

INDIAN MUSLIMS.

To Ajmer, west of Delhi, Moslems from all over India - and farther afield - come yearly to the shrine of Islamic saint Khwaja Ghiasi to seek a blessing. The pilgrims bring offerings of flowers to lay on the saint's tomb.

To the Moslem, washing is a religious act - cleansing of the body represents a cleansing of the spirit.

The festival lasts for several days. Thousands of pilgrims pack the streets listening to the professional musicians who sing the "Qawali", the festival's special hymns - accompanying themselves on the drum and harmonium.

Gifts of money, food and jewels are thrown into a huge pit for the priests who guard the shrine.

At the end of the festival the priests cook big pans of rice to serve to the pilgrims. For each halving of rice, the priest gets a tip - and the quicker and tougher a priest is, the more he earns. The pilgrims regard the rice as a blessing - so everyone is satisfied.