Peshawar is located", I felt a bit vexed: "Amazing, he puts question but does not let me answer." "Which part of Peshawar?" I asked "what do you know about Peshawar?" "Of course, I do know something: That's why I am asking about it." He replied smilingly. That got me recomposed and I said apologetically: "I am from Sirki gate. Know anything about it?"

"Is it the same Sirki Gate to which you have to pass through two gates and reach it via the Salt Market?"

His narration flabbergasted me. "How do you know about the two gates? They were demolished long ago?"

"Oh!" He said in a tormented tone, "I didn't know. Gates were there when I left Peshawar".

"But when did you see Peshawar?" I asked.

"What do you mean by 'see' Peshawar? I was born there. When Pakistan came into being, I was eight or nine years old. Then we migrated to England.

This meeting had a strange affect on me. It seemed as some lost part of my soul has suddenly re-united and incarnated. We used to have long talks time and again. We felt as time machine has brought us back to Peshawar of the 40s where we had wandered and roamed about strangers to each other! He told that his family lived in Wadda Bazaar. He talked about Tehsil and up-hill passage and asked me about Chowk Yadgar, Qissa Khawani Bazaar, Shahi Bazaar, Wazir Bagh, Down Town, Quail-fanciers Bazaar and so on...

One day the hotel owner walked up interrupting our chat. He was a Polish Jew. An Israeli Jew woman also worked in the hotel, she too join in as she saw the Boss walking up to us. The owner asked: "How long have you known each other?"

"For centuries!" I said.

Both were taken aback.

"You are a Moslem whereas he is a Jew. You are a Pakistani and he is from England. How come you are acquainted for centuries?"

"I beckoned Yaqutal and he said," Yes He is right. We know each other for centuries. We were born and grew up in the same town."

Both were really surprised. How come that there were Jews living in Peshawar? On hearing Yaqutal's allegory, the Jew woman asked, "In that case are you conversant in each others language?" the abrupt query was quite reasonable as well as bewildering. I doubted whether Yaqutal would speak "Hindko". Anyway he relieved me of the anxiety, saying: "I can't speak but I do understand". It was some what challenging. They asked me to say something in my language and I hesitantly said two easy sentences. "Keh Hal Je. Jis Kethe Hondey O?" (How are you dear, where had you been these days?) And to my amazement, Yaqutal immediately repeated the question in English. The Jew woman said astonishingly. "Did you speak in Urdu?"

"No it was "Hindko" spoken in Peshawar" he replied without delay.

I was delighted. I asked the hotel owner as he is my personal guest would he allow me to extend more concession in room rent? The owner is a gentle fellow. He had quite enjoyed my relations with that Jew. "Yes why not. Go ahead".

Yaqutal still comes to the hotel. He is in emerald business and a frequent visitor to Karachi. One day he asked me, "Know anything about stones?"

I know there is emerald in Swat. Cant make out good or bad." I said. He asked "Why don't you come in the stones business. Swat emerald isn't of good quality. Panjsheer emerald is of finer quality in Afghanistan. If you manage to supply emerald from Pakistan, I will buy it and you can earn much more than your salary here at this hotel."

But I could not follow his advice. He still comes now and then and whenever he comes he tries to convince me that love of the soil is eternal and is not confined to any religious inclination.

(These expressions were taken and translated from the Urdu Book "Yak Shehr-e-Arzoo" (A Desired City) written by Dr. Syed Amjad Hussain.)

INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES

According to Jewish Laws if the mother is a Jew, the children born of that marriage, are Jews irrespective of the fact whether her husband is a Jew or not.

RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS

1. The Original Golden Menorah

It is a ritual candelabrum and was shaped by Prophet Moses on the pattern of almond. Its seven branches symbolize the seven days of Creation. The middle cup signifies the Sabbath. A nine-branch candelabrum is used in the eight day Jewish festival of Hanukkah.

2. The Ark of the Covenant

It is a gold-plated chest that housed the two tablets of the Law given by God to Prophet Moses. It was originally kept at Shiloh and brought out during battles. It was put by King Solomon in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem. After that it could only be seen by the high priest on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Its ev fate after the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C. is unknown.

3. The Shofar

It was a curved Ram's Horn, it was used as a bugle in the olden days. Its prescribed notes are now mainly heard on Rosh Ha-Shana (The new year's Day) and Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement)

Jews Customs and Culture

The divine ties are emphasized at certain milestone of a Jew's journey from the cradle to the grave. On the eighth day after birth the male child is circumcised in accordance with God's covenant with Abraham, that is when the child is also named.

- For girls, there is a religious ceremony too when they are named.
- At the age of 13, the boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah assuming the full responsibility of an adult and is called up to read from the Sefer Torah in the synagogue.
- For girls there is a confirmation ceremony at the age of 12.
- At the time of marriage, bride and groom meet under the canopy (the Chupah on the Tebah/Bima) in the presence of the congregation in the synagogue, with the rabbi or other leading member of the community officiating. The custom of the bridegroom crushing a tumbler towards the end of the ceremony is thought to be a solemn reminder for every Jew in the time of his highest joy, of the tragedy of the destruction of the Temple thousands of years ago. The ceremony ends with the recital of seven benedictions chanted by one of the congregants given this special honor. The couple then goes to the Holy Ark (where the Sefer Torahs are stored) and after paying their respects to the Lord leave the synagogue. Confetti and rice grains showered on the couple connote good wishes for fertility.
- A Jew generally covers his head in the synagogue and elsewhere during the various religious services. This is considered a sign of male piety and female modesty.
- There are certain dietary laws laid down in the Torah like the prohibition of meat from animals that do not have cloven hoofs and do not chew the cud, of fish that have neither scales nor fins. The blood should be drained completely from the meat. The meat of a scavenger animal is prohibited. They can only eat Kosher meat which is slaughtered in a special way to minimize pain and make the blood flow out. Another example of a food restriction is the law prohibiting the consumption of meat and milk foods at the same time; even the utensils and dishes used must be kept separate.
- In India there is a unique thanksgiving ceremony held at homes known as Eliya--hoo-hanabi. The main feature of the ceremony is chanting hymns in praise of Elijah, the prophet whose early return as the harbinger of the Messiah is prayed for. There follows a meal consisting of at least two kinds of fruits and a special preparation known as "Malida" of parched rice, nuts, raisins, shredded coconut and spices. The partaking of the "Malida", the fruits, etc., is

preceded by a blessing. The prophet Elijah is like a special patron saint for the Bene Israels who have a belief that the Biblical prophet had actually been taken up to heaven in a chariot from a hillock near the village of Navgaon on the coast of Maharashtra.

- Charity must be practiced and proportion of one's income should be earmarked for this purpose, as a visible expression of universal love.
- Education is given high priority in every family and children have to learn to read prayers when still very young. The sanctity of family life is preserved by a number of home ceremonies and practices that bind the family together. For instance, the mother kindling the Sabbath lights before sunset on Fridays (and they remain burning till sunset the next day) with a blessing sanctifying the weekly holy day, the refraining from lighting the fire and cooking, and complete abstinence from the daily round of duties, the special festive meals etc. all these make a deep impact on the children's mind and serve to knit the family close together,
- In conclusion the infinite longing in Judaism for peace and goodwill finds expression at every time and on every occasion. For example the form of greeting "Shalom Aleichem" (Peace be unto you.) figures not only when Jews meet one another but can be heard as a form of greeting by people of some other religions as well. There is hardly any prayer where the word Shalom (peace) does not occur; most of the prayers are not merely requests for personal favors from the Almighty but for blessings for all people and for mankind in general. Many of the prayers are supplications for the forgiveness of sins and comprise readings and contemplation of sublime truths and principles of ethical living.

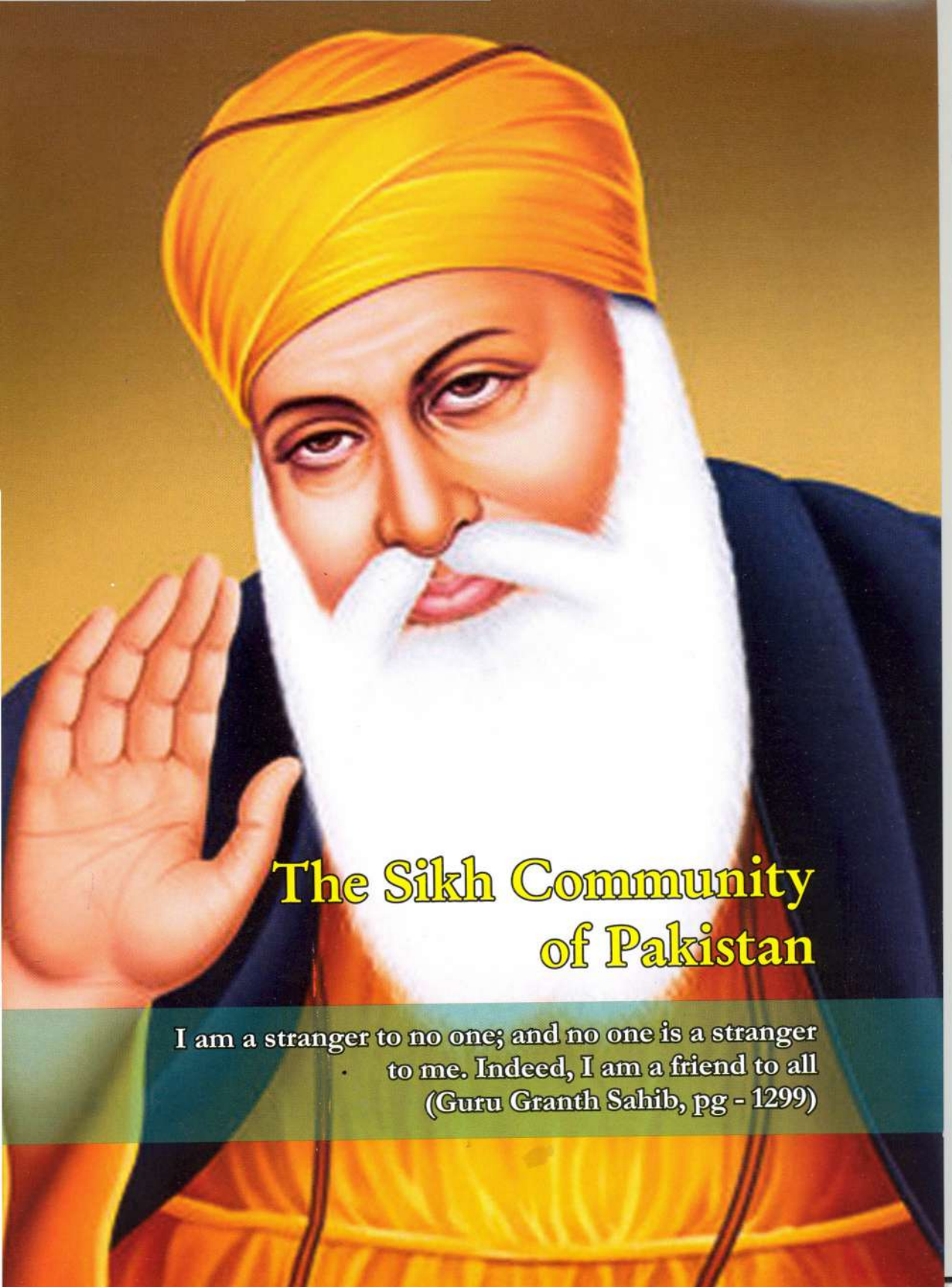
And thus it was that the Prophet Isaiah in his vision of peace declare: 'And it shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it.'

Jewish Festivals

1. The New Year's Day (ROSH HA-SHANA) is a solemn day of soul searching and self-examination devoted to congregational prayers in the synagogue during which is heard the blasts of the SHOFAR (Ram's horn) as a clarion call to repentance.
2. Day of Atonement (YOM KIPPUR) on the 10th day and is reckoned to be a day on which one's life is judged and sealed by the Almighty according to one's past actions tempered by the degree of true repentance. The day is devoted to a 24 hours rigorous fast and confession of sins and wrongdoing with determination to make good the wrongs done.

3. Succoth (Tents) which is celebrated two weeks later to remind Jews of the time when their forefathers had to dwell in tents while wandering in the wilderness for forty years on their departure from Egypt on their way to the "PROMISED LAND".
4. Simhath Torah (Rejoicing of the LAW) when Jews dance joyfully around the SEFER TORAH (The Scroll of the Law) in thankfulness to the Almighty for the precious gift.
5. Hanukah (Dedication) to commemorate the rededication is 165 B.C., of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Maccabeans after its desecration by the SYRIANS.
6. Purim (Feast of Lots) to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews from the wicked HAMMAN, the Prime Minister of the king of Persia at the intercession of his Jewish wife, Queen Esther, Hamman had decided by casting lots, on a day for their destruction.
7. Passover (PESAH) The passing over of the Angel of Death over the homes when the Pharaoh of Egypt would not agree to let the Jews and Moses, leave the country. The killing of the first-born in Egypt was the last of the punishments that God inflicted upon the Pharaoh when he refused to free the Jewish slaves. The festival is observed by the eating of unleavened bread (as a token of remembrance of the hurry in which the Jews had to leave) and a ritual meal consisting of bitter herbs and wine.
8. Yorn Haa'otzmauth (Israel Independence Day)
9. Shabuoth (The feast of Weeks) observed Seven weeks after Passover and known nowadays as Pentecost. The day on which Moses received the Ten Commandments. This is also a harvest festival.

TSHA-B'AV To commemorate the destruction of the First Temple in 586 and again in 70 AD. It is a day of fasting.



The Sikh Community of Pakistan

I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger
to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all
(Guru Granth Sahib, pg - 1299)

9 The Sikh Community of Pakistan

Raja Adnan Razzaq

The Faith

Fundamental Principles:

Sikhism is one of the youngest of world's religions. Today about twenty million Sikhs follow a religion which was born about five centuries ago in the Punjab from 1469 to 1708. The ten Sikh Gurus preached a very simple message of truth, devotion to God and universal equality.

A Sikh believes in one God, the ten Gurus, the Holy Guru Granth Sahib and other religious scriptures and believes in the necessity and importance of 'Amrit', the Sikh baptism. A baptised Sikh is called 'Khalsa' who must observe and follow strict code of conduct.

Concept of God and Prayers: The Sikhs believe that God is all Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. The worship of images and idolatry is strictly forbidden in Sikhism where God is the creator and destroyer, both merciful and compassionate. He is beyond birth, death, fear or enmity. He is self illuminated and is the master of all the treasures. God is called 'Waheguru' in Sikhism which means most wonderful master.

The religion does not believe in asceticism, celibacy or living alone in jungle or deserted mountain for salvation. It also rejects the order of monasteries and its teaching is based on the principles of Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of human kind. There are individual and collective Sikh prayers. The individual prayers are the morning prayers: Jap Ji, Jap Sahib and Sudha Swayas. The evening prayers are the Rehras Sahib and night time prayer is the Kirtan Sohila. The Congregational prayer is

performed in the morning and is called the Asa di var which is composed by Guru Nanak Dev.

The Five K's: The five sacred Sikh symbols prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh are commonly known as Panj Kakars or the 'Five Ks' because they start with letter K representing Kakka in the Punjabi language.

The Sikh Gurus: The Sikhs follow the teaching of the following ten Gurus;

i. **Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539):** Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion was born in Tilwandi near Lahore in 1469 in a Hindu family. During his childhood he learnt the Sanskrit. When he grew up he got employment under a local government official. Since India was under Muslim rule he learnt about Islam as a religion. Around 1500 AD he started travelling for the next twenty years of his life until he settled down in a village called Kartarpur in 1521. It is reported that he also went to Middle East where he performed Hajj at Makkah. It was in Kartarpur where he established the first community. Besides rejecting the Hindu caste system, and ritualism, Guru Nanak preached universal equality.

ii. **Guru Angad Dev (1539-1552):** Besides maintaining and upholding the traditions laid forth by Guru Nanak, the second Guru created the Gurmukhi script, a medium through which the writings and teachings of the Gurus could be readily understood by their followers. By disassociating the Sikh tradition from Sanskrit influence, a script and language largely unknown to the masses, the Guru emphasized the universality and widespread accessibility of Sikh religious thought.

iii. **Guru Amar Das (1552-1574):** Apart from reinforcing the teachings of the previous Gurus by organizing the construction of twenty-two centers of religious learning for the Sikhs Guru Amar Das sharply criticized the practice of sati, where widows immolated themselves on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. The Guru also required that anyone wishing to meet him would have to first partake in the common kitchen, called *Langar*, as a sign of equality. Emperor Akbar, followed this tradition before meeting the Guru.

iv. **Guru Ram Das (1574-1581):** Founder of the city of Amritsar, site of the Golden Temple, Guru Ram Das worked to ensure the city's growth by encouraging commercial and trade ventures in the town. Soon with the city flourishing as a trade center and place of pilgrimage, the Sikhs had a distinct religious center.

v. **Guru Arjan (1581-1606):** The fifth Guru started the construction of the Golden Temple. To emphasize the universality of Sikhism, the foundation stone of the shrine was laid by a Muslim saint, named Mian Mir. The temple had four entrances to represent access to all communities. Guru Arjan compiled the *Adi Granth*, the Sikh scripture containing the writings of all the Gurus until that time. As another sign of the universality of Sikh philosophy, the Guru added the writings of several Muslim and

Hindu saints, whose ideas corresponded to Sikh beliefs. In 1606, Emperor Jehangir had the guru killed.

vi. *Guru Har Gobind (1606-1644)*: Responsible for establishing idea of the inseparability of spiritual and temporal matters, the sixth Guru maintained an army for the purpose of protecting the poor and destroying tyrants. He constructed the Akal Takht, center of temporal affairs in the Sikh religion, across from the Golden Temple in Amritsar. By this time, the Sikh community was a full-fledged social, religious, and political entity.

vii. *Guru Har Rai (1644-1661)*: The seventh Guru continued the mission of organizing the Sikhs into a military force that would be equipped and ready, both spiritually and physically, to counter the repressive forces.

viii. *Guru Har Krishan (1661-1664)*: At only five years of age, the eighth Sikh Guru was the youngest. He worked to alleviate the suffering of the common man during a smallpox epidemic in Delhi, but succumbed to the disease himself at the age of eight.

ix. *Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675)*: The Mughal Emperor of India, Aurangzeb, attempted to consolidate India into one Islamic nation. In order to achieve this aim, he set out to virtually eliminate Hinduism from India. When the Guru was imprisoned in 1675, the Guru simply refused to concede to the Emperor's demand. Finally, the Guru was ordered to be beheaded. Unparalleled in the history of humankind, the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur was an act of sacrifice for another religious community.

x. *Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1708)*: Upon the death of his father, Guru Gobind Singh felt compelled to organize the Sikhs into a community of saint-soldiers. During the spring of 1699, the Guru called his followers for a special gathering where he was baptized by five beloved ones. In the annals of human history, such a transformation into a distinct and solidified community, culminating in the baptism of the prophet by his followers, remains a unique defining moment. Guru Gobind Singh and his Khalsa army were engaged in several battles against the imperialist army. Through the course of those turbulent times, the Guru lost his four children and his mother to the cause of righteousness; but nevertheless, the Khalsa stood firm as a distinct and sovereign entity, able to withstand the onslaught of a mighty enemy. Before his death at the hands of an assailant in 1708, the Guru added the writings of Guru Tegh Bahadur to the Sikh scriptures thereby giving a final revision to its form. The Guru also declared the lineage of living Gurus finished, and requested his followers to seek spiritual guidance from the Guru Granth Sahib. In essence, the light of Nanak, the first Guru, was to be forever enshrined within the pages of the Guru Granth Sahib. The ten Gurus are highly respected by the Sikh community as messengers of God.

SCRIPTURE

The Guru Granth Sahib

The holiest of the Sikh scriptures is Guru Granth Sahib. It was called Adi Granth (first scripture) until Guru Gobind Singh conferred on it the title of the Guru in 1708, after which it was called Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Granth Sahib is the only world scripture which was compiled during the life time of its compiler. Guru Granth Sahib was compiled by Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. The work of compilation was started in 1601 and finished in 1604. The Granth, called by Guru Arjan as Pothi Sahib, was installed at Golden Temple (then called 'Harimandir' - the house of God) with great celebrations.

Guru Gobind Singh, later (1706), added the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur in it and declared it to be the Guru of the Sikhs. The scribe of the first version (Guru Arjan's compilation) was Bhai Gurdas and of the second version (Guru Gobind Singh's compilation) was Bhai Mani Singh.

Sri Dasam Granth Sahib

The Last Guru Gobind Singh was a known poet. Despite being busy fighting and planning campaigns against the Mughals, he compiled a prose book of 1428 pages. This was called the Dasam Granth or the collection of the tenth Guru. It was assembled after thirty years after his death in 1734. Some of its compositions are used in Sikh ceremonies and there are many that are included in the gutkas or hymn books. It was compiled by Bhai Mani Singh, the devout and learned Sikh custodian of the Golden Temple (who later became a martyr) 26 years after the death of Guru Gobind Singh, at Damdama. But, some historians assert that it was not the Adi Granth, but his own Book that the Guru dictated to Bhai Mani Singh. However, much of its secular portion is the subject of great controversy even amongst the Sikhs who ascribe its authorship not to the Guru but to some of his 52 poets who lived at his court. One of the reasons of this controversy is that though the script of the Dasam Granth is gurmukhi but the languages of the poems vary. One find traces of Persian, Sanskrit and Punjabi in Dasam Granth. Dasam is difficult to read and not all the Gurdwaras keep a copy of Dasam Granth. It is never installed in a Gurudawara and never given the honor and respect with which Adi Granth or the Guru Granth is treated in Gurdwara and homes.

Varan Bhai Gurdas

Varan Bhai Gurdas is the name given to the 40 Varan (chapters) of writing by Bhai Gurdas. They have been referred to as the "Key to the Sri Guru Granth Sahib" by Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Sikh Guru. Bhai Gurdas was a first cousin of Mata Bhani,

mother of Guru Arjan Dev. He was the first scribe of Guru Granth Sahib and a scholar of great repute.

Each of the 40 chapters of "Varan Bhai Gurdas" consists of a differing number of Pauris (sections, paragraphs). The composition is a collection of detailed commentary and explanation of theology and the ethics of Sikh beliefs as outlined by the Gurus. It explains the Sikh terms like *sangat*, *haumai*, "Gun", Gurmukh and Manmukh, Sat, Naam, etc. Many of the principles of Sikhism are explained in simple terms by Bhai Sahib and at times in many different ways.

Apart from these holy scriptures, other important texts include the Amarnama, Ani Rai, Araz Ul Alfaz, Baba Mohan Valian Pothian, Babar Vani, Bala Janam Sakhi, Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, Bavanja kavi, Bhagat Ratanavali, Bhera Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Ka, Chalitar Joti Samavane ki, Chaturbhuj Pothi, Fatehnamah - Bhai Dyal Singh, Ganjnama, Haqiqat Rah Muqam Raje Shivnabh Ki, Hazarnamah, Kabitt Savaiye, Karkhe Patshah Dasvin Ke, Karni Namah, Nasihat Namah, Panj Sau Sakhi, Pauri Guru Gobind Singh Ki, Pothi, Pothi Sachkhand, Prachin Panth Prakash, Prem Abodh Pothi, Prem Sumarag and Sukhmam Sahansarnama.

Places of Worship

Gurudwara: A Sikh temple or shrine is called a Gurudwara, that is, the House of God, the House of the Guru, where the Guru dwells. Its most essential element is the presence of the Guru. According to the Sikh faith, while prayers to God can be offered any time and anywhere, a Gurudwara is built particularly for congregational worship. Even a very small group of devotees inhabiting any place anywhere in the world would generally build a temple to get together for religious or even for social purposes. The building could be as simple as a temporary shack or a small room in a house, depending on the resources of the local community. Most of their important shrines are connected with the ten Gurus or have other historical association and are great centers of pilgrimage.

It is expected of every Sikh that he would go to the gurudwara daily and join the congregation or *Sangat* for prayers. The *Sangat* is imbued with the love of God, and Sri Guru Granth Sahib presides over the congregation. The *Sangat* thus exercises a benign influence on those present. One can recite the Granth Sahib at home all by one self, but then one misses the benediction of the congregation.

In the gurdwaras, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, draped in fine raiment, is placed on a palanquin, often flower-bedecked, and under a canopy. The devotees, as they come, kneel before the Granth Sahib, the forehead touching the ground, place a small offering, generally some coin, and take their seat on the carpeted floor. The morning service begins before dawn, with *kirtan*, the singing of hymns from Granth Sahib to the accompaniment of instrumental music, recitations from the holy book and *katha*

exposition of the scripture, forming part of the program. At the end, the entire congregation stands with hands folded and the priest recites the Ardas, literally meaning a humble petition or prayer, concluding with a supplication to God, seeking His grace for the good of all mankind. The Ardas recalls the blessings of the Gurus and the sacrifices made by the community in the course of its history. At the end of the service, prasad or sacrament, generally a preparation of wheat flour, ghee and sugar, is distributed.

There is no hereditary priestly class among the Sikhs. Anyone could work as a priest in a gurdwara or function as such on a given occasion. Any layman who can read the Granth Sahib can conduct even ceremonial rites, such as on the occasion of a marriage. All gurdwaras however employ priests, called granthis, so that someone can devote all his time to the upkeep of the temple and to routine duties. Important gurdwaras run a langar or a free community kitchen for pilgrims, travelers and others. Guru Nanak organized one at Kartarpur, where he settled down during the later part of his life. Gurdwaras generally have provision of the lodging of pilgrims. In a town with a Gurdwara, any traveler can normally hope to find some food and a place to rest for a night or even longer.

A Gurdwara is not just a place of worship, it is a social institution. The shrines have funds at their disposal, built out of special donations made by the people and from day-to-day offerings. Some big shrines have large incomes and properties attached to them. Several educational and other institutions are run with the help of these funds; some of the schools function on the Gurdwara premises. Often, marriages and various other ceremonies are performed in the shrines.

A Gurdwara can be spotted from a distance by the yellow triangular flag hoisted from a pole in the compound. The flag is called Nishan Sahib.

The Golden Temple of Amritsar rises like an island in the midst of a large tank, the structure of this temple has provided a model and an inspiration to builders of other shrines. Many of them are two storied with the main roof being common to the two floors. The first floor has a gallery in the middle, overlooking the hall below, and it is supported by four or more columns and the outer walls. On the ground floor, in the space thus marked out by the four columns, or approximately in the center, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is enshrined on a platform or a movable palanquin with a canopy above. The congregation occupies the remaining space.

Places in a Gurudawara •

The Sachkhand: Sachkhand refers to a level of spirituality, literally it means the realm of truth, but refers commonly to the holiest room within a Gurudwara. The Sachkhand in a Gurudwara is the room where the holy scriptures are housed during the night. At the end of the day, the Guru Granth Sahib is made to rest in the

Sachkhand. Anyone entering the Sachkhand would have had a bath prior to entering the Sachkand - thereby insuring cleanliness. The head must always be covered in the Sachkhand and shoes obviously removed. The Sachkhand is normally situated in the highest point in the Gurudwara - most often it is a separate room within the Darbar.

The Darbar: The Darbar is the main hall in the Gurudwara, it is here that all ceremonies are performed. Inside the Darbar, there is a stage or platform on which the Guru Granth Sahib is placed; it is covered by a sheet of cloth known as an Armala. There is a canopy above the scriptures. There is normally another platform - placed lower than the Guru Granth Sahib. This is the main stage and all speeches, narration and kirtan is performed from here.

The Langar: One of the halls within a Gurudwara is the *Langar* Hall. This is the room where Langar is distributed; it will typically contain a kitchen where the *langar* is prepared. Traditionally, Sikhs sit on the floor - with men and women seated on separate sides.

The Daily Functions

The daily function of a Gurudwara usually begins early in the morning. The Guru Granth Sahib would be brought down from the Sachkhand and a ceremony known as the Parkash is performed, this refers to the 'opening' of the Holy Scriptures.

Throughout the day, Gurbani might be read; there would normally be a *sevadar* in the darbar who serves the Karah Parshad to visitors. The Granthi would be available to read the Hukamnama - the Guru's command to the visitors. In the evening, the Rahiras Sahib is read aloud and this might typically be followed by kirtan and katha. The evening ends with a ceremony known as the Sukh Asan, during this, the Guru Granth Sahib is closed and laid to rest in the Sachkhand.

The Gurudawara Committee: Previously - in the subcontinent - the Gurudwaras were run by the *sangat*, but later a separate committee was formed that could be ultimately responsible for various functions relating to the running of the Gurdwara, e.g., treasury, admin. Hence the Gurdwara committees were formed; these are normally elected by the *sangat*. The existence of such a committee is purely as a function of administration and it does not warrant a superior right within the Gurdwara.

The Granthi: The *granthi* can perhaps be best described as the 'priest' - although such a priest system does not exist in the Sikh faith. The granthi is the custodian of the scriptures and is ultimately responsible for performing the daily ceremonies inside the darbar. The granthi is usually appointed by the Gurudwara's committee. His (or her) typical duties might include performing the two ceremonies of Parkash and Sukh Asan, reading the *Hukam nama* aloud to members of the *sangat* during the functions and at

relative times in the day, performing kirtan and katha and reading certain *banis* to the *sangat* - such as the Rahiras and morning Nitnem.

Pilgrimage

All Sikh religious shrines are located in India and Pakistan.

The Golden Temple is the holiest of the Sikh shrines. The architecture of the Golden Temple was the master mind of Guru Arjan Dev. Its foundation stone was laid by a Muslim saint Mian Mir on 3rd January 1588. The work on its pool was started by Guru Ramdas in 1577. Guru Arjan had envisioned an eternal shrine that would make the focal point of the Sikh faith, an image of its firmness, resolve, strength, courage and toughness. It would become an emblem of its immortality and indestructibility.

The construction of the shrine and the bridge which connects it with the main complex was completed in 1604, when on 30th August; Guru Granth Sahib was courtly installed in there. The shrine is floating like a lotus in the centre of the pool. The shrine has four gates, representing the equality of man. People of any country, caste, creed, sect and faith are welcome in the shrine.

To reach the shrine the faithful have to go down the steps, which is symbolic of humility and modesty. All around the pool is a *parikarma*, walk-way, which every visitor has to follow to reach the shrine. This is reminiscent of oath of loyalty and faithfulness for Almighty God. In the post Guru period, many times the Mughals and other Afghan invaders blew up and desecrated the temple to demoralise the Sikhs, but each time it gave the Sikhs more moral courage, strength and firm resolution to fight the tyranny and rebuild their temple.

When Sikhs ruled Punjab (1749-1849), the Maharaja, Ranjit Singh, had gold leaf to be set on to its upper two stories and all the domes and minarets giving it a new name, the Golden Temple. In 1608, Guru Hargobind built another shrine opposite Harmandir and called it Akal Bunga, later on known as Akal Takhat. It represented both spiritual and temporal authority of the Guru.

During the times of Mughals, both the Harimandir and Akal Takhat remained under the control of sects organized by Sri Chand, a son of Guru Nanak and Prithi Chand, the eldest son of Guru Ramdas. The members of these sects did not keep long hair so that they could denounce their faith in times of adversity. With the lapse of time the control became hereditary and corrupt and the Sikh masses revolted against it. Against the Sikh traditions, images were installed in the Harimandir and the people of low caste were refused entry into it.

Even during the first fifty years of the British rule in Punjab, both shrines remained in the occupation of Mahants, the descendants of Sri Chand and Prithi Chand. The

British gave them protection against the upsurge of the Sikh masses. For some time the keys of the treasury of Golden Temple were also confiscated by the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar. At the end, on 17th January 1922, the British government yielded and handed over the keys to the President of SGPC, a newly constituted body for the management of all the historical Gurdwaras in Punjab. The Golden Temple precincts were then cleaned and all the images removed and entry opened to all the devotees.

The Sikh Takhats (THRONES)

The word Takhat means a throne. The Takhats are designated historical Gurdwaras, which have the power to legislate on the Sikh religion. The head priests of these shrines make a mini parliament and their decisions are law for the Sikhs. They have the authority to reprimand and punish the religious wrongdoers. They are also the final authority on all religious pronouncements.

Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, built the first Sikh Takhat at Amritsar in 1608 known as Akal Takhat, the seat of Almighty God. During his stay at Amritsar, the Guru held his courts at the Akal Takhat. He said that this Takhat has been built, by the command of all powerful God, to guide the Sikhs for the planning and guidance of their political and religious future. All through the Sikh history the assemblies of the Sikh parliament (Sarbat Khalsa) had been held in the forecourt of this Takhat. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, built the second Takhat at Keshgarh in Anandpur. This is the place where the Khalsa was baptised in 1699. Later on in the Sikh history, the Gurdwaras of Patna Sahib, the birth place of Guru Gobind Singh and Hazur Sahib, where Guru Gobind Singh breathed his last were also declared to be the third and fourth Takhats of the Sikh. The Gurdwaras at these places were built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

For many hundred years the Sikhs had only four Takhats. However, in the sixties, Gurdwara Damdama Sahib, the place where Guru Gobind Singh had prepared the final version of Guru Granth Sahib and where he rested after a long spell of his battles with the Mughals and the Rajas, was declared by the SGPC as the fifth Takhat of the Sikhs.

The Nankana Sahib (Sheikhupura, Pakistan)

Sikh history originates from Nankana Sahib. Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikh faith, was born here in 1469. The name of the place at that time was Rai Bhoi di Talwandi. The landlord contemporary of Guru Nanak Dev was Rai Bular, who himself became a devotee of the Guru. It was renamed Nankana after the Guru. It is located in what is called Nilianwali Bar (forest where nilgais abound), and is about 75 kilometers west-southwest of Lahore. Nankana Sahib is in Sheikhupura district and is connected

to the district town by rail and road. There are several shrines connected with the memory of Guru Nanak Gee's childhood and early youth. Later Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind also visited Nankana Sahib and a Gurdwara was built subsequently in their honor. During the Sikh rule, these gurdwaras were richly endowed with liberal land grants (over 7,000 hectares). The management was in the hands of Udasi and Nirmala priests until the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee took over during the Gurdwara Reform Movement of 1920-25. The Gurdwaras had to be abandoned in the aftermath of the Partition in 1947. They are now looked after by the Government of Pakistan. Nankana Sahib is one of the three places which can be visited by Sikh pilgrims, the other two being Panja Sahib near Hasan Abdal and Lahore.

Other important historical Gurudwaras at Nankana Sahib include the Gurudwara Janam Asthan, Gurudwara Bal Lila, Gurudwara Patti Sahib, Gurudwara Kiara Sahib, Gurudwara Mal Ji Sahib, Gurudwara Tambu Sahib and Gurudwara Chhevin Patsahi.

Gurudwara Panja Sahib (Hasan Abdal, Pakistan)

Hasan Abdal is an ancient city situated at a distance of 45 kilometers from Rawalpindi. Few places have natural fountains. Sainly persons usually take abode there. Guru Nanak along with Bhai Mardana reached Hasan Abdal in Baisakh Samwat 1578 B.K. corresponding to 1521 A.D. in the summer season. Under a shady tree, Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana started reciting Kirtan. Bhai Mardana was thirsty and went upto an abode near by for water. The man living there was Qandhari who did not like the presence of Bhai Mardana and Guru Nanak. He refused and used harsh words for him. He asked Mardana "Why don't you ask your Master whom you serve?" Mardana reached the holy presendance of Guru in a miserable state and quoted. "Oh lord! I prefer death to thirst I will not approach the man who is an egoist." The Guru Lord said smilingly, "Oh Bhai Mardana! Repeat the Name of God, the Almighty and drink the water to your heart's content." The Guru put aside a big piece of stone lying nearby, where a pure fountain of water sprang up and began to flow endlessly. Bhai Mardana quenched his thirst and felt grateful to the Creator. On the other hand, the fountain of Qandhari dried up who in a rage, threw a part of a mountain towards the Guru from the top of the hill. The true Lord halted the hurled stone with his hand. An indelible mark of Guru's hand was inserted in the stone. Observing that miracle, the ego of the man vanished and he became the Guru's devotee. Several attempts were made to deface the impression of the hand of the Guru but all of no avail and the mark remained. This holy and revered place is now known as Panja Sahib. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa built the Gurdwara and a sarovar there.

Several other buildings for staff and pilgrims and other, ancillaries were added subsequently. Guru ka Langar at Panija Sahib was famous for the quality of food and service at all hours day and night. Congregational fair used to be held on Baisakhi

(mid-April) and on 30th October until 1947. Now only organized bands of pilgrims occasionally visit Panja Sahib with the permission of the Pakistan government. One of such regular visits coincides with the Baisakhi festival.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

The Origin

The founder of Sikhism was Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, (1469-1538) who was born in the Punjab area of what is now Pakistan. At Sultanpur, he received a vision to preach the way to enlightenment and God. He taught strict monotheism and the brotherhood of humanity. He rejected idol worship and the Hindu concept of caste. Guru Nanak and Panth (his followers) later built the first Sikh temple at Kartarpur.

A succession of nine Gurus (regarded as reincarnations of Guru Nanak) led the movement during the period from Guru Nanak's death until 1708. At that time, the functions of the Guru passed to the Panth and to the holy text guru Granth Sahib, considered as the 11th Guru.

In 1801, the Sikh state of Punjab was founded in Northern India by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. According to a historian Vincent Smith, *"The Punjab State was neither a traditional Indian territorial State and monarchy, nor merely a dictatorship of one community over another. There was an element of partnership with other communities."*

Sikh Holy Texts

The holy granth consists of hymns and writings by the first nine Gurus, along with religious text from different Muslim and Hindu saints like: Kabir, Baba Sheik Farid, Bhagat Namdev, Bhagat Rav Dass, etc. The Guru Granth itself is considered the 11th and final Guru, and the Sikh's holiest religious text. It was made so by Guru Gobind Singh.

Various sources estimate that Sikhism has about 23 or 24 million followers, making it the fifth largest organized religion in the world. It is surpassed in numbers only by Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. If one defines the term "religion" very inclusively, it is the ninth largest religion in the world, being fewer in numbers than secularists, and followers of Chinese traditional religion, African traditional religions and aboriginal faiths. According to an estimate about 21 million (89%) Sikhs live in Indian Punjab. About 400,000 (2%) live in North America, and 360,000 (2%) are in the UK. The Sikh population of Canada increased from about 147,000 in 1991 to 278,000 in 2001. Data on the number of Sikhs in the U.S. is highly variable: In 1999, the *New York Times* estimated a population of 175,000; the *Salt Lake Tribune* estimated 500,000.

Pakistan: our home

Apart from that there are many historical sites in present day Pakisytan which are religiously very important for the Sikh community Nankana Sahib has special importance. The Samadhi of Ranjit Singh is located in Lahore. Nankana sahib has nine Gurdwaras which are associated with different events in Guru Nanak Dev's life and the town is an important site of pilgrimage for Sikhs from around the world. Each year thousands of Sikhs come to Pakistan from India and different parts of the world to pay homage.

Before partition of India in 1947 the Sikh community of the West Punjab were spread all over the Punjab and played a pivotal role in the economy of the province as businessmen and traders. They owned factories, trade and even agriculture. The 1941 Percentage Composition of selected West Punjab District Populations of Hindus and Sikhs was as follows:

District	Hindu	Sikh
Attock	36.4	33.0
Dera Ghazi Khan	40.9	10.2
Gujranwala	41.8	20.9
Gujrat	47.7	46.4
Jhang	15.9	45.5
Jhelum	46.5	23.9
Lahore	56.3	38.4
Lyallpur (Faisalabad today)	7.2	19.8
Mianwali	20.3	1.2
Montgomery (Sahiwal today)	14.4	13.2
Multan	20.5	5.2
Muzaffargarh	12.7	0.8
Rawalpindi	10.5	8.2
Shahpur/Sargodha	10.1	4.8
Sheikhupura	10.1	45.9
Sialkot	49.4	31.7

But at the time of partition there was a marginal Sikh population left in Pakistan. Most of them lived in Peshawar in the North West Frontier Province because the province witnessed less communal frenzy as compared to the Punjab. There was an influx of the Sikh population in Pakistan was seen during the civil war in Afghanistan.

There was a Hindu and Sikh minority in Afghanistan and due to porous borders with Pakistan a large number of the Afghanistan's minorities fled from their homes in Kabul, Kanddahar and Jalalabad and settled in different parts of Pakistan. Among these refugees were the Afghani Sikhs who joined their kinsmen in Peshawar and Lahore.

Sikh pilgrims visit Gurdwara Janam Asthan at Nankana Sahib, Panja Sahib at Hassan Abdal (Attock District), Gurdwara Dera Sahib at Lahore and Smadhi Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Lahore on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, Baisakhi, and martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev and death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh every year.

The Sikh children have been observing almost all historical days such as birth and death anniversaries of the Sikh Gurus, sangrand (beginning of Vikrami month), amavas (a day before new moon) and purnima (full moon). They also participate in religious functions organized by the visiting Sikh pilgrims from India and abroad. It is these children who are likely to look after the maryada of Sikh shrines in Pakistan in the coming years.

Harcharan Singh became the first Pakistani Sikh to join the Pakistan army as commissioned officer. Another Sikh Gulab Singh selected as the traffic sub inspector in Lahore. Both of these Sikhs belong to the historic city called Nankana Sahib. Another very important and encouraging step that the government of Pakistan has taken for the welfare and betterment of the Sikh community living in Pakistan and even abroad is that they have enacted the Sikh Marriage Act called the Anand Marriage Act in November 2007. This act not only allows the Sikhs living in Pakistan but also those living out side to register in Pakistan with this Anand Marriage Act. Sikhs have been also encouraged to take part in the politics of the country as Kalyan Singh Kalyan was elected as the first Sikh Provincial Assembly member in Pakistan representing the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

CULTURAL ROOTS

Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Scene

The Punjab was known as the land of the Sikhs as Punjab was their homeland and most of the Sikh community was living in the province. Their customs and festivals were regarded as the culture of Punjab. The other communities unconsciously started observing those customs gradually in one way or the other.

The Punjabi Muslims have fading memories of illuminated Gurdwaras and streets filled with jubilant Sikhs on the occasions of their religious festivals. The government has maintained the Sikh culture in Pakistan by preserving and maintaining the historical and holy Sikh sites. The Pakistan Sikh Gurudawara Prabandhak committee is a Pakistani government body which is responsible for the up keep and preservation of

the Sikh Gurdwaras in Pakistan. The famous Sikh shrines in Pakistan such as Panjah Sahib in Hasanabdal and Nankana Sahib are very well maintained where thousands of pilgrims come every year from all over the world.

There is a large number of Pakistani Sikhs who have immigrated to UK, USA, Canada and Dubai. It is estimated that there are around 40,000 Pakistani Sikhs in UK; around 18,000 in Canada. These Pakistani Sikhs are patriotic to Pakistan just like the Indian Sikhs are loyal to India. It is often observed that the Pakistani Sikh diaspora is found integrated into Pakistani community than the Indian Sikh community.

Customs

The Five K's: The five sacred Sikh symbols prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh are commonly known as *Panj Kakars* or the 'Five Ks' because they start with letter K representing Kakka in the Punjabi language. They are:

1. **Kesh** or unshorn hair, regarded as a symbol of saintliness. Guru Nanak started the practice of keeping the hair unshorn. The keeping of hair in its natural state is regarded as living in harmony with the will of God, and is a symbol of the Khalsa brotherhood and the Sikh faith. The shaving or cutting of hair is one of the four taboos or *Kurehats*. The Kesh reminds a Khalsa to behave like the Guru's. It is a mark of dedication and group consciousness, showing a Khalsa's acceptance of God's will.
2. **Kangha** or the comb is necessary to keep the hair clean and tidy. A Sikh must comb his hair twice a day and tie his turban neatly. The Gurus wore turbans and commanded the Sikhs to wear turbans for the protection of the hair, and promotion of social identity and cohesion. A Khalsa is expected to regularly wash and comb their hair as a matter of self discipline.
3. **Kara** or the steel bracelet symbolizes restrain from evil deeds. It is worn on the right wrist and reminds the Sikh of the vows taken by him, that he is a servant of the Guru and should not do anything which may bring shame or disgrace. When he looks at the Kara, he is made to think twice before doing anything evil with his hands. The Kara must be of Sarab Loh (pure iron). The Khalsa is not to wear a kara that is made of gold, silver, brass, copper or one that has grooves in it.
4. **Kachh** or the soldier's shorts must be worn at all times. It reminds the Sikh of the need for self-restrain over passions and desires. A symbol signifying self control and chastity. Resembling boxer shorts they are designed for comfort and freedom of movement: ".a symbol of restraint of passion, of chastity, and a constant reminder of the prohibition of adultery, both in lusting and in deed".

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5. **Kirpan** or the sword is the emblem of courage and self-defense. It symbolizes dignity and self-reliance, the capacity and readiness to always defend the weak and the oppressed. It is worn purely as a religious symbol and not as a weapon. When all other means of self protection fail, the Kirpan can be used to protect yourself or others against the enemy.

Festivals

There are numerous Sikh fairs and festivals. Some are of local importance as Maghi of Muktsar and Hola Mohalla of Anandpur. On such occasions the Sikh families gather in a Gurdwara. It is decorated and illuminated. The Granth is read, Hymns are sung in chorus or by professional Sikh singers. Prayers are said and sweet pudding (karah prasad) is distributed to the whole congregation. In hot weather sweetened iced water is served at various places. Houses are lighted in the evening. A *langar* at the main gurdwara is a must for every fair and festival. Following are the most important Sikh festival observed by the Sikh community around the world;

1. **Gurupurab:** Gurupurabs are anniversaries associated with the lives of the Sikh Gurus. The Sikhs celebrate 10 Gurpurabs in a year. One of the ten gurus of the Khalsa Pantha is honored on the occasion of one of these festivals. The birthdays of Guru Nanak and Guru Govind Singh and the martyrdom days of Guru Arjun Dev and Guru Teg Bahadur are the most important Gurupurabs. Guru Nanak's jayanti falls in the month of Kartik (October / November). The Sikhs believe that Guru Nanak brought enlightenment to the world; hence the festival is also called Prakash Utsav, the festival of light. The Tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, was born on 2 December 1666 in Patna. The martyrdom day of the fifth Guru, Arjun Dev falls in the months of May and June and that of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, in November. Prabhat Pheris, the early morning religious procession start three weeks before the festival. Devotees offer sweets and tea when the procession passes by their homes. Gurpurabs mark the culmination of Prabhat Pheris. The Guru Granth Sahib (the holy book of the Sikhs) is read continuously from beginning to end without a break for three days. This is known as *akhand path*. It is concluded on the day of the festival. The Granth Sahib is also carried in procession on a float decorated with flowers. Five armed guards, who represent the *Panj Pyares*, head the procession carrying *Nishan Sahibs* (the Sikh flag). Local bands play religious music and marching schoolchildren form a special part of the procession.

On the martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev sweetened milk is offered to the thirsty passers-by to commemorate the death of the Guru. Gurpurbs are part and parcel of Sikhism. Whether it is DEWALI (Bandi Chhor Diwas), VAISAKHI (Khalsa Sajna Diwas), or Martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Sahib (Sahidi Diwas), Sikhs gather and remember their Gurus and pay homage to the great Martyrs.

All the Gurburbs are celebrated with great fervor and enthusiasm by the Sikhs throughout the world. The birth-day celebrations and Gurburbs of Guru Sahibs usually last for three days. Akhand Path is held in the Gurdwara. A large procession (Nagarkirtan) is organized one day before the birthday, with singing of *Asa-di-var* and hymns from Guru Granth Sahib. Sometimes it is followed by *katha* (discourse), religious and historical lectures and recitation of poems in praise of the Guru. Kirtan-Darbars and Amrit Sanchar ceremonies are also held in the Gurdwara hall. After *Ardas* and distribution of *Karah Parshad* (sweet pudding) the *langar* (food) is served to one and all and there is *kirtan* till late in the night, the distribution of *langar* continues to the end of the program.

2. **Baisakhi:** Baisakhi is New Year's Day in Punjab. It falls on the month of Vaisakh. This festival marks the ripening of the Rabi harvest. The day coincides with the solar equinox on the 13th of April. The Guru Granth Sahib is ceremonially taken out, symbolically bathed with milk and water and placed on its throne. Priests called the *Panch Pyare* then chant the verses that were recited by the original *Panch Pyare*. The traditional folk dances of Punjab, called the *Gidda* and *Bhangra*, are performed with great enthusiasm. Processions include mock duels and bands playing religious tunes. The celebrations of Baisakhi are similar to the three-day schedule of the celebrations of other Gurburabs. It is generally celebrated on 13th April every year. Thousands of pilgrims from around the world come to Pakistan every year to celebrate the Baisaki festivals in the *Nankana Sahib* near Lahore and *Panjab Sahib* in HasanAbdal.
3. **Holla Mohalla:** Holla Mohalla is a Sikh festival celebrated in the month of Phalguna, a day after Holi. An annual festival held at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab, Holla Mohalla was started by the tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, as a gathering of Sikhs for military exercises and mock battles on the day following the festival of Holi. It reminds the people of valor and defense preparedness, concepts dear to the Tenth Guru. On this three-day festival mock battles are held followed by music and poetry competitions. The Nihang Singhs (members of the Sikh army that was founded by Guru Govind Singh) carry on the martial tradition with mock battles and displays of swordsmanship and horse riding. They perform daring feats, such as *Gatka* (mock encounters), tent pegging, bareback horse-riding and standing erect on two speeding horses.

On the last day a long procession, led by *Panj Pyaras*, starts from Takth Keshgarh Sahib, one of the five Sikh religious seats, and passes through various important Gurdwaras like Qila Anandgarh, Lohgarh Sahib, Mata Jitoji and terminates at the Takth. The tenth guru Gobind Singh felt that Holi, had lost its original meaning over the years. It was no longer a celebration to

reaffirm fraternity and brotherhood. In 1757 AD he decided to revive the spirit of Holi and weave its essence into a festival.

4. **Maghi:** Maghi is the occasion when Sikhs commemorate the sacrifice of forty Sikhs, who fought for Guru Gobindh Singh Ji. For Sikhs, Maghi means primarily the festival at Muktsar, a district town of the Punjab, in commemoration of the heroic fight of the '*Chali Mukte*', (the Forty Liberated Ones) who laid down their lives warding off an attack by an imperial army marching in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh. The action took place near a pool of water, '*Khidrane di Dhab*', on 29 December 1705. The bodies were cremated the following day, the first of Magh (hence the name of the festival), which now falls usually on the 13th of January. Following the custom of the Sikhs to observe their anniversaries of happy and tragic events alike, Maghi is celebrated with end-to-end recital of the Guru Granth Sahib and religious divans in almost all Gurdwaras. However the largest assembly takes place at Muktsar (Punjab) where big fairs are organized and pilgrims take a holy dip in the sacred waters of sarovar and also visit several shrines. A *mahala* or big march of pilgrims from the main shrine to Gurdwara Tibbi Sahib, sacred to Guru Gobind Singh, concludes the three-day celebration.
5. **Divali, Bandi Chhorh Divas:** The Sikh celebration of the return of the sixth Nanak from detention in the Gwalior Fort coincides with Hindu festival of Diwali. This has resulted in similarity of celebration amongst Sikhs and Hindus.

The Sikhs celebrate this day as *Bandi Chhorh Divas* "the day of the release of detainees", because the sixth Nanak had agreed to his release on the condition that the other fifty-two detainees would also be released. These other fifty-two detainees were the vassal kings who had done something to annoy the emperor. The Sikhs on this day, which generally falls in October-November, hold one-day celebrations in the Gurdwaras. So in the evenings are celebrated with fire works and oil lamps are lit. The celebrations are held both in the Gurdwar and in homes. Divali a Hindu festival became the second most important festival for the Sikhs. The Sixth Guru Hargobind, was freed from imprisonment in the famous fort of Gwalior by Emperor Jahangir in October, 1619. The Guru arrived at Amritsar on the Divali day and the Hari Mandar (now known as the Golden Temple) was lit with hundreds of lamps i.e. he was received in the same way as the Lord Rama and the day came to be known as the Bandi Chhor Divas (the day of freedom).

Towards a Composite Culture

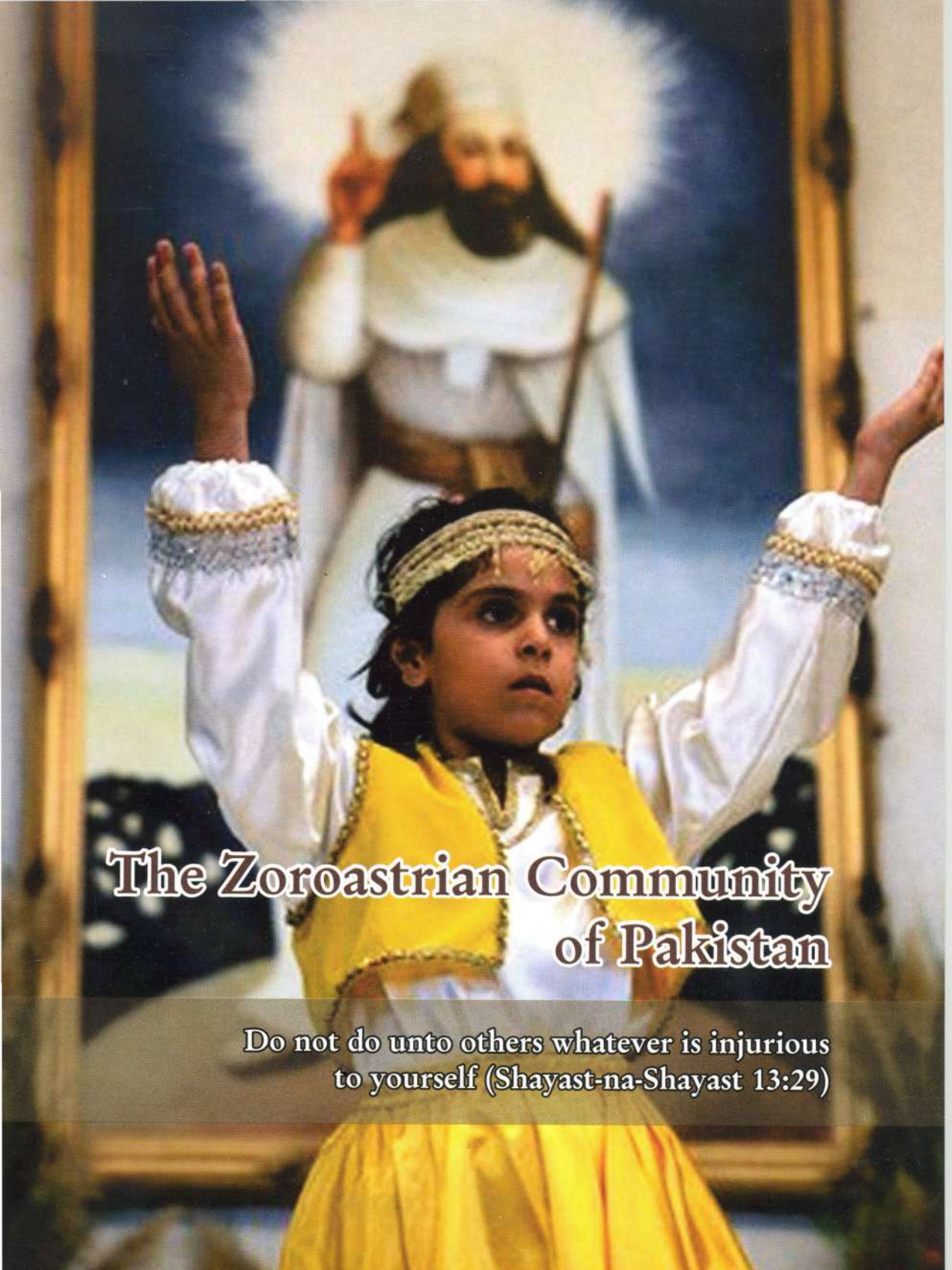
There are a considerable number of Sikhs in Nankana Sahib and even the areas adjoining the Panjah Sahib in Hasan Abdal near Rawalpindi because they have two of their most important religious shrines there. These Sikhs are likely to be associated

with the Gurdwara committees. Sikhs are also present in N.W.F.P and Sindh but the Sikhs living in West Punjab has been completely assimilated into the local community as they speak the same language and their cultural heritage is the same. The local Muslim community always welcomes the Sikh pilgrims from different parts of the world. People offer them food, drinks and other gifts as a token of their friendship. Full media coverage is given to the Sikh pilgrims and every possible step is taken to ensure their safety and comfort during their pilgrimage.

The Pakistani Sikhs are now been given their political right and now they are being inducted into the armed forces of Pakistan and the police department. They are also taking part in the active politics of the country.

Once when an unfortunate incident took place in Nankana Sahib where some hooligans attacked the Sikh students of the Nankana Sahib School and the Sikh shopkeepers. The army and the local Muslim community came to their rescue. The order was restored.

Despite these isolated events the minority communities in Pakistan are enjoying full political and religious rights. There is a need for better maintenance of the Gurdwaras and temple where there is no Hindu or Sikh population. These temples and Gurdwaras are the cultural heritage of the Punjab and therefore should be protected for the generations to come.

A young Zoroastrian girl is the central figure, wearing a traditional yellow and white dress with gold and silver embroidery on the sleeves and headband. She has her arms raised in a gesture of prayer or devotion. Behind her is a large, ornate painting of a Zoroastrian deity, likely Ahura Mazda, depicted with a long white beard, a white robe, and a tall, pointed hat. The deity is holding a staff and has a halo of light around his head. The background of the painting is a blue sky with white clouds. The girl is looking upwards with a focused expression.

The Zoroastrian Community of Pakistan

Do not do unto others whatever is injurious
to yourself (Shayast-na-Shayast 13:29)

10 The Zoroastrian Community of Pakistan

Ambrin Hayat

The Parsis follow the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism

When the civilized societies of the ancient world started to seek greater reasons for existence, different theories evolved. One such people in the earliest of the societies were the Aryans. Aryans could not be confined to a single ethnic or linguistic group. They were a conglomeration of several groups of different denominations. They lived in the steppes of Central Asia for 4500 years. Some of the tribes started to drift towards west and ended up in Scandinavia, Germany, Greece and Italy. The rest remained at the steppes and eventually formed two large groups. These groups were distinct with two different dialects that were evolved over the period of time, Avestan and an early form of Sanskrit. However the two groups shared the same religious and cultural traditions and generally lived together in harmony.

Traditionally the Aryans had worshipped a Sky God Dyaus Pitr. The Cosmos played a major role in developing the religious beliefs of the ancient people and so the wind, the storms, the gushing rivers all had a cosmic force behind them. The events on Earth were affected by the dynamics of the Universe. They believed that the spirit of Nature can be present in plants, animals, rivers and storms. Over a period of time the Aryans devised Gods that were closer to them and were identified with Nature and Cosmos alone. These were not omnipotent and did not have complete control on the cosmos and the universe. The life of the sedentary tribes took an eventful turn in the 1500s. Their interactions with the more advanced societies brought weapons and vehicles into the Aryan culture. The mild peaceful Aryans converted in to warriors. The steppes experienced incredible violence, bewildering the rest of those Aryans who still were peace loving people. Eventually the tribes who hadn't joined the mayhem

had to become part of it to defend themselves from the marauding armies. The violence and chaos went on until the 1200s when Zoroaster emerged as a saviour. Zoroaster said that he has been commissioned to bring peace and order to the region by Lord Mazda the God of wisdom and justice. He was thirty years old when he received his prophecy. He was deeply entrenched in the Aryan religion and studied to become a priest since he was seven years old. Zoroaster's vision of Ahura Mazda selecting him to fight the evil convinced him that Mazda was the Supreme God who controlled everything. For Zoroaster and his followers Mazda transcends the world and nature to become the Supreme Divinity above all other divine ahuras. Zoroaster believed that Mazda was the first to be there and Mazda is the one who created the other gods. Thus a philosophy of monotheistic tendency was initially there in the religion. The times were difficult for Zoroaster, the violence was escalating and he was helpless with no weapons and support from the people. Zoroaster meditated on the reasons why the evil is so strong and came to the conclusion that there is another being as powerful as Mazda who is evil. He concluded that some of the divine gods has paid allegiance to the Evil spirit. This brought in a dichotomy of believes in the Aryan society. For centuries the Aryans had worshipped Mazda, Indra, and the other gods. Now they had to decide whether they want to worship Mazda the God of peace and Justice or the Warrior Indra.

The division in the society was based on the theory that Indra is supporting the Evil Spirit that is creating havoc in the region. The tribes and people who are the plunderers are the earthly replicas of Indra, the daevas who are supporting the Evil and the Evil itself. On the other hand Lord Mazda who is the epitome of wisdom and Justice and his seven immortal followers are the one who are fighting the plunderers and evildoers. The people who stood up for justice are the people who are with Ahura Mazda. The world was simply divided into the supporters of Indra and the supporters of Mazda. Ahura Mazda concluded that the Evil Spirit has the allegiance of Indra and the daevas associated with Indra. He advised that the best way for a peaceful world would be that people clearly differentiate between the Good and Evil.

The complexity of the whole world was divided into simple theory of good and bad, everything that was peaceful and just was Mazda and his followers but anything that was evil, filthy and diseased was Evil. Zoroaster preached to keep the environment clean to show support for Mazda. By differentiating pure from the impure and clean from dirty they would eventually liberate the world from the clutches of the Evil Spirit. They should pray five times a day. In winter they should meditate to counter the effect of the evil spirits. Agni the God of the Fire is fighting the Evil spirit, to strengthen Agni, the pious should wake up in the night to throw incenses in the fire and keep it strong and alive. Zoroaster said that eventually Lord Mazda and his Immortals would descend on the earth and the evil forces would be wiped out. There will be a day of Great Judgment. Rivers of fire flowing into hell will incinerate the Evil Spirit. The Cosmic order would be restored to its original form, where gods and

humans will live side by side and would worship lord Mazda forever. Humans will be immortal. Zoroaster believed that all this could not be achieved in his lifetime, the Gathas says that another will come to take the mission of Mazda to its end. Zoroaster's warriors were fighting for peace and justice. They stood behind the oppressed and the weak. They cared for the environment and waged wars to protect it. People who would practice these good deeds would eventually become one with the Holy Immortals. Zoroaster was deeply entrenched in the ancient Aryan religious beliefs but even then his reasoning for fighting the evil shocked and alienated his people. After preaching for long to his own tribe, Zoroaster could have just one follower. However another tribe got highly influenced by Zoroaster's new doctrine. Vishtaspa the chief of this tribe accepted Zoroaster's teachings as holy and established the Zoroastrian faith as the religion of his territory. Zoroaster lived in his court and advocated war against injustice. By the end of the second millennium the Avestan speaking Aryan tribes had migrated to what is present day Persia and established the Zoroastrian religion there. The Zoroastrian religion is thus basically regarded as an Iranian religion.

The Scriptures

Avesta is the ancient sacred text. Zend Avesta is a commentary on these holy texts.

The Scripture Avesta is divided into two parts, the Avesta and the Khorda Avesta.

Avesta contains Yasna, Vispered and the Vendidad.

Yasna is a very important part of the Avesta, as it contains the five Gathas in its first part. Gathas are hymns written by the Prophet Zoroaster himself, they are the only source to which we can refer to for the philosophy and the life of the Prophet. Yasnas is written in an ancient dialect spoken much before the language in which the rest of the Avesta is written. In the second part the Yasna contains the prayers addressed to Ahura Mazda as well as prayers addressed to Holy Immortals around him. In this part the Yasna also has ceremonies to be performed by the believers.

Vispered

It is a compilation of litanies of invocations that are used before prayers and the rituals of sacrifice.

Vendidad has mythical tales and religious laws. A large part of Vendidad has laws for the purification of the soul and the mind. In Vendidad, Zoroaster is seeking answers to many problems that he encounters. Ahura Mazda is giving answers to these queries.

The scriptures originally had twenty one treatises, which are called Nosaks. Some of the Nosaks are lost in time; however the Nosaks that are preserved are studies on medicine, astronomy, botany, philosophy and agriculture.

Khorda Avesta contains invocations and prayers. Khorda Avesta is more for an ordinary believer as compared to Avesta which is more academic and intense and is meant more for the priests and for formal occasions. The prayers in Khorda Avesta

are recited daily by the Parsis. Parts of Khorda are ancient and some parts are written much later.

Places of Worship

The Temples are called Dar-i- Mihr a door of Mithra, in the subcontinent the temples are called Agiaris, originating from Agni, the fire.

There are no idols or even icons in the temple. There is only the Holy Fire to be revered. The Temples are graded on the purity of fire inside them they are Atash Dedgah, where the fire is ordinary fire; it can be kept in a home and touched by anyone.

The fire in Atash Dadaran is consecrated after religious rituals and ceremonies. Only a priest can touch this fire and great care is taken to keep it lighted.

The Holy Fire in Atash Bahram is the holiest of all. After a year long religious rituals and ceremonies this fire is lighted. This fire is constantly watched and guarded by the priests who go through the highest forms of purification.

The fire is usually kept in the part of the temple which has a dome roof at the top. A brass or copper urn is used to keep the fire on a table made of stone. The Mobed who is the priest at the temple cleans the room and washes the stone table five times a day. He sprinkles sandalwood on the fire to keep it alight and also sprinkles perfume and incense to keep the environment fragrant. In order to keep the Holy Fire pure and protected from his breath, he covers the lower portion of his face with a veil. While performing these religious tasks he chants prayers invoking the blessings of the holy fire to ward off the evil.

Generally all the temples are divided in to two portions one that houses the holy fire and the other where religious ceremonies are performed.

Pilgrimage

Udvada

In Surat in India is considered the holiest of the holy places for pilgrimage. The group who first came to Sanjan brought with them the holiest fire in Iran. They took great care to preserve it while traveling in a boat to Gujarat. Once the Raja gave them permission to stay on, they built a Temple for this holy fire. This fire is very sacred to Zoroastrians. They come from all over the world to pray at this Temple.

The 'Special Fires'

In the hamlets of the Yazd province in Iran, a number of ancient spiritual fires are preserved. The fire that is burning in the village of Sharifabad is said to be more than 2,000 years old. The temple is the only Atash Behram in Iran. There are eight in India.

There are also the legendary "flying fires".

The Zoroastrians believe that long ago these special fires came flying into Zoroastrian villages. These special fires were found glowing on a cypress tree in the village. Over the decades devout "Atashbands" (keepers of the Holy Fire) have preserved these Fires with great devotion.

The Holy Shrines

Holy Shrines in Iran are called and revered as "Pir". These shrines are usually on the mountains and consists of sacred rocks.

Prof Mary Boyce in her book, 'A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism', writes, "These sanctuaries were very dear to the Zoroastrians. So much so that one explanation, which they gave for their, was that they had been spared 'for the sake of those in the hills'. That is, so that they might continue to worship at these remote places, and to maintain the rites which were proper to them."

"The five sanctuaries," continues Boyce, "and one other in the plain near the city of Yezd, were in communal trust. Each village looked after the shrines in its own fields and lanes, but all joined together to care for these six. To visit any of them on any occasion was an act of much merit, but the merit was greatest when one joined in the yearly pilgrimage at the time appointed. Each pilgrimage lasted officially for five days, like each of the major festivals."

Seti Pir

Seti Pir is situated east of Yezd and it is the shrine that marks the place where Yazdagird's queen (Shahbanoo Hastbadan), the mother of the princesses, Banu-Pars and Hayat-Banu, herself fleeing from the invaders, jumped into a deep well, together with her two attendants, to save her honour. Seti Pir is, therefore, regarded as the mother of the other five great Pirs.

There is also a fascinating account of how the shrine was built. A man from Yezd was imprisoned and sentenced to death. In prison, the man who was a Zoroastrian had a dream in which he was told the story of Seti Pir and was asked to narrate that story to others. He was also commanded in his dream to build a shrine to Seti Pir on the spot he would find himself the next morning. When he woke up the next morning, he found himself not in his prison cell but in Yezd.

Banu-Pars

According to legend, Yazdegird's daughter, Banu-Pars, fleeing from invaders, came to Yezd she was tired and thirsty. As the people following her were drawing close she kept running and stumbled on a dry river bed. She went further into the mountains and cried out to Dadaar Ahura Mazda for help and He opened the rock before her and she hastened in, never to be seen again.

Childless women often have wishes fulfilled after praying at this Pir.

Pir-e-Sabz

Situated on the northeastern side of the Yezdi plain one has to drive through miles of dry desert. And, then, suddenly, a green area appears on the mountains an Oasis popularly known as Chak-Chak or Pir-e-Sabz. The sacred rock where 'Nek Banu' or 'Hayat Banu' is believed to have been taken in is up on the mountain, besides a pool of water. A small spring falls into the pool, the trickling water appears to be green because of the maidenhair fern growing all around it. These ferns are believed to be the hair of the princess, the huge old tree which shades the sacred rock is believed to

have grown from a branch that the princess thrust into the ground before vanishing. This tree is said to catch fire and then grows again after every thousand years.

The devotees, some of them even suffering from arthritis, rheumatism and heart disease climb their way up to offer their respects at this Holiest of Holy shrine in Iran. The trickle of water that comes out of the mountain is called Abe Hayat, the flow of the water increases if more pilgrims come to pay homage. Whether a dozen pilgrims come or five thousand, there is always sufficient water for everyone, provided the laws of purity are observed.

The view from the uppermost terrace at Pir-e-Sabz is stupendous and one can visualize how the tired and thirsty princess must have come running to this mountain, how she must have prayed for protection and aid. Pir-e-Sabz is also symbolic of the victory of good over evil. No wonder when the Iranian Zoroastrians come back from their annual pilgrimage in the mountains, they come back stronger in their beliefs and conviction in their great religion.

Pir-e-Nauraki

Pir-e-Nauraki is situated at the foot of a mountain of the same name, in the valley of Gaigun. According to one source, the shrine is dedicated to an unnamed princess of Yazdagird. According to the other source, it is dedicated to "Naazbanu", the daughter of a Zoroastrian Governor.

The shrine is a mountain oasis in the middle of a vast and barren desert. The mountains with sprinkle of snow at the top, even in late spring, provide a beautiful backdrop. The air is fragrant with the variety of flora and fauna grows around the shrine.

Pir-e-Hrist

The shrine rests on the crest of a ridge, which rises from the shingle in the mountain range. A maid named Morvarid se fled with a child of the royal family, she is believed to have been taken in by the mountain at this spot.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

The origin

More than a thousand years ago, some Zoroastrians mostly from the Fars province of Iran set out for greener pastures. They were also being discriminated against and were being persecuted in their own land for their religious beliefs. India a neighboring country was known for its acceptance and tolerance of other religions for thousands of years. This group of men, women and children arrived at Sangan a small principality in western Indian state of Gujarat. The people of Sangan were surprised to see these mostly fair skinned people, speaking a peculiar language and wearing long tunics. The leader of the group sought an audience with the Raja. The Raja put some conditions on them before they could be given asylum. He said that they will be free to practice their religion and pursue life as they wished, but that they will have to abandon their language and adopt the local Gujarati language, their women will wear sari the local dress and that they will not hold their wedding ceremonies during day time. The Priest

who was the leader of the group asked for a glass of milk and sugar, he mixed the sugar in the milk and asked the Raja to try to separate the milk from the sugar. Of course it was not expected to be done. He promised the Raja that that was how his group will assimilate with the local population. The Raja was amused by this description and granted asylum. History is witness to the fact that this was probably one of the best decisions taken in granting asylums to a community. Raja of Sangan in his benevolence to this group did a great service to his country. This community of Zoroastrians guarded their religious beliefs and ethnicity religiously. However they abandoned their language to speak Gujarati and the women took to wearing saris in the local style. They made sure that all the weddings took place after sunset as advised by the Raja. They totally immersed themselves in the local culture and also acquired the local acumen for trade and commerce. The rest is history. This group was distinct because of its religious beliefs and strong guard on its ethnicity, as they married amongst themselves only.

They came from Fars and were thus known as Farsi or Parsi in the local Gujarati language. More groups from Iran joined them and they spread over to Surat and other areas in Gujarat. They were honest, patriotic and hard working people. As time went by their business acumen developed. Bombay was being evolved as a major port; the Parsis envisioned a great business opportunity in Bombay. They migrated to Bombay in hordes and set up businesses which turned out to be enormously successful. The Parsi Wadia family practically developed the Bombay Port. Many other Parsi families tried their luck in a variety of other business ventures and because of their honest dealings, hard work and a sharp business acumen became very prosperous. Bombay emerged as a hub of the community in the 19th century. Geo political situations presented other venues to be explored. Sindh became part of the Bombay Presidency, opening new avenues for the Gujarati speaking business community of Bombay. Irrespective of religious affiliation the community is a very successful business people. Parsis along with the Gujarati Hindus and Gujarati Muslims came to Karachi to set up business. Some even went to Thatta and Hyderabad. Some drifted even further and settled in Quetta. An adventurous family went to Multan and a few went on to Lahore and a couple to Peshawar. However the major part of the community settled in Karachi where they lived and prospered with other Gujarati speaking groups of the cosmopolitan city. They had adopted the Gujarati language and customs wholeheartedly when they had first arrived and continued with them. Karachi became home to these dynamic people who were instrumental in its progress and welfare.

Pakistan Our Home

Parsis's contribution towards building the economy, the infrastructure and their tremendous capacity to give back to the society they live in has made them one of the most respected people in Pakistan. Parsis are dedicated to their jobs, have good work ethics and impress people by their integrity. They are mild people who don't get involved in any controversies. They don't impose their point of view on others and

generally live life by the policy of live and let live. Thus the community has produced excellent teachers and doctors and very successful business people amongst other professions. Above all they have produced exemplary citizens. Parsis don't go out converting people to their faith and do not take people into their religion even when they want to join in on their own. They generally marry amongst Parsis, not even to Zoroastrians from other ethnic backgrounds. Today there is 100% literacy in the Parsi community in Pakistan. There is an incredible sense of responsibility towards each other amongst the community. You will never come across a Paris who could be from the working class or some one who could be termed poor. The community has a well established system of helping every member to be able to make a decent living. Generally speaking Parsis are very well established people in Pakistan.

One winter afternoon I set out to meet one such person in Pindi. It was a cold afternoon for Islamabad/ Pindi, but the sun was out and the day despite being cold was bright. I had a pleasant drive to Ghoshi Bhandara's beautiful neighborhood. The house Ghoshi lives in reflects her personality in many ways. I entered a warm inviting home devoid of any artificiality. Just like Ghoshi herself. Ghoshi exudes an aura of serenity around her, she is petite and elegant. All the Parsi women of Ghoshi's age group in the Karachi of 20 years ago would always wear a sari, well that stereotype of 50 something Parsi women in the Karachi of yesteryears came shattering down as Ghoshi emerged in a brown woolen shalwar qameez suit. We settled in our seats and started talking about Ghoshi. However first I thanked Ghoshi for taking out time for me that afternoon. I had wanted to come a little early but Ghoshi had said that she says her Asr prayers at that time, so we decided to meet after the Asr time. Ghoshi was born with a silver spoon in her mouth in the well known Khandawalla family of Karachi, on a day that is celebrated by the Hindus as the day of Goddess Laxmi. That day there were celebrations all over the world and also in the Khadawalla family's Parsi home. Ghoshi's paternal grand ma was overjoyed by her little princess's arrival. She had predicted that this little girl would grow up to be a very wealthy woman. She named Ghoshi after a Zorastrian saint. The Grandma Khandawalla was deeply religious and left her influence on Ghoshi. When Grandma would be praying and Ghoshi as a little child would sit beside her, the Grandma would say that in the end she will give everything to Ghoshi. Innocent little Ghoshi would dream of inheriting all of the Grandma's dazzling diamonds and beautiful silk and chiffon sarees, intricately embellished with the gara embroidery done at the Karachi's Parsi industrial home. Well in the end Grandma left much more for Ghoshi then just material things. Khandawalla girls go to the Karachi Grammar School and so did Ghoshi. When it was time for Ghoshi's Navjot ceremony Ghoshi's parents planned a big celebration. Grandma Khandawalla insisted that the Grand Priest of the community would perform the ceremony even though Ghoshi was not the eldest grand child. In the end it was a very impressive occasion with the Grand Priest performing the ceremony and 6 other priests assisting him. As Ghoshi finished high school, like the other

Khandawalla girls, she too was sent to a finishing school in the States. The Khandawallas could live a very comfortable life, all thanks to Grand Pa Khandawalla who set up a successful business empire. The Khandawalla Motors was a prosperous enterprise, assembling motor cars and jeeps. He also invested heavily in real estate. When Ghoshi was a little girl her parents along with Ghoshi and her sisters went to live in Lahore to look after some business interests there. The Parsi Community in Lahore was miniscule as compared to the roaring community in Karachi. However Ghoshi's Mom soon found her childhood friend from Mama Parsi School in Karachi, married to a Lahore Parsi Business man a Mr. Bhandara. Both Mrs. Bhandara and Mrs. Khandawalla were delighted to meet in Lahore and the friendship continued. Mrs. Bhandara could see that her son Minoo was quite in awe of Ghoshi, and when Minoo would not eat up his dinner or wouldn't finish his home work, Mrs Bhandara would say that if he doesn't do such an such thing she would ask Ghoshi not to play with him. And Mrs Bhandara's command would soon be carried out. Well Ghoshi soon moved back to Karachi with her family. After Ghoshi returned from her finishing school Mrs. Bhandara requested Mrs. Khandawalla for Ghoshi's hand on her son Minoo's behalf. Though Mrs. Khandawalla was delighted, Ghoshi refused. Well after sometime Ghoshi realized that Minoo was the person for her and accepted his proposal this time. When Mrs. Bhandara Sr. asked Ghoshi where she would like to live, Ghoshi decided to live in Rawalpindi where the Bhandara family business was. So Ghoshi adopted Rawalpindi as her new home and raised a beautiful family in the city. She and her late husband had a very happy married life. She has two sons and a daughter. The daughter and one of the sons are married, they all live in the same housing compound, which has beautiful architecture and an air of grace around it. Like a big happy family they all eat together on the same table. The grandchildren play together in the same compound. Ghoshi has a little dispensary in the yard from where she gives herbal and homeopathic medicine to people. As we sat talking, Ghoshi said 'come I want to show you the sacred fire'. I walked with Goshi to her room, she showed me the little temple in her room, she explained the importance of the fire and the fact that it is not just the fire that is sacred you actually seek God through it. There were pictures of Goshi's parents and grand parents. There were other sacred paintings in the room too. She also showed me her rosary which she keeps in her little temple. There was a picture of a painting of the God with the Prophet Zoraster and other saints, Ghoshi said that her Grandma got that probably from Iran years ago it hangs in the Khandawalla House in Karachi. It is a very special painting and her friends ask her to get a picture for them, and she does that often. As I thanked Ghoshi for sharing this special painting and showing the temple to me, Ghoshi said 'wait I want to show you some more', and walked further in the room through a door to an adjoining room, there she surprised me by showing me a Quran. She said she reads the Quran too, she said she never learnt reading Arabic from anyone, It justy comes to her naturally. I remembered then that when we were setting the time she did mention that she says

her Asr prayers. Ghoshi said yes that is exactly what she had meant. I saw the four Quls hanging on a wall in this room. As I walked back to her room I saw that on the bracket on one of the walls with family pictures and other Parsi religious icons there was also a statue of Virgin Mary, yes Ghoshi believes in her too. I also observed two good Japanese ink paintings in her room and told Ghoshi that I am also interested in Japanese ink paintings. Ghoshi said she believes in Feng Shui and the bamboo paintings are there to protect, she said she also had another one of a mountain in her TV lounge, bamboo and mountains are both symbols of protection. We came back to her drawing room and Ghoshi told me that she once studied meditation and could achieve the state of Nirvana at times, but left it as she did not have a real Guru for guidance.

Ghoshi seemed deeply entrenched in the Parsi religion at first. She is very proud of her Parsi ancestry. But later I realized that she believes in a form of Sufism too. Her way of life is modest and simple despite all her wealth; she helps the poor, she looks content and has a very pleasant disposition. As I was leaving Ghoshi said 'I attract wealth, it comes to me from nowhere, I don't desire wealth, and it just keeps coming to me'.

CULTURAL ROOTS

Cultural Heritage: and the Contemporary Scene

The paramount cultural legacy of the Parsi community is their incredible sense of giving back to the society they live in. Together with the other business communities from their area they became pioneers in philanthropy in the city. Not only did they helped and looked after the not so fortunate in their own community, they generously donated towards the welfare and upliftment of the people of the city irrespective of their religious affiliations. They were instrumental in developing the economy and the infrastructure of the city. Karachi was a growing city, as the population increased, the water became scarce, the affluent had wells dug up in their houses, but the poor were suffering, the widow of Dadabhoy Shapurju Kothari had a well dug at Rattan Talao for the parsis community. After a few years Shapurjee Sopariwala had another well dug up again at Rattan Talao which he handed over to the Municipal government to be used by everyone. The Parsi community has always come out to help their fellow citizens in times of natural calamities; Edulji Dinshaw was prominent for opening up dispensaries all over the city. He contributed handsomely towards the building of the Lady Dufferin Hospital in Karachi. Spencer Eye hospital is another living example of the Parsi tradition of giving back to the society. The Parsis contributed in many ways in the development of the society, one of which was providing good quality education. The descendants of Edulji Dinshaw who built dispensaries and hospitals built the first Engineering University; The Nadirshah Edulji Dinshaw Engineering University has produced thousands of very capable engineers of the country. The B.V.S. Parsi School and the Mama Parsi School both are excellent institutions producing generations of

productive citizens of the country. A Parsi mayor of Karachi, Jamshed Nusserwanjee Mehta was elected twelve times to the mayor ship of the city; he had made Karachi into the cleanest city of Asia at the time. Jehangir Kothari 's name has become eternal with the name of the city , he donated his magnificent villa to the citizens and built the Kothari Parade at Clifton beach for common man. There are innumerable Parsi charitable deeds towards the society they live in. Thus sitting back and thinking whether the Raja at Sangan made a good decision in granting asylum to the group from Fars a thousand years ago, millions of people who benefited from the benevolence of the community later on will say yes. As citizens of the country they proved to be hard working, honest, law abiding, excellent citizens who contributed to the development of the country and the society at every stage. Their contribution in developing the industry helped build the economy and their immense contribution in the education and welfare sector and bringing in a good moral and ethical value system enriched the society.

Customs

The Navjote ceremony is the initiation ceremony for all Parsis when the boys reach the age of thirteen and the girls the age of nine years.

On this day they start wearing the Sudreh a white chemise made of cotton/muslin.

Kashti, a blackwool hand made belt comes from Udvada. Special prayers are said on Khasti by the priests in Udvada. The khasti is tied around the waist. A Parsi is expected to wear the Sudreh and Khasti all his life.

After the child has worn the sudreh and the khasti, a pure Muslim handkerchief is put on the palm, on the handkerchief a pomegranate is placed. The child is given a pomegranate leaf to chew.

The process makes the person pure. Now the child is ready to be initiated into the religion. A priest says the prayers and the child is formally taken into Zoroastrianism.

Festivals

There are three main festivals for Parsis in the Subcontinent.

Nauroze is celebrated on the 21st of March on the Equinox, the arrival of spring and for the Zoroastrians it is the beginning of the New Year.

Papeti is celebrated by the Parsis of the Subcontinent also as the beginning of the New Year. It is calculated according to the lunar calendar which is followed by the Parsis who came to the Subcontinent and it starts from the time they arrived at Sanjan.

Khordaad Saal is the birthday of the prophet Zoroaster.

Towards a Composite Culture

Sometimes it is beneficial for minority communities to merge with the mainstream culture of the society. However the benefits of such an exercise are subjective. An important consideration in such a situation is how secular and tolerant the mainstream culture is. And how overwhelmingly it identifies with a single cultural identity. In order to conserve its religious and ethnic traditions a minority community should be cautious of complete assimilation into mainstream culture of any society. However a

cosmopolitan culture is an ideal culture where no culture can intimidate or overwhelm the other culture. A minority community enriches the culture of the society by its presence. Multicultural and multiethnic societies because of their high tolerance and acceptance levels produce better human beings. Citizens of cosmopolitan cultures have rich cultural traditions to follow and an urge to learn of the outside world. Good citizens of cosmopolitan cultures are tolerant people whose lives are enriched by multicultural and multi religious traditions of their societies. Cosmopolitan people are ready to accept people as they are. They believe in the goodness of humanity and rise above communal and ethnic strife. They are ready to help their fellow citizens in times of need irrespective of their religious affiliations.

The Parsi community in Karachi has contributed tremendously towards cultural traditions of the city. They are part of the mainstream culture of the city yet they have a distinctive identity of their own. This is what rich cosmopolitan traditions of a city are. Where a minority community has the ability to retain its core identity and yet be part of the general culture of the society. Any society, which is capable of generating a cosmopolitan culture, is a generous and tolerant society. Such societies can be termed the main beneficiaries of their own traditions. They are able to produce better literature, better arts and crafts and good citizens. Who all own up the welfare of the state and its citizens and contribute towards it. It is imperative for the city of Karachi to retain its two hundred years old cosmopolitan traditions. As the demographics and dynamics of the situation changes with times it becomes a little difficult to retain cultural traditions. The citizens of Karachi will have to make an honest and earnest effort to religiously guard their cosmopolitan traditions and culture. The positive cultural, social and religious contribution of the cosmopolitan traditions has made Karachi into a dynamic city. The pluralistic religious and ethnic traditions of the city are a reason for celebration; they have contributed immensely for its social and economic development. I have a Parsi friend from Karachi who is married to a German diplomat. This gives her the ability to live in many cultures. I was pleasantly surprised to see that although she speaks German with her husband, she speaks Gujarati with her teenage children. Her sister who lives in the US is married to an Iranian. Despite the overwhelming American culture, which eventually engulfs everyone who lives there, this sister too speaks Gujarati with her children. The children of these two Parsi women will grow up with well-defined cultural heritage. These are the strong cultural roots that Parsi community has and should retain. They should repel the compulsions to integrate in a homogenous culture. They should contribute towards the centuries old cosmopolitan traditions of the city and should retain their ethnic and religious identity in that paradigm.



■■■ HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
PAKISTAN

SARRC
South Asian Research and Resource Centre