



# **In Search of Shiva: A Study of Folk Religious Practices in Pakistan**

*Haroon Khalid*

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Hidden within the rising tide of Islamic puritanism and extremism in Pakistan there is another world of Islamic religiosity which does not look towards the Middle East for its religious identity but is instead rooted in the cultural beliefs of South Asia. Comprising traditions that have their roots in the antiquity of the Indus Valley Civilization, it finds expression in shrines of phallic offerings, sacred animals and sacred trees. In the backdrop of economic development and rising extremism, these shrines exist as an anomaly and are increasingly at risk of being eroded. Growing connectivity between rural and urban areas further threatens the distinctiveness of these shrines and religious traditions. In Search of Shiva documents these religious traditions and studies how they have survived over the years and are now adapting to the increasingly rigid religious climate in Pakistan.

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