

Shaikh



Introduction / History

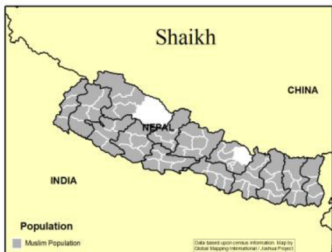
The term Shaikh is derived from the Arabic word for “elder” or “honoured older man”. The descendants of Arabs often go by the title of Shaikh or Sheik. Shaikh is also a term that is often used for leaders or elders of Arabian social groups. Following the advance of Islam into South Asia, lower caste of India converted to Islam and adopted the Shaikh title. There is a proverb in north India which says, “The first year I was a butcher, the next year a Shaikh: this year, if prices rise, I shall be Sayyid”. With over 200 million Shaikh spread over India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka there is little that does not define them somewhere in South Asia.

What is their life like?

The Shaikhs are not bound by one particular profession. The Shaikh can be broadly grouped into five communities. Three of these communities are the Siddiks, Farukis and Abbasi who are often descendents of Arab immigrants. The other two are the Chistis and Kuraishis communities who tend to be mainly from converts to Islam. Consequently, the Shaikhs profess Islam and have both Sunni and Shia traditions among them. In Nepal they speak Nepali and either Urdu, Bhojpuri or Maithili in their communities. They are not vegetarian and their common food is rice, mutton and vegetables. Common surnames are Mondal, Siddiqui, Usmani, Farouqi and Sheikh.

Ministry needs

There has been much ministry activity among the Shaikh in India but few works in Nepal. Pray that this largest group of Nepali Muslims will find the truth of the Prophet Isa! There is a lot of potential for gospel growth within the Shaikh community because of relatively few social divisions.



Population:

Nepal : 808,000

Total 208,334,000

Language: Nepali,

Maithili, Urdu & Bhojpuri

Believers: 0