

Introduction

THE ESSAYS IN THIS volume were written over the past ten years. Nine started out as public lectures and one as a funeral oration. Two were contributions to the *New Cambridge History of Islam* while the remainder were reviews for the *Times Literary Supplement* and academic journals. Naturally, they bear the stamp of Western concerns over this period. There has been the awareness amongst scholars, but not nearly enough in Western government or the general public, that the past two centuries have been a period of Western dominance in the Muslim world. Moreover, this dominance has clashed for much of the period with manifestations of the Islamic revival, a process of renewal and reform which has been, and still is, productive of new ideas and new organisations. Amongst the more striking examples of the latter have been the tens of thousands of madrasas which have sprung up throughout the Muslim world – supported for the most part by the donations of the faithful – steadily fashioning the infrastructure of an Islamic society from below. This has been an extraordinary manifestation of the desire in Muslim societies at large that both the materials of revelation and the skills to make them socially useful should continue to inform their world. Sufi orders, too, have continued to shape the hearts of men and women so that they serve God's purposes in the modern world. Alongside these institutions, long engaged in the transmission of knowledge, there have also flourished a host of modern Muslim organisations, increasingly embracing women as well as men.

It was out of these modern organisations, for the most part, that movements of resistance to the West emerged, notable amongst

them al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS or Daesh). Great cities of the world – Madrid, Paris, New York, London, Brussels, Birmingham – have all been attacked by Muslim terrorists. Fears have grown in many countries about the radicalisation of young Muslims. Some, indeed, did travel to Afghanistan/Pakistan and to Syria in order to participate in jihad. Whereas research in Islamic matters in the twentieth century appeared to have little political salience, apart from a flurry of interest around the Iranian revolution, research in the twenty-first century has taken place in the context of strong government and societal concern for explanations of why some Muslims seemed to hate the West.

The essays in this book have not been written with the direct aim of answering this question. But several do respond to this question in general terms by reminding us of the dominance of the West in the Muslim world over the past two centuries, by showing how this has created the opportunity for the key structures of an Islamic society to be rebuilt from below, and by explaining the nature of the shock delivered to the authority of Muslim civilisation by Western power.

There was a further aspect of context to the writing of these essays; it was the concerns of Western scholarship. One which has been prominent is the issue of 'modernity'. We no longer, thank heaven, following Weber, Talcott Parsons and the theorists of mid-twentieth-century USA, see all societies modernising along the same Western pattern. Modernity takes shape in different ways in different societies and so some have come to talk of 'modernities'. This said, there is an enduring concern about the relationship between Islamic reform and modernities. I think of Islamic reform's assault on the authority of the past, its assault on forms of magic (although not all manifestations of reform disapprove of all forms of magic), its emphasis on personal responsibility in faith, and its emphasis that belief should be revealed in social action. These ideas are to be found at work in Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama'ati-Islam through

to reformed 'ulama' groups such as the Deobandis, and various women's movements that carry forward the reforming process. A second academic concern has been that of authority. European dominance threatened every aspect of Muslim civilisation. In recent decades scholars have become increasingly aware of the depth of the challenge the West presented and the creativity demonstrated by Muslims, whether theologians, men of letters, Unani hakims or musicians, in striving to sustain the authority of their practices in the context not just of the European presence but of the increasing competition with each other stimulated by that presence. A third academic concern has been assessing the significance of the rise of the modern state, processes of globalisation and their impact on traditions of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. One of the features of the twentieth century is the way in which the emergence of the modern nation-state from former empires, especially after World Wars I and II, led to the destruction of cosmopolitan spaces and traditions as well as massive movements of refugees. Subsequently, processes of globalisation have resulted in major migrations of people from the developing to the developed world in search of better standards of life. Incorporating these people, many of them Muslims, into their largely Christian societies, has become a matter of urgent concern. Should local values dominate, or should concessions be made to multiculturalism? The noise of the discourse is constantly to be heard. For some Western societies it is the most important issue of the day.

A further aspect of my context is the group of postgraduate research students who have been working with me over the period. In the British system this can be quite an intense relationship as the student is not normally advised by a committee, as in the USA, but by a single supervisor, who may or may not be assisted by an adviser. I generally learn much from my postgraduate research students; indeed, in the years 1997 to 2004 when I was a full-time administrator, they kept me alive academically. The mark of my association with at least some of these students can be seen in some

of the essays in this book; I just hope that they in their turn benefited from me.

During the period 2008 to 2012 my Royal Holloway post was divided 50:50 with the University of Oxford, courtesy of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, where I was the Sultan of Oman Fellow. The meant, among other things, that I taught a course for the excellent M.Phil. in South Asian Studies and supervised Oxford postgraduate research students. Five completed their D.Phil.s with me, and one of them was Yaqoob Bangash whom I inherited from the Beit Professor, Judith Brown. He worked on the integration of the princely states in Pakistan, a subject which had suffered from sixty years of neglect.¹ Uther Charlton-Stevens was a second scholar whom I inherited from Judith Brown. His thesis has brought about a substantial advance in our understandings of Anglo-Indians and their politics in the triumphant phase of Indian nationalism.² Nikhil Puri, who was more social scientist than historian, produced a remarkable analysis of the different types of madrasa in Bangladesh and West Bengal and their struggles with each other and the state for social control.³ Tahrat Shahid, who was also more of a social scientist than a historian and came from a World Bank background, explored the problems of reforming family laws in favour of women in Bangladesh.⁴ My final D.Phil. student was Megan Robb, who worked on the *Madinah* newspaper of Bijnor in British India's United Provinces. Both the newspaper and the place had fascinated me for a long time; the *Madinah* was one of the most widely respected Muslim papers in the first half of the twentieth century, and Bijnor was a qasbah in which Hindus dominated the municipal board in the early twentieth century and Muslim separatist ideas flourished.⁵

Two Oxford students whose Master's theses I supervised came to do their Ph.D. theses with me at Royal Holloway. The first was Layli Uddin, who turned her M.Phil. thesis on Mawlana Bhashani into a major study of the political mobilisation of peasants and lower-class urban workers in East Pakistan in the years from the

1930s to the 1970s.⁶ The second was Eve Tignol who explored in depth a theme which has long fascinated me. I have tackled it briefly in the essay ‘Memory of Power, Muslim “Political Importance” and the Muslim League’ in this volume. Eve’s exploration covered poetry, particularly in the *shahr-e ashob* style, reaching back to the eighteenth century but also moving forward into the 1930s, and taking in cities as sites of memory along the way.⁷

Other postgraduate research students who worked with me at Royal Holloway were: Sumaira Noreen, who studied the development of the secondary education system with reference to Pakistan before and after independence;⁸ Tommaso Bobbio, who through studying the impact of urban planning in the city of Ahmedabad, brought a new dimension to our understanding of the causes of communal rioting;⁹ and Shuja Mahesar, who studied the impact of the green revolution in the Khairpur region of the Lower Indus valley and brought home to me the dramatic changes which flowed from this event.¹⁰ Six other postgraduate research students are currently working with me: Neha Vermani on Mughal food practices; Fakhar Bilal on how Deobandi madrasas came to be established in Pakistan; Ismail Mathari Porkundil on the problems of innovation in Indian madrasas in the twentieth century; Amna Khan on the seventeenth-century saint Sultan Bahu of Jhang, and the reception of his teachings down to the present; Kirsten Seymour on Sufi resistance to the tide of Islamic reform in the North West Frontier region of Pakistan; and Sudipto Mitra on the role of middlemen in the recruitment of indentured labour in the nineteenth century.

Two further scholars deserve mention as part of the context within which I have worked. First, Daniel Morgan, whose Oxford M.Phil. thesis on Shah Wali Allah I supervised. He then went on to the University of Chicago to continue his work on Wali Allah with Muzaffar Alam. This meant that when I went as a visiting professor to Chicago in 2016 he was able to support me as a research assistant and as a friend. The second is Ali Usman Qasmi, who came to Royal Holloway as a Newton International Postgraduate

Fellow. He used his Newton award to excellent effect, funding two conferences, one with Justin Jones of Oxford on the Shi'a in South Asia; and the second with Megan Robb on Indian Muslims who had opposed the Muslim League. Substantial publications were the outcome of both these events.¹¹ At the same time 'Ali Usman completed two important monographs, one on the Ahl al-Qur'an and a second on the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan.¹²

One's research students provide an important context but so too do one's major projects of the moment. For half of the period covered by these essays I was doing the research for and writing my biography of Mawlana Jamal Miyan of Farangi Mahall.¹³ It meant that I was much engaged with the educational and devotional world of Farangi Mahall, with the campaign for Pakistan, with the sharif class of the UP who drove that campaign and subsequently came to play a major role in running the new state. These were men whose ancestors had come from outside India to rule it. They often held high-ranking positions under the British and, after Independence, held similar positions either in Pakistan or international organisations. As I worked on Jamal Miyan's papers in Karachi, I would often meet their descendants in the Sind Club.

So much for aspect of general context. Let me now turn to the specific contexts of each essay. The first four essays all, one way or another, look at the Islamic world as a whole. Two were among those I contributed to the *New Cambridge History of Islam*, a project led with much wisdom by Michael Cook and with notable drive by the distinguished Cambridge University Press editor, Marigold Acland. Chapter 1 here is my introduction to the volume which I edited, *The Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance*. It sets out the two great processes which have shaped the Muslim world over the past two hundred years. The first was the onset of Western power from around 1800, involving processes of brutal invasion right up to the twenty-first century, structural changes brought about by integration into the capitalist system, the emergence of the modern nation-state and equally the emergence of new elites educated in Western rather than Islamic knowledge.

The second great process was the Islamic revival, which began as a process of renewal in Islam before the West arrived and then came to interact vigorously with it. At the heart of the revival was a shift in piety from an other-worldly Islam of contemplation to a this-worldly Islam of action on earth to achieve salvation. Arguably it was the greatest change to take place in Islamic piety for one thousand years. The essay traces the movement's connectedness and its spread throughout the Islamic world. It notes its two great products: Islamic modernism which has tried to build bridges between Islamic understandings and Western knowledge, and Islamism which has tried to capture the modern state for the purposes of particular Islamic understandings. Several themes are noted along the way: the relative decline of 'ulama' and Sufis as transmitters of Islamic knowledge and the rise of laymen and women; the growing prominence of women as transmitters and interpreters of Islam; the increasing shift in the leadership of the Muslim world to the East of the Hindu Kush; and the growth of a significant Muslim presence in the West. Just as this essay was deemed an appropriate introduction to the Cambridge volume on the Muslim world since 1800, so it is also appropriate to this collection of essays.

Chapter 2, 'Global History from an Islamic Angle', was written for a conference in September 2012 titled 'New Directions in Global History', which I believe was to mark the foundation of the Oxford Centre for Global History. The aim of the piece, as the title suggests, was to demonstrate that global history did not necessarily need to be seen from a Western angle. Indeed, from the eighth century CE the Islamic world developed a 'world system' which preceded Immanuel Wallerstein's Western world system. This was the main driving force of human affairs. Moreover, although it came to be overrun by Western power, that Islamic world system continued to expand within its frame. The chapter goes on to consider particular phenomena of global reach and significance which flow from research on Muslim societies: the tales of storytellers which cross vast regions of the world; understandings

of astrology and astronomy which have been widely shared; and particular commodities the impact of whose production and consumption has been of global significance. The chapter concludes by addressing the 'Protestant Turn' in religious piety, experienced throughout Muslim societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but also experienced in other leading world faiths. It raises the issue of the relationship of such religious change to 'modernities'.

Chapter 3, 'Education in the Muslim World to the End of the Eighteenth Century', was written for *Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, the volume of the *New Cambridge History of Islam* edited by Robert Irwin. It was a wonderful opportunity to build on my research on the 'ulama' of Farangi Mahall¹⁴ and consider education from the classical era to c. 1800, taking in spiritual education, children's education, slave education, popular education and women's education along the way. The essay was to explain how, on its own terms, the Islamic system of education was remarkably successful both in reproducing itself and in developing creative responses to the challenges of Europe. But ultimately, because at its heart its purpose was conservationist, it failed to master the challenge of Europe.

Chapter 4, 'On How Since 1800 Islamic Societies Have Been Built from Below', flows logically from Chapter 3 in that it explains the way in which the transmitters of Islam, in particular 'ulama' and their madrasas, have played the central role in sustaining the Islamic dimension of Muslim societies over the past two hundred years. It shows how from the nineteenth century the spread of Western power and ideas led to the ending of state-supported Islamic education both in societies ruled by Muslims as well as in those ruled by the West. It then demonstrates how Muslim societies themselves replaced one hundred-fold what the state no longer provided, paying for the institutions themselves. In most societies sustaining the Islamic dimension was the work of the 'ulama' but in some, for instance Turkey, it was the work

of the Sufi orders. The content of this chapter was delivered as a public lecture in the Divinity School in Chicago in March 2016 as one of the requirements of my post as visiting professor. Some of those present were unhappy with my emphasis on the role of faith in rebuilding Islamic societies from below. For them the financing of nearly a hundred thousand madrasas in South Asia was largely a function of Saudi and Gulf money. While I am willing to acknowledge that foreign money had a role to play in places, it would be a mistake, as Arshad Alam has shown, not to acknowledge the role of people's faith.¹⁵

Chapter 5, 'Crisis of Authority: Crisis of Islam?', and Chapter 6, 'Strategies of Authority in Muslim South Asia', address the issue of authority in Islamic civilisation which had been so grievously challenged by the dominance of the West. Chapter 5 was a lecture which I was asked to give at Royal Holloway (it took place in March 2008) as part of a celebration of the CBE to which I was appointed in 2006 for 'contributions to Higher Education and the History of Islam'. Part of me thought that it was a bit rough that I should have to do more work to celebrate my achievement, but the realist reminded me that I was fortunate that there were people interested in what I had to say. The lecture argued that Western dominance had led to a loss of authority in Muslim civilisation in general and in the religious sphere in particular. It showed how the old systems of establishing authoritative religious knowledge had begun to weaken, how religious authority had started to fragment as new interpreters emerged, as lay interpreters came forward to challenge the 'ulama', and as the individual human conscience came to be given an increasingly important role in establishing correct action.

Chapter 6, 'Strategies of Authority in Muslim South Asia', explores the issue of authority amongst South Asian Muslims from the nineteenth century and widens the field to consider Unani medicine and literature as well as religion. It was given a few months later in September 2009 as a keynote address at 'Muslim Voices: Traditions and Contexts', a conference in honour of my much-valued

colleague, Barbara Metcalf, at Ann Arbor, University of Michigan. Starting from the position that authority is always a work in progress, the lecture examined the strategies of the ‘ulama’, writers and Unani hakims in sustaining their authority and noted that all rejected the Persianate Mughal past and embraced instead Arab models, the Prophetic model, and in various ways British models and British authority. The lecture also noted the irony that just at the time Muslims were letting go of Mughal models of authority the British were coming to adopt them. The lecture also contained a running discussion of the revolutionary shift towards rooting authority in society at large and the techniques to do so.

Chapter 7, ‘Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia’, had its initial form as a paper written for a conference held by Filippo and Caroline Osella on Islamic Reform in South Asia in the summer of 2006. It gave me an opportunity to round off, at least for the moment, my thinking on the subject which had been developing over the previous twenty years – for the stages in the process see the first endnote to the paper. Around this time, I also made the acquaintance again of S.N. Eisenstadt, whom I had got to know at the University of Washington, Seattle, in 1986. Eisenstadt was very supportive of the direction of my thinking, which was hardly surprising given his *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization* (New York, 1974). My argument was, as Eisenstadt had argued in the case of Protestantism, that key aspects of Islamic reform – its strong combination of ‘this worldliness and transcendentalism’, its strong emphasis on ‘individual activism and responsibility’ and ‘the direct relationship of the individual to the sacred and the sacred tradition’ – gave it transformative potential. Of course, Islamic reform was operating in many different contexts and, in these contexts, it was an important, and on occasion the most important, element in fashioning forms of Muslim modernity.

Two further essays consider the long-term relationship between West Asia and South Asia. Chapter 8, ‘Iranian Influences on

South Asia', is on the rise and decline of Iranian influences in South Asia. It was first delivered as a lecture to the Iran Society in London in 2012, but there was a pleasing cyclical completion in doing so as the lecture drew on a lecture on a similar theme which I had given in September 1977 at the British Institute of Persian Studies in Tehran. The lecture shows how with the establishment of Mughal rule in South Asia from the sixteenth century Persian influences became consolidated: South Asian courts became an Eldorado for ambitious Iranians; the Emperor Akbar made Persian the language of government of his empire; and in religious matters, the rational subjects which had been brought to a peak in Iran came to rival the revealed subjects in the madrasa curriculum. Iranian poetry became a dominant presence in Sufi practice. Arguably Persian influences reached their peak in the eighteenth century after the decline of Mughal power. Almost all the successor states retained Persian as the language of government, including the East India Company; South Asia remained a destination for ambitious Iranians, and several Shi'a dynasties were established, becoming potent patrons of things Iranian. All this was brought to an end in the nineteenth century when the British became the hegemonic power and changed the language of government to English at the higher level and the vernacular at the local level. The second challenge to Iranian influences was the rise of Islamic reform with its aims to replace Persianate elements in ritual and learning with Arab elements. The latter half of the twentieth century saw Iranian influences increasingly confined to the Shi'as (no small community, numbering about 60 million in 2000) and the achievements of the region's industrial magnates of Iranian descent – the Tatas, Wadias, Godrejs and Ispahanis.

Chapter 9, 'South Asia and West Asia from the Delhi Sultanate to the Present', offers an overview of the changing relationship between South Asia and West Asia from the twelfth century to the present. It demonstrates how down to 1800, South Asia was invaded by the powerful armies of West and Central Asia and the

many influences they brought with them. From 1800 all changed. South Asia increasingly became a transmitter of ideas and of power to the West Asian region. Particularly dramatic was the role of South Asia as a base from which the British projected power into West Asia in World Wars I and II. Important too in the second half of the century was the role of the Gulf region, broadly construed, to the South Asian economy. Of course, South Asian cultural influences from the poet Iqbal to the Islamic thinker Mawdudi through to Bollywood have been notably strong in recent decades. West Asia has been emerging as India's extended neighbourhood, an important part of her great power status and the place in which, China permitting, it will be most fully expressed.

This essay began as a lecture which was to inaugurate the Indian Foreign-Ministry-funded Centre for West Asian Studies at the University of Calcutta. The lecture hall was full. But I was very surprised when I had finished speaking to be met with almost total silence. Someone behind me leaned over and said, 'You mustn't mind. They won't have understood a word you have said.' He meant the students who made up the audience. There is nothing like the workings of language policy in higher education to put a visiting speaker in his place! Eventually, there were some questions from retired Indian Foreign Service people in the audience. The lecture itself had a second outing as a contribution to a conference celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the accession of Sultan Qaboos of Oman in 2010.

Chapter 10, 'The Memory of Power, Muslim "Political Importance" and the Muslim League', was given as a lecture at a fascinating occasion of which I was very pleased to be part. It was the celebration by the government of Pervez Musharraf of the December 1906 founding of the All-India Muslim League in Dacca. So, academics came together with some notably sharp-shouldered politicians to celebrate the League's centenary in December 2006 in Islamabad. I was pleased to see that the authorities had invited former members of the Muslim League from Bangladesh, and

gave them great courtesy. President Musharraf's speech was delivered in a Durbar Hall that reminded me of the Chihil Sutun in Isfahan. The speech was memorable for its Churchillian style – I wondered if Musharraf practised by listening to tapes of Churchill's speeches – and the occasion was striking for the fact that only one of the many women in the audience wore any form of head covering.

During the conference and surrounding events one man caught my eye for his style and courtesy and the way in which others acknowledged him. This was Gohar Ayub, the son of former President Ayub Khan, a man who had been at the centre of affairs for forty years. As it happened, he chaired the session in which I gave my paper. I noted his concentration as I spoke and was delighted the following day to receive from him a small gift and letter of appreciation. He clearly warmed to a talk which emphasised the memory of power and Muslim 'political importance' as a motivating force behind the elites who led the Muslim League. The chapter demonstrates that these ideas were instinct in the Aligarh movement. They were set out most explicitly in the memorial to the Muslim deputation to the Viceroy in 1906 and were frequently repeated in addresses to All-India Muslim League sessions down to 1947. This idea, moreover, was accepted by many British who regarded Muslims, whom wrongly they imagined to be a unified community, as an important group that they needed to keep on their side. As I noted above, my former research student, Eve Tignol, has greatly expanded our understanding of the memory of power and its significance for South Asian Muslims in the last century of British rule.

Chapter 11, 'The Modern State: Citizenship, Multiculturalism and Globalisation', was delivered as a plenary address to a conference on 'Deconstructing Global Citizenship' staged by the branch of Texas A&M University in Qatar. I addressed the themes of the modern state, citizenship, multiculturalism and globalisation from a historical perspective. Focusing in particular on the Muslim world, the

chapter is about the cosmopolitan worlds that existed before the rise of the nation-state and shows how these were destroyed by the rise of the modern nation-state after World War I. It then explores how processes of globalisation in the last third of the twentieth century increasingly undermined the nation-state. At the same time, the increased movement of peoples across the world was forcing nation-states to consider how they might embrace diversity. Multiculturalism became the watchword of the moment, raising the issue of whether or not particular cultural practices should be permitted to trump human rights. Indeed, more generally since the Nuremberg trials of 1945–46 the idea has emerged that individuals have a duty to humanity that is greater than their obligations to their colleagues and the commands of their nation-states. This consideration has come increasingly to lie behind ideas of humanitarian intervention in nation-states.

I now turn to the short essay and reviews. Of the latter, chapters 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 21 were all written for the *Times Literary Supplement*. I have retained the titles given them by the *Supplement*. Chapter 20 was written for the Indian journal *The Book Review*; I have retained their title. Chapters 15 and 21 were written for the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*; their titles I have supplied.

Chapter 12, the short essay, was the oration I gave at the funeral of Ralph Russell in the autumn of 2008. For nearly fifty years Russell had been the leading scholar of Urdu in the UK. He had created a much-loved Urdu course and also retired early from the School of Oriental and African Studies to devote his energies to teaching Urdu to the community at large, and in particular to train those who might themselves become teachers of the language. At the same time, he produced a series of major works on Urdu poets and poetry. These had a great impact on me, enabling me to make contact with north Indian Muslim sensibilities more effectively than my limited language skills permitted me to do. It was wholly

characteristic of this generous and humane man that after my review of his *Ghalib: Life and Letters* appeared in *Modern Asian Studies*, he phoned me to thank me. No one else has done that. Again, he thanked me with a handwritten note for my contribution to his festschrift. No one else has done that.

Chapters 13 and 14 are both reviews of wonderful translations. The first is Dick Davis' translation of Fakhr al-Din Gorgani's *Vis and Ramin* composed for the Seljuk governor of Isfahan, c. 1050. Davis quite rightly describes it as 'one of the most extraordinary and fascinating love narratives produced anywhere in the medieval world, Islamic or Christian'. It is sensual, erotic and dramatic with great set pieces, placed at intervals in the poem, like arias in an opera, which expose the inner lives of the characters and stretch emotions to the limit. Davis has done a great service in resurrecting this too-little-known work. Chapter 14 reviews another work rescued from obscurity. It is the late Aditya Behl's translation of the Sufi master, Shaykh Qutban Suhrawardi's *The Magic Doe*, composed in 1503 as an introduction to mystic practice for disciples at the Sharqi court of Jawnpur in what is now Uttar Pradesh. Like Gurgani's *Vis and Ramin* it was designed for oral performance in groups. It could be read as a straightforward love story in which a prince falls in love with Mirigawati, a doe-woman, but must pass through a series of ordeals before he can consummate his love. Or alternatively it could be read as a Sufi text, a journey in search of love in which the seeker goes through stages, experiences the tension between earthly and heavenly love, and does not achieve his objective until he has succeeded in annihilating his self. Behl's teacher, Wendy Doniger of the University of Chicago, made sure that his translation of this Sufi romance from Hindawi, or old Hindi, was published. In both cases Dick Davis and Davis/Behl reminded me of what wonderful literature there is to be discovered in Asian languages.

One of the greatest works of Asian literature is, of course, the *Baburnama*, the memoirs of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, who founded the Mughal Empire. Chapters 15 and 16 both address

this great work in one way or another. In Chapter 15, 'Garden of Eight Paradises', I review Stephen Dale's *The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India (1483–1530)* which is arguably the greatest work of Timurid history written over the past fifty years. Of course, the *Baburnama* has an important part to play and Dale places it most skilfully in its Timurid context. The great achievement, however, is Dale's use of Babur's poetry in Chughtay Turki and Persian to get access to the individual and his emotional states. Dale learned Chughtay Turki especially to be able to do this. Dale quite rightly presses on us E.M. Forster's suggestion that late-Timurid Samarkand should be compared with Renaissance Florence, and Babur with Lorenzo de Medici. 'Uses for Grass', Chapter 16, reviews Dilip Hiro's abridgement of the *Baburnama* for Penguin Classics, which reduces it from 300,000 words to 100,000. Unfortunately, he chose Beveridge's early twentieth-century translation as his base rather than Wheeler Thackston's excellent recent one. His introduction makes no mention of Dale's great biography and there is no bibliography. This really was an opportunity missed.

The storyteller has been, until recently, a major feature of the Muslim world. One of the major stories told from West Asia through to Southeast Asia was that of Amir Hamza, the Prophet Muhammad's uncle. The Mughal emperor, Akbar, liked it so much that he would himself recite it in the harem, and would also have it told in camp for which purposes he commissioned 1,400 paintings on cotton backed with paper which were to be shown as the story was related. Chapter 17, 'The Muslim Commander Bond', is a review of Musharraf Farooqi's translation into English of Abdullah Bilgrami's abridgement of Ghalib Lakhnawi's original text. It needed abridging; the classic edition is of 46 volumes each of 1000 pages. The text of the abridged version is itself 948 pages. But the length should not deter the reader. The stories rattle along as Hamza defeats many enemies, converts many to Islam, loves many women (while continuing to honour his first love Mehr-Nigar),

enjoys much ribaldry and gets the better of the demons and fairies of the enchanted world. It is not difficult to imagine how these tales, united to the skills of the storyteller, would have held their listeners spellbound as they became caught up in a world of magical realism. The *TLS* editor used my description of Hamza as ‘Muslim Commander Bond’ as the title for the review and indeed he was. But I would have been just as happy if he had used Farooqi’s reference to the storytellers as ‘sweet-lipped historians’ or ‘nimble scribes of fancy’ as a title.

Chapters 18 and 19 take us to the courts of early-modern India. ‘Aromatherapy’ focuses on the use of scent in the culture of the great cities of the early-modern Deccan – Bijapur, Golconda and Hyderabad. One prime area was the garden, which was a place of pleasure where poetry and picnics might be consumed and men and women enjoy each other’s company. Gardens were made to delight the senses: trees were planted to create vistas, flowers placed to delight the eye, water was managed to please both eye and ear, and scented plants were positioned to perfume the air both by day and by night. ‘Scent is the food of the soul’, declared a tradition of the Prophet, ‘and the soul is the vehicle of the faculties of man.’ But the role of scent was not restricted to gardens; it was also used to furnish a space, to establish a mood. We learn that there were nine ways of perfuming a bedroom with individual bouquets and the author draws on Persian and Urdu poetry written in Bijapur and Golconda to illustrate that scented gardens in these early-modern Muslim worlds acted both as context and metaphor.

Chapter 19, ‘Love of Mahal’, takes us to the court of the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, in the first half of the seventeenth century. We are introduced to the bloody succession struggles which both preceded his reign and ended it. His great love of women is not ignored, in particular that for his second wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who was to bear him fifteen children in eighteen years. Nor is his passion for architecture, in which he introduced the high Mughal style with its plentiful use of white marble, ignored. Indeed, he

brought this passion to its peak in his construction of the Taj Mahal, which celebrated his other great passion, Mumtaz Mahal. Rightly, the book I review here gives particular emphasis to the role of women and to the extent of the correspondence between the Mughals and the Safawids in neighbouring Iran. This is the first biography of Shah Jahan since Saksena's work of 1932. It is most certainly handsomely produced but does not say much that is new. For this we need to go to: Munis Faruqi's *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504–1719* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) who throws new light on the functions of the succession struggles; Rajeev Kinra's *Writing Self, Writing Empire: Chandar Bhan Brahman and the Cultural World of the Indo-Persian State Secretary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015) who takes us into the world of Shah Jahan's chief minister; and Ruby Lal's *Empress: The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2018) who takes Mughal biography to a new level as she examines the life of the woman who competed with Shah Jahan to control the succession to Jahangir.

Recently scholars have begun to take much more seriously the connections of South Asian Muslims in the world outside the sub-continent. Chapter 20, 'Cosmopolis of a Shared Worldview', reviews a book which is very much part of this tendency. Its author is concerned to show how networks of primarily Indian Muslims grew in the nineteenth century in the spaces which lay between the British and Ottoman empires, and also to a lesser extent the Russian empire. Important underpinnings of these networks were shared positions on Islamic reform, improvements in communications brought about by the British, and print. These helped to fashion a shared world of ideas and feelings which linked India to Mecca, Cairo, Istanbul, and further afield. Seema Alavi's *Muslim Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Empire* supports her case by introducing us to five men who illustrate the working of her Muslim cosmopolis. We meet: Sayyid Fadl who, after leading anti-British activity in Malabar, came with Ottoman support to have a network of connections which stretched from Aceh in Sumatra through Arabia

to North Africa; Mawlana Rahmat Allah Kayranawi, who fled India after the Mutiny uprising and established the Madrasa Sawlatiyya in Mecca, which became a centre both for reform and for Indian Muslims; Hajji Imdad Allah, who also fled to Mecca after the Mutiny uprising, teaching many Indian students and giving spiritual guidance to many in India by letter; Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal, one of the founders of the Ahl-i Hadith movement, whose eighty books promoting his reforming ideas were published throughout West Asia making him a major intellectual presence throughout Alavi's Muslim cosmopolis; and Mawlwi Jafar Thaneshri whose vision of his land was framed by the British legal and administrative framework, but he was able to use his Islamic identity to range more widely. Alavi makes an important point about how in the nineteenth century Indo-Muslim horizons were spreading well beyond India, a process which continued throughout the twentieth century.

An occupational hazard of reviewing any book which deals with Israel is an assault from the country's 'attack dogs' who seem constantly to patrol Western publications to make sure that the view of the past that is presented is acceptable from their point of view. 'In Reverse' was my review of Eugene Rogan's excellent *The Arabs: A History*, which importantly enabled Arab voices to be heard. It admitted that they had been badly treated by the imperial powers and also that they had made mistakes. Rogan set out to produce as balanced a presentation of matters Arab/Israeli as possible. To emphasise his even-handedness I noted how he balanced the unprovoked attack by Jewish forces on the Arab village of Dayr Yasin on 9 April 1948 against a Palestinian attack on a Jewish medical convoy in Jerusalem. This immediately brought an assault from the attack dogs. The figure of 250 villagers killed at Dayr Yasin, which I had quoted from Rogan, was wrong; the numbers were much less, even Palestinian sources said so. I had to publish a retraction. This said, one did wonder about the delicate feelings expressed over the precise numbers of Arabs killed at Dayr Yasin, a well-known *cause célèbre*. It was just a couple of

paragraphs away from the bloody details of Israel's 'Cast Lead' operation in Gaza in 2008–9, which did \$1.4bn worth of damage, killed 1300 Palestinians and wounded 5100. Against this carnage just 13 Israelis died and 8 were wounded.

'Women, Leadership and Mosques', the final chapter, arose from a conference on women's religious authority in Islam organised by Hilary Kalmbach and Masooda Bano at Oxford in 2009. In pre-modern times there had always been some women who engaged in the transmission of knowledge, in particular Hadith. Bano and Kalmbach, aware of the growing numbers of women's madrasas and of women's religious leadership, even of men, aimed to discover where matters stood now. The twenty essays in the book answer three main questions: (1) How is space created for the exercise of women's religious authority and what are the relative roles of male invitation, state intervention and women's initiative in achieving this? (2) How have women used these opportunities to consolidate their positions as religious authorities? (3) What has been the impact of female authority on Muslim women themselves? The answers to these questions demonstrated that women's religious leadership was already a major fact in the Muslim world; that the world of scholarship needed to take it much more seriously than it had done; and that the Bano/Kalmbach collection of essays should be a starting point in doing so. In fact, they had opened up a whole new subject, centred around one likely to be of the first importance in the development of the Islamic world in the twenty-first century.

This book addresses a series of themes central to Islamic societies over the past 200 years: the impact of Western dominance; the crises of civilisational authority following from this dominance; the role of traditional education both in making Muslim societies and then in remaking them in an era of Western dominance; the relationship between Islamic reform and forms of Muslim modernity; and the relationship between the rise of the modern state, the decline of cosmopolitanism, the growth of globalisation