



Crossing the Threshold: Understanding Religious Identities in South Asia

By Dominique-Sila Khan

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Who is Hindu, who is Muslim? The answer, according to Dominique-Sila Khan, is not as simple as generally assumed. By analyzing documentary sources as well as original field data, she examines the shaping of religious identities in South Asia, particularly in North India. The author argues that the perception of Islam and Hinduism as two monolithic and perpetually antagonistic faiths coexisting uneasily in South Asia has become so deeply ingrained that the complexity of the historical fabric is often overlooked or ignored. She demonstrates how the emergence of clear-cut categories is a comparatively recent phenomenon, and shows how the past is characterized by a remarkable fluidity and diversity in the social and religious milieus of the two faiths. In exploring the historical mechanisms that have led to the emergence and crystallization of religious identities the author sheds light on the increasing number of conflicts which threaten the harmonious co-existence of South Asian communities today.

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Review

The Muslim World Book Review, 25:4, 2005. Review by Yoginder Sikand: 'This book is a timely contribution to the ongoing debate on religion and religious identity in contemporary South Asia.'

About the Author

Dominique-Sila Khan holds doctorates in Literature and Anthropology from the Sorbonne University in Paris. She is currently working as an independent researcher in Jaipur, associated with the Institute of Rajasthan Studies, specializing in Hindu-Muslim interactions in South Asia.

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