

Contributed articles presented at the International Seminar on "Composite Culture in a Multicultural Society" organized by the National Book Trust in 2006; with special reference to India.

In Pakistan, religious talk shows emerged as a popular television genre following the 2002 media liberalization reforms. Since then, these shows have become important platforms where ideas about Islam and religious authority in Pakistan are developed and argued. In *Religious Television and Pious Authority in Pakistan*, Taha Kazi reveals how these talk shows mediate changes in power, belief, and practice. She also identifies the sacrifices and compromises that religious scholars feel compelled to make in order to ensure their presence on television. These scholars, of varying doctrinal and educational backgrounds—including madrasa-educated scholars and self-taught celebrity preachers—are given screen time to debate and issue religious edicts on the authenticity and contemporary application of Islamic concepts and practices. In response, viewers are sometimes allowed to call in live with questions. Kazi maintains that these featured debates inspire viewers to reevaluate the status of scholarly edicts, thereby fragmenting religious authority. By exploring how programming decisions inadvertently affect viewer engagements with Islam, *Religious Television and Pious Authority in Pakistan* looks beyond the revivalist impact of religious media and highlights the prominence of religious talk shows in disrupting expectations about faith.

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Every generation needs to reinterpret its great men of the past. Akbar Ahmed, by revealing Jinnah's human face alongside his heroic achievement, both makes this statesman accessible to the current age and renders his greatness even clearer than before. Four men shaped the end of British rule in India: Nehru, Gandhi, Mountbatten and Jinnah. We know a great deal about the first three, but Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, has mostly either been ignored or, in the case of Richard Attenborough's hugely successful film about Gandhi, portrayed as a cold megalomaniac, bent on the bloody partition of India. Akbar Ahmed's major study redresses the balance. Drawing on history, semiotics and cultural anthropology as well as more conventional biographical techniques, Akbar S. Ahmad presents a rounded picture of the man and shows his relevance as contemporary Islam debates alternative forms of political leadership in a world dominated (at least in the Western media) by figures like Colonel Gadaffi and Saddam Hussein.

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