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Elements in Religion and Violence

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RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIA

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Religious Nationalism in Contemporary South Asia

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ABSTRACT: This Element explores religious nationalism in Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism and how it manifests in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. At the core, nationalists contend that the continuation of their group is threatened by some other group. Many of these fears are rooted in the colonial experience and have been exacerbated in the modern era. For the Hindu and Buddhist nationalists explored in this Element, the predominant source of fear is the Muslim minority and its secular allies. For Sikhs, a minority within India, the fear is primarily of the state. For Muslims in Pakistan, the fear is more dynamic and comprises secularists and minority sects, including Shias and Ahmadis. In all instances, the groups fear that their ability to practice and express their religion is under immediate threat. Additionally, Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim nationalists wish for the state to adopt or promote their religious ideology.

KEYWORDS: religious nationalism, Hindu nationalism, Buddhist nationalism, Sikh nationalism, Islamic nationalism

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