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*Jinnealogy* offers an alternative archive and modality of religion in the post-colonial city. For Anand Vivek Taneja, the presence of invisible Jinn spirits among the ruins of pre-colonial empire in contemporary Delhi points to the ideology and limits of post-colonial nation-state sovereignty in India, while offering an alternative *ethical inheritance* of Islam in a rapidly changing urban landscape. Each chapter presents a nuanced and poetic insight of Islam that crosses nation-state borders, Hindu Nationalist politics, time, and religious identity. Straddling fine-grained ethnography of Jinn saint shrines in Delhi with historical insights gleaned from state archives, the academic history of religion, and literary sources the book offers a convincing view of the way in which the history of Islam and its ecological entanglements are transformed and traced in contemporary Delhi. Jinn saints challenge the *archival amnesia* of the post-colonial state that seeks to efface Muslim presence in India, as well as the politics of Muslim reform that aims to purify Islam of supposed cultural accretions in favour of a return to the practices of the original community of first Muslims (*salaf*).

Through an introduction and seven chapters, readers are introduced to the fascinating labyrinthine world of Jinn saint shrines, state archives, and urban transformations in Delhi. The ruins of Firoz Shah Kotla, a medieval fort, is the location around which the ethnography unfolds. The introduction establishes the central argument of the book, that the popular veneration of Jinns as saints in contemporary Delhi challenges statist conceptions of religion, time, and order. Jinns travel large distances in an instant, arrive unannounced in dreams, and refuse to be buried by bureaucracy, legal battles, or theological debates. Taneja sees in Jinn veneration “a parallel Islamic discourse” (9) accessible to both Muslim and non-Muslim that forms an integral component of the *ethical inheritance* of North India. He draws on Shahab Ahmed’s notion of the exploratory authority of Sufi Islam that challenges the legalistic textual approach of the ulama. Exploratory authority allows Taneja to trace a discursive tradition of imagination and practice that connects across time and place through literature, poetry, and political practice.
Chapter 1 explores the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) desire to efface Muslim presence from the city. This means making sure that Muslim monuments and places of worship remain *dead* as sites of heritage and conservation, rather than *alive* as places of worship or communal life. Jinn veneration in post-Emergency Delhi refuses to accept the status quo, recalling a different register of sovereignty and justice. A medieval court now alive with Jinn saints is the location for a subaltern mode of inhabiting the post-colonial city. Chapter 2 turns to dreams and visions, repeated as tropes in Bollywood film and the experiences of visitors to Firoz Shah Kotla. Through Jinn as an *ethical inheritance*, the Islamic is very much alive in North India. In Chapter 3, the ethics of *gharib nawazi* (hospitality to strangers) is embodied though the practice of nameless sociality at Firoz Shah Kotla. The “formation of alternative communities, communities of friendship that are explicitly nonhierarchical and nondenominational” (105) challenges the dominant mode of caste-based hierarchy and communal life in North India. In Chapter 4, dominant patriarchal readings of Islam are juxtaposed with articulations of feminine desire and sexuality by the majority women congregants at the shrine. In Chapter 5, Taneja appeals to a Sufi mode of translation that finds equivalence between languages through the recognition that all language is ultimately insufficient. Through translation and transcendence, Indic and Persianate worlds are made to coexist in seamless contradiction incomprehensible to modern observers. For Taneja, this mode of pre-modern Sufi translation is embodied at Firoz Shah Kotla and other Jinn saint shrines in the city.

In Chapter 6, Taneja considers how an existing sacred geography of the city that ties religion to plants, animals, and water has been destroyed and diverted by the developmental state. The promise of piped water drastically altered the ecology of religion and communal life in the city which, along with rapid urbanisation and pollution, renders the landscape unrecognisable. Here, he finds traces of past practice mysteriously retained in clothes ritually hung to dry on a yellow Oleander tree in Bhuli Bhatiyari Park and in the veneration of animals as saints at Firoz Shah Kotla. For Taneja, these are moments through which to decentre anthropocentrism and to think ourselves “as animals once again in kinship with our fellow creatures, with the snakes and bats that make space for us to walk among them” (225). In Chapter 7, the liveliness of Islam at the Jinn saint shrines is compared to the desire of heritage experts and elite residents that historic monuments and places of worship are maintained as colourless ruins, dead to the city, available only as places of aesthetic appreciation of a historic past. This contrasts with the efforts of Muslim organisations to revive the colour of old monuments and to reinstate them as places of worship.

Taken together, the book is a beautiful rendition of the complex entanglements of state, development, and religion in contemporary Delhi. Its nostalgia for a lost past is tempered by a forward-looking promise of a different future to come, one
which draws on the Islamic past in thinking about a universal future. This is ultimately the book’s greatest strength: its refusal to be contained by boundaries of religion, caste, nation as well as the line between academic scholarship and the lives of the people we study.

Taneja makes a significant contribution to the anthropology of Islam in arguing that the discursive tradition emphasised by Talal Asad is excessively focused on coherence and textuality. He prefers Shahab Ahmed who draws attention to the literary and exploratory dimension of Sufi Islam over the prescriptive and textual ulama. He thus tells a story of a subaltern Islam that defies patriarchal gender roles and social and political identity. The value of this approach is the refusal to draw a rigid boundary or overdetermined notion of Islam as piety, remaining open to Islam alive to the world of plants, animals, and Jinn. However, the nostalgic revival of popular Islam requires caution. For Taneja, the Deobandi school, one of the most popular nineteenth-century movements of reform Islam in South Asia, is emblematic of reformist Islam, which he associates with a thoroughly modern disenchanted world. It is important to recognise that, despite theological debate, the Deobandi approach to saints and Jinn is not the same as disenchantment as conceptualised by scholars of secularism and European modernity. Deobandis do not contest the existence of Jinn in the world, but regulate the proper relationship between humans and Jinn. The dichotomy Taneja argues for between textual versus non-textual Islam or between Sufi and ulama Islam is problematic. It risks presenting Deobandi reform Islam as devoid of ethics and a matter of rule following, as opposed to Sufi or popular Islam, which for Taneja is “an Islam of plenitude, of enormous potentialities for ethical life” (8). The dichotomy doesn’t help to explain why a young girl asks Lat Wale Baba (the saint of the pillar at Firoz Shah Kotla) that her father is transformed from an alcoholic into a namazi (someone who prays regularly) (19), nor how a Deobandi Mufti saw it fit to write a book about Jinn that includes them as benevolent transmitters of prophetic tradition (43). The scholarly demarcation between ulama and Sufis or between text-based norms and popular practice does not denote parallel worlds. These are scenes of encounter, debate, and contestation replete with equivalence and difference.

This criticism aside, the book is a brilliant, evocative, and gripping account of Jinnealogy: the entanglements and traces of Jinn as a form of memory and practice that challenges the Hindu nation-state and dominant ideas of religion and social identity. The chapters capture attention, drawing the reader through historical details, ethnographic encounters, popular debates, and critical theory. It is an emblematic text for the Anthropology of Islam and South Asia, challenging the former to recognise the complexity of Islam, while contributing much needed insight on the persistence of Islam in North India as an ethical inheritance through which to imagine a new future beyond the increasingly violent present.