

Book Reviews

Dr. Riaz Shaikh, *Back from the Brink India-Pakistan Ties Revisited*, published by Ushba Publishing International, Karachi, 2012, pp.426, price, Rs.1100/-.

The events of the past do cast their shadows on the developments of future but normally with the passage of time new realities overshadow the legacy of the past. The history of the European countries sufficiently demonstrates that the compulsions to live interdependently helped remove those misgivings which had created apparently insurmountable cleavages between them in the past. Today, Europe appears more united than it had ever been. South Asia, unfortunately, tells a different story. The two big countries of the region, Pakistan and India, have travelled a long course of six and a half decades as independent and separate entities but there has never been a period when their relations could be regarded as normal, if not cordial. This long history of adverse relationship owes itself to the times and tribulations of pre-partition era. The long years and decades since then have not been able to help these countries come out of the quagmire in which the people of united India were entrenched once. Anchored in the past, India and Pakistan have fought three major wars in 1948, 1965 and 1971. To this can be added the Kargil event which may be designated as a semi-war. The efforts on the part of different agencies, groups and individuals to harmonize the two countries' positions and to put them on a course leading to wiser solutions have not yet borne fruit. Now it has become a general pattern that one day one hears about the success of a diplomatic initiative or a track II or track III behind the scene activities. One also hears about CBMs being agreed to between the two countries. But, then, all of a sudden one hears that all this has gone in vain. The ministries of two countries start labeling charges against each other, their respective foreign offices take to threatening tones and at times the military establishments also show their muscles. Media also comes out and takes hard hitting positions. And when it all happens saner

voices are lost in the mist of war-mongering and hysterical verbiage emanating from the official as well as unofficial channels. South Asia is freezed in its past.

One may argue that there exist real issues which do not allow India and Pakistan to move ahead without resolving them. There is no denying the fact that they do exist and they are also quite complex but one may not lose sight of the fact that the actual trial of inter-state relations lies not as much on how harmonious relations they had in the beginning on which they built subsequently, but on how they transformed their adverse relations into the better ones. It is here that India and Pakistan have, unfortunately, failed miserably. The partition of India left a number of issues to be resolved. These included the division of assets, riparian rights with respect to the rivers which flowed between the two countries, the ownership of Ran of Kutch and the accession of state of Jammu and Kashmir. Unfortunately, the two countries could not resolve any of these issues on bilateral basis. Water accord became a fact only through the good offices of the World Bank and the Ran of Kutch issue was resolved through arbitration of Great Britain. The Kashmir issue continues to haunt the relationship between two countries. There exists stalemate because both countries do not want to move even slightly from their position lest opposition to it would come from within the country that makes such a move. There are segments of society as well as the state institutions in both the countries who see their vested interests secured in the continuation of this adversity. Moreover, the Kashmir issue has also prevented the two countries from exploring the possibilities of normal relations in other domains like trade and educational and cultural cooperation.

The book under review carries articles which address the past and present state of affairs pertaining to India and Pakistan relationship. They also venture to look for possibilities of betterment of relations between the two in future. The book covers a wide range of themes bringing to the fore different perceptions and perspectives. The editor has quite intelligently divided all the writings in four sections. The first section carrying five articles digs into the past in order to trace the roots of the factors which shaped the post-1947 South Asia. Hamza Alavi, dealing with the social background of Muslim separatism, shows how the Muslim middle class, or its salaried section, described by Alavi as 'salarariat', spearheaded the platform of Muslim separatism. Starting from the United Provinces, the platform extended to Bengal and other Muslim majority regions of India. Mushirrul Hasan presents an Indian nationalist position but goes on to suggest that the partition has left deep impressions on the people of the two countries. The partition memories

constitute part of their psyche which is not very easy to erase. However, the author holds that while partition reminds us of violence, destruction and violation of human rights, it also reminds certain good things. It was amidst unprecedented atrocities resulting in grave human misery and deep scars on human soul that one also witnessed examples of Muslims protecting the lives of Hindus and Sikhs, and the latter protecting the Muslims. This showed that in the worst of circumstances humanity was alive. By the way, it is interesting to note that what Hasan registers as a historian today was depicted so forcefully in their works by the fiction writers on both sides of the divide right when it was happening.

Rajeev Bharghava discusses in his paper the nationalist histography of India and Pakistan. In order to highlight how the notion of nationality eventually narrows down the vision and helps promote differences, he holds that nationalistic histography is inherently subjective. In the case of India, he traces its roots in the British period when the English historians started describing Indian history along communal lines. Khalid Ahmed shows in his paper how building on the partition legacy, the state in Pakistan cultivated a view of nationalism that heavily relied on religion, and religious slogans and symbols rather than building it on rational and secular bases. As a result of this the officially created extremist outfits finally came to challenge the Pakistani state itself. Arundhati Roy presents the case of a peaceful South Asia. She argues against arms built-up and arms race. She also shows that a peaceful South Asia does fall in the realm of possibility.

The second part of the book deals with suggestions pertaining to the realization of peace in the region. Mani Shankar Aiyar highlights the factors that cause hindrance in the way of reconciliation. Aiyar holds that while the elements in the establishments of the two countries as well as in the respective societies may have their vested interest in keeping the adversarial character of the relations between the two countries, in fact, it is the common man and the masses who have suffered most on both sides of the divide. In this context, Mubarak Ali emphasizes the importance of people to people contact between India and Pakistan. He also holds that the pressure of the civil societies in the two countries and also that of media could compel the two governments to sit on the negotiation table. He also offers some practical proposals the adaptation of which might help in leading relations of the two countries towards normalcy. Anees Jillani opines that replacement of the traditional communal mindset by democratic and secular outlook is the key to the resolution of South Asian crisis. Bilal Zubedi holds that a vast segment of young generation considers peace and dialogue to be the best framework for resolving issues between the two countries.

The third section of the book discusses the new dimensions that have emerged to impact the India Pakistan relations in the last few decades. These articles particularly discuss the role of China and its relations with India and Pakistan, and the Afghanistan crisis etc. as being the dimensions that have added to the complexity of South Asian crisis. The last three articles of the book, grouped in section four, are mostly futuristic in nature. Aneek Chatterjee furnishes a framework for future peace while Jai Narain Sharma explains the possibilities of normal relations between India and Pakistan. He argues quite forcefully for viable confidence-building measures. Ashu Pasricha digs into the Hindu-Muslim divide and holds that Jinnah had avoided to have a communal stance. He was primarily a political person who sought the resolution of the issues that might have resulted in communalizing the Indian politics. She also discusses how the pre-partition mindset survived in Pakistan. She holds that since Pakistan traces its roots in the Middle East, the Gulf and West Asia, this has been a source of restriction in Pakistan.

The message of the book is that the crisis of South Asia may not be taken for granted as it involves millions of people. The arms build-up and war-mongering might not help bring normalcy in South Asia. For this South Asia needs concerted and serious efforts.

Pakistan Study Centre
University of Karachi

Syed Jaffar Ahmed

Deputy Nazir Ahmad, *Majmu'a nazm-i-benazir*, published by Mufeed-e-Aam Steam Press, Delhi, 1918.

Dr. M. Haroon Qadir (ed.), *Kulliyāt-i-nazm-i-Nazīr Ahmad*, published by Alwaqar publications, Lahore, 2012, pp.252, price, Rs.595/-.

Both these books dealing with the works of Nazir Ahmad are being reviewed concomitantly although a gap of nearly a century separates their publication. The first collection of 1918 is the more comprehensive. The second of 2012 is restricted to Nazir Ahmad's Urdu verse alone and excludes his Arabic poems altogether. 'Deputy' Nazir Ahmad is well-known for his many novels and for his pioneering position in Urdu fiction. While this constitutes a legitimate reason for his pre-eminence, it tends to confine his role and achievements to this element alone. It does not take cognizance of his other feats such as his translation of the Quran, his religious

books, his translation of the penal code or, finally, to his verse in Urdu and Arabic. Nazir Ahmad probably did not preserve his Persian poems. He was not a pen-pusher writing in isolation for the sake of making a living but a qualified religious scholar [‘ālim] of great distinction. Indeed, all his efforts were part of his mission to try and bring about a renaissance among the downtrodden Muslims of British India and to raise them to the position of dignity and honour that they previously possessed. He was an associate of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in his efforts to uplift the Muslims through education. Thus the theme of most of his poems is the importance for reform and reconstruction among Muslims. His soul-stirring poems were read out at various gatherings and meetings of Muslims held to revitalize their efforts at the promotion of this goal. The various organizations which he addressed in pursuance of these objectives were:

- Muhammadan Educational Conference [at various venues]
- *Anjuman Himāyat-i-Islām*, Lahore
- Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh.

The earlier edition [1918] has an interesting introduction by Nazir Ahmad's son, Bashiruddin Ahmad [author of the authoritative *Wāqi‘āt-i-dārul-Hukūmat Dehli*] with many sidelights and personal observations. In the later edition [2012], there is a brief [pp.6] preface with Bashiruddin Ahmad's introduction being totally omitted by Dr. Qadir. This is actually a disservice to Nazir Ahmad. There is no critical assessment of Nazir Ahmad's poetry and its relation to that produced by his contemporaries such as Shibli and Hali. Nazir Ahmad himself wrote:

*Tum apni nasr lo aur nazm ko chhoro Nazīr Ahmad -
Ke is ke wāstey mauzūn hain Hāli wa Shibli.*

[The editor has erroneously written ‘mauzu’ instead of ‘mauzun’]. In fact, the contextualization available through Bashiruddin's comments has been rendered redundant. The entire text of Qadir's book is comment-free and context-less. Only the Urdu poems have been reprinted and the Arabic ones omitted. A translation of these with a textual gloss would have added value to the bland reproduction. In the introduction by Bashiruddin Ahmad, there is mention that Nazir Ahmad knew thousands of Arabic verses by heart. These were from the *divans* of al-Mutannabi and the *Hamasa* [war poetry]. The famous humorist, Mirza Farhatullah Baig, used to go to Nazir Ahmad's house to study Arabic – as he has detailed in his informal essay, *Nazīr Ahmad ki kahāni, kuchh unki kuchh apni*

zabāni. The seven Arabic poems included in the 1918 edition were composed for the following:

1. An ode [*qasīda*] addressed to Sir William Muir, then Governor of the United Provinces – who was instrumental in the award of an Hon. LL.D. from Edinburgh University to Nazir Ahmad.
2. Another ode to Sir William Muir.
3. An elegy on the death of his own son, Zahuruddin Ahmad [aged 8 years].
4. A poem congratulating a friend on return from the Haj.
5. An elegy on the death of his wife [inscribed on her tombstone].
6. A poem on the visit of the Amir Habibullah of Afghanistan to India.
7. A poem written on the spur of the moment at a function at Mission College, Delhi.

These are followed by scattered verses. At the invitation of the Amir Habibullah on 'Id day, Muslims gathered at a reception in his honour. Nazir Ahmad composed this extempore couplet:

‘*Id-un wa ‘id-un wa ‘Id-un sirna mujtama’*
Wajh al-Habib wa yaum-e ‘Id wal jum‘a.

Translation:

There is 'Id upon 'Id upon 'Id which we see all
combined – The face of the beloved, the day of 'Id and
that of Friday

[There is a play on the word *Habib* which means 'beloved' and is also the name of the Amir of Afghanistan.] The Amir rose and kissed Nazir Ahmad's hands.

The poetry of Nazir Ahmad is of a high order and worthy of being ranked with the greatest Muslim reformist poetry produced in the later 19th and early 20th century. It will repay scholarly examination and reveal the contemporary background of Muslim decline. It is unfortunate that no reference has been made to Nazir Ahmad's poetry in the *Tārikh Adab-i-Urdū* [vol. 4, Lahore, 2012] by Dr. Jameel Jalibi nor in the edition of critical essays edited by M. Ikram Chughtai [*Nazir Ahmad: ahwāl wa āsār*, Lahore, 2013]. In addition, in the absence of reference to the Arabic works of Nazir Ahmad and others, it appears highly likely that Arabic scholarship is also declining in Pakistan.

Dr Abdur Rahman Ghazanfar (ed.), *Tafsīr Yaqub Charkhī* – sura Fatiha and the last two parts of the Quran, published by Ar-Rahim Academy, Karachi, 1999, pp.260, price, Rs.150/-.

***Tafsīr Charkhī* – last two parts of the Quran, Muhammad Nazir Ranjha (tr.), published by Jamiat Publications, Lahore, 2005, pp.408, price, Rs.250/-.**

These two books have been taken together for the purpose of review. The first one gives the Persian text of the commentary of the said parts of the Quran while the second gives the Urdu translation of the same. The author, rather commentator [*mufassir*], is Muhammad Yaqub Charkhi [d. 1447], an eminent scholar who was an early member of the Naqshbandi *silsila* [spiritual chain of antecedents going back to Bahauddin Naqshband (1318 - 1389) of Bukhara, who founded the largest Sufi order, named the Naqshbandi after him].

Sufi *tafsir* [mystical commentary] of the Quran forms an important part of its *tafsir* literature. The schools of Quran commentary have been diverse – philosophical [as in the case of the *Tafsīr al-Kabīr* of Imam Razi], lexical [as in the case of the *Tafsīr Kashāf* of Zamakhshari], legalistic [as in the case of the *Tafsīr Ahkām al-Qurān* by Abu Bakr Jassas], and so on. Sufi *tafsir* is unique in that it is based on the spiritual insight and personal mystical experience of the commentator. The term *sūfī* is applied to that most eminent group of saint-scholars which has dominated the ‘inner life’ of Islam since the 1st century AH. Among the great names are Dhunun al-Masri, Junayd al-Baghdadi, Maruf al-Karkhi, Rabia al-Adawiyya and others. The insight given to persons ‘of parts and vision’ adds a unique dimension to this scholarly area. Thus Sufism is endemic to Islam and does not exist outside it. The sufis, over the ages, have left their original compositions [such as the *Kashf al-Mahjūb* of Syed Ali Hujweri], the oral discourses [such as the *Fīhi mā fīhi* of Jalaluddin Rumi] and their Quran commentaries [such as the *Tafsīr* of Hasan Basri] for the spiritual illumination of the Muslims for generations to come.

The two books under review represent the continuation of this tradition. It is the 1/15th part of a commentary – all that is extant at the moment having survived the ravages of time. The *tafsir* is written in Persian – the universal *lingua franca* for theological scholarship used by the Muslims of Central Asia. Book No. 1 gives the Persian text of this remnant with a brief introduction. It goes to

the credit of Dr. Abdur Rahman Ghazanfar for rescuing this invaluable fragment of sufi *tafsir* from oblivion and reprinting it. Book No.2 gives the Urdu translation of the same text with a detailed life of the *mufassir*, his education, travels and his spiritual discipline under the Master, Bahauddin Naqshband. The translator, Muhammad Nazir Ranjha, has earlier edited and translated the Persian text of the *Rasā'il* [letters] of Shah Abdur Rahim, the father of Shah WaliAllah.

The *Tafsīr Charkhī* is not a recondite elaboration of mystical stations in esoteric diction. It is a delightful literary composition with relevant and pertinent quotes from poetry and prose both from Persian and Arabic. The most quoted poet is Rumi [d. 1272] whose *Masnavī-i-Ma‘anavī* was then a recent revolutionary poem gripping the mind of the masses. It has quotes from Sanai and Attar and others. The Hadith is amply quoted in relevant contexts. This *tafsir* contains the full gamut of traditional Quranic disciplines with personal insightful observations of profound wisdom. In short, the *Tafsīr Charkhī* is a milestone in the history of Sufi [and other] commentaries and is, in itself, a most valuable document. The fact that most of the *tafsir* has been lost raises the importance of questions related to the preservation of our heritage. It is vital that such valuable unpublished MSS should immediately be printed with explanatory glosses. Yaqub Charkhi is buried near Dushanbe in Tajikistan. With the Elect in the Heavens!

Department of English
University of Karachi

Syed Munir Wasti

Zia Mutaher, *Serving the unserved: the life of Dr Ruth Pfau*, published by City Press, Karachi, 2004, pp.99, price, Rs.200/-.

Zia Mutaher, *Khidmat ho maqsad-i-Hayāt merā: Dr Ruth Pfau ka zindagī nāma*, Saima Irum (tr.), City Press, Karachi, 2013, pp.91, price, Rs.200/-.

As is obvious, the above refer to the original biography in English followed by its Urdu translation. The purpose of the Urdu translation is to target a wider reading public and make it aware of the important socio-economic problems of our country. But the subject of the book and its translation is the great personality which they both treat and which, by association, ennobles both the book

and its translation. This is the world-renowned indefatigable fighter-physician who has combated leprosy all her life and brought it under control in Pakistan, viz. Dr Ruth Pfau. The fact that this great achievement has been made by Dr Pfau and her team before the deadline for its control [given by the WHO] is extraordinary and most commendatory. There was no effective leprosy control programme in Pakistan before Dr Pfau took charge and prepared a skilled team of capable medical staff to meet this daunting challenge head-on. Her relentless efforts at the eradication of leprosy have won her international acclaim, awards and prizes. The chief beneficiary of all this international attention has been Pakistan, which has also received supplies of medicines and machinery from Europe [chiefly Germany] for use by Pakistani patients.

Dr Zia Mutaher, a member of Dr Pfau's team and an old associate of hers, traces the human spirit behind the physical persona. He tells his story, based on interviews with Dr Pfau, with ability and compassion. Dr Zia so involves the reader in his narrative that no reader can put down the book until he has finished reading – it is simply 'unputdownable.' The translator has also performed her task with skill making a lucid version from the English.

Dr Zia tells of Dr Pfau's youth and suffering during the disturbed inter-War years in Germany. After joining the Order of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary in Paris, Dr Pfau took the triple oath of poverty, chastity and obedience. Her arrival in Pakistan was a lucky accident for us. She intended to go to India and attend to the suffering lepers there but seeing the appalling lack of attention to Pakistani lepers, she decided to stay on here. There is no doubt that leprosy control received a strong impetus from her benevolent presence. Dr Pfau is full of courage and determination. Dr Zia tells of her travels to distant villages in remote areas of Pakistan to seek and treat lepers, especially women, who are maltreated, shunned and repulsed by their fellow-beings. Along with drugs, Dr Pfau has given the most potent medicine of all – love. She is not disgusted by a nose full of pus, a body full of sores or a leper in the extremities of decomposition. She has reintegrated many former lepers into society and made them useful beings. The MALC [Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre] is the largest unit in the world treating lepers and it has extended its purview to include blindness, diabetes and disability. I would request the MALC to arrange the translation of Dr Pfau's five books written in German into English and Urdu so that readers can know and appreciate the full extent of her services. I have been

proud of my association with the MALC for over 25 years and I have tried to mobilize my students and others into supporting it.

Dr Pfau's spartan life-style, her simplicity and humility, her openness to all and sundry and her readiness to help others are all a great source of inspiration. Would that the Pakistani public realizes its duties towards the deprived, the destitute and the wretched that so throng our benighted land! No doubt Dr Pfau may have been inspired by the example of Father Damien and Mother Teresa. The satisfaction that she has obtained is that she has come closer than anyone else in realizing her ideals. Now in her 84th year, Dr Ruth Pfau is a radiant example for all – and we can only pray: Licht! Mehrlicht! [Light! More light!]

Department of English
University of Karachi

Syed Munir Wasti

Dr. Iftikhar Shafi, *Angaara*, published by Fazlee Sons, Karachi, 2013, pp.283, price, Rs.395/-.

Angaara is the first publication of Dr. Iftikhar Shafi's collection of *ghazals* and Urdu translations of English sonnets. Dr. Shafi is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Karachi and this collection of his poetry, deservedly, establishes his reputation as one of the most significant of Urdu poets of the present generation. The title echoes the words of the Quran (Sura Taha, line 10), and suggests the poetic idea that true verse is derived from the divine light. It is not surprising that this volume of incandescent verse has indeed sparked an instant response from its readers, many of whom are already familiar with some of Dr. Shafi's poems. As a scholar and critic of English Literature, he is a prominent and admired personality in the academic circles for his unique literary understanding and creative expression, both in English and Urdu. However, the publication of this long awaited volume of his verse has given an opportunity to readers, both here in Pakistan and abroad, to enjoy and appreciate his distinctive style as it beautifully combines the traditions of Eastern and Western poetry, perhaps unconsciously in certain *ghazals*. The synthesis of motifs and metaphors, taken from both oriental and European conventions in his poetry, contributes to the creation of a universal poetic language that transcends the barriers of time and civilizations. In the context of Western critical theory, his Urdu composition acquires a particular resonance that confirms its pioneering status in Pakistani literature.

The organizing principle of the order of the poems is in itself intriguing, inviting a closer attention to the contents of the compilation. The prologue of the book is devoted to Dr. Shafi's acknowledgement of the debt he owes to the Masters of the Sufi tradition. In the dedication, Iftikhar humbly devotes his efforts to honour the great personalities of Islamic literature such as Moinuddin, Fariduddin, Junaid, Rumi and Bayazid (may Allah be pleased with them and have mercy on their souls), who are all lovingly invoked by him. In the following preface, Abbas Alam has noted that Iftikhar's poetry evokes the classical period of Urdu literature as well as of the more recent past, that is influenced by the genius of Meer, Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz. There is no doubt that Iftikhar's work is rooted in the literary values originating in the glorious past of Muslim art and creativity, but it is simultaneously, situated in the crosscurrents of the social, cultural and aesthetic developments of the tumultuous present era. In fact, the very division of the poems in *Angaara* is based upon a chronological sequence that presents the *ghazals* in three sections; beginning from 1991 to 1994, and proceeding to those written from 1998 to 2000. The third section is composed of the *ghazals* written from 2000 upto the present, in addition to the miscellaneous Urdu poems, fragments of lyrics and translations of English verse, particularly of the Renaissance, that constitute the last part of the book. This structure suggests a biographical approach which is undeniably one of the most important critical methods that may be adopted to analyse the poems. It also, deliberately, locates Dr. Shafi's poetry within the present intellectual and literary milieu, lending them a sense of immediacy and relevance.

The subject matter of the *ghazals* is conveyed with a spiritual and emotional intensity that affirms their relationship with the contemporary urban and cultured individual who is sensitive to the dilemmas and challenges posed by the imperatives of living in our time. Depictions of the surrounding metropolitan landscapes as well as scenes of the changing seasons, as they affect the inner life of a thoughtful consciousness, are given a new sense of urgency and pathos in Iftikhar's *ghazals*. In the light of Iftikhar's *ghazals*, we have a new sense of Wordsworth's theory that describes the recollection of powerful feelings in a state of tranquility or resignation as the essential process of lyric creation.

Love, divine as well as human, is at the heart of Dr. Iftikhar Shafi's contemplative poetry, informing it with a sympathetic and compassionate tone. There is a depth of feeling and intensity of emotions that is held in the constraints of the sophisticated arrangements of metre and rhyme. Moreover, the classical forms and diction of love poetry are

modified by a rigorous rhetorical strain that introduces dialectical features into Iftikhar's *ghazals*. The artistic persona of the lover resembles the Petrarchan model as he observes and records his own plight in passages of idealized love. Yet, the voice of chaste detachment and dignified restraint is also carefully deployed to express the poet's command and versatility in the precise choice of his words and range of ideas. The mood of the poems varies from the calmly reflective to the melancholy, balanced by a witty and ironic vein. The aesthetic impact of these remarkable *ghazals*, is an accomplishment few poets of the grand style can hope to achieve in our present generation of Urdu poets and writers.

Dr. Shafi's translations and adaptations of the poems of meloncolic English poets from the Renaissance to the Romantic and modern eras give an impression of the diversity of poetic techniques that appear to be modified and assimilated into Urdu forms, with clarity and lucidity, that leave the reader with an overwhelming impression of the multi-dimensional aspect of his literary prowess. His interpretations of the sonnets of Shakespeare, Drayton, Shelley and D.H. Lawrence, present them with a Pakistani perspective that draws attention to Iftikhar's critical discernment in English literature.

It would not be an exaggeration to state that Dr. Iftikhar Shafi's collection of poetry heralds and manifests in Urdu poetry the qualities of the canonical literature of the future, identified by the famous American critic, Harold Bloom in *The Western Canon* (New York, 1994). According to Bloom, the lyric poetry invented by Petrarch in the Renaissance, also described as the Aristocratic age, on the one hand, and on the other, 'the memory of the Self', that forms the subject matter of Wordsworth's poetry in the Democratic age of the West, together, represent the characteristics of all canonical literature in the West up to the present. Nevertheless, the future, in Bloom's opinion, belongs to the theocratic age with a return to the more restricted and devotional function of literature (p.223). However, Dr. Iftikhar Shafi's poetic collection has distinguished itself not only by selectively assimilating the features of great Western canonical literature of the past as well as the present into Urdu poetry, but also by exceeding and surpassing the predictions for the role of literature in the future, particularly in our part of the world. Iftikhar's work is founded in the spiritual heritage of Muslim poetry that contains within it the splendid attributes of artistic evolution necessary for the revitalization of Urdu poetry in Pakistan.

It appears essential for our understanding of Urdu poetry, and indeed promotion of Pakistani literature, to include Dr. Iftikhar Shafi's

Angaara in the list of books recommended at college and university levels.

Department of English
University of Karachi

Dr. Farhana Wazir Khan

Saiyid Ali Naqvi, *Indus Waters and Social Change the Evolution and Transition of Agrarian Society in Pakistan*, Published by Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2013, pp.796, price, Rs.2900/-.

Historically, most significant and substantial civilizations of the world sprung along great rivers. Whether it's Euphrates and Tigris of Mesopotamia, Huang Ho of China or Nile of Egypt, rivers have been the main contributors in the evolution and development of culture and civilization. Indus is one of the important rivers in South Asia. This river not only gave birth to the Indus Valley Civilization but is responsible for the successive agrarian societies around it.

Keeping in view the cataclysmic role of the Indus, one reads the very diligent work of Sayid Ali Naqvi's '*Indus Water and Social Change The Evolution and Transition of Agrarian Society*'. This book is worth reading as it is narrative of a river's journey since 7000 B.C. Naqvi is a civil engineer by profession. In his career, the author was engaged with major hydel and irrigation development projects. The analytical expertise expressed in the book is an indication of author's dedication and involvement in mega hydel projects of Pakistan. To quote Naqvi's, his work is 'a thirst for synthesizing my professional experience'.

The book is divided into seven parts, covering the important historical and geographical process of social changes in the Indus region. Part I and II cover the historical period from ancient to medieval times. Indus region is drained by the river Indus and its tributaries. Its source is few kilometers away from Lake Mansarover, at an elevation of 5,000 meters on Mount Kailas. The shallow stream starts flowing from lofty mountains; passed through rugged hilly areas then enters into vast plains and finally falls into the Arabian Sea. The journey of river Indus is about 1800 miles long. The Indus plains have been formed by the alluvium laid down by rivers and its tributaries. Some pre-history settlements denote that the land's vitality was dependent on waters of Indus stream. The first agricultural and pastoral economy of the subcontinent can be traced in Indus region. It is the river Indus which gave birth to Indus Valley Civilization, the first organized and planned settlement of the subcontinent. In Indus region, the history of invasions can be traced with

the arrival of Aryans. The impact of social and cultural changes brought about by the Aryans resulted in the stratification of society. The Indus Valley accommodated various invaders coming from different parts of the world. Whether it was a question of rising feudalism or emergence of mercantile class these conqueror/invaders left their marks on the society. It is worth mentioning that throughout the history of Indus region, the nature of society was primarily agrarian. The waters of Indus have played a vital role in economy and society. Irrigation has always remained a key source of cultivation. The modes of irrigation did change with time but the dependency on irrigation was never minimized in this region.

Part III and IV deal with the British colonial period. Indus region ecology's is closely linked with Indus waters. British took no time to recognize the significance of this river. As soon as British annexed Indus Valley, they started planning to exploit the river's water fully. To lay down the irrigation network especially extension of inundation canals in Indus valley, the British Indian government designed various projects. With the improved irrigation facilities, canal colonies were established and extended which resulted in the rural in-migration for the other parts of the country. The population of Punjab rose to 20.33 million in 1901 from 16.25 million in 1868. As there has a threat of famine in India, parts of Indus Valley were safe. British were very eager to cultivate and produce maximum yields. For this, extensive and upgraded irrigation network was required. It was Lord Curzon who setup the irrigation commission headed by Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff. Some remarkable achievements of British in irrigation and hydrology designing included the triple canal system (which was to transfer the Jhelum river water to river Chenab, and the Chenab river waters to river Ravi), major inundation canal networks, construction of Sukkur Barrage and associated canals, Thal canal, etc. in Indus basin. The British left deep impressions not on the hydrology but also on agrarian society of Indus basin. They supported feudal lords by awarding them private property, patronized loyal aristocracy who ultimately became the greatest supporter of British Imperialism.

Part V to VII explains the post partition social, political and economic impact on Indus region. The partition of Indian subcontinent was the division of Indus waters, too. Major rivers enters into Pakistan's territory from India. The headworks of two eastern rivers were located in Indian Punjab and three in Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan wanted to utilize the full potential of river waters. India was in better position to control the waters from the eastern rivers. The genesis of water dispute between the two neighboring countries dates backs to April 1948, when

India stopped water from the Ferozpur head works to Dipalpur canal. It was perceived as a serious threat to agriculture and economy of Pakistan. The establishment of new canal colonies brought social change in the rural areas of country. The aim of British government to establish canal colonies in Indus region was for single purpose i.e. to get maximum agricultural commodities. Contrarily to that, after independence, Thal Colonization Scheme not only laid emphasis on agricultural commodities but also established manufacturing centres. These centers supported sugar and cotton industries in the adjacent areas. It was a way towards urbanizing the rural parts of Indus valley. In 1950's and 1960's, majority of Pakistan's population lived in rural areas and was directly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. The author believes that in Pakistan, the transition of traditional agrarian society to industrial society was primarily driven by Indus river system. In Pakistan, the process of industrialization stared in 1950's, when some large and medium scale units were set up. The Green Revolution and emerging industrialization together brought significant changes in country. The wage laborers transformed into capitalist farmers to get maximum profit by cultivating cash crops which were in high demand as raw material in the newly set up industries. The beneficiaries of the policies introduced in 1950's and 1960's were government sponsored industrialists and big land owners who adopted capital farming. There were demographic changes, too. The rural population was decreasing. In 1951, 80 percent of Pakistan's total population was rural; it declined to 77 percent of total population in 1961. Simultaneously, urbanization started to gain momentum. The expanding cities provided greater opportunities to the locals, while unemployment was the push factor in rural areas. According to 1998 census, 32.5 percent of Pakistan's total population was urban. By the end of 20th century, majority of country's population was rural and directly and indirectly dependent on agriculture. The river Indus role is pivotal in agricultural economy of Pakistan. One of the major problems pertaining to agriculture is of water logging and salinity. Extensive land has become infertile for cultivation. To combat this problem, Salinity Control and Reclamation Projects (SCARP) were launched in 1959. The idea was to save and reclaim the affected land. For this purpose thousands of tube-wells were installed, which in turn keep the underground water level low.

The river Indus is critical for Pakistan's economy and population. In 21st century, threats to the Indus have been multiplied. The Indus is declared one among the world's top ten rivers at risk by WWF. The Indus basin is likely to be affected by water scarcity. The excessive use of river waters has resulted in salt water intrusion in delta area. The mangrove cover has been decreasing at fastest rate and aquatic flora and

fauna of the delta area are threatened. It is not only environmental degradation which is affecting the Indus basin, but water dispute with India is likely to increase the pressure on Indus waters. With huge population depending on Indus water systems, the challenge is to check the water supply for irrigation and hydel power generations.

Naqvi seems quite ambitious to cover all historical, geographical and economic aspects of the social changes carried by the river Indus; and to an extent he did not fail in such attempt. His sagaciously written account on Indus waters provides the reader a complete and in-depth knowledge of entire region's physiography and society.

Pakistan Study Centre
University of Karachi.

Erum Muzaffar