

Interaction of Hindu Faith with other Religions in Kenya

Abstract:

Hinduism and Islam, from the arrival of the Arabs as far back as the 8th century AD, has had a checkered history. During the Muslim conquests Islam gained many converts on the Indian sub-continent primarily from Hinduism or Buddhism. Inter-marriage and immigration of Muslims from elsewhere is also led to the growth of Muslim populations in India. Muslims in India follow a caste system that divided the Arab-descended "Ashraf" Muslims and the "Ajlaf" converts, with the "Arzal" untouchables at the lowest rung[2][3][4][5][6] The term "Arzal" stands for "degraded" and the Arzal castes are further subdivided into Bhanar, Halalkhor, Hijra, Kasbi, Lalbegi, Maugta, Mehtar etc.[5][6][7] Sheikh Muhammad was a Sufi saint who embraced the Hindu God Rama as his chosen bhakti ideal. Kabir wrote poetry and preached to the people, advocating a blend of philosophy and spiritual practices challenging the religious clergy of both Islam and Hinduism and claiming to be neither Hindu, nor Muslim. The synergy between certain Sufis and Bhaktas in many regions of India led to Muslim and Hindu laity worshipping together at a mazar (Sufi shrine) attended by a Vaishnav priest