

Of Children and *Jinn*: An Inquiry into an Unexpected Friendship during Uncertain Times

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With the intrusion of contemporary global political trends into national contexts and local worlds, sectarianism in Pakistan, already analytically challenging, has taken on further complexity (Devji 2005; Zaman 2002). In a recent incident of violence in a shrine outside Islamabad (ABC News 2005), suicide bombing left 20 dead amid the mixed Shi'i and Sunni crowd gathered there to celebrate *urs* (the union of the saint with God). Until recently, the cause of the attack might have been attributed to local tensions, Islamist parties, Indian agents acting to provoke internal conflict, or even agents of the Pakistani state seeking to create sympathy for Pakistan within the international community. Now an additional possibility exists that those responsible may have been people associated with, or sympathetic to, Al-Qaeda who wanted to increase the pressure on President Pervez Musharraf to retract his support for the U.S. "War on Terrorism."

Within this landscape of ambiguity, I argue that everyday life is a necessary frame for understanding the reach and scope of sectarianism in Pakistan. Long-standing religious differences between Shi'is and Sunnis have been variously and violently mobilized at different moments in history with deleterious outcomes for life in both its biological and social senses. More recently, denominational differences among South Asian Sunnis have also taken on violent tendencies in Pakistan. What I explore in this article is how the dynamic of conflict between Shi'i and Sunni becomes reprised within divides among Sunnis as a standing archive of stereotypes and slights. On the basis of the stories I heard and had a hard time assimilating into available narratives on sectarianism (see Ahmad 1998; Ali 2000; Jaffrelot 2002; Nasr 2000), I suggest that religious differences both rest on everyday life while also informing it and that, as analysts, we ought to move away from a purely negative casting of sectarianism to see how religious differences imply both threat and possibility for Pakistanis.¹ The ways in which

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malevolence and generosity rub up against one another within a family suggest how religious differences get worked into the weave of domesticity. In arguing that family, domesticity, and selfhood bear a relation to sectarianism, I am striving to work beyond the exclusive focus on the public sphere that implicitly informs much literature on sectarianism in Pakistan.² At the same time, we capture something of the trancelike quality of everyday life in the tensions embedded within familial relations that animate religious differences in unanticipated ways.³ Finally, such an exploration will show how differences come to be internal to being. In other words, an exploration of such differences within everyday life may provide a different picture of the pious self than that recently espoused by anthropologists of Islam and Muslim societies.⁴

In this article, I explore the extended encounter of a Sunni family with a *jinni* (genii, pl. *jinn*) to show how their stories about this relationship are laced with a certain repulsion of the other, in particular the Shi'i other, which threatens the fragility of familial balances. Yet if one were to think how this repulsion opens up a place for a child to build conviviality with a creature made of smokeless fire and for a father to attend to the truths mediated by the child that come from another place, one cannot but acknowledge how malevolence and a certain generosity go together or how difficult it is to name something as sectarianism and to wish it away, as the Pakistani state would like to do. It is akin to saying that sectarianism gives voice. Here I am utilizing Veena Das's (1995) conceptualization of "voice" as not coinciding with "speech" but with a certain movement beyond an impasse, a movement that she charts through the modality of "hearing."⁵ Unless we can hear the maelstrom out of which this voice arises and acknowledge the economy of gestures that comprises this voice, that is to say, to that which sectarianism gives expression, I fear that it will be hard to imagine how war and peace are equally possible within everyday life in Lahore.⁶

One Summer's Day

Let me turn to the event that threatened my fragile grasp on the fractured landscape in which I found myself. Throughout the two years prior to 2001, I had been in and out of Lahore doing dissertation research on the urban spatial manifestations of sectarianism (see Khan 2003). It was summer and my days of spending time in mosques, religious seminaries, and shrines were cut short by the intensity of the heat and by the sudden sandstorms that made it difficult for Farooq Sahib, my Urdu teacher and coresearcher, to navigate his scooter and for me to hold on to my seat on the pillion behind him.⁷ Instead, we would duck into a bank to pay a bill or linger at a bookstore to catch the cool waves from the air conditioner. Most afternoons I spent in Sandha, one of the many densely populated but unauthorized urban settlements around the Mall in Lahore. At Farooq Sahib's house, which always seemed to be in a state of perpetual vertical expansion, I would trail his wife and daughters in their movements up and down stairs and on their rare trips

outside. On occasion I would accompany the women to the local ice cream parlor to seek refreshment with a *falooda* (a drink of milk, ice cream, and vermicelli). When I would go to speak to the men of the house, I would find them in a small, sparse room, decorated solely with a poster of the Prophet's mosque in Medina, where they worked on the two computers owned by the family. In addition to teaching *Islamiyat* (the fundamentals of Islam and Islamic history) at a local school, Farooq Sahib ran a small compositing business (what they referred to as "composing"), in which handwritten Urdu texts, mostly religious, were typed into the computer and then sent out for printing to the numerous small publishers crowding the Urdu bazaar in Anarkali. As will become clearer in the course of this article, the nature of this work resonates with Farooq Sahib's mode of self-fashioning.

Our days were punctuated by the call to prayer, the men leaving for the mosque and the women snatching time out of their schedules to go off to a quiet corner of the house to pray. I was, in a manner of speaking, in a powerhouse of religious rectitude: everyone in the household was a declared Deobandi (followers of a path [*maslaq*] affiliated with the Sunni reformist movement dating from 19th-century colonial India), and the sons of the household were active members of the Tablighi Jamaat, the missionary arm of the Deobandi (see Masud 2000; Metcalf 1982, 1993; Reetz 2002). They traveled regularly through mosques in and around the city preaching to Muslims to return to the right path by expunging from their religious practices the accretions of customs in the form of innovations (*bida*) or the idolatrous association of objects or persons with God (*shirk*; see Metcalf 1997). Often when I sat in a horse and buggy or a rickshaw with Adeeb, one of Farooq Sahib's two sons, while en route to an interview, he would strike up a conversation with the driver that would end with Adeeb urging him to go to his local mosque. "You will find solace there from your daily life," Adeeb would say quietly.

Imagine my surprise one afternoon when Farooq Sahib and Rahima Baji, his wife, walked into the room in which I lay dozing, speaking between themselves about the ants they had seen on the steps of the house. I was not paying attention. "Ants?" I asked, half asleep. Farooq Sahib, putting on that voice of his that always indicated to me that I ought to be taking notes, declared:

Naveeda, did we ever tell you that we had jinn living with us? We got them from an acquaintance who had inherited a group of jinn from his father, a famous *amil* [magician or healer]. But he has no use for these jinn, so he gives them to whomever he thinks will benefit from them. But the recipients have to be good Muslims. Each of the men in this family was given a jinni. Hostile jinn once attacked our house posing as ants. We knew they could not be just ants, because they would bleed when we killed them, whereas ants do not bleed. Thankfully, our jinn helped us to get rid of them.

By this time I was sitting up. At my look of shock at what I was hearing, he assured me that the jinn had since returned to their original guardian.⁸ He had made no efforts to bring them back, as he felt that the family had ceased to make entreaties directly to Allah through their growing reliance on the jinn. "Our faith [*aqida*] had become weak, and our obligatory worship [*ibadat*] was suffering."

However, he continued exasperatedly: “For a while we were the most harangued house in this neighborhood, with the women dropping by all the time to ask us to locate lost keys, secure marriages, get their husbands jobs, like we were amils or something. If the women could, they would have the jinn undertake worship on their behalf.”

Mildly intrigued by my interest, Farooq Sahib’s family related story after story to me about the jinn who had shared their home with them. “Oh, we hadn’t told you about them,” they said. However, after a day or two of this, their interest began to wane. “Naveeda, better get back to your research,” Farooq Sahib declared.

Jinn in Context

In what follows, I provide a short account of the jinn from the perspective of the Islamic tradition, as I do later for what it is to be a child or to follow the Prophet’s *sunna* (lit. trodden path) or even to have a friend. This is my way of suggesting how that which defines the normative, the duties and responsibilities that accompany observance of a religious tradition, shadows Farooq Sahib in the accounts he gives of his life and how he references it at different moments but with differing intensities.⁹ For instance, Farooq Sahib had never been in a close encounter with jinn prior to their coming to his family, so although he espoused the same position before and after, that is, he felt people ought to ask God and God alone for help and not go through a mediator, he had undergone much, as we shall soon see, between those two iterations. This raises the question of whether we can take a single expression of the normative position as the final one and how we are to understand the different intensities by which the normative is (re)iterated.¹⁰

The most important verification of jinn is to be found in the *Holy Quran* in Sura 72, titled Al-Jinn, which opens thus:

Say: It has been
Revealed to me that
A company of Jinn
Listened (to the *Quran*).
They said, “We have
Really heard a wonderful Recital

And, further on,

There were some foolish ones
Among us, who used
To utter extravagant lies
Against Allah;
But we think
That no man or jinn
Should say aught that is
Untrue against Allah (1993:1830–1831)

The most cited prophetic tradition (*hadis*, pl. *ahadis*) in support of jinn is the one in which the Prophet asked his assembled companions who among them

would come with him to a gathering of jinn. When none volunteered, he pressed one of them into service. The two walked until they had left human settlement far behind and found themselves in a desolate area. In an open field stood tall figures that struck fear in the heart of the Prophet's companion. The Prophet recited the *Quran* to this silent receptive crowd, after which he turned back. When he was a short distance away from the figures, he picked up a piece of bone and dung from the ground and flung it at them. He told his companion that he had asked God that the jinn be able to get sustenance from this during their travels. In other words, he had interceded on their behalf with God (El-Zein 1996:332).

These two passages provide the strongest textual verification of the existence of jinn within Islam. Belief in the existence of jinn is considered equivalent to belief in the existence of angels, one of the primary articles of faith in Islam, and consequently, to disbelieve in them would be heretical.¹¹ The majority of Muslims believe jinn to be a species of spiritual beings created by God out of smokeless fire long before he created humans out of mud and to whom he gave the earth to inhabit. They are drawn to both good and evil. In this regard they are different from angels who were created out of pure light and are incapable of evil and are, therefore, given the heavens to inhabit (Hughes n.d.; entry under *Djinn* in Encyclopedia of Islam 2003). In many ways jinn are the equivalent of humans in that they are endowed with passions, rational faculties, and responsibility for their own actions (El-Zein 1996). Biologically, they eat, grow, procreate, and die much like humans. Socially, they organize themselves as humans do (Westermarck 1926). However, jinn are capable of shape shifting, fast movement, great acts of strength, and long lives. They are also known to eavesdrop on the angels in the lower reaches of heaven to acquire limited knowledge of the future (El-Zein 1996; Encyclopedia of Islam 2003; Hughes n.d.; Westermarck 1926). Humans and jinn coinhabit the earth, however jinni haunts are primarily desolate places such as forests, ruins, and graveyards. The relations between the two may vary from mutual indifference to warfare in the distant past to relations of love and guardianship between members of both species. For humans, such a relationship may disrupt their lives through spirit possession (see Boddy 1989; Bowen 1993; Crapanzano 1980; El-Zein 1996; Pandolfo 2000; Rothenberg 1998; Siegel 2003). Humans have long struggled to bring jinn within their possession to harness their powers. However, as we shall see, these relations between humans and jinn are constantly evolving. My account of the jinn in Farooq Sahib's family can, therefore, be read as a recent installment in this long history of relations between humans and jinn.

As with the human world, the word of Islam was also sent to jinn through the Prophet Muhammad; in other words jinn preexist Islam. After the introduction of Islam, jinn became divided between those who became Muslims and those who did not. However, in the shift to Islam, the jinn began to be more associated with evil whereas previously both good and bad had been equally ascribed to them. An early theological debate, which remains unresolved, was whether Iblis (the devil),

originates from this species (El-Zein 1996; Encyclopedia of Islam 2003; Hughes n.d.). Some claim that he was allowed among the ranks of angels because of his immense devotion to God and was later banished from the heavens after his refusal to kneel before Adam. This association with Iblis hints at the anxiety that currently accompanies a belief in the existence and disruptive tendencies of jinn. Another classical theological debate that continues into the present deliberates whether jinn are indeed a different category of being from humans or whether they are forces of nature or projections of human interiority, in the Muslim sense, as the little mischievous spirits (*nafs*) that make up a self (Bowen 1993; El-Zein 1996; see Metcalf 1997 on *nafs*).

In South Asia, I have found a general acceptance of the anthropomorphic existence of jinn and their disruptive, possibly evil, tendencies, intermixed with a wariness that this acknowledgement of alternative worlds not be seen as yet another marker of Muslim irrationality. My intent in this article is not to address this sense of insecurity that arises from an almost quotidian acceptance of jinn nor do I do justice to the rich anthropological and psychological literature that interprets the belief of jinn as complex arrangements of cultural memory, political strategy, mental illness, and individual subjectivity (see Boddy 1989; Bowen 1993; Crapanzano 1980; El-Zein 1996; Pandolfo 2000; Rothenberg 1998; Siegel 2003). In my argument, the appearance of the jinn within a family provides insight into the tensions that undergird everyday life within which religious differences are feared and come to be embodied by a single self, in this case, by Farooq Sahib himself. In this I simply accept the jinni as a being in its givenness.

Maryam the Medium

When the jinn first came to them some seven years prior to my arrival in 1999, Farooq Sahib's immediate family included his wife and their two sons and three daughters (born in that order). Their conduit to the jinn was Maryam, the second of Farooq Sahib's daughters, who was then an eight-year-old girl. When I first met Maryam, she was 15 and had finished her education at a private school for girls after passing her metric examinations. Her elder sister, who was 16, was to be married shortly, so Maryam had assumed many of the household duties she once shared with her sister. Her family continued to view Maryam as the most spiritual of the girls, although her eldest brother Adeb also had a reputation for piety from an early age.¹²

Although I did not observe Maryam's transition from childhood to adulthood, I imagined how it must have been for her by observing the family's treatment of their youngest daughter Farah, who was eight when I first met her. At that age, Farah did not as yet observe the veil (*purdah*) but frisked around in frocks and high heels and occasionally dabbed some lipstick on her mouth. She was frequently indulged by being held and kissed and asked to recite *nat* (a form of poetry in praise of the Prophet). However, by the end of my stay, when she was

almost ten, she was already being pulled protesting out of her sleep to say her prayers with the family because she would soon be of an age when she would be accountable.

According to Islamic beliefs, children are born free of sin and have the ability to communicate with divine beings (Das 1989), however, they are considered beings without reason (*aql*) and therefore carry the threat of being easily led astray (Aijaz 1989; Devji 1994; Lapidus 1976). Consequently, Islamic and Quranic instruction has to begin as early as four years of age to ensure that children are provided guidance from early in their lives. By the time their children are ten years old and are considered to have reached the age of sexual maturation, Muslim parents are urged by religious scholars (*ulama*, sing. *alim*) to hold them responsible for any missed religious duties, notably the reading of the *Quran*, prayers, and fasting. According to a hadis quoted in a child-rearing manual, “the Prophet (S.A.W.) has said that we should call upon our children to offer prayers when they are seven years old and when they are ten years they should be punished for missing prayer and should have separate beds” (Aijaz 1989:32). By this time, parental entreaties may be replaced by punishment if children have not formed the habit of prayer and fasting (Aijaz 1989:30).¹³ Farooq Sahib would himself espouse this normative position on child rearing before and after Maryam’s encounter with the jinn, however Maryam differentially embodied the norm of a dutiful child in these two moments.

As an eight-year-old, Maryam had a window into the spirit world, channeling communications between the jinn and her family. At times she would look into the palms of her hands to see what the jinn would have her see; at other times, the stories about her relationship to the jinn suggest her ability to see how this world was intertwined with the jinni world, which was a mirror of this one. She saw the jinn interspersed among her family members. She relayed the requests of the human world to the jinn to seek their advice, instructions, and sometimes their expressions of desire. For instance, one day she told her father that one of the jinn wanted to taste human food, and with her father’s permission, she instructed the jinni that he could enter her father’s body. That day, as Farooq Sahib related to me, he had an appetite that frightened him with its enormity. He felt that he would have stayed rooted to his seat on the floor and would have eaten throughout the night, if he had not run out of food.¹⁴

When the jinn first came to Farooq Sahib’s house, the family’s curiosity would compel them to spend long hours conversing with the jinn about their lives in the jinn world. In the course of these initial introductions, one revealed himself as a *sahaba* jinni. The title *sahaba* refers to a close companion of the Prophet, or at least one who was alive at the time of the Prophet, thus having the opportunity to see him at first hand and to relay his teachings directly from the Prophet himself. Moreover, certain ahadis (prophetic traditions) attest to Muhammad’s conversion of tribes of both people and jinn to Islam. Given the long lives attributed to jinn, it was conceivable to have a *sahaba* jinni alive today.¹⁵

The Sahaba in Perspective

However, the title of *sahaba* had acquired other resonances in Pakistan since the early 1990s. Here is an account of one such resonance of that time. Following the death of General Zia-ul Huq, the fight between Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif over who would assume leadership created a period of tremendous political uncertainty. Moreover, Zia-ul Huq had ruled with an iron hand, and it was during this time that the conflict between Shi'is and Sunnis emerged in its current configuration. As this conflict reached its height largely in Punjab, ethnic battles in Sindh, such as between Sindhis and *mohajirs* (immigrants from India to Pakistan), between Pathan immigrants and *mohajirs*, or even intramohajir conflict, was in relative decline. One modality of violence replaced another. Instead of riots in mixed neighborhoods and public battles among competing political groups, bloody shootouts erupted in mosques, shrines, and religious processions, and public assassinations were carried out by masked men on motorbikes. Within this context, even a pious reference to the *sahaba* or concern for their reputation indexed a wariness of possible Shi'i slights of the *sahaba*.

Sunnis ascribe truthfulness to every known *sahaba* so that the presence of the name of one within the chain of narrators of a *hadis* is enough to verify its authority. Shi'is, however, are more discriminating in their endorsement of *sahabas* and refuse to recognize quite a number of them. Moreover, Shi'is denounce the idea of the leadership of the elect encompassed by the title *rasidhun*, the first four "Rightly Guided Caliphs" who were the Prophet's closest companions and who took on the helm of Muslim leadership on the Prophet's death. Shi'is consider this to be the usurpation of leadership rightfully owing to Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law and the sole male successor within the Prophet's family. Consequently, the Shi'is have developed a ritual denunciation (*tabarra*) of the first three caliphs (Ali is the fourth). This is usually undertaken in the Islamic month of Muharram, when Shi'is mourn the injustices shown to Ali, as well as the martyrdom of Ali's son Hussain at the hands of Yazid, the seventh caliph, in the Battle of Karbala, in what is now modern Iraq. The practice of *tabarra*, which has been historically documented as ascendant during colonial times (Cole 1988; Freitag 1989), became a target of protest in the early 1990s when Sunnis in Pakistan insisted that Shi'is be apostatized for defaming the *sahaba*. At the same time the perception had spread that the Shi'is were against all *sahaba*.¹⁶ The few *ulama* within Pakistan's National Assembly tried to pass an amendment to the infamous Blasphemy Law in the Penal Code, Section 295, to include the *sahaba* as sacred religious personages second only to the Prophet. Hagiographic books and tracts on known and unknown *sahaba*, including prophets prior to Muhammad, started to circulate in unprecedented numbers to inform Sunni Muslims about their venerable precursors.

By the time I began my fieldwork in Lahore in 1999, these books had clearly helped to provide alternative ways to appropriate calendrical days ritually significant to the Shi'is. For instance, one Sunni family I knew insisted on sending

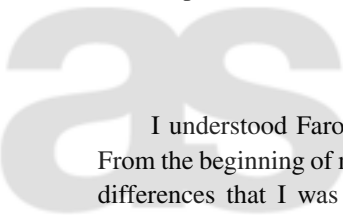
around sweets to their friends and family in celebration of Adam and Eve's birthday, which happened to fall on Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram marking the culmination of Shi'i mourning. Some families had even begun to hold weddings in this month, whereas in the past Muharram was considered an inauspicious time to undertake celebrations. Even name giving had taken on a poisonous edge as people had started to name their children Yazid, after the much-hated caliph who is held responsible for killing Hussain in the Battle of Karbala. The intensity of this hatred made the month of Muharram, which I twice spent in Lahore, a tense time, a mood that the state attempted to assuage by having open-topped trucks with soldiers displaying machine guns make rounds of the city.¹⁷

Although pure chance had led Farooq Sahib's family to have in their control a jinni by the name of Sulayman, who had once had direct contact with the Prophet, this opportunity was not free of a certain vindication for Farooq Sahib.¹⁸ From an earlier conversation with him, I knew that although he did not provide any material assistance to the militant group Sipah-e Sahaba (Warriors of the Sahaba), which was assumed to be responsible for assassinating many important Pakistani Shi'is and Iranians, he supported them in spirit. Once while driving around with Farooq Sahib's son Adeeb before a meeting with a Shi'i *alim* (religious scholar, pl. *ulama*), I was warned by him not to be taken in by Shi'i good looks as these were used to disarm people and to convince them to lapse into Shi'ism. When I asked him if it was not God that gave us our visages, he replied that Shi'is lost their good looks early in life as their internal corruption became visible externally. This stereotype of the Shi'is as corrupting and corrupted and as other than what they appeared to be was a variation on the long-standing stereotype of the dissimulating Shi'i (see also Devji 2005).¹⁹

Nonetheless, the sahaba jinni was the one with whom the family was most taken. In fact Maryam would spend most of her time describing Sulayman.²⁰ He was tall, I was told.²¹ He had a long beard that he kept well groomed. He was always dressed in spotlessly clean white clothes. He kept his face arranged in a serious expression and was careful not to indulge in loud outbursts of laughter. Although he looked stern, he smiled easily. He would sit down to eat or drink. He was also very gentle with Maryam. She said she never felt frightened in his presence and she claimed him as a friend. The family was captivated by these details about Sulayman's comportment, much more so than the descriptions of the physical landscape and social structure of the jinn world also related by Maryam. In fact, her father and brothers would listen carefully to her descriptions of Sulayman as examples of the correct way to imitate the Prophet's example.

Pious Imitation

I understood Farooq Sahib's preoccupation with this practice of imitation. From the beginning of my research, he had been integral to the picture of religious differences that I was putting together. Among my various Urdu teachers, he



was the one who taught me the nuances of the theological aspects of religious conflict. He would not let me slip into a comfortable modernist pose of dismissing these differences as the political expressions of the *petit bourgeoisie* or as identity politics. Through his confident articulations and his heated conversations with others, I understood how ontological these differences were and how they expressed different lived relations to the time and personality of the Prophet, to nature, and to creation.

Farooq Sahib was by no means a religious scholar, but he took such scholarship seriously. He was an *ashraf* (those who claim descent from the Prophet). He was a calligrapher by training, a teacher of Urdu and Islamiyat by vocation, and a compositor of computer-generated religious texts by profession. For him calligraphy in the Islamic tradition was the textual expression of what was enjoined on every Muslim, the pious imitation of the Prophet. Just as the calligrapher, now compositor, seeks to make the most perfect copy of a text without introducing any novelty into it, Farooq Sahib and his sons struggled to make themselves the perfect imitation of the Prophet: to uphold the Prophet's sunna without introducing any innovation into it.²²

Farooq Sahib had originally followed another Sunni tradition, the Barelwi path into which he had been born. The Barelwi path emphasizes passionate love for, and ecstatic identification with, the Prophet and is generally recognized as infused with Sufism (see Buehler 1998; Sanyal 1996). The Prophet is immanent in the world, present everywhere, but with the permission of God because God's powers cannot be granted to another even if it were the Prophet himself, who is the most beloved of God. In Barelwism, one is oblivious to one's being in the world in one's passionate embrace of the Prophet. At the time of Partition, Farooq Sahib's parents, sisters, and brothers had stayed behind in India and remained Barelwi. Farooq Sahib had moved to Lahore so that his wife could be closer to her family and because he could better ply his profession as a calligrapher, later compositor, in a place where Urdu was the lingua franca of the nation. However, through his ceaseless copying of religious texts, old and new, authentic and inauthentic, in the new nation of Pakistan where there flourished many pathways of being Muslim, Farooq Sahib had come to realize that the Barelwi path was not the correct way through which to experience the Prophet. Although he neglected to mention this to me, Rahima Baji, his wife, drew to my attention the fact that she had been instrumental in Farooq Sahib's conversion to Deobandism because her own family is of this path. This detail is important in suggesting the importance of familial ties in the experience and expression of religious differences and also of women's participation in determining religious affiliation.²³

In switching from one path to another, both of which were within Sunni Islam, Farooq Sahib was now fully persuaded by the Deobandi path. According to this path, the Prophet called forth a love expressed in efforts to embody the Prophet in this world by seeing the Prophet in one's mind's eye and imitating him.

The Prophet is not immanent in the world, although he is alive in his grave in Medina from which he witnesses the world, once again by God's permission. Thus, one could legitimately dream of the Prophet, if the Prophet so wished to bless you with his presence, but one could never call him forth, as Barelwis believed, through prayers in a mosque. Both these paths accept jinn as having a dynamic if disruptive presence within the human world, alongside the presence of angels and saints (*awliya allah*, lit. friends of Allah) whose shrines are scattered across the country. Deobandis, however, feel that Muslims risk angering God with their excessive reliance on jinn, angels, and saints, for it is God alone who ought to be relied on.

A third Sunni path found in Pakistan is the Ahl-I Hadis (People of the Hadis), who believe that the Prophet is a man, albeit a great man, and therefore demands of us not love but respect. So when one imagines the Prophet, as Akbar, a librarian, a friend, and a self-identified Ahl-I Hadis, had once described him to me, one imagines oneself riding behind the Prophet as though on horseback, being led by him. The ahadis intermixed by *sira* (biographies of the Prophet) are the only legitimate means to access Prophetic intent. That is, there can be no other experience of the Prophet other than through the record of his words and deeds simply because, in Akbar's words, he was quite dead and turned to dust. So for instance, dreaming of the Prophet, for the stricter Ahl-I Hadis, is sheer fancy. Every time I mentioned the topic of jinn to my Ahl-I Hadis acquaintances, they would repress superior smiles although I knew that a few of them were not averse to activating these forces when they had the need.²⁴

Through these varied affective relations (ecstatic love, reverential love, and respect) with the Prophet, the differences among the Sunni paths became a little clearer to me. Moreover, the enmity that had developed between Sunnis and Shi'is in the early 1990s was also mirrored among the travelers of these three paths within Sunni Islam in South Asia. In one instance, Adeb contemptuously slighted the Sunni Barelwi practice of celebrating the Prophet's birthday (Milad-un-Nabi) by referring to it as repressed Shi'ism ("they just want to be like the Shi'is") because Barelwi followers would parade with models of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina in ways that resembled Shi'i processions of *taziyas* (models of the tomb of Hussain in Karbala) during Muharram. In another instance, Akbar, my Ahl-I Hadis friend, commented that the Sunni Barelwi and Deobandi belief that the Prophet was alive in his grave was akin to Shi'i notions of the hidden Imam, giving a real fright to his Barelwi and Deobandi friends in the library in which they all worked.²⁵ This one comment generated one of the bitterest conversations I heard in my time in Pakistan.

Thus, the daily struggle to presence the Prophet with a certainty that only a faithful imitation could provide brought with it concerns on how to ground this imitation in proper religious authority and thus to iterate the normative position. Each of the Sunni paths had evolved complex procedures that were its specific mode of imitation of the Prophet. For the Deobandi, this involved face-to-face

relations with the *ulama-e salih* (the righteous scholars of Islam), for only through their teachings and practices could one have concrete examples of how to imitate the Prophet.²⁶

Given the Deobandi emphasis on face-to-face learning from the ulama, what rattled me was that Farooq Sahib would take his cues on the Prophet's example from a faceless and voiceless jinni, with his child serving as its ventriloquist. Perhaps Farooq Sahib was doing what many others do in activating competing bodies of knowledge and sets of relations in the hope that one of them will pay off (see Ewing 1997). However, I had gotten to know Farooq Sahib quite well by this point, and I knew his insistence on a modicum of consistency in his life. I knew for instance that he struggled with the fact that he did not like to keep a beard even though he was strongly urged by his sons to do so as it was a practice of the Prophet. So, given his disapproval of an overreliance on jinn to get things done, I found it strange that he would allow jinn into his home in the first place. Moreover, the introduction of the jinn into the household brought to the fore the frayed ties within the extended family through which religious differences became expressed. What I now show is how everyday life is never taken for granted by those who live it, and it must, therefore, be taken seriously on its own terms to understand better the sectarian condition that prevails in Pakistan, for the one stands alongside the other (see N. 3).

Religious Differences in the Weave of Domesticity

Although Farooq Sahib's immediate family was not living in a joint family arrangement, the exact number of inhabitants remained in flux.²⁷ Relatives came and went as the family retained close ties with its extended kin who would visit from as far away as Multan, Karachi, and even Delhi. Furthermore, there was an expectation of future growth, as the adult sons would soon have their families within this household.

However, over the time I was in Lahore, the unproductiveness of the sons was a continual source of tension within the family. While Farooq Sahib toiled at numerous paying jobs, Adeeb spent much of his time undertaking work that was pious but unremunerated, such as taking private lessons with a well-known alim, doing the beat of the neighborhood to invite the male members of households to pray in the mosque, preparing lessons with his Tablighi companions in their center in Lahore, going on retreats to convert errant Muslims in other parts of the country and abroad, and even on occasion, retreating to the mosque for prayer and contemplation for Ramzan, the Islamic month of fasting. Although the family, Rahima Baji in particular, was very proud of him, they also felt very keenly the meagerness of his contributions to the family coffers. Of late, Adeeb had gained a lot of weight and, together with his beard, head cap, and loose flowing tunic, he looked much older than his 20 years. People had started to refer to him as a *mulla*, once a title of respect but now a derogatory term for a religious personage who is

seen to spend most of his time sitting around the mosque (see Ewing 1999; Khan 2003).

His younger brother Ali was not doing much better. At the beginning of our acquaintance, he was ambivalent about being openly pious, preferring to spend his free time hanging out with his friends, watching pirated Hindi films, and generally exploring opportunities to leave Pakistan. By the end of my stay, he had been drawn to the more strident aspects of the Deobandi path seeking to correct members of other Sunni paths for their misuse of Islamic law.²⁸ Fashioning themselves on the militant group Sipah-e Sahaba, Ali's group called themselves Sipah-e Hanafiya (warriors of Hanafiya). One time, disgusted by the failure of Adeeb and Ali to provide more financial support to the family, Farooq Sahib spat out at them, "why don't you call up ghosts [*jinn bhoots*] to make some money." If they considered themselves too superior to take up regular jobs, then why did they simply not resort to being amils to make some money? By this time, the jinn had already come and gone from the family and, from what I could make out, the family had seen it as beneath themselves to profit monetarily from them when the jinn still resided in their household. Although Adeeb had shown some talent in the profession, for him to turn to *amaliyyat* (the practices associated with being an amil) now would be a considerable step down for these ashraf boys.

Meanwhile in 2001, Rahima Baji's sister died quite unexpectedly in nearby Multan, leaving behind two young children who came to live with her and her husband shortly after. Farooq Sahib agreed to keep them and even adopt them if necessary, but the children pined for their father. At the same time, there was some concern about how Farooq Sahib would manage financially if they were to live with him permanently. No one dared approach the children's father about this matter. Instead they sat around speculating whether he planned to remarry and abandon his children altogether.

By this time, the jinn had already returned to the amil, and in any case, Maryam was no longer a child and could no longer serve as a medium. Nonetheless, the family decided to have Farooq Sahib's youngest daughter Farah speak to Sulayman the jinni about what lay ahead for the young children. However, Farah did not fare as well as Maryam. She was alternatively frightened of the jinni and upset at him for not taking her to Mecca as he had promised. The family then sent the children of the deceased woman to transmigrate to Multan with Sulayman to see what was in their absent father's mind. When they returned to their bodies, they described how they had seen their father at home packing his bag. This offered hope that he was coming to pick them up, as he did indeed shortly afterward, but then just as quickly, he sent them back. Throughout the time I was there, the children remained in limbo, moving among several households.

Keeping this unresolved tension of the children's fate in mind and the straitened state of finances within the family, I turn briefly to a third story, that of the withholding of forgiveness. Rahima's mother had become the de facto guardian of the motherless children. A beautiful old woman untouched by the ravages of time,

she had returned to mothering, she said, when she ought to be knitting sweaters. Her domestic arrangements were themselves a continuing source of tension within Farooq Sahib's household. She had been estranged from her husband for almost a decade and lived in Lahore with her eldest son, while her husband, whom she never referred to by name but always as "he," lived with Farooq Sahib and Rahima Baji. He would only emerge from his dark corner downstairs to go to the mosque to pray. Having developed a cough that racked his body, he feared that he might die soon and wished to reconcile with his wife. He had sought her out on several of her visits to Farooq Sahib's house, but as she told me, although she wanted to do the right thing by him, his presence made her sick. Spurred on by Rahima Baji, Farooq Sahib attempted to reconcile the two. When all the stories of the jinn were being told to me, Rahima's mother came up and said almost ruefully, "Naveeda, I too was offered a jinni once. Now what is a jinni but a man? And I don't want to have a relationship with a man ever again."

The stories related above of the disappointment of parental expectations, the abandonment of children, and a wife's estrangement from her dying husband hint at the tensions that tear at families, even one as closely knitted as this one. A final story suggests how these familial tensions and the tensions between Shi'is and Sunnis and among different divides of Sunnis come into juxtaposition and how religious differences may even receive their impetus from familial tensions. In this case, familial relations came to figure a vague threat of religious differences within the domestic sphere in the shape of a malevolent witch.

During the time when Maryam still served as the family's medium and long before I came into the picture, Farooq Sahib had traveled to India to spend time with the Barelwi side of his family. Maryam remained restless the entire time he was away, scared that he might never come back. She asked her mother to take her to their amil friend almost every day so that she might speak with Sulayman the jinni. Every day she would whisper something to him. Meanwhile, Farooq Sahib tried to get his Indian visa extended to allow him to spend more time with his family in Delhi. However, it seemed to him, particularly in retrospect, that his every attempt failed. Dejected he had to return on the very day that his original visa expired. Maryam rushed to greet him at the door of the house, but then she fell back screaming. Apparently a 30-foot witch (*churail*)²⁹ had followed him back from India. Farooq Sahib immediately dropped his bags at the door and rushed to the mosque to say his prayers. When he returned home, Maryam assured him that the witch had left. If Maryam had still been frightened, he said, he would have had to tear up the city looking for someone to rid him of the witch, but thankfully prayers had done the trick.

When I asked Maryam why she did not want her father to stay in India, she replied that his family there was not going to let him go and that they had literally bewitched him because they were jealous he was returning to his other family. When I asked Farooq Sahib what he thought of this suggestion, he shrugged and thought it genuinely possible that his Barelwi family would pull such a prank

because they did not take his being a Deobandi seriously enough. I pushed him on this statement. After all, it was a grave accusation to make against one's own brothers and sisters. "Jealousy is a strong force. Sometimes those who are jealous do not even know how they bind others up," he replied. Although the witch may well have been the projection of Maryam's sense of loss at her father's absence, jealousy of his other family, or even fear that he was in alien country hostile to her own, for Farooq Sahib, the witch was to be located squarely within the Barelwi affiliation of his family. The field of religious differences served as the impersonal arena on which he pitched his tent and fought his battles. Similarly the attack on the family by jinn posing as ants, with which Farooq Sahib and Rahima Baji had begun telling these stories to me, was taken as another indication of the force of jealousy, this time emanating from their Barelwi neighbors who wished to test the truth of the Deobandi family's claim to having jinn in their possession.

Difference Internal to Being

What then do we make of Farooq Sahib's impulsive gesture of bringing the jinn into his home in the first place? In all the anthropological literature, occult manuals, and encyclopedic entries I have read on jinn, sustained contact with jinn augurs madness. The average amil undergoes considerable pain and deprivation to be able to lay claim to a particular force and must undertake continual exercises of the body and mind to control it.³⁰ However, Farooq Sahib did not train to be an amil; in fact, he still retained a sense of disdain for this profession. Nonetheless, by inviting the jinn into his household, he knowingly risked the potential disruption of his family, their flight to madness or, at the very least, the possibility of his family being permanently affected by this encounter.

One way to read his actions would be to acknowledge the ordinariness of the presence of jinn within the everyday landscape of Lahore in the late 1990s. The mainstream Urdu Press often carries stories of jinn sightings and abductions amidst gory stories of family feuds, political rivalries, and sectarian violence. Often, to caricature the gullibility of the ordinary Pakistani and to make fun of the Urdu press, the English-language press, the exclusive preserve of a cosmopolitan Pakistani elite, would plant stories in their pages about their correspondents attending jinni weddings.

A more productive way to read Farooq Sahib's decision would be to see it as enmeshed within a certain unintentional malevolence existing alongside generosity. By *malevolence*, I mean something that holds out the possibility of harm, rather than actively intending it. By *generosity*, I mean the willingness to concede to others, rather than a nobility of character. These qualifications bring the words closer to the actions and dispositions of those of whom I speak. If in the story of Maryam and the witch, the threat of religious differences is materialized as a malevolent witch, then we see how Farooq Sahib may also be reasonably seen as malevolent with respect to the ethical dilemma inherent in the act of

introducing the jinn and “exposing” his children to their disruptive yet generative powers. In exposing his daughter to the jinn, he had allowed her to become enthralled with them to better serve his preoccupation with getting closer to the way of the Prophet.

To complicate this thought, I have found useful Pamela Reynold’s (1996) concern with the “exposure of children to evil” in her own work on the Zezuru in Zimbabwe whose perspectives she brings to bear on Henry James’s novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1971). In his story, James wrote about a young governess who is given “supreme authority” over her two charges. She suspects that the children are haunted by two dead servants who have returned to take possession of the children’s souls. The governess takes it on herself to expunge this scourge by seeking the children out while they are in the company of the dead spirits and making the children confess. The young girl denies being possessed, then falls ill and takes a dislike to the governess, whereas the young boy confesses to being in the presence of a ghost and promptly dies in the arms of the triumphant governess.

Felman (1980) has written how the controversy surrounding the novella has long centered on whether to believe the governess or not or whether to see her as mentally unbalanced and projecting her fantasies on the children. Reynolds proposes a different interpretation. If the Zezuru were asked to comment on James’s story, they would fault the governess for her arrogance in thinking herself spiritually and physically prepared to take on the spirits alone, whereas, “she is, according to Zezuru ethics, without direction, lost without a code of behavior, and wrong in abrogating the role of the ancestors, relying rather on her own will” (Reynolds 1996:83–84). Moreover, they would fault the story for neglecting the innate resources of children. “For Zezuru, children are pure: they represent non-evil. They belong to the shades. Their innocence does not imply a state of passivity. Rather, children’s own resources are bolstered by the protection afforded by living and dead kin” (Reynolds 1996:71).³¹

In effect, Reynolds is saying that a guardian, even a parent, cannot know in advance what regions of experience and expression the child has access to or what he or she is capable of. Neither are guardians everywhere compelled to protect children from evil in the same way. In Islam, children are free of religious obligations up to the age when they are seen as maturing. However, they are not seen as innocent creatures to be protected until this age. Rather, they are considered to have a certain strength and prescience that makes them effective as conduits to the world of spirits. One’s protection of them can only extend so far, and beyond this they have to fight their own battles. In the case of spirit possession, children may be protected by countercharms and exorcism, but ultimately the fight is their own (see Mageo and Howard 1996). Metcalf notes that the innate strength attributed to children (as well as to the virtue of a mother) is indicated by the following hadis of the Prophet: “I swear by that Pure Being in whose power is my life that the child who is miscarried will take the mother by the umbilical cord and pull her in the direction of paradise if the mother’s object (*niyat*) has been to seek reward” (1997:210).

Given this view of children, it is not inconceivable that Farooq Sahib trusted Maryam more so than he did any jinn. He could have felt that she would guide their family through the jinn world, rejecting it if it posed any overt danger to them. It was just as conceivable that she could have a privileged access to truth and could be trusted to communicate it faithfully. To recognize the truth as such, she must have been formed in the light of her father's beliefs so that she could in turn be his light. Thus, religious difference, first materialized as a threat in the form of a malevolent witch then in a father's potentially malevolent instrumentalization of his daughter, is seen also to imply the possibility for generosity in Farooq Sahib's ceding his position of authority within his family to follow his daughter's words of guidance.³²

Farooq Sahib's turn toward Maryam may therefore be understood to be a turn away from the present, from a particular experience of everyday life, in which uncertainty plagues daily struggles to ground the pious imitation of the Prophet in proper religious authority within each of the Sunni paths. One may develop a sensibility finely attuned to theological differences so as to better tell apart one's own path from those of others. But sometimes practices arise even within one's path, which are more productive of doubts than a satisfactory certainty, not to mention a resolute certainty. Farooq Sahib was fully sensitive to this problem. Together, we had mulled over many "authorized" posters affixed to Deobandi mosques and fretted over the possible reception of their contents. In turning toward Maryam, Farooq Sahib's action appeared to give expression to his sense of the trancelike quality of everyday life, in which things were not as they appeared, just as people were not who they seemed to be. One knew Shi'is to be corrupting and dissimulating, yet the behavior of some Sunnis was no better or not all that much different. And, enmeshed within this field of religious differences, even one's own family stood to disappoint. In such a situation, guidance may well come from an unexpected source, and one had to know enough to accept and acknowledge it.³³

In what follows, I provide a picture of the pious self as composed of a series of presubjective singularities standing alongside one another within a milieu comprising other such series (see N. 4). This picture is distinct from that of a self-contradictory subject arching toward resolution or that of a norm-bearing subject that has achieved coherence. In whatever theory of the subject we may adhere to, the subject is set apart or sets itself apart from others. For instance, as a Muslim subject, Farooq Sahib set himself apart from Muslims of the other paths. He even distinguished himself from the Barelwi Muslim he once was. However, in the picture that I provide of him, he is constituted of different versions of himself that are not sharply distinguished from one another but are nonetheless distinct and that are best called presubjective singularities. I explore further how a self moves along this series of singularities, what brings about movement, and where that movement may be tending. To these ends, let me rehearse the various positions Farooq Sahib takes in his family's encounter with the jinn.

When Farooq Sahib first brought the jinn into his family's life after espousing derision for those who claim an involvement with them, he appeared to be standing beside himself—to be other than the reformed Muslim he claimed to be. He then moved again from his position as an authoritative father figure to become a pupil to his daughter through her power to access the guidance of the jinn. He returned to his position of authority when he decided not to bring back the jinn once they had returned to their guardian. However, his position was no longer the same as the one he occupied before the jinn came.

In effect, Farooq Sahib had moved from a version of himself that he knew to other versions of himself of which he did not have prior knowledge. He also did not move of his own accord. He had had an encounter out of the ordinary, which is what the jinn were, and was thus moved by it. And when he returned to his prior self, it was not entirely to the old self he once was. He now held experiences and expressions of the other versions of himself he had manifested in the course of his movement alongside himself. Consequently, the genetic elements that constituted him had reorganized. Moreover, his movement was toward the jinn and then away from them. So he was not only moving along these different versions of himself in the series that constituted him, but this series also moved toward the series constituting the jinn. A zone of jinn becoming (or human becoming for the jinn) opened between the two series within a milieu that also shifted around them. That he sensed this zone of becoming was expressed most strongly in his oft-repeated assertion: "Our faith had become weak and our obligatory worship was suffering." Given that the other persistent stereotype within the standing archive of anti-Shi'i stereotypes and slights is that of the superstitious Shi'i, overly reliant on the occult for guidance in this world, did Farooq Sahib then also come to sense a movement toward becoming Shi'i?

Unquestionably, something of the quality of becoming mad had entered into his family's life. This was forcefully communicated to me through my conversations with Farooq Sahib's colleagues. They told me that they steered clear of him during this time, scared that their previous light teasing of him on account of his religiosity may now bring forth a vengeful response from him. However, in the aftermath of this experience, Farooq Sahib did not judge himself as harshly as one would suppose, nor did he reject these different versions of himself, as he did his prior Barelwi self. His wry acknowledgement of being a bit different in those days speaks to the possibility of a generous relationship to himself, of allowing himself to be a multiplicity, as well as allowing the same of Maryam. A space opened up alongside a force field of malevolence to be generous to oneself and another.

Thus far, we have mulled on ways in which the sectarian condition and familial relations stand next to each other. Let us mull over friendship as one more element in this milieu that constitutes everyday life. Unquestionably, friendship has a place of privilege within the Islamic tradition. One cannot control the family into which one is born or the family one begets. Earlier, I cited an injunction in which the author claimed that it is best to disown one's children if they continue to resist parental

authority to mold them into pious Muslims (Aijaz 1989). However, good friends aid one another in the pursuit of piety. “A trusted friend is a safe treasure in the world and his companionship is to be greatly valued. This is possible only in good fellowship for good and pious works” (Karim 1989:549). Certainly, friendship nourished Adeeb, providing a resolution to a standing tension within his family over his unproductiveness. It opened up a future for him to continue to be pious in the way he desired. After I left in 2001, he met and befriended a young industrialist in his travels with his Tablighi companions and this new acquaintance recently gave him a job as the prayer leader of a mosque on his industrial estate in the fringes of Lahore. There Adeeb finally accepted his talents as an amil and began to dispense cures and spells to the workers in the estate. He married the younger sister of the industrialist and secured a marriage for Maryam with another of his Tablighi companions. Maryam now has a child and the two often return home to stay with her parents for extended periods of time while her husband travels to spread the word of Islam.

What of the friendship that Maryam once shared with Sulayman the jinni? Maryam did not seem to remember much. She had been busy assuming the role of the only grown daughter in her parents’ home by the time I left Lahore in 2001, and she later was busy in her new role as a wife and mother. Yet here too something had changed. When I last spoke with her in the winter of 2004 about her experiences, she readily claimed a friendship with Sulayman, grateful that he never frightened her in their many interactions. She had missed him after he left them. Farooq Sahib and Rahima Baji recalled that she had cried herself to sleep for weeks after. She claimed to have had dreams—such dreams—but she cannot recall them now. She just recalled the sense of those dreams with a shiver, while busy making us tea. Yet even now her sister-in-law, Adeeb’s wife, teased her lightly about Sulayman.³⁴

Did Sulayman simply aid in the family’s pursuit of piety? In place of her words, I imagine a certain friendship, derived in part from my own readings of *Tales of the Arabian Nights* and from the insight that perhaps Maryam too was not unfamiliar with these stories. As in the famous tale of Aladdin and the magic lamp, now caricatured through the Walt Disney production, a child finds a genie and can be literally pulled out of a certain existence to soar the skies. Maryam had shared in Sulayman’s joy of discovering human food. She whispered her secrets into his ears to engage him in her projects. She traveled to places with him (although Sulayman refused to go to the United States). She was able to help out her family and her neighbors, and she was able to take leave of her body, which was already changing beyond her control. Soon the time would come when she would not be able to access this world any longer, and I imagine her father was not averse to the jinni leaving before she was faced with a sense of loss. Is Sulayman then the arc of a certain line of flight for Maryam?³⁵ I am not saying that hers was a miserable existence from which Sulayman, or even the idea of Sulayman, provided her certain escape. Instead, I am suggesting that a friendship between a human and a nonhuman, within the possibilities of malevolence and generosity

that enables and even nurtures this friendship, is a productive movement within a field of negativity and therefore a means of gaining voice.

Notes

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1. The available narratives of sectarianism range from viewing it as an alternative mode of politics, to viewing it as the stymied politics enabled by modern nation states, or as a pathological condition of schismogenesis brought on by the breakdown of religious authority.

2. See Malik 1996, Ahmad 1998, Nasr 2000, Zaman 2002, Jaffrelot 2002. Also see Ring 2003 for a useful corrective of this tendency, at least for the question of ethnic violence rather than sectarianism in Pakistan.

3. Here I draw my inspiration from Stanley Cavell (1982, 1988, 1989, 1990) who has written extensively on how Ludwig Wittgenstein understood skepticism to be a standing threat within ordinary language. See Das 1998 for a fuller exploration of Wittgenstein's possible reception via Cavell within anthropology. Her critique of anthropological studies of everyday life is particularly pertinent for me. Das writes:

The problem is that the notion of the everyday is too easily secured in these ethnographies because they hardly ever consider the temptations and threats of skepticism a part of the lived reality and hence do not tell us what is the stake in the everyday that they discovered. In Cavell's rendering of Wittgenstein's appeal to the everyday, it is found to be a pervasive scene of illusion and trance and artificiality of need. [Das 1998:183]

I take Das to be saying that in finding the everyday in this way, its importance for the continuation of life as such becomes simultaneously both clearer and more opaque. Thus anthropologists must redouble their efforts to understand what is at stake within the everyday, what jeopardizes it internally and externally, and what work goes into securing it.

4. Two recent studies provide relatively different renditions of the formation of selves within contemporary Muslim societies. Ewing (1997, also see 1990) argues for the

existence of multiple selves within an individual, each of which is context-dependent and intersubjective. Although an individual may espouse different self-representations at different moments, these are not viewed as inconsistent to the illusion of wholeness that Ewing claims each individual must maintain of necessity. Mahmood (2001) is much less concerned with inconsistencies within her subjects, being more interested in how each subject comes to inhabit norms in such a manner as to make it appear that the norm is working on the subject, that is, the subject acts on herself in such a way as to make the norm constitute her as a pious self. This is not an abnegation of the self in the service of a higher ideal but rather a self that is generated through its particular emergence from, and interpenetration with, the norm.

In contrast with these two positions, I am more interested in the self as the realm of presubjective possibilities. In Gilles Deleuze's words, these "impersonal and pre-individual singularities" (1990:103) exist within a plane of immanence. "Far from being individual or personal, singularities preside over the genesis of individuals and persons; they are distributed in a 'potential' which admits neither Self nor I, but which produces them by actualizing or realizing itself, although the figures of this actualization do not at all resemble the realized potential" (Deleuze 1990:103). An individual actualizes only one of these possibilities or singularities or potentials, yet these other singularities exist within him and are his link to this plane of immanence. Although this multiplicity exists within the individual, one cannot call these multiple selves (*pace* Ewing). The multiplicity retains its preindividual, impersonal qualities and is marked by irreducible singularities. These singularities distinguish themselves from one another not by negation but by affirmation. A given individual moves between these qualities without necessarily morphing into entirely different selves. This multiplicity or rather the singularities in a given series within an individual, and the movement within this series of singularities, is what I mean by difference internal to being.

5. "From being a dead shell, culture comes to be born paradoxically at this juncture when a different relationship between the articulation of voice and hearing is established" (Das 1995:167). It is an ongoing challenge for me to try to bring Cavell's insights into everyday life as one of existence under continual threat in line with Deleuze's insights into living as one of joyfully becoming other. See Singh (in press) for a sustained effort to find convergences between these respective lines of inquiry. For me it has been a question of the vastly different affects espoused by the two authors, one of melancholia and the other of joy, even joy-taking in cruelty, respectively. However, Veena Das's writings provide a possible link between Cavell and Deleuze in line with my particular interest. In Das 1995, we see an exploration of a self who betrays the immediate norms of her family to ensure her continued relationship with them. In effect, she moves to a next self before her family is willing to allow her to do so, so as to keep alive the self she used to be in relation to her family. Might one then think of difference as movement entailing the risks of everyday life and the shock and joy of becoming other?

6. Most recently Charles Hirschkind (2001) has written about the "ethics of listening" within the Islamic tradition as practiced by Egyptian Muslims attending religious sermons, in which Muslims train their bodies to hear sermons in such a manner as to bring about the appropriate affective and mental responses in line with the normative picture of the pious self—in other words a certain work on the body elicits a specific mode of listening. I would distinguish my understanding of "gestures" and its relationship to "hearing" from Hirschkind's relationship of "body" to "listening" very simply. In my case, gestures and their being heard do not necessarily happen to or within the same body (although it may) as much as between bodies. Furthermore, the challenge for me, as one of those bodies, is to listen to gestures, that is, to not read them as a cultural text (*pace* Clifford Geertz) nor assume

there is a code to crack the regulative mechanisms of a society (*pace* Pierre Bourdieu) but, rather, to draw out how thinking proceeds apace with gestures, how gestures gather thought, sounded and unsounded, and how voice is incorporative of these gestures (see N. 5). Here I am drawing on lines of thought more fully developed by Martin Heidegger (1968). If we are to learn thinking, we must learn to listen to the gestures of the hand: “the hand’s gestures run everywhere through language, in their most perfect purity precisely when man speaks by being silent. And only when man speaks, does he think—not the other way around, as metaphysics still believes” (Heidegger 1968:16). These words are very resonant with Das: “Now if I am correct that the inner is not like a distinct state that can be projected to the outer world through language in Wittgenstein but rather like something that lines the outer, then language and the world (including the inner world) are learned simultaneously” (1998:190). Or further on, “That is not to say that we do not *read* the body but rather that we depend on grammar to tell us what kind of an object something is. Inserting the centrality of the body in human society is important not in inferring internal states of mind but in the intuition of language as a *bodying forth*” (1998:191). Gestures are a mode of thinking and of language *bodying forth*, which is precisely why they call for a hearing and a listening.

7. I used the title *Sahib* (sir) as a sign of my respect for my teacher and referred to his wife Rahima as my *Baji* (elder sister). Farooq and Rahima are pseudonyms as are the other proper names in this article.

8. I was not surprised at the claimed existence of jinn, as I had been told of alternative worlds to the human one and of the material and spiritual negotiations that humans enter into with the inhabitants of these worlds. What shocked me was that I had understood Farooq Sahib’s family to accept only obligatory worship (*ibadat*) as the legitimate way to approach God, having heard only their derision of other intercessionary modes in the two years I had known them. Yet here, in the last leg of my research, I was learning that they had once had jinn in their possession. This raises an interesting question about the temporality of memory (or even of fieldwork itself): Why did it take this family almost two years to remember to tell me this experience? Or was it a question of trust?

9. This also speaks to the way I learned from him, when almost every incident we spoke of formally, rather than in casual conversation, was used by Farooq Sahib to educate me on what Islam had to say on the topic. Right after I was told of his family’s encounter with the jinn, he bought a few books on the topic for me and directed my attention to sections he considered relevant for me to understand better the dilemma posed to his worship by the presence of the jinn.

10. Moreover, I hope that by keeping the normative within our horizon we can later better understand how Farooq Sahib struggled over the proper imitation of the Prophet even when the normative position on this was clear and unequivocal.

11. Even the Mutazilates, early Muslim materialists, dared not discount the existence of jinn although on the few occasions they spoke of them they referred to jinn as uncivilized tribes inhabiting the world (El-Zein 1996).

12. As a young boy, Adeeb had seen the Prophet Muhammad twice in his dreams. According to the Islamic tradition, one cannot be deluded about seeing the Prophet in one’s dreams as Iblis (the devil) cannot take the Prophet’s form. Adeeb’s piety is both a source of pride and tension within the family, as we will see. It is also the reason why the jinn associated with him, Sulayman, and later other jinn given to him by his friends and well-wishers, were seen to be particularly efficacious.

13. The importance of the child for the Muslim family cannot be emphasized enough. “In the Middle East, the child is seen as the crucial generational link in the family unit, the key to its continuation, the living person that ties the present to the past and to the future” (Fernea 1995:4). The burden of raising them as good Muslims rests heavily on parents

not only in the interests of grounding Islamic society but also in ensuring their standing before God. As a child, I was often urged to attend to my Arabic lessons and prayers with seriousness so that my parents might meet their maker without shame or fear of retribution on the Day of Judgment. "It is hoped that the parents will resolve to train and educate their children according to the Islamic principles as their primary obligation. If they fail in their duty they will have to bear the entire responsibility of children's deviation from the moral principles" (Aijaz 1989:162). Furthermore, "if one's offspring and close relatives obdurately stick to infidelity then faith demands that they should be disowned and all kinds of relationship with them should be cut off" (Aijaz 1989:34).

14. To be a victim of possession is to be struck by any number of somatic illnesses or psychic effects of mysterious origins (Bowen 1993; Siegel 2003). For instance, under the description of demonical possession in Jaffur Shurreef's *Qanoon-e Islam*, a 19th-century text, the author writes that the symptoms are as follows: "Some are struck dumb; others shake their heads; others grow mad and walk about naked; they feel no inclination to pursue their usual avocations; but lie down and are inactive" (1973:218). However this state is assumed to be a temporary one, eased through the interventions of healers and magicians or, failing that, by medical experts (Pandolfo 2000). In some cases, one may be permanently possessed, as in the case of Tuhami (Crapanzano 1980) who was enslaved by a female jinni by the name of Aisha Qandisha and could not easily shake off his state of enslavement. In both of these instances, we have a picture of possession that comes from outside the self and over which the self appears to exert little control. In contrast to such a victim, a state of possession for a healer or magician is much more of his or her own doing. Such a person may have jinn or related spirits in his or her possession, and it is a matter of undertaking the correct discipline and ritual activity to bring these jinn into presence. Although one would not strictly call this state one of possession as described by Shurreef, the healer or magician does leave him- or herself vulnerable to the jinn's intrusion into his or her body or mind, or he or she may even encourage such an intrusion to facilitate communication and negotiations with the spirit in question (Bowen 1993; Shurreef 1973; Siegel 2003). In this picture, the self maintains some control over the scene of possession. There are instances in which the healer or magician may utilize a child to bring into presence or communicate with the spiritual being. However, the child is only seen as a conduit for the jinn and is guided through this process by the healer or magician. In other words, the subjectivity of the child is never brought into focus, although of course he or she must meet the objective criteria for being a medium and is known to be effective as one. Therefore, in the case of Maryam, she cannot be called possessed either in the sense that Shurreef describes or in the example provided by Crapanzano. In other words, the control over possession does not lie outside herself nor is she a trained healer or magician to control the scene of possession. Rather, she presences the jinn on her own and participates in, or comments on, their sociality as a matter of course. In the literature on jinn, a category of spirits called *qarin* or *qarina*, are the evil (or in some accounts neutral) double born along with a specific person, and it stays with that person for his or her entire life (see Zwemer 1939). I have also heard references to children having *hamzards* (familiaris) who do not appear innately evil, but as we know in this instance, the jinn were given to this family and therefore cannot be grouped under these above categories.

15. In the following story, we have reference to a sahaba jinn:

Some people left for Mecca. They lost their way and felt that they were about to die, so they put on their shrouds and lay down waiting for death to come. Then a jinni came from the trees and said: "I am one of the jinn who listened to the Prophet. I heard him saying: 'The believer is like a brother to the believer. He is his eye and his guide and never forsake him.' This is the

water and this is the way.” Then he guided them to the water and showed them the way. [El-Zein 1996:313]

16. Scholars of Pakistan, such as Christophe Jaffrelot (2002) and Mukhtar Ahmad Ali (2000), have argued persuasively if not a little reductively that such anti-Shi’i rhetoric provided the mohajirs in Punjab a new way to locate themselves within a political field largely monopolized by Shi’i landowning families.

17. The following story relates how the jinn come to give expression to the myriad ways tensions between Shi’i and Sunni fold into everyday life. Around the time I first learned about the jinn in Farooq Sahib’s life in 2001, I met him one day looking utterly frantic. He had lost the registration documents for his motorbike. As Shi’i–Sunni tensions were particularly intense in those days with police at checkpoints everywhere, stopping men on motorbikes, he was frightened that he would be thrown into jail if caught without them. He was even more frightened that those involved in sectarian activities might deliberately leave them at the scene of violence to throw the police off their tracks. He rushed to his friend the amil to see if the jinn could give him some idea of where to look. After an extensive search, he found them in a garbage can outside his house.

18. One of the anonymous reviewers of this article for *Cultural Anthropology* suggested that Sulayman, in addition to being the name of the Prophet long associated with the powers to communicate with the natural and supernatural world, may be a version of the name Salman associated with Salman Al-Farisi, a sahaba who is very popular with the Shi’is. This would make doubly interesting Farooq Sahib’s chance of having a sahaba jinn within his grasp. Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to follow this insight in my field research.

19. So was the other stereotype about Shi’is in circulation, which characterized them as being excessively superstitious, drawn toward the hidden (*batini*) dimensions of religiosity over those of the obligatory outward (*zahiri*) ones.

20. Although I have changed the names of all my subjects in this article, I have left the original name of the favored jinn. This is because I want to draw attention to the significance of the name Sulayman to the history of jinn. In the *Quran*, Sulayman is mentioned as the prophet and the king to whom God gave the power to discourse with animals and jinn, the powers of which Sulayman in turn harnessed to construct the Temple named after him. In *Surat Saba*, it is elaborated that the jinn continued to build the Temple after Sulayman died and only realized that he was dead when the staff on which his body had been leaning crumbled, having been eaten by termites, and the body fell over. Stetkevych writes that the mythopoetic registers of the *Quran* and of Arabic-Islamic culture have been neglected within the field of Islamic studies (1996:2). One could make a similar argument for the mythopoetic registers of everyday life within Muslim societies. Sulayman the jinn introduces perhaps a mythic moment in the Islamic tradition in which men, beasts, and jinn lived in close communication and cooperation in opposition to the present context, in which prophets, kings, and caliphs are invoked to express difference and dissonance among men. Furthermore, Veena Das has made the interesting argument that children take “frequent recourse to the mythic” in making sense of their often violently changing social reality (1989:288). This leads me to speculate further on the (unintended?) agency of Maryam in mediating King Sulayman’s claim on this violent present as a different modality of being with difference.

21. Jinn are creatures of smokeless fire, that is, they do not have a fixed form. However, if they show themselves in one particular form to humans, they remain in that form as long as they remain in sight. The only way they can change forms is if they can trick the humans into looking at a copy of them, which then frees them to take another form or to escape

into formlessness (El-Zein 1996). This suggests something of the coercive force humans may exert on jinn, fixing them to a form when they may wish to be another. In this instance, however, the jinn left the family after the men were forced into dancing the traditional *bhangra* dance at a cousin's wedding. The jinn condemned this as immoral behavior that they did not wish to condone through their continued existence as part of this family. See Rothenberg 1998 for another instance of how jinn provide a barometer of everyday morality.

Interestingly, Farooq Sahib said that he was very embarrassed to face his neighbors after the jinn left his family. Although he did not provide any explanation for his embarrassment one can guess that it looked bad on the family to be judged so by a jinn and to suffer a loss of power and status. However, he quickly got over the loss.

22. I elect to call Farooq Sahib's relation to the Prophet one of pious imitation rather than copying so as not to introduce modern anxieties over the loss of aura attending copies into a time-honored practice of embodying and transmitting the Islamic tradition. However, this is not to say that such modern anxieties do not come to haunt this practice. See Khan (2005) in which I discuss contemporary legal discussions in Pakistan over copyrighting aspects of the Islamic tradition and its attendant anxieties.

23. As Devji (1994) has shown, since the 19th century, women in South Asian Islam have been largely portrayed as constitutionally and customarily impious, a portrayal that has helped make them the natural subject of various reform efforts. However, not enough attention has gone to show how they are constituted as pious subjects and have aided in the making of Muslim piety. See Mahmood (2001) for a study of this in the Egyptian context.

24. Another family with whom I was close was closely allied with the Ahl-I Hadis path. Although they routinely disparaged reliance on amils, they were themselves very close to a self-professed Ahl-I Hadis amil who went by the name of Baba. Although Baba traveled widely, visiting people afflicted by illnesses and spells at their own homes, an Ahl-I Hadis mosque was known to be his favorite place of worship and there he often dispensed advice and medicine. During one of our few conversations in the mosque, Baba related a dream of his, which came to him in the mosque and which he took to be the authoritative statement on the tense Shi'i-Sunni relations prevailing in the country. He said that he had long wondered about the truth of Zuljinah, the famed white horse of Imam Hussain, who had stood by the wounded men during the Battle of Karbala and who had carried the news of their demise to the Prophet's family, his face marked by the martyrs' blood. Baba had often wondered whether such a horse was more myth than reality and was, therefore, yet another emotional crutch for the Shi'is. However, in his dream, he saw himself praying in the mosque when the sounds of a procession floated to his ears. On completing his prayers he looked out of the window to see Imam Hossain astride a beautiful white horse riding through a cheering crowd. He was moved to tears by the sight of the Imam on his horse, and from that day hence, he has been convinced that Sunnis do great wrong to mock Shi'i beliefs and that each has to seek his own way to God. Coming as this did from a man who was very careful to keep his reputation free of any association with the Shi'is (his continued use of a strict Ahl-I Hadis mosque being a testimony to this) hints at the availability of dreaming as a mode of living religious differences. See von Grunebaum and Caillos 1966 and Ewing 1990 for the particular significance given to dreaming as a fraction of revelation (*wahy*) within the Islamic tradition.

25. This is a reference to the majority Twelver Shi'i belief that the twelfth of their twelve divinely inspired leaders had gone into concealment and was expected to return as the Mahdi (the Awaited or Expected One) to signal the Day of Judgment. Although Sunni Muslims also believe in the return of the Mahdi, they do not subscribe to the idea of his previous appearance and subsequent concealment (see Cole 1988).

26. Elsewhere (Khan 2001), I discuss a book of religious instruction by the well-known contemporary Deobandi *mufti* (legal scholar) Dr. Mufti Abdul Wahid (2000) of Jammiya Madania, Lahore, in which the topics are easily laid out to enable individual perusal of the contents of the book. However, the mufti warns against self-education despite his having written a book lending itself to such. Instead he advises that the interested buyer should seek out a scholar for guidance. Authoritative books require authoritative transmitters to ensure that the student comes to be a Muslim correctly. Authorized textual instructions in themselves do not ensure their correct transmission.

27. See Das 1970 for a detailed account of Indian Punjabi kinship. Note that this family was a mixed mohajir-Punjabi family.

28. South Asian Sunnis of the Deobandi and Barelwi paths do *taqlid* (imitation) of *fiqh-e Hanafiya*, one of the four major schools of Islamic jurisprudence extant. However the Ahl-I Hadis only support the *Quran* and the *ahadis* as legitimate textual sources for guidance and advocate an esoteric blend of all four schools in the making of legal opinions, although they too tend to largely rely on *fiqh-e Hanafiya*. See Schacht 1964, or Coulson 1969 for an introduction to the four fields of Islamic jurisprudence in the modern world; see Fyzee 1974, Metcalf 1982, Sanyal 1996 and Brown 1996 for the specificities of conflicts over *fiqh-e Hanafiya* among Sunnis in South Asia.

29. More specifically, this is the ghost of a woman who has died during childbirth, a very inauspicious and very likely vengeful figure.

30. Let me draw the example of Baba, the Ahl-I Hadis *amil* with whom I had a brief acquaintanceship. He related how he had to track down magicians of note to get their permission (*ijaza*) to use Quranic verses for talismanic purposes. Some of the verses were associated with jinni power and he had to undertake *cilla* (40 days of retreat to undertake austerities) to conquer jinni forces and bring them under his possession. He had to carry out many more prayers than the five obligatory ones to continue to maintain his powers over both verses and jinn, which took up most of his days. Despite all this work to possess jinn, he was much more comfortable utilizing *muakkals* (a minor form of jinn) to carry out his wishes because he feared jinn for their inherent capacity for evil.

31. These perspectives resonate with Das who writes in another context, “In the Indian case . . . the child is seen as already being a full person in domains to which the mother does not have access” (1989:268). And further, “the world of children and the world of adults meet on many points. They have a kind of floating relationship which cannot be described through analogy or polarity alone. Children’s play reproduces the world of adults in some contexts and transforms it in others” (1989:279).

32. Farooq Sahib’s trust in his daughter is one that he does not readily articulate in relation to his wife Rahima, who claims responsibility for Farooq Sahib’s conversion to the Deobandi path; nor is it one that he ever explicitly articulates in relation to his son Adeeb who later deepens Farooq Sahib’s association with the path through his own relations with the Tablighi Jamaat, the missionary arm of the Deobandis. In so doing, is Farooq Sahib thereby giving expression to a permissible, possibly gendered, love for his daughter? Certainly there is something specific about that father–daughter relation within South Asia. Das writes how “fathers willed their daughters to die for family honor rather than live with bodies that had been violated by other men” (1997:77) in the aftermath of the violence of Partition. Yet, in the story by Sadat Hasan Manto that Das analyzes, a father shouts in joy “my daughter is alive” when he recovers her violated and possibly dead body. Here then the specificity of this gendered love, of a father’s love for his daughter, gets a unique articulation: “To be masculine when death was all around was to be able to hand death to your violated daughter without flinching. . . . In the background of such stories, a single sentence of joy uttered by old Sarajjudin transforms the meaning of being a father” (Das 1997:77).

33. For Cavell (1988) this trancelike quality of everyday life and its ability to withdraw from us is a standing threat. However this perspective does not necessarily line up with the Islamic injunction that one should treat this world as a temporary way station on the path to God. One should strike a balance between participation in the world to enable life and keeping a discrete distance from this world so that we do not become attached to it. Islam condemns asceticism, that is, excessive withdrawal from the world, as strongly as it does excessive attachment to it. Consequently, striking this balance is most difficult because it effectively entails keeping up the illusory nature of everyday life while also participating in it. Farooq Sahib's turning toward Maryam for guidance was, for him perhaps, an attempt toward striking this balance. Taking another place to be more real than this one makes everyday life illusory. Yet by making the words from another place come to bear on his behavior, he also attempts to ensure his continued participation within everyday life.

34. See Lambek 1980 for an account of how spirits who possess women strike up friendships and relationships with their spouses, which endure even after the spirit leaves the woman's mind and body and even in instances in which the spouses leave the possessed women.

35. If we think of my descriptions of the Shi'i-Sunni conflict and the differences within Sunni Islam as being at the level of the molar, and what happens to Farooq Sahib as being at the level of the molecular, then what Maryam, with her encounter with Sulayman the jinn, brings to the picture is a possible line of flight into the plane of immanence. See Deleuze and Parnet 2002.

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ABSTRACT *Sectarianism in Pakistan, specifically the Shi'i–Sunni conflict, already analytically challenging, has taken on further complexity of late. Within this landscape of ambiguity, I argue that everyday life is a necessary frame for understanding the reach and scope of sectarianism in Pakistan. This article shows how the dynamic of Shi'i–Sunni conflict becomes reprised within divides among Sunnis as a standing archive of stereotypes and slights. At the same time, we capture something of the trancelike quality of everyday life in the tensions embedded within familial relations that animate religious differences in unanticipated ways. Finally, through a focus on the efforts of a single pious self to speak the normative within this landscape, I show how these differences come to be internal to being. [sectarianism, Pakistan, everyday life, family, self]*