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## Islam in Southern Asia

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ISLAM IN SOUTHERN ASIA: A SURVEY OF CURRENT RESEARCH. (Beiträge zur Südasien-Forschung; 16). Edited by Dietmar Rothermund. Wiesbaden, Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1975. viii + 126 pages.

Roughly 67 percent of all Muslims live in Southern Asia, from Afghanistan to Indonesia. This fact justifies a report like the present one on the studies of anthropologists, sociologists, and historians who deal with the region. The *Survey* sums up the work of twenty-four scholars, twenty-one with degrees from German, American, English, Australian, and Canadian universities, who participated in a workshop sponsored by the Department of History of the South Asian Institute of the University of Heidelberg, 16-19 December 1974. The preface describes the report as a sketch of some current research interests, intended to be neither comprehensive nor definitive.

The book has two main divisions. The first offers five "Work-in-Progress Reports" entitled: (1) Islamic Institutions and the State in South East Asia; (2) the Position of Muslim Women; (3) Education, Historiography and the Context of Political and Religious Ideas; (4) The Regional Setting of Muslims in India; and (5) Social Science Surveys and Anthropological Fieldwork. Under these headings are eighteen short papers circulated before or during each of the five conferences.

The second division contains a keynote statement and a summary of the minutes of four panel discussions. The topics are: (1) Social Structure of Muslims in India; (2) The Role of the Ulama; (3) The Muslims and the State; and (4) Relations of Muslims with other Religious Groups.

Both the reports and the panel discussions deal in large part with India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Afghanistan is treated in one paper which forms part of a report; but Bangladesh, with over seventy million Muslims, and the minority groups of Muslims in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines, are mentioned only incidentally, if at all.

In a concluding roundup on page 102, one participant notes the lack of studies on Muslim women. In fact, the second report, which takes up this subject, has only one statement, in contrast to the three to eight statements under the other four reports. Perhaps the subject was felt to be too delicate, since the one statement given here observes that "women had been a considerable source of anxiety to the Muslim revivalists who thought of them as a Trojan horse in the household, harboring non-Muslim attitudes and practices."

Several provocative remarks suggesting basic changes in Muslim attitudes were made during the panel discussions. One panelist put his hearers on guard: (1) against equating the *ulama* (doctors of the law) with traditional positions, since a new class of modernist ulama is making its appearance, and (2) against assuming that Muslims always follow the lead of the ulama. In Panel four on relations of Muslims to other religious groups, it was perceptively argued that it is more important to observe what people practice than

what they consider to be their doctrine. This has often been noted before but it is a point that cannot be overstressed in the whole matter of interreligious dialogue. This same rule might provide the best answer to some of the questions raised in Panel three (especially pp. 88-89) on the Muslims and the state; for example, "given the fact that the orthodox Muslim view of the state is completely antipathetic to the modern national state, can Muslims reconcile their faith with modernity?" Or again, how should one define the term "Islamic state"? All definitions would seem to imply something of Ibn Khaldun's distinction between the secular state and the Islamic state: "the former rests alone on human reason and promotes the material welfare of its citizens in this world only, the latter promotes not only their material but also their spiritual welfare" (p. 88). Finally, since Western political philosophy supposes a participation by the people, civilly united, in God's sovereignty, and since orthodox Islam rejects such participation by a human agency as polytheism, is it possible for an Islamic state to be a democracy? Can the will of the people ever be the determining force of an Islamic government?

Two pages summarizing the results of the workshop emphasize the value of interdisciplinary consultation and deplore the emphasis on quantitative data to the neglect of ideology and theory. A tentative bibliography of some twenty pages lists recent publications, dissertations, and even work-in-progress.

The book is remarkably free of typographical errors, but the footnotes seem to have been omitted after Dr. Troll's paper (p. 45).

If the work is regarded as the preface describes it, that is, as a sketch with no pretensions to comprehensiveness, it has succeeded in its aim to stimulate discussion and reflection on some of the problems that Islam faces in rapidly changing world.

*Thomas J. O'Shaughnessy, S.J.*

LOVE SONG OF THE DARK LORD (Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*). Edited and translated by Barbara Stoler Miller. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977. 225 pages.

One who reads poetry for pleasure might be intimidated by this volume, for such is the scholarship and textual criticism involved that one might not discover that: (1) the poem itself covers only about sixty pages, and (2) one can appreciate the richness of Jayadeva's imagery and the unique flavor and texture of his lines without plodding through his biography (interesting though it might be) or going through the various books of poems that inspired him (helpful though that might be). All twenty-four songs contained in twelve parts of the *Gitagovinda* may well be enjoyed by the ordinary lover of poetry without losing sight of the great boon to the serious reader contained in the