



## > Drugs and Prayers

The Sufi shrine of Mira Datar in North Gujarat is a large pilgrimage centre specialising in healing possession madness/mental illness. Recently, it has also become a site of experimenting with new forms of community care in the mental health sector. The NGO 'Altruist' facilitates communication between the mental health department, shrine dignitaries, psychiatrists and patients suffering from diverse kinds of mental troubles who seek help from the saint. Under the heading of "Dava & Dua" Altruist promotes psychiatric services at the shrine parallel to the cures of possession illnesses offered by ritual specialists.

The film documents exchanges between different actors at the shrine (patients-psychiatrists, psychiatrists-ritual specialists, patients-ritual specialists), listens to the stories of afflicted persons and presents diverse views on the presumed causes of mental illness as well on the benefit or non-benefit of medicine and/or ritual practices as perceived by patients and their relatives.

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A film by:

**author** | Helene Basu

**camera** | Philipp Offermann  
and Helene Basu

**Editing** | Angelika Schlöndorff,  
Andreas Samland, Helene Basu

**subtitles translations** | Basant  
Srivastav and Vasudeo Paralikar

**layout** | Verena Ilger

**photos** | Helene Basu

**running time** | approx. 55 min.

**subtitle version** | English

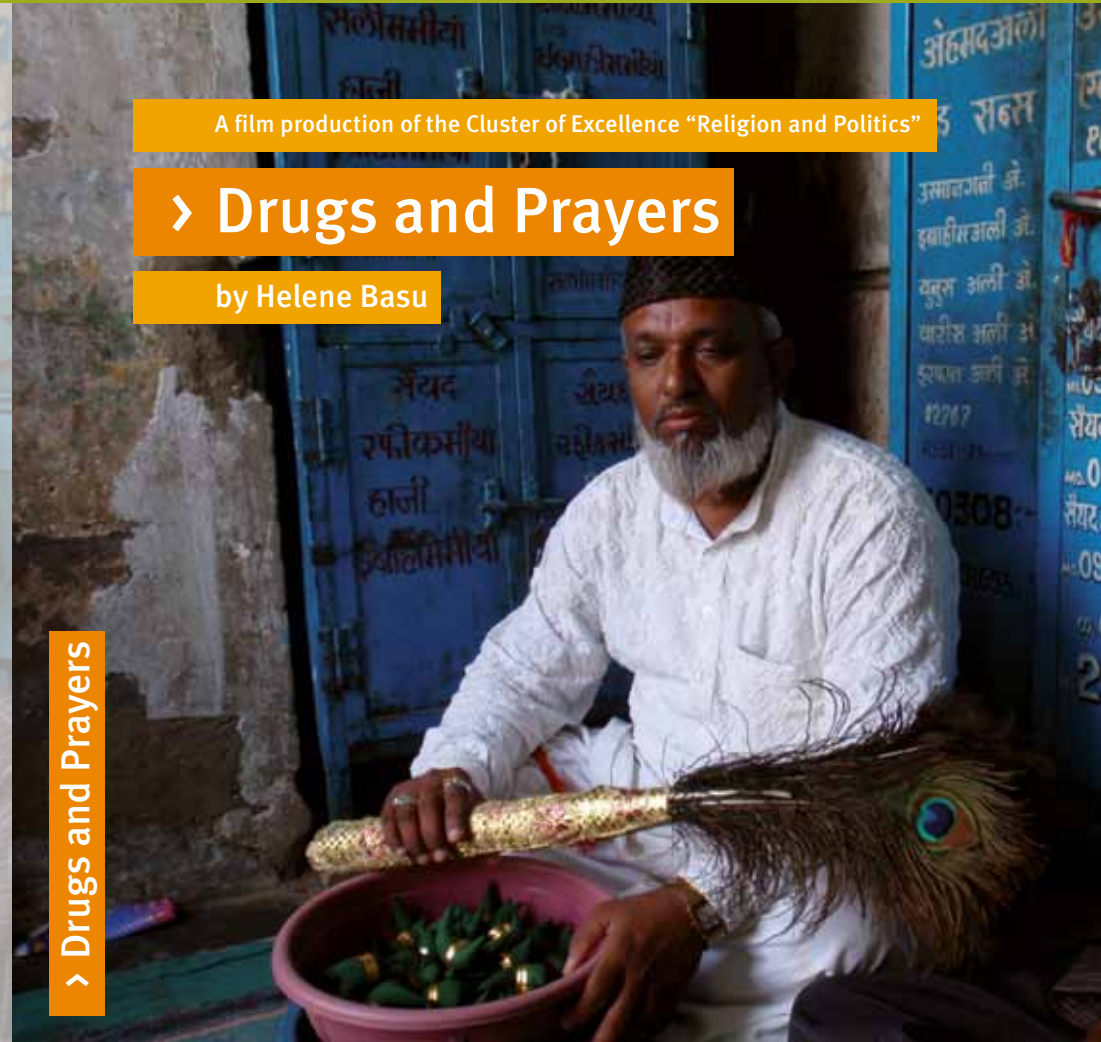
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A film production of the Cluster of Excellence "Religion and Politics"

# > Drugs and Prayers

by Helene Basu





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