

## **A Cultural Model of Nature in Pakistan.**

The evidence suggests that the most widespread model of the natural world involves a powerful supernatural domain, which includes Allah, as a sole God,

plus, various non-human spirits or *jinn*, who can be both benign and malicious,

and a bewildering array of spiritually powerful saints, or *pir-fakir*, to whom individuals can pray and seek some form of intervention. These *pir-fakir* do not themselves perform miracles, typically, but they are beloved by Allah and are somehow in a position to sway His actions in some people's favour.

For Barlevi Sunni Muslims, this influence continues even after death, which means that the gravesite of powerful *pir-fakir* themselves become sites of religious worship and devotion.

While this is arguably contrary to a literal interpretation of doctrinaire Islam, it is nevertheless remarkably widespread across the Muslim world and constitutes majority practice in South Asia.

The remainder of the 'natural' world, including non-human animals, plants, weather and so forth, appears to be part of the benevolent offering from God.