but from the very nature of the sector they occupy. Their authority only has integrity because of their sector interest, but they cannot live in isolation from the merchants and rulers upon whose patronage they rely. This complex relation with society at large and sources of patronage in particular require members of the *mashyakha* to walk a fine line, and the author notes several examples of figures within the *mashyakha* whose reputation was damaged as a result of either too close a relation to the state or too strong a clash with it.

However, questions remain. Would this group have been as successful in a nonauthoritarian context? Studies on Latin America suggest that traditional churches do well in authoritarian contexts and less well when they are forced to compete with other religious movements that the authoritarian state formerly limited. The willingness of the *mashyakha* to accommodate itself to authoritarian rule, while consistent with its sector interests, has arguably helped make sense of such rule to their constituencies in Syrian society—and even to perpetuate it. The voices of the *mashyakha* may have "saved" Islam for Syria, but they also linked it to authoritarianism. The future of Syria—and indeed of the entire region—is not clear. What does the future look like for the *mashyakha*? Will they be able to flourish as they have in the past in the event they no longer enjoy the backing of authoritarian rule? Are the interests of their sector best preserved in partnership with authoritarian rule, even of the secularist kind? Time will tell how the *mashyakha* in Syria fares when the state no longer needs it to compensate for its lack of legitimacy. This study, essential reading for all with interest in the nature of religion in modern Muslim societies, has laid out important methodological terrain for future research on Islam in Syria.

NAVEEDA KHAN: *Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012). Pp. 280. $84.95 cloth, $23.95 paper.

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Naveeda Khan's *Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan* is an original and substantive contribution to scholarship on contemporary Islam, and, more generally, to cultural anthropology, which is experiencing a "Deleuzian turn." The book engages the everyday trajectories of middle- and lower middle-class Muslims residing in Pakistan's second largest city of Lahore, the legal and bureaucratic practices of the postcolonial state, and the writings of the Indian subcontinent's most influential Muslim intellectual and literary figures, such as Muhammad Iqbal. These "sites" are connected—at times concretely, at times heuristically—by Khan to give shape to the book's primary theme: the movement of Muslim "aspiration" within the Pakistani national imagination.

In Pakistan, aspiration is the embodied, continuous striving of Muslims for moral perfectibility. Taking inspiration from W. C. Smith's early reflections on Pakistan, Khan argues that aspiration does not take the teleological form of a subject or identity striving toward a definite end. Rather, it is characterized "by a striving to an as-yet unattained self without presuming that this next self is the final one" (p. 55). This tendency for continual striving is characterized as "experimental" and "open to the future," but, in a crucial and challenging sense, is also inextricably caught up with socially and ideologically coded forms of action.

Muslim Becoming interrogates the dominant tendency in studies on Pakistan to approach the nationalist project through an analytic of "lack." Notwithstanding the critical orientation of this approach, argues Khan, it is overly fixated on diagnosing the failure of Pakistani state

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and society to reach "consensus" on the definition of Muslim nationhood. Acknowledging the complicity between aspiration and skepticism (the destruction of the social fabric) in Pakistan, Khan calls for a counteranalytic of "plentitude" in which emphasis is placed on "experimentation in seeking points of relatedness" between the national and religious self (p. 9).

Khan's study enjoys a place next to Aamir Mufti's *Enlightenment in the Colony* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007); both are theoretically sophisticated works of revision that are intimately attuned to the questions of postcolonial inheritance, loss, and potential that animate Pakistani national existence. It does not replicate the terms of recent influential ethnographies of Muslim piety that interrogate liberal secular conceptions of agency through the coherent lens of movements and techniques of moral self-cultivation. Although such movements are abundant in Pakistan, Khan favors the more diffused (and unstable) terrain of "relatedness" between Islam, Pakistan, and everyday social existence. Furthermore, the tendency toward aspiration charted in this monograph does not amount to either a liberal or vernacular culture of religious tolerance. For instance, when assessing the framing and enactment of a series of constitutional amendments that denied Pakistan's Ahmadi community legal status as *Muslim* citizens, Khan notes the distinction between the "exclusionary effect" that such amendments undoubtedly entailed and the countervailing "tendency to strive" exhibited by proponents and critics alike during the process of becoming law. For Khan, this tendency does not resist or even work against the "closures" of exclusionary policy so much as defer their "finality."

In conclusion, Khan is most interested in attending to how historical contingency operates *within* the nationalist theological imagination of postcolonial Pakistan, and more specifically, to the "spiral that aspiration produces, creating doctrinal and legal closures yet also spaces of doubt, uncertainty, and further experiments within daily life in Pakistan" (p. 109). In this sense, the book carves out its own object of enquiry and invites us to judge it on its own terms.

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