

A Carmelite Friar's View of Shah Abbas I



22 ▼ *Father Paul Simon, REPORT TO POPE PAUL V*

When Shah Abbas I ascended the Safavid throne in 1587 after the forced abdication of his father, he inherited an empire on the brink of disintegration. He faced a rebellion from Turkoman tribal leaders and invasions by the Ottomans from the west and the Uzbeks from the east. Within fifteen years he crushed the rebels and routed the Uzbeks and Ottomans. Subsequently, Abbas defeated the Mughals in 1621, taking Kandahar, seized the Persian Gulf island of Bahrain in 1622, and in the same year with English help expelled the Portuguese from their trading post at Ormuz. In addition to his military exploits, Abbas encouraged foreign and domestic trade, lent his support to manufacturing enterprises, and presided over a glorious era in Persian culture.

Part of Abbas's strategy to make Persia strong and prosperous was the cultivation of useful contacts with foreigners, especially Europeans. Two English brothers, Anthony and Robert Sherley, helped the shah enlarge and modernize his army and used their contacts to increase Persian trade with the English and Dutch. Abbas also sought alliances with European states against his enemy, the Ottomans. To that end he sent two embassies to Europe in 1599 and 1608 and tolerated the activities of Catholic missionaries, who were encouraged to think he might convert.

Such was the background for the negotiations between the envoys of Abbas I and Pope Clement VIII in 1600 that led to the dispatch of three Carmelite friars to Isfahan in 1604 to explore opportunities for missionary work. After an arduous journey through Russia and Poland, the three friars reached Isfahan in 1605 and remained in Persia six months. One of three, Father Paul Simon of Jesus Mary (1576–1643), a Genoese who became a Carmelite in 1595, traveled extensively during his visit. After a hair-raising return journey on foot through Ottoman territory, Father Simon presented a detailed report on Persia to the new pope, Paul V. Paul then dispatched Father Simon to Spain to discuss with King Philip III the complaints of Abbas I concerning the activities of Portuguese merchants in Ormuz, an important port city in the shah's territory, which the Portuguese (now subjects of the King of Spain) had controlled since 1507. Until his death in 1643 he held a number of administrative posts within his order. His report to Paul V remained in the Vatican archives until it was found and translated into English by a historian of the Carmelites.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What sort of impression does Abbas attempt to make on his subjects? What strategies does he use to make this impression?
2. What methods has Abbas used to suppress the powerful descendants of the Kizilbash who helped Ismail I (r. 1501–1524) establish the Safavid state (referred to by Father Simon as “the old nobles of Persia”)?

3. What impresses Father Simon about Abbas's army? How do his comments and observations resemble Busbecq's characterization of Suleiman's troops (source 21)?
4. On the basis of Father Simon's account, what conclusions can be drawn about Abbas's religious views?
5. What factors seem to have shaped Abbas's policies toward the European Christians?
6. Despite the impressive strength of Persia under Abbas, the Persian state quickly declined after his death. What underlying weaknesses do you see in the Persian state during Abbas's rule?

PERSONALITY AND POLICIES

The king . . . is sturdy and healthy, accustomed to much exercise and toil: many times he goes about on foot, and recently he had been forty days on pilgrimage, which he made on foot the whole time. He has extraordinary strength, and with his scimitar¹ can cut a man in two and a sheep with its wool on at a single blow — and the Persian sheep are of large size. . . . In his food he is frugal, as also in his dress, and this to set an example to his subjects; and so in public he eats little else than rice, and that cooked in water only. His usual dress is of linen, and very plain: similarly the nobles and others in his realm follow suit, whereas formerly they used to go out dressed in brocade with jewels and other fopperies: and if he sees anyone who is overdressed, he takes him to task, especially if it be a soldier. But in private he eats what he likes.

He is sagacious in mind, likes fame and to be esteemed: he is courteous in dealing with everyone and at the same time very serious. For he will go through the public streets, eat from what they are selling there and other things, speak at ease freely with the lower classes, cause his subjects to remain sitting while he himself is standing, or will sit down beside this man and that. He says that is how to be a king, and that the king of Spain and other Christians do not get any pleasure out of ruling, because they are

obliged to comport themselves with so much pomp and majesty. . . .

He is very strict in executing justice and pays no regard to his own favorites in this respect; but rather is the stricter with them in order to serve an example for others. So he has no private friends, nor anyone who has influence with him. . . . While we were at Court, he caused the bellies of two of his favorites to be ripped open, because they behaved improperly to an ordinary woman. . . .

He is very speedy in dispatching business: when he gives audience, which he does at the gate of his palace, . . . he finishes off all the cases that are brought to him. The parties stand present before him, the officers of justice and his own council, with whom he consults when it pleases him. The sentence which he gives is final and is immediately executed. If the guilty party deserves death, they kill him at once: to this end, when he gives audience, twelve men and twelve dogs who devour men alive, are kept ready: he keeps them in order to use the greater severity. Apart from the officials, once the sentence is given, it is not permitted to anyone to make any reply: for the person is at once driven off with blows of the sticks of some 30 to 40 royal guards, who stand ready to do this. When he wants to stop giving audience, he causes it to be proclaimed that no one, on pain of death, may bring him petitions, and, when he wants to go

¹A curved steel saber.

out of doors unaccompanied, that no one should follow him. . . .

There are four councilors of the king — Allah Viridi Khan, his general; 'Ata Baig his vizier; the Qurchi Bashi; and one who was his "governor" and preceptor. The three last are always with the Shah, and when he gives audience are standing next to him. He has to be obeyed absolutely: anyone failing in the slightest will pay for it with his head. And so he has had most of the old nobles of Persia killed off and put in their stead low-bred persons whom he has aggrandized. In the whole of Persia there are only two of the old-time governors. . . . Because of the great obedience they pay him, when he wills to have one of the nobles killed, he dispatches one of his men to fetch the noble's head: the man goes off to the grandee, and says to him: "The Shah wants your head." The noble replies: "Very well," and lets himself be decapitated — otherwise he would lose it and, with it, all his family would become extinct. But, when they [the nobles] allow themselves to be decapitated, he aggrandizes the children.

The Shah of Persia is very rich, because, besides having the treasure of his predecessors, he has seized those of the princes of Lar and of Gilan,² who were powerful and rich princes, and others. He has many sources of income and is master over the property of his subjects. . . .

MILITARY STRENGTH

He is very valiant and has a great liking for warfare and weapons of war, which he has constantly in his hands: we have been eye-witnesses of this because, whenever we were with him, he was adjusting scimitars, testing arquebuses,³ etc.: and to make him a present that will give him pleasure is to give him some good pieces of arms. This is the great experience which he has obtained of warfare over so many years, that he

makes it in person and from the first it has made him a fine soldier and very skilled, and his men so dexterous that they are little behind our men in Europe. He has introduced into his militia the use of and esteem for arquebuses and muskets, in which they are very practiced. Therefore it is that his realm has been so much extended on all sides. . . .

His militia is divided into three kinds of troops: one of the Georgians,⁴ who will be about 25,000 and are mounted; . . . this is the old-time militia of the kings of Persia for the guarding of their persons. The present king has introduced the second force, which is made up of slaves of various races, many of them Christian renegades; their number will be as many again, and they are more esteemed than the first cited, both because they are servants of the king, and he assigns posts to them and promotes them. . . . The third body consists of soldiers whom the great governors of Persia are obliged to maintain and pay the whole year; they will be about 50,000. . . . When they [the governors] accomplish something signal in war, he gives them a governorship which produces greater revenue and sometimes the territory they capture is left to them. All the above-mentioned soldiers, who will total some 100,000, receive pay for the whole year. Then, according to the campaign and enterprise the king wishes to undertake, he enlists others, and, when it is necessary to make a great effort, he has it proclaimed throughout his country that whosoever is his well-wisher should follow him. Then everyone takes up arms.

THE SHAH'S FAMILY

The Shah has three sons: the eldest aged 22 years; . . . His mother was a Christian, and he is friendly toward Christians and not so quick-tempered as his father. The second son, 12 years old, has a temperament similar to that of his father. The

⁴A Christian people inhabiting a region between the Caspian and Black seas.

²Lar was a Persian province on the Persian Gulf; Gilan was a province in northwest Persia.

³A portable matchlock gun invented in the fifteenth cen-

third is aged 5 or 6. He has several daughters. His predecessors were wont to kill off their daughters because there were no neighboring monarchs of equal rank to whom to marry them, and they did not like giving them in marriage to nobles of the country, for fear of the latter rebelling. In order to eliminate such cruel procedure this present Shah marries them to men of lowly position, as he did when we were there, giving one daughter to a camp commandant, the other to a captain. The eldest son born to the Shah inherits the throne even though he be by a slave woman.

HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWS

Regarding the religion of the king I think that no one knows what he believes: he does not observe the Muslim law in many things, nor is he a Christian. Six or seven years ago he displayed many signs of not being averse to our Faith. . . .

It is true that when the Augustinian Fathers⁵ went to Persia the king showed himself extraordinarily affectionate with them, and gave many signs of being well disposed toward the Christian Faith and of wanting to embrace it. . . . In notifying the king the objects of their mission, the Augustinian Fathers told him that they came to show him the True Faith, and to baptize him. He answered that he would discuss that at more length when he had the opportunity. Almost always he kept them near him. . . . He gave them 2,000 scudi⁶ yearly for their subsistence, and entertained them several times at banquets, always making them sit near him, and he took one of them into the harem of his women, which was an exceptional mark of favor, since he did not even allow his own son to enter it; he made some of them [the women] dance. When the Fathers proposed to him [that he should adopt] our Faith, he made show to agree to everything. He gave them, sealed with his small seal, and also by the

prince his son and three of his councilors who alone were present at this, a writing in which he promised to construct a church with bells in every town he should capture from the Turks, to allow the Gospel to be preached, if the King of Spain kept to that which he promised him by the same Fathers, i.e. to take up arms against the Turks, and to send him artillery and engineers, which up till now has not been fulfilled. As evidence that he still had the mind to fulfil what he was promising, he said that on the following day he would go to their church — as in fact he did. . . . [We were] told that the king wanted to make a great bell and a church for the Fathers in Isfahan, asked the Fathers for relics and a piece of the wood of the Cross, and that they gave it to him. . . .

▷ By the time Father Simon arrived in Persia in 1607, Abbas's views of European Christians, especially the Portuguese Augustinians, had changed. As Father Simon states, this change was caused by two things: the efforts of the Augustinians to turn the shah's newly conquered Armenian Christian subjects into Roman Catholics and the failure of the King of Spain, who at this point also ruled Portugal, to attack the Ottoman Empire.

In Tabriz it was told the king that the Augustinian Fathers had put up a bell in their church in Isfahan and that for this reason there were many people sick in that town. The Shah bit his finger, muttering two or three times: "Church with a bell! church with a bell!"; and gave orders that they should immediately take it down, as they did. In many other actions he demonstrated the small goodwill he had for Christians; and this increased to such an extent that, when we arrived in the city of Isfahan, he had given instructions for publication of an edict to the effect that all 'Frankish'⁷ Christians and

⁵Members of the Augustinian religious order, which traces its spiritual lineage to St. Augustine (354–430). The Augustinians in question were Portuguese.

⁶A gold or silver coin minted in Italy.

the Augustinian Fathers should quit his realm. . . .

. . . The cause of so great a change . . . God alone knows; the Augustinian Fathers say that in the beginning the king was merely pretending and that those demonstrations of affection and goodwill did not come from his heart. Other people attribute it to the many causes for annoyance the officials of his Catholic Majesty in Ormuz⁸ have given him; to the Christian princes, His Holiness, the Emperor, the king of Spain not having kept the word they had given to various ambassadors that they would make war on the Turks, when they exhorted him himself to do the same, as he in fact has done; to many of the Franks, who had gone to his country, having committed a great many follies; and, more recently still, to the Emperor having agreed to a treaty⁹ of peace between himself and the Turks, without giving him notice. . . . Certain it is that the mullahs¹⁰ — this the name they give in their tongue to the learned men of their belief — went to the Shah, and told him to reflect on what he was doing — that he knew very well that the [Ottoman] Sultan was the head of the Muslim belief; if he should bring about the destruction of the latter in this warfare, the Christians would do the same to him, and to all of their belief. For they observed what poor sort of friends they were, when even their kings did not keep their word to him, while, the Franks who came to his country, what scant respect they paid him. It would be better to make peace with the Turkish Sul-

tan, and then both of them together to attack the Christians. . . .

[All this left Father Simon at a loss about Abbas's true religious convictions.] . . . In his seraglio he has many Christian Armenian, Georgian, and Circassian woman.¹¹ I think that he lets them live as they wish, because when I enquired what the Shah did with so many holy pictures that were presented to him as gifts and some relics of the Saints, for which he asked, the answer was that he used to give them to the women in his seraglio. Besides that he is well informed regarding the mysteries of our holy Faith and discourses on the mystery of the most holy Trinity: he knows many examples and allusions which the Saints give in order to prove it, and discourses about the other mysteries . . . if he does not discourse about the women in his seraglio or about some demon or other. On account of the many disappointments which he asserts the Christians have caused him all this fervor has cooled. With all that he does not detest them, for he converses and eats with them, he suffers us to say frankly what we believe about our Faith and his own: sometimes he asks us about this. To us he has given a house: he knows that we say Mass publicly, he allows whoever may wish among the Persians to come to it, and we can teach them freely regarding our holy Faith, whenever they make inquiries about it. . . . Till now none of them has been converted: I think they are waiting for one of the nobles or of their mullahs to break the ice. . . .

⁷"Frankish" was a term for European.

⁸Ormuz, a port city on the Persian Gulf, had been taken by the Portuguese in 1507; between 1580 and 1640 Portugal was ruled by the king of Spain.

⁹The reference is to the Treaty of Sitvatorok, signed on November 11, 1606.

¹⁰A Muslim religious leader trained in law and doctrine.

¹¹Like the Georgians, the Circassians were a Christian people living between the Caspian and Black seas.

A Self-Portrait of Jahangir



23 ▼ Jahangir, MEMOIRS

Jahangir, Mughal emperor from 1605 to 1627, modestly increased the size of the empire through conquest, snuffed out a half dozen rebellions, and on the whole continued the policies of his illustrious father, Akbar (r. 1556–1605). The lands he ruled provided him the wealth to indulge his tastes for formal gardens, entertaining, ceremony, sports, literature, and finely crafted books. In addition to subsidizing the work of hundreds of painters and writers, Jahangir himself contributed to the literature of his age by writing a memoir. Intended to glorify himself and instruct his heirs, it covered the first thirteen years of his reign, before his addiction to alcohol and opium sapped his energy and effectiveness.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Other than to glorify the person of the emperor, what political purposes might have been served by Jahangir's elaborate coronation ceremony?
2. What do the "twelve special regulations" issued at the beginning of Jahangir's reign reveal about his priorities as emperor?
3. How does Jahangir view his Hindu subjects? What are his reasons for allowing them to practice their religion?
4. What does the episode of the Afghan bandits reveal about Jahangir's view of the emperor's responsibilities?
5. What similarities and differences do you see in the authority and leadership style of Suleiman I, Abbas I (sources 21 and 22), and Jahangir?

JAHANGIR'S CORONATION

On the eighth of the latter month of Jammaudy, of the year of the Hegira one thousand and fourteen,¹ in the metropolis of Agrah, and in the forenoon of the day, being then at the age of thirty-eight, I became Emperor, and under the most felicitous auspices, took my seat on the throne of my wishes. . . . As at the very instant that I seated myself on the throne the sun rose from the horizon, I accepted this as the omen of victory, and as indicating a reign of unvarying prosperity. Hence I assumed the titles of Jahangir

Padshah, and Jahangir Shah: the world-subduing emperor; the world-subduing king. I ordained that the following legend should be stamped on the coinage of the empire: "Stricken at Agrah by that . . . safeguard of the world; the sovereign splendor of the faith, Jahangir, son of the imperial Akbar."

On this occasion I made use of the throne prepared by my father, and enriched at an expense without parallel, for the celebration of the festival of the new year. . . . In the fabrication of the throne a sum not far short of ten krours of ashrefies² was expended in jewels alone. . . .

¹October 10, 1605. Jahangir uses the Muslim calendar, dated from the Hegira, Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina.

²A *krour* is a measurement of weight, and an *ashrefiy* is a unit of money. Although it is impossible to determine the exact value of ten "krours of ashrefies," it is an enormous sum.

... The legs and body of the throne were at the same time loaded with fifty maunds of ambergris,³ so that wherever it might be found expedient to put it together, no further perfumes were necessary for an assemblage of whatever magnitude.

Having thus seated myself on the throne of my expectation and wishes, I caused also the imperial crown, which my father had caused to be made after the manner of that which was worn by the great kings of Persia, to be brought before me, and then, in the presence of the whole assembled Emirs,⁴ having placed it on my brows, as an omen auspicious to the stability and happiness of my reign, kept it there for the space of a full ... hour. On each of the twelve points of this crown was a single diamond ... the whole purchased by my father with the resources of his own government, not from anything accruing to him by inheritance from his predecessors. At the point in the center of the top part of the crown was a single pearl ... and on different parts of the same were set altogether two hundred rubies. ...

For forty days and forty nights I caused the ... great imperial state drum to strike up, without ceasing, the strains of joy and triumph; and ... around my throne, the ground was spread by my directions with the most costly brocades and gold embroidered carpets. Censers⁵ of gold and silver were disposed in different directions for the purpose of burning fragrant drugs, and nearly three thousand camphorated wax lights, ... in branches of gold and silver perfumed with ambergris, illuminated the scene from night till morning. Numbers of blooming youth, ... clad in dresses of the most costly materials, woven in

silk and gold, with ... amulets sparkling with the lustre of the diamond, the emerald, the sapphire, and the ruby, awaited my commands, rank after rank, and in attitude most respectful. And finally, the Emirs of the empire, ... stood round in brilliant array, also waiting for the commands of their sovereign. ...

THE EMPEROR'S DECREES

The very first ordinance that issued from me ... related to the chain of justice, one end of which I caused to be fastened to the battlements of the royal tower of the castle of Agrah, and the other to a stone post near the bed of the river Jumnah; to the end that whenever those charged with administering the courts were slack in dispensing justice to the downtrodden, he who had suffered injustice by applying his hand to the chain would find himself in the way of obtaining speedy redress.⁶ ... I ordered a chain of pure gold, sixty ells⁷ in length, with sixty bells. It weighs four Hindustani maunds.⁸ ...

I issued twelve special regulations to be implemented and observed in all the realm.

1. I canceled the *tamgha*, the *mirabari*,⁹ and all other imposts the *jagirdars*¹⁰ of every province and district had imposed for their own profit.
2. I ordered that when a district lay wasted by thieves and highway bandits or was desolate of inhabitants, that towns should be built, ... and every effort made to protect the subjects from injury. I directed the jagirdars in such deserted places to erect mosques and caravansaries, or places for the

⁸A Hindustani maund equaled just over ten pounds.

⁹The *tamgha* and *mirabari* were both customs duties.

¹⁰A *jagir* was a grant of land by the emperor that entitled the holder to the income from the land. The income was to be used mainly to finance the maintenance of troops. A *jagirdar* was the holder of a *jagir*.

accommodation of travelers, in order to render the district once more an inhabited country, and that men might again be able to travel back and forth safely. ...

3. Merchants travelling through the country were not to have their bales or packs opened without their consent.
4. When a person shall die and leave children, whether he is an infidel¹¹ or Muslim, no man was to interfere a pin's point in his property; but when he has no children or direct and unquestionable heirs his inheritance is to be spent on approved expenditures such as construction of mosques and caravansaries, repair of bridges, and the creation of watertanks and wells.
5. No person was permitted either to make or to sell wine or any other intoxicating liquor. I undertook to institute this regulation, although it is sufficiently well known that I myself have the strongest inclination for wine, in which from the age of sixteen I have liberally indulged. ...
6. No official was permitted to take up his abode in the house of any subject of my realm. On the contrary, when individuals serving in the state armies come to any town, and can rent a place to live, it would be commendable; otherwise they were to pitch their tents outside the town and prepare abodes for themselves.
7. No person was to suffer, for any offence, the cutting off of a nose or ear. For theft, the offender was to be scourged with thorns, or deterred from further transgressions by an oath on the Qur'an.
8. I decreed that superintendents of royal lands and jagirdars were prohibited from seizing the lands of their subjects or cultivating the lands themselves for their own benefit; neither was any jagirdar to exercise any authority beyond the limits of his own. ...

¹¹A Hindu.

¹²This was to prevent any tax collector or jagirdar from gaining a vested interest in the fortunes of a particular region or family.

On the contrary, his attention was to be wholly and exclusively devoted to the cultivation and improvement of the district allotted to him.

9. The tax collectors of royal lands and jagirdars may not intermarry with the people of the districts in which they reside without my permission.¹²
 10. Governors in all the large cities were directed to establish infirmaries and hospitals with physicians appointed to treat the sick. Expenses are to be covered by income from royal lands.
 11. During the month of my birth there could be no slaughter of animals in my realm. ... In every week also, on Thursday, that being the day of my accession, and Sunday, my father's birthday, ... and also because it is the day attributed to the sun and the day on which the creation of the world was begun. It was unjustifiable to deprive any animal of life on such a day.
 12. I issued a decree confirming the dignitaries and jagirs of my father's government in all that they had enjoyed while he was living; and where I found sufficient merit, I conferred an advance of rank in various gradations. ...
- I told Miran Sadr-i-Jahan, who is one of the *sayyids*¹³ of true lineage in Hindustan and long held the glorious post of comptroller for my father, that every day the deserving poor should be brought before me. I set free ... all criminals who had long been imprisoned in fortresses and jails.

POLICY TOWARD THE HINDUS

I am here led to relate that at the city of Banaras¹⁴ a temple had been erected [in which] ... the principal idol ... had on its head a tiara or cap, enriched with jewels. ... [Also] placed in this

¹³A *sayyid* is considered to be a lineal descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

¹⁴A city on the Ganges River.

temple, moreover, as the associates and ministering servants of the principal idol, [were] four other images of solid gold, each crowned with a tiara, in the like manner enriched with precious stones. It was the belief of these non-believers that a dead Hindu, provided when alive he had been a worshiper, when laid before this idol would be restored to life. As I could not possibly give credit to such a pretense, I employed a confidential person to ascertain the truth; and, as I justly supposed, the whole was detected to be an impudent fraud. . . .

On this subject I must however acknowledge, that having on one occasion asked my father the reason why he had forbidden anyone to prevent or interfere with the building of these haunts of idolatry, his reply was in the following terms: "My dear child," said he, "I find myself a powerful monarch, the shadow of God upon earth. I have seen that he bestows the blessing of his gracious providence upon all his creatures without distinction. . . . With all of the human race, with all of God's creatures, I am at peace: why then should I permit myself, under any consideration, to be the cause of molestation or aggression to any one? Besides, are not five parts in six . . . either Hindus or aliens to the faith; and were I to be governed by motives of the kind suggested in your inquiry, what alternative can I have but to put them all to death! I have thought it therefore my wisest plan to let these men alone. Neither is it to be forgotten, that the class of whom we are speaking . . . are usefully engaged, either in the pursuits of science or the arts, or of improvements for the benefit of mankind, and have in numerous instances arrived at the highest distinctions in the state, there being, indeed, to be found in this city men of every description, and of every religion on the face of the earth." . . .

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In the practice of being burnt on the funeral pyre of their husbands¹⁵ as sometimes exhibited

¹⁵A woman who burned herself in this way was known as *sati* (Sanskrit for "virtuous woman"). The word *sati* also is used to describe the burning itself.

among the widows of the Hindus, I had previously directed that no woman who was the mother of children should be thus made a sacrifice, however willing to die; and I now further ordained, that in no case was the practice to be permitted, when compulsion was in the slightest degree employed, whatever might be the opinions of the people. In other respects they were in no way to be molested in the duties of their religion, nor exposed to oppression or violence in any manner whatever. . . .

THE DUTIES OF THE EMPEROR

. . . It had been made known to me that the roads about Kandahar¹⁶ were grievously infested by the Afghans, who by their vexatious exactions rendered the communications in that quarter extremely unsafe for travelers of every description. . . .

Lushker Khan . . . was despatched by my orders toward Kabul for the purpose of clearing the roads in that direction, which had been rendered unsafe by the outrages of licentious bandits. It so happened that when this commander had nearly reached the point for which he was destined he found opposed to him a body of mountaineers . . . , who had assembled to the number of forty thousand, horse and foot and musketeers, had shut up the approaches against him, and prevented his further advance. . . . A conflict began, which continued . . . from dawn of day until nearly sunset. The enemy were however finally defeated, with the loss of seventeen thousand killed, a number taken prisoners, and a still greater proportion escaping to their hiding-places among the mountains. The prisoners were conducted to my presence yoked together, with the heads of the seventeen thousand slain in the battle suspended from their necks. After some deliberation as to the destiny of these captives, I resolved that their lives should be

¹⁶A city in Afghanistan.

spared, and that they should be employed in bringing forage for my elephants.

. . . The shedding of so much human blood must ever be extremely painful; but until some other resource is discovered, it is unavoidable. Unhappily the functions of government cannot be carried on without severity, and occasional extinction of human life: for without something of the kind, some species of coercion and chas-

tisement, the world would soon exhibit the horrible spectacle of mankind, like wild beasts, worrying each other to death with no other motive than rapacity and revenge. God is witness that there is no repose for crowned heads. There is no pain or anxiety equal to that which attends the possession of sovereign power, for to the possessor there is not in this world a moment's rest. . . .

Religion and Society in South and Southwest Asia

Although many major religions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity — originated in South and Southwest Asia, by the sixteenth century, the region was dominated by two faiths. They were Islam, ascendant everywhere except India, and Hinduism, the Indian subcontinent's ancient religion that endured despite centuries of competition from Buddhism, Jainism, and Islam.

At first glance, one is struck by the many differences between Islam — with its uncompromising monotheism, its reliance on its holy book, the Qur'an, and its origin in the prophecies of a single human being, Muhammad — and Hinduism — with its thousands of gods, its slow and continuous evolution, and its lack of a single creed or holy book. Yet on a deeper level, a fundamental similarity exists in the religions. Both reject any separation between a person's religious and secular life. Islam and Hinduism not only guide each believer's spiritual development but also define that believer's role as a parent, spouse, subject, and man or woman. Secularism as such does not exist in either religious tradition.

Islam originated in the seventh century C.E. and was based on the prophecies of Muhammad (ca. 570–632 C.E.), whose revelations about Allah (Arabic for God) were recorded in Islam's most holy book, the Qur'an. *Islam* in Arabic means "submission," and a Muslim is one who submits to God's will. Islam's basic creed is the statement that every follower must utter daily: "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God." All Muslims are expected to accept the Qur'an as the word of God, perform works of charity, fast during the holy month of Ramadan, say daily prayers, and, if possible, make a pilgrimage to Mecca, the city on the Arabian peninsula where Muhammad received Allah's revelation. Islam teaches that at death each person will be judged by Allah, with the faithful rewarded by Heaven and the unfaithful damned to an eternity in Hell.

Hinduism, which evolved over many centuries, has no single creed, set of rituals, holy book, or organized church. Unlike Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which affirm the existence of only one God, Hinduism includes many thousands of deities