the latter are more selective and use the religion for other purposes. In this line, one might rather say that fundamentalism is a self-conscious reaction against modernity that uses religion as a means rather than an end in itself.

Most of the characteristics of fundamentalism discussed in this book may be found in other scholarly works on the topic, and the more theoretical analyses are borrowed from scholars such as Bruce Lawrence or Mark Juergensmeyer. But *Understanding Fundamentalism* excels in clarity and conciseness and thus lends itself as a very helpful textbook on the topic.

Catherine Cornille

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Muslim mysticism, which is referred to as Sufism or *tasawwuf*, denotes the internal or esoteric/spiritual aspect of Islam. A plethora of literature has appeared on the subject of Sufism highlighting its various aspects and dimensions. The book under review is one such attempt, but probably the first of its kind in English language. The book is unique and distinctive in the sense that it brings to forefront the Sufi thought and ideas as reflected in Urdu poetry. In addition to the poetry by renowned Sufis, the work also includes the poetic contributions of a number of poets having mystic inclination. In particular, it brings out the philosophical leanings of the poets, highlighting their varied Sufi notions as well as the major influences on them. The work covers a period of almost 800 years, beginning from Shaikh Farid al-Din Mas'ud Ganj-i Shaker, the 13th century Chishti Sufi, and coming down to the Urdu poets of 20th century.

Urdu language began to be crystallized in medieval South Asia as a result of interaction between the natives and the migrants from Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan. It gradually evolved, and took the form of ‘Hindustani’ or ‘Hindi’, as indicated by the medieval writers, before it came to be known as Urdu. Though the official language in medieval times was Persian, which was considered to be the language of power, Urdu became the *lingua franca* of the
masses. It also bridged the yawning gulf between the elite/aristocratic classes and the common masses.

Most of the Sufis of medieval India were acquainted with local vernaculars and dialects. They deliberately chose to employ Hindwi or Hindustani language for communication with the people. This was different from the attitude of the elite, who avoided this language in order to keep social distance from the masses, and thus retain their exclusivity. In the words of K. A. Nizami: “As their [Sufis’] Khanqahs were the only places where people of different shades of opinion, professing different religions and speaking different languages met, these Khanqahs became veritable centres of cultural synthesis where ideas were freely exchanged and a common medium for this exchange was evolved”.

Thus, the Sufis not only played an indirect but instrumental role in bringing the disparate social groups closer. They also significantly contributed to the development of Hindwi or Hindustani and Urdu language and literature.

The development of Hindwi or Hindustani literature took place in the khanqāhs of the Sufis. Sufi poetry is part of their spiritual legacy, which inspires the seekers of truth even today. The Sufis usefully employed this literary genre as a vehicle for the dissemination of their ideas.

Chapter I of the book under review presents a brief overview of the genesis and cardinal doctrines of Sufism. The question of the origin of Sufi thought has been quite controversial; some scholars have suggested that it can be traced back to the Qur’ān and Prophetic traditions, whereas other have propounded the alternative view that Sufi ideology owes its derivation to the Greek or Vedantic or Buddhist philosophies. Discussing this issue, Bhatnagar asserts that the Sufis were largely inspired by the Qur’ānic notions of God’s monism, love of mankind, moral values, and universality of religion (p. 11). However, he points out that the exchange of mystic ideas between Hindu saints and Muslim Sufis in South Asia gave birth to various “mystic systems”, which were the synthesis of Hindu mysticism and Sufism (p. 1).

Similarly, the issue of duality of exoteric and esoteric aspects of Islam has also been a bone of contention among scholars and critics of Sufism. The author tries to reconcile Sufi thought with the tenets of Muslim theology by

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stating: “Sharia, tariqa and haqiqat are related to each other as the root, the branch and the fruit of a tree are linked with each other” (p. 11).

Chapter II surveys the early Urdu mystic poetry by Sufi poets. It covers Sufi poets such as Shaikh Farid al-Din Mas'ud Ganji Shakar (d. 1265 CE), Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Ghsudaraz Shahbaz (d. 1421 CE), Shams al-'Ushshaq Shah Miranji (d. 1496), Shaykh Bahaa' al-Din Bajan (d. 1506), Shah ‘Ali Muhammad Jiv Gamdhani (d. 1515), Shah Burhan al-Din Janam (d. 1583), Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (d. 1611), Sayyid Shah Hasm (d. 1649), Qa' im Mahmud Bahri (d. 1718), Shah Ahmad (d. 1700), Sayyid Siraj al-Din Siraj (d. 1763), Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Shah Mir (d. 1772), Mazhar Jan-i Jana (d. 1781) and Zahur al-Din Hatim (d. 1791).

The next ten chapters are devoted to the study of the poetry of ten different Sufi poets or poets with mystic leanings. Shams al-Din Walid al-Hussaini, has focused on mystic themes such as the limitations of reason, purity of soul, poverty (faqr), and renunciation of the world. Mir Taqi Mir (d. 1810) has greatly influenced the subsequent Urdu Sufi poetry. His poetry bears an undeniable influence of Ibn al-'Arabi’s (d. 638/1240) philosophy of God’s monism or ‘Unity of Being’ (wahdat al-wujud), and ‘Abd al-Karim al-Jili’s (d. 832/1428) notion of the creation of the world and self-revelation of God (p. 38). For instance, in a verse he says: “My desire for display unveiled Me; otherwise I am the very glory of Hidden Pure Essence” (p. 39). Other major Sufi themes in his poetry include self-mortification and determinism. In contrast to Mir Taqi Mir, Khwaja Mir Dard (d. 1785) rejects the notion of wahdat al-wujud or hamab ist, and instead submits to the idea of wahdat al-shubud (Unity of Appearance) or hamab az ist (all is from Him). He says: “Every part of the Whole is in essence attached to the Whole; like a pearl which is distinct from water and yet is immersed in water” (p. 46). Asceticism appears to be one of the most recurrent themes in his poetry.

Shah Niyaz Ahmad (d. 1833), himself a profound Sufi and the founder of the Niyaziyyah silsilah, repudiates empirical and rational modes of knowledge in search for comprehending the Ultimate Truth. An advocate of wahdat al-wujud, he asserts: “The root, the tree, the branch, the flower, and the multitude of leaves and the fruits are indistinguishably united in the seed and hence they are all one” (pp. 55-6). He upholds the Sufi notion of effacement of selfhood, but vehemently rejects the theory of man’s becoming God.

\* He is considered to be the first Urdu poet of Deccan, and is said to have founded the Deccani School of Hindvi language. Yusuf Husain, Glimpse of Medieval Indian Culture (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), 107. Also see Iqbal al-Din Ahmad, Tadbir-i G sudaraz (Karachi: Iqbal Publishers, 1966), 148-51.
Following Khwājah Mir Dard, Khwājah Ḥaidar ‘Alī Ātish (d. 1846) expounds Sufi theory of hamah az ust. He sheds light on the various stages (maqāmāt) of Sufi journey to God such as austerity (zuhd), humility (khāksārī), poverty (jaqūr), purity (ṣafāʾ), contentment (qanāʾat), love (muhābbāt) and finally soul’s union with God (fanāʾ) in a number of verses. The overwhelming emotions depicting the agony of soul in separation from God have marvellously been portrayed by him. For instance, he writes: “O soul, leave the fetters of body soon since I am in a state of separation from the Beloved; for how long can a fish endure suffering in the net outside the water”? (p. 74)

Mīrzā Asad Allāh Khān Ghālib (d. 1869), the most remarkable Urdu poet of the 19th century, was a great exponent of Sufi ideas and philosophy in poetic language. He denies the existence of the empirical world, which appears an illusion to him. “I regard appearance of this world nominal; and existence of worldly things illusory” (p. 81). Upholding the monistic notion of God, he declares: “Contemplation of the real has perplexed me; the essence of its display, its vision and that which is manifested are one and the same” (pp. 81-2). He philosophically tries to prove the existence of God through His non-being, and believes that God not only exists in His Pure Form, but in His Manifested Form as well. He follows Rābīʿah (d. circa 135/752) of Baṣrā when he refutes the notion that the object of world’s renunciation is Divine reward. To Ghālib, soul’s agony is relieved through union with God: “The bliss of a drop of ocean consists in its absorption in the ocean; the pain is cured when it transcends all limits” (p. 88).

The poetry of Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ālim Āsī (d. 1915), a celebrated Sufi of Ghazipur, reveals the monistic notion of God. Other themes such as divine love, self-annihilation, and love of mankind are also found in a number of verses. Aṣghar Ḥusayn Aṣghar (d. 1936), popularly known as Aṣghar Gondavi, was also an ardent advocate of the monistic idea of God. Rejecting intellect or reason as a valid mode of knowledge of the Divine, he says: “It was an ecstatic state of selflessness that led me to experience and realize the Truth which had remained under the veil on account of my rational quest” (p. 97). Regarding causation, he takes the position that God is the Final Cause of everything.

Shāh Muḥammad Taqī ‘Azīz Rāz (d. 1968) stresses the principles of self-mortification and self-realization in the Sufi journey. He explains selflessness in these words: “I continued my journey to God like a moth; my devotion to Him took me far towards Him. I prostrated before myself in bewilderment; such is the state of selflessness in love” (p. 108). Similarly, Bisheshwar Prasad Munawwar (d. 1970) writes on themes of union with God, self-annihilation, sincerity, purity of soul and universal religion. His poetry is influenced by the Sufi ideas of Persian poet Ḥāfiz Shīrāzī (d. circa 792/1390) and the Vedantic
doctrine of monism. Following Ghālib, he seeks God's affirmation in His negation: “Is there really no rhythm in the music of this world? Is there no creator of this universe? How can I admit that God does not exist when His being is visible in His non-being”? (p. 123)

This account of Sufi poets is followed by a brief epilogue, which sums up the above description. An exhaustive glossary of Persian and Arabic terms used by the Urdu poets, a bibliography, and two indices of names and titles, and subjects and technical terms considerably add to the usefulness and value of the book.

The most outstanding feature of the book is the English translation of around seven hundred Urdu verses, which have marvelously been rendered by Dr Bhatnagar. The main text presents the English translation of the verses, whereas Urdu verses are cited in footnotes on each page for the benefit of bilingual readers. The command of the author over the delicate subject of Sufi philosophy is evident from the work.

There remain, however, a few shortcomings in the work. The title of chapter I “Indo-Muslim Mystical Thought” does not correspond to the discussion that ensues, which exclusively focuses on the development of Sufi thought and doctrines, with citations from the sayings of renowned Sufis of Persia and Central Asia, rather than Indian Sufis. Moreover, verses in the early forms of Urdu, i.e. Hindwi / Hindustani, have not been differentiated from Urdu.

These points aside, the book is a commendable and laudable piece of work, which speaks volumes for the author’s thorough search for verses pertaining to Sufi themes as well as his painstaking and meticulous translation of a large number of Urdu verses.

Tanvir Anjum

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Modernity has meant a considerable redefinition of the ways in which people come to see themselves and their place in the world. For many Muslims, like