

Reform and renewal in South Asian Islam: the Chishti-Sabris in 18th-19th century North India

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Abstrak

Of the many Sufi orders that have operated in South Asia, the Chishti order is the oldest and the most popular. This book examines the traditions, rituals, experiences, and legacy of the Sabri branch of the Chishtī order. Challenging the notion of Sufism as an ossified relic of the past, it presents evidence of growing interaction, accommodation, and intermingling within Sufi orders. It also highlights the active involvement of the Chishti-Sabris in the much discussed reformist upsurge in north India and explains how they addressed questions posed by colonial rule while still adhering to their mystical heritage. The role of networks that connected Sufi scholars in small towns (qasbahs) with those of Delhi is also examined. These connections, it is argued, moulded the religious ethos of such towns and made them incubators of Sufi reform. By locating Sufi traditions and institutions within the discourse of Islamic scholars (ulama), the book contends that the boundaries often drawn between Sufi and scholarly Islam were in reality far more blurred and porous than is admitted in the literature on modern reformist movements.