I mention this only with a view of showing what this fine Country is capable of under proper Management.

[From *The Making of British India, 1756–1858*, ed. Ramsay Muir (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1923), 92–93.]

SHAH ABD UL-AZIZ: ISLAM IN DANGER

As noted in volume 1, the status of non-Muslims had been a matter of controversy during periods when Turks and other Muslim rulers were establishing their authority in India. As a practical necessity, the rulers had tacitly accepted that Indians of other religions should be treated as *zimmīs*, that is, as tolerated and protected groups, the way Christians and Jews had been treated in the early Muslim empires. Many religious leaders argued, however, that rulers had a duty to convert non-Muslims, by force if necessary.

The political situation changed radically when the East India Company gained control, in the name of Great Britain, of vast areas of the Mughal Empire, including Bengal, the heartland of the Gangetic plain, and the historical capital of Delhi. At stake now was the relationship of Muslims to the new British rulers, who were frequently identified in religious terms as Christians, a name that recalled old antagonisms. Some religious leaders thought that Muslims could accommodate themselves to the British in matters of law, whereas others argued that they should not. This issue of obeying Western, or "Christian," laws arose because of the close correspondence of law, both civil and criminal, with religious belief in Islam.

Shah Abd ul-Aziz (1746–1824) was one of the most influential Muslim scholars and teachers of his time in North India. The eldest son of Shah Wali Allah, the famous theologian, whose ideas on the nature of the relationship between Islam and the political state had a profound effect on later Islamic movements in India and Pakistan, Shah Abd ul-Aziz inherited the mantle of his father's authority as a teacher and interpreter of Islamic law and faith. Father and son were both aware of what the weakening of Mughal power meant to Islam in India in the eighteenth century, and like many of their Muslim contemporaries they wondered whether a land that had originally been Dār ul-Islām, a land of (Islamic) peace, would become Dār ul-harb, a (non-Islamic) land of war, if it was conquered by non-Muslims.

Most jurists said that the criterion for action was the guarantee of freedom of religion: if Muslims could continue to practice their religion unhindered, then they were duty bound neither to migrate nor to wage war against their non-Muslim rulers. But the establishment of British power in Delhi in 1803 convinced Shah Abd ul-Aziz that British assurances of religious freedom were false and that the Islamic community was in grave danger; he issued a famous fatwa, or an authoritative interpretation of Islamic teaching for his followers, that has been cited, rightly or wrongly (Aziz got along well with the British on a personal basis, and was opposed to militant jihad), as a call to oppose the British. Some of his followers then and later believed that since Muslim law had been replaced by British law, India was no longer Dār ul-Islām, but

Dār ul-harb. If this was so, it was incumbent upon all believing Muslims to become *mujāhidīn*, fighters in a just war, against the infidel British. This is not the plain reading of the text, but, it was argued, it was the logic of the teaching. The fatwa is regarded as the first determined ideological expression of a conservative or fundamentalist Muslim attitude towards British rule, and was a factor in the serious uprising against the British in 1857–1858.

In this city [Delhi] the [Muslim religious leaders] wield no authority, while the decrees of the Christian leaders are obeyed. Promulgators of the commands of *kufr* [disbelief] means that in the administration of justice and matters of law and order, in the domain of trade, finance and collection of revenues, in the punishment of thieves and robbers, in the settlement of disputes—everywhere the *kuffār* [infidels] are in power. Yes, there are certain Islamic rituals with which they do not interfere . . . [such as Friday prayers, festivals, cow slaughter]; but the very root of these rituals is of no value to them. They demolish mosques without the least hesitation, and no Muslim or any *Zimmī* can enter into the city or its suburbs but with their permission. It is in their own interests if they do not object to the travellers and traders to visit the city. On the other hand, distinguished persons like Shujāul-Mulk and Wilāyatī Begum cannot dare visit the city without their permission. From here [Delhi] to Calcutta the Christians are in complete control. There is no doubt that in principalities like Hyderabad, Rampur, Lucknow, etc., they have left the administration in the hands of the local authorities; but it is because they have accepted their lordship and have submitted to their authority.

[Shāh Abd ul-Azīz, Fatāwā-ī-Azīziya, trans. T. A. Nizami, *Muslim Political Thought and Activity in India* (Aligarh: T. M. Publications, 1969), 23, slight revisions.]

HARSUKH RAI'S EPITAPH FOR THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: RECOGNITION OF THE WINNERS AND LOSERS

At the end of the century Harsukh Rai, descendant of a Hindu family that had served the Mughals for generations, watched the triumph of British arms over Indian rulers, and prepared, as he wrote his account, *Majma'u-l Akhbār*, to adjust to the new reality.

The Ranjīt Singh here is a local chieftain, not the famous Sikh ruler of the Punjab.

When, in the year 1218 A.H. (1803 A.D.), the British overcame the Mahrattas, and took possession of their territories, Ranjīt Singh was prudent enough to acknowledge ostensibly the supremacy of the British; but in the following year, on