'For Islam, honour, and homeland' (Islam de para, namus de para, votan de para) are the concepts usually employed when refugees or guerrillas belonging to Afghanistan's largest ethnic group, the Pakhtun, explain their opposition to the present regime in Kabul and its Soviet allies. Together these three categories define the conceptual realm which provides meaning and raison d'etre for the Afghan resistance struggle: the defence of territory and cultural tradition against interference from an opponent considered to be an infidel (kafir). Yet, although the majority among both the Pakhtun and the other ethnic groups in Afghanistan appear to agree to defend their beliefs and way of life against the Kabul regime and the Soviet forces of occupation, this does not mean that a consensus exists even within the separate ethnic groups, concerning the conceptualisation of the cultural tradition which is defended. The Afghan resistance, and in particular that of the Pakhtun, is split into a large number of political parties and groups, who differ more or less profoundly from each other both with regard to what they view as proper Islam, and with regard to the kind of society they envisage in a liberated Afghanistan. In what follows I shall attempt to outline how the very same categories - Islam, honour, and homeland - which provide the impetus for resistance are also the ones which must be considered, if the political and organisational fragmentation of the resistance is to be explained.
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Diversity within Islam

Islam does not contain any distinction between a religious and a secular sphere of life, but strives instead to create a total way of life based on the guidelines, directives and prohibitions which are given by God in the Koran or are contained in legends of the life of Muhammed, the hadith. However, the fact that the overwhelming majority of Afghans consider themselves Muslim and regard the Koran and hadith as the supreme authority concerning all contexts of existence, does not mean that Islam in Afghanistan constitutes an unequivocal or static phenomenon.

The presence of both of the major Muslim sects, the Sunni and the Shi'a, provides the basic diversity within Islam in Afghanistan. Neither Sunni nor Shi'a constitute monolithic systems of belief. Instead both contain internal sectarian differences like that between Imamis and Ismailis among the Shi'a, or those which separate the different Sufi tariqa and also separate the followers of these from the other believers among the Sunni. Moreover, the adherents of both Sunni and Shi'a Islam come from culturally diverse ethnic groups, who consequently in praxis realise mutually distinct versions of a Muslim way of life. All of these versions contain elements which deviate from or even contradict the message of the Koran and hadith, but people experience this condition very differently, and the practical consequences which they draw also vary considerably.

The Pakhtun provide an example of this kind of diversity. They regard themselves as descendants from a common ancestor by the name of Qaiz, who lived at the time of Muhammed, and who was converted to Islam by the Prophet himself. The Pakhtun thus associate and equate their very origin and identity as a people with their Muslim identity, and they contrast this with all the other ethnic groups in Afghanistan, whose Muslimity is not original, but who are later converts. At the same time, however, this notion of common descent also constitutes the basis of a tribal social order, which contains norms and modes of conduct that depart from Islam in several important respects.(2) This schism is part of Pakhtun cultural consciousness
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and is explicitly formulated as when the tribal notions of honourable behaviour, pakhtunwali, are contrasted with the sayings of the Koran in the proverb 'Pakhtun half use the Koran, half pakhtunwali' (Pukhtane nim Quran mani, nim pukhtunwali mani).(3) Most Pakhtun do not consider this conflict specially problematic, and many just appear to accept it as a fact of life, while others experience it as a fundamental existential dilemma and strive to solve it in different ways. Some attempt to do this by practising a personal lifestyle that places greater emphasis on the precepts of Islam, or attach themselves to a religious figure respected for his piouness and learning from whom they receive spiritual guidance, as for example one of the leaders (Pirs) of a Sufi tariqa. Yet others who wish to eliminate the discrepancy they experience, seek a political solution through a transformation of society which brings it in correspondence with what they view as proper Islam.

Such differences of opinion concerning the relationship between what is understood as proper Islam and the existing social order can be found within all sections of the Afghan population, and it was also present in the attitudes which people held with regard to the increasing 'modernisation' and 'westernisation' of Afghan society.

So, instead of providing unity of belief and a shared unequivocal conception of how society should be, the role of Islam as the basic conceptual frame of reference and the ultimate source of legitimation means that social and political matters are commonly understood and discussed in religious terms. The concepts of Islam have always been sufficiently ambiguous to allow different interpretations of their meaning and thus to allow mutually divergent political views to be seen as religiously legitimate by their exponents and followers. The result is that attempts to mobilise people for political action through religiously legitimate appeals, or to convince them of the correctness of certain kinds of conduct, invariably take place in a context which contains divergent or even alternative appeals, that are likewise held to be derived from Islam.

Afghan history contains many examples of political confrontations based on different interpreta-
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One of the most illustrative of these conflicts took place in the context of the expansion and consolidation of Afghan state authority during the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman (c.1880-1901). In addition to harsh military and administrative measures his attempts to strengthen the authority of the state also involved a religious policy which entailed the propagation of a new interpretation of Islam (cf. Ghani, 1978). The main feature of this interpretation was the attempt to provide state authority with religious legitimacy by defining the good Muslim as identical with the good subject who accepted this authority. Through a combination of repression and rewards the state managed to gain the support of a number of prominent religious personalities who promoted its version of Islam. But at the same time this version was rejected by others who proclaimed the ruler heretic, and who thereby lent religious legitimacy to the extensive popular resistance against the attempts made by the state to expand and strengthen its control.

The situation today exhibits certain parallels to that of the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman. Ever since seizing power through the coup d'état in April 1978 the new 'revolutionary' regime has striven to present itself as Muslim. Its decrees and other official proclamations have all been introduced by an invocation of God, and like its nineteenth-century predecessor, it has repressed and eliminated part of the religious establishment while at the same time attempting to ally itself with other religious figures who were willing to provide the regime and its policies with religious legitimation. However, the extensive popular opposition against the new regime demonstrates that this policy has been far from successful and that most people instead identify themselves with the resistance and consider it the legitimate representative of Islam.

Honour - Autonomy and Rivalry

One of the most important reasons for this state of affairs is the one which prompted the resistance against the centralising policies of Amir Abdur Rahman, and it is expressed in the second of the
categories that the Pakhtun use to explain the current resistance struggle - their honour. For them, honour is associated with the maintenance of autonomy and integrity, be that in relation to other members of the local community or to outside powers such as the state. While the notions of honour (nang) appear most elaborated among the Pakhtun, where they constitute the core of the tribal value system pakhtunwali (cf. Janata and Hassas, 1975), the association of honour and autonomy is also shared by the other rural ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

The attempt to strengthen state authority at the expense of local autonomy at the end of the last century, and to introduce such measures as taxation and military conscription, met with open resistance from practically all the ethnic groups in the country (cf. Kakar, 1971). But although the central government succeeded in expanding its influence considerably compared to its predecessors, there nevertheless remained considerable sections of the rural population who managed to retain much of their former autonomy, and who, moreover, have been able to do so right up to the present.

The current resistance struggle began as a number of mutually isolated and unrelated attempts to defend this local autonomy against increasing interference from the new 'revolutionary' regime. Clashes between the local population and inexperienced, newly-appointed officials, who often acted in a dogmatic and high-handed fashion, were seen by the government as 'counter-revolutionary' resistance and met with military reprisals. The result was that as early as the summer of 1978, a few months after the coup d'état and before the reforms affecting the rural population had been made public, the actions of the new regime had already fostered a growing popular resistance. At the beginning of October, this resistance reached such a level in the province of Kunar in Eastern Afghanistan, that the Afghan army had difficulties handling the situation and had to be supported by Soviet military advisers (Christensen, 1983: 11). The dependency of the new regime on Soviet civil and military aid - a dependency which deepened and became more manifest as the resistance increased - thus made it appear as foreign-dominated and un-Islamic to many
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Afghans long before the Soviet invasion in December 1979.

However, as mentioned above, the Pakhtun notion of honour has yet another dimension. Just as the maintenance of honour leads to resistance against the imposition of outside control, it is also a source of rivalry on the local level concerning influence, leadership and control over resources. The notion of honour is closely linked to the idea that all (male) Pakhtun are equal (sial) because of their common descent. Honour is preserved by asserting equality vis-a-vis other Pakhtun, be they close or distant kinsmen. The realisation of this involves above all the maintenance of the autonomy and integrity of the household (korunei) through the ability to protect (and control) the women, the house and the land belonging to it, three categories that are united in the same concept of honour - namus. In the eyes of Pakhtun society, then, it is not enough that the individual is a Pakhtun merely through descent, but he also has to do Pakhto (pakhto kavol) by upholding namus in order to preserve his equality and status as a real Pakhtun tribesman.

Equality thus has a dual nature for the Pakhtun: on the one hand it is something which is ascribed and given, yet on the other hand it also has to be confirmed through achievement. This duality is the source of the ambiguity, tension and frequent hostility which pervades the relations between even close collateral agnates, because the effort to secure the premised equality by upholding honour and autonomy may either be pursued through relations to others involving co-operation and conjunction, or competition and attempted dominance (Christensen, 1984: 72).

The ambiguity inherent in the relationship between patrilineal kinsmen is clearly expressed in the concepts used by Pakhtuns. Despite the often stated ideal of solidarity between agnates, the verb siali kavol, which literally means 'to make equality', has the meaning of 'competition', and the term for patrilateral cousin, tarbur, has the connotation of 'enemy', while tarburwali denotes the rivalry often existing between collateral agnates.

So political relations are shaped and conditioned by an organisational context provided by a patrilineal
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descent system with a strong normative emphasis on
solidarity, but where at the same time the actual
relations between agnates are crucially influenced by
variable interests, which may either bring them
together as allies, or separate them as competitors
and opponents. The result is that landholding descent
groups sharing the same village or local community are
usually split in rival factions headed by big-man type
leaders who compete with each other in building and
consolidating a following among both kin and non-kin.
Political allegiance cuts across patrilineal descent
relations, and the political groupings confronting
each other consist of more or less unstable factions
and coalitions of factions based on situationally
coincidental interests. While patrilineal descent
groups are not mobilized in any consistent pattern of
balanced opposition (cf. Barth 1959) descent segments
of varying size nevertheless do emerge within the
overall context of this factional rivalry (cf.
Christensen 1982: 37 ff).

Variations on such a factional mode of politics
are also found outside the areas inhabited by Pakhtuns
(cf. Azoy 1982: Canfield, 1973), and this pattern of
political organisation has implications which reach
beyond that of local politics. One such implication
is that despite the resentment of state interference,
the rivalry caused by the attempt to uphold autonomy
and honour also lends ambiguity to the relationship
between the local population and the state.

Thus, throughout this century successive Afghan
regimes who have tried to gain control over what they
regarded as the Pakhtun yaghistan, or 'land of rebels'
(Caroe, 1958: 347), have all managed to exercise some
kind of influence by means other than those of direct
military intervention. By various measures including
direct financial subsidies, the granting of adminis-
trative functions to favoured individuals, or a
generally privileged treatment compared to what is
given to others, the regimes have been able to
establish alliances with persons and groups at the
local level. As a result of the pervasive rivalry and
attendant competition for the prestigious position of
local political leadership, there will always be some
among those who aspire to local leadership, who will
find it advantageous to ally themselves with whatever
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regime is in power. For the local leader in question, however, such alliances do not necessarily entail any acceptance of the wider implications of state authority. His ties to government and administrators are more likely to be founded on tactical considerations concerning the benefits and support which can be derived from the state, and the followers who can be attracted by acting as middlemen between them and the state authorities.

Although still uneven and often marginal, the influence of the state apparatus in Afghanistan has nevertheless been felt in practically every corner of the rural hinterland since the period of state consolidation at the end of the nineteenth century. Since the state is something to be reckoned with, the participants in the competition for local leadership generally attempt to establish ties with the state authorities in their province, and, if possible, with those in the political centre in Kabul as well, which can be used to strengthen the leader and provide benefits for his allies and followers. The means used to establish such friendly relations and to obtain easy access to provincial authorities include hospitality and bribes to different officials, as well as cooperation in various matters. In addition, an increasing number of the families of local political importance have family members employed in government service as office workers, teachers and army officers whose connections with the regime in power or with rival cliques and groupings in the capital may yield immediate or future results.

The frequent political upheavals and changes which have taken place in Kabul during this century have been accompanied by corresponding alternations in the alignments between the state and local leaders in the provinces. Following these changes, the leaders most closely attached to the former regime have usually been discarded as allies by its successors, who, instead, have promoted and favoured new constellations of rising local leaders, often comprising the rivals of the previously dominant ones (cf. Christensen, 1982: 42 ff).

This form of political organisation and process also provided the framework of both the support for and the opposition against the new 'revolutionary'
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regime after the coup d'etat in April 1978. Allegiance and opposition to the new regime thus cuts across class divisions, and in the rural areas both supporters and opponents are made up of factions comprising feudal landowners, small landholders, tenants, and the landless (Christensen, 1983: 6 ff).

Support for the new regime appears in particular to have come from those factions who before the coup d'etat were the underdogs in the competition for local political influence, and who did not have close relations with the previous regime. Some of the families heading these factions had members who had joined the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, and who now received promotion within the administration and the army. As the new regime did not have any organisational foothold among the rural population, its influence in the countryside following the coup was critically dependent on such alliances with local factional leaders. In the years following seizure of power the new regime has consistently striven to maintain and if possible expand these alliances, and to this end it has used a number of means, including frequent meetings in the capital with local leaders, bribes and gifts, or promises to refrain from interference in local affairs.

But the pattern of local factional rivalry has another important implication besides that of creating conditions for alliances between local leaders and the state. Factional rivalry also prevents the resistance against outside interference from uniting within a more encompassing framework, because few factional leaders are prepared to relinquish their autonomy and submit to the authority of someone whom they consider their equal. To the extent that the resistance against outside threats is united in the current resistance struggle, and has been so in the past, this has been achieved through religious and not secular leadership. Both religious figures such as Sayyeds, Akhunzadas, Mians, Pirs, Maulawis, and occasionally even village mullahs have frequently managed to transcend their customary role as spiritual teachers, mediators, and magico-religious healers and have been able to use their spiritual reputation and following as a basis for exercising political influence. But their ability to function as political leaders and to
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rally people behind them through appeals to Islam is always subjected to the inherent diversity of attitudes, interpretations and interests which exist in Afghan society, and therefore even their leadership remains partial and incomplete as well as relatively unstable. It is partial and incomplete because their message and version of Islam is not accepted by everybody. At the same time it is relatively unstable, because only part of their following may be motivated by a shared religious attitude. Others may have joined mainly because of more mundane political considerations, which make their continued support dependent on the success of the religious-cum-political leader, and on his ability to safeguard their interests. So even though religious leaders may be able to build more encompassing followings this does not mean that factional rivalry is neutralised or superseded; instead it is transferred to another level of organisation, where it is expressed in the support for different religious leaders.

The Divided Resistance

Within the current resistance such political divisions based on different interpretations of Islam exist among both Sunni and Shi'a. Within each of these major sects the many political groupings appear to be divided into two main categories, of which only those among the Sunni will be discussed here.(5)

The political groups and parties constituting the first of these main categories have evolved from traditional religious forms of organisation and leadership like the Sufi tariqas. Thus, members of the leading Mujaddedi family within the Naqshbandia tariqa now head the National Liberation Front (Jabha-e najat-e melli-e Afghanistan), while members of the Gailani family from the Qaderia tariqa constitute the leadership of the National Islamic Front (Mahaz-e melli-e islami-e Afghanistan). Formerly, these families played an important role in the religious and political life of Afghanistan, and both are related by marriage to the exiled royal family. The members of each party are largely drawn from the religious followers of the Sufi tariqa from which the party has evolved, and since both tariqa have a considerable
number of adherents among Pakhtun in Eastern Afghanistan, this is also the region where they are most influential. The two parties thus represent different segments of the traditional religious and political establishment. Both seek the co-ordination of the resistance in a broad national front, and they favour the restoration of the monarchy and the establishment of a pluralistic political system, while at the same time stressing the need for strengthening Islam.

The second main category is composed of so-called 'fundamentalist' organisations like the Islamic Party (Hizb-e Islami) headed by the former engineering student, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and the Islamic Union (Jamiat-e Islami) which is led by Burhannudin Rabbani, who formerly held a teaching position in theology and Islamic law at the University of Kabul. These parties both want a radical transformation of Afghan society to make it conform to their conception of Islam, and each party regards itself as the leading force in this process. They look upon the Sufi background of the National Liberation Front and the National Islamic Front as something which is ideologically suspect. At the same time they consider the leaders of these parties to be partly responsible for the present situation in Afghanistan because of their former association with the monarchy whose policies the 'fundamentalists' view as excessively liberal.

These 'fundamentalist' parties represent a new phenomenon in Afghan politics. Like their opponents on the Afghan left, the 'fundamentalists' as a political movement are mainly the creation of the radicalisation which took place among sections of the intelligentsia and urban middle class from the end of the sixties and onwards as a reaction to their frustrated aspirations after employment, political influence and economic development. But Marxism and 'fundamentalist' Islam share more than being alternative and opposed ideological solutions to the same social problems. Besides a common historical background it would appear that their urban origins and their radical, uncompromising dogmatism make both basically unacceptable as political solutions to the rural population.

Thus, as early as the middle of the seventies 'fundamentalist' Islamic revolutionaries tried to
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mobilise the rural population against the Daud regime, but without success, despite the financial and military support they allegedly received from the then president of Pakistan, Ali Bhutto. Nor did this change before the coup d'etat in April 1978. 'Fundamentalist' agitators, who were named Panj Pirei by the local population after the madressa of Panj Pir outside Peshawar where they had been educated, were actively preaching against the government in the province of Kunar in 1977 and early '78. But although the authorities were unable to catch them, the Panj Pirei, on the other hand, did not attract sufficient followers to pose any serious problem. The local mullahs looked upon them as a threat to their own position, while people in general either ignored them or considered them somewhat heretic.(6)

It was only after the coup d'etat, when the interference in local affairs and the increasing repression by the new regime had created a growing opposition in the countryside, that the 'fundamentalist' groups managed to gain popular support.

All the resistance organisations mentioned above and others as well are to be found among the Pakhtun, but far from all Pakhtun resistance leaders are members or followers of such organisations. Many local leaders among the Pakhtun do not appear to be ready to relinquish their autonomy and submit to the authority and interference of the religious leadership of these organisations. The Pakhtun conception of their own original Muslimity introduces a certain ambiguity to their relative ranking vis-a-vis religious figures, and they tend to consider themselves as being on a par with people of religious status. So, although individual religious figures may acquire considerable prestige because of their piety, learning, or holy descent, they are not automatically considered superior or entitled to wield authority over the lives of others. This situation and the fact that the following of the religious leaders in the current resistance struggle may be based either on shared ideology or on more mundane political considerations, would seem to indicate that in addition to the two ideological tendencies within the resistance which have been described above, there exists a third: that of those Pakhtun tribesmen who do not
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view the discrepancies between Islam and pakhtunwali as particularly problematical, and who consequently do not feel the need for spiritual guidance and political leadership by religious figures.

Homeland - Emerging National Consciousness

As we have seen, the following of the major resistance organisations, like the four mentioned above, is either based on common ideology or derives from more immediate and mundane political interests. From their headquarters in Peshawar in Pakistan these resistance organisations, and a couple of others beside them, maintain international contacts with governments or with kindred Islamic organisations both in Pakistan and in the Arab world. These contacts provide them with access to some of the resources, money, and to a certain extent also weapons, which are badly needed by the active resistance groups inside Afghanistan. In exchange for material support the resistance organisations expect political allegiance from the groups receiving it. Thus, although the overall context is different, the position of the major resistance organisations and of their leadership nevertheless, to a large extent, derives from their ability to assume what is essentially the traditional role of successful local leaders: that of the middleman or broker who creates a following through patronage. This kind of dependency and the resulting organisational fragmentation of the active resistance struggle is deeply resented by many Afghans, who regard the resistance organisations in Peshawar as being too self-seeking and therefore refer to the six largest of them as spag dukanan - the six shops.

Yet, at the same time there is a tendency towards increased co-operation between some of the active resistance groups inside Afghanistan. A new generation of leaders has emerged from the resistance struggle and has in many cases replaced or overshadowed the traditional local leadership. Some of the most able of these leaders have managed to maintain relations with a resistance organisation in Peshawar, which gives them access to resources and arms, without allowing this to compromise their freedom of action, and have succeeded in uniting all
or most of the resistance groups in a particular province or region. This tendency is most developed in areas dominated by non-Pakhtun ethnic groups, whereas the Pakhtun resistance apparently remains fragmented. The most prominent examples of such unification, cutting across both political and ethnic divisions, are the resistance fronts headed by Massoud in the Panjshir valley, Sabiullah in the region around Mazar-i Sharif, and Ismail Khan and Allahuddin in the provinces of Herat, Ghor, Farah and Nimruz in Western Afghanistan.

So, whereas resistance groups formerly used to restrict their actions to the particular locality or region they consider their homeland, the existence of a certain amount of co-operation between the three large fronts of Northern and Western Afghanistan, as well as the sentiments expressed by Afghan refugees in Pakistan, indicate that the struggle is increasingly seen as one of national liberation.

Conclusion

In the preceding discussion I have tried to substantiate the argument that the categories of Islam, honour and homeland, which constitute the raison d'être of the current Afghan resistance struggle, are also the source of its ideological and organisational heterogeneity. This paradox derives from the fact that although the three categories are simultaneously present in the political discourse and apparently serve to define the shared cultural tradition and way of life of the Pakhtun, these categories do not constitute a consistent ideology or system of meanings.

This lack of consistency is inherent in the categories, and exists on different levels. First of all, the precepts of Islam and the notions of pakhtunwali differ in ways which cannot be resolved without compromising one of the systems. Second, the concepts of Islam leave room for interpretation and accommodation of different views of how the believers should arrange their existence. Third, pakhtunwali is also ambiguous, because the maintenance of honour may pose the dilemma of choice between autonomy and agnatic solidarity, both of which are considered important values by the Pakhtun. Finally, the dilemma of choice
posed by the notion of honour generates factional rivalry, which provides a social setting that allows different solutions of the ideological inconsistencies to function as alternatives.

Viewed from this perspective Pakhtun culture in the sense of a unified, consistent, and shared ideology does not exist. Culture and ideology instead have to be understood as heterogeneous systems of meanings which contain inherent contradictions, ambiguities, and dilemmas that are resolved in different ways by the members of the society in question. Moreover, such alternative ideological versions are always associated with, and defined by, specific interests, which they in turn serve to legitimate.

Notes

This chapter was presented at the Symposium on Islam: State and Society held at the University of Aarhus from 31 August to 1 September 1984. Fieldwork was conducted during 1977 to 1978 in the Kunar Province and a supplementary shorter visit was undertaken in February-March 1981 to Afghan refugees in Pakistan and to Kunar. The research was funded by the Danish Research Council for the Humanities.

1. Pakhtun, who are also called Pashtun or Pathan, number about 6 million of the approximately 15 million inhabitants of Afghanistan. Their main settlement areas are in the eastern and southern parts of the country overlapping the border with Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, where an additional 6 million Pakhtun live.

2. The relationship between formal Islamic injunctions and Pakhtunwali is described by Boesen (1979/80) and Anderson (1980).

3. Other proverbs expressing the same conflict can be found in Enevoldsen (1967) and Anderson (1980).

4. Concerning such confrontations among the Pakhtun see Caroe (1958: 299 ff and 198 ff) and Spain (1963: 86 ff).

5. The political and ideological division among the Shi'a Hazara has been described by Roy (1983).
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6. Besides referring to their proponents' ideological connections to 'fundamentalist' Islam in Pakistan, the name Panj Piri also carried the connotation of heresy, because it was used with the implication that the Islamic revolutionaries followed the fifth (Panj) Pir instead of one of the four established legal schools within Sunni Islam, i.e. the Hanafite, Malikite, Shafiite or Hanbalite.

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