This essay explores categories such as ‘religion’, ‘secularism’ and ‘politics’ in relation to social processes and subjects by locating them on terrains of modernity and liberal conceptions of statehood, sovereignty and personhood. An examination of quotidian phenomena such as piety, religious authority, socialization, and professional life in Mumbai reveals that the ostensibly ‘religious’ domain of Islam is not necessarily the primary basis for achieving a self-consciously ethical selfhood for even those who identify as observant Muslims. Rather, the religious domain of Islam is defined as such and intersected by discourses and practices of the self as a political and economic agent defined largely in terms of political modernity.