INTRODUCTION

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A Historical Overview of Islam in South Asia

Barbara D. Metcalf

Sri Lanka and the Southern Coasts

For long centuries, India, in a memorable phrase, was "on the way to everywhere" (Abu Lughod 1989). Trade brought Arabs to India's southern seacoasts and to the coasts of Sri Lanka, where small Muslim communities were established at least by the early eighth century. These traders played key economic roles and were patronized by non-Muslim kings like the Zamorin of Calicut (Kozhikode) who welcomed diverse merchant communities. The coastal areas had long served as nodal points for the transshipment of high value goods between China, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, in addition to the spices, teak, and sandalwood locally produced. The Muslim populations grew through intermarriage, conversion, and the continued influx of traders.

The Portuguese, who controlled the Indian Ocean by the early sixteenth century, labeled the Sri Lankan Muslim population "Moro" or "Moors." Sri Lankan Muslims are still known by this term, whether they are by origin Arabs, locals, Southeast Asians (who came especially during the Dutch dominance from the mid-seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century) or Tamils from south India (whose numbers increased under the British Crown Colony, 1796–1948).

One account of early Islam in Malabar on the southwestern coast is the *Qissat Shakarwati Farmad*, an anonymous Arabic manuscript whose authenticity may be disputed by contemporary historians but which continues to be popular among the Mapilla ("Moplahs") of the region. In this account, Muslims claim descent from the Hindu king of Malabar, who was said to have personally witnessed the miracle of the Prophet Muhammad's splitting of the moon (Friedmann 1975). Similarly, Tamil-speaking Muslims of the eastern coast claim that they too represent a community whose members embraced Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet; mosques in the area date at least from the early eighth century. Figure I.1 shows a mosque built in the local style, located in the west coast city of Calicut.

Not only traders, but also rulers, scholars, and literati in the south looked more

Fig. I.1: Nakhuda Mithqal Masjid (Mithqalpalli) at Calicut (Kozhikode). Fourteenth century, rebuilt in 1578/79, with subsequent additions. *Photo: Sebastian Prange*.

toward their Indian Ocean connections than toward those of Central Asia that dominated the north. They used Arabic over Persian and the Shafiʻi jurisprudential tradition rather than the Hanafi law of Central Asia. The cosmopolitan world of Arabic-speaking traders on the western coast in the twelfth century is vividly evoked in the story of an Arabic-speaking North African trader of Jewish origin that is retold in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* (1992), a story pieced together from fragments of letters and other papers preserved in a Cairo synagogue. Among the Sufis, whose influence was also widespread in the south, was Shahul Hamid Nagori (1504–1570), popularly known as "Qadir Wali" because of his power to protect seafarers and others who sought his aid. His vast shrine on the coast south of Madras, shown in Figure I.2, draws not only local pilgrims but also others from Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and beyond, where Tamil Muslims have carried his tradition. The ritual at this shrine is of a pattern with that performed at nearby Hindu and Catholic sites (Narayanan 2004).

Two entries in this volume depict the world of these coastal Muslims. A selection from a sixteenth-century Arabic tract from the western coast demonstrates the deep interrelationships that existed locally, even among transnational traders, in the face of Portuguese aggression (Chapter 30). A pedagogic Tamil text, also orig-

Fig. I.2: The Nagore Dargah; in front, a display of silver offerings representing body parts, vehicles, and other concerns for which the saint's intercession is sought. Nagapatnam, Tamilnadu, January 2007. Smaller replicas of this shrine have been built by Tamil devotees in Singapore and Penang. *Photo: Barbara D. Metcalf*.

inally from the sixteenth century, exemplifies the way that Tamil-language Muslim texts typically utilize the larger traditions of Tamil literature in their vocabulary, tropes, and descriptions of the local terrain (Chapter 14).

The distinctive cultures of the south, shaped in large measure by their oceanic connections, are a reminder that historical cultural and political regions do not map onto the areas defined by today's nation states. Kingdoms in the northwest for centuries spread over what are now international borders. The coastal areas of the south often had far closer connections via ocean routes than they did with many parts of inland India. This point is particularly important because of the routine description of those originating west of contemporary Pakistan, or even of all Muslims, as "foreigners" on the Indian Subcontinent. This anachronistic perspective reads into the past modern geopolitical loyalties (Asher and Talbot 2006, 5–7).

The Northwest in the Seventh to Twelfth Centuries

By the mid-seventh century Muslim armies had reached the Hindu Kush, and by 711 an Arab dynasty had established itself in the northwest of the Indian Subcon-

tinent, the area defined by the lower delta of the Indus River, which was then still known by its Arab name, Sindh. The subcontinent as a whole was at this time still thinly populated, covered with dense forests and vast expanses of scrubland. The population included nomads, shifting cultivators, and hunters and gatherers, as well as settled farmers. There were, however, increasing numbers of local kingdoms as new dynastic centers were established through the more energetic use of irrigation and subsequent settled agriculture. Transportation and communication by land and sea were increasing, not least as part of ocean networks, like that of the seaborne trade that apparently stimulated the Arab campaign in Sindh.

Although the ruler of Sindh in the early eighth century was a Brahmin, there were also Buddhists and Jains in the area, as well as people following a range of local cults not linked to any larger tradition. Contrary to the widespread assumption that South Asian Muslims are largely "Hindu converts," this more complex situation was probably characteristic of those areas, like Sindh, where over the centuries the majority of the population would come to identify itself as Muslim. Muslims, as noted in the Preface, added one more strand to an already heterogeneous population. According to an Arab chronicle of the period, the Umayyid caliph in Baghdad, using the pretext of a ship seized by the local ruler, sent out an expedition under the youthful Muhammad bin Qasim (695–715). He was supported by an overland army as well as by a second contingent arriving by sea.

What did a change of dynasty in Sindh mean? Dynastic rulers in this period in the subcontinent depended on establishing relationships with subordinates, giving rise to "layered sovereignties," the boundaries of their reach shifting as alliances stabilized or were undone. Thus, rather than suppress old local rulers, a dynast would seek a local alliance, looking not to deepen control but to extend dominion. In so doing, the early Arab rulers of Sindh, who were far from being the first rulers from outside the area, followed a pattern established by the Greeks, the Mauryans from the eastern Indo-Gangetic plain, and, more recently, the Central Asian Huns. Early sources document both Buddhist and Brahmin rulers allying themselves with the Arabs in order to be confirmed in their local kingships. There were frequent changes of governors, factional feuds among Arabs, and conflicts with Jats and other segments of the local populations.

The Arab rulers, in contrast to common assumptions about Muslim conquerors, had no interest in, let alone a program for, conversion. This was also true of their conquests elsewhere. Later texts tell us that the local populations of Sindh were assimilated to the Islamic category of *zimmi*, protected peoples who were in principle to pay a special tax (the *jizya*) but who would in return be exempted from military service and guaranteed safety; in some cases limitations were placed on the height of places of worship or other kinds of sumptuary regulations were imposed. This was the model pioneered in earlier Arab conquests of Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, who were all three understood to be the (flawed) inheritors of a shared revelation. Thus, after the initial destruction of selected places of worship, deemed symbols of the legitimacy of the now-defeated ruler, other temples and the rituals associated with them continued as before. On the basis of one later tex-

tual source, the *Chachnama*, it seems that *zimmi* regulations were in fact deployed to preserve the existing social structure, with Brahmins exempted from tax, and the unruly Jats obliged to continue such practices as going barefooted and bareheaded, as they had under the previous dynasty (Friedmann 1984, 32).

Ultimately the Sindhi population would become largely Muslim. Since the colonial period, the common explanation for this identification with Islam has been the desire on the part of the downtrodden to escape the trammels of caste. This theory seems to be a reflection of modern ideologies, one that gives conversion legitimacy. In many areas, however, Brahmanic institutions had not yet penetrated deeply into the society by medieval times, nor did Muslim rulers challenge the social hierarchies that existed. There is no evidence in Sindh, or indeed elsewhere in the subcontinent, of Sufi holy men or others preaching the concept of equality to non-Muslims. In fact, at an even later period in south India conversion to any religion typically had the goal not of escaping hierarchy but of improving one's standing in the hierarchic ladder (Bayly 1990). What evidence there is for Sindh—some of it surely legendary—suggests that those who did convert in the early centuries of Arab rule were at the top, not the bottom, of local society, opting through shared religious identity to be part of powerful Muslim rule.

The year 711 may figure prominently in contemporary Pakistani history text books as the founding date of Muslim rule on the Indian Subcontinent, but Muhammad bin Qasim's conquest seems to have been taken for granted at the time and in no sense formed a watershed in subcontinental history. Turko-Afghans, however, who began to establish settled kingdoms in the northern heartlands of the subcontinent in the early thirteenth century, by contrast began to imagine themselves as inaugurating an era of continuous Muslim rule. After the fragmentation of caliphal rule in Baghdad in the tenth century, Turks, moving westward out of Central Asia, some of them military slaves (*mamluk*) of Muslim rulers, others immigrant tribes that settled and assimilated, had begun to reinvigorate Muslim expansion. As early as the eleventh century, some of them launched raids into the subcontinent, among them Mahmud of Ghazna, whose regional significance was sketched in the Preface.

Mahmud presided over an urbane and sophisticated court. His patronage produced Firdausi's great Persian epic, the *Shahnama*, the scientific work of al-Biruni (973–1048), and major works on Sufism as well. The first Persian text on Sufism in the subcontinent was the *Kashf al-Mahjub* (The Disclosure of the Hidden) of Shaykh Abul Hasan 'Ali Hujwiri (d. 1071), written in Ghaznavid Lahore, which became a major source for early Sufi thought and practice. Hujwiri's tomb in Lahore stands today as one of the major Sufi shrines of the subcontinent.

The writings of the great scientist, traveler, and writer known as al-Biruni encompass scientific, ethnographic, and philosophical subjects, in contrast to the devotional topics that typically hold pride of place for this era. Al-Biruni visited many of the towns of northwestern India and wrote an encyclopedic work on the history, religion, and sciences of the region. He was a remarkable scholar whose work on geography, astronomy, and comparative religion was innovative and wide-ranging.

He learned Sanskrit in order to converse with Brahmans and read their texts, and he concluded that their traditions were fundamentally monotheistic. Although not included in the selections below, al-Biruni's writings represent a cosmopolitan "Islam in practice" that give witness to an extraordinary intellectual curiosity.

The Delhi Sultans

In the late eleventh century, a new wave of Persianized Turks under the leadership of Muhammad of Ghor (1162–1206), began a series of conquests of Ghaznavid centers in Punjab, taking Delhi in 1192, and subsequently the Hindu-ruled kingdoms of Ajmer and Kanauj. Key features of their war arsenal were their superior horses and their skilled horsemanship. Upon Ghori's death in 1206, Qutbuddin Aibek (d. 1210), a *mamluk* (military slave), took independent control of Delhi. He and his successors, who rapidly expanded control across the north, would be known as the "Slave Dynasty" (1206–1290). The Khiljis (1290–1316) extended the reach of Delhi into the Deccan, with excursions reaching beyond into the deep south. The Tughluq Dynasty followed (1316–1413), but was in decline by the end of the century, falling victim to the devastating raids of the Turko-Mongol founder of a vast Central Asian empire, Timur ("Tamerlane," 1336–1405), who moved through the Punjab and into Delhi in 1398.

The celebrated Qutb Minar, with its adjoining Jami' (congregational) Mosque (Figure I.3), located in what is now south Delhi, dates from the reign of Qutbuddin Aibak. Conventionally today the soaring minaret is interpreted as a proclamation of Islamic victory, intended to impress the vanquished, as the mosque's name, the "Might of Islam," and its use of the rubble from demolished temples, suggest. According to historian Sunil Kumar, however, the mosque was meant to convince factions among the conquerors of Aibek's claim at a time when divisions ran high among urbane Persianized aristocrats, military slaves of the Turkic army, and members of various nomadic tribes, all of whom represented people drawn from different areas and with different loyalties. The local population would in any case not have been allowed inside the mosque and hence could not have seen the re-used materials, whether they signaled deliberate destruction or simply an expedient use of rubble whose design may well have been appreciated. At least one similar tower (the minaret of Jam) was earlier built by the Ghorids in the course of establishing themselves in what is now Afghanistan.

Today's name for the mosque, the "Might of Islam," moreover, dates only from a colonial period misreading of a historic name for Delhi that dates to the late thirteenth century, namely, "Sanctuary of Islam," a name extended to the mosque complex and to the near-by shrine of the saint Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. 1236) as well. The word "sanctuary" (*qubba*) was heavy with meaning, as refugees fled Mongol depredations for the relative peace of India. The colonial misreading of *qubba* as *quwwa* (power) helped fit the site into a negative image of Muslim marauders, an image that would serve both colonialist and some strands of nationalist ideol-

Fig. I.3: The Qutb Minar, Delhi, early thirteenth century.
Photo: Catherine B. Asher and Fredrick M. Asher.

ogy. In travel and folklore accounts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, furthermore, the inhabitants of the area called the minaret "Qutb Sahib ki Lath" (the staff of Qutb, the saint), removing it from the story of conquest completely and focusing on it as a symbol of reaching toward heaven. Kumar's work is a reminder of how symbols take on different meanings at different times (Kumar 2002).

As in Sindh, the lives of most of the population in sultanate lands, apart from those of the displaced elites, at first continued much as before. But the rule of the new sultans ultimately brought significant changes. They established networks throughout the subcontinent and into Central Asia; they created a new urban presence; and they cultivated a new religious and classical culture in the Arab and Persian traditions. Their military strength allowed them to provide substantial protection for the subcontinent from the thirteenth-century upheavals of the Mongols that spread across Asia and to create a "sanctuary" for scholarly luminaries and others fleeing their depredations. Gradual conversions in this period seem to have included urban artisans, like weavers, in the context of the new urban settings where the ruling elites were based, as well as the beginnings of conversions of newly settled agrarian populations in areas like Punjab and Bengal, as texts from the latter region indicate (Chapter 28).

The sultans of this period justified their rule as a source of order and patronage that allowed Islamic life to flourish. Court texts of the period provided models for an ideal king, however, that were in actual practice more pragmatic than ideological (Chapter 21). As for the power of an Islamic judge, or *qazi*, the case of the Tughluq-period Ibn Battuta (1304–1377) provides an example of an arbiter of Islamic behavior who showed some stringency but also considerable tolerance for locally condoned practices, from women rulers to topless female dress, and an overall appreciation of the population's piety (Chapter 20).

It is impossible to over emphasize the importance in the subcontinent of Sufis, both culturally and politically, in these centuries. The sultans patronized them as inheritors of charisma (*baraka*) derived through "chains of succession" (*silsila*) from the Prophet himself. Their blessing was regarded as essential to a ruler's power. The Sufi elder (known as pir, *shaykh*, or *murshid*) was an instructor in spiritual disciplines, a guide to the moral way and discipline (*tariqa*) that led to the inner realization of the Divine, an intercessor for his followers, and a conduit of divine intervention or miracles (*karamat*) in everyday life. The lodges of the elders were ideally places of prayer, discipline, and guidance for disciples, but also served for teaching, intercession, and as an open kitchen for all who came. Some were intermediaries for their followers to worldly power and some played key roles in agrarian expansion. Their graves, or *dargah*s, became power-charged places of pilgrimage for blessings and intercession.

There had been Sufis in the subcontinent early on, among them, as noted above, Hujwiri in Ghaznavid Lahore, and, of enduring importance, Khwaja Hasan Mu'inuddin Chishti (d. 1236) who, as instructed in a dream, reached the subcontinent in the 1190s and settled in Ajmer in Rajasthan (Chapter 3). The Chishti lineage, founded and centered in the subcontinent, produced key figures in the spiritual and political life of the sultanate, among them Hazrat Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki,

mentioned above, and Shaykh Nizam al-Din Auliya (d. 1325), the Sufi *shaykh* of Amir Khusrau, the courtier, poet, and musician whose verse introduced the Preface. Other active orders in this period included the Suhrawardiyya, the Firdausiyya, and the Mahdawi (Chapter 29), as well as those outside formal lineages who were known by such names as *qalandar* or *malamati,* and whose defiance of convention was understood as their own route to God. Such figures offer a precedent for the colonial era *majzub* (madman) represented in Chapter 13 as a "holy fool."

The relationship of the Sufis to the sultans was a matter of contestation. The Sufis ideally disdained worldly power but at the same time they were understood to be essential to its success. The Chishtis in particular eschewed accumulation of wealth, and some withdrew from family life, but they were, ideally, conduits of material generosity to those who came to them. Their practices elicited debate, even if, like the unconventional holy men, they did not seek it. Especially controversial was their use of music (like the qawwali introduced in Chapter 5) that could culminate in ecstasy and trance (*sama*', as exemplified in Chapter 9). Figure 4 shows the celebrated qawwals at the Chishti shrine in Ajmer. The celebration of the saint's death anniversary, the '*urs,* has also been a contested practice, especially targeted by reformers in the modern period. Yet specific practices aside, as models of piety and intercession, Sufis have been central to mainstream Islam in South Asia and have interacted with both women and men from all levels of society.

Fig. I.4: Qawwals performing at the shrine of Mu'inuddin Chishti in Ajmer.
Photo: Catherine B. Asher and Fredrick M. Asher.

The Regional Kingdoms of the Long Fifteenth Century

The emergence of regional states in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries provided fertile ground for cultural efflorescence and local diversity. There were still sultans in Delhi, the Sayyids (1414–1451) and the Lodhis (1451–1526), but their territorial sway was limited. Malwa, south of Delhi, with its magnificently built capital of Mandu, became independent in 1406. Jaunpur under the Sharqi Dynasty, to the east, soon became more important than Delhi. Bengal had become independent as early as the beginning of Firoz Shah Tughluq's reign, as Ibn Battuta comments in his travels there (Chapter 9). The capitals of these newly independent kingdoms saw the building of splendid monuments that drew on local architectural skills and styles. As Alka Patel writes, the Gujarati buildings of the period were a continuation of the always-fluid architectural traditions of the region, adapted now to Islamic ritual requirements. This, she suggests, is a more useful line of analysis than notions of "synthesis" derived from the colonial classification of architecture as either "Hindu" or "Islamic" (Patel 2004). Part of the fifteenth-century Sarkhej complex of mosques, tombs, pavilions, a palace, and a pool, which was built in Sultan Ahmad's new Gujarat capital of Ahmadabad, is shown in Figure 5.

All of these regional kingdoms were centers of intellectual life and, above all, of influential Sufi personalities. As Ali Asani notes in his introduction to Isma'ili ginan (of which all but one included in this volume date from this fifteenth-century period), this was an era characterized by an intense devotional style that was shared across religious traditions. The "sant" teachers and poets, like Kabir (b. 1398?) and Guru Nanak (1469–1539), focused on the believer's direct relationship with a beloved Divine and sought to go beyond the formal symbols and rituals of Muslims and Hindus. Vaishnava *bhakti* also flourished in this period, as exemplified by the great saint Chaitanya (d. 1575) in Bengal. There was as well fruitful interaction with the theories and techniques of bodily discipline of the Nath yogis, coupled with the embrace of local languages in poetry. Both of these features are elegantly exemplified in the Sufi romance excerpted in Chapter 2. Shaykh Sadruddin (d. 1515) was one of the Sufis of the time who played an important role in regional political and spiritual life (Chapter 10).

Others Sufi teachers were primarily scholars, who focused not only on spiritual issues and practices but also on the core Islamic disciplines of hadith study, Qur'anic interpretation, and law (*fiqh*). One remarkable figure of this era who brought together the spiritual, the intellectual, and the political was Sayyid Muhammad Kazimi (1443–1505) who was born in the kingdom of Jaunpur. In 1495, in the course of a pilgrimage to Mecca, he declared himself the promised Mahdi who was to come at the end of time. Upon his return to Ahmadabad in Gujarat, he was condemned by 'ulama who demanded his banishment; he died in exile in Khurasan. Followers were nonetheless drawn to his knowledge, piety, and charisma. Despite episodes of persecution, small groups, some putting into practice his utopian teaching by sharing their worldly goods, continued his tradition for centuries in Guja-
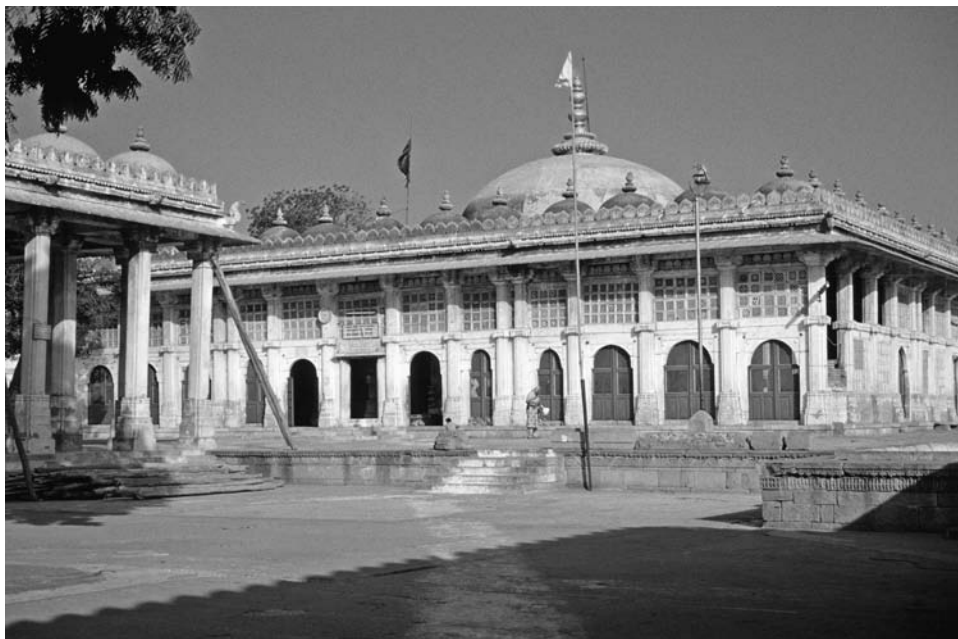
Fig. I.5: The Sarkhej Roza, Ahmadabad, 1457, including saintly and noble tombs.
It is part of a palace complex of the kingdom's rulers, built in a distinctive
regional style. *Photo: Catherine B. Asher and Fredrick M. Asher*.

rat, Rajasthan, the Deccan, and Sindh. Rather than see Muhammad Kazimi as a unique figure, and place "Mahdavis" in opposition to "orthodox," it is important to recognize the extent to which millenarian discourses were part of mainstream thought during the Mahdi's lifetime and afterward (as shown in Chapter 14). The author of the Sufi romance included in Chapter 2 was himself attached to the Mahdavi (as well as the Chishti) Sufi lineages.

By the mid-fourteenth century, the Bahmanid Dynasty in the Deccan had established itself independently of Delhi. At the turn of the sixteenth century, the kingdom split into five regional kingdoms that would persist well into the Mughal era. The cultivation of the language of Dakhni Urdu was one of the major cultural achievements of this period. In Bijapur and Golconda in particular, Dakhni Urdu Sufi verse flourished, notable for its use of the image of a woman in quest of the Divine as a symbol of the soul, a device shared with non-Muslim devotional traditions across South Asian vernaculars (and exemplified in the Isma'ili verses of Chapter l). Chapter 4 includes translations of Dakhni folk songs, sung by women while grinding and spinning.

The kingdoms fought with and against each other, as well as in opposition to or, at times, in alliance with the great kingdom of Vijayanagar under its local Hindu rajas, the largest state ever created in the south. They also interacted with

and fought the Portuguese, now established along the southwest coast and centered in Goa. Vijayanagar's political and economic structure mirrored that of the Muslim sultans, and, like them, it participated in the growing militarism of this era across Eurasia. Lines in this period were not drawn on religious grounds as many have wrongly concluded. Cynthia Talbot has shown from Vijayanagar documents that the great rivals of this era were identified in terms of their military specialization: the Vijayanagar warriors as "Lords of Men"; the "Turks" (identified on ethnic grounds), as "Lords of the Horse"; and the Orissans to the northeast, as "Lords of the Elephant" (Talbot 1995).

The "long" fifteenth century conventionally comes to an end in 1526 with the defeat of the last Lodhi sultan by Muhammad Zahiruddin Babur (1483–1530), scion of Timur and the Mongols, who turned to India when his own Central Asian territorial ambitions faltered. He would later be reckoned the founder of one of the great early modern agrarian empires, known to history as the Mughals, the most powerful and richest polity the subcontinent had ever known. Muslims and Islamic institutions of rule, education, Sufism, and belles lettres were by then well entrenched. The landscape boasted not only the forts and palaces of the rulers, but mosques, madrasas, *khanaqa*s, sarais, and tombs, as well as homes of Muslims large and small. Such buildings served as sites of prayer, instruction, devotion, intercession, and a range of other activities that cemented common bonds. One should imagine the venues and sounds of the texts of this period as they were repeatedly put into practice in these many sites.

The Mughals

In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Mughals ruled an empire far greater in population, wealth, and power than any of the other contemporaneous empires with which they shared Turko-Mongol heritage: the Safavids, Uzbeks, and Ottomans. In Mughal India, the fundamental transformations of the preceding centuries—the expansion of the agricultural frontier, the growth of commercial networks, and incremental technological change—continued apace under stronger and more unified rule. This was across Eurasia an era of increased global contacts, population growth, and political strength. As had been the case in the sultanates before them, the core military and economic institutions of these early modern empires were not specifically "Islamic" but rather shared characteristic patterns common across Asia.

The court language of the Mughal ruling elite continued to be Persian, a language that fostered networks into central and southwest Asia as well as distinctive cultural traditions in political theory, literature, and religious styles. The Mughal system flourished with the participation of a wide range of notables: military figures, traders, bankers, and cultural experts representing extraordinarily diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious origins. As the empire matured in the late sixteenth century, the high nobility included not only Afghans, Turks, and Uzbeks of Cen-

tral Asian origin, but also Persians (who as Shi'a differed from the majority Sunni Muslims), some Arabs, and locally born Muslims, as well as Hindu Rajputs, Brahmins, and Marathas. They were unified by a common culture defined by mastery of the Persian language and culture. Hindu and other non-Muslim scribal, trading, and military communities made the workings of the empire possible.

Babur's rule in Delhi lasted only a brief four years (r. 1526–1530). His daughter Gulbadan would describe his death as owed to a specific ritual practice: his circling the sickbed of his son Humayun, praying that he, not the son, would be taken (Gulbadan n.d.). Humayun lost out after a decade of rule to the rival Afghan Sur Dynasty (1540–1555), but succeeded in briefly reclaiming power after long exile in Persia. As the most commonly told story goes, only six months after his return to power, while hastening to prayer, he slipped and fell to his death from his library steps. This was a sad denouement, but showed the emperor as a model of canonical "Islam in practice."

The Surs had laid a foundation for the bureaucratic and military regime that Humayun's remarkable son Akbar (r. 1556–1605) consolidated. Akbar's conquests extended Mughal control north to Kabul and Kashmir, east to Bengal and coastal Orissa, south to Gujarat and parts of the Deccan, and southwest from Delhi to Rajasthan. Akbar incorporated new lineages into the ruling structure, significantly, those of the Hindu Rajputs whose allegiance was secured by imperial marriages to Rajput women (who did not convert to Islam), among them Jodh Bai, mother of Akbar's son and successor, Jahangir (r. 1605–1627).

The Mughals continued the patronage of the holy men of the Sufi orders. Babur initiated the patronage of the Central Asian Naqshbandi Sufis, who soon expanded into India from their base in Kabul. Akbar (like other notables of the court) was long devoted to Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti, and his visits to Delhi typically entailed pilgrimage to the shrine of Hazrat Nizam al-Din Chishti and to the tomb of his father, Humayun, which had been built under Akbar's direction in the shadow of the saint's shrine. Monumental in size, surrounded by a garden embodying a vision of paradise, Humayun's tomb was meant as a site for multiple dynastic graves linked at once to a vision of heaven and to saintly charisma. Humayun himself had been particularly devoted to Muhammad Ghawth Gwaliori (d. 1562), known for his treatises on astrology, including one that linked astral features to the Divine Names of God. Muhammad Ghawth also translated (or had translated) the Hatha yoga Sanskrit text, the *Amrtakunda*, whose breathing and other techniques of bodily discipline would be widely embraced by Sufi practitioners (Ernst 2003). Jahangir in turn honored both the Sufi Mian Mir Qadiri (d. 1635) and the Hindu ascetic, Gosain Jadrup.

The Mughals, however, not only sought out the charisma and wisdom of the holy along eclectic paths, but, like monarchs across Eurasia in this period, also sought cosmological and divine sanctions for their aspirations to unparalled power. Akbar, after experimenting with a decree asserting his unassailable right to make judicial pronouncements, primarily presented himself as the focus of elaborate ceremonial and even Sufi allegiance on the part of selected court disciples who shared the rit-

ual he formulated for his "divine faith" (*din-i ilahi*). His courtier Abu al-Fazl associated him with images of immanent light, a special light communicated directly by God to kings in the Mughals' cherished Turko-Mongol lineage (reaching back to the mythical Mongol queen Alanqua, impregnated by a ray of light). Abu al-Fazl also celebrated Akbar as a model of the human perfectibility cultivated by some Shi'i and Sufi thinkers (1997). Later historians, as the Preface notes, have taken Akbar as an example of "syncretism" and "tolerance," thus implicitly and misleadingly setting him apart from other "orthodox" Mughals. Of these, modern historians have taken the courtier 'Abdul Qadir Badayuni as preeminent example. But Badayuni turns out of have wholly shared, for example, the millenarian perspective of Akbar and others of his day with its notions of cyclical time and even of a form of reincarnation, ideas that make clear the complexity and variety of what was taken at the time as mainstream Islamic thought (Chapter 29).

Jahangir, and his successors, Shah Jahan (r. 1627–1658) and Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707), were all depicted with halos in miniature paintings of the day, a motif denoting sanctity borrowed from European art that had been brought to the court. Jahangir, like his father, enrolled his closest courtiers as his spiritual disciples, a relationship symbolized by their shared practice of ear piercing and wearing pearl earrings. Shah Jahan's claims to legitimacy were made material and visible in the architectural projects for which he is famed, above all the best-known artifact of the Mughals, the Taj Mahal, the tomb of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The art historian Wayne Begley has argued that the tomb not only recreated a paradisiacal garden layout, but, as demonstrated in the calligraphy of the site, also presented Shah Jahan himself as nothing less than the analogue of the Divine (Begley 1979), claims that are echoed in epigraphy at Ajmer (Chapter 3).

In keeping with the "orthodox" vs. "liberal" binary, conventional historiography has blamed the last of the great Mughals, Aurangzeb, for destroying the Mughal Empire through his exclusionary "orthodox" religious policies. To be sure, Aurangzeb chose to cultivate an Islamic image different from that of his predecessors, presenting himself as a man of abstemious habits and personal piety, and as a patron of Islamic scholars. He supported a group of scholars who compiled Islamic rulings in the Hanafi tradition, the *Fatawa-yi 'alamgiri*; he also patronized an important family of Lucknow 'ulama, known by the name of the dwelling he gave them, "Farangi Mahall." Even so, the Mughals in general stand in contrast to the Ottomans in their relative lack of engagement with the 'ulama. The emperors' Islamic legitimacy derived more from their own charismatic image, their links to holy men, and their patronage—often left in the hands of women of the royal family—of mosques, gardens, and sarais, as well as the *dargahs* of the Sufis.

As for Aurangzeb, whatever his personal behavior, or his particular patronage of a group of 'ulama, he did not, in fact, change the broad contours of Mughal religious policy. All the emperors extended patronage to Islamic thinkers, holy men, and sites, even as, in their capacity as rulers of culturally plural polities, they also patronized the religious specialists and places of worship of non-Muslims.

Indeed, as Catherine Asher has argued, the temples of a Hindu noble like the Rajput Man Singh, built with Mughal patronage, should be seen as "imperial projects," reflecting the bonds between nobles and king and making visible empire-wide architectural styles. It is, moreover, in these terms that one must understand Aurangzeb's destruction of temples in Varanasi, Mathura, and Rajasthan. Such destruction was not the fruit of iconoclasm, since the emperor continued to patronize other Hindu temples, but rather a response to the disloyalty of nobles associated with these sites, nobles who no longer saw their interests served by the empire at a time when it was geographically overstretched and financially precarious (Asher 1992). Even as Aurangzeb applied differential taxes to non-Muslims (a source of revenue for his hard-pressed regime), his leading general was a Rajput, among his enemies were other Muslims, and a quarter of the most powerful nobles were Hindu. The Mughals were guided throughout by pragmatic ideologies intended to secure their rule and, ideally, to give priority to the well-being of their domains (Chapter 21).

What in any case was "Islamic?" Among the most celebrated cultural products of the Mughal court are paintings, some recording and glorifying the court, others large-scale illustrations of legendary Islamic stories or of translations of Hindu epics. According to Abu al-Fazl, Akbar replied to those who brought up the conventional Islamic objection to depicting human forms: "It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God: for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life, and will thus increase in knowledge" (Schimmel 1980, 84). Figure 6 shows Shah Jahan in a painting of the mid-seventeenth century, standing on a globe imagining his ordered realm in which lion and lamb are at peace. A halo and cherubs point to his lofty status.

There was on the part both of Akbar and of Jahangir in particular, an expectation that all religious traditions contained elements of value. This is suggested not only by Akbar's dialogues and Jahangir's links to a Hindu ascetic, noted above, but also by an active program of the translation of Sanskrit texts into Persian. In his memoir, Jahangir wrote about his father:

> Followers of various religions had a place in the broad scope of his peerless empire—unlike other countries of the world like Iran, where there is room for only Shi'ites. . . . Just as all groups and the practitioners of all religions have a place within the spacious circle of God's mercy, in accordance with the dictum that a shadow must follow its source, in my father's realm, which ended at the salty sea, there was room for practitioners of various sects and beliefs, both true and imperfect, and strife and altercation were not allowed. Sunni and Shi'ite worshipped in one mosque and Frank and Jew in one congregation. (Jahangir 1999 ed., 40)

This is, of course, an imagined ideal, but it represents nonetheless an important theme in the cultural world of the court.

Fig. I.6: The Emperor Shah Jahan standing upon a globe. The emperor is depicted as a semidivine figure, with halo and cherubs; a lion and lamb sleep at his feet. Mid-seventeenth century, Hashim, Mughal Dynasty, India. Color and gold on paper. H: 25.1 W: 15.8 cm. *Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase, F1939.49a.*

Conversion

By the Mughal era, certain patterns in the distribution of the Muslim populations on the subcontinent begin to be clear. Muslims continued as a significant presence along the southwestern coast; in modern times they would form roughly one-quarter of the population as a whole in that region. In the old Mughal heartlands of the north, including the regions around imperial cities like Delhi and Agra, as well as in the Deccan, there was no correlation between the presence of Mughal elites and conversion: in these areas; the Muslim population would never be more than some 15 to 20 percent, often represented not only by rulers but by crafts-people, like weavers, and others in the service of the courts. Throughout most of the subcontinent, Muslims lived widely distributed among far larger non-Muslim populations. The two exceptions would be in the northwest and the northeast, where Muslims had become by the British colonial period the majority population. The presence of Muslims in the northeast is particularly striking, given the relative remoteness of the area. It is largely attributable to the role of court-sponsored Sufis in organizing local populations into an expanding frontier of settled agriculture (Chapter 28).

The Eighteenth Century and British Colonial Rule

By the early eighteenth century, Mughal power had begun to contract in favor of a wide range of regional states. Some were breakaway provinces of the empire. Others were led by locally rooted lineage heads and chieftains whose power had grown during the prosperous seventeenth century and who, typically, had gained ruling experience through Mughal institutions. The most prominent of these locally based polities were the Rajputs, some of whom had already challenged the center under Aurangzeb; the Marathas of the Deccan; the Sikhs in the Punjab; and the Jats, southeast of Delhi. Breakaway provinces, led initially by their Mughal-appointed governors and continuing to pay formal allegiance to the center, included Bengal, Hyderabad in the Deccan, and Awadh, east of Delhi, with its capital of Lucknow. The establishment of the new, non-Muslim polities was often interpreted in modern colonial and nationalist historiography as an assertion of "native" Hindu (or Sikh in the case of Punjab) power against "foreign" Muslims. In fact, the non-Muslim dynasts engaged in strategic cooperation and even alliances with Muslim rulers, both at the center and in other regional polities, and were never united among themselves. Similarly, the brutal invasions of Persians (1739) and Afghans (1748–1767) from the northwest made no distinction on the grounds of religion; they attacked Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Afghanistan, competed over by the Safavids and Mughals, took enduring shape in this period, notably under the empire of Ahmad Shah Abdali (r.1747–1772). Afghan power grew in part thanks to burgeoning trade into Russia and China sustained substantially by Hindu bankers and traders based in cities like Shikarpur in

Sindh. The Afghan kingdom at its peak reached into former Mughal territories in the northwest, but it was never able to establish itself in the Indian heartland despite its defeat of the Marathas at Panipat in 1761, a battle that showed the limits of each of these newly powerful regimes. By the end of the nineteenth century, the British succeeded in making Afghanistan into a "buffer state" and fostered the authoritarian centralization of the so-called "Iron Amir," 'Abdurrehman Khan (r. 1880–1901).

Despite the upheavals in the region around Delhi, the eighteenth century was overall a period of population growth, urbanization, and the establishment of new markets. The new regional kingdoms were centers of effective state-building, particularly in the Maratha case reaching deeply into their populations with effective bureaucracies and sustaining powerful armies. An innovation with far-reaching implications for the new system of regional states was their recruitment of professional infantry forces on the European model, efficient at handling artillery, and subject to new kinds of disciplined fighting. Such troops, who were initially often trained by European adventurers, had to be paid regularly, and they had to be paid in cash. The resultant "military fiscalism," as David Washbrook has called it, created at once the need for extracting more revenue from the peasantry and the services of bankers, traders, and revenue intermediaries who developed increasingly strong networks and played key political roles (Washbrook 1988).

The regional states also provided a context for new directions in poetry, art, architecture, music, and religious thought. Islamic traditions were among those that found new expressions in the regional settings. Across India in the eighteenth century there was a renewed attention to devotion, evident, for example, in a re-invigoration of the Chishti Sufis, particularly in the Punjab and in areas of Afghan dominance. Sindhi and Punjabi poets in this period produced masterpieces of vernacular poetry that reinterpreted local folk stories in terms of the human soul, symbolized as a woman searching for the Divine. The Punjabi story of *Hir Ranjha*, composed by Waris Shah (b. c. 1730), would prove one of the most enduring and popular of these accounts. At the Delhi and Lucknow courts, Urdu was adapted to Persian poetic genres, and Urdu poetry attained its classic form. This was also a period of Shi'a efflorescence, not only in Lucknow and Awadh, but also in other Shi'a-led states, including for a time Bengal. The Shi'a rulers of Lucknow undertook massive building projects, among them *imambaras* for the rituals of their mourning month of Muhurram, and celebrated Lucknow poets wrote elegies (*marsiyas*), like "The Battle of Karbala" by Anis, to recount the events commemorated during that month (Anis 2003). Figure 7 shows an *imambara*, a site used for mourning assemblies and for the storage of *ta'zia*s (replicas of the tombs of the martyrs), some towering, which are carried in procession during Muhurram, some miniature, like the ones pictured here. Replicas of permanent material are used over and over, in contrast to others whose use culminates in being submerged, like Hindu images, in water.

A central figure in creative Islamic thought in the eighteenth century was Shah Waliullah (1703–1762), whom many later Islamic movements in modern India
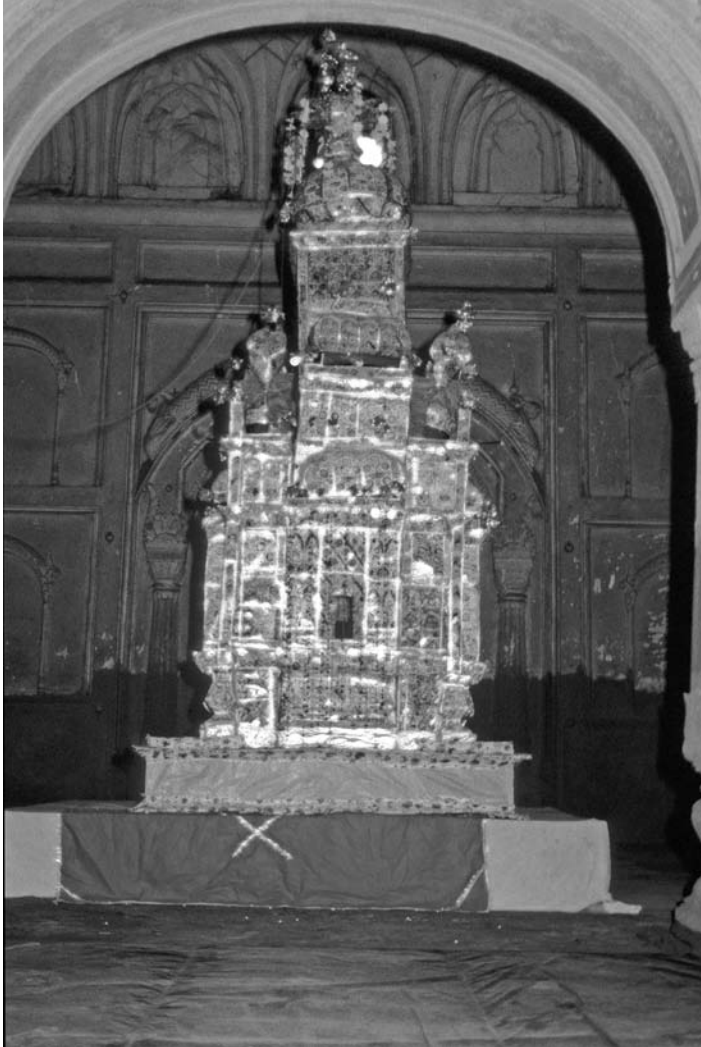
Fig. I.7: A *ta'zia* inside the Husainabad Imambara, Lucknow, carried in procession during the Shi'a mourning festival of Muhurram. *Photo: Catherine B. Asher and Fredrick M. Asher.*

would claim as their forebear. His father had been one of those involved in Aurangzeb's *Fatawa 'Alamgiri* project, and his own scholarship was enriched by extended study with hadith scholars in the Hijaz. Later scholars have commonly assumed that figures associated with these eighteenth-century Arabian hadith circles represented a single movement, all sharing the spirit of the radical Arabian reformer, Ibn 'Abdulwahhab (1700–1791). As Ahmad Dallal argues, however, the many reform movements of the century are deeply imbedded in their local con-

texts and vary profoundly. Thus, in contrast to the Arabian Wahhabis, associated with what Dallal calls "a grim and narrow theory of unbelief," Shah Waliullah represented a tolerant and rich synthesis incorporating the approach and teachings of all the law schools and, in the tradition of al-Ghazali (d. 1111), he ambitiously attempted to reconcile Sufism with tradition (Dallal 1993).

If much in this period had a dynamic of its own, increasingly cultural life and all else would take place in a context shaped by the English East India Company. By the end of the century, the Company had abandoned its pattern, dating back to the first years of the seventeenth century, of trading out of coastal enclaves, in favor of acting itself as a landed, regional power in the rich province of Bengal. Increasingly driven by the nationalism that defined its relationship (in particular to France), Britain had succeeded in edging out other rivals to the European trade in India. It had done so in part by involving itself in the internal politics of states in ways that made them ripe for takeover. Company ties with the newly powerful banking and financial groups were key to this success. In this, as David Washbrook has argued, the eighteenth century witnessed a "conjunction" not of a "progressive" Europe and a "declining" India, but of two thriving commercial worlds. It was India's flourishing institutions that drew and sustained European penetration.

Islam in Colonial India: Law, Jihad, and Mutiny

The British focus on the "rule of law" as a principle for ordering society and justifying their authority took shape by the end of the eighteenth century. British efforts to systematize personal law—laws related to marriage, inheritance, adoption, and so forth—had particularly far-reaching implications for religious practice across communities. Laws were to be homogenized into categories, "Hindu" and "Muslim," and derived from texts whose teachings were assumed to have been lost. This was only one of many administrative measures that served to delineate, if not actually to create, social categories that were erroneously supposed to already exist.

By the early decades of the nineteenth century, the process of transforming the Indian economy into a raw-material exporter, in return for manufactured goods from the metropolis, was underway. Nowhere did this classic colonial trading pattern fall earlier or more heavily than in Bengal with its large Muslim peasant population. The East India Company developed the production of opium, illegally smuggled into China at substantial profit. Peasant cultivators who faced an uncertain market grew indigo, often through coercion. Artisanal production declined with the loss of overseas markets and the advent of machine-made cloth, which was especially devastating for skilled weavers in the great weaving centers like Dacca and Murshidabad.

Throughout, the weightiest burden was a heavy land revenue, rigorously collected in cash, and ultimately used to pay the cost of the colonial presence. In an important decision in Bengal in 1793, those recognized as landlords were guaranteed possession of their lands in return for a fixed payment. That payment, initially high, led to a turnover of perhaps one-third of the land of the province. Those who

profited were largely those who were familiar with the new regime and had prospered under it, especially Brahman and Kayastha employees of the Company, who along with the old landlords enjoyed what would soon become a low taxation payment relative to the demands they levied on the peasants. Having seen the shortcomings of this experiment, British land policy was different elsewhere, but the cost to the Bengal peasant, especially when coupled with a depression from the 1820s to the 1840s, was high.

In 1821, a charismatic scholar, Shari'atullah (d. 1840), returned to Bengal after two decades in the Hijaz, preaching a renewed commitment to spiritual life and ritual obligations. By the 1830s he had gained a large following in the eastern Bengal countryside for what had become known as the Fara'izi movement (from *farz*, obligation). The movement joined religious consciousness to class antagonism. Participants refused to pay the customary levies used by Hindu landlords to support their temples and festivals. Shari'atullah's son, Dudu Miyan (d. 1862), organized the Fara'izis to assert their rights not only against Hindu landowners, but against moneylenders and British indigo planters as well. For several decades, the Fara'izis conducted agrarian protest activities throughout the region while operating within the fundamental boundaries set by the colonial state. In contrast, a movement led by Titu Mir (d. 1831), similarly focused both on both renewed spiritual and ritual life and on peasant rights, was crushed militarily when it resorted to violent jihad.

A second focus of militant jihad in this period was on the northwestern frontier in opposition to the Sikh warrior state that was deemed oppressive of Muslims. Its leader, Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (1786–1831), was part of the circle of Shah 'Abdul Aziz (1746–1823), who was the distinguished son of Shah Waliullah and himself a great scholar of hadith and a charismatic guide to many disciples. Shah 'Abdul Aziz's *fatawa* defining India as *darul harb*, a site of war, has been taken by later anticolonial nationalists as evidence that the jihad was launched against the British. In fact, Shah 'Abdul Aziz had cordial relations with East India Company officials posted in Delhi, and he intended his *fatawa* to give guidance in relation to practical matters, such as interest rates, that were different in a context of *darul harb*. He did not regard militancy against British power as legitimate given that Muslims were free to practice their religious rituals in British territories (Masud 2000).

Like his mentor, Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi was deeply committed to teaching and practicing religious renewal, including reform of what were regarded as Sufi and Shi'i deviations. He undertook his militant campaign in the state-building spirit of the times, hoping to carve out a place of correct and unhampered Muslim rule and practice. Two of the reformist tracts of the movement, the *Taqwiyyatul Iman* and the *Siratul Mustaqim*, were disseminated through the new and inexpensive medium of printing, and they were to prove enduringly influential throughout the region (Chapter 15). Once on the frontier, the fighters were defeated as much by the Muslim Afghans, who did not share their reformist concerns, as by the Sikhs. With the East India Company's own conquest of the Sikhs in 1849, the entire Indian Subcontinent was essentially under its control.

Less than a decade later, in 1857, an army mutiny joined civil unrest to sweep across northern and parts of central India, disrupting British control for over a year. The grievances that fed this revolt were many, from army conditions to taxation to the arbitrary removal of princely rulers. Both Bengal and Punjab remained quiet. The soldiers marched to Delhi, claiming the aged Mughal at Delhi, Bahadur Shah Zafar (1775–1862), as their symbolic leader. Hindu army sepoys predominated in the initial mutiny, and Hindu Marathas were among the fiercest rebels. Some Islamic clerics invoked jihad against unjust rule, but theirs was a minor stand in the uprising. Nonetheless, in the brutal, bloodthirsty reprisals that followed, the British hand fell particularly hard on Muslims who were stereotyped as "fanatics" seeking to restore Mughal rule. Large parts of Delhi were laid waste, its inhabitants killed indiscriminately, mosques were destroyed, and Shah Jahan's great congregational mosque was made for a time into a stable.

With the end of conflict, the East India Company was abolished in favor of direct crown rule. The new order, put in place after 1857, was geared to creating stability. In 1858 a Queen's Proclamation declared that there would be no interference on the part of the government in the religious lives of her subjects. Moreover, the Crown entered into agreements with a range of landlords and various princes, preeminent among them the Muslim Nizam of Hyderabad, who were guaranteed their tenure and expected to become a conservative bulwark for the regime. The post-1857 regime also took for granted that India was comprised of groups so diverse that only a foreign power could contain them. This assumption, translated into administrative practice, helped to create the diversity it was meant to counter, not least by drawing a sharp line drawn between Hindu and Muslim. An example of the reasoning of a colonial court anomalously adjudicating nothing less than a case of Islamic identity is provided in Chapter 22.

Renewal and Community

A second-generation employee of the Company, Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898), who had himself protected the British during the uprising, devoted himself in the decades following to fostering intellectual and political reconciliation between the Muslim service elite and the colonial power. In 1875, he established the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh (now Aligarh Muslim University), an English-style institution that cultivated gentlemanly skills in Muslims who could play a role in the kind of polity he imagined, one that welcomed "native" consultation and demonstrated respect for its subjects, as the Company had failed to do. Within two decades, Muslim elites had, in fact, come to be seen, like the princes, as a pillar of loyalty, a role not uncommon for "minorities" in authoritarian settings. Figure 8 shows a portrait of Sayyid Ahmad, wearing the Turkish fez he popularized at Aligarh as a symbol of the modern Muslim, as well as medals he had received from the British government, his very dress a demonstration of Muslim, if not "Islamic," modernity in practice.

Fig. I.8: A portrait of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, educational reformer and modernist Islamic thinker. Note his Turkish fez, popularized at Aligarh as a symbol of modernity, and his medals from the British government. http://www.twf.org/bio/SAKhan.JPEG

Sayyid Ahmad and the circle that grew around him at Aligarh were, however, also intellectual pioneers of Islamic modernism. Part of Sayyid Ahmad's intellectual project was to demonstrate a special spiritual bond between Christians and Muslims as monotheists, an analogue to the bond he sought in political life. (This argument is somewhat parallel to the nineteenth-century racial "Aryan" identity posited by high-caste Hindus and the British as a foundation for their imagined bond.) Central to Sayyid Ahmad's modernism was a rejection of the commentarial tradition of the traditional law schools and the specialized knowledge of the 'ulama in favor of the belief that any educated Muslim could turn to the sacred texts, to the Qur'an above all and in some cases to the hadith, in order to interpret Islamic principles appropriately for the current day. Sayyid Ahmad's denial of all miracles, and his insistence that Islam and western science were in perfect harmony, gained little support, but this perspective helped cast an aura of "superstition" over practices associated with tombs and holy men (see Chapter 13), which, nonetheless, continued in widespread use.

In part, Sayyid Ahmad's work, and the work of the modernists generally, sought to refute Western critiques of Islam on such issues as jihad, the status of women, and negative depictions of the moral character of the Prophet Muhammad. They accepted the judgment that Indians were "backward," and that modern education was crucial to their future, as did many Indian reformers, across religious back-

grounds. It was to modern education for Indian Muslims that Sayyid Ahmad primarily dedicated his career. There were now two strands of education for Muslims: that of the British-style school and college; and that of the Islamic madrasa, which in the post-Mutiny period began to be organized on the contemporaneous European model of a school with a formal staff and a common curriculum organized by classes (Chapter 17). The British-style schools, which used English as their medium of instruction, produced not only government servants and professionals, but also new "lay" claimants to Islamic authority, who had neither a saintly reputation nor the classical scholarly training that continued to flourish. (For examples of these new claimants, see Chapters 22, 25, 27, and 34).

The importance of newly available printing presses for disseminating religious texts contributed to the work not only of the challengers but of the 'ulama as well. Printed texts made possible access to sacred knowledge without the personal relationships to lineages of teachers that the traditionalists valued (Robinson 2000). But the traditionalists also benefited, using the presses both within the madrasas and for disseminating their own works to colleagues and to a general public. Examples include selections from a seminal reformist tract of the early nineteenth century (Chapter 15), a late nineteenth-century manual of Sufi practice (Chapter 16), a biography of a major family based at a saintly shrine (Chapter 12), a memoir by a former madrasa student (Chapter 17), and a mid-twentieth-century tract of guidance on family relationships (Chapter 23). As many of these texts make clear, this was a period of considerable intellectual dynamism, not only among the better-known modernists but among traditionalist thinkers as well. Spiritual guides also flourished, some representing a composite model of spiritual and scholarly learning (Chapters 12, 17, 23, and 26). Into this mix came as well the colonial authorities, who, as the example of the army-based "holy fool" evocatively suggests, could reduce a conduit to the divine to being a "madman," properly confined to a modern asylum (Chapter 13).

Of increasing importance in the twentieth century was the sense that personal identity was linked to public identity as a "Muslim" or a "Hindu." With the gradual introduction of Indian participation in the country's administration, the population numbers within each community became an issue of contention; Muslims and Hindus competed for a larger share in the seats the colonial authorities granted to each group in governing councils and for positions in schools, in public employment, and so forth. The protection of mosques, the right to conduct religious processions, and the status of Urdu all were made public symbols of Muslim rights (Freitag 1988; Gilmartin 1988). Urdu, written in Arabo-Persian script, had become an official provincial language across the north in the mid-nineteenth century. Its displacement in 1900 as the sole vernacular official language in the United Provinces (where Hindi, written in the Sanskrit-based Devanagari script, now shared official status) was taken as a blow to Muslim interests, as was British policy toward the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century, which was viewed as inimical to Muslims. Sayyid Ahmad's hope for a privileged relationship between the British and Muslims was short-lived.

The denouement of the administrative partition of the large province of Bengal in 1905 was a further blow. The division outraged politically active Bengali nationalists, who saw their base narrowed, but it provided an unexpected boon to some of the Muslim Bengali leaders who now had a majority province of their own in the east. In the face of protests and violence, in 1912 the British reunited the province and, as with the policy on Urdu, the Muslim elite felt betrayed.

In the course of the Bengal episode, a delegation of Muslims, composed of landed and aristocratic leaders from across India, petitioned the viceroy to acknowledge the presumed political needs of Muslims. This was the foundation of the Muslim League, a party focused on the protection of Muslim interests. The initiative was clearly welcomed by the British rulers. In the subsequent Indian Councils Act (1909), not only were seats in councils "reserved" for Muslims, but "separate electorates" were established in which only Muslims could vote for Muslim representatives. This pattern persisted in the subsequent reforms of 1919 and 1935, and it contributed significantly to the creation of a separate political identity for Muslims. By World War I, there was a distinct Muslim intelligentsia making demands on the colonial power and disseminating their causes in politically-oriented newspapers that emerged in this period.

These Muslim causes were initially led by western-educated Muslims, but in 1919 influential 'ulama organized the Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind (Association of Indian Ulama) to join in as well, radicalized in particular by the cause of defense of the Ottoman caliphate. This issue soon found supporters in Gandhi and others of the Indian National Congress who regarded post-war colonial Middle Eastern policy as another case of European deceit and aggrandizement. The Khilafatists in turn enthusiastically supported Gandhi's call for peaceful non-cooperation, even as some nationalist politicians, notably Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), demurred from resort to any other than legal means. The Khilafat Movement did not survive for long: in 1924 the Turks themselves abolished the caliphate under Ataturk's modernizing policies. The nationalist 'ulama, however, continued their allegiance to the nationalist movement and to the Congress.

The first non-cooperation movement had by then collapsed, and the decade of the 1920s was increasingly troubled by Hindu-Muslim violence. The aggressive conversion movement of the Hindu revivalist Arya Samaj intensified in this period, and, in response, Muslim movements of proselytization (*tabligh*), education, and guidance spread (including the movement later known as Tablighi Jama'at, Chapter 18). At best, such cultural strengthening was seen not as divisive but as integral to the independence movement, fostering each religious community as a strong component of the whole. This rationale influenced, for example, the foundation of non-governmental courts (Chapter 24).

At the end of the 1930s, Muslim political activists faced not only the struggle for India's freedom but full-out conflict among rivals for Muslim allegiance. The Muslim League gained little electoral support until the very end of the colonial period. In the elections following the Government of India Act of 1935, it was the Indian National Congress that dominated most of the provincial assemblies. Con-

gress, however, did little to address Muslim League concerns. At that point, Mo-hammad Ali Jinnah, a Bombay lawyer who had for the most part cooperated with the Congress, determined to assert the League and himself as Indian Muslims' "sole spokesman." His cause was helped by his expressions of loyalty during World War II when the Congress leadership refused to support a war they had not entered in-dependently. The verses of the Islamic modernist, Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), whose poetry celebrated Islamic history, denounced colonialism, and imagined a just society, helped fuel a separate Muslim nationalism (1993). Emphasizing this influence, Annemarie Schimmel, in her history of Islam in the subcontinent, calls the period from 1906 to Partition, "The Age of Iqbal" (Schimmel 1980).

For Jinnah and many other leaders of the League, "Islam" meant commitment to the Muslim community as an overriding identity. To secure that, he sought at all times constitutional strategies that would allow, above all, protection of Mus-lim minority interests. Ironically, for Jinnah it was only by creating autonomous areas of Muslim population that the religious identities and symbols that had come to dominate political life could, he believed, give way to the liberal, secular ideal of politics he espoused. Islam, for him, was a moral spirit that supported demo-cratic and egalitarian goals. Other supporters of the Pakistan movement and par-ticipants in the new state, however, came to imagine a Muslim polity as one fun-damentally shaped by some version of Islam, a cause evident in the final election campaign before independence (Chapter 31), as well as in debates and political strategies within Pakistan in the decades that followed (Chapters 32 and 33). Would Pakistan be a state for Muslims or an Islamic state?

A divided India gained independence on 15 August 1947. Many hands were in-volved in that outcome. Political and cultural movements had long drawn sharper boundaries around communities. Politicians had long negotiated on the basis of community. Some Congress leaders saw Partition as a way to avoid the decentral-ized federalism that they thought would impede the strong center needed for a development-oriented state. Some Hindu Bengali politicians welcomed a "second partition" that removed the Muslim majority that challenged their dominance. Partition unleashed one of the most horrific bloodlettings of the twentieth century. Perhaps a million people were killed; as many as ten million migrated, often in forced evacuations fueled by "ethnic cleansing."

Islam in the New Nation States

The ruptures of 1947, and subsequent changes in political regimes elsewhere in the subcontinent, could not but change many expressions of Islamic thought, practice, and patterns of belonging given the intensity of national identities in the twentieth century. Muslims in Pakistan would now live in the only state ever cre-ated to be a "Muslim" homeland. The Bengali citizens of that homeland, however, would soon reject religion as an adequate base for national identity. Muslims in India and other minority contexts like Sri Lanka would find themselves in polities

where nationalists at least implicitly challenged the notion that being Muslim was compatible with national identity. South Asia since the mid-twentieth century thus offers an opportunity for studying Islam in a wide range of modern political contexts: from democracy to military rule; from a majority status to that of a small and large minority.

Pakistan and Afghanistan

During the decades that preceded Partition, Muslim politicians and many others had negotiated ways to secure a Muslim voice in politics through such strategies as separate electorates, reserved seats, "weightage" to secure representation that exceeded the proportion of the population in minority provinces, and the establishment of Muslim-majority provinces. They had, however, not tied their focus on community identity to a romanticized relationship with a specific geographic territory in the style of modern nationalism. Indeed, as the idea of some kind of separate polity or polities (perhaps within an encompassing Indian nation) emerged in the 1930s, there was not even consensus on where that polity would be. The new citizens of Pakistan were thus in many ways unprepared when the decision in favor of Partition was made and the territorial lines of the new state drawn.

Moreover, Pakistan lacked for the most part the national institutions that India had inherited, from its newly built capitol in Delhi to its functioning bureaucracies to the well-established Indian National Congress itself. Bengali East Pakistan, some thousand miles of Indian territory distant from the western wing, differed profoundly in language, culture, and economic level from the dominant west. The princely state of Hyderabad in the center of India, with its Muslim ruler and largely Hindu population, which some had imagined as Muslim territory, was forcibly integrated into India. The princely state of Kashmir, adjoining West Pakistan, was claimed by India on the grounds that its Hindu ruler had "acceded" to India despite its majority Muslim population. Fought over on several occasions, it remains a tragic and unresolved legacy of the Partition.

Included within West Pakistan were two provinces, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), whose populations spilled over into the adjoining countries of Iran and Afghanistan. The Pathans (now more typically known as "Pashtuns") of the NWFP came uneasily into Pakistan given their political mobilization around a charismatic figure known as "The Frontier Gandhi" whose organization, the Khuda'i Khidmatgar (Servants of God), had mobilized the population in support of the Indian National Congress and nonviolence. The Pashtuns, moreover, chafed at a boundary that divided them from their fellow Pashtuns in Afghanistan, and their commitment to an autonomous Pashtun polity persisted well after independence. It would be East Bengal, however, that posed the greatest challenge to the new state, primarily in protesting their neocolonial economic and cultural position within the larger state.

Pakistan's strongest inherited institution was its military, thanks to the colonial policy of recruiting substantially from the Muslim populations of the northwest.

Support for the military was justified in the name of protection against India and fears over provincial separatism. Military coups have ushered in three long periods of army dominance, which together equal over half of the period since independence. Each coincided with significant international support. Pakistan was a Cold War ally of the West during the first two periods, from 1958 to 1971 and then again from 1977 to 1988, when the country (reduced to its western wing after a civil war in 1971) served as a conduit for U.S. and Saudi support to Afghan refugees fighting a jihad against Russian invaders. In the third period, under General Pervez Musharraf (1999–2008), Pakistan became a U.S. ally against the Afghan Taliban after their role in the attacks on the United States in 2001. Such geopolitical realities more than "Islam" contribute to Pakistan's democratic failures.

Two perspectives on the appropriate ideological path the nation ought to pursue have competed throughout Pakistan's history. The secular position that the state was created to serve Muslim political and economic interests was evident in a much-quoted speech of Muhammad Ali Jinnah to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan:

> You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed; that has nothing to do with the business of the State. As you know, history shows that in England, conditions, some time ago, were much worse than those prevailing in India today. The Roman Catholics and the Protestants persecuted each other. . . . We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State. (11 August 1947, available at http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/constituent_address_11aug1947.html)

Islam from this perspective was an identity and a culture with values relevant to the state as well as a focus for unity, as the electoral campaign represented in Chapter 30 shows. Sacred texts did not serve as a blueprint for state organization or legislation, nor did religious affiliation provide a basis for citizenship.

In contrast, there were 'ulama and others who imagined Pakistan as an "Islamic state" embodying distinctive forms and laws in accordance with sacred teachings and distinguishing Muslims from non-Muslims. This conception of an "Islamic State" is a fundamentally modern one, as even a brief review of earlier Muslim-led politics and texts of the premodern period, discussed above, makes clear. The influence of the "Islamists," those favoring a modern state organized on Islamic principles, can be traced in successive constitutions, criminal laws, and legal practice, all of which form a significant dimension of "Islam in practice" in South Asia.

Of increasing influence in Pakistan has been the thought of Maulana Abul A'la Maududi (1903–1979), the foremost Islamist thinker of the subcontinent, who had initially opposed the idea of the new state. For an Islamist, Islam is "a system" and "a complete way of life," not a secular state for Muslims. Maududi opposed the traditionalist 'ulama's adherence to the historic law schools in favor of his own direct interpretation of the Qur'an in the style of the modernists. And he opposed their *de facto* acceptance of Islam as primarily restricted to the compass of private

life. His organization, the Jama'at-i Islami, founded in 1941, appealed primarily to the modern-educated, not to graduates of the madrasas. His ideas were, however, increasingly shared by the Pakistani 'ulama, which formed political parties, as did the Jama'at-i Islami. Chapter 32 includes excerpts from the classic text on the secular vision of Pakistan, the Munir Report (1954), and Chapter 33 introduces recent writings of a leading Pakistani Islamic scholar on the rampant sectarianism that has produced violent confrontations in the country, particularly intense since the 1980s.

The 1980s ushered in a period in which the politics of Pakistan were intimately tied to the politics of its neighbor, Afghanistan. In 1979, a coup led to a communist government (1978–1989) supported by direct Soviet military intervention. International resources then flowed to Pakistan's military ruler, General Ziaul Haq, from both the United States and Saudi Arabia. Some three million refugees flooded into the border provinces of Pakistan, bringing with them guns, opportunities for drug dealing, and soon a commitment to jihad on the part particularly of young Afghans educated in the madrasas whose numbers began to soar. Ziaul Haq saw his regime strengthened militarily and ideologically as he introduced Islamic criminal laws and other Islamic regulations. Under Ziaul Haq, the Jama'at-i Islami first attained political influence, including cabinet seats. Both the secular Pakistani army and the non-Muslim United States saw their interests served by fostering jihadi Islam.

There were unforeseen consequences of Zia's authoritarianism, Islamic policies, and the encouragement of jihad, of which the growth of sectarianism was one. Shi'a groups, for example, resisted what they saw as Sunni fiscal and other policies imposed from above. A second stimulus was a kind of competitive funding, as Saudi money flowed to Sunni institutions and Islamist parties like the Jama'at-i Islami in the 1980s, while Iranian money, in the wake of the Iranian revolution of 1979, flowed to Shi'a. Sectarianism also served as a platform for involvement in public life at a time when an authoritarian regime precluded other forms of political engagement.

Within Afghanistan, a further unforeseen consequence was the extent to which rival groups that had emerged in the anti-Russian jihad fought each other for control after Russian withdrawal. Of these groups, the Taliban, led by students of an NWFP Deobandi seminary, gained control of most of the country by the mid-1990s. Their accommodation to al-Qaeda jihadis, who traded support to the regime for training sites, coupled with news reports on their draconian legal system, elicited international opposition to their regime. The Taliban at this point had no international goals of their own; they were nationalists. Al-Qaeda in contrast was committed to a global jihad and after bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa by terrorists linked to al-Qaeda in 1998, the United States retaliated with an attack on Afghan territory. After al-Qaeda-linked terrorists crashed aircraft into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, the United States and its allies retaliated again, this time with all-out attacks that destroyed the Taliban's hold on government power. At this point, Pakistan again became a somewhat reluctant

ally of the United States in its continuing struggle to control Afghanistan and destroy terrorist networks.

Pakistan was then again led by a general, Pervez Musharraf, who had come to power in a military coup in 1999. Musharraf, unlike Zia, was not himself committed to furthering Islamic legislation, but during his tenure support for religious parties grew, especially in the two provinces that border Afghanistan. In part this support filled a vacuum created by Musharraf's restrictions on the major political parties; in part it also served as a protest against Musharraf's anti-democratic, pro-U.S. policy as the religious parties called for free and democratic elections. Musharraf in fact used the fear of Islamist power as leverage for gaining international support for his "moderate" and anti-terrorist policies. When elections were finally held in early 2008, support went neither to Musharraf nor to the religious parties but to the major political parties that were once more permitted to operate.

Bangladesh

Many citizens of East Pakistan, the Muslim-majority districts of Bengal assigned to Pakistan at Partition, soon became disillusioned with their position in the new state. Bengalis came to feel themselves virtually a colony of the Punjabi-dominated army and bureaucracy. The privileged place of Urdu and English as official languages, despite the fact that Bengali speakers were a majority in the country as a whole, particularly rankled. Urdu was in fact the mother tongue of only some seven percent of the entire population, but it had been the official language in Punjab for roughly a century and had become a symbol of Muslim cultural identity. Bengal had a much more highly developed sense of linguistically and geographically based cultural unity than did West Pakistan, not least because the latter was comprised of four ethnically distinct provincial areas (Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun, and Baluch).

In 1971 the Bengali Awami League, led by Shaykh Mujibur Rahman (1920–1975), won the majority of votes but was denied the opportunity to form a ministry. East Pakistan seceded. In the brutal civil war that followed, India intervened on the side of Bengal, whose refugees were flooding across the international border. About 17% of Bangladesh's population is currently non-Muslim, largely Hindu, in contrast to Pakistan where a full 97% of the population is Muslim.

Bangladesh's first constitution declared it a secular state and prohibited religiously based parties, a reaction in part to the participation of groups like the Bengali Jama'at-i Islami on the side of Pakistan during the war. The mid-1970s, however, saw the beginnings of a turn toward much greater visibility of Islam in public life and debate. This was something of a world-wide phenomenon, evident in Pakistan as well; it was in part a response to the oil boom of the 1970s, which brought both support and job opportunities abroad for many poorer Muslim countries. Islam also provided a rhetoric for more populist regimes. In 1975, a coup against the increasingly dictatorial regime of Mujibur Rahman (who was assassinated) ushered in governments that fostered links to other Muslim countries

and support to religious institutions. In 1988 a constitutional amendment declared Islam "the state religion."

Two parties have dominated politics in Bangladesh, the Awami Party and its rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the latter including the Jama'at-i Islami (as well as a second, very small, Islamic party, the Islami Oikya Jote) in its ruling alliance from 2001 to 2006. Although acknowledging that the number of militants is small, many observers believe that the expansion of the number of madrasas and some episodes of violence in recent years suggest the potential for a new level of radical Islam in Bengal, in part as a response to the corruption endemic throughout the government. But all Islamic action is not the same, as a Qur'an class, led by a woman college student participant in an organization loosely linked to the Jama'at-i Islami, suggests (Chapter 19). This entry is a caution against conflating all forms of Islamic dress and piety with extremism.

India

Some sense of the dislocations and violence that took place in parts of India after Partition is evident in an account dictated by a small group of illiterate Muslims, affiliated with the Tabligh movement, who went to the Punjab in 1950 to try to reconvert Muslims who had apostatized (Chapter 18). Experiences like this, of course, do not reflect the tenor of everyday life for most Muslim Indians, although strands of Hindu nationalism, reinforced by an international situation that made Pakistan an enemy, persisted. India, however, was unusual among the new nations of the mid-century in its success at sustaining open debate and a vibrant democracy, in which Muslims actively participated. There emerged no single party or organization to speak for Muslim interests in independent India. Through the 1960s, Muslims, like most Indians, supported the Congress Party, which deliberately sought Muslim votes, but since that time Muslims, again like everyone else, have participated in electoral politics largely by voting for whatever party seems most likely to serve their interests.

As described in the Preface, there was violence against Muslims, who were all too often seen not only with the classic negative stereotypes of a minority group but also as disloyal citizens with Pakistani sympathies, especially from the 1980s on. This was in part a surrogate, it would seem, for opposition to the state, as well as a strategy to unite Hindus at a time of mounting social pressure from below that came with democracy, affirmative action, and, increasingly, economic "privatization." Muslims were presented as a vested interest whose "appeasement" proved governmental immorality and whose culture and politics were risks to the moral and political unity of the nation.

Fueled by a range of Hindu nationalist organizations, and with the connivance of government officials, a campaign focused on the symbol of a particular Mughal mosque, the Babri Majid in Ayodhya, allegedly built on the birthplace of the god Ram. The movement culminated in 1992 in mass participation in tearing down the mosque, followed by anti-Muslim pogroms in Bombay and elsewhere. In 2002

a second pogrom was unleashed in the state of Gujarat, one that shocked the world with its genocidal brutality. The work of many Indian human rights organizations and journalists in documenting the Gujarat tragedy represented humane voices that actively dissented from these crimes.

The defeat of the Hindu nationalist party (Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]) in 2004 brought into power a government more attuned to addressing the problems faced by Muslim citizens, as signaled by their creation of a Prime Minister's Committee on the Social, Economic, and Educational Status of Muslim Indians. The committee's report, known as the Sachar Report (after Justice Rajinder Sachar who chaired the committee), was issued in 2007 and has seemingly put to rest any talk of Muslim "appeasement" by showing the depressed status of Indian Muslims. As a whole, Muslim Indians were demonstrated to be poor; below the national average in literacy; underrepresented in government, the army, and the police; and underserved by the public education and health infrastructure. There are, to be sure, individual success stories of people of Muslim background, with figures in "Bollywood" and the world of cricket particularly well known. Three Muslims have served since Independence in the largely symbolic role of India's president. There are also great regional and class differences that are masked by gross measures of socioeconomic status. Nonetheless, the Report indicates that India's enormous Muslim population has suffered considerable handicaps.

At the same time, a great deal in Islamic life in India is vibrant and open. India's cultural pluralism contributes to that variety, as does the fact of democracy rather than authoritarianism. The Indian Jama'at-i Islami, with its Islamist roots, provides a particularly striking example of creative change in having moved, in contrast to sister organizations elsewhere in the subcontinent, toward a program of education, social service, and ecumenical outreach. Although Muslim spokesmen have clung to the preservation of Muslim Personal Law (Chapter 27), in recent years multiple "law boards," including ones representing women, have emerged to assert appropriate standards for such matters as marriage contracts. And Islamic symbols here, as everywhere, are products of their local contexts. An ethnographic film, for example, "Banaras Muharram and the Coals of Karbala" (2004), depicts the Shi'a mourning rituals of Muhurram. At times, the Muharram story has been interpreted as a charter for rebellion against injustice. In the film on Banaras, in contrast, it is taken as a profound symbol of peace and brotherhood. The Indians interviewed in the film explain that the very blood of ritual flagellation is a sign of willingness to hurt oneself before another. This interpretation is particularly poignant in the contemporary Indian context.

Nizamuddin

The area surrounding the tomb of the beloved fourteenth-century saint, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya Delhi contains the burial sites of his successors and disciples as well as those of a wide range of princes and paupers who over the centuries longed to share his charisma. Today, the busy site and its market spill into a neigh-

Fig. I.9: A display of Islamic chromolithographs for sale near the Tablighi Jamaat center, New Delhi, December 2006. *Photo: Barbara D. Metcalf.*

borhood of both middle-class housing and a slum, a railroad station, a near-by police *thana*, and the noisy streets characteristic of this densely populated capital city. To visit this neighborhood is an opportunity to witness many forms of "Islam in practice."

In Figure 9, a poster-seller offers chromolithographs representing devotional images, much like those that circulate in Pakistan (Chapter 8). His modest stall stands close to the historic center of the Tablighi Jama'at (Chapter 18). The center draws not only Indians but participants from throughout the world, some of whom come to study at the adjoining madrasa, which provides the traditionalist Hanafi teaching associated with Deoband; most come to worship, learn, and, possibly, venture out on preaching tours. The vendor of the posters has hung on the wall uncontroversial subjects, like pictures of Mecca and of pious children, keeping below a two-foot stack that includes more exuberant Sufi devotional posters illustrating saintly miracles or other subjects that reformers might find deviant.

Given the vendor's location, such discretion is not surprising. Figure 10 depicts Tablighis, with their travel gear on their backs, setting off to try to persuade other Muslims of the importance of prayer and other canonical obligations. Close by

Fig. I.10: Tablighis departing for a tour, New Delhi, December 2006.
Photo: Barbara D. Metcalf.

(but out of the camera's range) is the shop of a major publisher of books in Urdu, Hindi, English, French, Arabic, and other languages where visitors, including an international mix of Tablighis, browse as they make their way among great bundles wrapped for mailing to purchasers around the world.

Other passers-by may be en route to the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya itself, frequented for the blessings of the saints, living and dead, and the singing of the famous hereditary qawwals on Thursday nights. On the way they might purchase rose petals, puffed rice, or a velvet cloth to offer at the shrine (Figure 11). As the sign above the rose petals indicates (in Urdu and English), someone else

Fig. I.11: Offerings for sale at the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi,
December 2006. *Photo: Barbara D. Metcalf.*

going in the same direction might be making a pilgrimage of another sort, to the
tomb of the great Urdu poet of the nineteenth century, Ghalib, and the adjacent
hall named for him, which is often used for literary events. Ghalib's verses are
quoted by lovers of Urdu of all religious backgrounds and taken as evidence of a
secular "composite culture" shared across religious boundaries.

Someone else, a South Asian or a visiting European, might be arriving at Niza-
muddin at the same time to visit the tomb, hear a lecture, or consult the library at
the pristine, modern complex built in honor of Hazrat Inayat Khan (Figure 12),
the twentieth-century Baroda musician who carried "Sufism without Islam" to Eu-
rope (as discussed in Chapter 25). These four photographs (Figures 9–12) are
from India, but similar diversity of practice may be found in any of the countries
of the region.

Islamic Practice across Borders

Apart from this diversity, a great deal else in relation to Islamic practice is shared
across borders in contemporary South Asia. Like the photographs above, many of
the entries in the following text point to new forms of transnationalism that link
the identity issues of diasporas and home communities into reciprocal relation-
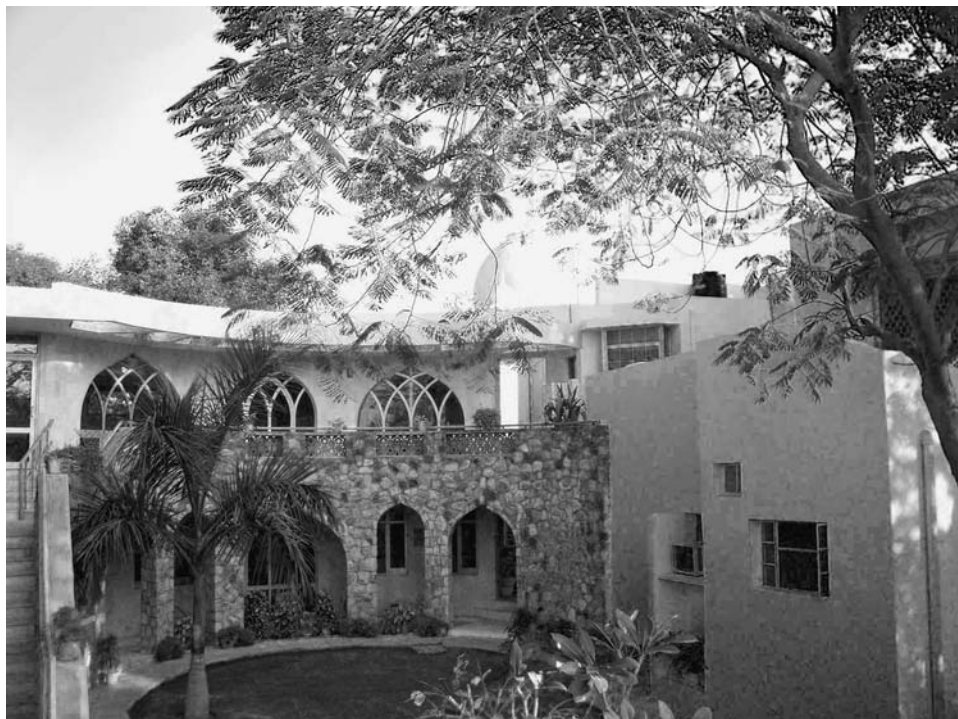ships that tie South Asian Muslims to Muslims of other backgrounds. This trans-

Fig. I.12: The *dargah* of Hazrat Inayat Khan, Basti Nizamuddin, New Delhi, December 2006. *Photo: Barbara D. Metcalf*.

nationalism is clearly expressed in the strong worldwide presence of Tablighis and in the international stature of Inayat Khan. Transnational networks have, of course, always existed, but they are intensified today by new modes of transportation and communication. A particular challenge in recent times for all religious traditions has been the reconciliation of competing truth claims as all religions are dispersed throughout the world.

Other characteristics of contemporary Islamic practice are evident in these selections as well. One is the fact of extraordinary sectarian competition, whether affixed to old labels like Sunni and Shi'a; new denominations, like Deobandi and its Tablighi offspring, and Barelvi, more sympathetic to shrine-based rituals; or new-style associations, formal or loose, like that represented by the followers of Inayat Khan. In the last, as in the Tabligh movement, one witnesses another common feature: leaders who claim Islamic authority without a base in either traditionalist scholarship or in a saintly lineage of their own. All of these characteristics may be observed in the practices of modern Hindu and other religious groups as well. In relation to transnationalism, sectarian competition, and "lay" leadership, the importance of print that makes available translations and other texts continues to be of great importance.

In yet another way, a common pattern across national boundaries, as sketched in the sections on separate countries above, has been the growth of religiously based nationalisms, whether Muslim, Hindu, or, one might add, in Sri Lanka, Buddhist as well. All religious practice today takes place in a context of more bounded and self-conscious communities. The categories that define the five Parts of this volume—"Devotion and Praise," "Holy and Exemplary Lives," "The Transmission of Learning," "Guidance, Sharia, and Law," and "Belonging"—have all been constant themes in Islamic practice, but all today mark self-conscious, and often contested, "Muslim" identities in social and political life. The manifestations of Islamic practice at Nizamuddin, however, preclude any simple characterization or easy evolutionary trajectory for what goes on. The site is a reminder of the sociological diversity, the rich variety of practice and belief, the edginess among competing views, and the movement of people, institutions, and ideas that have characterized South Asia's Muslims throughout. We will meet these themes many times in the contributions that follow, as we attempt to sample "Islam in practice in South Asia."

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Further Reading

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chapter, accompanied by annotated bibliographies. Annemarie Schimmel's *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980) is a classic survey with extensive bibliographies.

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