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Religious Traditions and Early Ismaili History in South Asia: Some Historical Perspectives on Satpanthi Literature and the Ginans

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Abstract

Recent research on the Ginans – the devotional poems of the Ismailis of South Asia – has opened up avenues of inquiry that have the potential to throw light on unexplored aspects of religion and society in South Asia. The following article reviews some recent research on the Ginans against the backdrop of religious change in medieval and early modern South Asia. It suggests that Ismailis may well have played a greater part in South Asian religious and literary history than previously suspected.

Key words:

Bhakti, batini, da'ir 'Abd Allah, *ginans*, Imam-Caliph al-Mustansir bi'llah, Kalki, India, Ismailis, Ismaili Khojas, Jats, Nizari Ismailis, Nur Muhammad Shah, Pir Shams, Puranas, Rajputs, Satgur Nur, Satpanthi, Siddharaja, South Asia, Sufi, Vaishnavism

In recent years, there has been significant research on the literature of the Ismailis in South Asia. In addition, there has been some investigation of the parallels between Ismaili literature and practices with those of certain other groups, particularly in Western India.ⁱ Although this research has produced results with important consequences, it is still on the margins of the history of South Asian religions and literature. This might be an appropriate occasion to evaluate the implications of this research from a historical point of view and list some of the issues that might be clarified by more research.

How are the Ginans to be placed in the broader history of religious literature in South Asia? Although the earliest manuscripts of the Ginans date from the 18th century, they obviously refer to events and traditions of an earlier date.ⁱⁱ What then can these compositions tell us about religious conditions of the medieval period? How are the Ginans and Satpanthi compositions studied at present and can alternative approaches be suggested? Although these questions cannot be answered authoritatively at present, an attempt will be made to set the context for further research.

An Overview of Religious Developments in Medieval South Asia

Muslims have lived in coastal western India and interacted with indigenous groups from the early centuries of Muslim history. This long history of engagement between Muslims and indigenous

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groups is closely bound up with the transformation and evolution of local polities and societies. From the ninth century, Ismaili preachers were active in Sindh and from the late 11th century onwards there is evidence that the Ismailis had established small areas of influence all over northern India. Meanwhile, the political landscape was transforming. Local pastoralist chieftaincies were replaced or subdued by the Delhi Sultanate (1297-1526 CE) which sent armies over large parts of the subcontinent. Many local rulers were defeated and supplanted by governors from Delhi – as in Gujarat – while other chieftains retained their holdings on payment of tribute. Pastoralist clans migrated to Gujarat, Sindh and Rajasthan, settling and clearing new territories and establishing new principalities. Over time, many of these were incorporated into a widening network of clans who intermarried and established a hierarchy of status amongst themselves – later collectively called Rajputs. Other clans, some of whom were militarily less successful or were incorporated by conquest into the Rajput hierarchy, achieved lower-status positions.

Buddhism was then in decline all over north India, including Sindh. In southern Sindh, sections of the Buddhist laity in the towns seem to have converted to Sunni Islam.ⁱⁱⁱ In northern and western India, the expansion of medieval Hindu polities, such as those of the Gurjara Pratiharas, the Rashtrakutas and, later, the Caulukyias, over new areas was marked by the building of temples. Another aspect of religiosity in the period was the prevalence of Hindu ascetic orders including the *naths* and *jogis* who often feature in early Sufi and Ismaili traditions. From the 15th century, popular forms of Vaishnavism were beginning to spread in northern and western India and sites traditionally associated with Krishna were being incorporated into a trans-regional pilgrimage cycle.^{iv}

Along the western coast, the introduction of Islam was neither through conquest nor by militant - Sufis as in north India and Bengal. The earliest layer of conversion to Islam was accomplished through persuasion and discursive means which did not insist on relinquishing established life-cycle customs. There is evidence that Sunni Muslim missionaries had achieved some success in Western India. By the 13th century, apart from the long-established colonies of Muslim merchants in the coastal towns, there were also inland settlements in places like Patan, Bharuch and Junagadh.^v According to the Verawal inscription of 1264, local Muslim communities included oil-pressers, whitewashers and other occupational groups.^{vi}

While Muslim merchants were settling along the coast of western India from the eighth century, the local traditions that were later subsumed under Hinduism were undergoing a profound reformulation and reaching into new areas. While several cults and sects were appropriated into state-sponsored Brahmanism, others were evolving and migrating. As pastoralist clans settled, found new resources and were incorporated into military hierarchies and employment, they became part of a trans-regional armed peasantry with their own sanctified heroes, deities and mother-goddesses.^{vii}

Ismaili History in Northern and Western India

It is increasingly clear that Ismaili preachers were influential in many parts of north and north-west India from a very early period. There were Ismailis in Sindh by the late ninth century where a political outpost of the Fatimid Caliphate was established in Multan.^{viii} The Fatimid principality lasted less than 50 years and was destroyed by the Sunni Ghaznavid ruler, Mahmud in 1005, but small Ismaili populations continued to live in the Sindh-Multan region. After this, the *da'wa* (mission) in Multan remained in existence and Ismaili revolts against the Ghaznavid governor occurred in 1041 CE and then against the Ghurids in 1175 CE.



Although there is no certainty about what groups were the first to be converted, it is likely that these included pastoralist and peasant groups from the countryside in upper Sindh, perhaps including branches of the Jats and Sumras.^{ix} However, this phase of pre-Nizari Ismaili influence in Sindh does not seem to be explicitly associated with or recalled in the Ginans.

The next Ismaili mission was established in Gujarat by *da'is* from Sulayhid Yemen in the reign of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustansir bi'llah (d. 1094 CE). According to a version from the Musta'li Ismaili tradition, a *da'i* 'Abd Allah arrived in Gujarat and made his way to the capital, eventually winning over the local ruler. After the Nizari-Musta'li schism of 1094 CE, the Nizari variant of Ismaili Islam was introduced into Sindh and became the dominant form, with its main centre at Ucch, south of Multan. This time, proselytisation was aimed at the trading communities and sections of the Lohana community were converted.

Missionaries now began to travel to other parts of north India and the next major sites of Ismaili settlement and activity were Gujarat, Kutch and Rajasthan. The Druze sect was also active in Sindh.^x Small colonies of Ismaili merchants appear to have settled in the trading ports along the coast. The earliest Muslim buildings in India, at Bhadresvar in Kutch, were constructed by Ismaili merchants with links to Fatimid Yemen in the late 12th century.^{xi} Although there is no evidence that this colony had spread further inland or had links with other Ismaili groups in the subcontinent, missionary influence in the hinterland can be inferred from a 12th-century Ismaili gravestone of the son of a *da'i* at Nagaur in Rajasthan.^{xii} From about this time, various *da'is* are believed to have been active in north India, beginning with Satgur Nur. Pir Shams travelled in Sindh and Punjab and is also believed to have carried the message to Kashmir and Bengal.^{xiii} We thus have a picture of Ismaili missionaries fanning out into northern and western India from the late ninth century. By 1500 CE, pockets of Ismaili influence were to be found all over North India, particularly in Sindh, southern Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

In the early period, it appears that the Ismailis in western India consisted of ethnic Arab or Persian merchant settlers as well as local converts from pastoralist, cultivating or merchant groups. These may have included militarised peasants and pastoralists from north-west India, some of whom went on to become part of the emerging Rajput hierarchy.^{xiv} The early tales of the Ismaili mission include narratives in which the *da'is* were faced with formidable adversaries in the shape of *jogis* or ascetics and Sufi *pirs*. In most narratives, the *da'is* were victorious and their opponents banished or accepted the Ismaili message. After the fall of Alamut to the Mongols in 1256 CE, more Nizari missionaries came to Sindh and Gujarat with Ucch in particular becoming an important centre. While the Nizari missionaries worked among the peasant and pastoralist groups, the Musta'li influence seems to have been restricted to merchant groups who came to be called Bohras or Vohras. Although it appears that Musta'lis did not have a wider influence, this has not yet been systematically researched.

Ismailis did not acquire lasting political power in South Asia (apart from the short-lived Fatimid outpost in Multan in the tenth century) but their history in the region is inextricably bound up with political and religious changes. The Ismailis had to compete for resources with other religious groups active in this period. The *da'is* were obliged to be aware of the hierarchies within the local society they encountered, and accordingly they approached powerful pastoralist groups, some of whom took on a militant character and posed a military challenge to the towns and centres of power. In the narratives of the early *da'wa* are several instances which describe the conversion of local rulers, their wives and courtiers.^{xv} The Nizari tradition of the conversion of



the Caulukya king of Gujarat, Siddharaja (reigned 1094-1143 CE), is a good example of this genre. Here, the *da'i* Satgur Nur is said to have made the idol in the royal temple appear to dance at his bidding, which led the priest to surrender to *da'i* Nur. He then had a confrontation with and routed the king's magician preceptor, a *jogi* or Saivite ascetic. After witnessing several miracles, the king and queen accepted the new faith.^{xvi} The narrative indicates familiarity with the structure of Caulukya authority, recognising the priest as the custodian of the idol-temple and the *jogi* as the ruler's counsellor.^{xvii}

The formative phase of Nizari activities in South Asia from the 12-15th centuries has hardly been chronicled in non-Ismaili historical records. With a few exceptions, the traditions recorded in the Ginans are almost the sole source of information about them. This is partly due to the Ismailis' own tradition of *taqiyya* or protective dissimulation and partly because most historical chronicles of Muslim India were written by Sunni authors. However, the scattered and often coded references to Ismailis can be collated and analysed to get a clearer picture of the activities of the *da'wa* and its adherents.

In the histories of the Sunni sultans of Delhi, there are scattered mentions of groups characterised as '*batini*' (esoteric), *Qarmati*, *Ibahati* and so on, and it is likely that some of these were references to the Ismailis.^{xviii} Similar characterisations about rebellious groups in Kutch and Sindh also appear in the histories of the sultans of Gujarat in the 15th and 16th centuries. Mahmud Begada (reigned 1458-1511 CE), the most prominent sultan of Gujarat, campaigned against the chieftains of the region in 1472 CE and compelled their submission. These chieftains included Sumras, Baluchis and Sodhas, collectively stigmatised as *Ibahatis*, a common euphemism for Ismailis.^{xix} His injunctions to them included giving up matrimonial and other relations with Hindus and being instructed in the appropriate practices of (Sunni) Islam.^{xx} According to the official histories, Mahmud and other sultans of Gujarat took a hard line against rebels and dissidents, regardless of their religious conviction. Ismaili tradition, however, credits Mahmud with granting the Ismaili preacher Imam Shah land near the capital Ahmadabad. By the end of the 15th century, the influence of Ismailis in Gujarat was in decline, partly due to the activities of the sultans and local Sufi groups.

Although the Ginans are virtually the only source of information about the activities of the *da'wa* in this period, it is clear that this was a time when considerable success was achieved. This is buttressed by the recent recording of new information about the *da'wa* and its adherents from the compositions and traditions of pastoralist and occupational groups such as the Bishnois, Meghvals, Ahirs and so on. Many of these corroborate and reflect the themes in the Ginans and show that Ismaili influence encompassed much wider circles than previously suspected. They indicate that the sects of Ramdev, Jambha, Ai Mata and other such figures that appear to be manifestations of saint and hero-worship within popular Hinduism, were formerly part of the larger *Nizari da'wa* in the subcontinent (sometimes called the Satpanth) and are still linked through the commonality of their compositions, practices and networks of pilgrimage.^{xxi} Some of these groups thought fit to conceal their Ismaili affiliations, but these were later revealed to ethnographers. As these shrines and compositions cannot usually be reliably dated, it is only through careful comparative study that they will reveal patterns and trends. However, questions still remain. To what extent were Ismaili-influenced groups linked to each other? How did individual preachers maintain contact with the central Nizari authority? What was the nature of contact of the central *da'wa* with the hero and saint-cults and their lay adherents?

Such groups, particularly those that demonstrate signs of 'syncretism', have often been dismissed



as marginal to the history of religious identity in South Asia. They are seen as lacking importance in the history of both Hinduism and Islam.^{xxii} However, it is now becoming clear that such groups were much more significant than formerly believed and also commanded a widespread lay allegiance in South Asia. Further, medieval sectarian religiosity is closely bound up with the processes of caste and state-formation in Western India. Several indications and illustrations of these processes may be discerned in the Ginans and Satpanthi compositions.

Ginans and Other Contemporary Literature

To what extent was Nizari Ismailism in South Asia, usually known in the region as the Satpanth or 'the true path', a unified tradition? It has already been suggested that the search for continuities with the Fatimid tradition has its limitations and that the Satpanth was created out of uniquely sub-continental religious experiences.^{xxiii} While it is clear that there are striking similarities in the organisation, practices and compositions of groups from the wider Satpanthi traditions, there are also significant variations. Various streams may be discerned within the compositions – some of them veering towards the mystical, others with more political messages, still others that are narrative in tone. This diversity may in part be because they record different aspects and episodes of Satpanthi tradition, as times inflected by local conditions. Also they have been modified to suit the needs and circumstances of the community using them.^{xxiv} Compositions tend to be inflected by the religious choices made by the community, often due to the need to assimilate to the practices of the dominant community in the region. The occupational profile of the user communities may also be linked to the kind of compositions they prefer. It might be profitable to compare the compositions preferred by the merchant-dominated Ismaili Khojas with those of other occupational groups who produced a different literature. The Ginans and allied Satpanthi compositions thus need to be studied in the light of all these factors.

However, other comparative frameworks should not be ignored. An attempt shall be made here to list some of the comparative frameworks within which the Ginans and Satpanthi compositions are being studied and where further research may be directed.

1. The Ismaili Ginans have much in common with the religious literature of groups that have historic links with the larger Satpanthi tradition including the Mahamargis, Nizarpanthis, Bijmargis and so on.^{xxv} Within the network of groups affiliated secretly to the Ismaili or Satpanthi tradition, some groups have a formal relationship marked by the payment of religious dues and other membership criteria. In other groups, only a small number of individuals are aware of a continuing or former connection to the Ismailis while a proportion of lay followers approach the shrine or use the compositions in ignorance of connections with the Satpanth, as in the case of the cult of Ramdev Pir.

In yet other cases, there is an awareness and perhaps reciprocal borrowing of compositions between Satpanthis and followers of other groups. This is a common practice with pre-modern and indeed even modern devotional compositions in South Asia. For example, the compositions attributed to the medieval saint-poet Kabir are not used exclusively by the members of his sect but by a wide range of other groups as well. Similarly, the Sikh scriptures incorporate compositions belonging to a range of distinct traditions. Such reciprocity requires at least recognition of common mystical aims and vocabulary, so we may surmise that Satpanthis recognised such a commonality with other traditions. Continuing on the lines of recent research, it is thus necessary to disaggregate and classify the themes and linguistic forms in Satpanthi literature and compare them with other compositions. While this will certainly explicate literary



and religious themes, it may also help clarify aspects of mutual literary appropriation between traditions.

2. The Ginans may also be studied in the light of their relationship to the Sufi literature of western India. Historically, it is difficult to disentangle Ismailis and Sufis as prominent Ismailis often passed as Sufis in order to escape persecution. It is likely that there were Ismailis in prominent positions in the courts of Gujarat and the Deccan Sultanates. For example Shah Tahir, a courtier of the Deccani ruler Burhan Nizam Shah (reigned 1508-1554 CE), was an Imam of the Muhammad-Shahi line.^{xxvi} The corpus of Sufi literature may well include contributions from Ismailis. Anthologies of Sufi poetry compiled in Gujarat from the 17th century onwards often include compositions attributed to Ismaili authors such as Satgur Nur and Nur Muhammad Shah.^{xxvii} The sultans in western India often promoted vernacular literatures and it may be that court-affiliated writers, whether Ismaili or Sufi, contributed to the rise of Indo-Muslim literary dialects. While most court-affiliated and Sufi literature is in Persian, there are important contributions in the emerging literary dialects of Gujarati and Dakkhani, which bear linguistic similarities with the language used in some of the Ginans. Gujarati was often inflected by Punjabi and Sindhi because of the origin of its practitioners, many of whom were from Uch, Multan, Thanesar and other regions where Ismailis were influential. There are also thematic similarities, especially in some of the messianic themes of Sufi literature which have usually been attributed to an undifferentiated Shi'ite influence. It may be useful to compare Ginans and Satpanthi compositions with Sufi ones, both in terms of content and linguistic features.

3. The third link is the relation of the Satpanthi literature with emergent practices of *bhakti* (devotion) and the Sant traditions. Satpanthi literature and the Ginans arose alongside certain *bhakti* traditions and have some features in common. Certain important disseminators of *bhakti* may have had a covert affiliation with Ismailis, for example, the preceptor of the 16th century Marathi poet Ekanath may have been an Ismaili.^{xxviii} It has also been suggested that other important figures such as Kabir and Raidas may have had links with Ismaili preachers.^{xxix} Another factor in common is the tradition of congregational worship and the recitation of devotional texts, *bhajans* or Ginans as the case might be. In Gujarat, the rise of revivalist Vaishnavism from the 16th century has effaced many of the features of Satpanthi practice, although these connections are clearer in the practices and compositions preserved by occupational groups. However, more research needs to be done on overlaps, exchanges and links between pre-modern devotional traditions.

4. The Satpanthi tradition is also linked to the ballads and heroic story cycles found all over western and central India as in the narratives of heroes such as Ramdev and Jesal Pir.^{xxx} This is due to the fact that many of the groups affiliated to the Satpanthi aspired to the status of Rajputs or warrior groups and consequently emulated Rajput practices. One of the most common forms of Rajput literature was the story-ballad featuring a heroic warrior, often composed and recited by professional bards and genealogists. Tales from the voluminous oral tradition include the story-cycles of Pabuji and Alha, and in a similar mode but within the Satpanthi tradition, the stories of Ramdev and, in Gujarat, of Jesal Pir, Mallinath and Rani Rupande. The heroic ballad mode was repeatedly used in the subsequent centuries for many Rajput heroes, and still continues to be used.

The ballad tradition emerged in a period when Rajput identity was less fixed and could be obtained by groups who met with military success or made suitable marriage or military alliances.^{xxxi} With the consolidation of Rajput identity from the 16th century, there may have been a corresponding decline in the influence of Ismailis among the Rajputising groups. While Ismaili



or Satpanthi groups continued to be active, they were more successful among groups that were marginal to the dominant networks of Rajputs in Rajasthan, who increasingly adopted high-caste Hindu practices. For example, the Ismaili-influenced Pranami sect became important in 16th-century Bundelkhand, then ruled by the marginal Bundela Rajputs.^{xxxii} What then, was the nature of Ismaili influence on the history of such groups? Can clues be found in the ballad compositions?

5. The last and least explored area of possible comparison is the relation of the Satpanthi corpus with its contemporary Sanskrit literature, especially the Puranas.^{xxxiii} While it might seem that the world of Satpanthi literature and its adherents belonged to a non-Sanskritic world, there are nevertheless links with the Sanskrit tradition that have not yet been explicated. How did figures from the Sanskrit Puranas and their variants in South Asian languages come to be incorporated into Satpanthi literature and the Ginans? The most notable of these is the figure of Kalki or the *nishkalankavatara*, the tenth 'untainted' avatar of Vishnu, who is often seen in Satpanthi compositions as the *qa'im* or messiah. The Kalki/Nikalank figure – the righter of wrongs, the mounted sword-wielding warrior – is homologous with the messianic figure of Imam 'Ali in the Ismaili tradition.

There are representations of Kalki in 12- and 13th-century sculptural friezes of Gujarat, and several inscriptions refer to the Chaulukya ruler Ajayapala as *nishkalankavatara* (the untainted manifestation).^{xxxiv} The figure of Kalki is explicated in the Vaishnava Puranas, including the late and accretive Kalki Purana. One area for research might be to explore whether parts of this text might have been compiled in response to the elaboration of the Puranic avatar figure by groups linked to the Satpanthis. Other marginal figures from the Puranic myths such as Prahlad and Harishcandra are also regularly found in Satpanthi texts. What do these figures represent in the Satpanthi tradition? Why were these particular figures chosen to be incorporated?

The importance of solar motifs in Satpanthi compositions, particularly those attributed to Pir Shams, also deserves further investigation. Such motifs include Pir Shams' command over the sun, the name *shams* (Ar. sun) and his alliance with Surjadevi (*surja* = Sanskrit *surya*). In the pre-Nizari period, it is possible that some sun worshippers were converted to the Ismaili faith in upper Sindh.^{xxxv} This was roughly contemporary with the evidence for the introduction of the sun cult into India from the eighth century.^{xxxvi} The references in the Ismaili tradition to solar motifs indicate domination or control over the solar tradition, as witnessed in Pir Shams' command to the sun, or at the very least some form of accommodation with it. Allusions to the solar tradition, perhaps including themes from the Bhavishya or Samba Puranas may then have been coded into the compositions as a reminder of the encounter.

The Puranas of particular interest for comparison with the Satpanthi tradition include some of the Vaishnava Puranas featuring the avatars of Vishnu, in particular Kalki, and the Puranas pertaining to sun-worship, including the Bhavishya Purana and the Samba Purana. The first section of the Bhavishya Purana deals with the sun-cult, possibly borrowing from the Samba Purana.^{xxxvii} The third section, probably written in the early 19th century, is a mixed bag of themes that include the Biblical Genesis, the Mughal Empire, British rule and myths and biographies of sectarian leaders from Shankara and Ramanuja to Kabir and Raidas.^{xxxviii} The Puranic corpus itself was in the process of being compiled throughout this period (accretions to the main texts continued even in the twentieth century).^{xxxix} As some of the Puranas were compiled in response to sectarian divisions and the emergence of pilgrimage networks, it is not inconceivable that some sections were written in response to the rise of the Satpanthi influence in South Asia.



Conclusion

The history of the Ismailis in medieval South Asia cannot be de-linked from the history of religious and political change in the region. In fact, Ismailis may have acted as catalysts in such change, especially in western India. Ismaili groups were often opposed and stigmatised as rebels by predominantly Sunni state authorities who made regular attempts to apply normative standards to them. Certain compositions of the Satpanthi tradition and allied groups represent a history of intense struggle for survival, power and resources in an often hostile political landscape. Other compositions, in their stories of conversion and mystical awakening and the writing of *jogis* and rival Pirs represent efforts to acquire followers, humble opponents and find patrons. Yet others demonstrate how the community was held together in the face of persecution and dispersal through the invocation of shared traditions and motifs.

Ismaili affiliation in pre-modern South Asia fitted into a stratum of religious affiliation that generally passed beneath the radar of overarching and politically powerful religious identities such as 'Hindu', 'Vedic', 'Sunni' and so on. Ismailis emerged into 'dominant' histories only when they posed political challenges. This stratum of religious affiliation, of which the Satpanth was a vital part, may turn out to be as influential in the creation of religious affiliation in South Asia as normative 'official' religion. It was exclusive and inclusive at once – while true initiation was carefully restricted, inclusivity was outwardly championed. The compositions are similarly multiform: on the one hand they represent exclusivity and group membership, and are shrouded in secrecy, on the other hand they are widely known, mutually borrowed and modified to suit community needs. They are regionally differentiated, yet their themes are trans-regionally recognisable. This paradoxical familiarity and exclusivity defined North Indian religious culture even more than the normative traditions. Perhaps much of modern popular and even normative religious practice in South Asia will turn out to have been forged through interaction with the Satpanth.

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ⁱ See in particular Françoise Mallison and Zawahir Moir, "'Recontrer l' Absolu, O Ami': Un Hymne Commun aux Hindous Tantriques et Aux Musulmans Ismaeliens du Saurashtra", *Purusartha*, 19 (1996),



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- ^x Farhad Daftary, *The Ismailis: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, 2007, p. 200; Tazim R. Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Satpanth Isma'ili Muslim Saint, Pir Shams*, Albany, 1995, p. 49.
- ^{xi} Ziyauddin A. Desai, "Kufi epitaphs from Bhadreswar in Gujarat", *Epigraphia Indica: Arabic and Persian Supplement*, 1965, pp. 1-8, Mehrdad Shokoohy and Natalie Shokoohy, *Bhadreswar: The Oldest Islamic Monuments in India*, Leiden, 1988, pp. 3-4.
- ^{xii} Mehrdad Shokoohy, *Rajasthan I*, Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, Vol. XLIX, *India: State of Rajasthan*, London, 1986, pp. 76-77.
- ^{xiii} The dates of this semi-legendary figure are discussed in Kassam, *Songs*, pp. 93-94. According to Daftary, he must have lived in the 14th century. Daftary, *The Ismailis*, p. 442.
- ^{xiv} On this phenomenon, see Dirk H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850*, Cambridge, 1990.
- ^{xv} As witnessed in the stories of Surjadevi, Rani Rupande and Kaka Akela and his wife, the gardeners of the king's minister and several others. See Kassam, *Songs*, p. 102 and Dominique-Sila Khan, *Conversion and Shifting Identities: Ramdev Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan*, Delhi, 1997, pp. 86-87. It is significant that many of these stories have the queen being converted secretly to the faith, eventually convincing her husband through her steadfastness. Similar tales testifying to the influence of the queens in bringing religious change in royal households are seen in the adoption of gurus and mother-goddess cults. See Lindsey Harlan, *Rajput Women*, Chapter 3, especially pp. 100-101 and Parita Mukta, *Upholding the Common Life: The Community of Mirabai*, Delhi and New York, 1994, pp. 105-106.
- ^{xvi} S.C. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat: Preliminary studies in their history and social organization*, New York, 1964, pp. 10-11.
- ^{xvii} In fact some rulers are asserted to have been converted to a number of traditions. For example, Siddharaja, the archetypal and long-lived Caulukya ruler, is alleged to have been converted to a variety of traditions, including Nizari and Musta'li Ismaili Islam, Sunni Islam and Jainism. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat*, p. 12.
- ^{xviii} On the rebellion of Nur Turk in the reign of Raziyya see Minhaj al-Din Abu 'Umar 'Uthman b. Siraj al-Din Juzjani, *Tabakat-i-Nasiri: a general history of the Muhammadan dynasties of Asia, including Hindustan*, Calcutta, 1872-1881, pp. 646-647. Firuz Shah claimed to have suppressed rebel sects including the Shi'i Rafizis and other 'heretics'. *Futuh-i Firuz Shahi*, tr. H.M. Elliot and John Dowson in *The History of India as told by its own Historians* III, 1867, pp. 377-378.
- ^{xix} 'Abd al-Husain Tuni, *Tarikh-i Mahmud Shahi*, ed. S.C. Misra, Baroda, 1988, p. 167.
- ^{xx} Satish C. Misra and M. L. Rahman, eds, *Mirat-i Sikandari*, Baroda, 1961, p. 127.



- ^{xxi} Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, passim.
- ^{xxii} Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Subcontinent*. Oxford, 1964, p. 140.
- ^{xxiii} Kassam, *Songs*, pp. 19-22.
- ^{xxiv} Ali S. Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment: The Ismaili Devotional Literature of South Asia*, London, 2002, pp. 29-31.
- ^{xxv} See among others, Khan, *Ramdev Pir*; Mallison, “Saints and Sacred Places in Saurashtra and Kutch”; Mallison, and Moir, “Recontrer l’Absolu, O Ami”, p. 335.
- ^{xxvi} Daftary, pp. 452-455.
- ^{xxvii} Hafiz Mahmud Shirani, “Gujari: Solahvin Sadi Isvi Men (Gujari: In the sixteenth century),” *Maqalat-i Sherani II*, Lahore, 1966.
- ^{xxviii} Hugh van Skyhawk, “Sufi influence in the Ekanathi-bhagavat”, *Devotional Literature in South Asia, Current Research, 1985-1988*, ed. R.S. McGregor, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 77-78, see fn. 23.
- ^{xxix} Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, pp. 254-257.
- ^{xxx} —, pp. 76-77 and, Alf Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking India’s Oral and Classical Epics: Draupadi among Rajputs, Muslims and Dalits*, Chicago, 1999, pp. 2-4 and passim.
- ^{xxxi} Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy*, passim.
- ^{xxxii} Dominique-Sila Khan, “The Mahdi of Panna: A Short History of the Pranamis, Parts I-II”, *Indian Journal of Secularism*, 6-7 (2003).
- ^{xxxiii} Hiltebeitel explores the version of the Alha story in the Bhavishya Purana. See Hiltebeitel, *Draupadi*, passim.
- ^{xxxiv} See, for example, the inscription of Brahmanwada (1175 C.E.) in G.V. Acharya, *Historical Inscriptions of Gujarat*, Bombay, 1933-1942, vol. III, No. 157B, and Patan (1199 C.E.) in A. S. Gadre, *Important Inscriptions from Baroda State*, vol. I, Baroda, 1943, p. 71.
- ^{xxxv} Maclean, *Arab Sind*, p.132.
- ^{xxxvi} D. R. Bhandarkar, “Ghatiyala Inscriptions of Kakkuka, S. 918”, *Epigraphia Indica*, IX (1907-1908).
- ^{xxxvii} Ludo Rocher, ed., *The Puranas, A History of Indian Literature II*, Fasc. 3, Wiesbaden, 1986, p. 132.
- ^{xxxviii} —, p. 133.
- ^{xxxix} *Tirtha* and *sthala-mahatmyas* (compositions in praise of shrines or sacred places) were often attributed to the *Skanda Purana*.