The Khōjā of Tanzania

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The Khōjā of Tanzania

Discontinuities of a Postcolonial Religious Identity

By

Iqbal Akhtar

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Cover illustration: The Khoja Ithnasheri mosque after Friday prayers in Dar es Salaam. Photo by the author.

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Dedication

To my parents, brother, and wife for their loving and unwavering support, as well as towards the cause of cultural preservation.

Jēṭh Sud Baras 2070 V.S.
12 Śābān 1435 A.H.

Contents

PART 2
Politics

PART 3
Linguistics

Foreword

At a time when Islam is constantly depicted, implicitly rather than explicitly, as backward, rigid, unable to evolve, and unable to adapt to modern (Western) concepts such as democracy and secularism, Iqbal Akhtar's work is a lifeline. It not only provides evidence that Islam was and is, like other religions, subject to to the circumstances of history, but also, along the way, indirectly demonstrates that research in the social sciences is indispensable for those who might doubt its utility. In fact, beyond the political agenda linked to the hunt for Islamist terrorists as a result of the post-September 11 attacks, Akhtar's book is a clear rejoinder to the prevailing prejudices with which the West has represented Islamic civilizations and cultures. In this respect, *The Khōjā of Tanzania* is a major contribution to several different sub-fields related to Indian studies, diasporic studies, and Islamic studies. Akhtar's work not only locates but also sits at the confluence of these three fields.

A real tour de force, *The Khōjā of Tanzania* will delight both specialists and nonspecialists. It shows a face of Shiism that has been obscured in the international scene by the media, too often given to sensationalism. For the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam, Shiism is not based on a demonization of Western values, as was the case for the former president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mahmud Ahmadinejad. Rather, he shows that Twelver Shiism has facilitated the modern Khōjā integration into the *umma*, the universal Muslim community, through a permanent dialogue between religion and society. Akhtar's book allows us to hear a discrete voice from the silenced majority of the Muslim community, Sunni as well as Shia.

The Khōjā mostly belong to a community originating from Sindh in Pakistan and Gujarat in India. Until the nineteenth century, the term was used to describe a motley conglomeration of predominately merchant castes, which nevertheless allowed the incorporation of low-status groups such as untouchables. When the Khōjā entered the scene of European history, it was in the context of the British colonization of India. The British understood them to be the followers of the divine living guide (*hazar imam*) of the Ismaili Shias, Hasan Ali Shah (d. 1881), known as Aga Khan I, himself a Persian refugee who reached India in 1843 by providing military help to the British in the conquest of Sindh. Actually, the Khōjā burst onto the scene when they challenged the Aga Khan's authority in the early 1820s, a dispute that was partly resolved by the famous Aga Khan Case of 1866. Following the case, the majority of the Khōjā kept their allegiance to the Aga Khan, while a second group became Sunni Muslim and a third Twelver Shia. Akhtar's focus is on the third group, the Shia

Khōjā, and he seeks to show that the split was much more than a 'single' conversion from the Ismaili branch of Shiism to the Twelvers.

However, because of the demographic domination of the Ismaili Khōjā, and the strength of successive Aga Khans, studies devoted to the group were for a long time monopolized by the Ismailis, especially through the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. Thus, the first Khōjā studies that appeared in the 1970s were in the form of Ismaili studies. Furthermore, they were directly concordant with the Aga Khan's global agenda, as the Khōjā, Ismailis as well as Twelver Shias, are presently scattered across six continents. The current, fourth Aga Khan—born Shah Karim al-Husayni (b. 1936)—closely monitors scholarship on the Khōjā; because of his position as the absolute authority of the Nizārī Ismaili Shias, and due to the control he exerts over the majority of available archival sources, most studies have been in line with his officially sanctioned history of the community. Consequently, criticism of the Aga Khan's policies has been unwelcome since the nineteenth century. Thus, academic works devoted to Ismaili studies in contemporary times have been restricted to 'neutral'—read 'noncontroversial'—topics, such as literature, education, public welfare, and so on. That said, it is important to stress the role played by the Aga Khan in bridging the gap between various Islamic communities and the West through his welfare and cultural development projects.

Consequently, Akhtar's book is the first thorough and comprehensive historical study on Khōjā identity. Furthermore, beyond the field of Ismaili/Khōjā studies, it touches on a wide range of seminal concerns. *The Khōjā of Tanzania* is a major contribution to the interface between religion and society in modern times. It addresses how a social body of Indian origin has faced modernity first embodied by British colonization and now expressed through globalized capitalism and an increasingly rapid redefinition of Islamic orthodoxy. It shows the ability of the group to use religion, first as a language and later as a reference resource, to identify itself beyond national boundaries as a member of the *umma*—especially since many East African nation-states, where Khōjās had lived for centuries, rejected or discriminated against Asians shortly after their independence. Akhtar shows that Khōjās kept specific Indic practices, which challenges the common view that Islam is all-encompassing and that it necessarily suppresses boundaries between religious and the nonreligious.

The persuasive force of the study comes from its threefold methodology: politics (especially the notion of religious citizenship), linguistics, and ethnology. In the first part, the author proposes that we view the Khōjās as a deterritorialized nation, examining them through the framework of the nation or welfare state. He recasts 'religious citizenship' as a model to understand the articulation of group identity through religious references. The second part, on

linguistics, is the most innovative. The author provides a detailed and comprehensive analysis of how Haji Naji invented Gujarati diacritics for translating Arabic sounds and concepts from the Quran.

The interest of the work mainly comes from Akhtar's expertise in undervalued languages and scripts. His skill in these fields is a decisive factor in the elaboration of his study. Gujarati Islam is an understudied field of research, despite its importance in South Asia, East Africa, and the West. Furthermore, the author is one of the very few scholars who knows Khōjkī, the 'caste script' of the Khōjā, which comes not from the Arabic alphabet, like Urdu, but from Brahmi, the precursor to the Devanagari script. Although, fortunately, many manuscripts and printed books have been preserved in institutional or private libraries, there is a lack of academic attention to this corpus. Akhtar's contribution includes the preservation of the forgotten legacy of texts written in old scripts that are not in use anymore, and that have been mainly forgotten, existing only as living impressions of the past.

Throughout my own studies, I have not found any other academic work on this vitally important issue of the vernacularization process of Islam. The issue of vernacularization has been addressed in other cultural contexts in seminal works such as, for instance, Sheldon Pollock's[1] study devoted to Sanskrit in premodern India, but it has not been implemented with such depth in an Islamic-related field. The main question is how to be a 'good' Muslim when you are not an Arabic speaker. That is, how do you enforce a correct understanding of what Islam is when you cannot read the original text of the Quran? How do you understand notions and concepts that are out of the scope of your own cultural framework? The first step of vernacularization is that of linguistic translation.

When the Arab governors ruled Sindh, the first province of India conquered by Muslims (in 711), they faced such issues. On their first coins they inscribed on one side, in Arabic, "*Muhammad rasul Allah*," or "Muhammad is the messenger of God," the second part of the *shahada*. But, because they wanted the local population to understand, they wished to translate the formula into the local language so that they could carve it on the reverse of the coin. Thus, they had to face an important challenge: how to translate *rasul* in the local language, knowing that the population's background was Hindu, Jain and Buddhist. They decided to translate *rasul* radically different and, one that was familiar to the local population: Muhammad became an *avatar* of God.

1 See Pollock's *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men* and his edited volume *Literary Cultures in History*.

Such a process has been at work for centuries, but the contribution of Akhtar's study is that it focuses on this process in recent times. It thus provides final evidence that the 'essentialization' of scriptural texts inevitably leads to an aporia. In this respect, the *pièce de résistance* of the book is its analysis of Hājī Nājī's *Majmūʾō*. Beyond the scope of vernacularization, it is also a valuable source for understanding the gradual shifts of the Khōjā from Ismailism to Twelver Shiism. The last part, devoted to ethnology, is an excellent study showing, among other things, how Shiism went through another step of vernacularization in the East African context, and finally, how the Iranian Revolution has imposed a new orthodoxy and orthopraxy on Khōjās as they negotiate becoming Twelver Shias. *The Khōjā of Tanzania* is a watershed in the field of Islamic studies during an important moment in its development, and I can only hope that studies, such as this one, will be followed by others rooted in different cultural environments.

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List of Figures

Map

Figures

Introduction

This multidisciplinary study focuses on the dynamics of power and authority in the construction of Khōjā religious identity among the Dar es Salaam community from the early nineteenth century to the turn of the twenty-first century through textual analysis and ethnological study. It seeks to understand the development of an Afro-Asian Islamic identity through four disciplinary approaches: historiography, politics, linguistics, and ethnology. Throughout this study, expressions of power and authority are most clearly demonstrated through language. Embracing Eisenlohr's "social semiotics of language" in his study of Indo-Mauritians (Eisenlohr 2006), particular attention is paid to the construction of linguistic frameworks, the contextual use of various languages, and the consequential significance of the inevitable death of the East African Khōjā *patois*, a century after the extinction of Khōjkī, the Indic Khōjā script (Pandey 2010). Organized thematically and covering the past two centuries, this research charts the modern evolution of the Khōjā from an Indic Hindu-Muslim *jñāt* ('caste') to a broader ethnic Muslim *jamāt* ('community') and examines its current transition to inclusion in an emergent *ummat* ('global Muslim nation'). These rapid transitions have produced profound tensions, resulting from the Khōjā's willful amnesia about their pre-Islamic Indic civilizational past in favor of an ideological 'Islamic' present. From a theological perspective, this entailed a change in the perspective of Islam from a relational *dharam* ('order') as a source of *sanskār* ('traits') to an exclusive *dīn* ('religion'). This study aims to seriously engage (C. Smith et al. 2013), document, and theorize this theological transformation in the evolution of modern Khōjā religious identities as conveyed through expressions of power, language, space, and the body.

The perspectives presented and terminology employed herein are those of the communities studied from a communal perspective. This study aims to provide obscured perspectives in Khōjā studies. Regarding the use of the term 'Khōjā,' this study shall employ the Francophone convention of referring to the entire caste and/or the Ithnā ʿAsharī community as 'Khōjā' and the Ismāʿīlī community as 'Āgākhānī,' a descriptive term based on referenced nineteenth century Sindhi and Gujarati[1] texts. The term 'Āgākhānī' is meant as a descriptor

1 The term 'Gujarati' is namely used when referring to printed materials in the language or the modern standardized form of the language, whereas 'Kāṭhiyāvāḍī' is used when referring to the spoken dialects. Similarly, the term 'Sindhi' is used when referring to printed materials in the language or the language group, whereas 'Kacchī' is used when referring to the spoken

referring to the 'partisans of the Aga Khan', in much the same way the Arabic term *shīʿah* refers to the 'partisans of Ali'. The issue with using the term 'Ismāʿīlī' within this diachronic study is that it is a reading back into history of a contemporary constructed identity that is based on a certain reading of Khōjā historiography and their religious origins. Ideally, there would be a similar term to refer to the proto-Ithnā ʿAsharī, but terms such as *subhānīyā* create other challenges in equivalence and differentiation. Therefore, in the spirit of *la méthode scientifique* this study will not presume an authoritative narrative of medieval Khōjā history beyond the eighteenth century manuscripts and documents publicly available for academic study.

This study presents a continuum of methodologies that are interwoven from textual analysis to ethnology. The beginning of the study is largely textual, interspersed with ethnographic detail, whereas the end is largely ethnographic, with textual detail framing the final chapters. This research is an attempt to connect the living tradition of the Khōjā to its voluminous textual legacy and in doing so to allow a more comprehensive understanding of the discontinuities in the development of Khōjā identity over the past two centuries by reconstructing and recording a wide sampling of the multiplicity of voices that is the comity of the African Khōjā.

The Khōjā: History and Importance

The Khōjā are an Indic Muslim merchant caste whose early modern origins lie in the geographic expanse stretching from Sindh to Gujarat. Permanent migration from the Indian subcontinent to East Africa is estimated to have begun as early as the twelfth century, such as in the case of Madagascar (G. Campbell 2008, 48). This study is focused on a contemporary East African community that has its origins in the late eighteenth century. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the Khōjā religion was caste specific (*khōjāpanth*) and employed regional Indic practices and rituals interspersed with eclectic Muslim cosmologies.

The mid-nineteenth century was witness to a fundamental transformation in Khōjā religion and caste identity with the arrival of Mahomed Hoosein Hoosanee in the province of Kacch in 1900 V.S. (1844 CE) (Nānjiāṇī 1892, 251). In Bombay, he pursued a series of legal cases to acquire the communal property of the Khōjā caste through the claim of being their imam. In 1866 the Aga

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dialects. This is critical for linguistically separating the Khōjā of East Africa, who primarily came from Kacch, from the Khōjā of Oman, who migrated from central and coastal Sindh, located in contemporary Pakistan.

Khan Case (*Daya Mahomed et al. v. Mahomed Hoosein Hoosanee et al.*), also known as the Khojah Case, was argued in the high court of Bombay between the elders of the Khōjā caste and supporters of this Persian exile, known also as the Aga Khan; at stake was access to the caste's extensive trading networks and control over its considerable financial resources. In essence, the plaintiffs argued that Hoosanee's claim to be the exiled imam of the Khōjā caste was spurious. Eventually, the case was decided for the defendant, the results of which ultimately fractured the modern caste into three Islamic creeds—Ismāʿīlī, Ithnā ʿAsharī, and Sunni (Purohit 2012). Hoosanee's forceful insertion into the internal affairs of the Khōjā was a nexus point in modern Khōjā history, which set into motion a series of events eventually leading to the fracture of the Khōjā caste and resulting in three distinct modern Khōjā reactions to Western modernity.

The schism, which began in India, officially reached the shores of Africa with the visit of Sultan Mahomed Shah to Zanzibar[2] on 19 Jhēḍhi (Jēṭh) 1955 V.S., or 22 June 1899 CE; during this visit he issued orders to his followers, the Āgākhānī Khōjā, to *jñāti bahār* ('outcaste') the Ithnā ʿAsharī Khōjā (Shah 1899). Whereas the plurality of Khōjā in the Bombay presidency sided with Shah in the late nineteenth century, the other two sides of the Khōjā triangle, Zanzibar and Oman (Nicolini 2004; Gilbert 2005) contained an equal number or plurality of the Khōjā community declaring an Ithnā ʿAsharī identity, as in the case of the Khōjā Lawatiyya of Muscat (Allen 1981; Valeri 2010). Part of the appeal of the Ithnā ʿAsharī faction over the Āgākhānī among the Khōjā was their embracing of normatively 'Islamic' rituals, such as the study of the Quran in Arabic, *namāj* ('daily prayers'), and *rōjō* ('fasting') (Shah 1899, 1–10). In both Oman and Zanzibar, the Khōjā were living in predominantly Arab Islamic societies, which saw these practices as normative for Muslims. Shah's perspective on 'Iṣlāḥ et Crise de Islam' (Boivin 2003, 52–60) meant that he employed a strategy of 'modernization' that enacted many changes by displacing traditional Islamic taboos, such as the consumption of alcohol. Conversely, the Khōjā increasingly embraced an orthodox[3] Twelver identity and religious life. For both Khōjā

2 Jaṅgbār is the Gujarati name used by the Khōjā for the main island of the Zanzibar archipelago. It is the equivalent of 'Zanzibar' in English and 'Unguja' in Swahili.

3 Although it could be argued that the terms 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' are quite ill suited for the study of Islam (Wilson 2007), among the Khōjā there exists the perspective that there is a normative 'orthodox' form of Islam as articulated by the Iranian and Iraqi *marjaʿ* ('clergy') in Qom and Najaf respectively. Their *phatvō* ('edicts') essentially form the basis of this normative orthodox Islam, which is promoted by the *jamāt* governing council as authoritative for communal affairs. Theoretically, the notion of orthodox Islam employed in the study draws

communities, this meant a diminution or outright rejection of Indic religious traditions as incompatible with an evolving Islamic identity. For example, the bhakti tradition of the Khōjā, known as the *jñān* (alternatively, *ginan*), was severely redacted, and important traditions were banned outright by Āgākhānī Khōjā as being un-Islamic (Rattansi 1987; Khan 2010, 106), whereas the Khōjā completely abandoned this devotional literature in favor of preserving the Khōjā traditions of the *navhā'ō* ('elegiac poetry'), which for the Āgākhānī Khōjā was verboten. Among the Khōjā caste in the mid-twentieth century, a clear tension emerged in coming to terms with their pre-Islamic Indic heritage as they pursued an Islamic identity.

Why study the Khōjā? It can be argued that the Khōjā are at the vanguard of modern Indic Islamic identities in our age of globalization.[4] The most recognized Khōjā was Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. The disaporic communal networks of the African Khōjā, disconnected spiritually from their ancestral homeland, can be seen as an example par excellence of deterritorialized Islam (Roy 2006, 158). The Khōjā believe that they can be purely 'Muslim' in religion and culture, 'Ismā'īlī' for the Āgākhānī Khōjā, and 'Ithnā 'Asharī' for Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā. This reified and idealized vision of Islam is inherently in conflict with Khōjā identity, for 'Muslim' is functionally defined here as Arab and Persian in form, leaving little room for the Khōjā's ancestral Indic heritage. All aspects of Indic culture are measured against this idea of a 'pure Islam,' and those aspects of culture that do not further this ideological goal are contested and usually discarded. There is no irreconcilable duality of the Prophet as a man of seventh-century Arabia and as a universalist prophet. The impact of this lack of duality can be seen in the discourses of Muslim societies in existential turmoil, such as in Pakistan. The Khōjā *jamāt* functions as networks of poleis-overlaid modern nation-states

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on Duderija's conceptualization of the orthodox tradition, which "refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of both non-orthodox premodern interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunna as well as those which are informed by and incorporate insights derived from modern theories of knowledge" (Duderija 2007).

4 The term 'globalization' as employed in this study references what Held refers to as the 'transformationalist perspective,' which "conceives globalisation as being a process whereby various forms of human activity are increasingly traversing the world and connecting people in differing parts of the world more densely and more quickly than in previous times" (Hudson and Slaughter 2007, 2). From this perspective, there is no single cause or outcome of globalization. For this study, the economic and intellectual effects of liberal economic policies in Tanzania beginning in the 1990s, affordable intercontinental transport, and the flow of identity discourses from South Asia and the Near East to East Africa are some of the specific impacts of globalization that have helped to radically transform Khōjā identity from the twentieth century until today.

facilitating transnational movement and a supranational identity in which loyalty to the *sāhēba jhamāna* ('imam of the age') precedes and outweighs loyalty to the state. The Khōjā, as a bellwether of globalized Islam, provide an important case study of this emergent religious citizenship.

Much of the postcolonial scholarship on the Islamic world has focused on the power relationships between the West and East (i.e., north-south power relations) (Erickson 1998; Majid 2000). This study endeavors to flesh out a lesser-developed theme in modern Islamic studies: the modern authority of Near Eastern Islam over that of the 'peripheral' Islamic lands (i.e., south-south power relations). Some studies have focused on how 'orthodox' Islam has come to rewrite vernacular forms of Islam; the most vivid account of this is located in the epilogue of Korom's authoritative study of the Muharram rituals in Trinidad, in which the author describes how the East African Khōjā, through the Bilal Muslim Mission of America, are trying to "propagate the 'real' meaning of the *Hosay*" (Korom 2002, 232; Kermalli 2013). This anthropological description of a modern ideological conflict has become a common theme in Muslim identity politics in South Asia and beyond; Salafiyya is the example par excellence of this modern ideology among Sunni communities worldwide. This study of the African Khōjā intends to integrate methods of textual analysis and ethnology with linguistics to theorize the modern development of how Near Eastern Muslim views of the 'peripheral' Muslims of the East came to be internalized (i.e., south-south power relations), how that power was communicated, and an authority differential constructed. Sociolinguistics is particularly well suited for this purpose, as it allows for the reconstruction of *Weltanschauungen* though the study of morphological, orthographic, and semantic changes over time. For our purposes, this is achieved through analysis of manuscripts, printed texts, epigraphs, and digital as well as recorded oral texts in English, Kacchī, Gujarati, and Swahili.

Among the East African Khōjā, the loss of the Gujarati language as a conduit for religious instruction and intracommunal communication is indicative of the devaluing of Indic heritage within an Islamic paradigm wherein the Persian and Arabic languages and forms of Islam wield a hegemonic influence on the form of Indic Islam brought by the Khōjā's ancestors at the turn of the nineteenth century. This form of "language death" (Crystal 2000) is not simply the result of the rising economic value of English, which supplants traditional languages in many parts of the world. In 2008, the highest-ranking religious leader of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā, when responding to my study of Khōjā Gujarati and Kacchī, asked me,

> Why are you studying Gujarati? It's a *Hindu* language. You only need about 250 words to basically communicate with the older generation. You should

> learn the *Islamic* languages of Arabic and Persian. If you have to learn an Indian language, learn Urdu because there is a lot of Islamic knowledge in it.[5]

The authority accorded to Persian and Arabic and the forms of Shiism found therein by the Khōjā functions as a form of Perso-Arabic colonization of their indigenous religious culture. In part, this is a reflection of a culturally embedded understanding of the Prophet—a reluctance to separate the seventh-century Arab from his universalistic message of Islam, which transcends the historical moment of revelation. The Near Eastern authority embedded within the very formation of Islam has come to be expressed as a cultural and linguistic power asymmetry between Near Eastern Islam and its Indic forms through the colonial experience.

What has come to pass in the twenty-first century among the Khōjā is inextricably tied to the colonial period, and for that reason this diachronic study includes the historical periods prior and subsequent to it to draw out contiguous themes in the evolution of Khōjā religious identity. The impact of colonization can be contrasted with medieval Khōjā religion in the lower Indus valley, which suggests historical relative equivalence in the power relationships between 'Islam' and the indigenous Indic traditions of the Khōjā, such as Vaishnavism (Khakee 1972) and goddess worship (Nānjiāṇī 1892, 245). As Sen (2013) explains, in the context of South Asia,

> This was also the result of the Orientalist intervention, similar to what happened with Sanskrit and Hinduism. It's not that there was no "old constituency" within these religious traditions which did not insist upon these languages. (The ulema in one case, Brahmin pandits in the other.) But then came the Orientalists, with the power they derived from colonialism and print capitalism. They placed these classes at the top and center of what became, in some ways, reimagined religious communities. In the process, the millions of people who practiced, lived, spoke, wrote and thought in different idioms and languages became either marginal or inferior within those religions, forced into new political struggles to recover or renegotiate their religious identities.

In reconstructing two centuries of Khōjā history in Tanganyika and Zanzibar, an important philosophical question emerges: Is it possible to be both fully Indic and Muslim? To illustrate this tension, can an Indian Muslim of a similar

5 Emphasis is the author's and is meant to highlight the juxtaposition of ideas on language.

stature speak with same authority as an Iranian in the Shia world? Will there be an Indian *marjaʿ at-taqlīd* ('instance of emulation') to whom Arab and Iranian Shia pay allegiance? Despite being heir to equally ancient civilizations, Asian or sub-Saharan African Muslims are unable to speak with an equal authority to Near Eastern Muslims. This has had a profound impact on how Muslim religious identities have been ordered in the hierarchy of the ostensibly egalitarian *umma* in our age of globalization.

The Khōjā from the Perspective of Indian Ocean Studies

For the Khōjā of eastern and central Africa, the Indian Ocean historically formed the tether that linked disparate settlements into a multinational community. It is assumed that the Indian Ocean can be understood as a geographic unit for analysis (Chaudhuri 1985), and yet there was not perfect fluidity of ideas or interconnection across its shores (Simpson and Kresse 2008). Bose's concept of an 'interregional arena' between global and local that is outside the nation-state system is helpful in understanding the profound impact of locality and transnational connectivity on the evolution of communal Islamic identities (Bose 2009). As opposed to the *longue durée* approach to social history, à la Braudel (Braudel 1958; Kenneth 1998; Hall 1998; Sheriff 2010), this microhistory of the Khōjā is centered in Mgini (central Dar es Salaam), which is historically connected to the old city of Zanzibar, with continual interchange between these two reciprocating vectors extending from East Africa to Bombay, Kathiawar, and Kacch in the subcontinent.

The preponderance of research in the field of Indian Ocean studies has focused on the political economy of the region, primarily through European and later colonial records (Metcalf 2007; Anderson 2012), but also through older sources such as archaeological sources and the Cairo *genizah* (Margariti 2007). The field is opening up to more cultural studies (Moorthy and Jamal 2009) that look at communities through their own perspective, in which the colonial regime is decentered and Asian merchant networks are placed at the center of economic expansion (Lombard 2000; Ho 2006). With regards to the South Asia–East/South Africa vector, perspectives remain India-centric. Ideas flow from India outward, and the disaporic communities are assumed to be 'Indian' (Manjapra and Bose 2010). This perspective is in part due to the relevance of Gandhi's legacy and the importance of his time in South Africa to the struggle for independence (Devji 2012).

The Kacchī-Kāṭhiyāvāḍī diaspora in eastern and central Africa were qualitatively different from other Indic diasporas, such as those in the Pacific and

West Indies, in that migration to this region was generally carried out by free traders who were able to create institutions for cultural and linguistic preservation through varying degrees of laissez-faire economic and social colonial policies; their efforts were aided by the relative ease of regular travel between Asian and African ports on the western Indian Ocean littoral (Desai 1992; Nair 2001; B.V. Lal and Hendrie 2004; Vahed and Waetjen 2011; Bahadur 2013). The reconstruction of the maritime migration from Kacch to East Africa has been well outlined, particularly the economic networks and cultural fragmentation that was part of this migration (Simpson 2006). The Indian Ocean can also be seen as containing multiple hierarchies and overlapping regions that are unified but also could be completely separate (Simpson and Kresse 2008). The case of the Khōjā of Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam was interconnected with the history of Oman beginning in the eighteenth century (Bhacker 1994; Ray and Alpers 2007). Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Asian trading class and the whole enterprise of the Omani-Zanzibar commercial empire was subordinated to British colonization (Sheriff 1987). The political economy of the Afro-Asian vector has been charted for the colonial period, whereas the lacunae in Indic religious life and the transformation of identity in the process of acculturation in the colonial period have been left to anthropologists to fill in for the postcolonial period.

Postcolonial studies of East Africa have very accurately described the insular nature of Asian life and the complex relationships between 'Africans' and 'Asians' (Ghai 1965; Mamdani 1993; Gregory 1993b; Theroux 1997; J.R. Campbell 1999; Keshodkar 2010; Ananda and Kaul 2011), but only a few have provided invaluable theoretical and practical detail on the function of religious identity and caste in East African praxis, which particularly informs the latter part of this study (Bharati 1965, 1966, 1967, 1972; Nagar 1997b, 1998). Herein lies the paradox of 'cosmopolitan' Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam: they are places of economic and cultural interchange for communities around the western Indian Ocean and Europe, and yet Indic caste religion necessitates an exclusive insularity. For instance, the Āgākhānī Khōjā restrict entrance into their *jamātkhānā* ('Muslim caste hall') for participation in religious rituals; similarly, the various Hindu communities limit participation in their *mahājan* ('Hindu caste hall'). This study, using the Khōjā community's own Indic religious texts in Kacchī, Gujarati, Swahili, and English, endeavors to reconstruct the internal dynamics and discourses of religious identity through the Khōjā's own languages, rather than depending heavily on colonial or postcolonial narratives of the evolution of the Indic Muslim religious identity of the Khōjā.

The Current Study: Methodology

This study employs both ethnological and textual research across disciplines to reconstruct the historical changes of Khōjā religious identity from the first arrival in Zanzibar until the contemporary period, focusing on the location of the most populous Khōjā community in mainland East Africa, Dar es Salaam.

Two methods were employed in ethnological participant observation of Khōjā communities throughout Tanzania. The first method was attendance and limited participation in the community's religious observances throughout the liturgical calendar. Weekly, this meant attending Friday prayers and *majlis* at the cemetery and shrines and attending community lectures. This also involved observing annual religious gatherings, such as the Muharram observances, from within the gatherings and processions. Most observation entailed viewing from the periphery of the gathering and later recording observations. The observer's status was clearly known by community members, which elicited both positive interest on the part of some community members, especially in regard to the recoding of the community's history, and deep suspicion in others as to the observer's motives and possible connections to Western intelligence agencies. In certain instances, it was possible to photograph material culture, architecture, and ritual performances. Much of the time spent in participant observation allowed for conversation with community members, which amounted to many informal interviews and establishment of contacts for later formal structured interviews.

The second method was semistructured formal interviews with community members. Access to the leadership of the community was relatively straightforward, although there was considerable reluctance to open discussions about the community's internal dynamics. To overcome this recalcitrance, interviews were conducted with 'peripheral' community members who were more forthcoming about their experiences with the community and its leadership. In the gender-segregated spaces of the Khōjā community, access to younger women and female spaces was nearly impossible. Research on those gendered dynamics was conducted indirectly through analyzing writings and television appearances, observing interactions in public spaces, and interviewing older women in the community with whom such interactions were possible. Most interviews were recorded with a pen and writing pad rather than a digital recorder, owing to the recalcitrance of many of the initial interviewees. Emergent themes were also recorded, coded, and shared with key informants to test veracity. To minimize bias and to avoid constructing an essentialized normative Khōjā perspective, a variety of voices were sought for the research

interviews. During interviews in the Khōjā vernacular, interviewees routinely switched between Gujarati, Kacchī, Swahili, and English in the course of a conversation or even a single sentence. To locate the Khōjā communities of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar in local geographies, interviews were conducted with other Asian Muslim and non-Muslim communities (Lōhāṇā, Brahman, Bhāṭiyā, Bōhrā, and Svāmināŕāyaṇ), as well as those of African Tanzanians, to get their perspective on the projection of Khōjā religious identities.

Research interviews were conducted throughout 2008, and subsequent interviews took place in 2010. More than 150 research interviews were recorded over this period in formal and informal settings; the interviews lasted from a minimum of fifteen minutes to a maximum of four hours. Research interviews were conducted with the full consent of participants and a guarantee of anonymity. Informants were selected in order to provide the most diverse population sample of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā; indices included gender, age, occupation, religious outlook, community participation, and location, among other factors. The majority of research interviews took place in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar; other research interviews were conducted in Zanzibar, Bagamoyo, Mwanza, Arusha, Moshi, Temeke, Kibaha, Malindi, Cape Town, and Mombasa.

Textual research focused on literature, archival case files, and documentation in Kacchī, Gujarati, Swahili, and English. There were Gujarati-language printing presses in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, which produced hundreds of religious books in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These texts helped form the basis of understanding the oral and written religious literature and the character of the community at various periods in the development of its religious identity in East Africa.

Material from the national archives in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam—particularly records of litigation, primarily probate and insolvency cases—helped to frame the economic and legal position of prominent Khōjā merchants in the evolution of the community. The Khōjā archives in Dar es Salaam are the main repository of Khōjā archival materials for the past century from communities throughout eastern, central, and southern Africa. Additionally, this study drew from private Khōjā family archives that contain both manuscripts and detailed documents relating to family histories; these provided individual biographies related to the economic and social history of the African Khōjā.

Beyond Africa, European archives and libraries were critical for obtaining primary materials such as manuscripts and colonial-era case files on or relating to South Asia and East Africa. Chief among them are the British Library, the British National Archives, Bodleian Library, the University of Edinburgh

libraries, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Pakistan National Archives, the Library of Congress, the University of Denver Library, and Harvard's Houghton Library, among others.

The primary methodology for data verification was triangulation. This refers to finding three independent sources to verify a particular point in the research. For instance, in the aftermath of the Zanzibar Revolution, the episode of 'forced marriages' from 1970 to 1973 was validated by newspaper accounts, communal files from the Khōjā Africa Federation archives, and research interviews with people who had primary knowledge of the events in question. Dates, names, places, and events were reconstructed through newspaper archives and through the community's response as recorded in archival files, and the psychological impact on religious identity and belonging was recorded through multiple formal and informal research interviews. Critical discourse analysis was employed in examining *jamāt* files and research interviews to understand power differentials within communal social structures.

A Note on Terminology

The term 'Khōjā' is used here throughout to refer either to the caste as a whole prior to the nineteenth-century schism, to the Ithnā ʿAsharī community, or to modern attributes that can be generalized across all creedal communities intrinsic to the caste. In the twenty-first century, Khōjā identity has been subsumed within larger Islamic religious identities—Sunni, Ithnā ʿAsharī, and Ismāʿīlī. In the history of the Khōjā, these are more recent religious identities that emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century. These religious identities are discontinuous in their development, as reflected in the changing linguistic landscape of the community. The problem with employing these creedal identities solely as they are vernacularly employed in contemporary Tanzania is that the terminology becomes unrecognizable or encompasses a far wider group of Muslims than is covered by this study. For example, the self-referential term used by the Ithnā ʿAsharī Khōjā is *iśnā'aśrī* in Gujarati, and the older form is *tināsirī* in Kacchī (Shah 1899, 8). As the community has embraced English to the exclusion of their ancestral Indic languages, the official title of the Dar es Salaam community has become Khoja Shia Ithnaasheri Jamaat (Khoja Shia Ithnaasheri Jamaat, Dar es Salaam 2013). Throughout this study, the term 'Khōjā' is used to refer to the community as a whole, and it is modified as necessary to specify creedal identity. This helps to provide greater

specificity than is offered by the term 'Ithnā 'Asharī,' which encompasses the entire Twelver world from South Asia to Central Asia and the Near East. The primary focus of this study are the Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā communities of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, but their stories are inextricably woven into that of their brethren communities. Hence, the internal creedal references will function as adjectives to modify the term 'Khōjā'—that is, Sunni Khōjā, Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā, and Āgākhānī (Ismā'īlī) Khōjā. Translations of Khōjā texts from these communities presented in this study are rendered idiomatically.

The development of Khōjā religious identity is both temporally linear and cumulative, such that aspects of *jñāti, jamātī,* and *ummatī* identities can be found in the communal life of the Tanzanian Khōjā. The term 'caste' is used as a translation of the Gujarati *jñāt*, from the Sanskrit *jñā* ('to know'). This term has been chosen to reflect the familiarity inherent in Khōjā identity, as the exact origins of the community are unclear. 'Caste' refers to that form of Indic communal organization that was historically tied to an economic activity, was characterized by endogamy, and had particular religious rituals and beliefs that were shared by its members. The term situates the Khōjā within their Indic origins and provides a lens through which to understand their negotiation of a Muslim identity through their pre-Islamic ancestry. *Jamāt* is the self-referential term used to indicate communities in specific locales, such as *jaṅgabārnī jamāt* ('the Zanzibari community'). It is a socioreligious term referring to both the caste affiliation and the normative religious identity of the community. Both *jñāt* and *jamāt* are circumscribed identities and are in tension with an *ummat* ('global Muslim nation') identity. For example, the Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā community worldwide is estimated at 120,000 members, whereas the number of Muslims worldwide is in excess of one and a half billion. This tension of maintaining a caste identity is seen in many different venues in Tanzania, from the adoption of Khōjā-only clauses for leadership positions in its federations to debates on access to resources for African converts to Twelver Shiism. These identities are fluid and are accordingly invoked singularly or collectively in negotiating local, regional, and international affairs.

The bias of the Indian national experiment has been projected on the history of Asian communities in eastern and central Africa, identities that are not necessarily self-referential. The most recent iteration of permanent Khōjā settlement in Zanzibar dates to the late eighteenth century, before Indo-Pakistani nationalism was codified in Sindh or Gujarat. The Khōjā were composed primarily of communities from Kacch and Kathiawar, and linguistic and caste identities were the most prominent identifiers within the cosmopolitan sultanate of Zanzibar. During colonization, particularly in Dar es Salaam during the Deutsch-Ostafrika period and continuing during the British protectorate, there

was a strict racialization of the population (Kohlert 2006). The term 'Indian'[6] is problematic as well, because of its association with the modern nation-state. The homeland of the Khōjā spans modern Sindh to Gujarat. With increasing Hindu nationalism in mid- to late twentieth-century India and the fact that the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a Khōjā, East African Khōjā communities developed an affinity for Karachi and the Pakistan project. The ethnological component of this research follows Bharati and Mangat's lead in acknowledging a fundamental rupture between South Asia and its diaspora in East Africa (Mangat 1969; Bharati 1972). For example, the Khōjā are not simply 'Indians' in Zanzibar; they refer to themselves as Jaṅgbārī ('Zanzibari'), Jaṅgbār being the Kāṭhiyāvāḍī/Kacchī term for Zanzibar. The Anglophone East African Khōjā are Indic, but not Indian. To see them only through the lens of their homeland is to diminish their self-narrative and to obscure the fundamental change of identity by which the Khōjā of East Africa became disaporic and unable to permanently return to their homeland, as evidenced by the Indian government's response to the traumatic expulsion order issued to the Asians of Uganda on 9 August 1972 (Amin 1972; J.S. Mehta 2001). The Khōjā have their own story beyond the well-worn tropes of laborers, colonial middlemen, and African exploiters (Nair 2005). For the purposes of this study, the term 'Asian' is used to refer to people of South Asian descent in East Africa, following in the ethnological tradition of Bharati, and the term 'Indic' is the adjective used to describe the language, culture, and religious traditions of the subcontinent as imagined and performed by these communities in eastern, central, and southern Africa.

When the ancestors of the contemporary East African Khōjā arrived in Zanzibar in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, they almost exclusively used the *Vikrama-saṁvat* (V.S.) calendar, which begins at approximately 58 BCE.[7] The V.S. date was exclusively used in Gujarati ledgers, and the Anno Domini date was used in correspondence with colonial Europeans, such as in English with H.B.M. Court for Zanzibar (H.B.M. Court for Zanzibar 1905). By the late nineteenth century, a major shift occurred that reflected the new 'Islamic' identity among the Khōjā—the use of the Islamic *hijrī* calendar for internal communication and the Western calendar for external communications, which continues until today.

6 The term 'Indian' is appropriate and is used self-referentially, as interchangeable with 'Asian,' primarily by the Hindu communities of eastern and central Africa.

7 "An expired Vikrama year is converted to an AD date by subtracting 57 or 56, depending on the month; for a current year, 58 or 57 is subtracted" (Salomon 1998, 182).

In an effort to engage with what Pattberg calls 'lingualism' (Pattberg 2013)—the use of Western European terms, as often as possible, to classify and interpret the meaning of foreign terms and ideas through translation—this study endeavors to use the terminology used by the Khōjā community in describing their worldview. For example, the closest term in English to the Khōjā *mēhphīl* is 'shrine,' and yet the idea of a shrine in the Western sense does not encapsulate the multiplicity of expressions of the *mēhphīl*. Therefore, original Indic terms are used frequently but not exclusively throughout the study, interspersed with the English equivalent for the sake of clarity and brevity. *Mēhphīl* and 'shrine' are used somewhat interchangeably, with the implicit understanding that 'shrine' is the closest English term to this idea but does not express the complexity of the Khōjā historical understanding and varied constructions of this form of sacred space. The Indic terms for Islamic concepts, rather than the terms' Arabic or Persian etymological origins, are used throughout the study, as the Indic terminology has meanings unique to the Khōjā context. To continue with the aforementioned example, *mēhphīl* is derived from the Arabic *maḥfil* 'lodge' or 'forum,' but in adapting to the context of early modern Kacch, it emerged as a reference to a specific form of shrine complex for prescribed Ithnā ʿAsharī Khōjā caste rituals.

The Current Study: Overview

Chapters 1 and 2. The Genealogy and Migration of the Khōjā

This study is historiographically framed within both microhistory and transcultural history (Herren, Rüesch, and Sibille 2012; Iggers 2005). This is to say that this study is primarily focused on the case of the Khōjā in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar but looks at points at which assimilation, adaptation, and cultural exchange has taken place in the context of Khōjā and non-Khōjā communities in Tanzania more generally. This multidisciplinary study initially focuses on textual sources and ends with anthropological analysis. Anthropology provides a missing dimension in the study of East African Khōjā history in that it captures the living tradition of the community through its practices, traditions, and oral histories (Goodman 2003). Another advantage of using anthropological sources in constructing this global history of the community is that it has the potential to fill in gaps in textual sources and allows a larger diversity of voices than that of the male elite of the *jamāt*. It is the history of a community that has endured many political changes, which in the colonial and postcolonial periods has forced a form of identity and insularity that is well adapted

to a globalized disaporic identity, particularly in light of British colonisation (Cheng 2012; Wiener 2013).

There can be no wholly objective retelling of Khōjā history. The study's focus has primarily used 'peripheral' informants to provide the fullest range of experiences of Khōjā identity, particularly as it crosses economic, racial, and political boundaries. To avoid essentializing a normative Khōjā perspective, the research explored voices outside of the community as a baseline. The use of texts and oral histories serves to provide a variety of Khōjā realities and to illustrate how their narratives of history have evolved over time to shape their contemporary identity (Howell and Prevenier 2001).

Within the field of oral history use of memories can be a contentious issue, because in a highly communal society memories are constantly being reshaped and reformulated from the center to the periphery (Perks and Thomson 2006; Hamilton and Shopes 2008). The oral histories included herein are focused on memories, perspectives on contemporary identity, and the emotive dimensions of being Khōjā in contemporary Dar es Salaam. Participant observation was another important component of this research. It allowed further contextualization of the research interviews, as they were not formal encounters, and provided additional layers of understanding of the communal political and social dynamics that inform Khōjā religious identity.

Chapter 3. Religious Citizenship

Discourses on the theme of religious citizenship are starting to emerge and can be classified in somewhat overlapping categories. In the context of antiquity studies, this phrase refers to religious life in the Greek polis and the extent to which this constituted politics. From this perspective, female inclusion in the religious life of the city-state could be a seen as form of political inclusion and thus citizenship (Borgers 2008). In studies of the contemporary period, there are two overlapping discourses with regard to religious identity and ethnic minorities in the West. The first focuses on how citizenship is inculcated within religious education and on the challenges presented in teaching a secular civic identity within a religious framework (Hemming 2011; Miedema 2006). Similarly, the second, more extensive body of research focuses on how religious minorities, particularly Muslims, are challenging established notions of citizenship in a pluralistic West (Kymlicka and Norman 2000; Hudson 2003; Modood, Zapate-Barrero, and Triandafyllidou 2006; Ryder 2006; March 2009).

This chapter defines religious citizenship in a different and narrower context than the existing literature, focusing on the political evolution the African Khōjā. Just as modern Western notions of citizenship are the result of the

political evolution of the state through distinct junctures, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries represent a similar nexus for the African Khōjā, as they transitioned from a circumscribed caste to a self-defined transnational nation. It was in this period, through the colonial experience (Mamdani 2006), that the Khōjā transformed from a caste organization to a liberal welfare state with a structure parallel to that of the nation-state in which it delivered goods, services, and security that the postcolonial state could not or would not provide in a political environment in which Asians were politically marginalized (Olinga 2010).

The transformation of the *jamāt* into a modern political body continues. The organization of the early modern Khōjā *jñāt* was plutocratic, relying almost exclusively on *śēṭhā'ī* ('the authority of the merchant elite'). For the Āgākhānī Khōjā in the early nineteenth century, this changed with the arrival of Mahomed Hoosein Hoosanee (Aga Khan I), who introduced an autocratic hierarchy, which, by the twentieth century, functioned as a constitutional divine monarchy over the Khōjā, as evidenced by the theological discourses on the imam in the *dhu'ā* ('central prayer') and the creation of a law book in 1905 for the Zanzibar community, which later evolved into the 1961 constitution (*Khōjā śīā imāmī ismāilīā kāunsīlnā kāydānī buk: prakaraṇ pahēlũ tathā bījũ* 1905/1323; H.B. Māstar 1909; Janmohamed 2011). Significantly, for the Āgākhānī Khōjā, the Aga Khan of the day remains the ultimate spiritual and temporal head of the community within a highly hierarchical transnational power structure.

With their official outcasting in 1899, the Khōjā took a radically different approach to democratizing their community by creating a constitutional democracy in which all male men could vote in elections each term. These autonomous communities in Africa are loosely affiliated through the Africa Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaats of Africa, created in 1946, which allowed for a bureaucratization of the *jamāt* structure ("18th Conference" 1992). For most people in eastern and central Africa until the mid-twentieth century, to be Khōjā and Ithnā 'Asharī was synonymous. The tension of Khōjā identity as both *jñāti* and *jamātī* began to be challenged in the second half of the twentieth century with the growth of the community, as illustrated by a 1956 court case in which an Ithnā 'Asharī of Memon ancestry was granted trusteeship of a *vakaph* ('religious endowment') in Zanzibar (*M.D. Kermali et al. v. Mussa G. Dhalla et al.*). Saeed Akhtar Rizvi's development of the Bilal Muslim Mission in 1964 (Dārēsalām khōjā śī'ā ithanā'aśarī jamāt 1969a) further blurred the established racial association between the Ithnā 'Asharī faith and Indic ancestry. The full realization of this *ummatī* ideal of religious nationhood manifests itself among the Anglophone African Khōjā

diaspora in Western Europe and North America, wherein some new religious centers established by these Khōjā eliminate the term 'Khōjā' entirely in their naming and membership requirements.

Aside from establishing a shared sense of purpose, religious identities are inherently about inclusion and exclusion (Kabeer 2006). For both the Āgākhānī and Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā, religion allowed for an expansion of ethnic membership on religious terms—that is, they defined themselves as Ismaili or Shia, respectively. The caste identities of modern Khōjā communities have been subsumed within larger globalized Islamic identity constructs based on Near Eastern authorities, such as pan-Shiism or pan-Ismailism (Kassam-Remtulla 1999). Islam has become the exclusive *dīn* of the Khōjā. This transformative development has allowed some non-Khōjā attendees full membership within a Khōjā-majority *jamāt*. For this globalized community, each *jamāt* functions as the sovereign territory of the Khōjā nation, in which its own definition of religious citizenship functions as a primary civic identity and demands a loyalty above and beyond the nation-state. To illustrate these points, take the following encounter in Miami between the author an Āgākhānī Khōjā.†5

> Author: How do you primarily identify yourself? Do you consider yourself Khōjā?
>
> Student: No, not really. I am Khōjā, but I think of myself as Ismā'īlī. I'm having this issue with my children, trying to explain to them who we are. I have [Sunni] Muslim friends who don't consider us Muslim because we don't go to the mosque or pray and fast like other [Muslims]. What should I tell them? Are we Ismā'īlī or Muslim? It's hard to explain . . .
>
> Author: In terms of loyalty, is your first loyalty to America or Hazur Imam [Aga Khan IV]? If you had to choose between one and the other, which would you choose?
>
> Student: Of course, *maulā bāpā*. We are loyal Americans but if we had to choose it's him.

This nationalistic loyalty as distinct from that of the nation-state is further illustrated in the preamble (§D) of the 1987 Ismaili constitution, which states:

> The authority of the Imam in the Ismaili *Tariqah* ['faith'] is testified by *Bay'ah* ['oath of alliance'] by the *murid* ['devotee'] to the Imam which is the act of acceptance by the *murid* of the permanent spiritual bond between the Imam and the *murid*. This allegiance unites all Ismaili Muslims worldwide in their loyalty, devotion and obedience to the Imam within the

> Islamic concept of universal brotherhood. It is distinct from the allegiance of the individual *murid* to his land of abode. (Hasnani 1987)

Employed heuristically, the phrase 'religious citizenship' endeavors to capture the changing political identity of the Khōjā in the age of globalization as inexorably linked to the transnationalism of global capitalism (Barber and Lem 2012) yet quite apart from 'rootless cosmopolitanism' or Kantian 'world citizenship' (Beiner 1994, 17). One could argue that this is not citizenship at all, simply membership in an organization. In the literal sense that is true: the Khōjā cannot construct citizenship, as they have no sovereign territory from which to project power within the nation-state system. Yet they have created a latticed network that overlays the nation-state system by which expertise, money, power, and authority are transferred along these vertical and horizontal axes, while remaining grounded in North America and Western Europe. What is argued here is that civic identity—how one participates in national and transnational power structures that give identity and allow participatory inclusion within a group—is an ideological construct that has real political ramifications across subsystems within the world system (Balibar and Wallerstein 2011). When the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) or the World Federation (WF) offices in countries function as de facto embassies negotiating directly with a host country for passports and visas for its members or for political and economic dispensations, something qualitatively different is occurring beyond the nongovernmental organization model. That level of coordination between Africa, Asia, and Europe allows tightly organized Khōjā communities to acquire Western citizenships and traverse global political foundries to fulfill religiopolitical agendas that are expressed by their respective leaderships (Steinberg 2011).

Modern ideas of citizenship and nationalism are intimately tied to the evolution of the nation-state and, for the Global South, to colonization; so too is Khōjā nationhood tied to its disaporic reality in the age of globalization. For example, the creation of an 'Ismaili nation' creates a social contract with those who accede to its requirements of membership, thus providing its 'citizens' with a narrative of place in history and purpose of being as well as the full resources of a developed welfare state apparatus, such as in Tanzania. Herein the boundaries between a secular civil religion and faith are blurred. This transnational political construct can be differentiated from other similar communal Muslim development programs such as the Gülen or Ahmadiyya movements, in both sheer scope and ideology. Whereas those programs are embedded within particular cultural and national milieus, Turkish and Pakistani respectively, both the Āgākhānī and Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā communities seek to politi-

cally unify Muslim communities from around the world who embrace their religious creed, although such inclusion is sometimes accompanied by reluctance on the part of some Khōjā community members. This construct is a synthesis of modern nationalism and political realization of the Islamic ideal of the *umma* (Kruse 1971) through particular discourses of pan-Islamism that has its origins in nineteenth-century South Asian literature (Naeem 1980). For both the Āgākhānī and Ithnā ʿAsharī Khōjā, the African experience was critical and determinant in the development of their contemporary transnational religious citizenship construct. This section is primarily focused on historicizing the stages of Khōjā institutional development in East Africa that have led to these contemporary transnational political networks.

Chapters 4 and 5. Quranic Gujarati, Epigraphy, and the Dō'ā'ōnō Majmū'ō

Much of what is known of Indic history in East Africa, such as Zanzibar, comes from colonial records (Sheriff 1987; Bhacker 1994). Quite a bit is known about the Swahili and Arabic traditions, such as the circulation and content of Arabic Islamic texts in the western Indian Ocean region (Bang 2011). The numerous yet rapidly disintegrating Indic texts in Tanzania have yet to be comprehensively catalogued, much less studied. Yet philological study of Indic-language religious texts can reveal vital clues to understanding the evolution of Khōjā Islamic identity in Africa.

The integrated sociological study of language and religion is still in its infancy, as is charting linguistic landscapes (Ferguson 1982; Spolsky 2003; Omomiyi and Fishman 2006; Jaworski and Thurlow 2010; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael, and Barni 2010). This study endeavors to take a step forward in this direction by charting the linguistic evolution of African Khōjā religious identity. Many works on South Asian linguistic religious identity tend to describe and engage with Islamic languages from an instrumentalist or political perspective as a collection of symbols and identities that are recreated and manipulated based on social, political, or economic changes (Zutshi 2003). In many instances of Anglophone scholarship, analyses rarely transcend this level and venture into theological and philosophical analyses of the construction of Muslim identities, although this appears to be more common in the Francophone tradition (Arkoun 2002; Meddeb and Jambet 2009). Politics and economics only provide the vehicle for the profound identity evolution that the Khōjā undertook in the nineteenth century. To contextualize causation, theological and philological analyses provide answers as to how transformations in religious authority and the requisite soteriology actually transmuted identities and thus prompted larger political and economic changes observed

outside of the caste's interactions with the colonial and postcolonial state. Of course, central to this theological transformation was the introduction of the printing press and Gujarati transliteration of the Quran.

From extant late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Khōjā manuscripts, it appears that, within Khōjā religion, Perso-Arabic Islamic thought had begun to occupy an increasingly dominant position within caste consciousness and religious practice. Nevertheless, until the twentieth century, the Quran was absent from religious discourses and was considered untranslatable into the 'heathen' Khōjā script; a similar attitude was taken toward many Indic vernaculars, including Bengali (Eaton 1996, 293–297). The 'conversion' of the Khōjā is far beyond the scope of this study, but it is important to highlight that the Quran as a literal text appears to not have been instrumental in the process of Islamic acculturation. Beyond the standard Indic narratives of Sufi syncretism as a method of conversion, it seems that an 'oral Quran' (Meddeb and Jambet 2009) as mythos was an important vehicle in introducing Muslim narratives to the peoples who would in time become the Khōjā. By 'oral Quran' I refer to the popular traditions of Asian communities who attribute ethical teachings and traditions to Muhammad and the Quran, which carry an authority equal to the canonical texts. For example, a well-known Asian Muslim tradition states that there were 124,000 prophets sent to each nation (Bosworth 1976, 18). This tradition became critical in the development of interfaith relations with Asian traditions outside of the Near Eastern cosmology of the Quran, such as with Japanese Buddhism, which postulates that the Buddha could have been a prophet of primordial Islam (Obuse 2010).

As with all religious traditions, the printing press fundamentally shifted authority from the oral tradition to the written word. Such was the case with the Khōjā, who were by far the most prolific publishers of Islamic texts in Gujarati during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of particular importance was the transliteration of the Quran into Gujarati by Gulāmalī Ismā'il in 1901. His transliteration system and manipulation of the Gujarati language with Perso-Arabic infusions shifted the Khōjā dialect so dramatically that, linguistically, like the Bōhrā, their dialect and vocabulary came to resemble Urdu more closely than Jain and Hindu dialects of Gujarati. This allowed the Khōjā to more easily translate Near Eastern Islamic texts and eventually to bypass Gujarati altogether, proceeding directly to Urdu, Persian, and Arabic sources. This had a transformative impact on Khōjā religious identity in Africa, where their Indic religious traditions and languages were deemed 'un-Islamic' and where normative Near Eastern forms of Shiism overwrote their ancestral religious heritage. This liturgical evolution from Kacchī to Gujarati and eventually

to Urdu in the course of a century encapsulates the dramatic changes in religious identity and authority among the Khōjā, emphasizing how language corresponds to different types of knowledge preservation and dissemination (Boivin 2008). Ismāʾil's *Dōʿāʾōnō Majmūʾō* ('vade mecum') became the religious text par excellence for the African Khōjā, as it provided a Gujarati bridge between popular Khōjā religious traditions and the Arabic textual tradition through transliteration and translation.

Although we are fortunate that much of the religious literature of the modern African Khōjā has survived, it provides only one dimension of the evolution of their religious identity. "Owing to the ahistorical orientation of traditional Indian culture" (Salomon 1998, 3), modern African Khōjā texts in Indic vernaculars are generally functional—accounting ledgers, religious texts, or polemical literatures. Detailed chronologies or personal narratives are almost nonexistent. To reconstruct the politics of power in the formation of Khōjā religious identity, the same methodology that has been used to reconstruct ancient Indian political history is employed here: epigraphy. According to Saxl, "modem epigraphy has its origins in politics" (Petrucci 1993, 14). Epigraphy entails analyzing the material, locale, language, space, and aesthetics of inscriptions to reconstruct history. The Khōjā inscriptions of Zanzibar allow a multivalent reconstruction of Khōjā identity from its caste origins to its contemporary creedal communities. These inscriptions are sometimes multilingual, addressing various communities on the island in Arabic, Gujarati, and English. Epigraphy functioned to demarcate Indic spaces in the cosmopolis, to restrict entry, to demonstrate creedal allegiances, to construct an Islamic identity, to proselytize, or simply to inform caste members of the location and function of a building. Because they are dated, they function as more accurate data points than communal memory for reconstructing a timeline of discontinuities and narrative constructions of Zanzibari Khōjā identity in coastal East Africa.

Chapter 6. Shrines

The final part of this study is ethnological, tying the textual history of the Khōjā in East Africa to the living tradition of contemporary religious identity through understanding the use of space and the body. In a sense, the approach of these chapters embraces the new anthropology of Islam that takes into account local cultural traditions and how they are authorized into an 'Islamic' historical narrative (Bowen 2012). Although the construction of Khōjā sacred spaces, such as *mēhphīl* ('shrines'), in the Western diaspora is constrained by the construction of differentiated private and public spaces as

distinct domains (Schubel 1996), the African Khōjā are not thusly restricted. Of course, the *imāmvāḍō* ('caste hall')[8] and *mēhphīl* are interior sacred places. In Chapter 6, the *mēhphīl* is described in minute detail to develop a full understanding of the traditional construction of such spaces, demonstrating the relationship between their material culture and the construction of the sacred (Khosronejad 2011), which are rapidly being lost to politicized Near Eastern inspired forms of organization. There also exists a form of exterior sacred space, such as the Khōjā cemetery. In a larger sense, the Khōjā are familiar within Mgini (central Dar es Salaam), which functions as the Asian intercommon linking various sacred sites around the city through which group identity is constructed and expressed through clothing and behavioral norms (Nagar 1997a). The *mēhphīl* is the site for everyday spirituality, the location for entreating the saints and the divine. It plays a central role in the religious education of the community and is the repository of the community's sacrality, from which the annual Ashura procession is consecrated and commences.

The most visible ritual observance of Asian Shiism, namely the Ashura procession, which takes place on the tenth day of Muharram and continues through thirty subsequent days of mourning (forty in total), has been a subject of study for well over a century. In the twentieth century, John Hollister's seminal work, *The Shia of India*, helped to deepen scholarly understanding of the Shia experience through a detailed cataloguing of doctrines and ritual practices on the diversity of the Asian Shia experience. Both Hollister and Wladimir Ivanow, in opening avenues for research on Asian Shiism, privileged the Arabic and Persian sources as normative and measured Asian philosophical and theological treatises against these Near Eastern touchstones.

The late twentieth and early twenty-first century has seen a reexamination of Asian Shia belief and ritual as indigenous manifestations of a global religious tradition, connected to but not necessarily authenticated through Near Eastern traditions. One common approach of this new school of scholarship is a longitudinal ethnographic inquiry allowing scholars unprecedented access to and a deep understanding of the cultures in which they find themselves. They have been able to communicate, in part, the experience of spiritual gno-

8 I translate *imāmvāḍō* as 'caste hall,' as it differs from the South Asian *imāmbāra* in two principal ways. First, membership is restricted to those of the caste and serves as a focal point for the community's identity rather than only as a religious space. Second, caste rituals, which include communal feasting and weddings that observe and perpetuate ancient Khōjā custom and rituals, are performed there.

sis through the religious performances of various Shia rituals in lucid prose and to recover a multiplicity of voices, particularly those of women.

This postcolonial ethnographic approach to Asian Shiism, with particular attention to Pakistan, was led by Vernon Schubel. On the Pakistani Khōjā, he documented certain Khōjā rituals and relics in Karachi at Mehfil-e-Murtaza, which was created by African Khōjā who immigrated to Pakistan as a result of the postcolonial instability on the continent during the 1960s and 1970s (Schubel 1993). David Pinault's conversational ethnographic approach analyzed the liminal religious identities in Ladakh among Buddhist and Muslim understandings of sacrality in a contested Indian geography. One way by which this was accomplished was through a study of the replicas of the legendary horse Zuljenah, which are carried by participants in the traditional Ashura procession in Leh (Pinault 2001). Syed Hyder Akbar's work has provided a rich tapestry of Asian Shia Islam, drawn from his own background as a native of Hyderabad. His ability to describe the intimacy of Shia spirituality by drawing on a lifetime of ethnographic observation and experience has contributed to an understanding of the aural and oral dimensions of Shia ritual and performance. Moreover, he has carefully presented the views and claims on Ḥusayn by various communities, including the Sunni, Shia, Hindus, and Sufis. Their interpretations, although varied in motivation, are unified through the practice of joining the mourning processions that venerate the fallen martyr as a bridge between the human and divine (Hyder 2008; Hyder and Petievich 2009).

Public religious processions are layered in meaning from observation to the observer. In the Asian context they can be a form of competition, a forum for conspicuous consumption, a display of hierarchy, a way to lay claim to public space and to define community territory, and—in the context of diaspora—a public display of identity by a minority community (Jacobsen 2008). Processionals contextualize the Battle of Karbala and guide the congregant through the appropriate series of rituals. Most recently, Toby Howarth has begun to collect the immense volume of Muharram processional literature as well documenting the mechanics of ritual performance in Hyderabad (Howarth 2011). Much of this recent scholarly focus on Asian Shia Islam has focused on the ancient centers of Shiism in the subcontinent, such as Hyderabad and Lucknow. Pakistani Shiism has been somewhat neglected in comparison to Indian forms of the tradition, a notable exception being Zahab's work on the Punjab (Zahab 2008). Asian Muslim public processions have historically been a male performance. This has meant that Muharram observances in private female spaces have been difficult to access and explore. Aghaie's edited

volume, although weighted heavily toward the experience in Iran, is a valuable survey of various facets of the female experience (Aghaie 2005).

Khōjā Shiism in East Africa has evolved considerably from its origins in the subcontinent. The African experience exposed the Khōjā to various Muslim cultures, particularly that of the Swahili, some aspects of which they incorporated into their own traditions. Although most of the religious terminology used by the African Khōjā originated in southern and western Asia, some terms have changed in meaning or were replaced entirely by local terminology. For example, among the Zanzibari Khōjā, the term *chungani* is used for 'cemetery'—rather than the Gujarati term *kabrastān*—which reflects their experience in Zanzibar.

Hitherto, the scholarship on Tanzanian Khōjā ritual life and sacred spaces has been nominal and primarily descriptive. Cynthia Salvadori completed a significant recording of Khōjā religious rituals through anthropological observations and research interviews (Salvadori and Fedders 1989). Her recording of the history and religion of Asians in East Africa is the most significant contribution to the preservation of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Afro-Asian heritage. Some basic notes on the Khōjā of Madagascar have been published by Dilavard Houssen (Houssen 1979), but these are more general notes rather than a detailed ethnographic study. Noel King published another brief collection of descriptive notes on the community in collaboration with the 'chief Khōjā missionary' of East Africa, Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (King and Rizvi 1973).

The most comprehensive articles on Asian Twelver Shia religious performance in eastern, central, and southern Africa, written by Goolam Vahed, is on the Durban community and focuses on contemporary 'Muharram performances' (Vahed 2005); the other work by Vahed discusses those of nineteenth-century colonial Natal (Vahed 2001). Beyond Africa, one of the most significant contributions to the understanding of the identity and ritual performance of diasporic Asian Shiism in a cosmopolitan context is Frank Korom's work on the 'Hosay' in Trinidad (Korom 2002). Korom clearly articulates the various levels on which the annual Muharram processions are understood by examining the various actors' claims to appropriate this procession on cultural grounds and the context by which the religious observances have been modified over time to preserve it. For instance, Korom's illustrative discussion on 'Indianness'—being of neither place fully but, nevertheless, staking a claim against the 'homeland' as an indigenous islander—is as applicable in Trinidad as it would be in Zanzibar.

Although the literature on diasporic Asian Shiism in places such as Mauritius (Eisenlohr 2007), Trinidad, and Durban can be useful in understanding

the Dar es Salaam Khōjā, there are significant differences in examining the East African context. First, the Khōjā were not transported as indentured labor. Their social standing in Tanzania was a result of their free mercantile status. Second, migration to the Swahili coast was a recurring voyage. The earlier dhow and later steamer Indian Ocean shipping lanes allowed a generally uninterrupted social, religious, linguistic, and cultural intercourse with the subcontinent as the Khōjā journeyed back and forth to the subcontinent and, in the postcolonial period, to Western Europe and North America (J.S. Mehta 2001). Third, until the late twentieth century, the Khōjā of East Africa maintained Kacchī and Kāṭhiyāvāḍī as private mercantile languages, Urdu as a liturgical tongue, and, for the Zanzibari Khōjā, Swahili and English as vernaculars. Religious institutions, such as the late nineteenth-century Khōjā School Faize in Zanzibar, were created to propagate religion and language.

Owing to these particularities of the East African Khōjā community, the annual Muharram commemorations never took on the political or pan-Indian dimension seen in Durban or the fête quality present in Trinidad. The evolution of Khōjā Muharram processions in Zanzibar was influenced by the island's geography through regular contact with Sunni Muslim traditions such as the Ibāḍī and Qādirī Sufis as well as other forms of ethnic Shiism, such as Bahraini and Iranian Shiism. The geographic isolation of the Khōjā in Africa from larger trends in global Islam, particularly on the Zanzibar archipelago, allowed the development of a unique Indo-African ritual culture. This is evidenced in a number of religious and cultural expressions, such as the development of Swahili Shia dirges and the use of Swahili cuisine for the *nyājh* ('sacrament'). This isolation allowed Near Eastern and Asian Islamic civilizations to meet as equals in terms of religious and cultural authority. The intensity of the Arabian Peninsula and the subcontinent was tempered as peoples from these societies met on the archipelago and reconstituted themselves in the cosmopolitanism of the Zanzibari sultanate.

It is at the *mēhphīl* that the annual Muharram procession begins and also ends. One of its multiple functions is to serve as a repository for sacred relics (*tājhīyākhānā*). The proliferation of *mēhphīl* in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is indicative of demographic and ritual changes taking place among the Dar es Salaam Khōjā. The *mēhphīl*, as a repository of religious material culture, is a visual expression of the changing 'Islamic' identity of the Khōjā, as its sacred space was reconfigured from being a component of the Khōjā Indic heritage of ancestral and saintly veneration to an Iranian-inspired ideological space that is cleansed of 'Hindu' (read 'Indic') cultural practices for an Iranian orthodoxy authorized by Khōjā *ṭalibe* ('seminarians'). The

reconfiguration of this sacred space was an ideological battleground, which is also manifested in attitudes toward the female body.

Chapter 7. The Veil

There appears to be no end to the Occidental academic and popular fascination and fetishization of the *hijāb* ('veil'). Particularly in Francophone Europe, it has come to symbolize Islam, which appears to "call into question the very identity of the country, or at least the nature of its institutions. People mobilize for the defense of 'republican values' and 'laïcité' " (Roy 2009, 1). Particularly among Muslims in the West (Duderija 2007), this debate is quite heated; views range from seeing the veil as an oppressive tool of 'fundamentalist' Islam (Bennoune 2013) and gender oppression (Gross, Davies, and Diab 2013) to viewing it as a form of self-expression, identity, and empowerment (Gabriel and Hannan 2011).

The terms of the debate are markedly different among Muslim communities in sub-Saharan Africa. Here the fields of ethnology and comparative literature have continued to contextualize quite well the complexity of gender and performance in the context of postcolonial societies (Fox 1991; Elmarsafy, Bernard, and Attwell 2013). For example, in Zanzibar, there is little emic discussion on the 'oppressive' nature of the *hijāb* or its relationship to militant extremism. Rather, particularly for African Zanzibaris, it is an assertion of their "freedom and economic might" (Fair 2013, 15). Even among the small percentage of Khōjā women in Dar es Salaam who don't wear the veil, those who challenge it base their arguments on economic status as well it as articulations of individual versus communal identity; they do not view it as a symbol of oppression or an assertion of a secular versus Islamist identity (Nagar 2000a).

One standard narrative for the adoption of the *hijāb* in contemporary American academia is based on Leila Ahmed's *A Quiet Revolution*. The text is focused around a narrative of how the *hijāb* came to be mainstream in urban Egypt in the late twentieth century and on the connection between this phenomenon and its corollary in the United States (L. Ahmed 2012). Based on a sizable body of secondary literature, the narrative is very clear and directional, but even in the context of the United States, which has a sizable Asian and African American Muslim population, the Egyptian narrative cannot fully explain the complex evolutions in their societies. In trying to understand the evolution of modern Islam in the Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the Near Eastern narrative tends to dominate, thereby reducing these societies to passive communities bereft of agency. For the Sunni, Egypt is central to the development of modern Islam, and, for the Shia, Iran is the principal agent. The argument here is not that these societ-

ies did not have a profound impact on the development of modern Islamic thought, but that African and Asian societies are not simply following them as the arbiters of normative Islam. Each society has its own history, language, and culture in its journey to Islam. Although the women in these societies might appear similar to an outsider (i.e., Muslim women in *hijāb*), the style, color, and material of their veils each reveals a complex interwoven history. It is this story that the final chapter seeks to uncover: that is, what were the complex historical causations that led Khōjā women of Dar es Salaam to veil en bloc in 1982?

Conclusion

This diachronic and thematic study of the Tanzanian Khōjā somewhat obscures the impact of the transmission of religious knowledge and an indigenized Swahili Khōjā culture from Zanzibar to the mainland, both in the colonial era and, particularly, after the revolution in the postcolonial period. Of all the Khōjā communities in eastern and central Africa, no other community assimilated linguistically and culturally as did the Zanzibari community. The fluency in Swahili of the Khōjā in Dar es Salaam had a direct impact on their community, positioning it as more indigenous than other Asian communities yet ultimately unclear in terms of its members' place in this postcolonial African state.

PART 1

Historiography

The historiography of the Khōjā presented in this study draws from both textual and oral sources. It is an attempt to engage both disciplines, history and anthropology, in their own right, to provide "a sharper sensitivity to the conditions—practical, cultural, political, institutional" (Geertz 1990, 334)—of the development of Khōjā religious identities from the colonial to postcolonial eras in Tanzania. The advantage of employing both methodologies is that a more complete context emerges of how Gujarati and Sindhi texts functioned in the everyday religious life of the community, from major public religious performance to private female household rituals, in ways different than originally intended. Embedded within contemporary language and cultural practices are echoes of vernacular traditions, which the Khōjā brought with them from Kacch and Kathiawar in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These living traditions complement the manuscripts and the early printed materials of their religious history on the Swahili coast. As Peter Burke has outlined, this form of historical anthropology is evidence based and necessarily microhistorical, focusing on one community for which the political and social context of the region is useful in locating the community geographically (Goodman 2003, 790).

For the Khōjā, imposing a strict written—versus oral—dichotomy would be contrary to the interaction between both forms of texts. Slavica Ranković's 'oral-literate continuum' is a better model for conceptualizing this relationship, although not in a strictly linear fashion (Ranković 2010). Some of the earliest Khōjā texts from the late eighteenth century are written oral texts (*Dhoā:māhādhinje:ćhañṭe:vijaṇjī: Manuscript, 1865. MS Indic 2534* 1778). In addition to texts that were intended to be read, such as polemics, Gujarati publications in Zanzibar included 'voiced texts' (Foley 2010, 20–21) of religious poetry, which were written but were primarily intended to be recited in the *imāmvāḍō*. For skilled reciters, they functioned as *aides-mémoires*. In reconstructing the historical evolution of a living community's religious identity, written texts can serve to validate its oral history.

To better illustrate the integrative potentiality of the written and oral in historical anthropology, let us take the case of a late nineteenth-century Khōjā *majlis* ('religious service') book used in colonial Zanzibar (further described in Chapter 4). This book is a daily lecture book for the leader of the *majlis* that contains an extensive glossary at the end. Because of its poor condition, many pages from both the beginning and the end of the book are missing, making it difficult to contextualize the publication and its intended use. When asked about the book, female septuagenarians corroboratively explained that the *jhākirā* ('female reciters') used to memorize the book in order to learn Gujarati and the new Perso-Arabic vocabulary of Gulāmalī Ismā'il's publications. These

jhākirā would travel from village to village in colonial Tanganyika, reciting sermons and providing literacy education to the women of the community. Without oral history, the poor condition of the book would have limited its analysis to a theological and philological study. The use of validated oral history allowed for a recovery of women's narratives through oral history (Perks and Thomson 2006) on the book's role in the development of late colonial African Khōjā female religious identity and literacy.

The underlying subject of analysis is the internal dynamics of change through multiple vectors of power and its expression through discourse on language, text, space, and the body. The methodological approach used is based on 'discursive institutionalism,' which focuses on how ideas are constructed, communicated, and evolved within institutional contexts (Schmidt 2008). As is discussed in Chapter 3, the Khōjā, as a caste-based merchant community with a plutocratic elite, evolved a corporate institutional structure that appropriated municipal functions in late colonial Zanzibar and postcolonial Tanzania. Within this bounded entity, the study seeks to reconstruct the evolution of Khōjā religious identity though written and oral discourses as well as material culture. For example, the construction and normative associations of terms such as 'Islamic' are examined diachronically through written texts. Analyses of how these ideas have shifted and have been expressed through oral history also allow minority perspectives and gendered voices to be heard in the context of performative spaces as confirming or contesting institutional definitions of normative Khōjā identity. Examining the discourse of what it means to be Khōjā and what is Islamic reveals where power is located and how authority is constructed and reconstructed to fundamentally reimagine what it means to be a Khōjā Muslim in contemporary postcolonial Africa.

CHAPTER 1

Genealogy: The Origins of the Khōjā

Religious Origins

> It is likely that the Khōjā are descendent of two groups. The principal group being Kashmiri-Punjabi Hindu known as the Cakk and the other group the Lōhāṇā. Details about the first group are recorded and can be found in the *Phirastānnī tavārīkh*. The Lōhāṇā were *mātāpanthī* ['followers of the Goddess']. They were descendent of Lav.[1] The Rāṭhōḍ Lav and Lōhāṇā Rāṭhōḍ migrated from Kanōj to Lauragaḍh. The essence of the *mātāpanth* faith is that the world was created from the power of Brahma. When fire burns, it results in a blister. As fire and its power are one, so too are Brahma and Prakṛti. This is the core philosophy of the doctrine. This is similar to *kaulamārg*, which was later known as *vāmamārgī*.[2] (Nānjiāṇī 1892, 245)

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Muslim and Hindu saints, such as Pīr Sadradīn Sāhēbē and Sahadēva Jōśī, respectively, ostensibly 'converted' subcastes (Sahib 1972) within the Cak and Lōhāṇā to a multivocal form of Indic religion known as *khōjāpanth*, thereby creating a new ethnic identity, a Muslim[3] caste known as the Khōjā. According to the Khōjā,[4] the singular or

1 Lav here refers to the son of Ram in Hindu cosmology.

2 The Gujarati term *vāmamārgī*, used in the text to describe this system of worship, has a complex set of meanings. It is associated with the particular goddesses Lakshmi and Saraswati as well as the general female divine power, *śakti*. The rites are defined as 'left-handed', taken from the Sanskrit *vāma* ('left'), which has the connotation of improper or obscene acts by its detractors. The traditions appear to have been Tantric and Vaishnavite in classification.

3 At the theological level, elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism, and Shiism seem have been present in the medieval Khōjā religious complex. The shift toward a Muslim religious identity can be clearly seen in the change of the death rituals from cremation to burial and the later importance of controlling the cemetery among competing Khōjā factions in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Bombay and Zanzibar.

4 Āgākhānī Khōjā scholars claim that the name *khōjā* is a corruption of the Turko-Persian term *khwājā*, which came into being as a replacement title for the Lōhāṇā *ṭhākar* ('lord, master') (Asani 1987, 439). This narrative of corruption is troubled by internal linguistic inconsistencies. For instance, how did such an irregular corruption of the initial conjunct syllable from *khw* to *khō* occur? As observed by Beames, the summary of Persian and Arabic terms

plural proper noun 'Khōjā' and its derivatives[5] can be traced to the transitive verb in Sindhi *khōjaṇu* ('to search for') (Stack 1855, 82). This verb is common in many Indo-Aryan languages, from Pali (Frankfurter 1883, 151) to north Indian modern vernaculars. This explanation is a robust argument for the Indic etymology of *khōjā* and challenges the view that it is a Persian corruption. For the Khōjā, it is an appropriate name for a community in perpetual movement in search of both economic security and a perfected form of spiritual being.

Khōjāpanth was an eclectic combination of various Indic religions, from *sādhupanth* ('ascetic philosophies') to more mainstream traditions like the Vaishnava religion, suffused with Islamic mysticism.[6] A dynamic unity was created on which Khōjā religious philosophy was based, both in theory and in praxis. For example, some of the medieval Vaishnava Khōjā prayers illustrating this dynamism, reprinted in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have survived. One such prayer is the Viśanāpurī ('The Perfected Viṣṇu'), which begins with an Indic Genesis-like genealogy of creation, continuing through a list of the avatars of Vishnu and of Khōjā demi-avatars, until the eighth avatar of Vishnu, the Buddha. The Khōjā demi-avatars emanate from the Buddha, uniting Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam into a continuum (Dēvarāj, 4–7).

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into Indo-Aryan languages, such as Gujarati, rarely sees a modification of the original term, and when there is a modification, it is an addition of a suffix—rather than a prefix or initial syllable—while the original Arabic or Persian noun remains "unaltered and uninflected throughout" (Beames 1872, 40–41). Why, specifically, did the corruption occur only in this instance, when more than forty words exist in the Gujarati language that are of Persian origin and have retained the initial conjunct syllable *khv*? (Note: In Gujarati, the Persian phoneme /v/ is pronounced /ʊə/ and is transliterated with a *v*.) Additionally, why does the term *khvājā* also appear in its 'uncorrupted' form in the Gujarati language from Persian, with a myriad of definitions in a plurality of Gujarati dictionaries (Chandaria 2006)?

5 The term 'Khōjā' is used both in academic discourse and by the Anglophone Khōjā to describe an individual member, the collective, or communal attributes of the community. In Gujarati and Kacchī, the term is differentiated into *khōjō* (singular masculine); *khōjī* (singular feminine); *khōjē, khōjēṇ, khōjaṇ, khōjaṇy*, or *khōjēṇy* (singular or plural feminine); and *khōjā'ō* (plural) (Kēśavrām 1976, 643).

6 The principal figures of Islamic mysticism that appear in Khōjā oral and written traditions are Muḥammad, ʿAlī, and Ḥusayn (Amiji 1971; *Narratives to Be Recited at the Commemorative Assembly* (*Majlis*) *Held on the 10th and 20th Days after the Martyrdom Anniversary of Imām Ḥusain: Manuscript 1890?* [1890?]; *Various Shiite Devotional Texts to Be Recited in Religious Assemblies* (*Majālis*) *Commemorating the Events Leading to the Martyrdom of the Shii Imam Ḥusain b. ʿAlī* (*d. 860*)*: Manuscript, 1900?* [1900?]).

Migration and Diaspora

Over the course of the following centuries, a great migration of the Khōjā ensued, from Kashmir and Punjab, down the Indus River valley, and culminating in the Sindh-Gujarat corridor, today located between Pakistan and India. This migration meant the absorption of various communities—such as members of the Bhāṭiyā, Pāṭīdār, and untouchable castes—along the way, which expanded trading networks and expertise. The Lōhāṇā and Bhāṭiyā are traditionally classified as Kshatriya. Within the Kshatriya hierarchy and specialization of knowledge, according to the *Śrī hiṅgulā purāṇā* (chapters 86 to 291), both the Lōhāṇā and Bhāṭiyā specialized in the knowledge of merchantry (Hīrāṇī 1990, 33). Despite being smaller ancestral communities among the Khōjā, the Lōhāṇā and Bhāṭiyā subcastes were instrumental in the transition of the Khōjā from agriculturists to merchants in the medieval southeastern trek down the Indus.

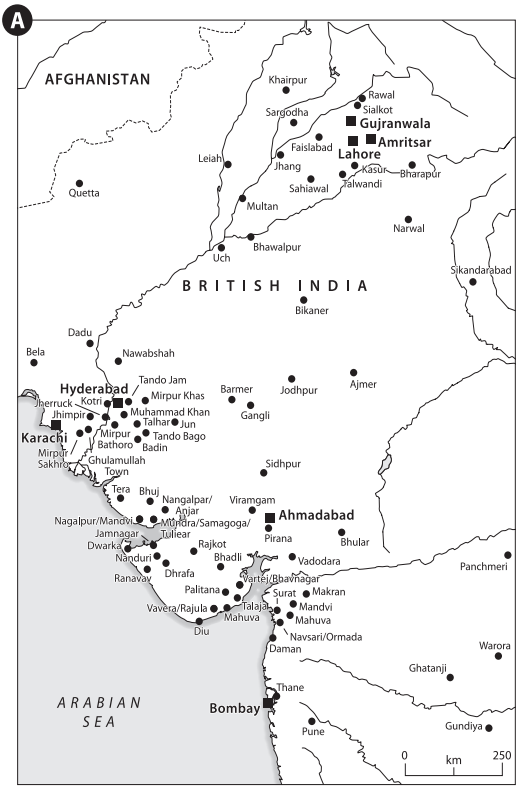
By the eighteenth century, the Khōjā had settled and acculturated in the Sindh-Kathiawar corridor. During the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century, they migrated toward a rising Bombay, and their merchant knowledge and instincts thrived in this preeminent mercantile entrepôt of the British Raj. By the late nineteenth century, the Khōjā had become a formidable trading community, creating elaborate trading networks throughout the western Indian Ocean region from Karachi and Bombay to Muscat, Mogadishu, and Zanzibar. See Map 1.

Schism

The rapid economic and geographic transition in the nineteenth century to the Bombay cosmopolis meant both exposure to a variety of different traditions in the religious economy of the city and a need for a new form of religious identity and praxis for the Khōjā as urban transnational merchants (Green 2011, 155–178). Although they still observed common caste rituals, by the mid-nineteenth century, the Khōjā were distributed into various and sometimes multiple Indic religious traditions (Nānjiāṇī 1892, 262–263), including but not limited to *mātāpanth, satpanth* ('the true path'), *sādhupanth, svāmināŕāyaṇ* ('followers of saint Sahajanand Swami'), *sājanbahāt* ('followers of saint Sajan'), *brāhma samāj* ('Brahmoism'), and *prārthanā samāj* ('Maharashtra Hindu reform society'). (Sahib 1972, 14–15).

Competing religious traditions, increasing communal mercantile wealth, and new ideas such as modern education and democracy among the Khōjā

MAP 1 *Map of Khōjā settlements in the Western Indian Ocean littoral,* circa. *1899.*


A
AFGHANISTAN
Khairpur
Rawal
Sialkot
Sargodha
Gujranwala
Amritsar
Faisalabad
Lahore
Leiah
Jhang
Kasur
Bharapur
Talwandi
Sahiawal
Quetta
Multan
Narwal
Uch
Bhawalpur
Sikandarabad
BRITISH INDIA
Bikaner
Dadu
Bela
Nawabshah
Tando Jam
Ajmer
Hyderabad
Mirpur Khas
Barmer
Jodhpur
Kotri
Muhammad Khan
Jhimpir
Talhar
Jun
Gangli
Karachi
Mirpur
Bathoro
Tando Bago
Badin
Mirpur
Sakhro
Ghulamullah
Town
Sidhpur
Tera
Bhuj
Nangalpar/
Anjar
Viramgam
Nagalpur/Mandvi
Mundra/Samagoga/
Tuliear
Ahmadabad
Jamnagar
Pirana
Bhulan
Dwarka
Rajkot
Nanduri
Bhadli
Vadodara
Panchmeri
Dhrafa
Ranavav
Vartej/Bhavnagar
Palitana
Surat
Makran
Talaja
Vavera/Rajula
Mandvi
Mahuva
Mahuva
Diu
Navsari/Ormada
Daman
Warora
Ghatanji
Thane
ARABIAN
SEA
Bombay
Pune
Gundiya
0
km
250

MAP 1 A


B
Nairobi
BRITISH
EAST AFRICA
Lamu
Malindi
Arusha
Moshi
Mombasa
Tanga
Pemba
Pangani
Chake Chake
Zanzibar
Bagamoyo
Zanzibar
GERMAN
EAST AFRICA
Dar es Salaam
INDIAN
OCEAN
Kilwa Kivinje
Lindi
Mikindani
Lake Malawi
PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA
0
km
250

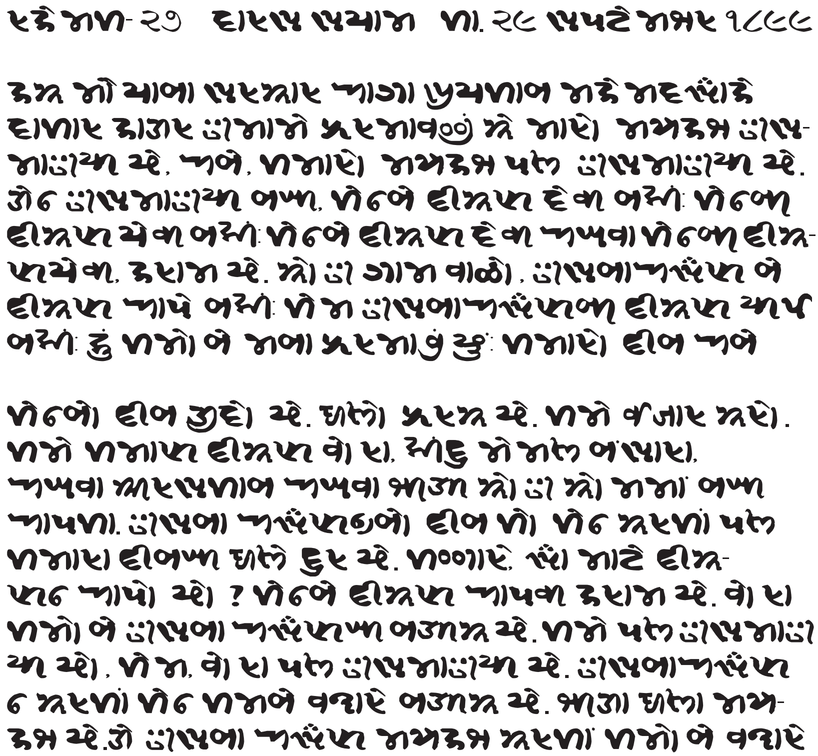
MAP 1 B

eventually resulted in internal conflicts over caste authority, education, democracy, religious observances, and ownership of communal resources (*Dhī khōjā sōśīyal prōgrēs yunīyan nā āśarā hēṭhaḷ apāyalā bhāṣaṇō* 1897; Goolamali 1864). At the turn of the nineteenth century, factions within the Khōjā began to contest the authority of the Khōjā leaders, and this dissent subsequently escalated in degrees, leading, in 1866, to a court case in the Bombay High Court—*Advocate General ex Relatione Daya Muhammad et al. v. Muhammad Husen Huseni et al.* (Bombay (Presidency)—High Court of Judicature). This case began a trend in which the British colonial administration claimed the authority to define Khōjā ethnic and religious identity, resulting in a fracture of the Khōjā caste into multiple religious communities—Āgākhānī (see Green 2011, 155–178), Ithnā ʿAsharī, and Sunnī (Shodhan 1999; Purohit 2005; Shodhan 2010). The arrival of Hassan Ali Shah (Aga Khan I) in the province of Kacch in 1900 V.S. (c. 1844 CE) (Nānjiāṇī 1892, 251) was a nexus point in the development of modern Khōjā identities. The ramifications of his decisions and of responses by various factions of the Khōjā leadership throughout the western Indian Ocean littoral have continued to reverberate in the construction and trajectories of the religious identities of Khōjā worldwide. Much of the academic discussion of the schism has focused on the legal and political responses of the various factions within the Khōjā communities in India, particularly in Bombay (Shodhan 2001; Green 2003; Purohit 2012; Boivin 2013). Whereas the judicial rulings of British India generally favored the Āgākhānī faction of the Khōjā, the political and religious environment of the Khōjā communities in regions outside of India—such as Zanzibar and Oman—was quite different. For instance, Nānjiāṇī records a provocative episode in Muscat in which the Khōjā community asserted their religious identity:

> In Saṁvat 1904 [c. 1847] a row developed among the Khōjā of Muscat, they were of two factions. The faction of Jāgaṇ Hañjī'āṇī was orthodox Muslim and encouraged others to follow the Sharia. The two factions were those who were followers of the Sharia and those who were reconciled [with older beliefs]. The faction of those reconciled declined as those who opposed [this position] grew. Then ten of the prominent members of the community voted upon and then executed a gathering of all the books and puja utensils from the *jamātkhānā* and threw them into the sea. Thereafter this faction grew in size. Āgā Jāpharkhān [a cousin of the Aga Khan] offered a proposal of reconciliation to them, but they refused this agreement and instead took up arms against the faction, which landed some of them in jail. This demonstrated their obstinacy and refusal to pay [the tithing to the Aga Khan]. Finally, Āgā Jāpharkhān had to return back [to Bombay]. Thereafter their numbers swelled. They

> rejected belief in the Aga Khan. The *jamātkhānā* was turned into a mosque. The approximate population of the community is four hundred families, of which four or five became Sunni and the rest are Ithnā ʿAsharī. (Nānjiāṇī 1892, 252–253)

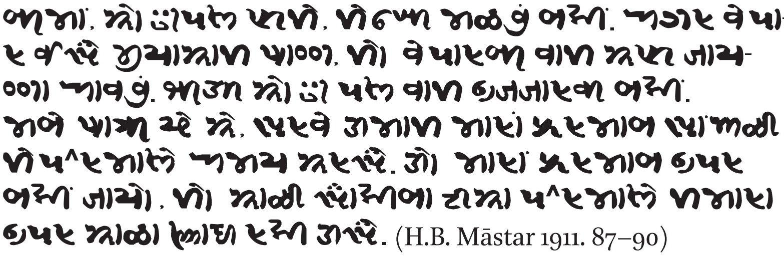
The Muscat case was an outlier in that the majority of the Khōjā adopted the Ismaili faith, as the Āgākhānī faction generally directed the impact of the schism throughout East Africa. In particular, the outcasting of the non-Āgākhānī Khōjā was a traumatic process for the caste in which families were separated by allegiance to the Aga Khan. Although there was dissention among the Khōjā of Zanzibar from the late nineteenth century, it was during the visit of Sultan Mohamed Shah (Aga Khan III) to East Africa in 1899 that the final and formal outcasting of the non-Āgākhānī Khōjā was enacted, on 27 September 1899. The text of the *pharmān* ('order'), followed by a translation, has been reproduced below in an attempt to understand this process through primary texts and to consider its psychological impact on the construction of modern sectarian religious identities among the Khōjā. The following text is in Gujarati printed in the Khōjā Sindhi script, used by the community until the early twentieth century.



બરાબર છે. કુમ્બા જાણકાર ખાધેલો ડાયમાંડાંવાળા દીવાળે ચડાવી છે. બાડા ઘાલો જાણકાર છે. કો ખાધેલાએ ડાયવા ખાણેલા મકવાં વચ્ચાંદે બરાબર છે. કુ «બાયચ પંચ કરા» કુ મકવા બાબાવાબા ? બાબે. મકેવા ધ્યાડાકોલ છે ? બાકો બાકરાર બાકા દા દીમકદાકુ ડાયવા બાણેલાકાબે બાધો છે. બીકાબે દીમક દા બાધવા. બાબે. બીકાબા દીમકદા ચેવા. પ ઘાલું કા પકદાબ છે. કોર કાકે પદાં ધ્યરી બાધે. બાબે. કાકે પદાં મકે મે કુ ડાયમાંડાંવાળા કુ. બી ડાયમાંડાંવાળા કાલેવાવા. બાવ બા બાં પાળે બાપવા બા પાળે. બાવ બા કો વાકુ બાકાકર મારા બબા બાવ બા પો બાબે ઠે મારોલે પકડો જાપ્યે. બાકાકર મારા કાકે દા કુ છે. બાવ બરાં. કો ડાપ બી ચા કાકરબા કે વવા. બીકુ મારાં બરી. કોર મકે મે. બાકો ડાયમાંડાંવાળા બબા. બીર

બા. વવાકુદી. બાધાદાબા બાકરબ કુદ દકે કુ કો ડાપ. બીકબા કુબંધાબા બરી મારવા. બીકબા દીબ વાપ્યે ક કુકુ બાદકુ બો ચકુ. બાપવા. બીબાબે ચાબબ બાદવા. પ બો ટો કબાકર છે. કો બાકો પંકા મારપ્યે. બી બાબાદા દીબબે બાટે. કરબ બબા. બાકો બીકબા કુદ દકે. ધ્યદવે કાલે બા બાબબ વવ્વાબબાં દાપકરો. મકે ડા બાકાચદાદા મકે મે. ડાયબા બાબંધદાબા દીમકદા ધાર. બાપવા. ડાયબા બાબંધદાબે દીમકદા દીર બી બાકાચદાદા બબા. બાકાચદાદા બાબા બી દદ છે. ડાયબા બાબંધદા બાદબ્ર ધાબ્રાદપ્યે મકે. બી બાકાચદાદા બબા. કોર કાકે પદાં ધ્યરી બાધે. બી ડાયબાંડાંવાળા છે. બાવ બરાં કાકો બીવા કો વવ. બાવ બ કો વાકુ મારા બાકા ચ બબા. કો મકે ડા કાકે પદાં ધ્યરી બાધે. બાબે પાચદે કાકે પદાં બાધકાકદબાં કાવવ્વા. બીકબે બાબા મકદકો. વળી. બ બાબે બાબે કાવવ્વા. બીબે બાકાબ વપબા બાબા મકદકો. વળી બ બાબે બાબે કાવવ્વા. બીબે બાકાબ વપબા બાબા મકદકો. બી મકદબાં પબ્ર. બ બાબે. બી બીબે બાધબ્રો દીબબાંબા દદ મકદકો. બીબે કાબાબાપબાબાબાં બાવવા દેપ્યે બરી. બી પબ્ર. બીબે દીબબે દકુ બાદકુ બો ચબા બરી. બીકબા દીબબે દકુ બાદકુ બો ચપ્યે. બીબા કાબાબ મારા બાપવા વાકાબ છે. બાકો પવા પકાંબે જાચકો. બાબે. પવા મારા મકદે. મે કો કબાબાબા કાવવ્વાપંપા બાકો બાવવ્વા છે. બી બાધબ્ર બાબારબ કબદ પાચદા પકડો જાબ કાર. બાકો-

બેબારા બાલેબધબા દીબ દધાપ્યે મારાં મારા બબા. બાકા-ચ મારા પ છે મે. કોર બાકારદા દાબબાં દધરી બાધે બરી : બીબાબો દીમકદા દેવા બરી. બાબે. બીકબા દીમકદા ચેવા બરી. પદબ્વબે. બ બાદબે. બ પાવાબાં. બ બાંબા-



(H.B. Māstar 1911. 87–90)

27th Mercy Dar-es-Salaam 29 September 1899

The true master and ruler, Aga Sultan Mohamed Shah, the generous present Imam has commanded: "My faith is Ismailism and your faith is also Ismailism. For those who are not Ismaili, daughters [in marriage] are not to be taken from or given to them. It is forbidden (*harām*) to give daughters to them or take daughters from them. To any resident, he should not give a daughter to an Ithnā ʿAsharī or accordingly take a daughter from an Ithnā ʿAsharī. This I forbid you.

Your faith and their faith is different. There is great difference between you and them. Reflect upon this, that you do not give your daughters to the Hindu, Memon, *nasārā* (Christian), or other communities. The practices of the Ithnā ʿAsharī faith are even more different to the practices of your faith. Then why do you give your daughters to them? To give your daughters to them is forbidden. The Vōrā [Bōhrā] are closer to you [in faith] than the Ithnā ʿAsharī. You are Ismaili and so are the Bōhrā. They are much closer to you than the Ithnā ʿAsharī. There are many other traditions that are much closer to you than the Ithnā ʿAsharī. Our Ismaili religion is closer to the Sufi tradition. There are many other traditions that are much closer to you than the Ithnā ʿAsharī. What of the belief that "we were originally one"? How are we to understand this? You are unjust giving your daughters to the Ithnā ʿAsharī. Taking daughters from them or giving daughters to them, that is a great evil. For those who publically (*jāhērī*) sign and say, "I am Ismaili," he is counted as Ismaili. If one practices or does not practice in private (*bātun*), it is not your business to inquire into his private affairs. Your concern is the public. It is of no concern if you see he is faithless in private. Stay away from those who say, "We are not Ismaili", as you distance yourself from the Jews and Christians.

Do not harbor enmity towards them, demean their religion, or curse them, as these are great sins. If you do, then this is not correct as per your religion. Stay far away from them. Heed all these matters. If it is said of

> any officer [of the community] that he has taken a daughter from or given to an Ithnā ʿAsharī, then he is not a leader. He is removed from the position. If he advocates on behalf of an Ithnā ʿAsharī, he is not a leader. Whomever signs publically is an Ismaili.[7] Your concern is not private affairs. Whomever signs publically and then attends masjid, forbid him [from doing so]. If he disregards this and goes, then forbid him a second time. If he disregards this and goes, then forbid him a third time. If he persists and does not obey, then he is outcaste from the faith. Do not allow him to come to the *jamātkhānā*. Nevertheless, do not belittle his faith. If one belittles his faith, then it is reasonable to silence him. If this work is thusly observed and completed, then you will return in an exalted state to the home above.
>
> You do not have any business with anyone else's religion. Your duty is that to those who do not give their allegiance, to them no daughter should be given or taken from them, do not attend their marriages, do not attend their funerals, do not eat from them, do not entertain them as guests, or interact with them socially in any way. If you must meet with them for purposes of business, speak only of business matters and nothing else. I trust that the entire community shall hear and observe my command. For those who disobey my command, he shall be stained with a mark of black ink.

One of the determinate markers of a caste is endogamy, and for the Khōjā, the preceding prohibition against giving or taking a daughter in marriage to or from a non-Āgākhānī Khōjā, particularly an Ithnā ʿAsharī, combined with the prohibitions against any familial relations, effectively cleaved the Khōjā communities of East Africa. In interviews, Khōjā septuagenarians mentioned stories from their grandparents that are quite stark: young adults were disowned for adopting the Ithnā ʿAsharī faith, and families were abruptly cut off from all social interaction by their Āgākhānī relatives. This separation was so profound for the outcasted and so closely tied to their struggles to establish a new community that a subconscious animus can be detected more than a century later.

Since their first arrivals into East Africa in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, caste membership was crucial in terms of delineating economic and social ties. The flexibility of Khōjā religious practices hitherto was jettisoned with Aga Khan III's 1899 commands to his followers. With these

7 The Āgākhānī practice of making Khōjā men publically sign a declaration of faith was widespread, particularly in India (Masselos 1978, 110; Shodhan 2001, 74, 126, 131–132).

edicts, the discontinuity of religious allegiances came to the fore and was determinate in marking communal identity. Religious allegiance was also the lens through which Khōjā history was reinterpreted and remembered and through which Khōjā religious heritage was divided trilaterally. For the Āgākhānī Khōjā of the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century, the *dhu'ā* and associated rituals in the *jamātkhānā*, observance of the *pharmān*, and recitation of the *jñān* in Kacchī formed the core of religious practice and the frame for constructing a memory of a glorious Near Eastern Ismaili past. In contrast, the Khōjā built their religious practice on rejection of these forms of worship and, in their place, preservation of the Hindustani *navhā'ō; majlis* in Gujarati performed in the *imāmvāḍō* for men and in the *mēhphīl* for women that retold the lamentations from the Battle of Karbala; and *namājh* ('daily ritual prayers') in the masjid.

Both communities consciously and subconsciously repel and mirror each other in their political, economic, and social developments. Although both communities were already on the path toward higher levels of communal bureaucratic organization at the time of the schism, the Āgākhānī Khōjā further developed a hierarchical structure in which power was vested at the apex. In contrast, the Khōjā fiercely defended their democratic organizational structure and the independence of the local *jamāt*, even as they established regional and worldwide federations. In terms of developing an identity narrative, the Indic civilizational components of Khōjā heritage have been weakened considerably for both communities in deference to Near Eastern forms of Shiism. For the Āgākhānī Khōjā, this can be clearly seen in the transition of the *dhu'ā* from Kacchī to Arabic in the mid-twentieth century, and for the Khōjā, this change evidenced by their rejection of Khōjā vernacular rituals in Gujarati, such as the *kahāṇī* ('narrative prayers'), in deference to politicized postrevolutionary Iranian Shiism.

The schism ended the period of the development of the Khōjā as *jñāt*, once religious allegiance became determinant for membership. This is different from traditional caste membership in Kāṭhiyāvāḍ. For example, if one is Lōhāṇā, this is determined by ancestry and marriage, rather than by faith. A Lōhāṇā can be a member of another Hindu religious community, such as Svāmināràyaṇ or Ārya Samāj, without this affiliation having an impact on his caste membership. Post-schism Khōjā membership is inextricably linked to a specific Islamic creed as determinant for membership. This change solidified a *jamāti* identity in which religious identity is foregrounded while still effectively functioning as a caste in Tanzania, a *jamāti* identity overlaid *jñāti* communalism.

From Indic Caste to Islamic Nationhood

As a result of these rapid changes in the mid- to late nineteenth century, Khōjā religious identity and expression in the twentieth century could be summarized as a systematic suppression of popular expressions of Khōjā religion. This can be seen particularly in the elimination of their ancestral Hindu philosophies, which were carried out by the respective religious leaderships of the various Khōjā religious communities. Gujarati and Kacchī prayers were replaced with Arabic prayers, hierarchical forms of religious authority were created and institutionalized, and orthodox[8] belief replaced vernacular expressions of faith. In this manner, the various Khōjā religious identities assumed the ideological orientation of a modern Islamic national identity. At the theological level, Indic elements of belief, ritual, and symbolism, such as the messianic Vaishnavite avatar of ʿAlī and worship of the Goddess, were banned as un-Islamic and were purged as an incomplete Near Eastern identity was assumed. This process of transmuting religious identity from the Indic to Near Eastern Islamic was relatively rapid and sometimes provoked fierce resistance from within.

In the twenty-first century, contemporary Khōjā identities are the summation of a century of communal policies, resulting in a systematic amnesia about the pre-Islamic and medieval Indic heritage of the Khōjā in exchange for narratives of Near Eastern Islamic religious identity and ritual practice. The Khōjā practice of imagining Near Eastern genealogies was instrumental in this enterprise, linking the medieval Indic heritage of the Khōjā to earlier Arabic and Persian religious authorities (Boivin 2008). For the two Shia Khōjā communities, Āgākhānī and Ithnā ʿAsharī, modern religious identity and caste status is found through three avenues: service to the community (*sēvā*), loyalty to the imam of the age (*imāmajh jhamān*) (Jamal 2008; Strohl 2011), and ideological conformity to and zeal for the established orthodoxy. Resisting this modern ideological definition of Khōjā identity can result in communal marginalization and, in extreme cases, a modern equivalent to the medieval practice of outcasting.

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8 The term 'orthodox' has been sufficiently problematized within the discipline of Islamic studies (Wilson 2007). Here it is used in a narrow, anthropological manner to describe what Lawrence Kohlberg refers to as 'conventional' morality—a public consensus that religious and community elites construct and enforce through communal peer pressure (Duderija 2007). This entails both actions, such as gender segregation, and perceptions and thoughts, such as a pro-Iranian and anti-American political worldview, both of which are articulated through symbolic religious discourses.

Esoteric versus Exoteric Readings of Khōjā Religion

The field of Khōjā studies, as an academic discipline, is a relatively young one, divided into essentially two positions[9] regarding the theological orientation of the Khōjā. The first position posits that the Āgākhānī Khōjā were always Ismaili, hidden for five centuries, and that all material contrary to this position should only be understood as dissimulation in the subcontinent and diaspora to avoid persecution. The oldest academic thesis on the Khōjā articulating this position was published by Syed Mujtaba Ali at Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in the early twentieth century (Ali 1936). Ali presumes, in accordance with contemporary Āgākhānī Khōjā doctrine, that the Khōjā were the spiritual descendants of the refugees who fled the destruction of Alamut in 1256 by the Mongol emperor Hülegü. He provides little textual evidence and proceeds to narrate a Near Eastern genealogy of the early Khōjā saints. The famed Orientalist Wladimir Ivanow (Ivanow 1948), commissioned by the Ismaili Society, further developed the narrative through the use of Persian texts, providing considerable personal authority in this stage of the narrative's development. Later scholars following in this vein include Azim Nanji (Nanji 1969), Gulshan Khakee (Khakee 1972), Aziz Esmail (Esmail 1972), Shirin Walji (S.R. Walji 1974), Ali Asani (Asani 1984), Farhad Daftary (Daftary 1990), Tazim Kassam (Kassam 1992), Shafique Virani (Virani 1995), Zawahir Moir and Dominique-Sila Khan (Khan and Moir 2000), Zulfikar Hirji (Hirji and Daftary 2008), and Zahra Jamal (Jamal 2008). They attempt to deal with the lack of evidence—and the sometimes contradictory texts and historical data—by presuming that such evidence does not exist or by employing the Near Eastern Islamic concepts of *bāṭin* (inner form) and *taqīyah* (dissimulation) to manage the discrepancy.

Take, for instance, Khan's coining of the term *nizārpanth* to refer to a 'secret' Ismaili tradition. The term does not exist in any text; rather, the terms *nij* or *nijiā dharm* are interpreted to refer to this secret Ismailism (Khan and Moir 2000, 114). The absence of concrete textual evidence regarding the presence of a Nizārī Ismaili *daʿwa* in Khōjā religious texts before the mid-nineteenth century itself becomes proof of its 'esoteric' existence. Within this position, being

9 This is not to simplify the complex arguments and methodologies of the scholars mentioned subsequently; however, there is little ambivalence on the core issue of who the Khōjā are in religious terms and their core identity—Ismaili. Scholarship on the Khōjā is predicated upon a stance on this foundational issue, and this stance is thusly reflected in the authors' respective works.

Khōjā, an ethnic caste identity, is synonymous with being Ismaili, a religious identity (Asani 2001). This position privileges a Near Eastern Islamic narrative of Khōjā history as contiguous in the subcontinent and its Indic spiritual geography as incidental in understanding Khōjā religious traditions.

The issue of language is crucial to this narrative of esotericism. The oldest surviving documents of the Khōjā are in Sindhi, written in a Brahmi-based Landa script adapted to the peculiarities of the Khōjā dialect. That an Indic-based linguistic system, rather than the parallel Arabic script, equally employed in Sindh was employed would be a strong indication of the community's cultural and religious identity as foundationally Indic rather than Near Eastern. Rather than placing the Khōjā script of Sindhi within the context of other similar scripts developed in Sindh (Grierson 1904, 15–17), it is separated from them, promoted as a unique 'Khojki,' and appropriated exclusively as the secret "script of the Nizārī Ismaili Muslim community of Sind, Gujarat and Punjab" (Asani 1987, 439). Some of the Khōjā *jñān* written in this script are deemed 'esoteric' and 'Ismaili' (Virani 2005) rather than being understood within their own geographical and cultural context as an expression of a vernacular bhakti shared by other Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities (Purohit 2005, 1–24).

The labeling of the dialect, the highlighting of *satpanth* as the 'true' and sole religious tradition of the Khōjā, and the appropriation of the corpus of extant religious literature as exclusive to the Āgākhānī Khōjā are critical stages in the reimagining of Khōjā heritage as solely Ismaili. The continual reinforcement of this Near Eastern genealogical narrative has been critical to maintaining the institution of the Aga Khan for more than a century and a half, without which 'spiritual' authority over the Khōjā is perceived to be weakened.

The second academic position within the field, hitherto underdeveloped in comparison to the first, is to understand the medieval and early modern Khōjā religious complex as an indigenous evolution in the interaction between Indic and Islamic religious traditions in the subcontinent. Rather than privileging a Near Eastern Ismaili narrative of Khōjā history, Hatim Amiji (Amiji 1971), J.C. Masselos (Masselos 1978), Amrita Shodhan (Shodhan 1995), Iqbal Surani (Surani 2003), Teena Purohit (Purohit 2005), Ludovic Gandelot (Gandelot 2008), Michel Boivin (Boivin 2008), Samira Sheikh (Sheikh 2010), and Nile Green (Green 2011) have attempted to understand the Khōjā, a Muslim caste, within its own context in the subcontinent as Indic. Their attempts to define Khōjā social, legal, and religious identities allow for a plurality of voices within the category of Khōjā, thereby giving the minority religious communities within the caste equal authority in articulating its history.

The early Khōjā religious complex, as per this second position, was an amalgamated Hinduism that became discretely Muslim in the nineteenth century as religious definitions of nationhood became solidified through political and social discourse as well as case law. As Masselos quotes from the testimony of Khōjā Habib Ibrahim in 1847, "Some say we are Soonees [Sunni], some, Sheas [Shias]. Our religion is a separate religion" (Masselos 1978, 103–104). In this context the Nizārī Ismaili tradition, now practiced by the majority of Khōjā worldwide, can be understood as a modern phenomenon from late nineteenth-century India, where a newly revived tradition (Green 2011, 155–178) was initially introduced to the Khōjā of Bombay by the Persian exile Hasan Ali Mehalatee (d. 1881). At its core, this position posits a fundamental question of the Āgākhānī narrative: what precisely is 'Ismaili' about Satpanth Ismailism?

CHAPTER 2

The African Khōjā: From the Colonial Period to the Present

The Colonial Period

It has been asserted that South Asian trade with East Africa has existed for the better part of two millennia (Gregory 1971, 1–14). In part, this is due to the seasonal trade winds of the western Indian Ocean. In the nineteenth century, travel by dhow from Gujarat to Zanzibar with the trade winds took four to six weeks (Sheriff 2010, 15–26). The western Indian Ocean region was essentially a free-trade zone until the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century and their implementation of the *cartaz* system of permits and taxation (Pearson 1976, 30–56). Subsequent colonial regimes, including the Omani, German, and British regimes, routinized successive trading and security regimes throughout East Africa. The nineteenth century saw a fundamental shift in the historic South Asian trading pattern from short-term residence to long-term settlement. What push and pull factors can account for this significant shift of Asian merchantry toward a permanent African migration in the nineteenth century, after nearly two millennia of intercourse?

The principal push factor was the cycles of drought, combined with political and economic failures, which lead to severe famines, such as the famine of 1813.

> In the 1812–1813 famine in Gujarat and the adjacent North West, the Governor of Bombay would not prohibit the export of grain, declaring unconditionally for unrestricted private trade as the soundest means of relief. Rajputana suffered the most. Three-fourths of the cattle died, and skeletons of man and beast lay in every direction. Many people died of fever when the rains came. . . . Drought, followed by famine and scarcity, occurred in Madras in 1823, in Bombay in 1824. (Wallace 1900, 7)

Subsequent famines ensued from 1833 to 1835 (Sheriff 1987, 82–83). The severity of these famines forced migration from rural Kacch toward urban Kathiawar and onward toward the rising port of Bombay.[1] For the Khōjā, as a community

1 Among the Khōjā of eastern, central, and southern Africa, two distinct linguistic communities were historically present: the Kacchī and Kāṭhiyāvāḍī. In the Ithnā ʻAsharī community,

of traders, the opening of the Indian Ocean through colonial expansion represented an unprecedented economic opportunity. By the early twentieth century, Khōjā communities could be found the entire length of the Indian Ocean, from Antananarivo to Rangoon (Khoja Shia Imami Ismaili Council 1914).

The principal pull factor was the tremendous, if not precarious, opportunities provided by the economic development of eastern, central, and southern Africa. Unlike other classes of Asian labor in Africa, the Khōjā came as free traders. They followed traditional migration patterns in which caste members who were established in the diaspora pooled resources in order to bring over relatives and friends for settlement and help them get established; they then continued the process until Asian communities and networks were established throughout the region. As Gregory summarily comments, their "industry, ingenuity, thrift, and education were bound eventually to bring wealth" (Gregory 1971, 21). The liberal economic policies enacted by Sultan Syed Said in 1840 benefiting traders, including Asians, facilitated the rapid increase of the Asian merchant population on the Zanzibar archipelago and Swahili coast (Gregory 1971, 10). As with the migration of any people, individual push-pull factors were in play, including certain financial inducements by the British government for skilled Indian bureaucrats, brides from India coming to join their husbands-to-be in East Africa, adventurism, and the desire to escape debt and/or familial entanglements. In interacting with the British, chiefly in Zanzibar, some Asian merchants developed the ability to speak English quite fluently and became skilled professionals, such as accountants, advocates, and bureaucrats.

The overall success of the Asian traders within the larger East African economy depended on subsequent colonial policies of free trade (Gregory 1993a, 360–362). On arrival, most Asian immigrants were working-class entrepreneurs who decided to brave the voyage to Africa in search of economic opportunity. The caste trading network throughout the Indian Ocean allowed for transnational trade on credit, supplying the African and European customer with finished goods, such as china, while facilitating the exportation of raw materials—such as ivory—from the continent. Asians catered to remote and niche markets, organized novel transportation networks, and even competed with Europeans in cost, as Asians would conduct business at lower margins of profit unacceptable to many European settlers, who preferred the plantation economy and climate in the highland regions, such as Arusha-Moshi in colonial Tanganyika. This economic success allowed for the creation of caste

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Gujarati language and culture dominated in the *imāmvāḍō*, whereas in the Āgākhānī community, Kacchī language and culture dominated in the *jamātkhānā*. For the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam, these distinctions have lessened over the intervening century, giving way to distinctions derived from the African experience, such as 'mainlander' and *jaṅgbārī* ('Zanzibari').

infrastructure, institutions, and viable permanent settlements throughout eastern, central, and southern Africa, among which Dar es Salaam has become preeminent.

Widely held postcolonial African nationalist narratives of historical and contemporary Asian exploitation of Africa and Africans doggedly persist until the present day.[2] The simplistic notion of wealthy Asians exploiting naïve Africans and the virgin continent of Africa belies the reality of boom-and-bust cycles, which greatly affected the merchantry of all races in the region in this period (Sheriff 1987, 78–118). Embedded within this perceived racial indignation is the idea of a monolithic Asian community. There were, of course, wealthy Khōjā traders such as Nasser Nurmohmed (Gandelot 2007, 209–215), but the majority of Khōjā traders vacillated between economic security and insolvency, typified by the 1911 case of Abdool Hoosein Brothers, and Company ("In H.M. High Court of E. Africa at Mombasa, Insolvency Jurisdiction, Cause No. 13 of 1911" 1911).

Among the colonial Zanzibari Khōjā there existed great discrepancies in wealth; the economic depression of the early twentieth century exacerbated this divide. A compelling narrative of the complexity of class tension and examples of poverty among the Khōjā from 1930 to 1960 can be found in *Dastaan*; the following excerpt presents one such narrative account:

> And one more example. This old person who was jovial with a likeable personality. He yearned for company to talk to because he was partially blind in both eyes. He sat in the premises which used to be his family's shop in the same house in which he and his family still lived. And yet he proudly did a labour job for gain—for a living—of removing betel nuts (*sopari*) from husk. He developed stooping shoulders by squatting too long on the floor and keeping stretching his hands around him to have a feel of the things he was working on. It is possible that it was the untreated cataract (*motya*) that brought about his blindness and that the elusive (hard to find) surgery cost of a couple of hundred East African shillings seemed more precious to others to part with than his eyesight. (Khalfan 2010, 7–8)

Despite the economic uncertainty of the colonial period, many Tanzanian Khōjā view it in retrospect as a period of growth and security for their communities, including those in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. It was the postcolonial

2 Interview with twenty-seven African Tanzanian students aged thirteen to thirty, Mabibo Dar es Salaam, 21 September 2008.

period that saw the unraveling of Indic Khōjā culture thus profoundly influencing the retrenchment of African Khōjā religious, ethnic, and national identities until the present day.

The Postcolonial Period: African Independence

As a community, the Khōjā of East Africa lived under at least three separate governments—Omani, German, and British rule—in the span of half a century. The apolitical stance the Khōjā leadership adopted out of necessity served them well throughout these successive periods, allowing them continuous access to free markets. Independence fundamentally changed the equation. For the first time, the Khōjā of Africa would experience black African political power, which made many uneasy as the date for independence approached.

For the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam, six pivotal policy decisions took place in the postcolonial period that reoriented the religious identity of the Khōjā toward insularity as a reaction to perceived insecurity and hostility by the majority Africans. These six decisions—enacted in the course of seven years, from 1964 until 1971, and based on principles of African socialism as articulated by Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania—were perceived as direct threats to the economic and personal security of the Tanzanian Khōjā, particularly women.

The first policy decision, from 1961 to 1966, was a concerted effort toward Africanization of the civil service and state apparatus, which meant that many qualified Asians serving in government and the financial sector were relieved of their posts and replaced with black Africans (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics 1967, 58). This had a direct impact on the smaller professional cadre within the Khōjā community.

The second policy decision was the Arusha Declaration on 5 February 1967. It set forth the principals of Nyerere's socialist vision for Tanzania, which included nationalization of all property and assets in service of the state and required all noncitizen residents of Tanzania to obtain a residence permit. Almost overnight, the landed assets of the Khōjā, including religious trusts—indeed, all private property—were appropriated by the state (United Republic of Tanzania 1967, 621–624). The necessity to choose citizenship to retain rights of residency as well as to access state goods, such as free education and health care, meant that the Khōjā had to declare their political identity and loyalty to the state. Thus the majority of Khōjā in Dar es Salaam gave up the perceived 'safety valve' of British protectorate status and the possibility of emigration to Britain in the event of political instability. From this point

until today, because no private property exits, older nationalized buildings are under the administration of the Shirika La Nyumba La Taifa (National Housing Corporation [NHC]), and these buildings can be demolished with only a few months' notice and without effective recourse by its residents. The loss of all property and subsequent collapse of the Tanzanian economy in the 1980s had a profound psychological effect on this dispossessed merchant community, as its members were unable to engage in their defining function: merchantry.

The third policy decision, in 1966, was the implementation of two years of compulsory national service for all Tanzanians who complete higher secondary education (Mazrui 1978, 223). There was a different sort of outcry at the University of Dar es Salaam on the implementation of this policy (Ivaska 2005); however, for the Khōjā, the worst-case scenario was the idea that a Khōjā girl would be forced into the "interior where God knows what might happen to her."[3]

The fourth policy decision, in 1964, was the threat to personal security for Khōjā women that came as a direct result of the policy of 'forced marriages' in postrevolutionary Zanzibar. The passage of the Equality, Reconciliation of Zanzibar Peoples Decree (no. 6 of 1964) brought about an involuntary form of racial integration that resulted in forced marriage between revolutionary guard members and non-African women, namely Asian and white girls; this policy ran in opposition to Islamic law, which necessitates female consent in marriage. It was "the RG's [Revolutionary Guard's] major racial strategy acted out on the bodies of women" (Maoulidi 2011, 46).

Of particular concern to the Khōjā was an episode in 1970 in which four Iranian coreligionists were forced to marry "black cabinet ministers of the regime then in power" (Reuters 1973). The four young girls were Wajiha Yusuf (age fourteen), Badria Mussa (age twenty), Fawzia Mussa (age seventeen), and Naaren Hussein (age sixteen). The episode was recorded in vivid detail by the Tanzanian newspaper *DRUM*:

> The four reluctant girls were escorted to a place where there was a crowd of anxious people including government officials, and most important, a Muslim priest, locally known as Kadi. The Kadi was already in ceremonial robes. He sat majestically and then turned to the girls: "The ceremony

3 Interview with a Khōjā female professional in her early sixties, Edinburgh, 26 October 2011.

> we are celebrating today is of great moment. It is under order from the government, and by the will of the Almighty that our performance today should open a new era in the history of our country."
>
> When the girls realised that they were about to be married, pandemonium broke out. They became hysterical and bathed in streams of tears, and together with their parents and relatives screamed in chorus: "No, no, no, how can it happen?" But the matrimonial blessing was made and the Koran reading completed. The girls became the official wives of four tough and forceful men about 30 years their senior. (Smyth and Seftel 1993, §V)

The Khōjā became advocates of the girls' plight, corresponding with the Iranian Embassy in Dar es Salaam and making unanswered appeals to Nyerere (Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Dar es Salaam 1970–1973) and Abeid Karume (Meghji 1971). Three years later, three of the four women were smuggled from the island, with considerable Khōjā assistance, to the mainland, from which they eventually made their way to Tehran, arriving on 13 March 1973. The episode of the 'forced marriages' of the four Iranian girls was the catalyst for the rapid exodus of the Khōjā from Zanzibar, despite restrictions on migration to the mainland. Among the Zanzibari Khōjā women from this period resident in Dar es Salaam, stories abound of Asian girls being smuggled in dhows to the mainland under the cover of darkness.

Beyond the loss of livelihood and private property, for the Khōjā, postcolonial Tanzanian policies on family law, such as the authorization of forced marriages, meant a loss of the right to personal security and liberty (Bakari 2000, 73–79). This perceived threat to women initiated a concerted effort on the part of Asians generally either to send women out of the country—for instance, to study in India or England—or to limit their public exposure for fear of drawing unwanted attention from the police and military of the newly founded republic.

The fifth event, which precedes and triggered some of the aforementioned policies, is the Zanzibar Revolution. The Asian community escaped with only a loss of patrimony, far less than the carnage visited on the Arab inhabitants of the archipelago—despite the Khōjā support for the nationalist party, Hizb-ul-Watan, in elections following independence. Nationalization in Zanzibar, as on the mainland, meant an immediate loss of wealth, which for the Asian merchant class was the source from which their power and security was derived (Lofchie 1965). More fundamentally, at the level of identity, it was an overturning of the social order, as peasants became kings. It has been reported that

Abeid Karume, the first president of postrevolutionary Zanzibar, had previously been employed as a servant in the Khōjā kitchens.[4]

The sixth and most traumatic event in East Africa took place in Uganda in 1971, when Idi Amin expelled Asians, en masse, from the country. Although this event did not occur within Tanzania, it is impossible to understate the psychological impact of the Ugandan expulsion (Mahmoud 1973) on the Tanzanian Asian community at its northern border. It strengthened the notion of ethnic identity and solidarity among the Asian communities within Dar es Salaam as well a perception among many, which has continued until the present day, that the future of the African Khōjā is limited.

For the majority of Khōjā, the postcolonial period in Tanzania can be characterized as a privileging of the black African over the Asian and as the implementation of arbitrary policies with little or no legal recourse for Asian citizens. The six aforementioned policies and events have had a direct bearing on the Khōjā community's self-perceptions of their security, which has translated into conservatism, and insular retrenchment reinforcing communalism in postcolonial Tanzania.

The Development of the Khōjā Community in Dar es Salaam

Khōjā religious and ethnic identity is intimately tied to membership within the *jamāt*. In the mid- to late nineteenth-century settlement of Africa, Khōjā merchants[5] began establishing communities and institutions in port cities, such as Zanzibar and Bagamoyo, before moving inward to the heart of the continent. The story of Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam intersect at various points, but Dar es Salaam, being on the continent and outside of direct Muslim rule, had a different historical trajectory in terms of the evolution of Khōjā identity, because of the stronger Christian presence in the city specifically and mainland Tanganyika more generally.

Khōjā history in the region should be understood in the context of its geographical development. Each Khōjā *jamāt* developed independent institutions and hierarchies of power. Although the twentieth century saw the development of an African Federation of Khōjā communities throughout the continent, power remained devolved to the local polis. A microhistory

4 Interview with a Khōjā male pensioner in his early eighties, Mwanza, 8 March 2008.

5 In the early to mid-nineteenth century, Khōjā merchants were exclusively men who came without their families. Later developments allowed for families to join patriarchs, once caste strategy changed from seasonal trading to permanent settlement.

of the development of the Khōjā community and its institutions in Dar es Salaam is helpful in understanding their contemporary religious identity.

Permanent Khōjā settlement in Dar es Salaam is recorded to have begun between 1875 and 1884. A few of the first Khōjā pioneers[6] in this fishing village were Sachedina Pira Mawji, Versi Adwani, and Nasser Mawji (King and Rizvi 1973, 19). The beginning of German rule in 1885, Deutsch-Ostafrika, saw a rapid development of the city and its infrastructure. In 1900, the first *imāmvāḍō* was constructed on the property of Pirbhai Jiva Bharwani. Thereafter, a temporary structure of corrugated metal was erected, which ultimately proved to be impractical. A permanent solution had to be found. Khōjā philanthropists Sacchu Pira and Suleiman bin Nasser donated the funds for construction of a permanent masjid and *imāmvāḍō* on land granted to them by the German governor of Dar es Salaam in 1894.

According to a 1950s interview with Khōjā Alibhai Ibrahim, who arrived in Dar es Salaam in 1902, at the turn of the twentieth century Bagamoyo eclipsed Dar es Salaam as the main trading port in Tanganyika, even though Das es Salaam was the capital of Deutsch-Ostafrika. The main mode of transportation into the city was by foot or cart. With the construction of the railroad in 1905, the economic fortunes of the city began to rise. At the point of the construction of the *imāmvāḍō* and mosque, the Khōjā population of Dar es Salaam totaled "two-hundred souls" (Dhī suprīm kāunsīl ōph dhī phēdarēśan ōph khōjā śīā isnāaśarī jamāts ōph āfrikā 1960, 117).

Construction of the buildings began in 1904, and occupation in 1906. They remained unfinished until Sacchu Pira's children, Nurmohamed Sacchu and Abdulrasul Sacchu, oversaw construction efforts for their completion. In 1908, the completed mosque and *imāmvāḍō* were inaugurated by Shah Kuchak, a cousin of the Aga Khan and an ardent Ithnā ʿAsharī, in the presence of the original Khōjā families of Dar es Salaam (Dārēsalām khōjā śī'ā ithanā'aśarī jamāt 1969b, 17–19). These nine original Khōjā families, who settled in Dar es Salaam in the mid- to late nineteenth century, are listed below, by patriarch:

1. Haji Sacchu Pira
2. Haji Nasser Mawji
3. Haji Nasser Rattansey
4. Haji Molu Kanji

6 Khōjā records from Dar es Salaam, until the late twentieth century, almost exclusively record the names of the male patriarchs of the family, because membership in caste institutions is established through males; female membership is assumed in connection with a male family member.

5. Bhai Nasser Molu
6. Bhai Merali Muraj
7. Bhai Pirbhai Rattansey
8. Bhai Dhalabhai Nanji
9. Bhai Alibhai Walli

A later renovation of the *imāmvāḍō* and creation of a monumental gate, financed by Ibrahim and Ghulamhusein Virjee, took place from 1941 to 1942 in honor of the 1,300th anniversary of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn.

Prior to the construction of the *imāmvāḍō* and mosque, a cemetery was a crucial first investment of the community. Shortly after construction of the mosque complex, in 1914, with support from the Nasser Virjee Trust, the Khōjā *musāpharkhānũ* ('travelers lodge') was constructed to facilitate travel for Khōjā merchants transiting through the growing port city. On 12 August 1966, the first housing scheme of the community was inaugurated to serve as a social welfare project; since this pilot project, at least five more buildings have been erected to meet the housing needs of the poorer members of the community. The community's school (Al-Muntazir Academy), seminary (Husayni Madrassa), hospital (Ebrahim Haji Charitable Dispensary), recreation facility (Union Sports Club), and missionary organization (Bilal Muslim Mission) round out the official institutions of the Khōjā polis in Dar es Salaam. Khōjā institutions independent of the *jamāt* include *mēhphīl*, missionary charities such as the World Islamic Propagation and Humanitarian Services (WIPAHS), and media outreach initiatives such the television station al-Itrah Broadcasting Network Television (IBN). These institutions are independent of the Khōjā political hierarchy, allowing for both cooperation and conflict with the agendas of the elected political leadership. The existence of these institutions, official or independent, has been internalized over time as an immutable part of Khōjā identity.

Khōjā Confederation from the Postwar Period to the Present

The internationalization of modern multinational corporate organizational theory in Zanzibar, through close prominent placements in the British administration (Zanzibar Protectorate 1960), in time allowed the various Khōjā communities in the region to adopt increasingly complex forms of communal organization, including international bodies for common policy coordination. In the aftermath of World War II, Khōjā communities in the region—Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Somaliland, Congo, and Madagascar—adopted

the prevalent internationalist outlook, and on 26 May 1946, in a Dar es Salaam inaugural constitutional conference, they established the Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Federated Jamaats of Africa. The objective of this organization was coordination of common social, economic, and political policies in the region as well as retention and promotion of Khōjā religious identity (Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Federated Jamaats of Africa 1946; Karim 1998). Today the membership of the Federation consists of more than forty communities throughout eastern, central, and southern Africa.[7]

Because of differing colonial and postcolonial economic national policies among states, Khōjā pan-African economic initiatives have been limited to trade and business associations. Religious and social policies—such as the Bilal Muslim Mission—have been far more successful in promoting Islamic education and missionary work in the region (Dārēsalām khōjā śī'ā ithanā'aśarī jamāt 1969a). They have helped to shape the regional transition of Khōjā identity from primarily ethnic to a religious identity with ethnic undertones through standardizing the religious curricula of the community's schools in the region and facilitating international exchange programs for Shia religious scholars from South Asia and the Near East. At the political level, the most visible achievements of the sixty-six-year history of the Africa Federation—the African division of the Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Federated Jamaats of Africa—have been its assistance in the evacuation of the Khōjā from Zanzibar in 1964 and from Uganda in 1972 and the complete evacuation of the Khōjā community from Mogadishu in 1991 (H.A.M. Jaffer 1991) and Yemen in 2015. The postcolonial political unrest in regions outside of Tanzania has transformed the Dar es Salaam Khōjā community into a regional nexus for the preservation of the diversity of African Khōjā identity and religious practice, a testament to the city's name: 'Haven of Peace.'

7 Member communities are located in the following states: Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Congo, Mozambique, and Madagascar (Africa Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaats of Africa 2012). In addition to the Africa Federation, the organization also includes the World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities. This group was formed in London in 1976 by Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer to coordinate all Khōjā communities worldwide and to preserve the ethnoreligious identity of the Khōjā. The Africa Federation is a member of its constituent assembly. The World Federation essentially serves as a global Khōjā *agora* through its conferences and functions in development as a nongovernmental organization (World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities 2012).

Khōjā Demographics in Modern-Day Africa

From the original 200 Khōjā residents in Dar es Salaam at the turn of the twentieth century, by 1961 the population had multiplied by almost a factor of 8.5, to approximately 1,696 Khōjā resident in Dar es Salaam. Of the total Tanganyikan Asian population of 102,395 on the eve of independence, the total number of Khōjā resident in colonial mainland Tanganyika was 6,043. In the same period, of the approximately 18,000 Asians living on the Zanzibar archipelago, 2,200 families were Khōjā (Dhī suprīm kāunsīl ōph dhī phēdarēśan ōph khōjā śīā isnāaśarī jamāts ōph āfrikā 1960, 96, 179). See Figure 1.

According to the 2008 census data of the Dar es Salaam *jamāt*, the total population of the Khōjā in Dar es Salaam was 6,908. The gender ratio of male to female was 1:1.05. Mapping the Khōjā population by age group, a distinct population bulge can be seen among youth, especially those aged twenty-one to thirty. Urban Khōjā demographics in the capital are slightly more evenly divided across age groups than the national population (United States Department of Commerce 2012) due to both historically higher-quality nutrition and better access to health care by Asians compared to Africans.

The rise in the population of Dar es Salaam in the last half century is not necessarily the result of higher fertility; rather, it resulted from two demographic shifts. First, the economic and social policies of Nyerere meant uncertainty and lack of access to the resources Asians had in the colonial period (Aminzade 2003). This resulted in an exodus from the hinterland to the capital for greater access to communal social and economic goods that was under way by the 1980s and concluded in the early 1990s. Second, the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964 meant a mass exodus from the archipelago to the mainland, as Dar es Salaam was the closest port and part of the newly federated Tanzania; thus most refugees remained within national boundaries in the capital. For more than a century, Zanzibar had been home to the largest Khōjā community on mainland eastern, central, and southern Africa (Dhī suprīm kāunsīl ōph dhī phēdarēśan ōph khōjā śīā isnāaśarī jamāts ōph āfrikā 1960, 177–198). Its collapse, as a direct result of the revolution, had tremendous sociocultural and religious reverberations for the African Khōjā and irrevocably changed the locus of Khōjā power, religious identity, and cultural production from Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam, where it remains until the present day.

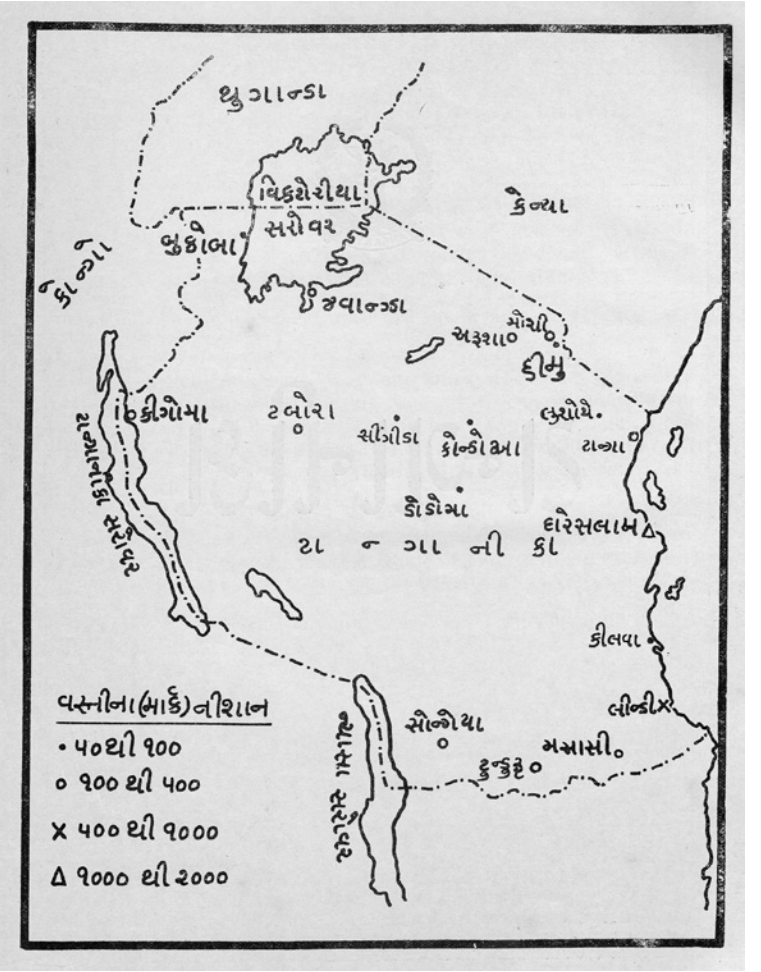


FIGURE 1 *A demographic map of Khōjā communities located in colonial Tanganyika, c. 1960.*
COURTESY OF THE FEDERATION OF KHŌJĀ SHIA ITHNA ASHERI JAMAATS OF AFRICA.

PART 2

Politics

Contemporary African Khōjā identity is inextricably bound to both recent eras of globalization: the contemporary and colonial periods. These processes were driven by European powers but also included regional power structures in the western Indian Ocean region such as the sultan and chiefs of the Swahili coast; Asian merchant communities navigated these regional power structures (Nicolini 2009b). Until the late colonial period, the Khōjā communities of Tanganyika and Zanzibar were allowed to retain a bounded Indic ethnoreligious identity, in part due to the racial policies of the colonial state. More than a century and a half as residents in the states of eastern Africa necessarily led to a process of limited acculturation. Precisely because of their status as free traders, they were able to establish religious institutions through constant familial, cultural, linguistic, and mercantile intercourse with their ancestral communities in the subcontinent. This allowed the Khōjā the ability to maintain a relatively apolitical caste identity.

As with the majority of colonized peoples, modernity was thrust on the Khōjā through colonization. If we interpret their history in light of Gillespie's thesis that modernity was a process of grappling with the challenge of nominalism (Gillespie 2009), we can see that the Khōjā response to nominalism was to firmly enthrone God and to create an intellectual fortress of religion outside of which scientific rationalism and capitalism could operate unabated. In the late colonial period, the Khōjā—particularly those who worked closely with the British in Zanzibar—applied constitutional organization and systems planning (House and Warfield 1969) toward the goal of serving the community, and, as they saw it, strengthening an idea of religion that surpassed their ethnoreligious tradition in the service of 'Shiism.' This meant the appropriation of certain municipal functions for the development of communally run public institutions, such as hospitals, schools, and cemeteries. Management and expansion of these bodies necessitated the development of financial, bureaucratic, and managerial expertise that mirrored their mercantile corporations. The institutionalization of communal power through the democratic process around a central religious identity publically signaled the transition of the African Khōjā from *jñāt* to *jamāt*.

Eighteenth-century Saurāṣṭra (Spodek 1975) and Zanzibar (Sheriff 1987; Nicolini 2009b) mirrored forms of social organization in which communities had specific socioeconomic roles in the political ordering and functioning of society, somewhat akin to the Near Eastern 'Circle of Justice' postulate (London 2011). As in the Ottoman world, reciprocal relationships categorized the interactions between groups and the ruler (Aral 2004). The colonial period ushered in a citizenship and rights discourse to which African Asians were

generally indifferent, when defined in nationalist terms. In contrast, the politics of grievance became embedded within black African nationalism in colonial Tanganyika (Sunseri 2007).

The 1964 revolution in Zanzibar and the 1967 launch of Nyerere's *ujamaa* ('socialist') policies, through which all sectors of the economy and land were nationalized, coincided with citizenship requirements in Tanzania that imposed reporting requirements and restricted access to social goods and employment for those residents who did not wish to give up their British protectorate citizenship. The marginalization of Asian communities throughout East Africa (Ghai 1965) led the Tanzanian Khōjā to concentrate their resources on further developing the institutional structures of the *jamāt* in Dar es Salaam to meet the needs of both the refugee Zanzibari community and Khōjā communities migrating from the interior to the capital. The postcolonial period saw an increasing marginalization of Asians in the economic and political life of East Africa, which culminated in the 1972 expulsion of Asians from Uganda by Idi Amin. The precarious political position of Asian Africans meant that the political currents of modern globalization, such as citizenship, had to be mastered in short order.

The idea of citizenship is defined by the relationship of the citizen to the state (Heater 1999) or of the state to the globalized citizen (Sassen 2009). Citizenship invokes languages of social and political rights demanded of the state as well as of the responsibilities of citizens to it. These constructs are being increasingly challenged by the mobility of citizens (Beiner 1994), particularly Muslim migrants to Western Europe and North America (Soysal 1997). Both Heater and Beiner call for a 'world' or 'universal' citizenship based on notions of universal human rights and civics education, respectively, that broadens the hitherto narrow focus of nationalist agendas and moves toward a global political identity that embraces diversity and allows for points of global political convergence, such as the International Court of Justice.

The modern notion of citizenship is the result of the evolution of more than 2,000 years of Western political thought, whereby the evolution from classical poleis to civitates to medieval realms and finally to nation-states created modern ideologies, which finally bound the identities of peoples through civil religion to the structures of political power in the regions in which they resided. The Khōjā had begun to leave the subcontinent before the nationalist project began in earnest in their ancestral home and, by virtue of their position as economic intermediaries, were isolated from the nationalist discourses of Africanism in East Africa. The African Khōjā evolved a primary religious loyalty to and identification with their local *jamāt*, which functioned as a polis, and to the *imāmvāḍō*, which functioned as an agora.

During the postcolonial period, Tanzanian Khōjā who migrated northward into Western Europe and North America became fully deterritorialized and were forced into a process of 'Islamic' identity formation based on differentiation, relativization, and socialization among their minority ethnic neighbors (Robertson 1992). This new translocal culture bore an imagined world (Appadurai 1996) that connected the members of the worldwide Khōjā *jamāt* based on an idealized Near Eastern Shiism through the cultural experience of Africa. As a disaporic community, the African Khōjā leaped from the polis to global citizenship without a firm sense of state nationalism. The use of dual and triple citizenship by many members of the Khōjā community can be understood through Ong's concept of 'flexible citizenship' in an era defined by Soysal as 'postnationalism.' And yet, the state is not politically irrelevant, as people from the Global South do not flow northward quite as freely as do their manufactured goods (Jacobson 2009). The African Khōjā have been able to maintain the economic advantage of caste kin networks through the *jamāt* while reimagining their identity to engage in the discourses of global Shiism. The national is understood in relation to either the local or the global. It is possible that the Khōjā represent a new facet of Muslim global citizenship through the continuing evolution of the *jamāt* as an aggregator of the community's socioeconomic resources directed toward local and global religious aspirations.

CHAPTER 3

The Evolution of Khōjā Political Power: Religious Citizenship

Introduction

How is power constructed among and imposed on the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar? In the transition from *jñāt* to *jamāt*, how was it reconstructed and why? To what extent did the African experience change the Khōjā who migrated there? What is the political identity of the Khōjā in Tanzania and what is their role as global citizens in shaping international relations? The Khōjā inhabit a political interspace as Asians; they are not fully Tanzanian or fully Indian. And yet, they are an important constituency with their own institutions that bypass and surpass the state. This chapter seeks to examine how Khōjā political organization evolved in Tanzania and, in doing so, how it redefined communal membership from a caste-based system, with power vested in a plutocratic elite, to a democratic community organized around a religious creed—that is, a system of religious citizenship.

Khōjā Membership as Communal Citizenship

It is pertinent to ask at this point why we use the term 'citizenship,' as opposed to 'membership,' in regard to this religious community. The term 'citizenship' is normally a legal concept associated with membership in a nation-state. The use of the neologism 'religious citizenship' is apt because there are legal rights associated with being an official member of the Khōjā community, such as the community's ability to issue birth and death certificates and marriage licenses and to provide legal arbitration in matters of personal law. Additionally, in Dar es Salaam, the official Khōjā membership card provides discounts at community institutions such as pharmacies and, for the destitute, offers social welfare in the form of monthly payments toward rent, utilities, and food. In its most state-like function, the Khōjā community conducts foreign affairs directly with heads of state, bypassing the nation-state apparatus. The most vivid example of this is seen in the actions of the leader of the Āgākhānī Khōjā, Karim al-Husayni:

> All this has only accentuated the Imamate's state-like form, given its efforts to standardise Ismaili practices globally as if in a nation-state, claim ambassadorial status for the Imam's representatives in parts of Asia, Africa and even Europe or North America, and lend the Aga Khan the perquisites of a head of state by having him sign protocols of cooperation with kings, presidents and prime ministers. Indeed the community has its own constitution, flag and even, in the case of the Khojas, an anthem. (Devji 2009, xii)

Just as multinational corporations, such as Coke or Nestlé, have used globalization of the national-state system to set up transnational networks facilitating the flow of goods and services through affiliated companies throughout the world, so too the Khōjā have exported their corporate organization worldwide through the local *jamāt* linked by confederation. Khōjā religious citizenship can thus be envisaged as a possible next iteration of communal citizenship and religious organization in the age of globalization.

Conditions of Membership

Who is Khōjā and how is one deemed eligible for membership and the substantial benefits the community provides in Tanzania? When this question is addressed to members of the community, it seems absurd, as, to them, the answer is self-evident: being Khōjā is a clear Asian ethnic identity divisible by Islamic creed. As with most identities, its boundaries can be found by examining both the center and the periphery.

The Center: Ethnicity and Gender

At the center, Khōjā identity functions as caste identity. This identity can be thought of as a shared genetic[1] profile that has emerged from centuries of endogamy.[2] Among the few thousand Khōjā in Dar es Salaam, caste identity is reinforced through regular or annual attendance of religious observances and performance of distinct rituals at the *imāmvāḍō* and *mēhphīl*. Shared communal experiences, such as attendance at the community's seminary, and familial relations allow mutual recognition among Khōjā members. The Khōjā are

1 Aside from phenotypic characteristics, certain genetic diseases predominate among the Khōjā, such as thalassemia.

2 This endogamy is evolving with periodic introductions of new genetic profiles through intermarriage, usually from other South Asian Shia communities.

also distinguished by physical identity markers, such as the particular form of veil observed by women, the silver carnelian rings worn by men, or the black or green *dōrā*[3] ('strings') worn by both genders on the right hand for spiritual protection.

However, the core method by which Khōjā of a particular community in East Africa know one another is through recollection of a 'mental map' of community members and ancestral figures. The mental map of community members is updated by visual interaction with other caste members. If, for instance, a Khōjā from Kampala came to Dar es Salaam and wished to be recognized as Khōjā by members of the community, he or she would need to indicate the names of family members who are known to the local questioner or to trace his or her lineage to familiar Khōjā pioneers of the nineteenth century, like Bhalloo Vali. Once the questioner recognizes the name of the family member and the family member's relationship to the individual being questioned, his or her identity is verified. This ancient system of recognizing *jñāti birādarī* ('caste brethren') allowed immediate transactional trust in long-distance commerce among the Khōjā, for family members serve as additional insurance against delinquent debtor relatives. Over time, this method became regionalized, as relationships with the Khōjā in other regions tapered off, such that a Khōjā of Dar es Salaam might be able to validate a Khōjā from Mombasa but might be unlikely to be able to easily validate or place equal trust in a visiting Khōjā from Ahmedabad. The possibility of subversion is almost nonexistent, as the unique dialects and caste rituals serve to further (in)validate Khōjā identity.

Among the African Khōjā communities, currently membership in a *jamāt* is restricted to Khōjā males. Female membership exists through the closest male relative. The restrictions of both gender and Khōjā ethnicity, as exists in Africa, are being challenged in the Western diaspora in locales such as London[4] and Toronto, which have tended toward a more multicultural and egalitarian approach to membership and administration. Essentially, the tension of Indic versus Islamic identity is expressed in how the Khōjā self-referentially identify as either Ithnā ʿAsharī Khōjā or Ithnā ʿAsharī exclusively within a pan-Shia ideology. This is another example of the contemporary tension between the older *jñāti* and *jamātī* identities as organizing principles and the emergent *ummatī*

3 These *dōrā* represent ʿAlī and Ḥusayn, respectively. The practice of wearing *dōrā* is common among Asian communities; the colors symbolize membership in a community—for example, red and saffron represent the Svāminārāyaṇ.

4 For example, the organization Mahfil Ali in North Harrow, London, refused to use the term 'Khōjā' in its name or organizing documents or to restrict full membership to only the Khōjā.

ideal. Intermarriage—particularly with black Africans—is still a contentious issue for the Khōjā, despite there being substantive black Shia communities closely connected with the Khōjā missionary movement.

The Periphery: Intermarriage and Half-Castes

Khōjā identity is also contested on the periphery. Particularly problematic is the categorization of offspring from intermarriage. One of the demographic issues of the Dar es Salaam community is the slightly higher female-to-male ratio among those in the marriageable age range, which has necessitated the importation of grooms, primarily from Pakistan.[5] Although they are generally Shia, these men are not necessarily Khōjā. The Asian racial identity of a child from intermarriage between a Khōjā and a non-Khōjā Asian allows that child Khōjā membership with few communal reservations. Interracial marriage is another issue entirely.

Common among the nineteenth-century Khōjā of Zanzibar was the practice of interracial marriage, or liaison, particularly before Asian women were brought to Zanzibar for permanent residence in the mid- to late nineteenth century. A Khōjā merchant might have had a plural marriage with an Asian Khōjā first wife, an Iranian second wife, an Arab third wife, and an African fourth wife.[6] This practice was less common among mainland communities, such as Dar es Salaam. Although, theoretically, any outcaste marriage would provoke disdain by the community, marriage to an 'African' and the resulting offspring were particularly problematic, principally on the mainland, as the cosmopolitan nature of Zanzibari society allowed for an overarching national identity that transcended strict racial categorizations. The category 'African' was a racial distinction but was also, for Asians, a form of defining oneself against the local other. This racism toward the 'African' was a composite of inherent Asian attitudes and European colonial categorizations, which placed both the European and the Asian above the African in the colonial racial hierarchy (Sheriff 2001).

The child of an Asian Khōjā father and African mother would derogatorily be referred to as *chotara* ('half-caste' in Swahili). The rights of an offspring from a Khōjā-African liaison were particularly problematic when it came to inheritance and the privileges of the child from within the Khōjā caste; 'illegitimacy' complicated these issues. The first case of half-caste rights brought before a Zanzibar court was *Nasur Jesa v. Hurbayee, widow of Jesa Dhamani* in 1878.

5 This ratio is based on demographic data provided by the Census Committee in 2008.

6 These racial terms are self-referential identities, because the nature of intermarriage on the archipelago over centuries has blurred strict racial classifications.

Nasur Jesa was the son of Jesa Damani and wished to be given an equal share of the inheritance from his father's estate. The Khōjā wife, Hirbayee, claimed that he was illegitimate and, according to Khōjā caste law, ineligible to receive a share of the inheritance, as Khōjā caste law followed Hindu custom rather than Islamic laws of inheritance. The testimony of Khōjā elders, such as that of Tharia Topan, favored disallowing the inheritance of half-castes. Justice Foster finally ruled in favor of the plaintiff, citing the intent of Damani's will; this ruling set an African precedent, which contravened half-caste disinheritance as practiced by the Khōjā of Bombay (Amiji 1971, 606).

In the twenty-first century, the issue of multiracial members has been settled by African Khōjā custom. In Dar es Salaam, if the father or mother regularly brings the child to the Khōjā caste hall or shrine and if the child has participated from a young age with other Khōjā youth in institutions such as madrassa, he or she is treated as an equal within the Khōjā community. Intermarriage between Asians and Africans is still rare in Dar es Salaam; intercaste marriages among Asian communities are far more common. Rather than seeing this trend as positive discrimination against black Africans, we can view it as a result of the insular nature of the Asian subculture in central Dar es Salaam; that is, Asian Africans share a common Afro-Asian language, cultural referents, and a familiarity with Bollywood popular culture, which makes it easier for young Asians to communicate with one another—despite religious and caste differences—than with black African youth of the same age demographic for whom Tanzanian Swahili culture and language predominate.

With the establishment of the Bilal Muslim Mission in 1964 by Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, a new issue arose: the black Shia. Until this point, to be religiously Twelver Shia in eastern, central, and southern Africa was almost synonymous with or connected to the ethnic Khōjā caste. The propagation of Shia Islam, exclusively funded by the Khōjā, was well received by many Africans in the last half of the twentieth century. This so much so that in the twenty-first century, the black Shia of Tanzania outnumber the Khōjā by an estimated ratio of 2:1 (Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania 2007). This spurred the creation of an indigenous Swahili form of Shia Islam through the leadership of scholars such as Sheikh Abdillahi Nassir. Within central Dar es Salaam, the Bilal Mission masjid in Kariakoo is separate from the Khōjā masjid in the city center. The Khōjā are comfortable with funding missionary work; however, intermingling at the social level is seen as problematic and has resulted in discrimination against black Shias who venture into the Khōjā *imāmvāḍō* through accusations of impurity, a lack of commitment to the faith, and poor character. According to a confidential report of the Mombasa *jamāt* in 1987,

> Shias of Black Origin are being looked down upon and being insulted for coming to Mosque and Imamvados. They have been made to feel that they are unwelcome, and as a result Students and Maalims are now not prepared to come to our Mosques and Imamvados in order to maintain their self-respect. . . . Complaints are being lodged and propaganda made to the effect that these people are not acquainted with TAHARAT [ritual purity] and as such are making the Mosque Najis [ritually impure]. To what extent are Khojas acquainted with Taharat we know better! (Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Mombasa 1987, 1–5)

There are, however, points of convergence between the two communities, particularly during Muharram. Each weekend during the forty days of mourning, the Dar es Salaam *jamāt* organizes bus trips to the Bilal Mission mosques in the area, such as Temeke and Bagamoyo, where Khōjā and African Shias engage in ritual observance and break bread together. These interactions are limited and denote a clear power structure in which the Khōjā are distinct from the African Shia and are engaging with them on their own terms.

Constitutional Organization

In the nineteenth century, the Khōjā caste became more than an ethnic community and voluntary organization. Interaction with the British in India and Zanzibar allowed for a gradual transformation of the Khōjā *jamāt* into a constitutional body. For the Khōjā, the constitution is essential to local polis organization as well as for each international organizational body, such as the Africa Federation. Each constitution lays out rules of membership, bylaws, membership dues, election rules and terms, administrative positions, and so on. So internalized has this form of organization become among the Khōjā that mid- to late nineteenth-century communal religious endowments were bequeathed through trust deeds and corporate wills or probates rather than with the *vakaphnāmũ̃* ('Islamic writ of endowment'). Figure 2 presents a notice discussing changes to the Khōjā constitution, along with a line-by-line translation.

Contemporary Khōjā identity is based on these institutions and constitutional forms of organization as both immutable and essential to corporate organization. Wherever the Khōjā settle as a community, a *jamāt* is formed to organize the community and build institutions to support it. The normal offices of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer are present in all Khōjā constitutions, each with a limited term and carefully bounded powers.

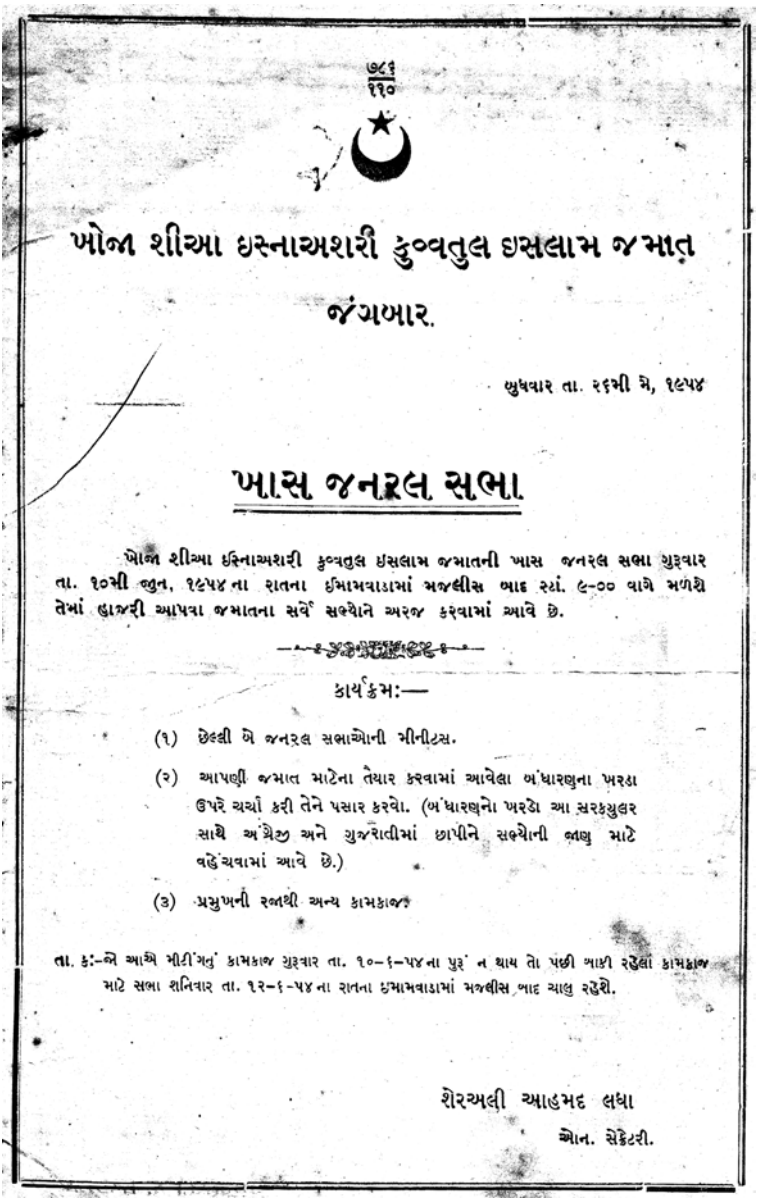
The republican nature of the Khōjā *jamāt* is critical to its identity and, for the caste members, is a means of identifying themselves against their Āgākhānī brethren. As the African Khōjā began to experiment with higher levels of organization, they exported their local and regional republican models of organization back to India, helping to establish such regional organizations as the Kucch Federation and the Council of Gujarat. The consolidation of the original Africa Federation has itself been contentious. Each 'triennial conference' and 'extraordinary conference' of the Federation is beset with conflicts among various communities couched in the language of parliamentary procedure, the main issue being a balance of power.[7]

At the onset of the twenty-first century, the Dar es Salaam Khōjā community is the largest and wealthiest in Africa. Its interests tend to dominate, to the consternation of smaller communities. Because it is organized through a system of proportional representation[8] (Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats of Africa 1993–2003), smaller and relatively poorer communities must form alliances and use parliamentary procedures to ensure that their interests are accounted for in final deliberations. Aside from power and wealth, there are other cleavages within the federation, such as language and culture. For instance, there is a distinct separation between the mainland communities and the Francophone islands of the western Indian Ocean. The mainland communities send individuals representing each particular community, whereas the Francophone communities of Madagascar, Mayotte, and Réunion have formed the Conseil Régional des Khojas Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamates de l'Océan Indien, which has a separate council apart from the Anglophone Africa Federation (CROI 2011). The Francophone insistence on the use of Gujarati is a pronounced difference from the Anglophone mainland transition to English in Khōjā affairs. The political complexity and intrigues found within the Federation rival that of any international governmental organization.

Although *jamāt* constitutional parliamentary procedure is modeled after British practice, Khōjā constitutions are a composite of Khōjā organizational history. Two early modern organizational remnants present in all Khōjā constitutions in eastern, central, and southern Africa are the appointed posts of

7 A full fifth of the total Gujarati and English archival correspondence housed in the Africa Federation archives in Dar es Salaam deals with issues related to parliamentary procedure and constitutional matters of the Federation.

8 The Federation's system of proportional representation designates one representative for every one hundred members in each particular *jamāt*.



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ખોજા શીઆ ઇસ્નાઅશરી કુવ્વતુલ ઇસલામ જમાત

જંગબાર.

બુધવાર તા. ૨૬મી મે, ૧૯૫૪

ખાસ જનરલ સભા.

ખોજા શીઆ ઇસ્નાઅશરી કુવ્વતુલ ઇસલામ જમાતની ખાસ જનરલ સભા ગુરૂવાર તા. ૧૦મી જુન, ૧૯૫૪ના રાતના ઇમામવાડામાં મજલીસ બાદ રાં. ૯-૦૦ વાગે મળશે તેમાં હાજરી આપવા જમાતના સર્વે સભ્યોને અરજ કરવામાં આવે છે.

કાર્યક્રમ:—

(૧) છેલ્લી બે જનરલ સભાઓની મીનીટસ.

(૨) આપણી જમાત માટેના તૈયાર કરવામાં આવેલા બંધારણના ખરડા ઉપરે ચર્ચા કરી તેને પસાર કરવો. (બંધારણનો ખરડો આ સરકયુલર સાથે અંગ્રેજી અને ગુજરાતીમાં છાપીને સભ્યોની જાણ માટે વહેંચવામાં આવે છે.)

(૩) પ્રમુખની રજાથી અન્ય કામકાજ

તા. ક:-બે આગે મીટીંગનું કામકાજ ગુરૂવાર તા. ૧૦-૬-૫૪ના પુરૂં ન થાય તો પછી બાકી રહેલાં કામકાજ માટે સભા શનિવાર તા. ૧૨-૬-૫૪ના રાતના ઇમામવાડામાં મજલીસ બાદ ચાલુ રહેશે.

શેરઅલી આહમદ લધા
ઓન. સેક્રેટરી.

FIGURE 2 (*a*) *A document containing general body minutes/constitutional changes by the Khōjā Kuwwatul Islam* jamāt *in Zanzibar, 1954.*

786
110

Khōjā Shia Ithnā ʿAsharī Kuvvatul Islām Jamāt of Zanzibar

Wednesday 26 May 1954

Special General Body Meeting

The Khōjā Shia Ithnā ʿAsharī Kuvvatul Isalām *jamāt* will have a special general body meeting Thursday 10 June 1954 in the *imāmvāḍō* after the *majlīs* at 19.00h in the evening to which the presence of all community members is requested.

Program:

1. Minutes from the previous two general body meetings
2. To discuss and pass the proposed constitution for our *jamāt*. (The draft constitution attached to this circular has been printed in English and Gujarati to be distributed as notice among the membership.)
3. President's remaining business

Postscript: If the proposed items are not completed on Thursday 10 June 1954, then remaining business shall be reviewed at the meeting on the evening of Saturday 12 June 1954 in the *imāmvāḍō* after the *majlīs*.

Sherali Ahmed Ladha
Hon. Secretary

FIGURE 2 (*b*) *Special general body meeting notice.*

mukhī ('chief') and *kamāḍīyā* ('accountant').[9] The remit of these two posts is largely ceremonial and is limited to the institutions of caste halls, shrines, and mosques. Historically, the chief and accountant had the authority to organize, fund, and maintain the religious rituals of the Khōjā. The larger modern Khōjā welfare state apparatus that emerged in the twentieth century is organized and executed through the elected leadership, to which the chief and accountant ultimately report. The retention of these two positions allows for a historical continuity of the modern Khōjā polis.

Taxation

There are three funding streams for the Dar es Salaam Khōjā: subscriptions, tithing, and personal donations. The first funding stream is the *lavājam* ('yearly subscription'), the smallest share of overall funding. It is levied on each adult male within the community and is a precondition for an individual's voting rights within the community. In 2008, the subscription rate in Dar es Salaam was TZS 100,000 (USD 65) per year, and payment entitles the Khōjā male to voting, custody, finance, management, and leadership rights within the Khōjā community of particular locale (Census Committee—Dar es Salaam 2008). Any major movement of an individual within the communal hierarchy necessitates payment of the subscription. As with taxation, poorer members of the community are given an exemption, after a detailed financial assessment by the welfare/social services subcommittee.

The second funding stream is *khums*, the Shia tradition of one-fifth tithing. The Khōjā observe the nineteenth-century practice of remitting their tithes to an ayatollah deemed to be the *marja'ē taklīd* ('source of emulation'). This fifth can be further divided into two parts, the *sahmē imām* ('portion for the imam') and the *sahmē sadāt* ('portion for the Prophet's descendants'). The current source of emulation for the Dar es Salaam Khōjā is Ayatollah Sistani in Iraq. Each Khōjā community collects the tithe from its members; these funds are pooled by region and presented to the ayatollah yearly. The Khōjā have received a dispensation for the Imam's portion, such that half of the total tithing remains with each community. These funds are then reinvested in community projects such as infrastructure development, education, healthcare initiatives, and so on. This funding and allegiance to an ayatollah serves

9 Whereas the Khōjā have adopted a republican form of communal organization, which has limited the remit of the chief and accountant, the Āgākhānī Khōjā have allowed the chief and accountant to retain a degree of spiritual authority in caste affairs.

to enhance and reinforce the Near Eastern element of contemporary Khōjā Islamic identity.

The third and final funding stream is personal donations to the community. The communal nature of Khōjā society encourages private funding of communal projects, from which status is derived. Wealthy members of the community are expected to be patrons of the community and to donate for communal welfare. The ancient Khōjā ritual of *jamaṇ* ('communal feast') is seen as central to communal identity and its funding is viewed as meritorious, particularly during the first ten days of Muharram. Funding community building projects is a means for attaining immortality within the communal consciousness, as the names of benefactors are inscribed on the completed projects and their deeds are recorded for posterity; this information is periodically disseminated throughout the community's periodicals and listservs. Historically, Khōjā donations to the community were made in two areas: communal feasts and building-construction projects. As the Khōjā community is evolving into an efficient polis and as sectors of the Tanzanian economy are developing into service-oriented fields, a shift is needed in personal donations toward investments into human capital.[10] It is challenging for a mercantile caste whose historical conception of communal identity and endowments was expressed in tangible terms to now transition to the intangibility of investing in the intellectual development of the caste and its members.

Social Welfare

In the absence of a functioning modern welfare state in Tanzania and with the help of multinational corporate organizational and bureaucratic skills acquired from European colonization, the Khōjā over time developed all of the institutions needed to replicate the modern welfare state for its members. Some of the institutions developed—such as the Ebrahim Haji Charitable Dispensary—are open to the public but allow their own members reduced or free access to services. Other services, such as subsidized housing, are exclusively intended for the community's economically disadvantaged membership. Within Khōjā caste identity there is the Kacchī concept of *jamātīʿāʾī* ('communal rights'). Because it was the reinvestment of communal funds that built these institutions, community members believe they have a right to use

10 Interview with a Khōjā male professional and a member of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā Higher Education Board in his early sixties, Dar es Salaam, 7 February 2008.

them. One illustrative example of this belief in communal right and of challenges to the social welfare function of the polis is the current housing crisis.

The origins of the housing crisis in Dar es Salaam can be traced to the Arusha Declaration of 1967; the declaration's nationalization of property and of other key sectors of the economy hit the Asian trading class particularly hard. For about three decades after independence, the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam stagnated economically. It shook the confidence of the Khōjā to have lost their wealth and be unable to engage in their caste profession. Unable to conduct licit trade, some Khōjā participated in the burgeoning informal economy, bringing goods from the port of Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam.

During this socialist period, the majority of Khōjā living in central Dar es Salaam lived in Asian-built tenements, which had been nationalized and were administered by NHC. The NHC imposed rent control on these properties, artificially insulating the tenants, who were predominantly Asians, from rising rents in the city over three decades. With the economic collapse of Tanzania in the 1990s and the opening of the nation to global capitalism through policies of economic liberalization during the presidency of Ali Hassan Mwinyi (1985–1995), the class divide among the Khōjā became more pronounced.

The opening of markets was initially beneficial to the Khōjā, as they had maintained their transnational links with other Khōjā communities in the region, such as Dubai. They imported manufactured goods by the container. According to a respondent, "in those times we were able to buy a thing for ten dollars from Dubai and sell in Dar for one hundred dollars."[11] The profit margin was so high and the need for manufactured goods in Tanzania so great that an entire generation of Khōjā boys did not complete higher secondary education and/or university and instead worked at the family business, importing and exporting goods. With the demand satiated, the economy stabilized in the late 1990s, and competition from African merchants meant that an entire generation of Khōjā men without higher-education qualifications or technical skills was unable to compete in the emerging service economy of Dar es Salaam. This 'container culture'[12] generation of men, and their families, has slipped from the middle to lower class in the span of a decade, and the men and their families are routinely in need of the community's welfare assistance.

The economic challenge for this generation of Khōjā men was compounded by a NHC policy of selling nationalized houses for demolition. In 2008, the rent in a newly constructed building without rent control (USD 1,500)

11 Interview with a Khōjā male merchant in his mid-forties, central Dar es Salaam, 1 August 2008.

12 Ibid.

was approximately ten times the original rent-controlled cost (USD 150), making it almost impossible for poor and lower-middle-income families to live in the city. Notice of only three months or less is given to each family living in the building before the demolition of these houses, and, of course, no viable legal recourse is available. The rapid rate of demolitions in central Dar es Salaam in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century has exacerbated this housing crisis, and impoverished members of the community have turned to the *jamāt* leadership to solve this problem (Abizer 2009; World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities 2013).

The combined needs of the housing crisis and the container culture generation have put a strain on communal resources. It is estimated that, of the remaining 3,100 Khōjā households living in continental East Africa, 600 are completely dependent on communal welfare funds (Daya 2012). Initiatives to build cheap community housing for those losing their property and programs to update skills, such as vocational training in technology, are slow processes beset by bureaucratic hurdles and lack of will. However, there are other salient social issues that have recently affected the community on which the leadership has taken bold and swift action. The leaders quickly responded to the rise of the HIV-AIDS epidemic in Tanzania in the 1990s by imposing a mandatory HIV-AIDS test on all Khōjā couples before marriage (Daya 1996/1416). The social and economic policies of the *jamāt* are responses to the Khōjā expectation that the community leadership respond to all manner of social, economic, and political change in Dar es Salaam. For many Khōjā, personal identity is intimately tied to the *jamāt*; it allows a ceding of personal responsibility to the polis to enact policies for the preservation and advancement of the individual through the community.

Foreign Policy

The strongest argument for the Khōjā *jamāt* as polis is its ability to conduct direct negotiation with nation-states and to extract concessions for the community. Two examples of this in the late twentieth century, one in Uganda in 1972 and another in Somalia in 1991, demonstrate this acquisition of foreign policy power, generally for the nation-state.

Uganda: 1972 Asian Expulsion

Idi Amin's expulsion order of Asians from Uganda on 7 August 1972 meant that all Asian communities had to find a way to exit the country within ninety days, though there were some Asian families that hid in rural Uganda after the

expulsion date. It was unclear until toward end of that deadline whether the UK government would allow Asians with British protectorate passports and stateless Asians to relocate to the United Kingdom (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1972). In the interim, the Āgākhānī Khōjā took the step to migrate westward to Canada (Valpy 2002), and the Khōjā looked eastward toward Pakistan.

This choice begs the question, why choose Pakistan if the ancestral home of the African Khōjā was located in contemporary India? In the aftermath of partition, the African Khōjā came to view Pakistan as a Muslim homeland for Asians. The escalating violence against Muslims and the rise in Hindu nationalism in Gujarat was perceived to make India inhospitable for Muslim émigrés. Additionally, Pakistan was established by a converted Khōjā, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and Karachi was home to wealthy Khōjā industrialists such as the Habib Kansara (Habib Bank Ltd.) and Jetha Gokal clans. They would be instrumental in helping émigrés to integrate, by establishing initiatives such as the Panjetani Welfare Society in Karachi (Ramji 1971; "Ravivārē ī. āphrikā vāsī'ō nī sabhā" 1971).

Because it was the Ugandan state itself that functioned as the instrument of oppression, the Khōjā used the Africa Federation and transnational caste connections in Pakistan to bypass the postcolonial nation-state and to directly secure immigration waivers and visas for their 3,500 brethren trapped in Uganda (High Commission for Pakistan 1971; Secretariat 1970). The majority of African Khōjā who migrated to Pakistan did so before the 1972 expulsion order; at most, this represented only 300 people. The majority of African Khōjā eventually opted to migrate to Western Europe and North America, as those avenues rapidly opened toward the end of Idi Amin's deadline. Although Pakistan ended up not being the main destination for the Ugandan Khōjā, its preparation was instrumental in helping the Khōjā federation to develop experience and in giving it an opportunity to negotiate at the nation-state level to achieve its objectives by bringing to bear its weight through local Khōjā communities.

Somalia: Operation Ghadeer

The development of the Khōjā community's foreign policy interventions has emerged out of necessity in the instability of postcolonial Africa. One example of the coordination of international humanitarian assistance by the Africa Federation—organized by the Khōjā communities of Mombasa, Nairobi, and Dar es Salaam—is Operation Ghadeer, an evacuation of the entire Mogadishu Khōjā community to Kenya and Tanzania between 10 and 15 January 1991 (Rashid and Rashid 1411/1991).

With the deterioration of the Somali political situation, leading to the ouster of Mohamed Siad Barre in January 1991, the Khōjā Africa Federation embarked on a final evacuation of the entire Khōjā community. The Federation had been monitoring the political situation since 1989, when Hashim Okera of Mogadishu visited the Dar es Salaam community to discuss evacuation of unmarried girls and to prepare current passports for all community members for possible exodus. By December 1990, the situation had deteriorated quickly, and those Mogadishu Khōjā members wanting to relocate voluntarily, particularly women and children, were offered free travel to Nairobi by the Supreme Council of the Africa Federation (Daya and Chagani 1411/1991). With the fall of the capital in January 1991 and the evacuation of all major embassies,

> a four-man committee comprised of Sajjad M. Rashid, Chairman of Mombasa Jamaat; Ashiqhussein M. Rashid, Chairman of Nairobi Jamaat; Raza A. Mooraj, a former resident of Mogadicio domiciled in Nairobi and Hassan A.M. Jaffer, a Councilor of Africa and the World Federation was formed. (H.A.M. Jaffer 1991, 33)

The committee decided to act by hiring a ship captained by the Khōjā Sajjad Rashid and, with a small contingent, embarked from Mombasa to Mogadishu to evacuate the Khōjā of Somalia. Coordination was needed in order to achieve safe passage and to cross international boundaries. The committee was initially working with the Italian government, but Pakistani naval support was needed for the evacuation of the Italian ambassador from the capital. Captain Rashid recorded in his log that they arrived in Mogadishu on 12 January 1991 at 11:45 a.m. At this point they realized the situation has deteriorated even further since their last communication and sent a seven-man advance party, from the thirteen onboard, to assess the situation of the community on the ground. Matters took a precarious turn when the two lifeboats broke down on shore on the party's arrival, and the committee was forced to negotiate with militants for safe passage of the evacuees onboard the M/S *Ambassador 1*. A total of 1,053 evacuees were finally brought safely to Mombasa, of which 780 were Khōjā (H.W. Datoo 1426/2005). Coordination with the Kenyan government provided the evacuees with legal status to reside in the country as refugees coordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and there was a dispersal of the community as many sought refuge in Dar es Salaam. The leadership of the Khōjā *jamāt* in Dar es Salaam—Alhaj Anverbhai Rajabali Dharamsi, Alhaj Azim Dewji, and Alhaj Ramadhan Bhai Nanji, the chairman of the Africa Federation—eventually arranged Tanzanian citizenship

for the Mogadishu Khōjā who wished to reside in Tanzania (H.W. Datoo 1426/2005).

This case also illustrates the interconnected nature of Khōjā religious identity and foreign policy. The federation's navigation of international borders and of national bureaucracy and its appropriation of the foreign policy power of a state were motivated and executed through devout belief in the mission and its divine sanction. This is most clearly recorded in the log of the captain's wife, Tahera Rashid, who recounts that in "the darkest hour of the mission when the seven men were on shore, no boats available, and gunfire heard throughout the night of the first day in Mogadishu," she and six other female volunteers from the community on board held an all-night vigil. She writes,

> I remember that Monday night when after all effort—leaving no stone unturned—there were no signs of slightest success, we did not sleep that whole night. We did Amale Ashura in the dark under the open sky. We recited "Amaan Yujibu" several thousand times. We called "Ya Ali" 125,000 times. We besought Allah to have mercy on His suffering humanity; our community, and our seven volunteers. We prayed to forgive our sins if those stood in the way of our success of the rescue mission. We beseeched him to deliver our people for the sake of Masumeen A.S. I feel Allah replied our Duas, for which we shall always be grateful to Him. (Rashid and Rashid 1411/1991, 7)

Conclusion

The African experience was transformative for the Khōjā of eastern, central, and southern Africa. Without realizing it, they had become diasporic without the ability to return to their ancestral home, as was made clear to the Ugandan Asians by Indira Gandhi (Gupte 2012, 5–6) before the expulsion. Particularly for the Zanzibari community, their close work with the colonial administration and the social milieu of the sultanate meant that the Khōjā both adopted modern bureaucracy and ideas of representational government and imbibed the Islamic ethos of the island to the point that, when the caste schism occurred, it forced a reevaluation of caste identity and of the boundaries of inclusion. The indigenization of the Zanzibari community and their later exodus to the mainland and onward to Western Europe and North America transformed the Dar es Salaam community and set the stage for international coordination, based in London, of Khōjā communities worldwide. Their small numbers, shared

experiences, and intimate knowledge of the intricacies of citizenship and the nation-state system have allowed them to achieve what Olson termed 'the logic of collective action' (Olson 1971) in negotiating the international system to aid their communities worldwide within the strengthening *ummatī* identity of an elusive pan-Shiism.

PART 3

Linguistics

The majority of sociolinguistic research on either Zanzibar or Dar es Salaam has almost exclusively focused on the identities that have evolved or been subsumed in the interaction among regional languages in Tanzania—primarily, Swahili and English (Brenzinger 1992; Kahigi, Kihore, and Mous 2000; Mekacha 1993; Pütz, Fishman, and Neff-van Aertselaer 2006; Sebondea 2012). There appears to be little, if any, systematic linguistic analysis of the dialects of Gujarati used on the archipelago or the mainland, and there is much less scholarship on Kacchī. The two chapters in this section employ philological methods to reconstruct the evolution of Khōjā religious identity through the development of Khōjā Gujarati orthography and epigraphy and through an examination of a printed religious text that was ubiquitous among the Khōjā of eastern, central, and southern Africa until the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Although this section focuses on printed texts, ethnographic research aids in contextualizing the possible ways in which these texts were actually read and understood. The central question addressed is how language records shifts in communal religious identities. Language expresses power relationships and can also contest them, be performative, create group identities in opposition to others, reflect class and gender disparities, and connect disparate communities to a singular narrative of being and purpose (Joseph 2004; Ennaji 2005; Omoniyi and Whitse 2006 Edwards 2009 and Mooney et al. 2011). The preponderance of certain languages, methods and forms communication, and discourses reveal how Khōjā identity is constructed in various linguistic mediums over time. The native languages of the Khōjā communities that migrated to the Swahili coast as merchants were the dialects of Kacchī and Kāṭhiyāvāḍī, before these regions were united into a modern 'Gujarati' identity.

The Dar es Salaam community actively[1] communicates in four distinct languages (Kacchī, Gujarati, English, and Swahili). An individual can switch between these languages depending on his or her familiarity with the language, the person being spoken to, and the topic of conversation. For example, a young Khōjā might communicate with his grandparents in basic[2] Kacchī or Kāṭhiyāvāḍī, to a vegetable seller in Swahili, and to his peers in English. Depending on class, age, audience, and/or gender, certain languages are preferred over others in the communication of complex ideas, multiple tenses, or religious themes. In oral communication, these languages are not always distinct, and there can be considerable borrowing of vocabulary and

1 Because of both Urdu poetry recited in the weekly *majlis* and the ubiquity of Indian satellite television, passive knowledge of Urdu and Hindi is prevalent.

2 'Basic' is defined here as a vocabulary of less than 150 words.

even grammatical merging. The contributions of Gujarati to Swahili have been somewhat documented in English (Patel 1967), whereas the influence and development of the African languages on Gujarati dialects in the region have been almost exclusively attended to by Gujarati scholars of Africa (Mahetā 2001). The subject of Khōjā orality is far beyond the scope of this study. But to get a sense of how Swahili loanwords are borrowed and used in East African Khōjā Gujarati, it is helpful to examine the following examples of domestic vocabulary.

The terms most commonly adopted into Gujarati revolve around daily life (S.R. Walji 1969, 153–154). For example, the infinitive verb 'to iron' in the Dar es Salaam dialect of Gujarati is *pīgā pāsī*, from the Swahili *kupiga pasi*, whereas the modern standard Gujarati equivalent is *istrī karvī*. The noun for the physical object 'iron' is *pāsī*, from the Swahili *pasi*, whereas a modern standard Gujarati equivalent is *istrī*. The verb 'to sweep' used in this dialect is *phagīō*—from *fagio*, the Swahili word for 'broom,' rather than from *kufagia*, the corresponding Swahili verb—whereas the modern standard Gujarati approximation is *kacarō kāḍhvō*. One term for 'pillow' in Gujarati is *thakiyā*, but in this dialect the term *mītō* is used, which is borrowed from the Swahili plural noun *mto*, wherein the initial conjunct /mʈʰ/ (mt) is divided by the placement of the vowel /i/ (ī), because, in Gujarati, words do not begin with any allophone of the conjunct /mʈ/. As singular terms enter into Gujarati, they also lose their traditional modes of forming plurals by noun class in Swahili; for example, 'orange' and 'oranges' are referred to as *machũgva*, from the Swahili plural noun *machungwa*, rather than employing the corresponding plural or the singular noun *chungwa*.

Khōjkī, the original script of the Khōjā peoples, was first recorded in epigraphic form on eighteenth-century tombstones in Sindh (Boivin 1997). The script itself is Indic, of Brahmi origin (Grierson 1919). The Gujarati script had already been in use among the Khōjā merchants of both Kacch and Kathiawar from the beginning of the African migrations, and both the script and its mathematics were particularly well adapted to their mercantile endeavors. The Khōjā schism of the mid- to late nineteenth century exacerbated identity claims among the fractured Khōjā communities in Zanzibar and throughout East Africa (Amiji 1971). Many of the leaders of the Khōjā community—such as Dewji Jamal (Dhī suprīm kāunsīl ōph dhī phēdarēśan ōph khōjā śīā isnāaśarī jamāts ōph āfrikā 1960, 177–198) and Gulāmalī Ismā'īl, the prolific publisher of the Khōjā Gujarati texts that came to define the Khōjā tradition in print—were from Kathiawar. Thus, Gujarati became the main language of religious instruction, so Kacchī and the Khōjā script were devalued by the Khōjā. Within the Sindhi Khōjā corpus was the *jñān* literature, a form of Muslim bhakti that occupied the interspace between specific Hindu religions and Khōjā ver-

nacular Islam (Purohit 2012). The use of Gujarati and Ismā'il's development of the first Arabic transliteration system for translating Arabic and Persian into Gujarati signaled a clear break from the oral and written traditions of *khōjāpanth* toward a normative form of Islam defined by abandoning the Khōjā script for Gujarati. By the second quarter of the twentieth century, the Āgākhānī Khōjā Mukhī Lālajībhā'i Dēvarāj's brief experiment with publishing in the Khōjā script through his Khoja Sindhi Printing Press in Bombay had concluded (Boivin 1997). In addition, while the Āgākhānī Khōjā transitioned to Gujarati, Kacchī religious literature continued to be published in the Gujarati script and remains the language of prestige and identity among their remaining African communities.

In India, Gulāmalī Ismā'il was the critical link in the creation of a modern Khōjā religious identity in Francophone and Anglophone communities throughout the western Indian Ocean littoral. Ismā'il's printed *Dō'ā'ōnō Majmū'ō*, which contained daily and annual prayers for the liturgical year, functioned as an affordable and portable religious text. Although some aspects of popular Khōjā religion remained in the text, the majority of it was translations and transliterations of orthodox Twelver prayers and supplications in transliterated Arabic with or without Gujarati translations.

In embarking on what would become a lifetime of publishing more than four hundred Khōjā religious tracts, Ismā'il made three important decisions that would fundamentally reorient Khōjā identity through the religious literacy his texts would provide. First, he abandoned the Khōjā script for Gujarati, breaking the connection to a Sindhi ancestral heritage. Practically, it meant that the Khōjā lost the ability to recognize the Khōjā script, much less read their religious literature prior to the twentieth century.

Second, the Gujarati that Ismā'il used was heavily laden with Persian and Arabic terminology. Words and phrases were imported directly from Arabic and Persian through Urdu, which necessitated expanded glossaries for readers of his earlier works. It appears that, for him, the creation of an Islamic identity was bound to Arabic and Persian, which did not appear to heavily characterize earlier Khōjā dialects of Sindhi or Gujarati as documented by early Khōjā manuscripts. Ismā'il's attempts at Persianizing Gujarati stand in contrast to the larger trend of Gujarati during this period, which was increasingly marginalizing Muslim and Parsi dialects of Gujarati—whereby Hindu dialects of Gujarati, such as Amadāvādī, were used as a standard—while synchronously Sanskritizing and eliminating terminology derived from Persian and Arabic (Isaka 2002).

Third, Ismā'il created the first systematic transliteration system for representing the Arabic script in Gujarati. The Khōjā script had already begun to experiment with the *traṇ mīṇḍā* (ઃ) above letters representing Arabic

consonants, for example, above the /a/ (ā), to indicate the Arabic *ʿayn*. He adapted this ad hoc system into Gujarati, expanded it by creating new symbols for each phonogram of Arabic, and developed a systemic framework for its application. His unique system of diacritics is still the most comprehensive system for representing the Perso-Arabic script in Gujarati and was unique to the Khōjā in Africa. Ismā'il's prolific career resulted in a printed corpus sufficient to construct a new *Weltanschauung* for the Khōjā through his religious ideas by shifting and standardizing Khōjā dialects toward a singular form of Persianized Gujarati. It contained a unique vocabulary and orthography that defined the Khōjā as distinct from their Āgākhānī cousins as well as from other Muslim and non-Muslim Gujarati communities in East Africa.

Whereas these Khōjā texts were consumed internally, epigraphy was one form of marking physical spaces in communalistic terms through the creation of interrelated signs that constituted a linguistic landscape (Shohamy and Gorter 2008). Much of the foundation of modern Dar es Salaam Khōjā identity was established in colonial Zanzibar. New research into the nineteenth- and twentieth-century histories of urban regions that contained significant Khōjā populations, such as Zanzibar (Bissell 2010) and Bombay (Lewis and Harris 2013), provides an interesting glimpse beyond the official colonial record of these cities as racially segregated. In particular, the compact layout of the old city in Zanzibar and the considerable mercantile movement in this cosmopolitan entrepôt of the western Indian Ocean region meant a fluidity of public spaces, particularly when combined with local cultural traditions, such as the use of the *baraza* ('stone bench') (Loimeier 2007). The use of epigraphs, engraved inscriptions, helped to demarcate interior Khōjā spaces in the eyes of the public. The Khōjā inscriptions in Zanzibar almost always occur in Arabic or Gujarati, with or without parallel translations inscribed in English.

According to caste traditions, such as those of the Lōhāṇā—an ancestral caste of the Khōjā—the caste hall is open to attendance by members of other communities, although participation in certain caste rituals is limited to members only. With the Khōjā schism, this form of de facto limited access to caste spaces became another place for demarcating identity. The Āgākhānī Khōjā closed the *jamātkhānā* to the public, whereas the Khōjā opened their mosques and *imāmvāḍō* to the public. The only all-Khōjā caste inscription, found above the caravanserai, is in Arabic, Gujarati, and English. The epigraph clearly delineates the space for all Khōjā merchants and wayfarers to Zanzibar.

The earliest Khōjā space with a surviving epigraph—a mosque—has two inscriptions exclusively in Arabic referencing the authority of Quranic verses inviting believers of the faith. Here, the Islamic nature of Khōjā identity is

being expressed as an open religious space exclusively to the Arab and Swahili populations, as most Asians were not familiar with the Arabic script during the late nineteenth century. Conversely, the earliest surviving epigraph on an Āgākhānī Khōjā space—the *jamātkhānā*—is written in Gujarati and English, citing the exclusive authority of Sultan Mohammed Shah, the third spiritual leader of the Āgākhānī Khōjā. The epigraph highlights the sectarian Islamic identity of the community and makes an appeal to British authority in citing Shah's position as Knight Grand Commander, Order of the Indian Empire (GCIE). These early epigraphs are indicative of the trajectories of each community in terms of spiritual identity and approaches to religious modernity: the Āgākhānī favored Westernization and appeals to British colonial authority, whereas the Khōjā preferred to be immersed in the Islamic authority of the Near East. These epigraphs are useful data points in reconstructing the identity trajectories of each of the two communities in the twentieth century. They demarcate communal spaces from public spaces. Each language appealed to discrete authorities and informed the intended audience of desired identities to be publically conveyed, or obscured, through these signs.

CHAPTER 4

The Khōjā Language: Quranic Gujarati

Introduction

What was the role of language in the creation of modern Khōjā identity? How did the shift in language transform Khōjā identity from a caste-based outlook to an increasingly faith-based definition of membership? By whom and through what processes was this brought about? On arrival into Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, the Khōjā were predominantly speakers of the Kacchī dialect of Sindhi and the Kāṭhiyāvāḍī dialect of Gujarati. Their script, Khōjkī, was caste specific. Literacy was low among the first Khōjā communities and was almost exclusively limited to men. The Khōjā schism, first in Bombay and later in Zanzibar, spurred the adoption of the printing press and publication of religious tracts and polemics. Sustained contact with Europeans, particularly the British, created a greater awareness among the Asian communities as to the importance of a 'Western' education and the establishment of Gujarati medium and later English medium schools in Zanzibar (Loimier 2009). By the early to mid-twentieth century, the Gujarati language and script overwhelmed Kacchī, and the Khōjā Sindhi script became the unified linguistic medium for printed communications among Khōjā communities across the western Indian Ocean littoral. The loss of Kacchī and the Khōjā script provided an opportunity to create a new religious identity; to that end, the Khōjā made a unique imprint on the Gujarati script by translating and transliterating Near Eastern texts, such as the Quran, into Gujarati.

Background

The Gujarati dialect used by the Khōjā in East Africa is a unique mélange of Gujarati, Kacchī, Urdu, Swahili, and English. This dialect differs from the Nāgarī Brāhmaṇ, on which modern standard Gujarati is based, in both vocabulary and pronunciation. The Khōjā of eastern, central, and southern Africa are composed of two principal ethnolinguistic groups: the Kacchī and the Kāṭhiyāvāḍī. The Kacchī language is depicted as an intermediary language between Sindhi and Gujarati, which Grierson catalogues as a dialect of Sindhi (Grierson 1904, 183–211). Kacchī has been less prolific in its written form than Gujarati and is now generally written in the Gujarati script, which has reinforced the supremacy of Gujarati in contemporary Gujarat (Kothari 2010). The Kacchī dialects

represented among the African Khōjā locate the places of origin of these communities within Kacch, including Mandvi, Mundra, Kera, and Bhuj. The Gujarati dialects represented among the African Khōjā locate the cities of origin of these communities within Kathiawar, including Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Mahuva, and Porbandar (Hīrāṇī 1990, 119–121). In addition to these dialects, the African Gujarati vernacular was influenced by the other communities with whom the Khōjā lived in close contact and maintained cultural intercourse, such as the Bōhrā (Suratī), the Mēman (Kacchī), and various Hindu castes such as the Bhāṭiyā (Kacchī and Kāṭhiyāvāḍī) and the Lōhāṇā (Kacchī and Kāṭhiyāvāḍī).

The Khōjā dialect of Gujarati can be additionally classified as one of the Musalmān (Muslim) dialects of Gujarati. Muslim dialects are characterized by a higher-than-average use of Persian and Arabic origin terms (Grierson 1908, 436–439). This adoption of terminology was concurrent with the introduction of Islam into the region. The origins of contemporary Gujarati lie in its Sanskrit and Prakrit roots, the vocabulary of which articulated an Indic cosmology. The Near Eastern theological concepts of Islam were foreign to Gujarati and necessitated an adoption of ideas and vocabulary from the Persianate world. Take, for instance, the Arabic term for the Islamic faith, *dīn. Dīn* in this sense is a universal code that entails specific beliefs, actions, and ultimately consequences in an afterlife, which has no direct equivalent in the Indic religions. The closest approximation—the Sanskrit origin term in Gujarati, *dharm*—is relational[1] rather than universal, contrasted with the Islamic conception of religious duty.

Bōhrā Gujarati: A Move toward Persianized Urdu and Arabic

The Bōhrā are a Gujarati Ismaili community centered in Surat whose Indic origins trace back to a Brahminical caste in the region. The Bōhrā *lisānnũ dāvat* ('missionary language') is the oldest Muslim dialect of Gujarati, which was able to systematically articulate the theology and philosophy of Near Eastern Islam within the Gujarati language in Arabic character. This was accomplished by bringing their dialect of Gujarati closer to Persian and Urdu, thereby preserving the medieval prohibition against translating or transliterating the Quran into Indic vernacular character. An example of this variance can be seen in an 1878 Quran lithograph and commentary published by the Bōhrā, in which a Gujarati translation in Arabic character sits below the corresponding Arabic verse of the Quran (al-Qādir, Jiwā Khān, and Mūsājī 1295/1878). See Figure 3.

1 As Miller explains in her introduction, "Theoretically right and wrong are not absolute in this system; practically, right and wrong are decided according to the categories of social rank, kinship, and stage of life" (Miller 1986, 3).

FIGURE 3 *A lithograph folio of chapter 1 from the first extant printed Quran with interlinear Gujarati translation and marginal commentary notes in the Bōhrā dialect, written with Arabic character, 1878.*
COURTESY OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.

Following are transliterated Gujarati translations of the Basmala. These examples illustrate the difference in vocabulary, which made Muslim Gujarati dialects unique when compared to Gujarati religious literature from Parsi and Hindu communities.

Text	*bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*
Translation	In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful
Mūsājī (1878)	*śaru karũ chũ maĩ khudānā nāmsē bakṣnō karnār mahērbānī rākhnār*
Ēsphahānī (1900)	*kṛpāḷu anē dayāḷu khudānā nāmthī śaru karũ chũ.*
Ismā'il (1901)	*śaru karũ chũ khudānā nām sāthē tē rahmān anē rahīm chē*

Both the Bōhrā Quran and, later, Ismā'il's translations push the Gujarati language to its very limits toward Persianized Urdu and Arabic. Śēk Mōham'mad Ēsphahānī's translation is based on an 1867 Gujarati translation that maintains the mainstream Gujarati vocabulary of Sanskrit origin, as evidenced by the translation of 'gracious' and 'merciful' as *kṛpāḷu* and *dayāḷu* respectively. The Bōhrā translation favors *bakṣ* and *mahērbānī* for translating 'gracious' and 'merciful' as well as employing the Urdu locative preposition *maĩ* for the Gujarati *mã̃* ('in') and the Urdu possessive preposition *sē* for the Gujarati *thī* ('from'). Ismā'il's translation maintains the Gujarati grammatical structure while directly importing the terms for 'gracious' and 'merciful' from Arabic, *rahmān* and *rahīm* respectively. The herculean efforts of translating the Quran into the Bōhrā dialect of Gujarati and the marginal commentary notes, as well as the original translation on which Ēsphahānī's reissue was based, formed the foundation of published Gujarati Quranic scholarship, on which Ismā'il's eventual publication of the authoritative Khōjā Gujarati transliteration, translation, and commentary of the Quran would be based.

Ismā'il's Quranic Transliteration Scheme

Historical Background: Religious Texts for the Laity

The Khōjā Gujarati transliteration scheme for Quranic Arabic was developed by Khōjā Gulāmalī Ismā'il (d. 1944)[2] in the late nineteenth century. A native of Bhavnagar, in the late nineteenth century, Ismā'il traveled to study in the seminary of Mulla Qadir Hussain, founded in 1873 and located in the Mandvi quarter of Bombay (Sahib 1972, 99). On completion of his studies, Ismā'il embarked

2 Ismā'il was born in 1920 V.S./1864 CE and died on 9 Dhū l-Ḥijja 1363/25 November 1944 CE.

on pilgrimages to Iraq and Iran, and thereafter he returned to Bhavnagar and founded the Ithna-Asheri Electric Printing Press. He began by distributing Khōjā religious literature for the education of the Khōjā community and the propagation of the faith. The religious periodical he first published in Bhavnagar in 1893, *Rāhēnajāt*, is the longest continuously published Gujarati Muslim periodical to be published until the present day.

With the success of the periodical and of books published for internal caste use, Ismā'il decided to embark on a systematic translation and transliteration of classical Islamic texts into the Gujarati vernacular to facilitate access for the laity.[3] As logic would dictate, the Quran would be his first major project, to be pursued in Ahmedabad. To facilitate popular access to the Quran for a population not familiar with the Arabic script, Ismā'il developed a systematic Quranic Arabic transliteration scheme unlike anything that had hitherto been developed in the Gujarati script. This intellectual act broke the medieval Gujarati prohibition on transliterating the Quran into a 'non-Islamic' Indic vernacular.

Opposition and Legal Rulings

As word spread in Ahmedabad ahead of Ismā'il's publication of the first Quran in Gujarati character, *Kura'ānē śarīph*, and the first volume of his Gujarati commentary on the Quran, *Anvārūl bayān phī taphsīril kura'ān*, Muslim opposition to his work in the city rose to the point where he was forced to flee to Khambhat, some eighty kilometers to the south. Opposition to his works was based on three issues. First, was it proper to render the Quran into the language of the 'nonbelievers' (i.e., Gujarati)? This opposition was based on the presupposition that there exist 'Islamic' and 'non-Islamic' languages. Second, could the word of God be sold for profit? Third, could the word of God be sold to nonbelievers? These were the reservations of a population ostensibly aware of the medieval Sunni taboo of rendering the Quranic verses into Gujarati character (Sachedina n.d., 10–11).

The Shia religious leadership, whom Ismā'il approached about these issues, concluded that it was permissible to render the Quran into Gujarati for the purposes of propagation of the faith. A Quran could only be sold at cost to a Muslim and should be given for free to non-Muslims (Sachedina n.d., 10–11). To abate any further opposition on his return to Ahmedabad, Ismā'il obtained

3 Unlike the Bōhrā, who had inherited an unbroken transmission of classical Arabic learning from Fatimid Egypt, the Khōjā were an Indic caste whose Hindu-Islamic medieval traditions and language were firmly based on the Indic rather than the Perso-Arabic tradition. This is illustrated by the script employed in the Sindhi dialect of the Khōjā, which is derived from Brahmi, in contrast to the extant Perso-Arabic-based script also widely used in Sindh.

phatvō ('legal rulings') from two prominent Near Eastern Shia clerics of the time: Ismāʿīl Mūsawī b. Ṣadr al-Dīn ʿĀmilī[4] (d. 1338 A.H./1919 CE), a student and representative of the famed Ḥājī Mīrzā Ḥāsan-i Shīrāzī[5] (d. 1312 A.H./1895 CE), and Muḥammad Ḥusayn b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (Ismā'il 1901–1903). In addition, he received an endorsing certificate from the professor of Arabic and Persian at Gujarat College, Mirza Mussa Cowser (University of Bombay 1908, 732).

These two legal rulings demonstrate the robust religious network of the Khōjā, which stretched from Ahmedabad to Karbala in the late nineteenth century. From the perspective of the field of Qajar legal practice (Werner 2005), one can infer that the time and attention paid to these particular requests by the respective religious leaders, as evidenced by the rulings regarding the Gujarati text, suggest a large number of contacts. The insertion of a certificate by Professor Cowser is significant, as he would have been a local intellectual personality whose authority and credentials would have been well respected. The two religious legal rulings and one secular certificate highlight the international impact of Near Eastern authority within Khōjā Shiism at this point in time as well as the local impact of secular academic authority, both of which were balanced in Ismā'il's publication.

These religious and secular endorsements eventually satiated Ismā'il's critics. He included the available Gujarati transliterations and translations of the Persian text in the preface to each volume published, beginning in 1901 and ending with the final volume in 1903 (Ismā'il 1901–1903, 1–2). By the time of the publication of Ismā'il's *Dō'ānō majmū'ō* in the early to mid-twentieth century, the transliteration scheme that Ismā'il had introduced in 1901 had evolved. His Gujarati transliteration scheme for classical Arabic has become the standard scheme for all Khōjā texts until the present day and is even employed by the Āgākhānī Khōjā in transmission of the *dhu'ā*.

The Increasing Importance of Arabic Texts

The necessity of a Gujarati transliteration scheme in the nineteenth century suggests that this era was a formative period in the development of an 'Islamic' identity among the Khōjā. Prior to this period, the Quran and other Arabic or Persian texts were not central in caste worship. The *navhā'ō, munājāt* ('hymn'), *marsīyā* ('elegy'), and *jñān* are all forms of popular devotion in Indic

4 Ismāʿīl Mūsawī b. Ṣadr al-Dīn ʿĀmilī was born in 1257 A.H./1841 CE and died in 1338 A.H./1919 CE.

5 Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan b. Maḥmūd (1230–1312 A.H./1815–1895 CE), called Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī-yi buzurg and al-Mujaddid, was known for his opposition to the Tobacco Régie in Iran in 1891.

vernaculars featured prominently in nineteenth-century Khōjā worship. This would be challenged by the rise and eventual centrality of the *dhu'ā* ('supererogatory prayer'). Ismā'il's transliteration scheme facilitated an eventual move, in the twentieth century, from use of the Indic vernaculars to near exclusive use of the Arabic script.

Arabic and Gujarati are from different language families, Afro-Asiatic and Indo-European respectively. Accordingly, thirteen consonants do not easily translate from the Arabic alphabet into the Devanagari script, from which the modern Gujarati script is derived. They are

/θ/ (*ṯā'*)	/ħ/ (*ḥā'*)	/χ/ (*ḫā'*)
/ð/ (*ḏāl*)	/z/ (*zāy*)	/sˤ/ (*ṣād*)
/ḍ/ (*ḍād*)	/tˤ/ (*ṭā'*)	/ðˤ/ (*ẓā'*)
/ʕ/ (*'ayn*)	/ʁ/ (*ġayn*)	/f/ (*fā'*)
/q/ (*qāf*)		

The Arabic consonant *'ayn* is treated as a vowel, not as a consonant, which it really is (Forbes 1866, vi). In the Gujarati alphabet, the consonants corresponding to the Arabic /f/ (*pha*) and /z/ (*jha*) are developed letters that were not deemed necessary for special transliteration in the Khōjā Gujarati-Arabic transliteration scheme. Ismā'il's transliteration scheme, presented as fourteen "rules for proper Arabic recitation," is described in detail in the following sections (Ismā'il 1972, 5).

Detailed Analysis: Consonants

Ismā'il's scheme considers five consonants from the Arabic language to be guttural: *ḥā', ḫā'*, *'ayn, ġayn*, and *qāf*. The Khōjā Gujarati diacritic *traṇ mīṇḍā* (♣) is placed above a letter to represent these five consonants; this diacritic was most probably taken from the Arabic script, which employs these dots in cases such as the letter *ṯā'*. As written in the Khōjā Gujarati script, the five guttural consonants are pronounced *ĥay, kĥay, âyn, ĝayn*, and *k̂āph*. Ismā'il lists the following words as examples: 'truth' (*ĥak̂*), 'create' (*k̂halk̂*), 'servant' (*âbd*), 'festival' (*îd*), 'grief' (*ĝ̂am*), and 'destiny' (*k̂adr*).

There are two dental consonants in Ismā'il's transliteration scheme: *ṯā'* and *ḏāl*. In the Khōjā Gujarati transliteration, they are represented by a *gōḷ mīṇḍũ* (◦) above the transliterated letter. As written in the Khōjā Gujarati, these letters are pronounced *śē* and *ĵhāl*. Ismā'il lists the following words as examples, 'recompense' (*śavāb*) and 'remembrance' (*ĵhīkr*).

The Arabic consonant *ṣād* is categorized as *sīsōṭī* in Ismā'il's transliteration scheme. The term *sisōṭī* in Gujarati in this context means 'to whistle.' It is categorized as such by Ismā'il; as he explains, "it is pronounced with a whistle, using both lips." The Khōjā Gujarati diacritic *traṇ mīṇḍā* (♣) is placed above the letter *sa* to represent this sound. As written in the Khōjā Gujarati script, this letter is pronounced *ŝvād*. Ismā'il lists the following words as examples, 'patience' (*ŝabr*) and 'illustration' (*taŝvīr*).

The Arabic consonant *ḍād* in Ismā'il's transliteration scheme is categorized as a *ḍāḍh* letter. The term *dāḍh* is derived from the Gujarati term for molar tooth. It is categorized as such by Ismā'il; as he explains, "the tongue is kept on the molars." The Khōjā Gujarati diacritic *traṇ mīṇḍā* (♣) is placed above the letter *jha* to represent this sound. As written in the Khōjā Gujarati script, this letter is pronounced *jĥvād*. Ismā'il lists the following words as examples, 'earth' (*arjĥ*) and 'astray' (*jĥāllīn*).

The Arabic consonant *ẓā'* in Ismā'il's transliteration scheme is categorized as a medial letter. The letter is transliterated using the double /l/ ligature *ļa*, without a lateral bar, which was presumably taken from the Devanagari script described in the Gujarati text as the *bē gōļ mīṇḍā* (◌͏̫).[6] This is then placed above the Gujarati letter *jha*. As written in the Khōjā Gujarati script, this letter is pronounced *jḫ̫ōy*. Ismā'il lists the following words as examples, 'oppressive' (*jḫ̫ālīm*) and 'manifest' (*jḫ̫āhūr*).

The Arabic consonant *zāy* in Ismā'il's transliteration scheme is categorized as an *aṇī* letter. The term *aṇī* in modern standard Gujarati means 'the sharp end or tip of a thing.' No specific diacritical mark is placed above the Gujarati letter *jha*. The examples given are 'ritual prayers' (*namājh*) and 'a fast' (*rōjhā*). The text cautions the Khōjā reader against using the Gujarati consonant /ʤʱə/ (*jha*) in "pronouncing the five variants of /z/ in the Arabic language," *ĵhāl, jhē, ĵhvād, jḫ̫ōy*, and *jha*, as understood by the author.

The Arabic consonant *ṭā'* in Ismā'il's transliteration scheme is categorized as a 'thick medial' letter. The Khōjā Gujarati diacritical *traṇ mīṇḍā* (♣) is placed above the letter *ta* to represent this sound. As written in the Khōjā Gujarati script, this letter is pronounced *ťōy*. Ismā'il lists the following words as examples, 'pure' (*ťāhēr*) and 'student' (*ťālēb*). Table 1 presents a chart of the Arabic consonants and their Khōjā Gujarati equivalents as classified in Ismā'il's transliteration scheme.

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6 For ease of transliteration, I have used the existing Unicode (hex) character code 035A (combining double ring below), which sits below a letter as opposed to above a letter, as is the case in the Khōjā Gujarati transliteration system.

TABLE 1 *Ismā'il's Khōjā Gujarati Transliteration Scheme for Arabic Consonants*

English Classification (Stewart 1841, 27)	English Transliteration of the Arabic Letter	Arabic Consonant	Khōjā Gujarati Transliteration of the Arabic Letter	English Transliteration of the Khōjā Gujarati
Gutturals	ʾalif	ا	Treated exclusively as a vowel	
	ḥāʾ	ح	હ	hēy (h)
	ẖāʾ	خ	ખ઼	x̂hay (x̂h)
	ʿayn	ع	અ઼ / ઇ઼	âyn (â)
	ġayn	غ	ગ઼	ĝayn (ĝ)
	hamza	ء	Treated exclusively as a vowel	
Labials	bāʾ	ب	બ	bay (b)
	fāʾ	ف	ફ	phay (ph)
	mīm	م	મ	mīm (m)
	wāw	و	વ	vāv (v)
Palatials	ǧīm	ج	જ	jīm (j)
	qāf	ق	ક઼	k̂āph (k̂)
	kāf	ك	ક	kāph (k)
	yāʾ	ي	Treated exclusively as a vowel	
Dentals	tāʾ	ت	ત	tā (t)
	ṯāʾ	ث	સ઼	s̊ē (s̊)
	dāl	د	દ	dāl (d)
	ḏāl	ذ	ઝ઼	ẑhāl (ẑ)
	ṭāʾ	ط	ત઼	t̂ōy (t̂)
	ẓāʾ	ظ	ઝ઼	jẖōy (jẖ)
	lām	ل	લ	lām (l)
	nūn	ن	ન	nun (n)
Linguals	šīn	ش	શ઼	śīn (ś)
	ṣād	ص	સ઼	ŝvād (ŝ)
	ḍād	ض	ઝ઼	ẑhvād (ẑ)
	rāʾ	ر	ર	rē (r)
	zāy	ز	ઝ	jhē (z)
	sīn	س	સ	sīn (s)

Detailed Analysis: Vowels and Punctuation Marks

The transliteration of vowels from the Arabic into Ismā'il's Khōjā Gujarati system is dependent on whether the vowel is pronounced or whether it functions as an inert letter when recited. This is determined by the placement of the vowel. If no sound is made or if it is obscured by another phoneme according to the rules of Quranic recitation, then it is not represented. Long vowels are represented either as vowels or as consonants, depending on their placement.

Because the transliteration scheme was primarily developed to render Quranic Arabic into Gujarati for oral recitation, certain diacritics have been included to notify the reader when to pause, stop, or continue the reading of a word or phrase. The half ring sign (ʾ) is placed above the letter of the next word to signal that no pause is to occur in recitation at that point, as the Gujarati reader is unlikely to intuitively know punctuation and stress points from the original Arabic. For example, the Basmala is transliterated as *biśmillāhiʾ raĥmānīʾ raĥīm*. To signal a pause or break in recitation, a semicolon or comma can also be used. Asterisks are used to delineate separate verses of the text; the numeric system employed uses standard Gujarati numerals. To signal a break in recitation, the Gujarati letter *la*—which is taken from the Arabic word for 'no,' in line with traditional Quranic notation—is written above the asterisk.

Gemination in Ismā'il's transliteration scheme is noted as *taśdīd* ('emphasis'). As in all Devanagari-based scripts, consonants in the Gujarati alphabet contain an inherent vowel (a short unbounded low-central /ə/), which is not the case in Arabic. The Gujarati alphabet suffices when an Arabic word can be spelled using two of the same letters, as in *makkā* 'Mecca.' But when the *šaddah* is used in the original Arabic spelling, which means that the first letter is silent and the second is doubled in pronunciation, then the *taśdīd* sign (◌ّ) is placed above the consonant to be repeated, as in 'paradise' (*janẗat*).

The Gujarati script does not have a diacritical mark that elongates a vowel, as is necessary in accurately reciting a classical Arabic word or phrase. In order to represent an elongation of a vowel in pronunciation, a *madnũ* (◌̃) is placed above the letter. According to the original classical Arabic, it appears that this symbol was intended to represent the elongated *ʾalif*.

In the recitation of classical Arabic, letters may be pronounced depending on their position within a text. The letters *ta* and *ha* appear to have been particularly confusing for the Khōjā laity. For example, the word for 'alms' can be pronounced *zakāt* or *zakāh*. The aspirated /h/ is another such example. Ismā'il clarifies this ambiguity for the reader in transliteration by ending the word as he heard it pronounced, as in the phrase 'God is greatest' (*allāhō aḵbaṛʾ*). Table 2 provides a chart of the Arabic vowels and Quranic punctuation marks presented with their Khōjā Gujarati equivalents, as classified in Ismā'il's transliteration scheme.

TABLE 2 *Ismāʾīl's Khōjā Gujarati Transliteration Scheme for Arabic Vowels, Numerals, and Punctuation Marks*

Standard Arabic Term	Arabic Character	Khōjā Gujarati Transliteration of the Original Character	English Transliteration of the Khōjā Gujarati Character
ʾalif	ا	અ, આ, ◌ા [a]	a, ā, ◌ા (*madnũ*)
ʿayn	ع	ઇ, ઇ, ઉ, ઉ,	î, â, ô, ô
wāw	و	ઔ, ઉ, વ	ō, ū, va
yāʾ	ي	ઇ, ◌ા, ઈ	î, y, ī
hamza	ء	એ, અ, એય	ē, a, ēy
fatḥa	◌َ	Not represented	
kasra	◌ِ	ઇ, ઈ, એ	i, ī, ē
damma	◌ُ	ઉ, ઓ	u, ō
shadda	◌ّ	◌્ or double consonant conjunct	◌્ or double consonant conjunct
jazm	◌ْ	◌્ quiescence	◌્ quiescence
tanwīn	◌ٌ ◌ٍ ◌ً	ન, નʾ મ, ઇ, ઉ, આ	na, ṅa, ma, i, u, ā
sukūn	◌ْ	◌્	◌્
madda	◌ٓ	◌ૅ	◌ૅ
(dagger alif)	◌ٰ	આʾ	å
(alif maksura)	ى	આ	ā
Symbol that signals the end of a verse	۝	*, , [,], or [space]	*
Symbol that signals the end of a chapter	۝ ◌ٰ	આ *	ā*
Symbol that signals continuity in recitation of verses without pause	◌ۘ	લ *	l*
Symbols that signals continuity in recitation of verse without pause	ز ,ق ,ج	◌્	◌્

TABLE 2 *Ismā'il's Khōjā Gujarati Transliteration Scheme* (cont.)

Standard Arabic Term	Arabic Character	Khōjā Gujarati Transliteration of the Original Character	English Transliteration of the Khōjā Gujarati Character
Symbols that signals pause in recitation of verse	صل ,صلے ,ج ,م ,ہ ,قف ,ط وقف ,ص ,وقف ,س	; ,	; ,
Numerals	٠ ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥ ٦ ٧ ٨ ٩	૦ ૧ ૨ ૩ ૪ ૫ ૬ ૭ ૮ ૯ (Gujarati) ٠ ١ ٢ ٣ ۴ ۵ ۶ ٧ ٨٩ (Persian/Urdu)	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

[a] The *madnũ* (ں) has been approximately transliterated using the Gurmukhi *dulānvã̂* (ੰ).
[b] This character is represented by the inherent vowel within consonants.

Comparative Analysis: The Quran, Chapter 1, Verses 1–7

The following illustration compares the English translation (Pickthall 1930), Arabic text, and Khōjā translation of seven verses from the opening chapter of the Quran (1: 1–7). This comparison highlights how the original Arabic text was reparsed and connected for the Gujarati reader. See also Figure 4, which presents an image of the page from Ismā'il's text on which these seven verses, known as *Sūratul' phātēhâh'* (the Fātiḥa), appear.

English translation

1:1 In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
1:2 Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,
1:3 The Beneficent, the Merciful:
1:4 Owner of the Day of Judgment,
1:5 Thee (alone) we worship; Thee alone we ask for help.
1:6 Show us the straight path,
1:7 The path of those whom Thou hast favored; Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.

Arabic text

1:1 *bismillāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*
1:2 *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi rabbi l-'ālamīn*

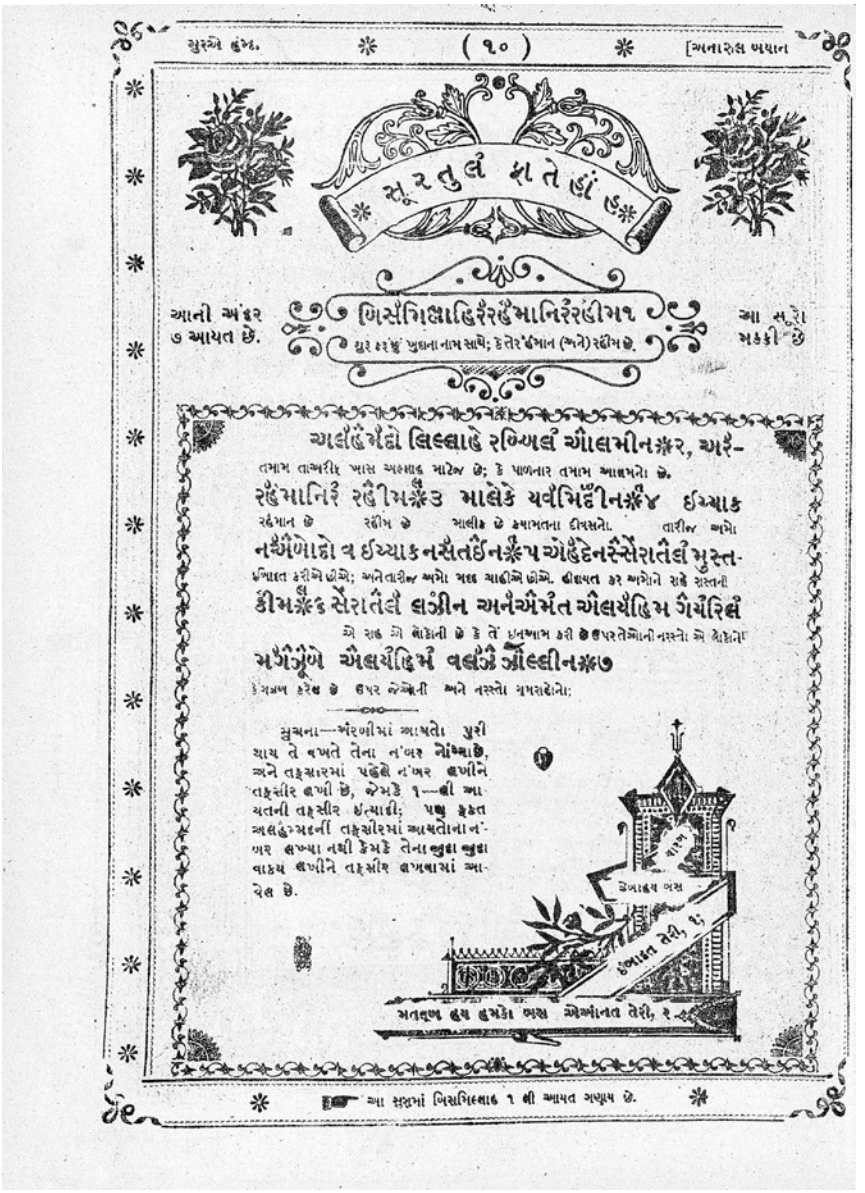


FIGURE 4 *Ismā'il's Gujarati Quranic Arabic transliteration and translation of* Sūratul' phātēhâh' (*the Fātiḥa*), *1901.*

1:3 *ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*
1:4 *māliki yawmi d-dīn*
1:5 *iyyāka naʿbudu wa iyyāka nastaʿīn*
1:6 *ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīm*
1:7 *ṣirāṭa l-ladhīna anʿamta ʿalayhim ghayri l-maghḍūbi ʿalayhim wa lā ḍ-ḍāllīn*

Khōjā Translation
1:1 *bismillāhirʾ raĥmānirʾ raĥīm*
1:2 *alʾĥamdō lillāhē rabbil âlamīn*
1:3 *arʾraĥʾmānirʾ raĥīm*
1:4 *mālēkē yavʾmiddīn*
1:5 *iyyāka nâʾabōdō vaʾiyyāka nastaʾîn*
1:6 *ēĥdēnaŝʾŝērāt̂alʾ mustakīm*
1:7 *ŝērāt̂alʾlajĥīna anâʾamta âlayʾhimʾ ĝayʾarilʾ maĝʾjĥūbē âlayʾhimʾ valajĥʾ jĥāllīn*

Adoption

The rapid adoption of Ismāʾil's transliteration scheme among the Khōjā and other Gujarati Muslim communities in the subcontinent was echoed by the African Khōjā. His transliteration scheme provided an opening for the importation of vocabulary directly from Persian, Arabic, and Urdu at a rapid rate, to the extent that Khōjā Gujarati came to be much closer to the Bōhrā dialect than their ancestral Lōhāṇā. In Africa, this linguistic development and evolution of Khōjā Gujarati was tempered by engagement with other linguistic traditions, such as Swahili, and the absorption of their vocabulary into Gujarati (Patel 1965). To allow the Khōjā in disparate parts of the subcontinent and in the diaspora to keep pace with these linguistic developments in transliteration and vocabulary, Khōjā writers began to include extensive vocabularies and transliteration guides as appendices to all published books during the turn of the twentieth century.

A folio from the appendix of a Khōjā caste *majlis* book published in the late nineteenth century is entitled "A Lexicon for Difficult Words"; it begins with the first letter of the Gujarati alphabet, the vowel /a/, and continues through the entire alphabet. For each 'difficult word' a more common Gujarati synonym is provided. For example, the first entry reads, "*ēkhvānō-videlicet*, brothers, comrades." *Ēkhvānō* was probably sourced from the Arabic 'brotherhood' (*ikhwān*) and then given the *–ō* postposition to create a Gujarati collective noun. The twentieth entry is *âśā*, from the Arabic *'ishā'*, defined as "the time after *maghrib*, the time of sleep." This, and many other basic terms in

the lexicon, is another indication of the discontinuity between Khōjā religious ritual and identity wherein more orthodox forms of Islamic religious expression became normative, as evidenced by these terminological changes.

That one of the earliest-recorded lexicons from Zanzibar is in a *majlis* book is significant, as it was the reciter who promulgated this new vocabulary to the Khōjā laity, many of whom were illiterate, especially in communities located in the more remote regions of eastern, central, and southern Africa at the turn of the twentieth century. Reciters, particularly Khōjā women, memorized portions of the book.[7] As these reciters traveled to various Khōjā communities to lead religious services, they spread this new vocabulary and brought with them copies of newly translated and transliterated texts that were awash with Ismā'il's transliteration scheme. Ismā'il's scheme also matured over time. The initial published texts with Arabic diacritics, such as *Anvārūl bayān* had diacritics on nearly every word of Arabic and Persian origin in the Gujarati expository. Over time, Ismā'il refined his transliteration system and restricted its use solely to transliterated texts from Arabic, and occasionally Persian. By the time of Ismā'il's death in 1944, his transliteration scheme had become standardized, and it has been widely used in Khōjā Gujarati texts worldwide until the present day.[8]

Indo-African Epigraphy: Seven Inscriptions

The enduring legacy of Khōjā Gujarati and Ismā'il's transliteration scheme on Khōjā identity in East Africa can be seen in the evolution of inscriptions on major Khōjā institutions in the Kiponda quarter of Zanzibar. The terminology and content of the following seven Khōjā inscriptions visibly mark the development of Khōjā religion. Of particular interest is the codification of self-referential identities; for example, the Gujarati spelling of the term 'Ithnā 'Asharī' features a large number of diacritics, which exemplifies a stage in its emergence and evolution directly influenced by Ismā'il's transliteration scheme.

7 Interview with a Khōjā female professional in her early sixties, Edinburgh, 26 October 2011.

8 Ismā'il's opening of Quranic Arabic into the Gujarati language allowed a plethora of similar translations of the Quran into Gujarati in the twentieth century; some of these publications included works by members of the Sunni community, such as the Gujarati translation and commentary of the Quran by the Chisti order (Mīr Muhammad n.d.).

Inscription 1. An Early Entryway Inscription on the Khōjā Hujjatul Islam Masjid

Location: Kiponda quarter, Zanzibar
Language: Arabic
Type: Wooden carving set above a door
Purpose: Entryway benediction
Description: Calligraphic Quranic verse with a record of the mason's name and the creation date of the door and mantle
Date: 10 Rajab 1307 A.H./2 March 1890 CE

The text of the inscription reads as follows:

إنّ فتحنا لك فتحاً مبينا سعيد بن علي بن مسعود تاريخ ١٠ رجب سنة ١٣٠٨

Innā fataḥnā laka fatḥan mubīna saʿīd b.ʿalī b. masʿūd tārīkh yawm 10 Rajab sana 1307

Drawing on Pickthall's (1930) translation of the Quran, the text can be translated into English as follows:

Lo! We have given thee (O Muhammad) a signal victory [1:48]. Saʿīd bin ʿAlī bin Maʿūd. Dated 10 Rajab 1307 A.H. [2 March 1890 CE]

This is the oldest extant Khōjā inscription in Zanzibar. The inscription does not refer to the exclusivity of the Khōjā caste; rather, it is a statement of an inclusive Islamic religious identity.

Inscription 2. An Entryway Inscription on a Khōjā Caravanserai

Location: Kiponda quarter, Zanzibar
Language: Arabic, English, and Gujarati
Type: Stone inscription
Purpose: Entryway dedication
Description: A trilingual stone inscription of a dedication set within an intricately carved floral motif on a wooden frame above the entryway.
Date: 9 Jumādā 'l-Ākhira 1310 A.H./29 December 1892 CE/9 Pōṣ 1949 V.S.

The Gujarati section of the inscription reads:

1. કચ્છ સમાગોગાના ખોજા ઈસમાલ રામજીનુ ધરમાઊ મુસાફરખાનુ
2. ફકત ખોજા જમાતના મુસાફરોને માટે જંગબારના સુલતાન સૈયદ આલી બીન સઈદના વખતમાં
3. સ્થાપને વકફ કીધું છે. સંવત ૧૯૪૯ના પોષના ૯મીને વારગુરૂન રોજ ૧૩૫

1. *Kacch samāgōgānā khōjā īsmāl rāmjīnu dharmā'ū musāpharkhānu*
2. *Phakat khōjā jñātnā musāpharōnē māṭē jangbārnā sultān saiyad ālī bīn sa'īdnā vakhatmā̃*
3. *Sthāpīnē vakaph kīdhũ chē. saṁvat 1949nā pōṣnā 9mīnē vārgurūna rōj 135*

The English translation reads:

1. Charitable caravanserai [bequeathed] by Khōjā Ismail Ramji of Kucch-Samagoga
2. Only for travelers of the Khōjā caste in Zanzibar during the reign of Sultan Sayid Ally bin Sayeed
3. Established as a perpetual religious trust (*vakaph*). *Saṁvat* 1949, 9th of Pōṣ, Thursday, 135[9] [29 December 1892 CE].

The year in which the text was inscribed, 1892, precedes the permanent fractionalization of the Zanzibar Khōjā into discrete creedal communities. Ramji's bequest is on behalf of the entire caste, regardless of belief. The use of the Indic *Vikrama-saṁvat* (V.S.) calendar in the Gujarati portion of the inscription and the reference to caste, not religious confession, indicates that, until this point, it was Khōjā caste identity that defined the boundaries of inclusion and access to communal goods and services.

9 The significance of the final number, 135, is somewhat unclear. The most likely explanation for concluding with the number 135 is that it represents the time of day at which the building was dedicated, 1:35 pm. This is a logical explanation because the date is written from the longest time frame to the shortest—year:month:day:time [of day]. Being that it is the V.S. calendar that is employed, an auspicious time would be a probable explanation.

Inscription 3. A Later Entryway Inscription on the Khōjā Hujjatul Islam Masjid

Location: Kiponda quarter, Zanzibar
Language: Arabic
Type: Wooden carving set above a door
Purpose: Entryway benediction
Description: Calligraphic Quranic verse with the creation date of the door and mantle
Date: 1312 A.H./1895 CE

The inscription reads:

هذا المسجد المسمّى بحجة الإسلام ومن أظلم ممن منع مساجد الله أن يذكر فيها اسمه وسعى في خرابها أولئك ما كان لهم أن يدخلوها إلا خائفين لهم في الدنيا خزي ولهم في الآخرة عذاب عظيم ١٣١٢

Hādhā l-masjid al-musammā bi-ḥujjat al-islām wa man adhlamu mimman manaʿ masājida l-llāhi an yadhkura fīhā-smuhu wa saʿā fī kharābihā ūlā'ika mā kāna lahum an yadkhulūhā illā khā'ifīna lahum fī l-dunyā khizyun wa lahum fi l-ākhirati ʿadhābun ʿadhīm

When translated into English with help from Pickthall's (1930) edition of the Quran, the text reads:

> This mosque is called the Proof of Islam [Ḥujjat al-Islām]. And who doth greater wrong than he who forbiddeth the approach to the sanctuaries of Allah lest His name should be mentioned therein, and striveth for their ruin. As for such, it was never meant that they should enter them except in fear. Theirs in the world is ignominy and theirs in the Hereafter is an awful doom [2:114]. 1312 A.H. [1895 CE]

Again, for the Khōjā of Hujjatul Islam, it was religion, rather than caste, that dominated identity. The verse of the Quran chosen here is significant, as it clearly defines the mosque as open to all, in contrast to the practices of the Āgākhānī Khōjā, and guarantees access while invoking divine wrath on those who would restrict the believer's entrance. This openness came to define Khōjā identity within the context of Islamic Zanzibar and was reflected throughout Khōjā communities in eastern, central, and southern Africa, including Dar es Salaam.

Inscription 4. An Entryway Inscription on the Āgākhānī Khōjā Poor Women's Home

Location: Kiponda quarter, Zanzibar
Language: English and Gujarati
Type: Brass plaque set above a door
Purpose: Entryway dedication
Description: Description of the institution with the executors' dedication and a reference to the deceased benefactor
Date: 1903 CE

The Gujarati section of the inscription reads:

1. હીઝ હાઇનેસ નામદાર આગાખાન ધી ઑનરેબલ સર સુલતાન મોહામદ શાહા
2. જી.સી.આઇ.ઇ.કે.સી.આઇ.ઇ. વગેરે વગેરેના
3. વારસ સ્વર્ગ વાસી મી. જાનમાહામદ હસરાજે ખોજા ઇસમાયલી ગરીબ બાઇઓ માટે સ્થાપેલુ આશ્રમ ઘર
4. તા. ૫ મી સપટેમ્બર સને ૧૯૦૨ ના વીલની રૂએ, એમના એકઝીકયુટરો
5. બાઇ નાનબાઇ તે મરહુમની વીધવા તથા મી. મહામદ સાલેકાનજી હસરાજે
6. બંધાવ્યું સને ૧૯૦૩

1. *Hīj hā'īnēs nāmdār āgākhān dhī ŏnarēbal sar sultāna mōhāmad śāhā*
2. *Jī.sī.ā'ī.ī.kē.sī.ā'ī.ī. vagērē vagērēnā*
3. *Vāras svargvāsī mī. jānmāhāmad hasrājē khōjā īsamāylī garīb bā'ī'ō māṭē sthāpēlu āśram ghar*
4. *Tā. 5 mī sapaṭēmbar sanē 1902 nā vīlanī rū'ē, ēmnā ēkajhīkayuṭarō*
5. *Bā'ī nānbā'ī tē marhumnī vīdhvā tathā mī. mahāmad sālēkānjī hasrājē*
6. *Bandhāvyũ sanē 1903*

The English translation reads:

1. His Highness the Renowned Āgākhān, the Honorable Sir Sultan Mohamed Shah
2. G.C.I.E. K.C.I.E.,[10] etc., etc. . . .
3. Established by the late Mr. Jānmāhāmad Hasrājē as a home for poor Khōjā Ismaili women
4. Date 5 September 1902, by his executors exactly according to his will
5. Bā'ī Nānbā'ī, the deceased's widow, and Mr. Mahāmad Sālēkānjī Hasrājē
6. Built in the year 1903

10 Knight Grand Commander and Knight Commander, Order of the Indian Empire.

See the following subsection for a discussion of this inscription.

Inscription 5. An Entryway Inscription on an Āgākhānī Khōjā Jamātkhānā

Location: Kiponda quarter, Zanzibar
Language: English and Gujarati
Type: Brass plaque set above a door
Purpose: Entryway dedication
Description: Description of the institution with the benefactor's dedication and the contractor's name, including the creation date of the door and mantle
Date: 26 Āṣāḍh 1964 V.S./7 August 1907 CE

The Gujarati section of the inscription reads:

1. શીઆ ઈમામી ઈસમાઈલી ખોજા જમાતખાના
2. હીઝ હાઈનેસ સર સુલતાન મહમદ શાહ આગા ખાન જી. સી. આઇ. ઇ. ને
3. અર્પણ કરનાર
4. આલીજાહ કાસમ ભાઈ દામાણી કચ્છ કેરાવાલા
5. મીસ્ત્રી ખાકી શીવજી કરાંચીવાલા જંગબાર તા. ૨૬ આસાડ સા. ૧૯૬૪

1. *Śī'ā īmāmī isamā'ilī khōjā jamātkhānā*
2. *Hīj hā'īnēs sar sultān mahamad śāh āgā khān jī. sī. ā'ī. ī. nē*
3. *Arpaṇ karnār*
4. *Alījāh kāsam bhā'ī dāmāṇī kacch kērāvālā*
5. *Mīstrī khākī śīvjī karāñcīvālā jangbār tā. 26 āsāḍ śā. 1964*

The English translation reads:

1. Shia Imami Ismaili Khōjā *jamātkhānā*
2. His Highness Sir Sultan Mohamed Shah Aga Khan, GCIE
3. Dedicated by
4. The illustrious Kasam Bhai Damani of Kucch Kera
5. Mason Khakee Shivji of Karachi, Zanzibar 26 Āṣāḍh 1964 Saṁvat [7 August 1907]

Because of the outcasting *pharmān* of 1899, it was the Āgākhānī Khōjā who began to clearly identify themselves in partisan terms; to create exclusive institutions, such as the poor women's home; and to restrict access to religious

spaces, as with the *jamātkhānā*. In the short period from the 1903 to 1907, the inscriptions record the further development of a deemphasis on Khōjā caste identity, Khōjā Ismaili, and an emphasis on an exclusively religious identity, Shia Imami Ismaili. The religious identity is foregrounded to the exclusion of a Khōjā all-caste identity. It was in response to this restriction that the Khōjā began to develop a theological self-referential religious identity within the caste, against the Āgākhānī other.

Inscription 6. A Façade Inscription on a Khōjā Widows' Home (Vidhvāśram)

Location: Kiponda quarter, Zanzibar
Language: Gujarati
Type: Marble inscription
Purpose: Dedication of a widows' home
Description: Marble plaque set within a coral stone façade wall
Date: 25 January 1935 CE/19 Shawwāl 1353 A.H.

The inscription reads:

1. ખોજા શીઅી ઇસ્નાએશરી
2. વિધવાશ્રમ
3. મરહુમ હાજી મહમદભાઈ અલારખ્યા શીવજી
4. તરફથી ખોજા શીઅી ઈસ્નાએશરી
5. વિધવા બેહેનો માટે વકફ
6. તા. ૨૫મી જાન્યુઆરી ઈ.સ. ૧૯૩૫
7. તા. ૧૯મી શવ્વાલ હી.સ. ૧૩૫૩

1. *Khōjā śī'â isnā'âśarī*
2. *Vidhvāśram*
3. *Marhum haji mahamadbhā'ī alārakhyā śīvjī*
4. *Taraphthī khōjā śī'â isnā'âśarī*
5. *Vidhvā bēhēnō māṭē vakaph*
6. *Tā. 25mī jān'yu'ārī ī. s. 1935*
7. *Tā. 19mī śavvāl hī. s. 1353*

When translated into English, the inscription reads:

1. The Shia Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā
2. Widows' residence

3. [Donated by] the late Haji Mohammed Bhai Alarakhia Shivji
4. To the Shia Ithnā ʿAsharī Khōjā
5. As a perpetual religious trust for widowed women
6. Date: 25th January 1935 AD
7. Date: 19th Shawwal 1353 A.H.

By 1935, the Khōjā had completed their articulation of self-identity within the Khōjā caste as Shia Ithnā ʿAsharī. The precise spelling of the self-referential identity *śī'â isnā'âśarī* ('Shia Ithnā 'Asharī') employs Ismā'il's transliteration scheme, with the use of the *traṇ mīṇḍā* (ʿ) on the /ā/ to denote the ʿayn of the original Arabic. This diacritical spelling then became the standard for communal inscriptions and self-referential documentation. The use of the term *vidhvāśrām* at this point in Khōjā history signals that, although the formation of identity terminology had reached maturity, the African Khōjā had not yet fully adopted Persianate vocabulary, as modern-day Khōjā of Tanzania exclusively refer to a widows' house as a *bēvā khānā*, an Urdu term derived from the Persian *bīwe* ('widow') and *khāne* ('abode') (Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Dar es Salaam 2005, 15).

This sixth inscription reflects a permanent shift in religious orientation with regard to conceptions of time, as the *Saṁvat* calendar is dropped in lieu of the hegiric date. Additionally, the widows' residence is declared to be a *vakaph*. This is a continuation of traditional Khōjā practice wherein communal rights are preserved in perpetuity and are seen as central to self-identity. The fifth inscription, of the *jamātkhānā*, served to vest the property and its accompanying rights in the person of Sultan Mohamed Shah, the Aga Khan of that period, rather than in the Khōjā caste. In observing this development among the Āgākhānī Khōjā, the Khōjā consciously strengthened the ancient Khōjā institution of vesting property and communal authority in the community's republican leadership council.

Inscription 7. A Memorial Entryway Inscription on a Kuwwatul Islam Imāmvāḍō

Location: Kiponda quarter, Zanzibar
Language: Gujarati
Type: Marble inscription
Purpose: 1,300th martyrdom anniversary memorial of Ḥusayn
Description: Marble plaque set within a coral stone façade wall above the main entrance of the *imāmvāḍō*
Date: 27 January 1942 CE/10 Muḥarram 1361 A.H.

The inscription reads:

1. હ. ઇમામ હુસેન અ.ની
2. શહાદતના ૧૩૦૦ સાલની
3. યાદગારમાં અર્પણ કરવા
4. માં આવેલ છે. ૧૩૬૧ હિજરી

1. *Ha. imām husēn a.nī*
2. *Śahādatnā 1300 sālnī*
3. *Yādgārmā arpaṇ karvā*
4. *Mā̃ āvēl chē. 1361 hijrī*

When translated into English, the inscription reads:

1. Hajharat Imam Ḥusayn's, peace and blessings be upon him,
2. 1300 year martyrdom anniversary
3. Dedicated in memoriam
4. In 1361 Hijrī [1942 CE]

Although the sixth inscription, on the Khōjā widows' home, reflects the maturation of Ithnā ʿAsharī identity, its exclusivity to this community is specific to the institution. It is only social welfare, and not religious worship, that is restricted by caste membership. The seventh and final inscription, above the *imāmvāḍō* honoring the 1,300th death anniversary of Ḥusayn, highlights the continuing accessibility and openness of the Khōjā concerning faith. Ḥusayn is the Islamic martyr par excellence, and proclamation of his message is accessible to all, particularly to other Asians literate in Gujarati. This confidence in and collective self-definition through Ḥusayn became the basis for later proselytization initiatives of the Imami Shia creed on the continent in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Polyglotism

As the previous section on epigraphy has demonstrated, the Zanzibari experience, and more broadly the African experience, exposed the Khōjā to a multiplicity of languages and cultures at a very fundamental level, which transformed their own religious identity to embrace rituals and conceptions of Twelver Shiism that were of Near Eastern origin. The Khōjā community that later came to define itself as Ithnā ʿAsharī saw itself as the upholder of

the Khōjā tradition of *ajhādārī* ('mourning'). Thus, the Gujarati language and Kāṭhiyāvāḍī culture came to dominate Khōjā intellectual life.

Hundreds of Gujarati religious tracts were printed in Zanzibar through the Huseini Press of Hassanali F. Master. The most popular publications were those that preserved Khōjā oral traditions for Muharram observances, the oldest extant collection being *Phirdōs* ('Paradise'). Kacchī oral literature is the oldest extant traditions among the African Khōjā. But it was through the Gujarati script that newer popular devotionals in Persian, Arabic, and Urdu were imported, read, and recited in communal observances. A review of representative samples, which were presented as appendices, illustrates the nature of these dirges as popular and highly emotive in subject matter. These devotionals were selected and preserved to the extent that they fit the parameters of communal ritual performance and contained mnemonics to facilitate memorization. Their tremendous appeal among the Zanzibari Khōjā came from both the authority of these Near Eastern tongues and the emotional appeal derived from a narrative of Karbala unencumbered by philosophical and linguistic complexity. As these Near Eastern languages and traditions entered the Khōjā vernacular, they crowded out many of the ancient Indic traditions and vocabulary of nineteenth-century Khōjā religious identity. These rapid linguistic changes set the stage for a dramatic shift in Khōjā religious identity at the turn of the twenty-first century in Dar es Salaam.

Conclusion

Although the Gujarati script was known among Khōjā communities—particularly among Kāṭhiyāvāḍī merchants, who used it for accounting and inventory purposes—well into the nineteenth century, it was not the script predominantly used by Khōjā communities for communicating religious knowledge. More than any other author or publisher, Gulāmalī Ismā'il had a formative impact on the Gujarati script: his printing press and his more than four hundred publications made Gujarati a critical language for communicating the Ithnā 'Asharī creed to Khōjā communities throughout the subcontinent and Africa. Ismā'il's unique transliteration scheme allowed him to highlight Persian and Arabic terminology and phrases and import them into Gujarati; his publications made Near Eastern Islamic texts accessible to an increasingly literate laity. The break from the Khōjā Sindhi script was a discontinuity that functioned as a tabula rasa. Succeeding generations of Khōjā were unable to read texts in the old script, and, as a result, their entire religious narrative was based

on the new translations and texts published in Gujarati. The ancestral religious traditions of the Khōjā were forgotten and were replaced with a more normative Near Eastern form of Islam; thus identity increasingly became defined in religious rather than caste terms. Self-referentially, the Sanskrit origin term denoting caste exclusivity, *jñāt*, came to be replaced by the Arabic origin term denoting a community based on religious inclusivity, *jamāt*.

CHAPTER 5

Khōjā Religious Texts: The *Dō'āōnō Majmū'ō*

Introduction

From a corpus of more than four hundred publications, which of Gulāmalī Ismā'il's publications were most significant in transforming the religious identity of the African Khōjā? How did these texts change the structure of religious authority and the transmission of sacred knowledge within the community? For Ismā'il, Islamic authority was based in the Near East. This meant providing new narratives of being exclusively tied to Arab-Islamic history. Ismā'il's texts allowed a radically new cosmology based on Near Eastern Shia texts to be introduced to the Khōjā, replacing Indic conceptions of time and history (V. Lal 2003). Time itself shifted forward and became anchored on a new point in history as the *Vikrama-saṁvat* calendar was replaced by the *hijrī* calendar. Instrumental in providing a new liturgical calendar and rituals therein was the ubiquitous *vade mecum* of the Khōjā: *Dō'āōnō majmū'ō*[1] (henceforth *Majmū'ō*).

Overview

First published in the early twentieth century, the *Majmū'ō*[2] measures 17.25 cm in length, 12.5 cm in width, and 3 cm in height; its 529 pages weigh a total of 401 g. In contrast, Ismā'il's *Kura'ānē śarīph* measures 31.5 cm in length, 20.5 cm in width, and 2.75 cm in height; its 546 pages weigh a total of 1,153 g. Moreover, volume 2 of *Anavārūl bayān phī taphasīril kura'ān* measures 30.5 cm in length, 21 cm in width, and 4 cm in height; its 993 pages weigh a total of 1,482 g. The latter two texts, which are about three times heavier than the *Majmū'ō*, contain detailed Quranic text and commentaries, most of which are not read daily in personal or communal supplications. In contrast, the *Majmū'ō* was tailored

1 The name *Majmū'ō* is derived from the Arabic *majmū'* 'compilation.' The full name of the text, *Dō'āōnō majmū'ō*, literally translates as 'collection of prayers.' It has been referred to as a *vade mecum* because of its pervasive use as a core religious manual that was portable and ubiquitous among the African Khōjā and their communities.

2 To my knowledge, no major university, state, or national library in North America or Western Europe has an early 20th century copy of the *Majmū'ō*. The review and citations in this study are based on an early twentieth-century edition provided by a respondent in Dar es Salaam, 2008.

for daily use and was printed with lightweight paper and a cardboard cover; this made it cheap to print and easy to transport. Moreover, the *Majmū'ō* was the most cost-effective choice for the average Khōjā household. On a price-list published in a text by Ismā'il in Bhavnagar on 1927, the complete *Anavārūl bayān* in three volumes cost between 35 and 37 rupees, which represented the publication price at cost, whereas the price of the *Majmū'ō* was only 3.5 rupees, one tenth of the cost of the *Anavārūl bayān* (Ismā'il 1346/1984/1927, i, ii). The *Majmū'ō* was a concise and economical text at that time that provided all necessary prayers for the liturgical year in an accessible language and compact form.

Because of the text's popularity among the Khōjā of the subcontinent and their publication houses, the *Majmū'ō* has never gone out of print since its first publication. Interestingly, the *Majmū'ō* was never published in Africa and instead was imported directly from the subcontinent. Although it has rapidly disappeared in Africa in the twenty-first century, it has continued to be published in various cities in Gujarat as well as in Karachi, where Ismā'il's printing press moved after his death in 1944 and subsequent partition of the subcontinent in 1947.

The *Majmū'ō* is an evolving text that adapts to the evolving religious needs of the Khōjā community that prints it. After Ismā'il's death, the *Majmū'ō* has continued to be published by other presses, with Ismā'il credited as the original author. With each new edition inserts are included and certain sections taken out as necessary to meet the religious needs of a particular community. Take, for instance, a 1981 Pakistani Khōjā edition of the *Majmū'ō*. Published in Karachi, it begins with an eight-page insert printed in green ink that includes written talismans in Arabic character to be used as a cure if a person has a fever or as protection if an individual is about to embark on a journey. The use of such talismans is clearly a popular local practice, and thus talismans have been included in this edition in response to local needs (Ismā'il 1981, 9–16).

Table of Contents

For most African Khōjā born before 1980, their first experience with an Islamic text, including the Quran, was through the Khōjā *Majmū'ō*. It is organized into various books that contain a variety of foci. Certain books are complete Khōjā Gujarati transliterations and simplified Gujarati translations of Shia Arabic texts, such *Du'ā' Kumayl*. Other books are conglomerations of Khōjā vernacular practices and assorted prayers from a variety of Persian, Arabic, and Urdu sources. The extensive nature of the text and its indispensability for all manner of ritual prayers throughout the annual liturgical calendar can be quickly ascertained by looking at its table of contents; Table 3 presents a translation of the table of contents from an early twentieth-century edition.

TABLE 3 *The Table of Contents of the* Dō'āōnō Majmū'ō

Book	Translation	Outline of Contents[a]
I. *Viṣay*	Subject matter	Summary, recommendation, table of contents, rules for reading Arabic, and Ismā'il's preface, "Why Should We Pray?"
II. *Durrē maksūd*	Door of wishes	Prayers to be recited after the five daily prayers, the prayer of the Endorser, the Tradition of the Cloak, and the five prayers of behoof
III. *Vajhīphah*	Daily prayers	[Prayers for] obtaining wealth, for the sick, for the misfortunate, and for the oppressed to be relieved of their affliction. Prayers for divine boons, etc.
IV. *Tōhphatul ābēdīn*	The gift of [Zayn al-] ʿĀbidīn	A miscellaneous collection of sixty-three assorted prayers
V. *Dō'ā'ē kanjhul arṣ*	Prayer of the treasures of the divine throne	The great prayer of the treasures of the divine throne
VI. *Khajhā'ēnē rahmat*	Treasures of divine mercy	The prayer of divine remembrance, the prayer of divine consultation, pilgrimages of the heirs [of the Prophet]
VII. *Murādē dil*	Desires of the heart	The ninety-nine names of God, nine special verses, methods of divination, and numerical methods for *abjad*
VIII. *Dō'ā'ē kōmēl*	The prayer of Kumayl	The prayer taught by Alī (a.) to Kōmēl ībn Jhiyād
IX. *Dō'ā'ē âdīlah*	Prayers of justice	Prayers of justice, of the heavenly ascension [of the Prophet], the spreading of the divine light which awakens, and funerary rites.

Book	Translation	Outline of Contents[a]
X. *Dō'ā'ē maślul*	Prayers for the afflicted	Prayers for those with afflictions
XI. *Dōrūdē tusī*	The salutations of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī	The salutations of Tusī, contained within are the prayers to the Fourteen Infallibles
XII. *Jvaśanē sagīr*	The lesser armor	A great and magnificent prayer
XIII. *Gavharē maksud*	The essential purpose	Wondrous methods of bibliomancy, prayers, [prayers of] aspiration, etc.
XIV. *Jvaśanē kabīr*	The greater armor	To be recited on the night of destiny

[a] The contents outlined here are translated from the title page of each book, which contains a short summary.

The Text: Selective Analysis

The contents of the five-hundred-plus pages of the *Majmū'ō* are immensely complex; in fact, an entire thesis could be devoted to translating and analyzing its multiple books and levels of religious, philosophical, and practical discourse. The book contains both esoteric and exoteric content, from *abjad* to very practical prescriptions for the curing of diseases such as yellow fever. This *vade mecum* served as both a very personal individualized text with sections designed to be recited silently, such as prayers for women unable to conceive, and a communal text with content proclaimed in unison in the *imāmvāḍō*, such as Quranic prayers. The following sections discuss a few important portions of this intricate and multilayered work.

List of Names

One illustration of the *Majmū'ō*'s lasting impact on Africa Khōjā identity can be seen in the forenames selected for newborns. The list of potential names for Khōjā boys and girls presented in Book V standardized the Khōjā forenames found in Perso-Arabic Shiism. For example, Book V presents proper conjunct forenames such as Mōham'madalī and Alīhusēn, as well as descriptive forenames such as in Rōśana'alī ('the light of 'Alī') and Khādimhusēn ('servant of Ḥusayn'). Popular male names still in use in East Africa from the *Majmū'ō* list

include Muhammad Jaffer, Hasanali, Zainul Abedin, Yusuf, Makbulali, Mohsin, Anwar, and Riyaz. The African experience further tailored these names in the Khōjā vernacular, such that Mōham'madhusēn would be known as Mamad, a contracted adoption of the Swahili form of the name Muḥammad.

Prayers for Alleviating Difficulty

Ancient Khōjā traditions are preserved, in modified form, within the *Majmū'ō*. An extant tradition among both the Ithnā ʿAsharī and Āgākhānī Khōjā is the use of prayers for the *muśkil āsān* ('alleviation of difficulties'). The Khōjā define 'difficulty' in general terms in the context of the *Majmū'ō*; that is, essentially all manner of *duḥkh* ('suffering') from the Indic perspective that corporeal existence has a metaphysical basis, that is to say that prayers can physically cure the ill. Ritual prayers, including the *Nādē alī*, are recommended to ease current suffering and to prevent its reoccurrence, or, at least, lessen it in the future. The use of an orthodox Shia Arabic prayer, the *Nādē alī*, presents an 'Islamic' approach to a medieval Khōjā religious tradition.

The Āgākhānī Khōjā have taken a somewhat different path in observing the prayers for the alleviation of difficulties. These prayers are generally conducted within the *sātadō* religious ceremony. As its name indicates, the *sātadō* is a congregational prayer that lasts seven days and is held twice or thrice a year, primarily for the alleviation of individual and communal difficulties. In the weekly congregational prayers, following the recitation of the *dhu'ā*, the officiating priest recites the *muśkīl āsānī tasbīh* prayer for the mitigation of difficulties. One can also request that the officiating priest ask the congregation to pray on behalf of a particular community member. Similarly, the *girīyājharī tasbīh* contains the following verse: "yā ālē nabī avlādē alī yā muśkīl khuśā yā hājhār imam" ("Oh descendent of the Prophet, descendent of ʿAlī, ease our suffering, oh present Imam"). This prayer reflects the doctrine of the Āgākhānī creed.

For the Āgākhānī Khōjā, the alleviation of suffering can be achieved through the Imam as divine mediator. For the Khōjā, the *Majmū'ō* gives this power to each literate individual. The differences between the Ithnā ʿAsharī and the Āgākhānī in their approach to the ancient Khōjā tradition, prayers for the alleviation of difficulties, highlight the extent to which creed has come to separate and identify each Khōjā faction apart from the other and in relation to the divine.

Sacred Maps

'Magic squares' are an ancient form of presenting the sacred whose origins lie in the Chinese *Lo-Shu*, which was adopted by Indic civilization and came

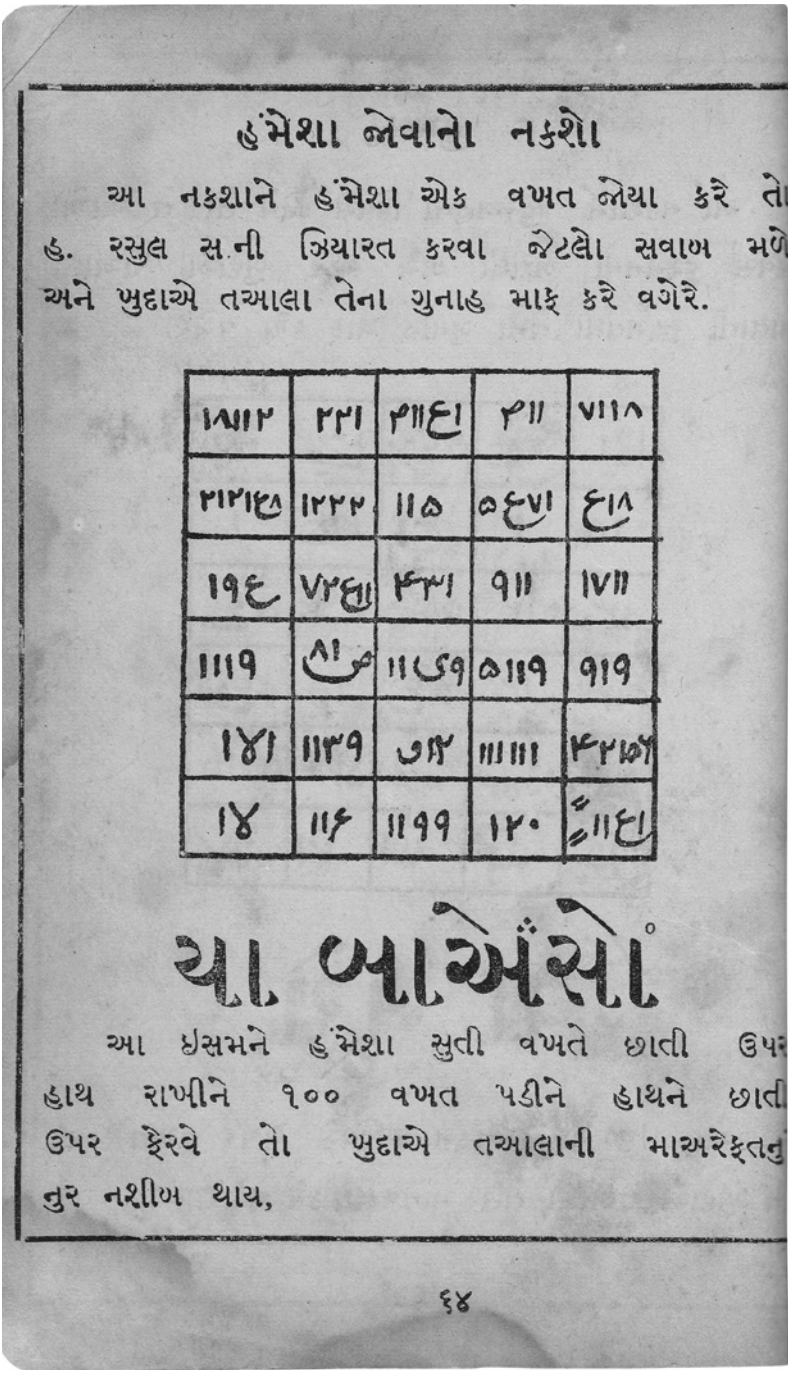
to the Perso-Arab world in the tenth century. They represent an arithmetic encapsulation of the world, a model of the universe and symbolic representation of life. The center of a magic square represents the Creator and Sustainer, and the symbols surrounding the center square represent a complex and harmonious universe, which expresses the divine order; the magic square thus possesses universal power (Cammann 1969a, 1969b). The magic square maps presented in the *Majmū'ō* are less geometrically precise than older versions of these squares found in medieval China and India, providing a less mathematically precise but equally potent version for the Khōjā. As the Quran became increasingly accessible to the Khōjā through printed transliterated translations, the mystical aspects of Khōjā vernacular traditions were combined and subsumed within particular Near Eastern Shia traditions that made the Quran the focus of divination and protection rituals.

The *Majmū'ō* records the Islamization of esoteric Khōjā ritual practices in the late nineteenth century. Two representative examples of this translation in the text are the *nakśō* ('sacred maps') and *istēkhārō* ('rites of divination'). Located in Book 11, the sacred maps are tables that are six squares in length and five squares in width. Located within each cell are Arabic, Persian, and Gujarati letters and/or numerals written in cipher. Each particular arrangement is believed to be auspicious. The sacred maps are paired with an attribute of God. In the evening, the reader of the book is to see and visualize the sacred map(s) within the context of particular rituals and after obligatory and supererogatory ritual prayers. These sacred maps differ from those in the Near East in that the reader is exhorted not only to see but also to visualize them in order to bring about divine succor, employing the Indic practice of *darśan* ('divine sight').[3]

Although the form of the sacred maps appears to have been imported from the Near East, subtle variations within cells contained in the sacred maps reveal the Khōjā stamp placed on these imported traditions. An illustration of this can be seen in the sacred map in Figure 5, taken from Book 11 of the *Majmū'ō*. A preliminary analysis of this sacred map reveals that the last box on the bottom left is a square that contains the number 14 written in Gujarati script; above it is the number 141, also written in Gujarati script. The remaining numerals in the sacred map are in the Persian/Urdu script, and the letters present are of the Arabic script. One possible explanation for the insertion of the number 14[4] from Gujarati is that it resulted from an internal theological

3 *Darśan* in this context is the act of beholding a sacred object, a reciprocal experience in which the beholder is then blessed as a result of the interaction (Eck 1998).

4 The number 141 is a palindrome based on the number 14.


હંમેશા જોવાનો નકશો.

આ નકશાને હંમેશા એક વખત જોયા કરે તો હ. રસુલ સ.ની ઝિયારત કરવા જેટલો સવાબ મળે અને ખુદાએ તઆલા તેના ગુનાહ માફ કરે વગેરે.

١٧١٢	٢٢١	٢١١٤١	٣١١	٧١١٨
٢١٢١٤٨	١٢٢٢	١١٥	٥٤٧١	٤١٨
١٩٤	٧٢٤١	٣٣١	٩١١	١٧١١
١١١٩	٨١	١١٥٩١	٥١١٩	٩١٩
١٨١	١١٣٩	٥١٢	١١١١١	٣٢١٥١
١٨	١١٤	١١٩٩	١٢٠	١١٤١

યા બાએંસોં

આ ઇસમને હંમેશા સુતી વખતે છાતી ઉપર હાથ રાખીને ૧૦૦ વખત પડીને હાથને છાતી ઉપર ફેરવે તો ખુદાએ તઆલાની માઅરેફતનું નુર નશીબ થાય,

૬૪

FIGURE 5 *A sacred map from Book II of the* Majmūʾō. *The appellation below the sacred map reads, "The Resurrector"* (Yā bāʾêsôˊ).

debate among the Khōjā in the late nineteenth century regarding whether the Twelve Imams should be venerated exclusively or whether veneration should be expanded to include the Fourteen Infallibles (i.e., the Twelve Imams including Muḥammad and Fāṭima). Particularly problematic was a tension in the veneration of Fāṭima, because she was not an imam and not infallible; she was eventually accepted into orthodox doctrine by the Khōjā.

This sacred map, used in private meditation, allowed a focusing of the mind in contemplative prayer. The Khōjā version of this mandala was accompanied by a mantra, in this case *Yā bāʾêsōˊ*, as well as by particular rituals that emphasized the esoteric connection between the individual and the divine. The following excerpt is an example of the esoteric rituals found in the *Majmūʾō* associated with the aforementioned sacred map.

> This appellation should be chanted at the hour of sleep. Place your hand over your chest in a circular motion and recite this appellation one-hundred times. The effect of this shall be that [the reciter] shall benefit from the light of knowledge from God, Most High. (Ismāʾil n.d.[b], 64, Book VII)

The example of sacred maps in the *Majmūʾō* is typical of the way in which Near Eastern Islamic religious texts were modified, understood, and used by the Khōjā in a particularly Indic context, reflecting their negotiation of religious identities.

Quranic Bibliomancy

Whereas the sacred maps reflect an earlier importation of Near Eastern Islamic texts and traditions modified in form and use for Khōjā needs, the divination guides in the *Majmūʾō* are an example of religious innovation and production; that is, they are an amalgamation of indigenous Indic traditions refashioned through Near Eastern Islamic modes in the Khōjā context. Particularly illustrative of this process is a Quranic bibliomancy text located in Book XIII. Unlike the Bōhrā, who had centuries of interaction with and learning in the Arabic script, the Khōjā were entirely unfamiliar with both the script and the routine use of Quranic texts. In order to engage in an 'orthodox' form of Quranic bibliomancy, the Khōjā developed a unique system that assigned values to each letter of the Arabic alphabet to reveal the divine will.

Divination differs slightly between the Sunni and Shia traditions. In the Sunni tradition, the prayer of divination is recited before sleeping, the basic form being a declaration of intent and supererogatory prayer. The individual then goes to sleep and is to receive revelation in his or her dreams, which on

awakening provide an intuitive response as an answer to the decision in question (Bulkeley 2008, 206–207). If the divination ritual does not elicit a dream or feeling, it is to be repeated consecutively until it is achieved. For the Sunni, divination is revealed through this form of 'dream incubation' (Edgar 2010).

For the Shia, particularly the Khōjā, the outcome of divination is immediate. The *Majmūʿō* outlines three main forms of divination prominent among the African Khōjā in the late nineteenth to late twentieth century: *Kurānē śarīphnō istēkhārō* ('Quranic bibliomancy'), *cīṭhṭhīōnō istēkhārō* ('cartomancy'), and *tasbīhnō istēkhārō* ('rosary divination'). Each form of divination has specific and somewhat elaborate rituals that must be performed in a precise order to achieve a proper result. Incomplete preparation for the divination, such as a lack of ritual purity, could result in an incorrect or inauspicious divination. Although, technically, divination could be performed by anyone, for the East African Khōjā, there were specific people who generally performed the proscribed rituals within the community. These individuals were respected for their age, religious knowledge, and character.

Quranic bibliomancy in the *Majmūʿō* is the most elaborate and complex of the three presented forms of divination. This form of bibliomancy requires the reader to be in a state of ritual purity and to have completed supererogatory ritual prayers in order to open a Quran.[5] The supplicant then turns to the beginning (right side) of the page and goes down seven lines. The first letter of the seventh line is the answer. One then reads the entry that corresponds to the letter to understand the answer to the divination. For example, if the first Arabic letter of the seventh line on the page is *bā*', then the reader would find the corresponding entry in transliterated Gujarati, *bē*; he or she would then find the entry that corresponds to the Gujarati letter, which reads, "From your sincere need you will find relief and will profit from a rich client. (It is a good omen.)" Here the Quran, through the *Majmūʿō*, responds directly to a common concern of this merchant caste.

In this scheme, the answers to Quranic divinations are good, bad, or neutral. There are five degrees of good omens, such as *ṭhīk* ('okay'), *sārō* ('good'), *ghaṇōj sārō* ('quite good'), *bahuj sārō* ('very good'), and *bahuj majāhnō* ('much joy'). Neutral omens (*madhyam*) can be understood as an inability to clearly discern the mysterious will of the divine though divination but, at the same time, are cautiously optimistic. Even for divinations that portend evil (*kharāb*), there are prescriptions for changing one's decreed fate to achieve a favorable outcome. This is also significant in terms of early Khōjā conceptions of the divine decree,

5 This form of divination is found in a section near the end of the *Majmūʿō*, as it presumes access to a printed Quran and basic comprehension of Arabic letters.

which lacked the fatalism that came to Dar es Salaam through Near Eastern Shia theology in the late twentieth century.

The ratio of possible outcomes, in a tally of the entire Arabic alphabet as presented in the text, is 9:3:2 (good–bad–neutral). See also Table 4.

The Quranic divination system developed by Ismā'il was unique, as it allowed the Khōjā, who were unfamiliar with the Arabic script, to incorporate the Quran into ritual practices, such as bibliomancy. There is a slight issue for the Khōjā reader in that the chart presented in the Quranic bibliomancy text contains only the isolated form of the Arabic alphabet. Arabic letters have contextual forms (initial, medial, and final) in addition to their isolated forms. Gujarati letters generally have only one form, except as conjuncts. The most likely resolution to this issue by the Khōjā supplicant unfamiliar with the Arabic character system would have been to repeat the rituals of divination until an isolated Arabic letter or clearly distinguishable initial form letter appeared.

TABLE 4 *Arabic Letters as Categorized in the Quranic Bibliomancy Text of the* Majmū'ō

Good	Bad	Neutral
ا	ت	ج
ب	خ	ط
ث	ز	ق
ح	ش	ي
د	ك	
ذ	م	
ر		
س		
ص		
ض		
ظ		
ع		
غ		
ف		
ل		
ن		
و		
ه		

Quranic bibliomancy was the most preferred form of divination, compared to cartomancy and rosary divination, as the Quran in Islam is seen as the word of God 'inlibriate' (Watt 2007). It has a spiritual power far stronger than sacred chits or a rosary; it is a literal, textual manifestation of the divine. This unique system of divination was a substantial Khōjā contribution to the development of an indigenous Gujarati Shiism. The chart of Arabic letters in the *Majmūʾō*, provided by Ismāʾil to interpret the divination, was a medium through which the veiled will of the divine was rendered intelligible to the Khōjā, a cipher to render the esoteric exoteric.

The *Majmūʾō* in African Praxis

The *Weltanschauung* of the *Majmūʾō* thoroughly enchanted its readers, and it presumes positive free will on the part of humanity. There is evil sorcery and magic that must be defended against through prayers, amulets, and rituals. Diseases, such as cholera, and minor ailments, such as toothaches, can be cured through the chanting of particular prayers and observance of precise rituals. Certain times of the day are auspicious in invoking God's succor. The recitation of the prayers contained therein was the most important Khōjā religious practice at this particular historical juncture; the completion of the ritual in its totality provided a catharsis for the supplicant in petitioning the divine and the saints. In theory, the *Majmūʾō*, as a way to access knowledge and as a guide to ritual practice, allowed for a direct connection between the supplicant and God. In practice, within African Khōjā communities, there were specialized practitioners[6] who dealt with particularly challenging and persistent issues that an individual believed he or she could not solve by him- or herself with the text in hand.

One example[7] from the early 1950s is the case of a Khōjā girl approximately eight years of age, a resident of the Shangani quarter of Zanzibar city. She suddenly took ill, and after the illness had passed, she appeared to have literally gone mad. Her parents tried everything, from various herbal remedies to prayers to return her to her previous state. Nothing seemed to work. A female preacher was called and determined that the illness was the effect of a *najhar*

6 Historically, the role of religious specialist in African Khōjā communities was the domain of four categories of people: *hakīm* (*'yunānī* healers'), *mullā/mullīyanī* ('preachers'), *alim* ('scholars'), and *jhākir/jhākira* ('reciters').

7 Interview with a Khōjā housewife in her late sixties, central Dar es Salaam, 20 August 2008.

('evil eye') owing to the girl's exceptional beauty; she also explained that the area in which they were living, Shangani, was especially prone to the works of evil spirits. The family was advised to move to the Kiponda quarter, as it could provide spiritual protection and succor, for it was home to many Khōjā shrines and Islamic houses of worship. Additionally, they were advised to use the *Majmū'ō* constantly by reading chapter 36 of the Quran and the *Jvaśanē kabīr* supplications over the girl. The family did eventually move to the Kiponda quarter, but the condition of the girl improved only slightly. It resulted in permanent mental retardation and premature death. She died approximately three years before her father passed away, in 1997.

This illustrative case contextualizes the spiritual world of the African Khōjā, in which the *Majmū'ō* played a powerful role. The *Majmū'ō*'s role was a spiritually charged one in which there was no doubt in faith and in which the spiritual world was as real as—and, in certain contexts, perhaps more real than—the material world. The absence of an established clergy meant a reliance on lay leadership as well as a lack of central orthodoxy. Praxis of the senses dominated Khōjā religious life—performing the actions, hearing the sacred verses, seeing the sacred icons, and so on. As the historical core of female Khōjā religious life was the home, the *Majmū'ō* allowed literate women an opportunity to fully engage, at the individual and communal levels, with the high religious rituals observed by Khōjā males in the *imāmvāḍō*.

Conclusion

The *Majmū'ō* functioned as an all-in-one liturgical text for the Shia calendar. Through its wide distribution and extensive use by Khōjā communities throughout eastern, central, and southern Africa, it helped to standardize language, rituals, and a sense of Ithnā 'Asharī religious identity among geographically isolated communities. The text was particularly instrumental in female religious instruction and served as a basic text for achieving near-universal literacy. Ismā'il's transliteration system for Arabic allowed for the recitation of Arabic prayers and of the Quran without requiring instruction in the Arabic script. With the *Majmū'ō*, anyone could perform a basic *majlis*; as a result, this development decentered the position of the *mukhī* as keeper of the sacred rites. Ismā'il's printing press democratized access to religious texts, thus providing the Khōjā with the vocabulary, history, and rituals with which to redefine religious identity as central to their *jamātī* communalism.

PART 4

Ethnology

The ethnographic material presented throughout this study, particularly in the chapter on the sacred space of the *mēhphīl* ('shrine'), employs Knott's 'locality-based approach' of a spatial methodology by which religion is understood as situated in particular places. It seeks to understand the dynamic and local properties of space: configuration, simultaneity, extension, and power (Knott, 2005). Because sacred spaces are inextricably linked to changing narratives and scenes within them, they reflect the religious identity of the individuals and communities that patronize them (M. Smith 2008). For the African Khōjā, the creation of new sacred spaces through architecture, material culture, and liturgy provide visual reference points of the discontinuities in the evolution of communal religious identity in Dar es Salaam.

The *mēhphīl* has a central role in the construction of daily religious practice in contemporary Dar es Salaam, while being a relatively new phenomenon that is largely unregulated by the communal hierarchy. The first shrine established in the city was brought from Zanzibar in the mid-twentieth century; Zanzibar had a thriving tradition of the *mēhphīl* in addition to the *imāmvāḍō* and mosque as religious centers in the spiritual geography of the city. The creation of ad hoc sacred spaces on the island shortly after Khōjā settlement and their longevity, popularity, and financial support from private donors attest to the centrality of the *mēhphīl* to African Khōjā ritual worship. The *mēhphīl* may have Indic origins in the earlier vernacular traditions of *khōjāpanth*, which allowed Shia narratives devotional flexibility in local contexts, as seen in the South Indian village of Gūgūḍu in Andhra Pradesh (Mohammad 2013). In part, the popularity of the *mēhphīl* among the Africa Khōjā is due to its ritual flexibility. Historically, the *majlis* ('congregational service') was delivered communally in Gujarati or Urdu in a prescribed ritual form, after which popular devotional practices were performed individually. In contrast to the mosque and *imāmvāḍō*, the material culture contained within the *mēhphīl* is symbolic of the "widespread desire for a more concrete, even immanent, relationship that is direct, unmediated and, at least partly, involves forms of intercession" (Khosronejad 2012).

The Khōjā share with other Muslim communities in the lands outside of the Near East a need to connect to the spiritual geographies of distinctly Islamic narratives, such as those of Mecca or Karbala. Shrines fulfill this need by providing a physically accessible space for the transcendent to become imminent that is culturally appropriate for the community (Green 2003; Schielke and Stauth 2009; Cormack 2013). Indic shrine culture provides some inclusion of various local practices (Huda 2003). In contrast, when visiting Karbala, the Khōjā are disempowered: they are thrust into a linguistic and performative culture that is alien to them and to which the lands outside of the Near East are

irrelevant and their communities unknown. The Khōjā *mēhphīl* serves an important role in housing a sacred space and rituals that reflect their unique historical identity. In the older *mēhphīl*, each ritual object was donated by a community member, further personalizing the construction of the space and connecting it to the past and present membership. These objects form a spiritual bridge between their immediate reality and the sacred geography they represent. The *mēhphīl* contain replicas and icons to represent *their* Khōjā narrative of Karbala and Husain, which is empowered within *their* multilinguistic and cultural context, creating unifying narratives that are shared among the entire community as common referents of African Khōjā religious identity.

Similarly, the performance and liturgy of the Khōjā *majlis* is unique to their experience in Africa. The religious material within the Ithnā ʿAsharī canon is voluminous, so the selections used to structure the Khōjā *majlis* were based on Gulāmalī Ismā'il's *Dō'ā'ōnō Majmū'ō*. The liturgy became standardized so that it is performed consistently and punctually. A degree of indigenization is reflected at select *majlis* in which Swahili elegies and dirges are recited in addition to the traditional ones in Urdu, although Kacchī recitations are rare. Khōjā observances of Muharram are open to the public. Another unique feature of the Khōjā *majlis* in Dar es Salaam, aside from the fact that the *nyājh* ('sacrament') routinely uses Swahili *mandazi* ('beignets') or *vitumbua* ('rice cakes'), is the routine holding of thrice-weekly *majlis* in the cemetery. These routine remembrances of death and prayers for the ancestors focus communal memory through praying for the deceased. The deceased are commemorated in communal histories, through recordings of their acts of philanthropy, and in religious publications, which are often dedicated to a deceased community member, for whom the reader is asked to pray. As shrines are 'refurbished,' the new religious identities of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā in the twenty-first century—modeled on Near Eastern forms of Shiism—are visibly represented in the changing layout and material culture of the shrines, which stand in stark contrast to the Indic religious traditions brought to East Africa by the Khōjā in the early nineteenth century. In addition to the cemetery, mosque, and *imāmvāḍō*, the *mēhphīl* serves as the fourth pillar of Khōjā sacred space, which informs the urban physical identity of the Tanzanian Khōjā.

Although it must be acknowledged that "the human body is ultimately inexhaustible and unknowable, because it is open to endless transformation and reconstruction," there is something to be said for a unified understanding of the body and its social relationships to power and materiality (Burkitt 1998, 80; Burkitt 1999). The body is defined here as the embodiment of nature, culture, ideology, and power relationships (Fraser and Greco 2005); they are changing both individually and as a reflection of communal values. Thus bodies are able

to adapt to new ideological realities faster than physical spaces. To reconstruct this historically, words and human language can be used as artifacts, because they are symbolic of the way in which human bodies are located through relationships to action (Ilyenkov 1977). The final chapter of the study seeks to understand the evolving role of the female body in the construction of Khōjā religious identity through the use of the *cādar* ('veil').

Scholarship on the veil has primarily focused on its increasing symbolic value in political Islam (L. Ahmed 2012) or on its increasingly polarizing effect in the context of immigration and assimilation of Muslim minorities in Western societies (Laborde 2008). The context of the Khōjā in Dar es Salaam is quite different from that of the Near East or Western Europe. Tanzania is a country religiously divided approximately into thirds: Muslims, Christians, and those who practice indigenous religions; the country's current president and vice-president are both Muslim. Zanzibar is ninety-nine percent Muslim. Because Zanzibar was the chief incubator for Khōjā culture in East Africa during the nineteenth century, particularly for communities on the Swahili coast, its mores were influenced by the Omanis, Bahranis, and Shirazi, among others, who played a role in defining the Islamic character of Khōjā religion and the female embodiment of its values. The 1964 revolution brought those narratives to Dar es Salaam, which interacted first with local perspectives and later with the Iranian Revolution, resulting in a more politicized identity in relation to a globalized pan-Shiism.

At the local level in the city center of Dar es Salaam, the Khōjā *cādar* is a symbol of identity that differentiates Khōjā women from those of other communities, such as the Āgākhānī, Bōhrā, and Lōhāṇā. The clothing and adornment choices of men are more subtle but can also identify one's caste, through details such as the color(s) of the *dōrā* ('thread') worn on the wrist. The ways Khōjā women wear their *cādar*—the style, color, and material—express individuality (Moruzzi 2008), and it is quite possible that the *cādar* is a 'tool of cool' (Botz-Bornstein 2013). It is difficult to ascertain the complex forms of identity that the *cādar* reflects for individuals, as Khōjā spaces are strictly gendered and thus access was limited during the ethnographic phase of the research. Nevertheless, select interviews, publications, and early texts allow a general reconstruction of the *cādar* as an evolving symbol of Khōjā religious identity and an examination of the dynamics of power involved in constructing its authority.

However, it is apparent that the adoption of the *cādar* was not entirely voluntary by all women in the community. Its use is an expression of gendered power—that is, communal power over each individual and among individuals (Nagar 2000a). But the meaning of the *cādar* has changed over time, as has its

narrative in the religious identity of the Khōjā. It has roots in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century vernacular *kahāṇī* ('tale') tradition, which tried to amalgamate indigenous narratives with new themes and symbols derived from Islamic traditions. The politicization of the caste in the late twentieth century drew on older narratives in order to link it to 'orthodox' practices introduced from the Near East. In the twenty-first century, its politicization was linked to the politics of discontent and victimization by the United States and Israel against Iran and Hezbollah as defenders of Shiism. The historical literary and lived traditions of the Africa Khōjā over two centuries in India and Anglophone East Africa were completely overwritten linguistically in near-complete deference to politicized Iranian Shiism, which delegitimized Indic Khōjā traditions and rituals of the body as 'Hindu' and thus *but-parast* ('idolatrous'). The ambiguous theology of *khōjāpanth* was thus disembodied in lieu of a defensive theology of legal formalism that harbored a critical anxiety (Kugle 2007) over the place of the Khōjā both in Africa and in the larger world of Shiism.

CHAPTER 6

Ritual Space: Khōjā Shrines

Introduction

How was the changing religious identity of the Khōjā reflected in ritual practices, material culture, and the construction of sacred spaces? What factors are responsible for the success and proliferation of the *mēhphīl* in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam? As a result of Gulāmalī Ismā'il's publications, the *majlis* became the primary communal religious ritual centered in both the *imāmvāḍō* and *mēhphīl*. Because Ismā'il had shifted the Khōjā dialect of Gujarati to embrace an increasing amount of Arabic and Persian vocabulary, to the exclusion of Sanskrit-derived terms, the Urdu religious literature became increasingly accessible. Dirges and lamentations were needed for the *majlis*; to fill in this gap, the Khōjā turned to the voluminous Urdu Shia literature. Consequently, the *mēhphīl* formed a spatial bridge between Indic rituals and constructions of sacred space and the new demands of a normative form of Islam. It is one of the few communal spaces that is generally privately owned and managed outside of *jamāt* council regulation, thus allowing for a diversity of practices, languages, material cultures, and spatial configurations.

The *Mēhphīl* as a Sacred Space

The origins of the African Khōjā term *mēhphīl* lie in *maḥfil* ('congregation'), a Urdu term of Perso-Arabic origin. In Khōjā Kāṭhiyāvāḍī and Kacchī, *maḥfil* refers exclusively to the sacred space of the shrine, whether it is a room or an entire building dedicated as a shrine to a particular Shia saint. The Khōjā shrine, in the context of contemporary Dar es Salaam, is a multipurpose sacred space for communal observances and events such as weddings, funerary rites, communal lectures, and, of course, prayers and invocations to the saints at the *jharī* ('replica tombs') located within.

Currently, more than twenty Khōjā shrines are located in Dar es Salaam. Only two shrines are under the direct control of the local Khōjā governing council: Mēhphīlē Abbās ('the Shrine of 'Abbās') and Mēhphīlē Asgharī ('the Shrine of Aṣghar'). The remaining shrines are located in residences or spaces devoted exclusively to the shrine and supported through private family patronage or funding by local merchants. All shrines share the same physical layout of

ritual objects, although particularities exist depending on the size of the space, the amount of resources that can be devoted to its creation and maintenance, and the benefactor's and/or custodian's perspective on the shrine's construction and arrangement.

Material Culture, Worship, and Fellowship in Shrines

Material Culture

The Khōjā shrine originated in South Asia; as such, East African Khōjā shrines feature many spatial similarities to Shia shrines in the subcontinent, with distinct particularities. Each Khōjā shrine, whether private or communal, has six key features that are active in the creation and dissemination of sacrality throughout the liturgical year.

The first feature of Khōjā shrines is the *jharī*. The name of a particular shrine indicates its dedication and is reflected in the icons represented therein.

The second feature of Khōjā shrines is the *yādgīrī* ('relics')[1] contained within or around the tomb replicas. These are sacred, abstract representations of the Imams, members of Muḥammad's family, and/or key personalities in the passion of Karbala (61 AH/680 CE). These relics are generally composed of a base metal with gold or silver plating. For example, in the communal Khōjā shrine in Dar es Salaam—Mēhphīlē Asgharī, which is dedicated to the infant Alī Aṣghar, who, according to the narrative, was killed at the Battle of Karbala—approximately one hundred replica cradles are placed within and outside of the tomb replicas in display cases. Functionally, the tomb replicas also serve as *tājhiyā khānā* ('reliquaries') for relics used in both weekly devotion and the yearly Muharram processionals.

The third standard feature of Khōjā shrines is *tājhiyā* ('processional relics'). Items classified as *tājhiyā* include certain tomb replicas, which are prepared for procession, as well as a range of ritual objects used exclusively during the Islamic months of Muharram and Safar in Khōjā processionals, such as a replica casket used in the lamentation rituals observing Ḥusayn's death. One ubiquitous ritual object employed in both weekly services and yearly Muharram observances, of which each shrine has multiples, is the *alam* ('ceremonial battle standard'). In South Asian Shiism, this battle standard is different from its Near Eastern counterparts in its appearance and use outside

1 Here the term *yādgīrī* is translated as 'relic' rather than 'replica'; because the African Khōjā lack access to 'actual' relics in South Asia or the Near East, *yādgīrī* function and are revered as relics in Khōjā worship.

the mourning season. The Khōjā battle standard consists of a pole, generally wooden, on which a black or green[2] cloth is placed. Crowning the standard, sometimes, is a *pañjā* ('stylized hand'). For the Khōjā, the *pañjā* symbolizes the refusal of Ḥusayn to submit at the Battle of Karbala. In addition to the tomb replicas, the battle standard is crucial in the backdrop of any Khōjā shrine.

The fourth feature of Khōjā shrines is the pulpit. The seated pulpit is similar to those found in the masjid. In larger shrines, such as Mēhphīlē Abbās, the pulpit is used by the preacher in delivering the sermon during the *majlis*. In smaller private shrines, which do not have a designated preacher, a smaller, symbolic pulpit is placed in an orientation toward Makah. This smaller pulpit may function as a foundation on which relics and replicas can be placed.

The fifth feature of Khōjā shrines is the open space of the sanctuary, which is an extension of the tomb replicas and ritual objects. The open space must be ritually pure, so that the Islamic ritual prayer may be performed in the area. Even the smallest shrine has a prayer mat demarcating the ritually pure prayer space.

The sixth and final feature of Khōjā shrines are collection boxes; shrines generally have four such boxes. The first collection box is reserved for funds to be used expressly for charity. The second collection box is reserved for money collected on behalf of the eighth imam, Imāmē Rajhā, also known to the Khōjā as Imam Jhāmīn. In Khōjā tradition, a traveler takes a coin or token money with him or her on a journey. On his or her safe return, as a boon of the imam, the money is deposited in this box. The third collection box is reserved for funds on behalf of the twelfth Imam, Imāmē Jhamānā. The funds collected in these two boxes, on behalf of the Imams, are used for community development projects. The fourth collection box is reserved for monies given to the shrine by supplicants whose prayers have been answered. In Khōjā tradition, a supplicant, generally female, visits the shrine, offers a prayer, and ties a string to the outer tomb replica. Once the prayer is answered, the supplicant returns, unties the string, and places money into the box as a gesture of thanks to God and the imam.

The number of collection boxes in a shrine can be increased as necessary, as, for example, in 2010, when severe flooding hit Pakistan. Fundraising drives in Khōjā shrines throughout the world helped raise money for the survivors, who were aided by the Khōjā World Federation nongovernmental organization (World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities 2011a).

2 A black cloth, such as a sari, is used to signify lamentations for Ḥusayn, whereas a dark-green-colored cloth is used to signify lamentations for ʿAbbās.

Historically, all of these ritual objects and tomb replicas were made by hand by individuals and were placed in the shrine. Each object in the shrine has a story, and, taken as a whole, these objects are a representation of collective religious identity. The following narrative, concerning an early twentieth-century shrine in Zanzibar, further illustrates this.[3]

During an interview, an interlocutor told a story about his father, who was a devout Khōjā in Zanzibar. His father was responsible for fashioning ritual objects for the oldest communal shrine of the Khōjā. During World War II,[4] he had been asked to fashion a silver *pañjā*, due to his familiarity with metalwork. As a final dedication, the man decided to place the *pañjā* in the ocean to imbue it with spiritual energy derived from the water. On doing so, he felt a strong power coming from the *pañjā*, a possession, and was unable to hold it. He dropped it and ran away.[5]

This episode reveals a significant point in the twentieth-century transition of Khōjā worship to a Near Eastern form of Shiism. Although ostensibly Shia, the ritual actions and perceptions of the Khōjā spiritual universe were firmly rooted in coastal Kāṭhiyāvāḍī and Kacchī traditions in which the fashioning of gods concludes with a final immersion of the statue and invocation of the deity. In processions and ritual worship, these relics, such as the *pañjā*, functioned as abstractions of the divine. For the Khōjā during this period, the Islamic divine could be made imminent, but only through an Indic ontological referent.

Worship: The Khōjā Majlis

In order to understand the generation and effusion of sacrality in a Khōjā shrine, it is necessary to connect this material culture to its actual use in religious worship throughout the liturgical calendar, the preeminent example of which is the *majlis*. The *majlis*, in the context of Khōjā Shiism, refers to the standard weekly religious services of the community. As with the evolution of their political organization, the Khōjā *majlis* is an egalitarian and efficient

3 Interview with a septuagenarian Khōjā businessman, Mombasa, 29 July 2010.

4 World War II was a significant historical period, spiritually, for the Zanzibari Khōjā, because various *mōjījha* ('miracles') took place during 1944/1945. The first miracle was the appearance of human blood on many of the ritual objects used in the commemoration of the martyrdom of Husain. The second miracle occurred when the Khōjā participated in a ritual procession in the midst of a typhoon; once the procession ended, the typhoon abated. The third miracle took place when the Khōjā recited a prayer for the alleviation of drought, after all other communities' prayers had been recited publically; when the prayer concluded, the delayed monsoons finally deluged Zanzibar.

5 Interview with a septuagenarian Khōjā businessman, Mombasa, 29 July 2010.

form of worship that became standardized through its dissemination. The Khōjā *majlis* can be abridged as necessary; it can be as short as fifteen minutes or as long as two hours and can be performed in a communal or a private setting. With a manual, such as the *Majmūʾō*, the *majlis* is easily taught and replicable and has become the standard form of service among the African Khōjā and the Khōjā resident in the Western hemisphere.[6]

The modern, streamlined Khōjā *majlis*, innovated in the early to mid-twentieth century, can be divided into seven principal parts, which are orthodox Imami in character. The efficiency of the Khōjā system lies in its standard use of particular prayers from the larger Shia corpus; this system can be expanded as necessary, but its skeleton form is omnipresent in Khōjā worship. The Khōjā *majlis* is a democratized form of worship that can be led by anyone and that, unlike ritual prayer, does not necessitate a hierarchical selection of congregational leadership.

The first part of the *majlis* is the introductory prayers, a series of benedictions that include a reading of the opening chapter of the Quran.

The second part of the Khōjā *majlis* is the recitation of the thirty-sixth chapter of the Quran. The role of this chapter of the Quran in the daily religious life of the Khōjā cannot be overemphasized. Each child who attends the Khōjā religious school in Dar es Salaam memorizes all eighty-four verses, which are constantly repeated at almost every Khōjā gathering, from wedding receptions to sporting events. The most significant use of the chapter is in honoring the dead. In the Khōjā cemetery on Bibi Titi Mohammed Street in Dar es Salaam, honoring the dead is part of the weekly religious calendar. A *majlis* is held at the cemetery on Thursdays and Sundays in the late afternoon. On entering, members of the Khōjā community take a copy of the Quranic chapter and a pitcher of water to the grave of their ancestor(s). They begin by reciting chapter thirty-six, which is then followed by the opening chapter, after which they pray for intercession on behalf of their ancestor and pour water on the exposed soil within the raised stone grave. In Khōjā belief and practice, recitation of the *yā sīn* to a dying person eases the path of the departing soul into the afterlife.

The third part is the recitation of the Tradition of the Cloak. This prophetic tradition, from Shia sources, recounts an episode in which the *pañjatanpāk* ('Sacred Five')[7] and the angel Gabriel gather together under a cloak. Generally, within Shiism, it is significant because it illustrates the divine authority of

6 There are fundamental differences in approaches to organization between the Pakistani Shia communities in Britain (Naqvi 2008) and, for example, the relative organizational efficiency of the Khōjā in the Stanmore Khōjā *jamāt* of north London.

7 The Sacred Five are Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn.

the family of the Prophet and thus the claim of the Shia as heirs to the true teachings of the Prophet. Specifically, it was incorporated at the time of the separation from the Āgākhānī Khōjā as a means of identifying themselves in opposition to their cousins, as the Āgākhānī do not include Ḥasan within the spiritual genealogy of the imamate (Dēvrāj 1919, 11).

The fourth part is the main sermon. This accounts for the largest time bloc in a Khōjā *majlis*. The sermon is generally divided into two parts. In the first part, the preacher addresses questions of jurisprudence by the community, such as the etiquette of fasting (M.A.M.M. Jaffer 1999). Next, the preacher invokes the *salavāt*[8] and the congregation responds; this step serves as a connection between the first and second parts of the sermon and is also used between the other sections of the *majlis*, which creates the impression of a singular movement. The second and main part of the sermon focuses on any topic of contemporary or historical interest. The end of the sermon inevitably turns to the passion of Karbala, through which the preacher evokes pathos from the audience and slowly builds toward a crescendo, at which time the preacher concludes the sermon. In Dar es Salaam, these sermons can be given all or part in Gujarati, Urdu, or English. They are increasingly being delivered in Kiswahili, as a result of the growing influence of and the religious expertise emerging from the Bilal Muslim Mission communities.

The fifth part is devotional poetry. After the sermon, devotional poetry appropriate for the occasion is read by a selected community member. The types of devotional poetry within the Khōjā oral tradition include *marsiyā* ('elegiac poems'), *navhā* ('dirges'), *munājāt* ('hymns'), *kasīdā* ('odes'), *rubāyat* ('quatrains'), and *salām* ('salutations'). The type of devotional poetry selected depends on what type of day it is within the liturgical calendar—for example, whether it is a *vaphāt* ('death anniversary') or a *kuśālī* ('birth anniversary') of a particular imam or saint.[9] Community members compete fiercely to be selected to recite publicly, and being chosen to recite is a marker of status. Khōjā practice requires that each young child be selected to recite publically at least once, as a way of inducting children in communal rituals. In a *majlis*

8 The basic *salavāt* prayer is "allāhumma salē alā mōhammadiṁv va ālē mōhammad" ("May God bestow peace on Muḥammad and his descendants") (Rāīṭar n.d.). Additional phrases are sometimes added before or after the prayer.

9 In defining themselves against the Āgākhānī Khōjā, who mainly celebrate birth anniversaries, the Khōjā celebrate birth anniversaries in the same somber mood as death anniversaries.

commemorating a death anniversary, this fifth part would be followed by *mātam* ('lamentations'), before transitioning to the sixth part.

The sixth part is the recitation of the *jhiyārat* ('pilgrimages'). Like the *yā sīn*, nearly every Khōjā child learns this passage by rote at madrassa. There are many additions that can be placed before and after the recitation of the basic pilgrimages, as shown in the following selection. These pilgrimages privilege the Iranian perspective of Shiism; this perspective is most visible in the observance of the Safavid practice of a slight shift toward the recitation of the name of the eighth imam, ʿAlī al-Riḍā. When the name of the twelfth imam (*sāhēbajhamān*) is recited, most Khōjā bow in respect. The elderly or disabled who are unable to stand bow slightly while sitting or touch the stamped clay of Karbala (*mōhr*) to their foreheads. Some also point their index finger in the direction of Karbala. The following standard Khōjā *jhiyārat* selection, recited in every *majlis*, is from the *Majmūʿō*, Book VII (Ismā'il n.d.[b], 266–268). The text reads as follows:

	The translation reads as follows:
H. imam husayn alayhissalāmnī jhiyārat	The pilgrimage of Imam Ḥusayn, peace and blessings be upon him
Asalāmō alayaka yā abā abdillāh asalāmō alayak yabn rasūlillāh asalāmō alayak yabn amīrrilmōamēnīn yabn sayadil vasīyīn, asalāmō alayak yabn phātēmatajh jhaharā'ē sayadatē nēsā'il ālamīn asalāmō alaykum varahmatullāhē vabarakātōh.	Peace be upon you oh father of ʿAbdallāh; peace be upon you oh son of the Prophet; peace be upon you oh son of the commander of the faithful son of the appointed one; peace be upon you oh son of Fāṭima the radiant—the first among the women of the world. May the peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you.
Imāmē rajhā alayhissalāmnī jhiyārat	The pilgrimage of Imam Riḍā, peace and blessings be upon him
Asalāmō alayaka yā mavlāy vabn mavlāy asalāmō alayak yā garībal gurabā, asalāmō alayak yā sultān abal hasan alīyabnamūsarrējhā varahmatullāhē vabarakatōh.	Peace be upon you oh master, son of our master; peace be upon you poorest of strangers; peace be upon you the majestic Abū l-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Riḍā. May the peace and the mercy of God be upon you.

Bārmā imam a.nī jhiyārat	The pilgrimage of the Twelfth Imam, peace and blessings be upon him
Asalāmō alayaka yā sāhēbajhamān asalāmō alayak yā khalīphatarahmān asalāmō alayak yā śarīkalkurān, asalāmō alayak yā mavlānā sāhēbal asarē vajhamān, asalāmō alayakum varahmatullāhē va barakātōh	Peace be upon you master of the age; peace be upon you successor of the merciful one; peace be upon you companion of the Quran; peace be upon you master of the age and time. May the peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you.

With the final recitation of these verses, the *majlis* is concluded. The seventh and final part is the distribution of the sacrament, known by the Khōjā as *nyājh* or *phātīyā*. This is always served to assembled congregants by volunteers from the community. In Dar es Salaam, the sacrament consists of fried Asian sweets or savories. In the twice-weekly graveyard *majlis*, milk tea is served with *mandazi*, a cultural influence of the Zanzibari Khōjā. All congregants to the *majlis* are obliged to partake in sacrament, if only symbolically. Not doing so or disposing of an unconsumed amount is sacrilegious. In Dar es Salaam, beggars gather at the front entrance of the graveyard each Thursday and Sunday to elicit the sacrament from the hands of departing congregants.

The full form of the weekly *majlis* is memorized by all Khōjā and replicated in private and public, thus serving as a common ritual identity. Bonding through collective consumption of the sacrament allows regular communal recognition of community members. The particular types of food served as sacrament and in larger caste meals are a modern reproduction of medieval Khōjā traditions that tie the community, through cuisine, to their Asian origins.

Communal Fellowship: The Caste Feast

Food and religion have become the pillars of Khōjā identity in Dar es Salaam. The *jamaṇ* ('caste meal') is among the oldest extant traditions, dating to the origins of the community. It is the quintessential form of Khōjā communal fellowship, and it follows the *majlis* during the Muharram/Ṣafar and Ramaḍān periods of religious observance as well as other holidays in the liturgical calendar, such as *maulīdī* ('the Prophet's birthday').

Khōjā cuisine is itself a unique amalgamation of traditions that were collected in the historical southeastern migration in the subcontinent. In Africa, this has been augmented by acculturation to local cuisine and the availability of spices such as clove, cinnamon, and black cardamom in Zanzibar. Preparation of the feast is undertaken with communal vessels, such as the *sufuria*/*dēg*

('cauldron'), *sahani*/*thāḷī* ('individual plates'), and *samani*/*vāsaṇ* ('utensils').[10] The weekly *majlis* sacrament and annual caste feasts can serve a redistributive function. For some of the poorer members of the Khōjā community in Dar es Salaam, meat and imported confectionaries are only consumed in the context of these communal feasts. Each Khōjā has *jamātī'ā'ī* ('an inalienable right') to partake in the communal feast, which is also an assertion and affirmation of communal membership and the egalitarian Khōjā identity.

Other Ritual Spaces: Taboos

Khōjā identity in Dar es Salaam is maintained by strict food prohibitions based on a criterion of *pāknajis* ('purity and pollution'). Functionally, this means that the Khōjā only eat the prepared food of a Khōjā or another Muslim. This taboo was not generally observed in Dar es Salaam, or on the mainland more generally, until the influx of the Zanzibari Khōjā in the aftermath of the 1964 revolution on the archipelago. According to a Khōjā from Bukoba settled in Dar es Salaam, "We were ignorant and used to eat their [Hindu] food in Bukoba . . . then we came to Dar es Salaam [in the 1970s] and learned the religion properly."[11]

The sources of this taboo are numerous, but the core reasons concern caste identity, communal politics in Zanzibar, and intracaste othering. For the Zanzibari Khōjā and the numerous other religious communities on the archipelago, a restrictive diet helped to maintain boundaries of endogamy and, in the self-perception of the community, elevated their status vis-à-vis other Muslim and non-Muslim communities in much the same way that vegetarianism can be a marker of class and caste status among Indic cultures. It also served as a retort to their Āgākhānī cousins, who formally outcasted them in 1899 and have looked disparagingly on the Khōjā until the present day, as evidenced among caste politics in India. According to Lal,

> Ismaili [Āgākhānī] group is orthodox and do not even invite even Isna-Asheri [Ithnā 'Asharī] group to their *zamat khana* [*jamātkhānā*] and consider Isna-Asheri as inferior to them, although there is no strict restriction from switching over to the other group. . . . As traders and

10 Both the Swahili and Gujarati terms are used, depending on the person referring to the items. Those from the Zanzibar archipelago generally use the Swahili names, whereas those from the mainland use the Gujarati/Kacchī terms.

11 Interview with a Khōjā septuagenarian male business owner and Khōjā council member, central Dar es Salaam, 29 August 2008.

> business community, the Khojas used to maintain occupational and social relations with all the surrounding communities. Ritual relations are confined to themselves.
>
> They accept and exchange water and food with all the Muslim communities but not with Harijans, Koli and Wadha communities. A few accept and exchange water and food with all the communities except Brahman, and Bania-Bawa, Goswami, Bhatia and vice-versa. But Sanathan dharma Hindus like Swaminarayan panth of Leuva Patel do not accept or exchange water or foodstuffs with the Khojas and a few orthodox Khoja also do not accept or exchange with the former. (V. Lal 2003, 686)

Although technically the taboo applies only to the prepared food of Hindus, functionally it has been expanded to all non-Muslim communities in Dar es Salaam, including Sikhs and Christians. The taboo applies to cooked food. Commodities, such as grains and rice, may be purchased from non-Muslim merchants, provided that the commodities are then cooked by Muslims. As a result, the taboo has created an internal communal demand and ready market for catering, which is satisfied almost exclusively by small businesses owned and operated by Khōjā women. These various women's catering services have grown in number and popularity in the beginning of the twenty-first century, as the economy of Dar es Salaam transitions to a capitalist service economy in which an increasing number of Khōjā are becoming professionals, abandoning the centuries-old caste vocation of merchantry.

The rationale given behind the taboo is that "Hindus are idol worshipers and the Prophet *sallalahu alaihi wa salam* destroyed the idols in the Kaaba . . . the [Catholic] Goans eat pork and drink alcohol so it is haram."[12] According to this commonly cited justification, incorrect belief presents itself as a spiritual manifestation of physical impurity. Unbelief—particularly that of a father, which extends to his family—is the source of impurity. The only remedy for this impurity is conversion to Islam, as is explained in a Khōjā madrasa text from 1968, *Elements of Islamic Studies*: "[A] Kafir [unbeliever] becomes clean after accepting Islam. . . . When a Kafir becomes Muslim, his minor children become clean automatically" (Africa Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats 1968, 16–21).

This taboo is most likely a continuation of pre-Islamic Indic taboos prominent among castes in Kacch and Kathiawar, and, in the context of Dar es Salaam, it is an inversion of the historical Hindu taboo on the consumption

12 Interview with a Khōjā middle-aged male business owner and madrasa volunteer, central Dar es Salaam, 14 March 2008.

of Muslim food, shared also by the Bōhrā. This taboo has been brought into the Western diaspora, as evidenced by its observance by the British Khōjā of Peterborough (Smalley 2002). The Khōjā see their observance of the taboo as a stricture that positively distinguishes them from other Asian Muslim communities that do not observe the taboo, such as the Sunni Kacchī Memons.

At a functional level, the inability to share a meal limits cultural intercourse and promotes caste endogamy. According to Goan and Lōhāṇā informants who are lifelong residents of central Dar es Salaam, these taboos forcibly separate the Khōjā, socially, from the other Asian communities in central Dar es Salaam. The inability to give and receive gifts of food, such as exchanging plates of prepared food with one's neighbor during religious celebrations, weakens the reciprocating bonds of intercaste fraternity, further reinforcing Khōjā insularity. However, in the past two decades of capitalist expansion and with the full impact of globalization on Dar es Salaam, many of the historical taboos against fraternizing with or consuming the food of the non-Khōjā have begun to weaken, to the consternation of conservatives. The most visible marker of this change is the increasing number of intercaste marriages, marriages with non-Khōjā Asians. Despite evidence of weakening, the taboos generally continue to be publically observed and enforced though peer pressure.

The Story of a Shrine: Mēhphīlē Abbās

Mēhphīlē Abbās is the oldest and currently the preeminent Khōjā shrine in Dar es Salaam. It is dedicated to Ḥusayn's brother al-'Abbās. The main entrance opens onto Hazrat Abbas (A.S.) Street, which was officially renamed through Khōjā impetus. The shrine is adjacent to the intersection of Mali and Asia streets, a block from the main Khōjā mosque complex, which also contains the *imāmvāḍō* and travelers lodge. See Figure 6, which presents a map of this region.

Mēhphīlē Abbās was established as a private shrine in the 1930s by Fatmabai[13] Abdulla Punja Mohamed Sheriff, more commonly known as 'Fatu Mumbai.'[14]

13 'Bai' is an honorific added to the names of women in Gujarati and Kacchī.

14 Her original name was Fatima. For a time, a particular form of modifying given names was common among the African Khōjā, which mirrored similar Arab and African contractions. For instance, the name 'Fatima' was shortened to Fatu, Fatim, or Fati. In Zanzibar, monikers based on attributes or events were popular in lieu of given names, such as in the case of a famous Khōjā reciter of oral traditions, Abdulrasul Mohamedhussein Rajabali Bhaloo. A Zanzibari who lives in Dar es Salaam, Abdulrasul's moniker is 'Duchoo.' He

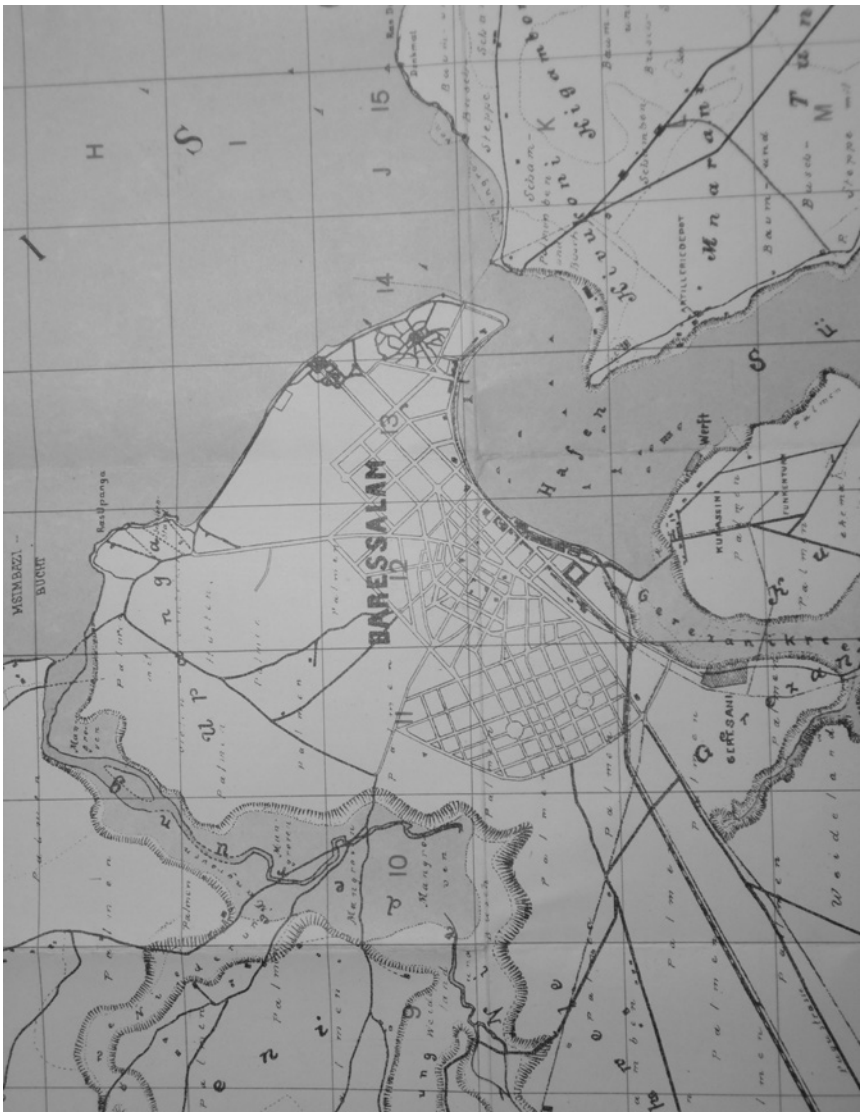


FIGURE 6 *A sectional frame of a 1913 German city planning map for central Dar es Salaam, entitled "Karte der Umgebung von Daressalam" (Vermessungsbüro Daressalam 1913). Original to the map is the icon representing the central Khōjā mosque.*
COURTESY OF THE BRITISH NATIONAL ARCHIVES.

The original Mēhphīlē Abbās "was founded in 1915 AD by Mulla Raza Kassim"[15] in Zanzibar. The Dar es Salaam iteration is an export of the original.[16] As with many of the founders of Khōjā shrines, Fatma established and maintained Mēhphīlē Abbās as well as engaging in missionary work internal to the Khōjā community of Dar es Salaam. Fatma's individual enterprise was so successful that the shrine expanded and, by the mid-twentieth century, offered daily, rather than weekly, *majlis* and hosted community-wide lectures that attracted preachers from throughout eastern, central, and southern Africa, as well as South Asia.

Currently, this shrine is one of two under the direct public control and ownership of the Khōjā council, the other public shrine being Mēhphīlē Asgharī. How this private shrine, founded and operated by a Khōjā woman, came to be appropriated by the all-male Khōjā council in the late colonial period is disputed. The council's official version simply states that Fatma gave the shrine to the council; no corroborating evidence exists for this, and the account was reiterated during the council's grand reopening of the shrine on 17 August 2007 (H.W. Datoo 2008).

There is, however, a second version of the story, narrated by women, specifically Khōjā septuagenarians.[17] According to their compiled and verified accounts, Fatma was a pious woman who came from Bombay to Africa through marriage with a Zanzibari Khōjā. She was a *mulyānī* ('female preacher') and

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received the moniker in grade school at Sir Euan Smith Madrasa. One day in class, the teacher asked the students, "What is the name of people who live in the Netherlands?" No one could answer except Abdulrasul, who answered, "The Dutch." The name has stayed with him, and it is how he is known within the Dar es Salaam community. Few people actually know his given name. Other such names are lively; for example, an individual might be called Mende for eating a *mende* ('cockroach') as a child, or someone whose insatiable appetite is like an empty *bakuli* ('bowl') might be nicknamed accordingly.

15 This quotation is from a folio located in a private Khōjā library in Zanzibar.

16 Khōjā religious spaces, such as shrines, are portable sacred spaces that can be both transferred from place to place as well as multiplied, as in the case of Mēhphīlē Abbās. For the Khōjā, this is an ideal form of sacred space for a diasporic merchant community in constant movement. It allows religious flexibility in adapting to the social, political, and economic changes of life in permanent diaspora. For instance, Mēhphīlē Sakīnā ('the Shrine of Sakīna') of Mohamedhussein Kermalli, known as 'Babu Lelu,' was closed in the aftermath of the Zanzibar Revolution in 1964. Its sacred space and relics were transferred to Dar es Salaam, and the shrine was reopened there in an unbroken continuity up to the present day.

17 Multiple interviews with Khōjā female septuagenarians, central Dar es Salaam, 2008.

eventually came to Dar es Salaam with her husband. On arrival, she was appalled by the lack of religious knowledge among the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam and other mainland communities. Basic observances of ritual purity, the complete *majlis*, and even male circumcision had been neglected or forgotten. Seeing the community thus, she made it her mission to educate the community, primarily through female education. Fatma founded the shrine as a way of educating Khōjā women about the Khōjā faith.

By the mid-twentieth century, Fatma had become very successful and popular among the Khōjā. Mēhphīlē Abbās had become the preeminent religious and cultural center for Khōjā women in Dar es Salaam, threatening male power and the authority of the Khōjā council. Shortly before independence in 1961, council leaders outmaneuvered her by going to court and applying to have the shrine rezoned from a private dwelling to a religious structure, thereby placing it under the authority of the council, as per British colonial legal practice. There were heated debates on the issue by the Khōjā in the editorial section of the [*Tanganyika*] *Standard* newspaper. Eventually, because of immense pressure placed on her by Khōjā leaders within the community, Fatma ceded control of the shrine to the council. According to one informant,

> This was a great tragedy for her . . . she was betrayed by the *jamāt*. Once they got control they put other people in charge of it basically throwing her out after she put all her life in it. She was upset and left—it defeated her. She opened a new *mēhphīl* in her house, but in a few years she died brokenhearted.[18]

This narrative, reiterated by other Khōjā women, including relatives of Fatma, provides another incisive glimpse into the politics of power within institutions that define Khōjā religious identity as well as the disparities of gender and class among the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam in the colonial period, which persists until the present day.

Sacrality

Conferring Sacrality: Historical Rituals and Modern Renovation

Historically, permanent sacrality was imbued through a ritual at the point of completion of a sacred object. For example, the *pañjā*, particularly when

18 Interview with a Khōjā female septuagenarian, central Dar es Salaam, 12 August 2008.

placed atop an *alam*, has historically been the most visible icon in a Khōjā shrine. In the older traditions of Kacch and Kathiawar, handmade icons, such as the *pañjā*, were infused with spirit through ritual finishing by placing the icon in the sea, before its subsequent installation in a shrine. This permanent sacrality remains even if the shrine is moved or the objects boxed up for a time until the shrine is reestablished. In Mēhphīlē Abbās, the most prominent tomb relic is a reproduction of ʿAbbās's shrine in Karbala. The original tomb replica, installed by Fatma, was an Indic handmade scale model of the tomb with other handmade relics, like ʿAbbās's waterskin.

With trade liberalization in the 1990s, the Dar es Salaam Khōjā have been able to import manufactured tomb replicas and relics purchased in Iran, Syria, and Iraq. In the 2007 renovation of Mēhphīlē Abbās by the Khōjā *jamāt*, Fatma's original scaled tomb replica was replaced with a scale replica of the original tomb in the Near East. The replacement of many such relics and ritual objects in 'renovated' shrines removes the personal imprint of a shrine. Older shrines contain conglomerations of relics that have been brought by the Khōjā and placed in the shrine over the years. The traditional Khōjā shrine was an ad hoc development of gradual communal input and amalgamation. The newer, sanitized shrines contain only manufactured relics and replicas, which engender an impersonal environment, distancing the supplicant from the icons. The Indic imagined abstraction of Shia sacred geography within the shrine is thus replaced with perfect replicas of the actual Near Eastern structures; this change emphasizes Near Eastern Shia authority and a narrative of historical reality over Indic spiritual visualization.

Permanent and Temporary Sacrality

A portable Khōjā shrine, once established, engenders two forms of sacrality: permanent and temporary sacrality. As the preeminent shrine in Dar es Salaam, the physical location, relics, and structure of Mēhphīlē Abbās are examples of permanent sacrality. This permanent sacrality can be expanded, temporarily, through religious observances, such as the yearly Ashura procession, which envelops adjacent roads and buildings into its sacred geography.

The sacred begins at the red-marble-tiled steps of Mēhphīlē Abbās. As the Khōjā pass the shrine on the sidewalk, some stop to kiss its marble-tiled façade. Others run their right hand on its smooth surface as they pass, while muttering a short prayer. Tactile interaction with the shrine connects the abstract belief of the congregant to a concrete object. Inside, the abstract icons of the Imams and the shrine replicas are arranged parallel to the front wall, so that their general shapes can be distinguished from the exterior façade through the frosted glass when the afternoon light illuminates it.

On entering the shrine and after ritual ablutions,[19] the congregant enters the inner sanctuary barefoot. Some Khōjā touch the carpet with their right hand, their lips, and their forehead in a reflexive motion as a sign of respect for the hallowed ground. In the sanctuary, all space is sacred, as is that which contains it, from the floor and carpeting to the walls and ceiling. Both before and after *majlis*, congregants file to the front of the shrine where the sacred tomb replicas and relics are stored. After the *majlis*, congregants line up at the front, touching shrines and kissing them in veneration. A common manner in which this is done is to kiss whatever part of the shrine is easiest to access by touch and then to place the right cheek and eye, left cheek and eye, and forehead against the spot; the congregant then kisses the shrine again, while supplicating. Touch is an integral part of the shrine experience. To touch the tomb replicas, or even the display cases that house them, confers a temporary sacrality to the supplicant and connects him or her to the divine, with the ritual object as a physical and spiritual intermediary. This experience is described by Khōjā congregants as an auspicious moment for a supplicant.

Shifts in Sacrality

Apart from the adoption of Near Eastern icons, the shift of Indic identity and religious authority toward Near Eastern models can be gauged by the loss or retention of traditional Khōjā shrine rituals. One illustration of loss is the abandonment of the ritual use of *agarbattī* ('incense sticks') within shrines. Until the late twentieth century, incense sticks[20] were ritually burnt before the beginning of religious events within shrines. According to a middle-aged Khōjā woman who manages a shrine off Jamhuri Street in central Dar es Salaam, "Before incense sticks from India were very popular. A preacher came from India [in the mid-1990s] and told us this was Hindu culture and religion and we should stop."[21] According to the informant, the preacher's rationale was that incense is similar to the fire, which is used in Hindu ceremonies, and thus the practice should be stopped. Slowly, this ancient Khōjā practice was phased out, although its use persists in some older private shrines.

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19 The Khōjā of eastern Africa developed a system of ablution pools at the entrance to communal sacred spaces, such as the *masjid* and *imāmvāḍō*. Each congregant who enters is obliged to pass through a shallow pool, and his feet are dried on mats as he continues into the space.

20 In Zanzibar, an alternative to incense sticks imported from India is its famous local *ūdh* ('incense'), which is made in a unique process involving essential oils, scented woods, and crystalized sugar.

21 Interview with a Khōjā female septuagenarian, central Dar es Salaam, 12 August 2008.

The abandonment of the incense stick is symbolic of a larger identity transition, the classification of the Indic as Hindu. The traditional Indic culture of the Khōjā, if not justified as Islamic or as having an Islamic basis, is deemed Hindu and must be abandoned as antithetical to Islam. As is explored in the final chapter, the most visible manifestation of this transition is the adoption of the veil in the early 1980s. The irony of this position is that, in the early twentieth century, pre-Islamic Iranian culture—particularly the observance of Nouruz—was introduced as Islamic.

Although some Indic rituals have gone the way of the incense stick, others—such as the *arījhā* ('water petition')—have resolutely persisted. The communal water petition ritual occurs after the observance of fasting on the fifteenth day of Shaʿbān. After evening prayers following the breaking of the fast, congregants write their petitions for succor on a prayer form. The petitions are gathered by the community, covered with clay, and placed in a papier-mâché tomb replica. After morning prayers the next day, community leaders take the replica to the seashore, where it is placed on the water and floats out to sea.[22]

This tradition is retained and deemed 'Islamic,' as it preserves a communal ritual that is not seen to be shared with Hindus, although in reality it is nearly identical to Indic coastal rituals. The ritual is rebranded as related to the Shia saints and the divine, which is religiously permissible. In part, incense was abandoned because of its link to Hindu worship as seen in Bollywood serials and films. In the context of Dar es Salaam, the 'Islamic' alternative to the Indian incense stick is the Arab incense of Zanzibar.

Performing Sacrality

Material culture and architecture are permanent receptacles that effuse sacrality for the Khōjā. Sacrality can also be constructed temporarily. Two examples of this in the month of Muharram are the Karbala diorama and the observation of *saph* ('circular lamentation').

For the entire month of Muharram, Khōjā volunteers create and maintain an elaborate diorama of the Battle of Karbala in a small triangular plot opposite the main entrance of Mēhphīlē Abbās. There is a water tap on the far side of the plot, which is turned on periodically to simulate the Euphrates River. Some Khōjā women collect the water in plastic bottles and believe that, in flowing through the diorama of Karbala, it has become a sacred cure. Ordinarily, the water is nonpotable. But in flowing through the diorama, it becomes potable and imbued with a positive spirituality that remains in the bottled water until

22 In absence of a sea, any body of water will suffice for the immersion of the petition. A water-and-flour paste can be substituted for clay.

it is consumed. After this month, the water from the tap returns to its 'original,' nonpotable state.

The circular lamentation of the Khōjā is observed within the larger *majlis* service during the months of Muharram and Ṣafar. The form observed in Dar es Salaam is unique to the Khōjā of Zanzibar, although somewhat similar forms of lamentation could be found among the Būshehrī and Baḥrānī communities in nineteenth-century Zanzibar (Hasana'alī Phājhal Māstar 1372/1952).

The circular lamentation is generally observed within the privacy of the *imāmvāḍō* but can be extended to a public space, as during the evening Ashura procession in Dar es Salaam. A line of congregants form a circle and connect to one another by holding the shirt or belt of the person to the left with one's left hand; the right hand is left free for the lamentation rituals. The congregants strike their chest with their right hand and echo the chant of the reciter. The circle expands as congregants join, until it reaches the maximum size for the venue; at this time a second circle can be formed within the larger circle, creating a maximum of two or three concentric circles, each gyrating in a synchronous orbit around the reciter in the middle. The congregants move together, following a predetermined sequence of steps: first, they move one quarter of the circle step forward at a time and then repeat these steps counterclockwise. Next, the congregants step to the left, which means that this pulsating circle turns counterclockwise. The lamentation peaks as the circles pulsate and rotate more rapidly, until it reaches a crescendo and the reciter proclaims "*biśin*."[23] This instructs the congregation to sit, thus concluding the lamentations; the congregation then sings a specific Persian dirge.

The circular lamentation may represent a centering of the divine and his presence made manifest. It is an encircling of the divine presence by which the many become one, as congregants join together physically, emotionally, and, from the perspective of the congregants, spiritually. The rhythmic and increasingly energetic pulsating of the circular lamentation echoes the primordial heartbeat. When the lamentation is performed in public, the entire area becomes sacred as the participants perform barefoot on the street. With its conclusion, the sacrality that the area enjoyed is released and returns to its former state in much the same way that the tap water of the diorama is transformed and then reverts to its previous state.

The origin of the circular lamentation is contentious among the Khōjā, and for many it is considered immutable. That is to say, it is heretical to intimate that its origin lies in Khōjā pre-Islamic Hindu tradition. An Islamized Hindu tradition is incompatible with the Khōjā perception of their normative Islamic

23 *Biśin* is a Gujarati term of Persian etymology from *be-neshīn* ('to sit').

practice. The communally authorized answer to its origin lies in the Khōjā's nineteenth-century interaction with the Imami Shia Būshehrī and Baḥrānī communities of Zanzibar. But the cadence and footwork of the steps are different and faster than the circular lamentations of the aforementioned communities. A more likely explanation can perhaps be found in the pre-Islamic origins of the Khōjā, through their Lōhāṇā ancestry.

The steps performed by the Khōjā in the circular lamentation are identical to those of the *rās-tīnkāḷī* dance performed during Navrātrī[24] celebrations at the Shree Mulji Walji Suchna Lohahna Community Hall on Kisutu Street in Dar es Salaam. The steps in the Khōjā circular lamentation correspond exactly to the Lōhāṇā dance. The Lōhāṇā dance includes clapping, a deity in the center of the circle, and music. The Khōjā lamentation features breast-beating, a reciter in the center or an empty space representing the divine, and the recitation of elegiac poetry. The introduction of breast-beating was operative in the transformation of this act, which originated as a celebratory occasion, into a ritual of lamentation. It lends credence to the theory that the circular lamentation is a modification of original Hindu practice that was transformed in the Khōjā conversion to Shia Islam—hence its foundational place in African Khōjā religious identity.

The Proliferation of Shrines

From the establishment of the first Khōjā shrine, Mēhphīlē Abbās, in the mid-twentieth century to the present, Khōjā shrines have proliferated in Dar es Salaam. This trend was taken up in the community's premier periodical, the *Federation Samachar*. Between the October 2003 and April 2004 issues, a heated discussion ensued regarding the expanding role of the shrine in Khōjā worship. The initial article, "Too Many Mehfils," was an interview of an anonymous[25] source conducted by the veteran Khōjā correspondent Sakina Datoo criticizing the proliferation of shrines. The article highlighted the tension in shifting from an Indic Khōjā heritage to an emerging Near Eastern Shia identity. The most controversial point was the equation of traditional Khōjā shrine worship to idolatry. The opinions expressed in this article represent the

24 "The first nine days of the month of Aśvin held sacred to the goddess Durgā" (Belsare 1904, 689).

25 Anonymity is crucial, for it allows an individual to engage in this virtual agora while still maintaining his or her reputation and standing within the community. Anonymity enables the Khōjā to engage in a form of free speech not possible in person.

alienation of ancestral Khōjā tradition in lieu of the Iranian narrative of 'appropriate' Shia practice.

> Firstly, small Mehfils in people's houses, as she saw them, were turning into a sort of puja houses. Like the practice by the Hindu community of doing puja to their gods in the special shrines they keep in their homes, many of our community members are now keeping *zarihs* and *alams* in a similar manner. Every day, they light *agarbatis* and "*bhare salaam*", copying the culture that is associated with idol worshipping. (S. Datoo 2003, 84)

From a sociological perspective, the proliferation of shrines can be attributed to two main trends. The first trend is the increasing economic inequality that has resulted from the national policy shift from Nyerere's African socialism to market capitalism in the 1990s. There is a subsection of the Khōjā community that has been unable to adapt to the increasingly competitive capitalist market in Dar es Salaam and is thus barely hovering over the poverty line. The effect of economic uncertainty is an increasing number of welfare cases supported by the Khōjā council through food vouchers, education loans, and subsidized housing. In 2008, it was estimated that 150 families were receiving welfare.[26] For many of these poorer community members, the communal feasts and regular sacrament offered after services in shrines help to fill the nutrition gap.

The second trend, which helps account for the increase in Khōjā shrines throughout central Dar es Salaam, is related to social demographics. Western emigration of Khōjā youth from Tanzania and increased life-spans as a result of access to modern medicine and sanitation have led to a rise in the geriatric demographic among the Khōjā (see Figure 7). Regular shrine attendance and other communal religious observances have become an important part these elders' social routine, offering fellowship and support in a rapidly changing metropolis.

The traditional worship offered in private Khōjā shrines allows for a comforting continuation and preservation of Khōjā rituals and traditions in Indic

26 This figure is an approximation provided in interviews with officers of the Khōjā welfare committee in June 2008. One exception to this welfare support is during the month of Ramadan, when private donors fully fund all welfare cases. Welfare through private donations is a significant source of undocumented support to lower-income families. In central Dar es Salaam in 2008, a monthly household income of less than USD 300 is considered to be the poverty line.

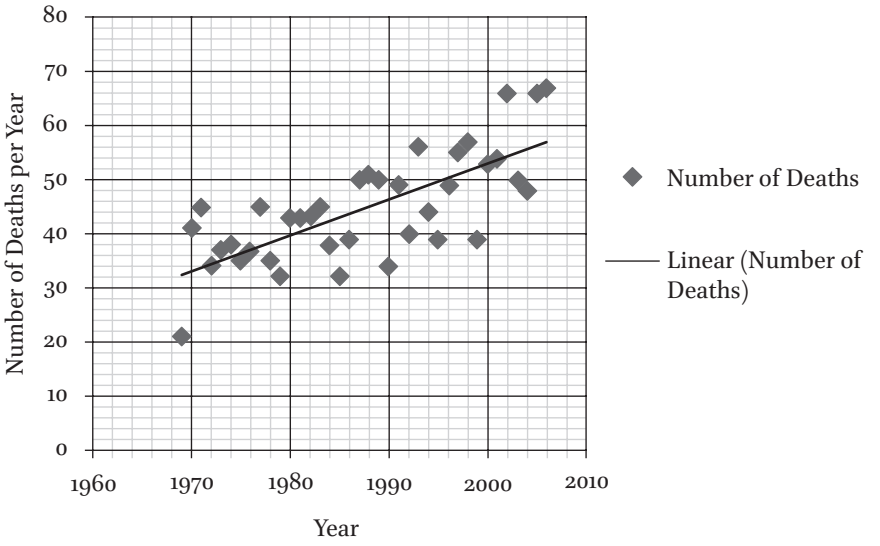

FIGURE 7 *Mortality statistics for the Dar es Salaam Khōjā* jamāt, *2008.*

languages, which are of little interest to younger generations born in the post-colonial period. With the collapse of the extended-family ideal, the Khōjā have been contemplating the creation of retirement homes for their aging population. This has become a contentious issue, as it challenges traditional notions of Asian filial duty in a newly capitalist environment that places a premium on the economic production of the worker.

Conclusion

In the twentieth century, the Khōjā communities of Zanzibar and, later, Dar es Salaam saw a rapid proliferation of the *mēhphīl*. In part, this was a reflection of shifting demographics in Dar es Salaam. Unlike Mēhphīlē Abbās, many of the private *mēhphīl* still conduct the *majlis* in Gujarati, burn incense sticks, and retain older relics. They serve as places of communal gathering for older women in the community, and through offerings of *nyājh*, they help to supplement the diet of an increasingly impoverished class of the urban community. The construction of *mēhphīl* spaces, the languages and discourses of the *majlis*, and the material culture of the *mēhphīl* are a visual representation of the change in Khōjā religious identity at the turn of the twenty-first century from *jamāt* to *ummat*. This discontinuity is the result of a shift in focus from rituals and an apolitical orthopraxy to a politicized and ideological orthodoxy.

CHAPTER 7

The Body: The Khōjā Adoption of the Veil

Introduction

What has been the gendered impact of the transition from *jamātī* to *ummatī* communal religious identities? How has clothing and the female body visually represented the identity of the Khōjā? What indigenous narratives and African experiences were drawn upon in the communal adoption of a Near Eastern dress for Khōjā women? In modern South Asia, women are bearers of culture and an authentic nativity (Nath and Dutta 2012). This is also the case for the African Khōjā, for whom the colonial experience was, upon balance, a positive one, which allowed for the Khōjā economic growth that would later be hampered or reversed entirely in the postcolonial period. The linkages made by globalization to the lager Shia and Islamic world in the late twentieth century meant the adoption of the politics of discontent and victimization that categorizes political Islam (Mandaville 2007). The articulation of an *ummatī* consciousness among the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam can be traced to 27 October 1982 (10 Muharram 1403 AH), when seven hundred Khōjā women spontaneously donned the *cādar* ('veil')[1] after attending ten days of rousing Urdu lectures by a visiting reciter, Hamida Abbasi (Nagar 2000a, 673). It was the logical conclusion to the shift in religious authority formalized by Gulāmalī Ismā'il's Gujarati publications and the prevailing attitude of complete deference to the religious authorities through which ideological definitions articulated by Muslims in Najaf and Qom came to constitute normative Islam.

1 'Veil' is used as the best translation of the concept of *cādar* among the Khōjā, which is seen as more than simply a head or body covering. It is an entire social construct by and toward women in the context of communal life. It is not my intention to draw on the Orientalist discourse and the negative normative connotation of the term 'veil'; rather, perhaps, I hope to help reorient our understanding of its complexity in the modern postcolonial period. When appropriate, I refer to the particular pieces of clothing that constitute the veil, such as the hijab, abaya, and chador.

The term *cādar* is used here, rather than 'chador' or 'abaya,' as the concept of veiling among the Khōjā was and continues to be referred to by this term. The meaning of the term has evolved over time and is reflected in its use within the community. In central Dar es Salaam in the 1950s, *cādar* referred to the Indic cultural use of a *pachēḍī* ('scarf') in religious settings. In the 1980s, it referred to the headscarf, and from the 1990s up until the contemporary period, it has referred to the Near Eastern abaya and headscarf worn in peninsular Arab style.

Overview: Abbasi's Lectures and the Complex Background of the Adoption of the Veil

> I remember after the first week, almost 60 percent of the [Khōjā] women wore the hijab . . . it was awkward at first, women were wearing hijab with sari then [eventually] we got the chador.[2]
>
> The lectures have gotten more conservative over time, they tell us going to cinema is haram; listening to music is haram but everyone does it behind the back of the community. The reality is that [now] you can watch all the music shows on Star Plus. . . . [One example of this is] in Al-Muntazir. The kids are segregated from the beginning so that they are not allowed to interact [with the opposite gender] so they go close in a wrong way. It is very backward; this suppression . . . even non-Muslim girls [who attend Al-Muntazir] must wear the hijab![3]

This chapter seeks to explain how multiple historical streams converged, leading these Khōjā women of Dar es Salaam to embrace the veil. This adoption of the veil as a case study is framed within the larger context of Islam's evolution as a political ideology among the Khōjā. The identifiable streams of causality that converged in this case are multiple and interconnected, including internal caste dynamics, narratives from Khōjā religious literature, the intellectual trends of colonial and postcolonial South Asian Islam, the impact of location, the historical experience of the Zanzibari Khōjā, the socialist policies of Julius Nyerere and Abeid Karume in postcolonial Tanzania, and the persistent influence of postrevolutionary Iranian ideologies, among other factors.

The adoption of the veil has been attributed to Hamida Abbasi, a female preacher from India. In 1982, she came to Dar es Salaam and delivered a week of rousing speeches in Urdu to the Khōjā women in the *imāmvāḍō* and Mēhphīlē Abbās. Her visit coincided with the first week of Muharram, the most holy week for the Shia Khōjā of Dar es Salaam, which is marked by a crescendo of religious observances and sermons that culminate in processions mourning the passion of Karbala on the tenth day, Ashura.

The temptation would be to explain this increasing conservatism and the adoption of the veil simply as effects of the Iranian Revolution exported to the Shia world; the importance of this explanation has often been exaggerated (Hunter 1988). We ought not to see these Shia communities as a *tabula rasa* on

2 Interview with a Khōjā housewife in her early fifties, central Dar es Salaam, 18 August 2008.

3 Interview with a Khōjā housewife in her mid-thirties, central Dar es Salaam, 27 July 2008.

which the politicized Iranian version of Shiism was laid eagerly and unquestioned. Rather, a detailed anthropological study of the community reveals the complexity of attributing historical causality to any one event; moreover, it reveals the inconsistencies of a simple narration of events, in this case regarding the impact of the Iranian Revolution.

The argument that veiling was a direct result of the Iranian Revolution is problematic when confronted with the complex history of the variety of female spaces among the various Central African and East African Khōjā communities. For instance, a 1929 source records that veiling was a common practice among the Khōjā of Zanzibar. Additionally, in the early to mid-1970s, veiling was recorded among the Khōjā of Mombasa, well in advance of the establishment of the Islamic Republic. Other issues challenge this narrative explanation—for example, why did the Khōjā women of Dar es Salaam adopt the style of hijab and abaya of the Arabian Peninsula, rather than the Iranian chador? This chapter delves into the interconnected social, intellectual, demographic, political, economic, and theological changes that brought about momentous transformations among the Khōjā women of Dar es Salaam in Muharram 1403 AH.

Historical Precedent: Use of the Veil before the 1980s

Since 1899, as a result of the outcasting and schism, both communities—the Ithnā ʿAsharī and the Āgākhānī—have defined themselves against the other, taking oppositional historical trajectories. Veiling was an established practice among some Khōjā women in Zanzibar, as recorded in 1929:

> "Socially, as said before, there is no difference between the two groups of the Khojas, except that the Ismaili women are unveiled, whereas the Ithnasheri ones tenaciously adhere to the purdah notwithstanding the futile exhortations of Surayya, the ex-Queen of Afghanistan, to do away with it!" ("The Khojas in Zanzibar" 1929, 63). Furthermore, within this early twentieth-century practice of veiling in Zanzibar among the Khōjā, there was a discrepancy in practice corresponding to class:
>
> The rich could continue with the community's tradition for their women who put on hijab. They used a piece of non-textile see-through niqaab (called '*picho*') for face-cover which had heavy *jeek-jari* embroidery along the three sides and costly pure golden chains with tinkles dangling from its lower end. The poor had their old women use a plain *picho* with no

> such adornment to reveal their life of poverty in the streets and in the community gatherings. (Khalfan 2010, 9)

Correspondingly, on the Swahili coast in the 1970s, one source records that, among the Khōjā of Mombasa, "Die Ithna'asheri sind auch jene Community, die heute noch streng auf das *burkha*-Tragen (Schleier) ihrer Frauen achtet." (Sheikh-Dilthey 1978, 705).

Sultan Mohamed Shah's leadership of the Āgākhānī Khōjā can be characterized as a project in Westernization (Adatia and King 1969, 179–191). In Nairobi in 1946, Shah issued a series of changes to the communal constitution as well as a series of *pharmān* to his followers, which led to a wholesale adoption of Western cultural mores, including dress (Calderini 2011, 48–62). For Āgākhānī Khōjā women, this meant a replacement of the traditional sari with the skirt. According to one interlocutor, "I remember when the Ismailis [Āgākhānī Khōjā] had to wear skirts. All of a sudden the next day, even the old women, were wearing skirts showing off their legs . . . they were very awkward."[4] The Asian quarter of Dar es Salaam is a tight space in which the various Asian castes overlap in spiritual geographies. Asian women of all castes of that generation remember the abrupt change. From the perspective of the Khōjā, it was yet another example of their cousins' Westoxication (Al-i Ahmad 1984). At a subconscious level, the adoption of the veil in 1982 was self-validated, as the veil was Oriental and conservative and thus truly Islamic, compared to the perceived Westoxication of their cousins, who reject traditional adherence to the sharia and many Islamic prohibitions, such as the drinking of alcohol, through claims of esotericism.

The Adoption of the Veil among the Ismaili Bōhrā

Apart from the Khōjā, the other dominant Shia community in Dar es Salaam, and more broadly in central and eastern Africa, is the Musta'lī Ismailis of India, known as the Dā'ūdī Bōhrās (Amiji 1975). Between the Khōjā and the Dā'ūdī Bōhrās there is a deep affinity, as they see in each other an abiding commitment to the remembrance and message of Ḥusayn and the passion of Karbala. In the late 1970s,

4 Interview with a female Lōhāṇā teacher in her late fifties, central Dar es Salaam, 4 September 2008.

> "[The] Daudi Bōhrā high priest promulgated an order that women had to wear the veil (*rida*). . . . The brother of the high priest during a visit to East Africa in 1977 also issued an order that Bōhrā women in East Africa should leave their jobs and wear the *rida* and men should wear a beard and Bōhrā dress" (Ghadially 1989, 34).

By 1979, many of the Bōhrā women in Dar es Salaam had adopted the *riḍā* ('veil'). Men had adopted traditional dress as well, which included a white prayer cap with gold embroidery, traditional Bōhrā robes, and a kempt untrimmed beard.

That the community closest to the Khōjā, in ethnic and religious terms, readopted the veil in so rapid a manner was noted by the Khōjā community. By the conclusion of 1982, the brief experimentation with Western dress—such as skirts and uncovered heads—on the part of younger Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā and Bōhrā women of Dar es Salaam had come to end. Most women in both communities scrambled to turn their six meters of sari into an appropriate Islamic dress. The transition was thus marked by this literal dismantling of Indic cultural identity for a Near Eastern narrative of religious authenticity.

The Influence of Postcolonial Changes

Postcolonial Insecurity

> At night time the police had gone to the [Asian] neighbors and searched the house. They found some money [foreign currency] which was illegal. They took away the husband. . . . I was so scared; I had hundreds of pounds my sister sent to me from London. I went to the *lavani* [courtyard] and burnt them all, we tried to hide the smoke. . . . There was one time [also] during Sokoine's period the police went to another neighbor's house and found a TV, they were told about it by Nivada [the TV repairman] who was in custody. We never saw him [Nivada] again. . . . . We never knew who these people were, maybe police, just Africans in uniform would come at night.[5]

The dispossession of Asians' assets, landed and liquid, as well as their inability to conduct free trade was a stark turnaround from the colonial period, the age of the great Asian traders, such as Khōjā Nasser Nurmohamed of Zanzibar. The socialist policies of Julius Nyerere and Abeid Karume in Tanganyika and Zanzibar, respectively, deprived all Tanzanians of private

5 Interview with a Khōjā housewife in her mid-sixties, central Dar es Salaam, 9 October 2008.

ownership of the land, buildings, and material wealth that they had acquired during the colonial period. The period of the prime ministership of Edward Sokoine (1977–1981 and 1983–1984) was particularly brutal; police incursions into Asian residences in Dar es Salaam were frequent and left them without legal recourse. The inefficiencies of the state-controlled market, in this period, meant a scarcity of all basic commodities, opening an avenue for a thriving black market. In the experience of a prominent Khōjā industrialist in Dar es Salaam, "during this period, you could bribe a secretary for an appointment to see a minster with only a Lux [a brand of bar soap]."[6]

Dar es Salaam Hegira

A confluence of factors led to a mass exodus of Khōjā from regions throughout Tanzania to Dar es Salaam in the postcolonial period; these factors included the economic collapse of the Tanzanian economy in the late 1970s (Bigsten and Danielson 2001); a retraction of the rule of law in the early 1980s, evidenced by arbitrary arrests and a lack of due process; and a lack of education and health infrastructure. So complete has this exodus been that entire Khōjā religious endowments and infrastructure in the interior have been left without guardianship.

The example of Mtwara Province is typical of this phenomenon. Newala is a city in the southeastern part of Tanzania in Mtwara Province. It is one of the last major cities before Mozambique and sits close to Ruvuma River, part of which forms the national boundary between Tanzania and Mozambique. Historically, this was part of a regional trading route for goods from Mtwara and the Indian Ocean into the interior. In 1960, there were sixteen Khōjā-owned businesses in Newala, three in the outskirts of the city, and a total of thirteen in the surrounding cities of Luatala, Kitangari, and Lulinidi; up to five hundred Khōjā were resident in the city of Masasi alone (Dhī suprīm kāunsīl ōph dhī phēdarēśan ōph khōjā śīā isnāaśarī jamāts ōph āfrikā 1960). For an Asian trading presence in the region, it was a robust mercantile network. As of 2008, there were no resident Khōjā in any of these locations. In regions where the Khōjā have left en bloc, such as Bagamoyo, Khōjā properties have been placed in trust as religious endowments (*vakaph*), administered and used by the local Bilal Muslim Mission (Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania 2008).[7]

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6 Interview with a Khōjā male industrialist in his late fifties, central Dar es Salaam, 17 November 2008.

7 The Bilal Muslim Mission is a missionary organization founded by Saeed Akhtar Rizvi in 1964 with the support of the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaats of Africa. Its mission is the propagation of the Imāmī Shīʿī creed to Africans (King and Rizvi 1973; Sōmjī 1980; C. Ahmed 2009).

By 1982 the Dar es Salaam community had become the largest Khōjā community in Tanzania. Unlike, for example, the Khōjā community of Mwanza, where Khōjā families had lived together for more than a century and had developed a common civic culture and communal friendships extending beyond generations, Dar es Salaam in 1982 was a heterogeneous mix of Khōjā from the interior whose experiences and perspectives were markedly different from the historical Khōjā community of metropolitan Dar es Salaam.

The economic and political insecurities that brought the Khōjā hegira to Dar es Salaam also exposed many of these migrants to new religious ideas and a desire to learn 'true Islam.' It was in this demographically dynamic milieu that Abbasi's lectures were received. Which subsection of Khōjā women were the first to adopt the veil is unclear. What is clear is that by Ashura 1403 A.H. a tipping point had been reached at which individual actions had become a social phenomenon, resulting in a concerted communal pressure to conform to the new norms of dress and behavior of the veil.

The Influence of Zanzibari Culture

In adopting the veil, why did the Khōjā women of Dar es Salaam eventually decide to emulate the style worn by women in the lower Arabian Peninsula, rather than the style worn in Mashhad or Karbala? The answer to this question lies in Zanzibar and the experience of two centuries of Khōjā acculturation therein.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the current wave of Asian immigration from the subcontinent to central and eastern Africa had been established through commercial ventures and transnational trading networks in the western Indian Ocean region (Bhacker 1994, 116–137). The oldest settlements of the Khōjā in central and eastern Africa were located on the Swahili coast in port cities such as Lamu, Bagamoyo, and, of course, Zanzibar. The Khōjā communities of Zanzibar were the most concentrated and largest in all of central and eastern Africa until the revolution in 1964. In 1958, according to a census conducted by the community, approximately 2,200 Khōjā families were resident in central Zanzibar (Stone Town) and the neighboring island of Pemba in the towns of Wete and Chake Chake (Dhī suprīm kāunsīl ōph dhī phēdarēśan ōph khōjā śīā isnāaśarī jamāts ōph āfrikā 1960). See also Figure 8.

Factors unique to Zanzibar allowed the Khōjā to assimilate Zanzibari cultural identity during the sultanate period; the most notable effect of this assimilation was the adoption of Swahili as the mother tongue of the community. This linguistic assimilation was not replicated by any another Khōjā community in eastern or central Africa. Part of this acculturation was the

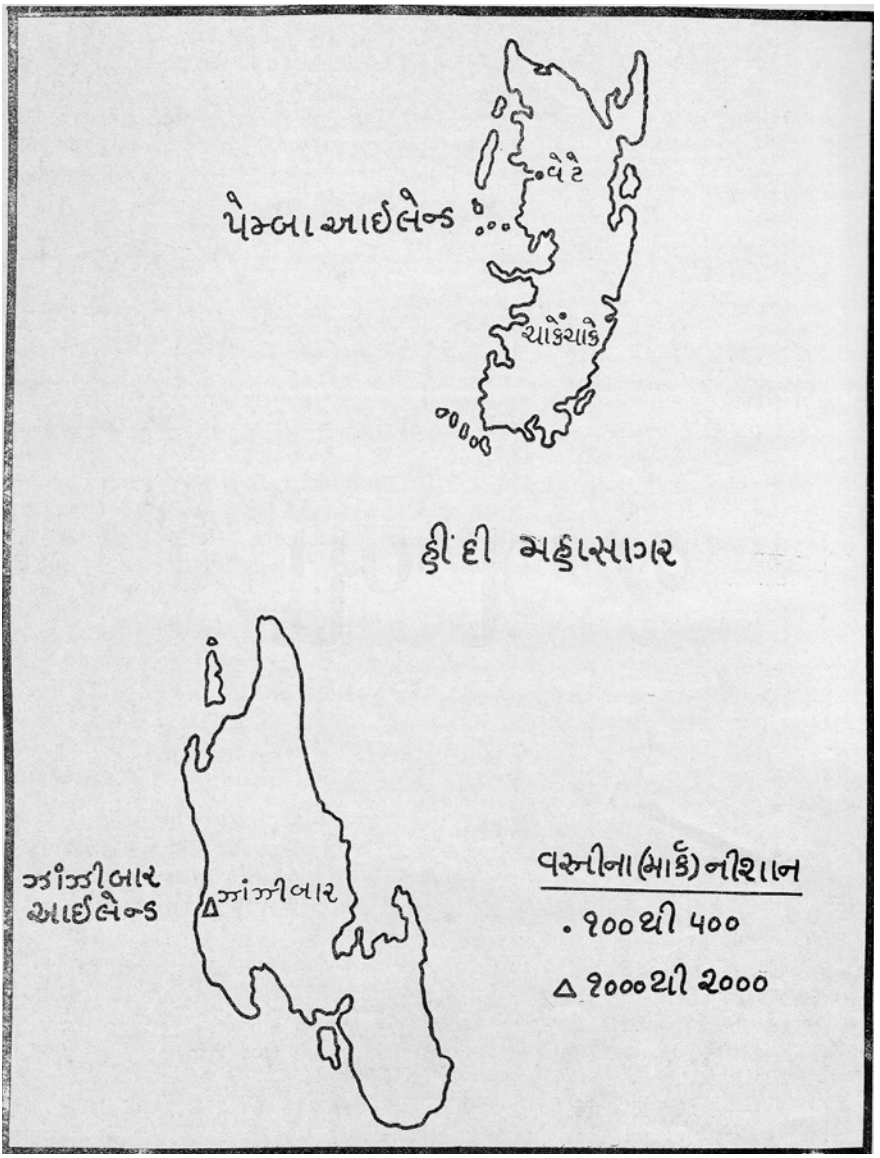

FIGURE 8 *A Gujarati-language demographic map of Zanzibar and Pemba from 1958 highlighting Khōjā population centers in central Zanzibar, Chake Chake, and Wete.* COURTESY OF THE FEDERATION OF KHŌJĀ SHIA ITHNA ASHERI JAMAATS OF AFRICA.

aforementioned adoption of the peninsular-style abaya and hijab by some of the more religiously observant Khōjā women. This adoption was concurrent with a high level of religious and social intercourse with other Shia communities in Zanzibar Stone Town, such as with the Bahrani community in their prayer hall, which is known as Matam-e-Bahrani located in Kiponda quarter, opposite the first Khōjā masjid (Peera 1410/1990).

Sunnī women in Zanzibar, especially those related to the court, had an established practice of wearing the full face veil (Said-Ruete 1888). The Khōjā practice of veiling was an extension of extant traditions on the archipelago whose history extended to Oman and its intertwined history with the islands. With the revolution in 1964, Khōjā refugees from the Zanzibar archipelago were forced onto the mainland, and for many that meant Dar es Salaam. Their particular religious culture had a considerable impact on the Dar es Salaam community; a notable result was the importation of shrine culture, as seen in Dar es Salaam's first Khōjā shrine, Mēhphīlē Abbās, and the subsequent proliferation of shrines throughout the city. The choice to adopt 'Islamic' dress following Abbasi's lectures in 1982 highlighted extant communal practices on the islands and on the mainland coast that were known to, though not observed by, the Dar es Salaam Khōjā community. The use of the peninsular-style hijab and abaya was a culturally authentic articulation of this conservatism; the importation of the Iranian form of veiling was and is seen as alien to the African Khōjā experience.

Symbolism of the Veil in Narrative Prayers

Until the late twentieth century, popular *kahāṇīō* ('narrative prayers') were widely used as devotional literature among the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar. This genre of South Asian literature among the Khōjā is almost exclusively written in Urdu in the Gujarati character; even the Gujarati versions conclude with devotional poetry in Urdu.[8] These traditional narratives focus on the personalities surrounding the Sacred Five, the Imams, and on

8 The vast majority of popular devotional poetry performed by the Khōjā remains in the Urdu language. The lesser-known oral literature of the Zanzibari Khōjā survives in Persian, Arabic, Kāṭhiyāvāḍī, Kacchī, and Swahili. The historical connections between the Urdu-speaking ulema and their religious literature date to nineteenth-century Bombay and Mulla Qadir Husain. Mulla Qadir Husain was a Shīʿī cleric who was tasked by Ayatollah Zainul Abidin Mazandarani of Karbala to teach the Imāmī creed to the Khōjā of Bombay. He arrived in Bombay in 1297 AH (1879 CE) (Sahib 1972, 1; Takim 2009, 37).

prominent personalities surrounding the passion of Karbala. The *kahaṇī* was historically employed by the Khōjā as a form of narrative prayer. Employing seemingly simple language, each of these complex narratives was specified and related to particular customs and supplications while engaging multiple levels of discourse.

This literature was primarily recited by Khōjā women and generally features a female protagonist who comes to a point in her predicament at which there appears to be no hope or clear answer. A dream or encounter, which entails pilgrimage to a shrine or a meeting with the saint corporeal, then reveals the solution. The *kahaṇī* is a narrative that is recited within proscribed ritual practice, including prayers concluding with the distribution and consumption of sacraments. Originally of South Asian origin, the *kahaṇī* was a means by which the Imāmī Shia, in the periphery of Islamic civilization, envisioned and related to the saints of the Near East while retaining the Indic legends and narrative structures of their indigenous devotional literature.

The *kahaṇī* of the Lady Zaynab[9] is a typical example of this literature, which allowed a personal connection between the female devotee and the saints. The narrative of the Lady Zaynab begins with a short biography of Zaynab's travails after the Battle of Karbala, in which she is brought to Damascus and displayed before the Umayyad court without her veil (*cādar*).[10] Then the story shifts to a vernacular tale of a blind woman who hears this moving story of Zaynab in a gathering (*majlis*) and becomes entranced by her fortitude and grace. She resolves to become a devotee of Zaynab and takes a vow to live in a state of penitent mourning—which includes the adoption of the veil—until she is able to embark on pilgrimage to Zaynab's shrine in Damascus. The veil, as a symbol and an object, is crucial, for once she embarks on the pilgrimage, the devotee wishes to place her veil on the shrine and to take one from the shrine with its blessings; she is prevented from doing so by the custodian of the shrine. At night, the Lady Zaynab visits both the devotee and the custodian in their dreams, ensuring that the veil is given to the devotee the next day. Once she receives the veil, the devotee can return home and is released from the vow of penitent mourning.

The *kahaṇī* is both recited and performed. To perform the *kahaṇī* of Zaynab, one begins with a cup of sherbet and with it recites prescribed prayers in Arabic. After the prayers are recited, the supplicant reads the narrative in its entirety,

9 Lady Zaynab is the sister of Ḥusayn, and her shrine is located in Damascus.

10 The term *cādar* in Gujarati refers to a 'textile covering,' such as a white sheet. This was understood by the Khōjā reader to refer to either the muslin head covering used only for prayer or the abaya and hijab.

generally by rote. On the completion of the narrative, a short elegiac poem is recited, following which the sacrament, in this case the sherbet, is consumed.

Through the story, the veil serves a potent symbol of honor, defiance against oppression, and identification with the Shia cause. The *kahaṇī* posits Zaynab's veil as the archetypal form through Khōjā veiling is normalized. Adoption of the veil links South Asian Khōjā women, through material culture, to the Near Eastern narrative of the passion of Karbala.

For more than a century, this *kahaṇī* of Zaynab was widely known and recited by the Khōjā women of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, remaining in the communal consciousness at a passive level. Abbasi's lectures in 1982, in part, tapped into these communal narratives of Zaynab in an affective manner, linking the wearing of the veil to the promotion of a politicized Islamic identity discrete from Indic cultural traditions (Ruffle 2011).

Narratives of Resistance to Colonization

Just as the *kahaṇī* literature formed a background to the rapid changes instigated by Abbasi's 1982 lectures, narratives of South Asian Muslim resistance to colonization also played a role in the adoption of the veil. Because the veil was explained to be symbolic of resistance, the object of that resistance had to be explained as well. This was particularly important for the Dar es Salaam Khōjā, who remember the colonial experience as having been overall a positive experience and the postcolonial period as largely negative.

The Khōjā of central and eastern Africa traditionally had a worldview based on local cultural geography and, with regard to other Asians, vis-à-vis caste identities. The background to the political message of Abbasi's lectures emerged from a tradition within South Asian Islam that had developed in response to more than a century of colonization in which many Muslims saw themselves at the losing end of the colonial experience. It was a message of religious conservatism as a way to empower Muslims against lax Western mores of personal morality.

The colonial experience for the African Khōjā was, on balance, a positive experience. It was in the colonial period that their economic prowess reached its zenith (Sheriff 1987, 78–118; Oonk 2006, 1–4). The historical attitude of the Khōjā to the colonial experience was similar to that of their Hindu compatriots in the region; they saw it as a model for emulation and an impetus for cultural revival. In fact, it was the postcolonial experience that saw the dispossession of the Asian trading class. Julius Nyerere's Arusha Declaration initiated a series of policies resulting in the nationalization of all land and property in

the country. This was a devastating blow to domiciled Europeans and Asians, who, combined, owned a plurality of landed assets at the time of independence. Five years later, Idi Amin's expulsion of all Asians from Uganda led to a crisis in Afro-Asian relations in the East African community. As citizens of newly formed African nation-states, the Khōjā began to internalize nationalist discourses that framed the history of Western colonization as the source of all contemporary political and economic troubles in the Global South.

The Influence of Iran

Prerevolutionary Iran

Arguably, the connection between the Khōjā and Iran extends as far back as the fifteenth century in South Asia. From the time of their arrival in East Africa in the nineteenth century, Iranians and the Persian language have had a notable impact on Khōjā religious observance and its corpus of oral literature. This is seen quite visibly in the early twentieth-century text *Phirdōs*, which contains numerous Persian lamentation odes and dirges from the nineteenth century, including one of the oldest: *Abbāsē ammu jānam man āb namī khavāham* (*Abbas, My Dear Uncle, I Don't Want Water*), a Persian dirge in Gujarati character (H.Ē. Māstar 1343/1924). Persian phrases, presumably from Būshehrī or Baḥrānī dialects, pepper the speech of the Zanzibari Khōjā. One such well-known phrase is repeated by congregants while waiting for the communal feast to begin in the *imāmvāḍō*: "Hamśī hamśī hāst, īmān hāst; hamśī hamśī nīst, īmān nīst." According to Khōjā respondents, this phrase means, "Where there is food, there is faith; where there is no food, there is no faith."[11]

Furthermore, Iranian contributions extended beyond literature and language: the first religious authorities within the Zanzibar Khōjā community were Iranians. In 1885, Sayyid Abdulhusein Marashi was sent by Ayatollah Zainul Abidin Mazandarani of Karbala to lead the Zanzibari Khōjā at the behest of Dewji Jamal (H.A.M. Jaffer 1420/1999; H. Walji 1425/2004). Marashi led as head religious scholar from 1885 until his death in 1905, at which point he was succeeded by his son-in-law Husain Habibullah Shushtari in 1905, until his death in 1945 (Daya 1419/1998). The Zanzibar Revolution of 1964 brought an abrupt halt to the historical connection with Iran; its resumption in 1979 Dar es Salaam was an unequal affair.

11 One suggested etymology of this saying is the phrase "hama shay' hama shay' hast, īmān hast; hama shay' hama shay' nīst, īmān nīst" ("When everything is present, faith is present; when nothing is present, faith is absent") (H.A.M. Jaffer 2012).

The Iranian Revolution: Messianic Iran

The Iranian Revolution shattered the Iranian state's relative isolation from and indifference toward this Shia community in East Africa. It ushered in a new type of relationship with Iran; no longer was there cultural parity among the Indian Khōjā, Iranians, and Arabs, as had existed in Zanzibar. In part this was a result of anxiety and insecurity due to the loss of wealth and institutions developed by the Khōjā in the colonial period, coupled with rapid demographic shifts in the Khōjā communities in the postcolonial period. On the mainland in Dar es Salaam there evolved a perception of religious and cultural inferiority to the Iranians. The post-revolutionary propaganda of Iran claimed the authenticity of Shia Islam; the collective Kacchī, Kāṭhiyāvāḍī and Zanzibari Shiisms of the Khōjā were unable to defend their centuries of indigenous tradition from the ideological onslaught. The adoption of the veil was the price paid for communal membership in the world of global Shiism.

One ideology that was promulgated by the Islamic republic and that reflected streams within Iranian Shiism was an emphasis on the imminent return of the messianic twelfth imam. Until 1979, the twelfth imam had been a part of Ithnā ʿAsharī Khōjā creed, a means of theological self-identification in opposition to their cousins, the Āgākhānī, who claim an unbroken chain of imams resulting in a present imam. One manifestation of this dispensational messianism was an increase in the performance of ritual observances that incorporated this messianic creed. The pilgrimages of the messianic imam were recited more often in the *imāmvāḍō*. A new prayer was added following the *salavāt* prayer, to hasten the imminent return of the imam of the age: *wa ajjil farjahum*. In addition, slogans of political messianism—such as flags, likely of Iranian origin, bearing the slogan "Al Mahdi (pbuh) is from the progeny of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who will come to make a universal government and establish global justice"—have appeared in Muharram observances. In this paradigm, the veiling of all Shia women, ostensibly all Muslim women, is crucial in setting the foundation for the arrival of the messianic age.

Postrevolutionary Iran: A Utopian Dystopia

Postrevolutionary Iran is imagined to be a Shia utopia and the United States its antithesis; in this paradigm, the West is scared of 'true' Islam. For the majority of Khōjā in Dar es Salaam, the wearing of the veil is crucial to the practice of Islam.

> The West is mostly scared of *practicing* Muslims. If you are a Muslim without hijab, if you are a Muslim you are following your religion, ok, you pray. That's not a problem for them. But you're not a practicing Muslim, you

> don't have a proper hijab or the ones that know who are really practicing that have the hijab, the Khōjā Shias do. (Z. Walji, Hassan, and Ebrahim 2011)

In Dar es Salaam, Abbasi was among the first in a wave of preachers to bend the theology of Karbala to political aims. In part, the Khōjā had to learn the political and social symbolism of the veil, as *résistance* to forces that threatened contemporary Islam, thereby linking the adoption of the veil to a continuation of Ḥusayn's struggle to establish divine justice for humanity in political terms echoing the religious rhetoric of postrevolutionary Iran.

The intellectual interaction between the Khōjā and Iran has increased exponentially since the founding of the Islamic Republic. The most notable development has been the yearly scholarships offered to Khōjā students for study in the seminaries of Qom.[12] This avenue for education was one of the first opportunities widely available to females among the Dar es Salaam Khōjā. Because religion is seen as an inherent good, religious education was not seen as threatening to the marriageability of these women on their return home, as a Western professional education was and is seen by some within the community. In addition, the system of education in which the Khōjā are engaged in Qom allows female education at the graduate level, whereas the prerequisite for postgraduate education is marriage.[13] Within this paradigm, female agency in education is proscribed by marriage—by a woman's status vis-à-vis a male and, by extension, the Khōjā community.

The veil is, of course, mandatory in Iran. That Khōjā women would wear it there is clear. But while there, their exposure to Iran is restricted to Qom and Mashhad.[14] The Persian they learn is the religious language of the seminary. They are never inducted into the classical Persian literature of the *Shahnameh* or its pre-Islamic Persian heritage. The Shiism and corollary ideologies, as propagated by the Iranian state, represent Iran for them; the voices of discontent and excesses of the regime as contemplated in the university are never heard. The first group of Khōjā students to return to Nairobi in the mid-1980s shocked the Khōjā community on their return: "When they came back, the girls were wearing full chador. They said that the way we were doing *ājhadār*

12 Technically, studying in a seminary in Qom is free; the scholarships help to defer the costs of living and transportation and help to arrange the program of study from Tanzania.

13 Interview with a Khōjā male seminarian in his mid-twenties who had returned from Qom, central Dar es Salaam, 20 August 2008.

14 The shrine city of Mashhad is a major pilgrimage center in Iran, as it is the location of the tomb of the eighth imam of the ʿAlī al-Riḍā.

was wrong. They said it was un-Islamic. The *jamāt* was very upset . . . finally they calmed down."[15]

The Khōjā students who complete an entire course of education over six or eight years, equivalent to a master's or doctoral level, live in Iranian society for a sufficient amount of time to encounter and internalize its problems. Many of these students have only lived in two societies—Iran and Tanzania. Despite having experienced considerable discrimination and corruption in Iran, they never tell the Dar es Salaam Khōjā of their travails. For them, Iran, as flawed as it might be, is the only Shia republic and the defender of the true faith.

The exposure of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā to the fervor of a Near Eastern pan-Shia ideology has continued in the waves of Khōjā students returning from Qom who now function in various capacities as religious leaders of Khōjā communities throughout the African continent and in the Khōjā diaspora communities of Western Europe and North America. A contemporary example of this can be seen in the Friday sermon delivered in Dar es Salaam. Traditionally divided into two sections, the first section is generally devoted to issues of Islamic law and ethics. Since the 1990s, the second section has been a political platform. It is a digest of news from the 'Islamic world' (Tabligh Sub-Committee 2007/1427–2010/1431) interwoven with pro-Iranian, anti-American, and anti-Israeli polemics, as seen in the sermon on 20 August 2011, in which the *alim*, a Khōjā who spent more than a decade in Iran, after railing against American and Western European foreign and economic policies, concluded with, "If the whole world wants to put sanctions on Iran, it's our duty to find ways to boost and help Iran."

There is constant religious interaction between the Dar es Salaam Khōjā community and the Iranian leadership, such as the visit between Movahhedi Ghomi, the Iranian ambassador to Tanzania, and a delegation of the Africa Federation on 9 November 2011, in which special dispensations were made with regard to visas for Khōjā (Africa Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats 2011b). The Khōjā of Dar es Salaam are thus expected to function as proxies of the Iranian state and its global interests as a religious duty. For the Iranian state and clergy, the Khōjā serve a unique function with regard to their transnational diaspora links, particularly with their religious institutions established in North America and Western Europe. For the Khōjā leadership, to be seen with representatives of Near Eastern Shiism enhances their own authority among the Khōjā (World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim

15 Interview with a Khōjā male seminarian in his mid-twenties who had returned from Qom, central Dar es Salaam, 20 August 2008.

Communities 2011b). The Khōjā narrative, with respect to women, continues that of the Islamic Republic and its interpretation of Shia Islam as being normative, authoritative, and liberating to women. Although women in Western societies might appear to be free and liberated, they are actually exploited and commoditized. In this line of reasoning, the veil, in fact, liberates women from being valued only for their bodies so they can be properly respected for their minds (Hoseini 2011). Apparently, according to respondents, the veil also protects Muslim women from rape (Kermali et al. 2010).

Veiling Change: The Veil in Modern-Day Discourses

The Veil as a Source of Power: Feminist Discourse and Resistance to Western Oppression

The adoption of the veil over time coincided with a heightened observance of Islamic law, including the adoption of the laws of relative degrees, which include gender segregation. Within female spaces there are a multiplicity of discourses that have attempted to use the veil as a religious mechanism to push for greater equality and recognition at many levels within and outside of the communal governing structure. Two salient topics in 2008 were the push for equal divorce rights for women in Islamic law and preventing domestic violence. The promotion of gender equality through feminist discourse within the community is possible only *through* the veil. An example of this in public discourse can be seen on the Khōjā television channel IBN TV[16] in Dar es Salaam, which regularly hosts the edgy *Voice of Women* series with presenter Sakina Hasanali.

The political symbolism of the veil as resistance to Western imperialism was developed through lectures by preachers from South Asia beginning in the 1980s and continues until today. Abbasi's 1982 lectures were the precursory stage to seeing the veil as a form of power. The Khōjā of Africa first needed to understand their political dispossession and disempowerment as Muslims at the hands of the West. There needed to be an internalization of Muslim identity as the binary opposite of Western culture; this included the characterization of Near Eastern conflicts as relevant and internal to

16 The IBN TV channel was started in 2003 by Mehboob Somji, a Khōjā, as an independent initiative. It is broadcast throughout the Dar es Salaam capital region and in Tanga. Since 2011, IBN has launched Radio Maarifa 105.3 FM in Tanga.

communal identity. This politicization of Khōjā religion came through narratives attributing sole responsibility to the West for historical injustices to the Muslims, the example par excellence being the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.[17]

> When I came to London [from Dar es Salaam in 1970] I did not know about the Jews. I went to work [on the first day] and met a Jewish girl [as coworker]. I introduced myself as from Africa and Muslim;[18] she said, "you know we're not supposed to be friends." I didn't know what she was talking about. Then I learned about the Israeli-Palestine [conflict].[19]

Khōjā women had to be taught that they were in fact being oppressed by Western systems of domination and that the veil allowed them the ability to be liberated from it. The discomfort with and opposition to the veil in Western Europe and North America itself is a sign of its immense power. In Sakina Hasanali's *Voice of Women* interview of the prominent Khōjā journalist Sakina Datoo on 3 April 2011, Datoo responded,

> I think it's, it's very clear and very obvious that [the head]scarf has become a very big threat to Western societies for non-Muslims. And I think that very fact that I think it's a threat to them means that it is giving something very special to Muslim women that other people feel threatened with. I can speak for myself to say that I've worn hijab, as a, from the time I can remember, when I was required to and I have pursued all sorts of careers in all sorts of countries and for me it has definitely been a liberating force and very empowering. (S. Datoo 2011)

The Missionary Imperative

Historically, Khōjā religion in central and eastern Africa had followed an Indic form of ethnic religiosity, a caste tradition. The creed and its associated rituals[20]

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17 The importance of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict for the Khōjā can be seen in the annual Quds Day, an expression "of solidarity with the Palestinian people" (Kermali et al. 2010), which is celebrated on the last Friday of Ramadan. This day of remembrance was imported directly from Iran, as instituted after 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini.

18 She was not wearing the hijab at this time; her work attire was a blouse and a knee-length skirt. She adopted the hijab later, in the early 1990s.

19 Interview with a Khōjā female professional in her early sixties, Edinburgh, 26 October 2011.

20 One example of these rituals is the night of *śāmē gharībā*, following the martyrdom of Ḥusayn. Traditionally, children would circulate throughout the darkened *imāmvāḍō*, weaving through those attending with a tray filled with *mīṇbattī* ('candles'). The children

were specific to the community. Aside from a few communities on the Swahili coast, the veil as attire had not been generally present among the Khōjā of central and eastern Africa. Of course, as with many Indic traditions, a head covering was used when entering sacred spaces such as the *imāmvāḍō* and *mēhphīl* or when participating in a Muharram ritual procession. But the veil was situational rather than a permanent ideological marker of identity.

Saeed Akhtar Rizvi of Gopalpur fundamentally reshaped the insular orientation of Khōjā religion, and consequently the veil, by drawing on the missionary imperative of Islam and Indian Shiism in particular. His arrival in Lindi in 1959 from Jawadia Arabic College (Banaras, India) was quickly followed by a proposal to the Khōjā community in Dar es Salaam for the creation of a body to propagate Shiism to Africans, the Bilal Muslim Mission. There was opposition and dissention in the ranks of the Khōjā leadership in regard to this undertaking (Daya 2002). It was only with an appeal to Near Eastern authority, a fatwa from Ayatollah Syed Mohsin Al Hakeem, that the resolution to establish the mission passed at the 1964 triennial conference of the Africa Federation in Tanga (Daya 1418/1998).

Since its inception in 1964, there has been a massive expansion of the project, resulting in more than ten thousand African converts in Tanzania. As of 2008, the Bilal Muslim Mission had fifty-seven locations throughout Tanzania, managing a range of services from the building of shallow water wells to the establishment of schools and housing for its community members. Its projects in the Dar es Salaam region include the Bilal Comprehensive School and the Ahl al-Bayt Teachers Training College, among a wide range of other initiatives (Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania 2007).

As with Khōjā Mohamed Hemani's private initiative—the Temeke campus of the World Islamic Propagation and Humanitarian Services (WIPAHS) in the Dar es Salaam region—particular attention is paid to the education and employment of women. Both groups function as nongovernmental organizations through a Shia Islamic rubric. Female economic empowerment is seen through the observance of Islamic norms that include strict gender segregation and the adoption of the hijab. The veiling of women is integral to this development model, which has been adapted from and developed in conscious opposition to the historical success of Protestant missionaries in the region (Kassamali, Walji, and Bhimji 2004).

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would approach an adult, who would wave his or her hands over the flames and over his or her face and then place money on the tray. These rituals are highly reminiscent of Indic *ārtī* rituals. They have been modified substantially in last two decades within a new narrative, rendering the original ritual virtually unrecognizable.

The Islamic Concept: The Veil as an Expression of Islamic Culture

Western culture and Hindu culture are seen by the Khōjā as discrete monolithic entities suppressing a normative Islamic culture. Within this paradigm, the "three woods are attacking Islam—Hollywood, Bollywood, and Lollywood" (Baqri 2011). Islam is reified, and the norms of the contemporary period and its discourses are understood to be immutable, hence the Islamic concept (A.M.M. Jaffer 1992). For the Khōjā, Islam as religion is also a culture in its own right that is separate from Hindu and Western culture. In this paradigm, the veil, then, is the ideal expression of this normative Islamic culture, which is under attack by liberalism, as illustrated in an interview with a previous editor of the community's journal, the *Federation Samachar*:

> The western culture has somehow instilled a different type of cultural invasion into our society and that is *liberalism*. Take an example of some issues like Hijab and some practices of our religion. Some issues are discarded with the notion of being modern and that they are not needed as the soul is more pure than the actions, so why pray, fast, perform hajj and so on!
>
> Equally, both the cultures [Hindu and Western] pose a threat to us in different ways. While we have ignored the sanctity of women in Islam, we hail the western idea of women's emancipation in Islam. The recent issue of dialogue on the validity of marjaiyat, taqleed and azadaari are all a part of the western movement to instill doubts in our younger generation. (H.W. Datoo 2009)

To respond to what is understood to be an onslaught of Western culture, a defense must be mounted, and this can be seen in the defense of the rights of women through polemical apologetics. For example, to counter traditional Orientalist critiques of female subjugation in Islam, apologists argue that, in fact, Islam was the first institution to liberate women. All discourse on the role and rights of women within the Khōjā community is contested almost entirely through the language of religion, invoking the key personalities of classical Islamic history. For instance, in a push for the right of women to work, one might invoke Khadīja, the first wife of Muḥammad. She would be used as an example to demonstrate the ability of a woman to work outside the home, with the veil, for she was a successful businesswoman and entrepreneur who, in fact, employed her husband—the Prophet (Baqri 2011).

Another salient example is the secular discourse on human rights, which has been wholly internalized but is presented in an Islamic form seen as superior to the secular version, "a Divine perspective on human rights" (Tabligh

Sub-Committee 2008). The Islamic form is superior to the Western form in two ways. The first is its historical precedent: these Islamic human rights are claimed to have been revealed to the Prophet in the seventh century, many centuries prior to the Enlightenment and, most recently, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The second is its form: having been revealed to Muḥammad and transmitted through ʿAlī and the Imams, it is divine in nature and thus is an inherently superior form of human rights to the Western form, which is derived from limited human logic. The rights of women, in this paradigm, actually originate with Islam and Western forms are but a distorted copy of the original.[21]

Résistance: Nonadoption of the Veil

There were, of course, dissenting views of Abbasi's eloquent description of a pan-Shia utopia that would be hastened with the donning of the veil. In October 1982, not all Khōjā women replaced their colorful saris with black robes. There were those women for whom the ancestral Indic traditions had an equally strong hold and who saw them as a way to maintain a link to the community's ancestral past that had only recently been concluded.

> [In 2000,] I was told I could not attend the senior citizen's computer class because I did not have a hijab. They explained me [*sic*] that a man was teaching a class and it was not right to sit in front of him without a hijab. A woman gave me a *pachēḍī* ['scarf'] and I to cover [with it]. . . . The girls nowadays don't know how to wear saris. Every year they have a sari competition and all our [Khōjā] girls come to me to learn how to tie a sari or go to the *banyanis* ['Hindus']. . . .[22] I have given up [fighting the community on this issue], I've turned all my saris into night dresses and started wearing the *cādar* of *bībī jhaynab*. I'm getting old; who am I going to give this all to?[23]

21 This view falls within a larger construct of Islamic theology—Islam as both primordial and successionist to Judaism and Christianity.

22 *Banyani* is the Swahili term for Hindu merchants or Hindus more generally. Its etymology can be traced to the Kacchī or Kāṭhiyāvāḍī term for a merchant caste, *vāṇiyā*.

23 Interview with a Khōjā housewife in her mid-sixties, central Dar es Salaam, 15 August 2008.

Nagar skillfully draws out the various narratives of the veil as empowering and disempowering (Nagar 1995), especially in the context of the debate on *muṭā* ('temporary marriage') in the 1990s (Nagar 2004). Economic class is tied to these prima facie narratives of the veil as empowering. Impoverished Khōjā who resist the veil inevitably find their access to communal resources delayed or blocked until they conform (Nagar 2000a).

As of 2008, the communal adoption of the veil by the women of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā was essentially complete. To be sure, there are still those who do not wear it. But those who are able to resist what they feel as pressure to conform to this new norm are women of the upper classes whose lucrative livelihoods and/or independent wealth mean that they are financially independent of the *jamāt* structure.

These cases of nonveiled women, although interesting in their own right, are exceptions within the larger trend that began prior to 1982 and completed by the early 1990s. Any contemporary discourse of *résistance* is articulated through third world feminist and socialist discourses. Appeals to Indic tradition as a discourse of *résistance* are impossible, as the Indic heritage of the Khōjā has been alienated from the communal consciousness, and an identity has been created in diametric opposition to both Indic and Western culture with regard to notions of female agency.

Conclusion

By resisting simplistic notions of cause and effect, one can observe the issue of the veil among the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam illustrating the complex historical forces that have come to shape globalized Islamic postcolonial identities. The adoption of the veil by a few hundred Khōjā in 1982 was the result of a confluence of historical events, some of which had begun a century prior in Zanzibar.

The religious narrative of the *kahaṇī* helped set a foundation for the eventual adoption of the veil by the Dar es Salaam Khōjā. There was already an extant tradition of veiling present in Zanzibar that was uniquely acquired through social intercourse with Arab, Bahrani, and Iranian communities on the archipelagos of Pemba and Zanzibar. Political instability within and the economic collapse of postcolonial Tanzania brought disparate communities throughout the united republic into central Dar es Salaam. The history of the relations of the Khōjā with their Āgākhānī cousins was a historical cornerstone in its adoption. The physical and temporal proximity to the Ismaili Shia Bōhrā

readoption of the veil in Dar es Salaam was an undercurrent leading to the dramatic events of 1982.

The exportation of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 to the Khōjā through its links in Dar es Salaam, such as the Iranian Cultural Centre, and the influence of Khōjā students returning from the seminaries in Qom meant that the ideology of the revolution permeated the community in continuous waves. This, in addition to preachers from South Asia explicating a postcolonial Shiism, brought about both the politicization of Shia Islam and the rapid replacement of Indic communal tradition with a Near Eastern form of religion complete with a missionary imperative brought by Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

The rapid adoption of the veil in the 1980s was partially the result of this politicization of the veil. The Khōjā were provided narratives of Western domination and an immutable Shia identity that linked this community to a larger modern pan-Shia identity. The veil was constructed as a form of resistance and an example of moral superiority to the West. Additionally, the veil was placed within a larger context of Imāmī messianism: the proper observance of the veil by the Khōjā would be another step toward hastening the return of the twelfth imam.

With the *jamāt* functioning as a city-state parallel to the nation-state, resistance to the veil and its worldview can only be successful by those women who are materially and socially independent of its communal institutions and structures. Women who refuse to wear the veil are persona non grata to the *jamāt* leadership except if they, their spouses, or their family members are wealthy and fulfill their obligation as patrons of the community. For lower- and middle-class women who depend heavily on the *jamāt*'s contribution to their children's tuition fees and on other forms of communal welfare, communal rank can only be increased through public piety, for which the veil is essential.

The veil has become synonymous with a normative Islam and Islamic culture. Although it is well known that Muslim-Western tensions persist (Kohut et al. 2011), an equally significant threat is seen from the East. An Eastoxication from Indic culture, particularly Bollywood (Dalmia 2011), is seen as threatening a perceived pristine Islamic culture. For the generations of women who have been brought up since 1982, the veil is immutable and has been completely internalized as a mark of identity in conscious opposition to the Indic and Western cultures to which they are continuously exposed.

Conclusion

By the Deutsch-Ostafrika period in the late nineteenth century, major Khōjā settlements on the Swahili coast included Lamu, Zanzibar, Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam, and Kilwa Kivinje. Despite the transfer of the capital from Bagamoyo to Dar es Salaam in 1890, by 1905 the Khōjā population of Dar es Salaam was still relatively small in comparison to that of Zanzibar: there were about two hundred Khōjā in Dar es Salaam versus about five thousand in Zanzibar (Dhī suprīm kāunsīl ōph dhī phēdarēśan ōph khōjā śīā isnāaśarī jamāts ōph āfrikā 1960). Until the mid-twentieth century, Zanzibar functioned as the spiritual center for the Khōjā communities on the Swahili coast and in British East Africa. Most Khōjā migrants from the subcontinent first arrived in Zanzibar and then moved onward to the mainland. The Khōjā settlement on the main island, Unguja, was the nexus of African Khōjā religious learning and home to its printing press, which disseminated this knowledge to the communities on the mainland.

Central to the formation of an Ithnā ʿAsharī religious identity in Zanzibar was the creation of Faize Ithnashery Night School in 1926, wherein young Khōjā men were instructed in a traditional madrassa education by Mahamad Mullā Jāphar, who was trained in Najaf (Dhī suprīm kāunsīl ōph dhī phēdarēśan ōph khōjā śīā isnāaśarī jamāts ōph āfrikā 1960, 191). The Khōjā Gujarati presses of Zanzibar, such as Hasanalī Māstar's Husēnī Prēs, were involved in a 'mini-renaissance' (Sadgrove 2005) of literacy, and through the publication of elegiac oral traditions, missals, and periodicals on the Ithnā ʿAsharī faith contributed to the development of a unique Khōjā religious literature informed by Iranian, Bahrani, and Indic linguistic and cultural forms of Shiism. This cultural importation was spatially manifest in the emerging material culture of the *imāmvāḍō* and *mēhphīl* as well as the performance of annual public processions on 'Āshūrā' on the islands. The strength of Omani cultural norms in prerevolutionary Zanzibar influenced its Khōjā communities, as these norms encouraged the promotion of stricter internal gender segregation, a greater degree of female seclusion from the public sphere, and adoption of the veil among the higher classes, in contrast to the cultural practices of Hindu communities on the island or even the mores of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā community during the same period.

The most remarkable developments of the Zanzibari Khōjā involve their concurrent development of transnational cooperation among communities in the region and linguistic indigenization. Scholars have been accumulating meticulous research on the relationship between Indic merchant communities,

whose origins lie in the regions of Sindh and Gujarat, and their trading networks throughout the western Indian Ocean (Gupta 1984; Jha 2008; Machado 2005; Markovits 2008; Subrahmanyam 1995). Much of this research has focused on economic and social history; yet it has remained silent on the profound internal political changes in the distribution and construction of power among caste communities. For the Khōjā, the late nineteenth century saw the beginning of a relatively successful experimentation with constitutional democracy, thereby circumscribing *śēṭhā'ī* ('the power of the mercantile elite'), in which power within the caste council was distributed primarily according to wealth. The Khōjā community in Zanzibar differed from those on the mainland because of their incorporation within the British colonial administration as bureaucrats, which created a professional salariat with technical skills. It was through them that the procedures of a constitutional democracy were implemented within the *jamāt* structure. Their presence created a new pole of power within the existing power structure of the *jamāt* in which the salariat was located in between the *śēṭh* ('merchant') and the *dukawala* ('trader'). This newly democratized institution of the *jamāt*, in which all male members were equally enfranchised, served as a marker of identity distinct to their cousins, for whom caste authority became vested in the infallible religious authority of a single individual. This momentum toward higher levels of organization extended internationally to the Khōjā communities throughout Africa, who, in 1945, together formed the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaats of Africa.

Another unique development of the Khōjā of Zanzibar was their level of sociolinguistic assimilation. Of all the Khōjā settlements of eastern, central, and southern Africa, only those who settled permanently in Arab or Arabized entrepôts (Muscat, Mogadishu, and Zanzibar) were integrated into local national identities. For the Zanzibari Khōjā, Arabisation was mediated by Swahili. This meant becoming Zanzibari, and the strongest evidence for this is the adoption of kiUnguja—the dialect of Swahili on the main island of Zanzibar—as the mother tongue of the island's Khōjā communities by the early to mid-twentieth century. The Indic tongues were certainly still used among the older generation and in religious life, but for most, they remained as passive knowledge. The Indic languages of Kacchī and Kāṭhiyāvāḍī ceased to be dynamic vehicles for the expression of new cultural and religious experiences. Therefore, the transition to the Ithnā ʿAsharī creed relied heavily on the Shia Urdu oral tradition, whereas the interactions of everyday life on the cosmopolitan archipelago were conducted in Swahili. Additionally, the Khōjā salariat and many traders were well versed in English, as per their extensive political and economic relations with Europeans and through schooling, such

as that provided by the Sir Euan Smith Madrasa (Loimier 2009, 222–243). As evidenced by the first Khōjā Arabic inscription on the Hujjatul Islam mosque in Kiponda, the Khōjā were articulating a differentiated Islamic identity among the Asian Shia communities. From their perspective, following the middle path meant fostering an Eastern Islamic identity in contrast to the Westernizing Āgākhānī and a generally open disposition in contrast to the insular orthodox Bōhrā community.

The revolution in 1964, a month after independence, came as a shock to the Asian communities. The revolutionary government attempted to violently erase the Arab and the Asian from the mosaic of Zanzibari history. The forced marriage of four Iranian Ithnā ʿAsharī girls to African members of the Revolutionary Council as per the Marriage Decree No. 6 of 1966 had a profound psychological impact on the Khōjā in communicating the level of personal insecurity in revolutionary Zanzibar and, by the mid-1970s, served as a major push for the evacuation of the community to the mainland, mainly to Dar es Salaam (Bakari 2000, 73–79). It was an exodus from which the Khōjā Zanzibari community never recovered, such that, in 2010, the estimated Khōjā population in Zanzibar numbered 120, from its prerevolutionary height in excess of 5,000.[1] As a result of the expulsion of Asians—including the Khōjā community—from Uganda in 1972, both the Zanzibari and the Ugandan Khōjā established their first Anglophone Khōjā communities in Western Europe and North America. The socioeconomic networks established between the communities in the West and Africa allowed for the globalization of Khōjā identity on the basis of transnational ideologies, such as pan-Islamism.

The Zanzibari Khōjā exodus transformed the religious life and identity of the community in Dar es Salaam. The Zanzibari Khōjā were better able to linguistically navigate postcolonial Tanzania, in which Swahili was fast becoming the national language. They brought with them religious institutions, such as the *mēhphīl*; Gujarati printing expertise; an emphasis on communicating communally in English; political organizing skills; and certain cultural norms associated with the Swahili and Arabs, such as men ceremonially wearing the *kanzu* (‘robes’).

Embedded within the origins of Islam is the authority of the Arab and Arabic and, for post-Safavid Shiism, the Iranian and Persian. Through the technological, social, and economic linkages provided by globalization, the Khōjā became participants in global dialogues on pan-Shia identity politics. The symbolic postcolonial Khōjā transition from the sari to the *cādar* is one now being repeated throughout the ‘periphery’ of Islamic civilization, from India

1 Interview with president of the Hujjatul Islam *jamāt*, Kiponda, Zanzibar, 17 June 2010.

to Indonesia. As globalization interconnects realities at an ever-increasing rate, even an isolated African community can now engage in real-time Shia discourses with communities in the Near East or North America.

Both the Ithnā ʿAsharī and Āgākhānī Khōjā are conceivably at the vanguard of transnational political organization. Both are using and bypassing the nation-state system through the inherent power of citizenships from the Global North toward a religious impetus couched within humanitarian language. The asymmetry of authority and thus power between central and peripheral Islamic lands has meant that this connection to Near Eastern Muslim communities has come at the cost of Khōjā ancestral culture and ritual. Those cultural practices which do not conform to Near Eastern patterns of Shiism are decried as Hindu and are thus tagged for excision. The ancient Near Eastern prejudice against Indians as idolaters has created an irreconcilable tension between the Indic ancestry of the Khōjā and their Near Eastern spiritual forbearers.

In becoming orthodox the Khōjā have replaced *khōjāpanth* with *dīn*, as authenticated by the sources of emulation in Najaf and Qom. The desire to be viewed as normatively Muslim by Near Eastern and central Asian communities has resulted in the subsumption of Khōjā religious identity within a trajectory of increasingly larger categories of political organization. Thus at the turn of the nineteenth century, Khōjā identity was understood as *jñāt*; at the turn of the twentieth century, it was defined as *jamāt*; and at the turn of the twenty-first century, there is again a discontinuity being redefined along the lines of an emergent *ummat*. Each subsequent form of organization did not replace the former but rather encompassed it in larger group self-definitions, the latest iteration of which is an engagement in global discourses of Islamic identity. With the Āgākhānī Khōjā identifying themselves as exclusively Ismaili and the Khōjā identifying themselves as pan-Shia, Jaffer's oracular subtitle seems particularly relevant for the twenty-first-century emergent identity of the community: "Whither Khoja?" (H.A.M. Jaffer 2008).

Lexicon

abjadpad'dhati (*n.*)[1] An alphanumerical system that assigns numerical values to each letter of the Arabic alphabet. Commonly referred to as *abjad*, its name is derived from "the first of the eight mnemotechnical terms into which the twenty-eight consonants of the Arabic alphabet were divided" (Weil and Colin 2012). Among the Khōjā, the Indic version of the system, which makes use of the Persian character system, is used within the *nakśō* ('sacred maps') in a variety of contexts, including auguring good fortune, mitigating against the evil eye, helping to cure an individual, and so on.

alam (*n.*) A ceremonial battle standard commemorating the Battle of Karbala, which is kept in the Khōjā *imāmvāḍō* and once yearly is publically displayed during the Ashura procession.

amaldārī (*n.*) An officer of a local Khōjā *jamāt*. Historically, Khōjā councils were organized locally, and major decisions involving the community were made by a council of five officers—president, vice-president, *mukhī* ('chief'), *kamāḍīyā* ('treasurer'), and secretary. These top posts within the community have generally been held by well-known and wealthy merchants. As Khōjā communities began to develop locally, organize regionally, and progress internationally, the position of Khōjā council officer expanded in terms of both scope and power. The power and authority of the Āgākhānī Khōjā officers were eventually muted in deference to their 'manifest and present imam,' whereas officers in leadership among the Ithnā 'Asharī and Sunnī Khōjā communities retained their autonomy and continue to be democratically elected for constitutionally appointed terms. Due to dialectical variation among the Kacchī and Kāṭhiyāvāḍī Khōjā communities in the subcontinent, the term used to refer to the entire leadership council evolved a variant pronunciation: *amaldāvī*. In eastern, central, and southern Africa, this term fell out of use and was substituted by the catch-all term-*jamāt* officers.

amuldavi See *amaldārī*.

arījhā (*n.*) A tradition of Hajarat Īmām Jāphrē Sādik in which supplicants write their wishes on chits of paper in the form of a 'divine petition' on the evening of the fifteenth of the Islamic month of Shaʿbān. At sunrise the next day, the petitions are wrapped in clay and placed in a papier-mâché replica of the imam's tomb, which is then sent out to sea. This tradition of petitions can be observed any time of the year

1 The parts of speech are abbreviated as follows: *n.* (noun), *v.* (verb), *adj.* (adjective), and *adv.* (adverb).

by community members by writing the petition, covering it in clay or a flour-and-water paste, and then it placing into a body of water (e.g., a river, the sea, or a well).

banyani (*n.*) The Swahili term for a Hindu merchant, chiefly male. This term probably originates in the initial interactions of Zanzibaris with Hindu merchants of the Baniya caste in the early nineteenth century. Among contemporary Muslim Asian communities in Dar es Salaam, the term refers to anyone who is Hindu, irrespective of gender and occupation.

cādar (*n.*) In the term's most general sense, a piece of cloth that covers or obscures someone or something. With regard to female attire, *cādar* generally refers to a scarf that covers the hair. The meaning of the term has evolved over time and is reflected in its use among the African Khōjā. During the 1950s in central Dar es Salaam, *cādar* referred to the Indic cultural use of the *pachēḍī* in religious settings. In the 1980s, it referred to the *hijab*, and from the 1990s up until now it has referred to the Near Eastern abaya and headscarf worn in the peninsular Arab style. It has come to define Khōjā identity and religious observance, as it has in many parts of the Muslim world; it is as much a political symbol as a religious one.

chotara (*n.* or *adj.*) A pejorative Swahili term, originating in the kiUnguja dialect, meaning 'half-caste' or 'half-breed.' See *chōṭārā*.

chōṭārā (*n.* or *adj.*) This term's documented origin can be traced to the Khōjā community in mid-nineteenth-century Zanzibar (*Nasur Jesa v. Hirbayee, widow of Jesa Damani*). Etymologically, it is a diminutive that infers caste impurity. The word is a pejorative Swahili term of Gujarati origin that means 'half-caste' in reference to a person of mixed racial ancestry, particularly African and Asian. The predominant genealogy of such individuals is generally traced to an Asian father and an African mother. An important question for nineteenth-century Asian communities in eastern, central, and southern Africa was whether people of this mixed ancestry should be able to obtain the caste membership of the Asian parent and the rights that accompanied it. In contemporary Tanzanian modern standard Swahili, the term has expanded in meaning to refer to a crossbreed of seeds or animals. One example is *mbwa chotara* ('mutt') (Taasisi Ya Uchunguzi Wa Kiswahili 2001, 49).

chungānī (*n.*) This term, which means 'cemetery,' probably evolved from the original function of the space that later became the Khōjā cemetery in Zanzibar. It was first employed by the Zanzibari Khōjā in reference to the Khōjā cemetery on the outskirts of Stone Town, Zanzibar. This cemetery became the principal graveyard for the Khōjā after the 1907 case in which the Āgākhānī Khōjā prevented the Sunnī and Khōjā from observing the rites of the dead in the original Mnzai Moja all-Khōjā caste cemetery (Phrāmrōj pē. dākṭar, rējīstrār 1907). In the aftermath of the Zanzibar Revolution, President Karume's revolutionary government destroyed all Khōjā cemeteries, save the private Khōjā cemetery of Bustani in Vuga, established in the

nineteenth century by Khōjā Dewji Jamal. With the diaspora of the Zanzibari Khōjā, the term has come to be used in reference to any local Khōjā cemetery, such as the cemetery in Dar es Salaam. The term is used interchangeably with the Gujarati term for cemetery, *kabrastān*.

dhu'ā (*n.*) The Kacchī variant of *du'ā*; see *du'ā*.

dōrā (*n.*) A piece of string that is usually worn around the wrist of the right hand and that is believed to protect the wearer from evil. This tradition is observed by many Asian communities. In Dar es Salaam, string colors distinguish communities; for example, dark green and black are used by the Khōjā, whereas red and saffron are used by the Svāminārāyaṇ. The Khōjā usually obtain these strings from shrines, in which they are tied to the tomb replicas contained within.

duka (*n.*) The Swahili term for a shop (e.g., *duka la dawa* 'pharmacy'). In the context of Asian merchantry in East Africa, this refers to the general store model of commerce pioneered by Asian merchants in the nineteenth century. So successful was its introduction that it spread throughout the region and is now the primary form of economic interchange in even the most rural locales in East Africa. The creation of networks and the organization of caravans financed by Asian merchants were instrumental in opening the lowlands and densely forested parts of the Great Lakes region to further infrastructure and economic development, at a time when European entrepreneurs focused, almost exclusively, on the highlands.

du'ā (*n.*) Commonly understood as supplications in the Islamic tradition, for the Khōjā, the *du'ā* formed a major constituent part of caste religious services, and they have evolved substantially in the twentieth century. The Khōjā transitioned from Indic Gujarati prayers invoking the Khōjā avatars to exclusively Arabic Islamic prayers. For the Khōjā, this took place in the late nineteenth century, primarily through the efforts of Gulāmalī Ismā'il and his publications. For the Āgākhānī Khōjā, this took place in the mid-twentieth century (Dēvarāj 1965/1919; Shia Imami Ismailia Association for Madagascar 1957).

dukawala (*n.*) The Swahili term for a shopkeeper, primarily used in reference to male, Asian shopkeepers and traders.

hājat (*n.*, *adj.*, or *v.*) Any need or wish as kept by a supplicant to the divine; also, to make a supplication. This can be expressed in multiple ways, such as through an *arījhā* or simply as a personal supplication after the recitation of a prayer.

imāmē jhamānā (*n.*) The imam of the age. Currently, for the Āgākhānī Khōjā, this refers to the forty-ninth imam of their lineage; today this role is filled by Karim Al-Husseini. For the Khōjā, this refers to the messianic twelfth imam, who remains in occultation, the Mahdi.

imāmvāḍō (*n.*) The caste hall of the Khōjā, wherein observances commemorating the imam as well as caste rituals and rites are observed.

istēkhārō (*n.*) Divination rites employed to resolve a decision through divine inspiration. The most popular forms of divination include *phāl* (bibliomancy) and *svapn* (oneiromancy), which are forms of divination through the Quran.

jamaṇ (*n.*) The caste meal of the Khōjā that is periodically observed in the *imāmvāḍō* or shrine throughout the liturgical year or as necessitated by commemorative events, such as a death or birth commemoration of the Infallibles.

jamāt (*n.*) This multifaceted term can refer to the Khōjā leadership council, the Khōjā caste as a collective, the Khōjā community in a particular locale, and/or the city-state organization parallel to the nation-state pioneered by the Khōjā polis in Africa.

jamātī'ā'ī (*n.*) A Kacchī term that refers to the ancient Khōjā tradition of communal right. According to this tradition, any member of the Khōjā caste has the right to enter the caste hall and to partake in the communal feast and has a share in the corporate body of the community. It is a concept of inalienable right based on birth and caste membership that cannot be denied by the community's governing body. This traditional notion is in conflict with the idea of membership developed at the turn of the twentieth century, according to which the community is a voluntary organization founded on rules and orthodoxy, the breaking of which can lead to a denial of communal access or even banishment.

jamātkhānũ (*n.*) The caste hall of the Āgākhānī Khōjā community.

jaṅgbār (*n.*) The Gujarati name for the island and archipelago of Zanzibar. It chiefly refers to the main port of the capital city on Unguja Island. A possible theory as to its evolution is that the initial interaction of Kāṭhiyāvāḍī and Kacchī merchants with the Arabic name of the sultanate would have likely led to a modification in which the phoneme /z/ (z) in Arabic was pronounced as a /ʤə/ (jha) in their Indic languages, creating the initial term *jañjabār*. In later interaction with the local non-Arab population, the name 'Unguja' would have been heard as well. It is possible that the conjunct /ŋg/ (ng) from the term 'Unguja' changed the modified Gujarati term via a hardening of the consonant /ʤə/ (ja) to a /g/ (g), with the extant nasalization *ja* providing the /əŋ/ for the final proper noun of the archipelago in Gujarati: /ʤəŋg-bar/ (Jaṅgbār).

jhākir(ā) (*n.*) A lay member who recites religious traditions, poetry, and stories and who may also preach to the community across various venues. It is a continuation of the nineteenth-century tradition of lay leadership in religious worship, which is in decline in Dar es Salaam with the rise of a professional clerical class.

jhañjīr mātam See *mātam*.

jharī (*n.*) Technically referring to the actual tomb of an imam or saint within the Shia tradition, for the Khōjā this term more regularly refers to the tomb replicas that are located in shrines and in the *imāmvāḍō*, displayed publically during Muharram processionals.

jhiyārat (*n.* or *v.*) Either the pilgrimage prayers to the imams and saints that are recited by the Shia as part of daily religious observances or the act of pilgrimage to Near Eastern shrines; also, to undertake such a pilgrimage.

jñāti bahār (*n., adj.*, or *v.*) To enact the Indic practice of outcasting a member for violating the rules or customs of his or her particular community; also, having been outcasted. This could range from a complete shunning of the individual and his family to limiting community members' interaction with him to religious observances only. This concept is complex in practice, as it can be both explicit and implicit and can last for a period of time or for one's lifetime. It is still observed by Gujarati Muslim castes—such as the Bōhrā—in both the subcontinent and Africa.

julūs (*n.*) The Muharram precession, particularly on the tenth night ('Āshūra'); also, to participate in such a procession. In central Dar es Salaam, the evening procession on Ashura begins after the Maghrib *namājh*; it departs from Mēhphīlē Asgharī and concludes at the Khōjā *imāmvāḍō*.

kahaṇī (*n.*) A form of narrative prayer used until the late twentieth century among the African Khōjā; also, to make such a prayer. These narratives in Gujarati and Urdu in Gujarati script were widely used as popular devotional literature among the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar. Each of the tales was specified and related to particular customs and supplications. The *kahaṇī* literature was primarily employed by Khōjā women and generally features a female protagonist who comes to a point in her predicament at which there appears to be no hope or clear answer. The solution is revealed to the protagonist in a physical encounter or night dream, which entails pilgrimage to the shrine of or a meeting with the saint corporeal.

khōjā (*n.* or *adj.*) A South Asian Muslim caste that ostensibly 'converted' to Islam in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the regions known today as Kashmir and Punjab. The original community was composed of two major Hindu castes—Cakk and Lōhāṇā—and was expanded through the incorporation of various tribes on the centuries-long trek from their homeland down the Indus valley, until permanent settlement was established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Sindh-Kathiawar corridor. Today, this ethnic community is primarily divided among three Islamic creeds: Āgākhānī, Ithnā 'Asharī, and Sunnī. The term can be used to refer to the caste as a collective, a particular community, or an individual member.

khōjāpanth (*n.*) The original religious complex of the Khōjā peoples; an amalgamation of various religious traditions, including Vaishnava philosophy and Tantric rites in observance of the Goddess, Buddhism, Sufism, Sunnism, and Shiism.

kuśālī (*n.*) The observance of a birth anniversary, particularly that of an imam or saint, which entails specific rites in the caste hall; also, to enact such an observance. Within the context of the dominant Sunni Islamic culture of Dar es Salaam, the birth anniversary of the Prophet is a particularly noteworthy event that is

celebrated over a two-day period, during which lights and decorations festoon the Khōjā mosque complex.

lavājam (*n.*) The yearly subscription fee that all Khōjā members pay to the community to maintain current membership. Members whose monthly income falls below the poverty line of the community (approximately USD 300 per month) are exempt from payment.

lavānī (*n.*) A Zanzibari Khōjā term meaning 'balcony' or 'courtyard.' Traditionally, these were semipublic spaces where women would communicate and interact with one another while performing household chores.

majlis (*n.*) In South Asian Shia usage, the observances in honor of the martyrs of Karbala and the Shia Infallibles; also, to enact such observances. In the Khōjā context, this is refined to refer to a specifically evolved form of Shia communion, composed of seven principal parts, concluding with communal sacrament.

majmūʾō (*n.*) An abbreviation of the title of a late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century text published by Gulāmalī Ismāʾīl, the full title of which is *Dōʾānō majmūʾō*, the Khōjā *vade mecum*. It was the primary religious manual for the Khōjā of eastern, central, and southern Africa for almost a century, until the decline of the Gujarati language among these communities in the twenty-first century.

mandazi (*n.*) The term for a Swahili beignet, which, with milk tea, is popular as a form of Khōjā sacrament after a *majlis*.

mātam (*n.*) Shia lamentation rituals that chiefly commemorate the martyrs of the Battle of Karbala; also, to partake in such rituals. The most common form is the striking of the chest with one's hand during the recitation of dirges and elegiac poetry. *Jhañjīr mātam*, a rare form of this lamentation among the Khōjā, is a more intense lamentation ritual that entails 'sacred pain' through the use of chains with razors to lash the back and chest.

mēhphīl (*n.*) A Khōjā shrine that is dedicated to a particular martyr of Karbala or a Shia saint. Shrines are somewhat specialized and are selected by congregants based on historical relationships with the shrine, on its patrons, and on particular miracles associated with the shrine.

mōhr (*n.*) A stamped, unbaked clay seal made from the soil of Karbala (*turba*) and used in ritual prayers as a forehead marker during prostration. The soil is believed to have miraculous qualities when consumed or applied, particularly for the sick.

mōjījha (*n.*) Miracles attributed to a Shia imam or saint; also, having the quality of such a miracle. These can take various forms, such as the 'miraculous' recovery of a patient in the hospital or the spontaneous appearance of blood on an *alam* in a shrine. The period of 1944–1945 in Zanzibar was a particularly spiritually charged time for the Khōjā, as Khōjā members eyewitnessed various miracles in relation to the sacred spaces and the religious leadership of the Khōjā. For the Khōjā com-

munity during this period, this demonstrated their spiritual dominance within the island's religious landscape.

mukhī (*n.*) The historical title of the chief religious functionary of the Khōjā caste. Within the Āgākhānī community, the position has limited power, and the *mukhī* functions as the leader of religious services and connects a particular community to the bureaucracy of the organization. Within the Khōjā community, this appointed position focuses on internal religious issues and the logistics of communal rites. The holder of the post primarily deals with the organization of religious functions within shrines and the *imāmvāḍō*, whereas the administrative power and functioning of the *jamāt* is executed by the elected presidency.

mulyānī (*n.*) A well-regarded female lay religious leader who recites the oral traditions of the Khōjā and also leads the *majlis* and delivers lectures to assemblies of Khōjā women. In addition to her religious duties, her pious reputation would engender other opportunities for her to serve the community, in capacities such as counselor or spiritual healer.

najhar (1) (*n.*) The concept of the evil eye, which exists in many human civilizations, including Indic *kudṛṣṭi* and Islamic *ʿayn*. For the Khōjā, the causes of the evil eye are desire, envy, and hatred, the result of which can be obstacles, injury, failure, and loss. Young women and children are particularly vulnerable, so their public exposure is circumscribed; thus opportunities to be inflicted by the evil eye are believed to be reduced. Talismans, such as sacred maps and the hand of Fāṭima, are placed at entry points in order to ward off the evil eye. The curing of one afflicted with the evil eye is complex and involves various rituals, potions, and prayers; some of these are detailed in the *Majmūʿō*. For the Zanzibari Khōjā, the concept of the evil eye merged with local traditions of the *jinn*, such as spirit possession.

najhar (2) (*n.*) A vow. Various forms of *vrat* ('religious vows') exist among the African Khōjā through their Indic heritage. The most basic is the supplication vow. An individual will make a vow that if a supplication is fulfilled, a particular action will be carried out. For example, if a woman's child is sick, she will give the child medication and make a vow that when he gets better, she will fast for a week as a thanksgiving. Historically, the shrines have played an integral role in this process. The use of other forms of vows has declined with the influence of Near Eastern Shiism in Dar es Salaam. One such example is the *maunvrat* ('vow of silence'), which was historically observed in honor of the dead.

nakśō (*n.*) Sacred maps of letters and numbers presented in a matrix within Khōjā texts as a means of achieving divine succor. They are placed in the entryways of shops and houses as a way to augur auspicious tidings for the inhabitants and to repel evil forces. In private meditation, the maps are used in visualization, with the supplicant repeating and performing particular rituals as prescribed.

namājh (*n.*) The five daily ritual prayers proscribed in Islam, performed by the Khōjā Shia at three daily intervals.

navhā (*n.*) A dirge or form of elegiac poetry recited during a *majlis* commemorating a death anniversary, as on Ashura.

n'yājh (*n.*) The Khōjā sacrament that follows the conclusion of a *majlis*. It is consecrated by the recitation of the opening chapter of the Quran over the sacrament. For example, in early twenty-first-century Dar es Salaam, following the cemetery *majlis* on Thursday afternoons, chai and *mandazi* are served as sacrament.

pāknajis (*adj.*) The theological concepts of ritual purity and pollution among the Khōjā. In the subcontinent, ritual pollution among the Khōjā was historically caste based. In East Africa, the Khōjā inverted the Hindu taboo against eating the prepared food of Muslims by declaring Hindus to be idolaters and identifying their food and sacred spaces as sources of ritual pollution. This was eventually extended to all non-Muslims, such as Christians, on the basis that they are all *muśrik* ('polytheists').

Places for female prayer are one illustration of ritual purity in actual practice: traditionally, within the Khōjā home, the place for female prayer was considered a place of ritual purity. This space would be contaminated if an unrelated man entered into it. This Indic Khōjā concept of ritual purity and pollution was a complex set of evolving rules, with each living being or form of organic matter having the potentiality of impurity and the ability to spread the 'contagion' to ritually pure spaces. These shared boundaries helped to define a unique Khōjā identity shaped to the particularities of the African context while reinforcing caste consciousness. These historic notions of ritual purity and pollution among the African Khōjā have been increasingly replaced with legally based definitions of purity and pollution from Near Eastern Shia traditions.

pañjā (*n.*) A stylized metallic hand that is placed above the *alam*, symbolizing either Ḥusayn's refusal to submit to the forces of Yazid at the Battle of Karbala or his cousin ʿAbbās's aid during the course of the battle.

pañjatanpāk (*n.*) The Sacred Five central to the Shia tradition, which places the family of the prophet at the center of the Shia conception of religious authority; the Sacred Five are Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn.

phātīyā (*n.*) See *n'yājh*.

sāhēbajhamān (*n.*) 'Master of the age'; see *imāmē jhamānā*.

saph (*n.*) A form of *mātam* historically practiced by the Khōjā of Zanzibar that entailed congregants forming a circle by interlocking their left hands, with the reciter standing in the center. Moving counterclockwise, congregants would perform the *mātam* with their free right hands while repeating the particular dirge or elegiac poetry proclaimed by the reciter.

śarīyatī (*adj.*) Of or relating to the observance of Islamic law.

sēvā (*n.*, or *v.*) Public service; also, to participate in public service. This concept is central to Khōjā communalism. It is understood as regular volunteerism that is either sustained, as in community leadership positions, or sporadic, as during communal functions like the caste feast. It is service both to the community and, for the Shia Khōjā, to the imam. The term can be used as an honorific for an elder in the Khōjā community who has dedicated a lifetime of service to the community, for example, Sēvā Hājī.

tablīg (*v.*) Religious propagation of the Imami Shia message to both non-Muslims and non-Shia Muslims through a variety of media and initiatives. In East Africa, the most famous initiative is the Bilal Muslim Mission, which was formed in 1964 by Saeed Akhtar Rizvi to bring the message to Africans.

tājhiyā (*n.*) The relics that are placed within, around, or on the tomb replicas within shrines and in the *imāmvāḍō*. The relics are specific to the narrative of the personality to whom a particular shrine has been dedicated.

tājhiyākhānā (*n.*) A reliquary, within which relics are housed. Once yearly, relics are removed from the reliquary and are carried in the annual Ashura processional.

vakaph (*n.*) A perpetual religious endowment that is vested in the Khōjā community and is managed by the communal leadership as trustees. Unlike traditional *waqf* arrangements in the Near East, the Khōjā create endowments chiefly by the incorporation of a property through a corporate trust deed or through bequests.

vaphāt (*n.*) The observance of a death anniversary, particularly of an imam or saint, which entails specific rites in the caste hall. In defining themselves against their Āgākhānī cousins and as a result of an increasing conservatism from the importation of Near Eastern Shia traditions, the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam have come to celebrate both birth and death anniversaries in a similar, somber fashion.

vrat See *najhar* (2).

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Index