

Richard J. Cohen [rjc8s@virginia.edu] was drawn to the languages, literatures and cultures of South Asia in college, when he studied for a year in India at the Maharaja Sayajirao University. Dr. Cohen lived in a Rajasthani village for two years as a Peace Corps volunteer, and later specialized in the classical and medieval languages, Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsa in graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to his research and teaching activities, he administered South Asia centers at several universities, as well as directed a research library for a couple of years in Hyderabad, India as a Fulbright scholar. His intellectual interests lie primarily in the medieval, transitional languages and literatures of north India, such as Apabhramsa, early Hindavi and Awadhi. Through such literature, one can trace the cultural continuities within South Asian civilization as it undergoes changes in response to the arrival of Islamicate cultures. He developed an interest and specialization in Jainism through his work in Prakrit and Apabhramsa, and in early South Asian Sufism through a study of its literature, and developing material for syllabi on the role of Islam in South Asian civilization. Dr. Cohen is keenly interested in the development of Indian cinema, particularly in the post-Independence period – how it manifests political and cultural change. He recently taught courses on the classics of South Asian literature from the earliest period to the present, Islam in South Asia and an introduction to Indian film through Hindi/Urdu cinema in the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures [MESALC] at the University of Virginia (UVA), Charlottesville, VA. He is currently coordinating the area studies programs within the UVA College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and setting up an Asia Institute. Several of his translations of prose and poetry are included in *The Oxford India Anthology of Modern Urdu Literature*, edited by Mehr Afshan Farooqi, Delhi, 2008.