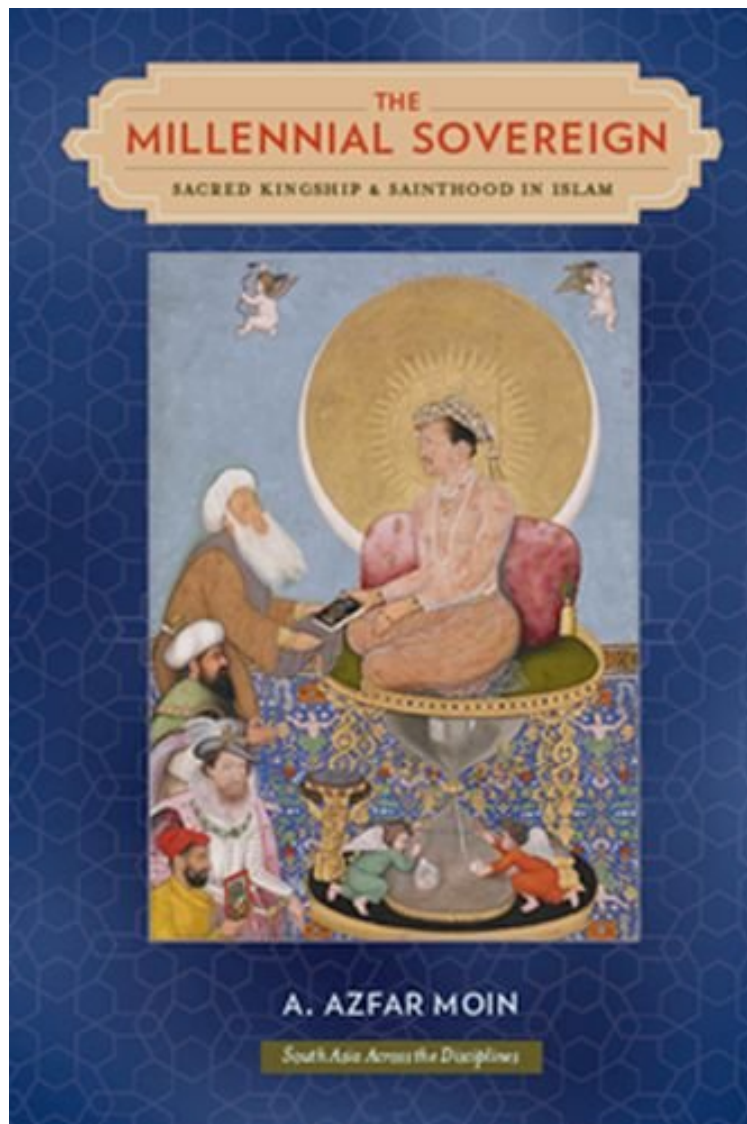


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The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam (South Asia Across the Disciplines)

A. Azfar Moin

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A. Azfar Moin : The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam (South Asia Across the Disciplines) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam (South Asia Across the Disciplines):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Deeply insightful book on the Mughal EmpireBy apThis book is not

meant to be for casual reading, but it is definitely readable. Those who live in the regions today that are covered by this work (Pakistan/Northern India/Afghanistan/Iran) should spend the time to read it. Its groundbreaking in how it describes the role of Islam in the Indian subcontinent Persia. It really helps the reader rethink how we should look at the Mughal and Safavid Empire. Millennialism, as a concept, is key to understanding history. It's a recurring theme in Christianity, Zoroastrianism and even the Nazi Reich. With this book, the author does a great job on showing a similar influence on Mughal history and Islam. Groundbreaking. As a Pakistani, it helps give me gain several insights into how our society has embraced Islam and why certain idiosyncrasies exist. The Abdullah Shah Ghazi Mausoleum in Karachi is a great living example of the author's thesis. If nothing else, the key discovery about Allahu Akbar having a secondary meaning (see page 144) is worth the read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By philbertktough to follow 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very Interesting By R. Albin A very interesting analysis of the nature of kingship in the Mughal Empire with considerable discussion and analysis of the rival Safavid Empire. Moin breaks away from traditional historiography to argue that the Mughal Emperors supported their legitimacy by drawing on a variety of religious traditions to present themselves as Millennial redeeming figures. These supporting traditions include Islamic Sufi traditions, the heritage of Central Asian rulership, and pre-Islamic Persian millennialism. Interpreting a variety of sources in novel ways, and using insights from the anthropology of religion, Moin provides very convincing analyses of how these different traditions were appropriated by the Mughals and how they interacted in creative ways. Moin's convincing interpretation breaks away from the traditional historiography of the Mughals and Safavids establishing Islamic states (Sunni and Shi'a, respectively) by conquest and instead present a much more complex picture of recent conquerors embedded in a complex religious environment and using a variety of intellectual traditions and popular beliefs to establish their rule. Interesting dimensions, with strong analogies to contemporary Europe, include the importance of astrological and alchemical thought.

At the end of the sixteenth century and the turn of the first Islamic millennium, the powerful Mughal emperor Akbar declared himself the most sacred being on earth. The holiest of all saints and above the distinctions of religion, he styled himself as the messiah reborn. Yet the Mughal emperor was not alone in doing so. In this field-changing study, A. Azfar Moin explores why Muslim sovereigns in this period began to imitate the exalted nature of Sufi saints. Uncovering a startling yet widespread phenomenon, he shows how the charismatic pull of sainthood (wilayat) rather than the draw of religious law (sharia) or holy war (jihad) inspired a new style of sovereignty in Islam. A work of history richly informed by the anthropology of religion and art, *The Millennial Sovereign* traces how royal dynastic cults and shrine-centered Sufism came together in the imperial cultures of Timurid Central Asia, Safavid Iran, and Mughal India. By juxtaposing imperial chronicles, paintings, and architecture with theories of sainthood, apocalyptic treatises, and manuals on astrology and magic, Moin uncovers a pattern of Islamic politics shaped by Sufi and millennial motifs. He shows how alchemical symbols and astrological rituals enveloped the body of the monarch, casting him as both spiritual guide and material lord. Ultimately, Moin offers a striking new perspective on the history of Islam and the religious and political developments linking South Asia and Iran in early-modern times.

This is a brilliant book. It is the most innovative contribution to our understanding of Mughal history in my time. As a work of the first importance, and a step change in our knowledge of sixteenth-century India, it must be read by anyone interested in the fields of Islamic kingship, millenarianism, and astrology in the Muslim world and the early-modern world in general. (Francis Robinson, Royal Holloway, University of London) Moin deserves the highest praise for venturing into this contested terrain and writing a most interesting book about it. (Andre Wink American Historical) he has thrown an entirely new light on how early monarchs of India's greatest dynastic house asserted their claims to royal authority. His book should be read not just by historians of South Asia but equally by those of Central Asia and Iran, as well as by specialists in Islamic studies. (Richard M. Eaton Journal of Interdisciplinary History) In this unusually well written and elegantly carpentered book he has a rare gift for building argument through narrative Moin has delivered a major contribution to both Islamic history and the scholarship of sacred kingship. (Alan Strathern History and Theory) Moin outlines a formidable challenge to the conventional narratives of Mughal and, to a lesser extent, Safavid history that is likely to surprise even specialists... A valuable contribution to the field that ought to compel scholars to reevaluate key assumptions regarding kingship and sainthood in Mughal India. (International Journal of Middle East Studies) Too seldom does a plodding dissertation become transformed into an elegant monograph. This 2010 dissertation is the rare, and welcome, exception The author has conducted deep archival research with an accent on visual history and astrology *The Millennial Sovereign* does deliver on its promise. (Journal of Islamic Studies) A delightful study that seeks to provide early modern Islamic historical scholarship with a new model to conceive of politics in the pre-modern era... Rich (of Middle East Studies) A fine volume that will enrich the libraries of both scholars of Islam and scholars of early modern Europe. (The Sixteenth Century Journal) About the Author A. Azfar Moin is assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Texas at Austin.