

Book Reviews

***Pakistan: Nation, Nationalism and the State*, edited by Christophe Jaffrelot, published by Vanguard, Lahore, 2005, pages 352.**

The book under review is a compilation of thirteen articles written by different authors belonging to both Pakistan and abroad. The book is edited by Christophe Jaffrelot who is a French writer and has worked extensively on subcontinental political issues. The present book addresses various issues of Pakistan political history and links them to one central question, i.e., the question of identity. The different writers of the articles included in the book trace the identity issue in their respective manners while addressing the political, religious, social and geo-political dimensions of Pakistan. If one tries to connect all the arguments and seeks to generalize the central argument of the book one would say that it is Pakistan's search for identity which runs as the linking thread behind the issues confronted by it, i.e., issues of regionalism, lack of democracy, foreign policy challenges etc.

Before addressing the book and its contents, we will seek to present the issue of identity as it has emerged in the political literature on Pakistan in general. In the second section we will go to the actual arguments and contents of the various chapters of the book under review. In the final section a critical evaluation of these arguments will be made.

Pakistan's creation in 1947 constituted a unique development in nation formation in modern times. Pakistan was carved out of the Muslim majority regions of united India on the claim that the Muslims formed a separate identity distinct from the majority Hindu population of India. This very rationale of the creation of Pakistan also became the major test and challenge for the new country as after independence it was beset with the task to define its identity. Ever since her inception, Pakistan has undergone numerous crises emanating from lack of continuous constitutional governance, breakdown of democratic system, regionalism, ethnic polarization, and sectarianism. While these crises

tend to define the political history of Pakistan, the crisis of identity has remained the most important crisis with far reaching implications.

The six decades of Pakistan's independent history have time and again aroused questions which have been addressed by scholars at home and abroad. As such Pakistan provides a fertile area for historical and political inquiry. Needless to say that there is found rich literature on the issues confronted by Pakistan since 1947. There have been major incidents which invited objective analysis – Pakistan's creation itself, the emergence of military as the strongest claimant of state power, the breakup of the country in 1971, Pakistan's role as the frontline state against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979, and now Pakistan's role as a coalition partner against terrorism – these events have helped bring the intellectual critical searchlight on Pakistan in the past and in the present times. Jaffrelot's edited volume also probes into these matters and comes out with observations which need to be evaluated carefully. It is difficult to discuss in detail all the thirteen articles comprising this volume, yet some light can be shed on some of these.

Ian Talbot, an authority on the political processes in the Punjab, looks into the place of Punjabi interests and elite in the political history of Pakistan. He shows how in the first two decades after independence a conflict between the elite of the Punjab and Bengal prevented the country from moving along the constitutional road. Punjab's representation in the institutions of the state enabled its elite to pursue its interests which were looked with suspicion by Bengal and also by the smaller provinces in the western part of the country. After 1971, Punjab emerged as the biggest province as well as the bastion of power. The 1973 constitution provided a framework in which different provinces could expect to pursue their interests within a federal arrangement. The fact that the constitution could not function without hindrance, weakened the federal status of the country. This resulted in inter-provincial and center-province tensions, some of which continue even today.

Yunas Samad touches upon the issue of Mohajir identity and the role of migrants in the politics of the country. He dilates on the intricate dynamics of Mohajir politics, its social background and its claims both within the province of Sindh and vis-à-vis the center.

In his article on Islam, the state and sectarianism, Vali Raza Nasr shows how the use of Islam as the state ideology promoted the religious class, both as a powerful social force and as a political platform. Pakistan's involvement in the Afghan *jihad* further enhanced the role of the religious platform but the induction of overwhelming resources also facilitated fissions within this platform. The over-emphasis on religion, instead of uniting various sects, in fact created

distance among them. Sectarian organizations, thus, cropped up, each striving to share the state power in order to be able to let its version of Islam prevail in the society.

Mariam Abou Zahab demonstrates that sectarianism was not merely a religious phenomenon; it was also a regional one. Therefore, the shia-sunni tension created by sectarian organizations affected the intra-regional unity and harmony in the Punjab with Punjabi elite getting divided on the sectarian lines.

Saeed Shafqat probes into the rise of Dawat-ul-Irshad and Laskhar-e-Taiba. Lately these organizations were banned given their involvement in the extremist and militant activities both within the country and abroad. However, their rise in 1980s and 1990s had been a very important phenomenon. The rise of religious militancy affected the socio-political landscape of Pakistan and, in a way, threatened our national fabric which at times appeared to be torn apart. Saeed Sahfaqt looks into this phenomenon from the angle of a political scientist and gives us a useful insight into the dynamics of religious militancy.

Olivier Roy and Gilles Dorronsoro study the Taliban phenomenon, the role of Pakistan administration in the cultivation of Taliban and the overall impact of this phenomenon on the society of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The authors hold that while the past Pakistan governments thought that by promoting Taliban they were extending their influence into Afghanistan as far away as the borders of Central Asia, the perception could severely damage Pakistan's own status as a nation state. As has been mentioned at various places in the book Pakistan has been beset right from the beginning with the challenge to define its nationhood independent of external points of reference. Our past governments' flirtation with the idea of extending the country's influence to Afghanistan was justified on the pretext of Pakistan's adherence to pan-Islamism. But this had far reaching implications as this could nullify the country's independent status as a nation state. Olivier and Gilles Dorronsoro touch upon these matters quite amicably in their articles.

In his article on Kashmir insurgency, Sumit Ganguly traces the roots of the Kashmir problem as far back as the partition of India. The author holds that from Pakistan's point of view, Kashmir constitutes an important identity issue as anti-Indianism defines Pakistani nationalism.

Jean-Luc Racine writes on the Kashmir issue and nuclear programme of Pakistan and shows how these are inter-related and have been linked to what the author calls the 'India syndrome'. The author discusses how partition had left a bitter heritage for the two South Asian countries which has affected their future course in all directions –

economy, politics, foreign policy etc. Kashmir is regarded as the unfinished agenda of partition. The issue affected nation-building process in Pakistan as the country has to invest major parts of its resources to its defence, sacrificing a great deal in the areas of education, health and economic development. It is for securing self-defence and self-confidence that the country embarked upon the nuclear programme. This course too was conditioned for Pakistan given its hostile relationship with India. Thus India continues to affect the policy making in Pakistan.

An article by Frederic Grare looks into the geo-politics of Pakistan's energy supply policy. The author, in this article, looks into the prospect of a new kind of role that Pakistan can play with India and the Middle Eastern countries as through Pakistan, Middle Eastern natural gas and oil could be transmitted to India. We know that the matter is still under consideration and while Iran, Pakistan and India, in principle, agree to a pipeline between Iran and India passing through Pakistan, United States has certain reservations on the plan. Given its adverse relationship with Iran, the United States seems to prevent Iran from extending its economic interests into the region. Hence, the pressure from Washington on Islamabad and Delhi to refrain from realizing the pipeline project. In the context of the ongoing tussle, Frederic Grare's article can be taken as a good background piece which has come with a very good and informed analysis.

Mohammad Waseem's article studies the dialectic between domestic politics of Pakistan and its foreign policy. In a bold claim, Waseem holds that despite dissensions in the ranks of Pakistani political elite, the wide gap between the state institutions like military and bureaucracy on the one hand and opposition political parties on the other, and inter-regional differences, there does exist a consensus in the country on the major foreign policy issues. This, to Waseem, is a nationalist consensus which provides common ground for all the segments of political divide to operate within the system.

An interesting article by Amelie Blom looks into the political sociology of Pakistan. The author holds that in Pakistan one finds a wide difference of opinion on almost all subjects. Kashmir is no exception. Differing from Wasim's position that despite differences, Pakistanis unite on the Kashmir issue, Blom says that even on the Kashmir issue one finds a variety of opinion and even policy decision in Pakistan. The author also endeavours to show some diversions of opinion in Pakistan's highest bodies of decision making and then concludes that Pakistan can be taken as a 'multi-vocal state'. This characterization of Pakistan, to a great extent, depicts the state of affairs as the most influenced of

Pakistani elite may be found projecting divergent views on the most serious of the national issues.

Ian Talbot in his second article discusses the role of the army in the shaping of Pakistan's foreign policy. He discusses how this role has evolved over decades to the extent that strong army is equated with a strong nation and given its strength army plays the most decisive role in deciding the foreign policy matters.

The upshot of these articles is that Pakistan has faced multifarious problems in its history. Many of these problems continue even today. All these issues, whether they are domestic and political or relate to the foreign policy, have been ignited from one major source, and that is the question of identity. Pakistan, according to the authors of the articles included in this book, does claim to have a nation but on examination one finds it difficult to identify a nation, or a Pakistani nation in Pakistan. Jaffrelot, therefore, describes this dilemma as being 'nationalism without a nation'.

The above is a provocative position. However, it is difficult to contest the fact that Pakistan has undergone multifarious political crises resulting for its failure in evolving a genuine democratic set-up. The tone of some of the articles may be a bit harsh but the overall assessment of them is fairly objective and convincing. Despite this one tends to suggest that though Pakistan has faced political problems of historic proportion, and most of its political journey seems to have gone in vain, yet there are certain things which compel us not to be carried away by an apparently dismal scenario. For example, the inter-provincial migration in Pakistan and the vested interest of the inhabitants of one province in another province has created a situation where all people have their stakes in the country. A large number of Pukhtuns now live in Karachi. Similarly, Pukhtun share in transport and communication has increased over the years as a result of which now their economic interests are not confined to the Frontier. Similarly, the people of other provinces have also migrated and settled in other provinces in large number. This trend serves as a good cementing force in the federation of Pakistan.

Moreover, the growth of an integrated economy along with modern means of communication linking far-off regions of the country with each other, also has the potential to serve as a cementing force for the country. It is believed that if our political institutions also attain maturity and serve to evolve consensus along constitutional lines, this will strengthen the notion of Pakistani nationhood.

***Pakistan: Unique Origins; Unique Destiny?* by Javed Jabbar, published by National Book Foundation, Islamabad, 2011, pages, 246, price, Rs. 325.**

Javed Jabbar does things in his own way. Steeped deeply in innovative thinking, all his initiatives demonstrate a remarkable imprint of originality. As a host of Pakistan Television in its black and white days he brought serious discussion on international affairs in the sitting rooms and the lounges of millions of Pakistanis. As a film-maker, he attempted to break away, but not with much success, from the traditional cinema and formula movies, opening the screens for more liberal horizons. It was an idea whose time, perhaps, had not come by then. He created a niche for himself in the world of advertising. He served as a global vice-president of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). He was a federal minister in Pakistan's cabinet during Benazir Bhutto's first term. It was not something unique; what was unusual was his attempt to free Pakistani press and the electronic media from the years old official bondage. He served for six years as a senator, a position he employed for introducing and drafting several progressive laws and policies. These include the PEMRA Law, which opened the gates for electronic media in Pakistan. His NGO, Baanhn Beli, earned a name for itself for its work at the grassroots in a remote area of Tharparkar in Sindh. The titles of his books tell clearly about their unusual themes: *A Man in the Queue*; *Snapshots*; *6 Years, 46 Questions (Urdu)*; *From Chaos to Catharsis*; *Soap and Soul*; *Storms and Rainbows*, etc. And now there is this new book.

Here, the author seeks to facilitate an understanding of Pakistan in its totality. The idea is to point out the extra-ordinary features and factors which can help define Pakistan and its society. The context of the coming of this book can be additionally useful while seeing its contents. It is all too well known that in a progressively globalizing world, the nation states have to compromise on their sovereignty and distinct identities, if the two have not fully succumbed to the pressures of market economy and the global expansion of capital. There is room for discussion on Pakistan in this context also. But in the last few years Pakistan's statehood has come under academic scrutiny both within the country and abroad not as much in the context of global economic pressures as it has been due to the internal weakening of the country. Lately a number of works have highlighted the progressive decline of the state in Pakistan, the waning away of its writ on a significant part of its territory, disparities among the regions, and an almost collapse of the governance in the country. To add to this, there has been the emergence

of multiple centers of power – extremist outfits and the mafias, which add to the dismal picture of the country. The book under review breaks this gloom and comes out with quite refreshing perception about the country and holds that there are hidden aspects of Pakistani life to which our intelligentsia and also the academia has had a blind eye so far. The book raises hopes about Pakistan's future and does so convincingly.

The book is not a work of political or social theory. Nor does it indulge in any polemical debate, types of which we come across in abundance, thanks to our overcharged electronic media that has promoted partisanship through its discussion programmes, in which every discussant over-emphasizes his or her point of view without accepting to consider its possible weaknesses. The author adopts a simple methodology. Through his observation, drawing from his having lived a Pakistani life, and also insightful reading of literature, he identifies the features which may help define Pakistani society and people. Instead of sermonizing on what the country should be, he delves into what it has been and what it is. After figuring out a host of facts and aspects of Pakistan he further examines them on a comparative scale. This provides him with a set of factors which are common to Pakistan and other countries, on the one hand, and a set of the ones which are specific to Pakistan, on the other. This calculus does not stop here; the author then moves on to decipher the positive and negative aspects of the Pakistani society separately. Once, this is done, there follows the discussion of all the facts falling in the two categories. The outcome is a book quite different from the works which discuss Pakistan along the traditional lines of study. The methodology used by the author may raise a few questions also but to them one would come later.

The author identifies eight reasons that make Pakistan's origins unique. For example, Pakistan is the only nation state whose name is an invented objective; it is the only country created with two wings separated by one thousand miles; it is also the only nation state created on the principle of religious identity on a land which is neither the 'homeland' of that religion nor the 'headquarters' of it; etc. The author also highlights two 'not so good reasons' that make Pakistan's history unique. These are, one, Pakistan is the first nation-state which disintegrated after World War II, and, two, it is the only nation state in which the majority of the population separated from its own nation-state while the minority retained the name of the state for itself.

A full section of the book enumerates 57 strengths of Pakistan and 38 weaknesses of it. The set of strengths highlights: Pakistanis' resilience and pragmatism; Pakistan's proficient technocratic elite; its distinguished intelligentsia; a strong independent superior judiciary of

the country; a federal parliament; a compassionate and generous nation; a youthful, energetic and pulsating population; struggling and forward-looking women; an integrated and inter-dependent economy; a people who love adventure; a people who respect all religions and appreciate cultural pluralism; a vibrant mass media; a very pro-country Pakistani diaspora; etc.

Among the 38 weaknesses are: low ranking in the Human Development Index; severe income disparities; mis-governance; rampant corruption; feudal and primitive attitudes and weaknesses; weak enforcement of law; extra-legal acts of the intelligence agencies; disrespect for time; extremism in the name of religion; neglect of children's and women's rights; divided loyalties; population growth; mass media's role in spreading despair; low level of political participation; emergence of criminal syndicates; military's intervention in politics; etc.

Based on the evaluation of the above, the author ventures to argue about the future of the country not in a speculative manner but in a rational way. He very rightly discusses the future of the country while identifying the challenges it is facing and will have to face in future. He strongly argues for a rational and compassionate society guided by knowledge and the values of humanism. He also thinks that the future of Pakistan will depend largely on how the relationship of Islam with state and society is determined. To him, the global conditions will also have great impact on the climate, economic choices and geo-political relations of Pakistan. He also attributes great significance to Pakistan's future relations with India in particular and other neighbours in general.

The author's selection of factors in different sets of themes may be agreed to fully or partially. But more important is the fact that a very different approach to discuss Pakistan has been adopted by him. This approach, one would argue, may land someone who adopts it, in a subjective terrain where personal choices and perceptions may dare determine results. But then here lies the test of an author how he or she embraces personal perceptions with the objective facts. As in this case one finds the author doing it quite admirably. Moreover, while going through the book, perhaps, one would detect, here or there, a tendency of generalisation while suggesting a trait or a feature of Pakistani society but as has been mentioned earlier, the work is based more on observation and experience of sharing a Pakistani life and that it is not a work of pure research based on data acquired through systematic inquiry. The book's major advantage is the accumulation of a number of ideas and indicators along which further studies can be done. These may be made use of even by the serious social science researchers in their investigative studies. At

least these could serve for them as good hypotheses on the foundation of which they may build solid research.

Another unusual and interesting feature of the book is the author's decision to provide blank pages in between different chapters for the consumption of the readers. He expects that the exercises done by him in identifying different sets of factors and features of Pakistan the reader would also be encouraged to make similar effort. This means that a reader's copy of the book would eventually be richer in content than the one he or she would have bought.

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***Seamless Boundaries: Lutfullah's Narrative beyond East and West* – edited, annotated with an Introduction by Mushirul Hasan, published by Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007, pages 284, price \$45.00.**

The writing of autobiographies, memoirs and travelogues is a tradition of permanent practice among Muslims and goes back a long way. The original title of this book was *Autobiography of Lutfullah, a Mohamedan gentleman; and his transactions with his fellow-creatures: interspersed with remarks on the habits, customs, and character of the people with whom he had to deal*. This long self-explanatory title was the common practice in the 19th century. The book was issued from London in 1857. It has already been edited by Edward B. Eastwick, a then well-known Persian scholar and translator of Saadi's *Gulistan*. E.B. Eastwick in his prefatory remarks states that he had to condense and prune the narrative to make it more acceptable to an English-reading public in Britain. What portions have been omitted and the places where such omissions were likely to have been made are not pointed out by the next editor, Mushirul Hasan. In addition, Hasan has also unilaterally changed the title of the book without sound reason giving it the impression of 'seamlessness' [as he wishes] without succeeding in his futile attempt. The book itself has fourteen chapters of which thirteen have South Asian locale. It is only in the fourteenth chapter that the author's visit to Britain is given and that too in a mere seventeen pages. The book is important for the details contained in the last chapter alone which is the *raison d'être* of the whole composition – which would not be of interest if it were geographically limited to South Asia [and that too in a small area] alone. It is in no way 'beyond East and West' as Dr. Hasan sonorously proclaims. It would

have been better, and proper for an editor, to remove or summarize these portions not of general interest and focus on the mere important parts. But this Hasan has not done. Indeed, Hasan tries to give the impression of the narrative being an international travelogue [which it is definitely not and hence Hasan fails to do so]. Indeed this failure could easily have been foreseen in any work written in the mid-nineteenth century. The question may be asked: Why does Hasan do this? The answer lies in the fact that Hasan feels he must put a preconceived construction on anything he writes/edits in order to attack and falsify the creation of Pakistan. He carries this fallacious notion of his to ridiculous lengths even trying [and failing] to misinterpret a 19th-century document. His books such as *Legacy of a Divided Nation* and *Stories of the Partition of India* put forward the tendentious argument that Pakistan was the result of division/partition as though such division did not exist in the centuries prior to its creation. Hasan has taken upon himself the role of the devil's advocate and has been rewarded accordingly. But his casuistry will not work nor will it convince anybody logically inclined.

The remarkable fact is that Lutfullah [d. c. 1860] learnt English all by himself and to such an extent that he could write his life-story in English of a superior level. Hence, its publication in London by E.B. Eastwick. The previous thirteen chapters give an account of a very ordinary and uneventful life of a subordinate functionary in British India. It is only in the last [14th] chapter that Lutfullah's arrival in Britain is described ending with his departure for India. It is a unique picture of Britain at the time of its mid-century glory and prosperity. As such, the sights and sounds of London and adjoining areas held Lutfullah in thrall. He is vocal in his adulation of English life, law, customs and civilization. Among the remarkable things he observed were museums and hospitals and the houses of Parliament.

A visit to the opera does not please Lutfullah. His visit to the Ascot races and his sight of Queen Victoria was an occasion of great joy. The British Museum and the Royal Asiatic Society served as intellectual stimulants to Lutfullah as did the National Gallery, Westminster Abbey and the College of Surgeons. A unique experience was going deep into water in a diving-bell. The itinerary of Lutfullah was packed with activity from dawn to the next dawn being occupied with parties, visits, sight-seeing and amusement. There were delightful encounters in London with Saiyid Aminuddin Ali, ambassador of Turkey to Britain, who treated them with that special courtesy which is reserved for Muslims. Lutfullah's assessment of the English people and their achievements is given in an insightful passage:

They (the English) are entirely submissive to the law and obedient to the commands of their superiors. Their sense of patriotism is great than that of any other nation in the world.

However, all is not milk-and-honey for Lutfullah does not favour the freedom given to women – as he writes:

In fact, the freedom granted to women kind in this country is great, and the mischief arising from this unreasonable toleration is most deplorable.

There is a balanced – even critical – picture here of life in Britain by one who had, in his brief visit, been exposed only to the life of the rich and the privileged.

The book is valuable for its last chapter and merits comparison with an earlier travelogue, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Talib Isfahani* [1801] whose account of Britain [in Persian] is longer and more descriptive.

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Muntakhab Maqālāt – Hakīm Dr. Syed Mahmūd Ahmad Barkātī,
edited by Dr. Mazhar Mahmūd Shirānī, published by Maghribi
Pakistan Urdu Academy, Lahore, 2011, pages 369, price, Rs. 300.

Reviews of books by Hakim Mahmud Ahmad Barkati have earlier appeared in *Pakistan Perspectives*, 14:1, Jan-June 2009 and 10:1, Jan.-June 2005. Both were written by the present reviewer. Of these, the earlier-mentioned review is of a collection of Hakim Sahib's essays edited by Dr. Mazhar Mahmud Shirani – who is also the editor of the book presently under review.

It certainly goes to the credit of Dr. Shirani who has so painstakingly assembled these lost essays and rescued them from oblivion and made them available to a larger readership at the present time. Dr. Shirani has also prefaced this collection with a scholarly essay in which he has dilated upon the high academic status of these mini-dissertations. The preface contains a brief biographical sketch of the author who, like the editor, hails from the princely state of Tonk – the only Muslim state in Rajputana during British rule.

The book is divided into four parts:

- i) Personalities
- ii) books and libraries
- iii) miscellaneous essays

iv) reviews

In the first section, there are 10 essays on ten personalities. These include eminent scholars, physicians and politicians from among the Muslims of South Asia during the last four centuries. Among them are Allama Fazl-i-Haq Khayrabadi, the eminent scholar of the logico-philosophical sciences who also participated in a *jihād* against the foreign occupying power – the British – in the War of Independence [1857]. Allama Khayrabadi was sentenced to exile in the Andamans where he died and was buried. There is an essay on Hakim Ahsanullah Khan, the physician of the last Mughul Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, who was in league with the British against his sovereign. An interesting literary piece is on the relations of Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani with the family of Hakim Barkati Sahib in the state of Tonk.

In the second section, there is a well-researched essay on the library of Tipu Sultan and its contents. In spite of his relentless efforts to rid the subcontinent of the British colonizers, Tipu Sultan followed the tradition of Muslim enlightened rulers of collecting a library of materials chiefly relating to the Islamic Sciences. It was looted in the storming of Seringapatam [4 May 1799] and transferred to London.

A descriptive account of the rare items in the library of Wazir-ud-daula in Tonk is extremely interesting for its collection of rare Arabic manuscripts. There are five essays on ancient medical literature in the subcontinent. The third section consists of miscellaneous essays on a broad spectrum of topics such as the historiography of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the means of living or professions adopted by Sufis, the relations between the ‘Ulema of Khayrabad and Badayun. There are eleven essays in this section. In the fourth section, there are reviews of three books on subjects of interest to Hakim Barkati Sahib viz. religion, history and medicine.

In conclusion, we may state that it is obvious from the vast range and broad scope of the book that the author is an erudite scholar of multifarious Islamic disciplines ranging from finer points of Islamic logic to the details of Islamic medicine. He pursues his scholarly interests in ‘splendid isolation’ without seeking either publicity or approbation. The great contributions of Hakim Mahmud Ahmad Barkati to the School of Khayrabadi Logic entitle him to the rank of the ‘Imam of the School of Khayrabad’. The tradition of Islamic logic is dying out and in the person of the Hakim Sahib we can see its penultimate glory before its inevitable end. In this, he is a worthy successor to the illustrious Fadl-i-Haq and Fadl-i-Imam Khayrabadi.

***Mughaltay Mubalghay* by Mubarak Haider, published by Saanjh, Lahore, 2011, pages 152, price, Rs. 200.**

All the ages might have their paradoxes and problems, but the 21st century has surpassed many of the past centuries in terms of intensity, depravity and atrocity of the paradoxical approaches at work in the world at large. The paradoxes emerge from misconceived notions and misplaced priorities. '*Mughaltay*', literally meaning 'misconceptions', and '*Mubalghay*' literally meaning 'exaggerations', are added to make title of the book under review. The author has already earned country-wide reputation in initiating a process of dialogue on very crucial issues many others have been reluctant to talk about. *Mughaltay* and *Mubalghay* are put together to explain the current scenario in Pakistan and the world Muslim community at large in the book under review. The author's earlier book, *Tahzeebi Nargasiyat*, was focused upon the 'pathological narcissism', a trouble he identifies in the Pakistani society as the overarching reality. The book under review is, in fact, an extension and expansion of his same argument, in which he has seen emerging dimensions and new facets of reality, making themselves identified as worth noting. The reality he is most concerned about is the religious behaviour of a large section of society which, for being full of blind conviction, has turned all actions, as right, according to the version of religion they are taught. This self-righteousness has erased all chances of self-doubt and self criticism, so no chance for reform or dialogue for looking into the wearisome syndrome is left.

About four decades ago, Ali Abbas Jalalpuri has written on common intellectual misconceptions. Comparison of the lists of the two books can be revealing. Jalalpuri chose to talk about the misconceptions surrounding on the issues, including: history repeats itself; waywardness is freedom; past was beautiful; philosophy is dying; human nature is immutable; institution is superior to intellect; wealth brings happiness; love (*Ishq*) is a malady; moral values are eternal; women are inferior to men; art for the sake of artist, humans are selfish by nature, and, state and religion are inseparable. Haider, on the other hand, highlights the issues which have deeper impact and which have grown enormously in their destructive power in the last half century in Pakistan. No doubt, their roots and the propensity of the society to opt for an imbalance and extremism were there. Undoubtedly, the *mulla* was there but was rather 'naïve', as compared with today's fanatics who have undermined the very spirit of a peaceful and progressive religion. The people were there with their utter naïvity and vulnerability but they were not ready to bargain paradise for suicide. Bigotry did not reign supreme. The author

has analyzed the subject of the book in the light of historical evidence, something which he fears, has been rejected by today's religious preachers.

The issues Mubarak Haider has highlighted are many, springing from, according to him, one great source of self-deception and suicidal instinct, which unfortunately has taken over. His questions are related to the manifestations, briefly outlined in this paragraph. He finds that a cadre of non-representative leaders, has been forcing the whole society to unconditional obedience. Hatred and prejudice dominate the human relations. Wisdom and intellectual honesty is stifled, hence a discourse based on argumentation is not allowed. Though being directionless, our contentment with our own deeds, our freaky attitude towards religion, and our banishing a culture of inquiry, knowledge and free expression, all have resulted in ever-readiness for war. There has emerged an Arabic imperialism, along with the American imperialism; both want to rule the world by annihilating each other. Since it was easy through educational curricula, media, pulpit and a full-fledged system of seminaries, to teach fanaticism, to confuse the Muslim identity, the collective thinking has become devoid of reason. The emphasis upon an identity as Muslim *Ummah* is founded on pointless detestation of 'others'. Internal discrepancy of the Muslim *Ummah* has already been exposed after the revolution in Iran. Now the people of reason have become helpless before the so called religious leaders. A hyperbolic culture of worships and reciting mantras has been promoted. Group beliefs of 'ours' are the only path allowed and the 'others' beliefs are declared worth extinction. The malady has grown so much that all interests groups (the power elite, agencies, religious groups, media, and the well-off people) all are bent upon fighting with the rest of the world to raze it to ground. A state of paranoia is taking over the whole society. Injustice, self-centrism, and self annihilation are the logical outcomes.

Regarding human resource development, the author believes that a powerful society produces tall intellectual figures, which devote their lives to inquiry, invention and creation. Human development is based on human capability which is usable and useful for the society. Whereas the Muslim societies have now taken just memorizing the religious scripture as the mark of academic excellence, and have bent upon condemning the modern sciences as misleading, taken as merely diverting towards temporal greed and a base and detestable pursuit, consequently the Muslims have left far behind in the process of human development.

Haider criticizes the rote-learning culture of the schools as an extension of seminaries' culture, where learning by heart is sole criterion of merit. Such learning cannot create new knowledge, a critical

approach, and a self-assessment. He sees that till the Ayub time, the society was not so barren, enlightening knowledge was not a curse, and PPP had a host of scholars, poets, artists, engineers, etc. in its cadre. But after the intermission of Zia rule, Pakistan Peoples Party was left with a large following comprising only a mob of illiterate or poorly educated workers, who can die for their leaders, but cannot keep them on right track. The religious fanaticism, a legacy of General Zia, is presented by Haider rightly as undermining the moral core and social fabric of the society. Sometimes it appears that the author has become too critical, pessimistic or just tries to be an independent observer from outside, while being an insider as well. He is not the one who could see the system crumbling and he ignoring it. Instead he is optimistic as well since it is the feeling which keeps the struggle on. He might have used a lot of negative adjectives to portray the situation but he believes in the assertion that 'the prevalent system of thought and action needs to be questioned time and again'. (p.138). He also thinks that we are deciding the issues on the basis of whims and wishes while majority of the societies in the world are taking things seriously and implementing their well thought-out plans as the foremost duty. He defines that the dilemma of Pakistan is not due to in-articulation of religious politicians, or insecurity of defenders of Islam, or the oppressed bogey of generals, judges or media. Rather, he asserts, the dilemma lies in it's being a hostage to the warriors of an archaic tribal system. It can be dissolved only through democracy, he believes. He also exposes the supporters of al-Qaeda and Taliban dominating the media scene.

He explains the misconception around few concepts. For instance, western civilization, which is a misnomer, rather he says, it is an industrial democratic civilization, which is projected in the Muslim world as an enemy. If the criteria of '*ilm*' (knowledge) is applied, then Muslims should not lag in acquiring and creating knowledge and also not hating those who have been trying to accomplish the divine mission of conquering the universe. He clarifies that secularism means not accepting the holy authority of a particular group in religion, as this-worldly matters are not necessarily to be administered under the religious references. Islam merely calls for consultation, and this is the essence of secularism.

The author wants to share a number of his confusions with the reader; the foremost being about the relationship of religion with the society. He finds people not objecting outright to the impositions by the religious lobby whereas the religious leaders are harping the same old

tune; 'People have banished religion'.¹ This is despite the large scale training in religion, preaching and organized activities of the religious section. The paradox Haider points out is that why there is so much lawlessness, degradation and depreciation in all spheres of life amidst the full-scale propagation of a comprehensive religion. He further asks as to why people are not willing to vote for the votaries of religion to let them be parliamentarians and decide fate of the nation. Furthermore, why masses cannot express their disagreement? Why cannot they become true Muslims as the clergy wants them to be? Can *Iman* (conviction) be nurtured through force? These and similar other countless questions, all surrounding the attitude of individual and collective religiosity, are the main theme of the book.

Whereas the religious scholars have been calling upon the people to be on the right track, by condemning corruption,² society is tolerating and promoting all such practices which are corrupt. So, ineffectiveness of religious message in one sense and tightening grip of religion in certain others is strange as it is distorting the social reality, focus, and direction of change.

Mubarak Haider has referred to the death of Osama Bin Laden to explain his point of view. He has tried to point out the extreme state of confusion Pakistani society was thrown in due to this event, but he condemns the attitude of not accepting the fault and feeling sorry over the great amount of lies been told to the world about Osama and his organization. This is one among the so many proofs of hypocrisy and collective criminality, which he finds and demands the issue to be discussed for reforming the situation.

The reaction of the Pakistani state and society has raised many issues, which the author feels are important to be analyzed. The chaos he finds the whole system in after this event can be defined as losing all credibility of self, of leaders, of media, and of everything.

The closing lines of Haider are really thought-provoking for every conscientious Pakistani. He, referring to the will of Osama to his children, forbidding them to join any jihad, and the fear that Osama is going to become a legend and role model for a certain section of Muslims of Pakistan, he writes:

The episodes of sacrifices of the Sheikh [Osama Bin Laden] are not based on truth. His life is devoid of any such proof of sacrifice rather no signs of labouring, studying, and

¹ The same has been repeated as 'Islam in danger' earlier.

² Hafiz Muhammad Farooq, 'Rishwat ka Wabal aur Mo'ashray par oos kay Tabah-kun Asraat', *Jang*, 14 October 2011, p.5.

deliberating are found. That is why he did not leave any writing or any ideology for others. Not only this, he utilized the weapons of ignorance and emotionality and his legacy for the Muslim *Ummah* is nothing else his personal wealth and destructive hatred.³

He then asks the readers that if Osama had thought his children should not go to war, isn't it the time for the common and level-headed Muslims to think the same for their millions of children? Such an ending by the author leaves one with the greatest question of the decade, perhaps the century, to think about stopping self-annihilation and hatred towards others, which has no other logical conclusion but a large scale destruction. As a whole the book has raised some very critical questions to add upon the ones raised by his previous book, and hopefully this would serve the noble purpose he has taken up so boldly.

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Anwar Shaheen

***The Hadith: an authentic record* by Syed Munir Wasti, published by Qirtas Publishers, Karachi, 2011, pages 114, n.p.**

This compact book, authored by Professor Dr. S.M. Wasti, is a companion volume to his earlier printed *The Quran: the Book free of doubt* [University of Gujrat Press, 2009]. It intends to offer the reader who is unskilled in the intricacies of the Islamic sciences, a readable and untechnical introduction to the massive complexities that go into the disciplines of the *hadith*. This is a very important venture because our new generation of educated Muslims does not possess familiarity with the *hadith* and its allied sciences. A cursory scrutiny of the history of the collection and examination of the *hadith* makes one amazed when one considers all the painstaking effort that went into this magnificent accomplishment. It was these great endeavours that have ensured the flawless transmittal of the words [*hadith*] and actions [*sunnah*] of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *Sall-Allaahu 'alyh-e wa sallam* [Allah's blessings be upon him] to future generations of Muslims till the end of time.

The book has been sub-divided into four sections which:

1. deal chiefly with the history of the *hadith*;
2. deal with certain technical details of the *hadith*;
3. give the opinions of various scholars regarding the *hadith*;

³ Mubarak Haider, *Mughaltay Mubalghay* (Lahore: Saanjh, 2011), p.146.

4. deal with certain aspects related to the *hadith*.

In section one, an examination is made of the earliest writing of the *hadith* in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, SAAWS [PBUH]. This is followed by the relation of the *hadith* to the later schools of *fiqh* [law], *siyar/maghāzi* [battles] and the early '*ilm al-tafsīr* [the science of interpretation] as well as the collection and compilation of official documents. In this context, the role of mosques, *madressah*-s and cantonments is brought out. The important contribution of 'Omar-II ('Omar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz) in the collection of the *hadith* is highlighted.

In section two, the technical details of *hadith* classification are given. Many objections raised by western writers are answered and discussion on the importance of *isnād* [chain of narrators] and *asmā al-rijāl* [names of persons/narrators] are made. Altogether there are 31 topics dealt with in this section covering the compilation and collection of the *hadith* till the time of Imām Bukhāri [d. 256 AH].

In section three, the opinions of various scholars on the authenticity of the *hadith* are given. Famous Muslim scholars – such as 'Allama Muhammad Asad, Shah Wali-Allah, 'Allama Iqbal, Dr. Hamidullah, Shahidullah Faridi and Fazlur Rahman have elucidated the great efforts of the early *muhaddithīn* and relevant quotations from their works are given. Also, certain balanced and favourable views of non-Muslims like P.K. Hitti and Roy P. Mottahedeh are also quoted. There is an exposition on the efforts of Imām Zuhri [d. 124 AH] and Imām Mālik [d. 179 AH] in the collection and scrutiny of the *hadith*.

The fourth section tackles the problematic issue of the 'fabrication' of the *hadith*. The author makes it clear that the majority of *hadith* transmitted through the centuries are genuine and Muslims need not entertain any doubt regarding their authenticity. While certain *hadith* were fabricated in view of certain circumstances by certain partisans, these are no longer included in the genuine collections and have only antiquarian interest.

The conclusion notes the relentless anti-*hadith* propaganda issuing from the West that seeks to destroy the 'second base of Islam'. This poses as scholarships but in reality is disguised enmity.

A valuable part of the book lies in its detailed and categorized bibliography covering books in the major Islamic languages as well as in English and German. This is also enough evidence of the exhaustive study and research undertaken by the author to compile this compendium.

On the whole, this book is a scholarly essay on the science of *hadith* that has the advantage of making complex and technical issues simple and comprehensible. It removes doubts regarding the compilation

of the *hadith* and brings out the collection of the *hadith* as a great intellectual achievement not only for Islam but for the whole world.

In view of the undeniable practical importance of the *hadith* along with the *Quran* as an indispensable manual in understanding, comprehending, interpreting and implementing the Quranic commands, a continuing research is essential to discover and elaborate the wisdom contained in the *hadith*.

While there is no dearth of scholarly works in Islamic languages, few Muslim writers have produced works in English and other European languages that could cater to the young Muslims educated abroad and those who have recently embraced Islam and are mostly unfamiliar with Islamic languages. Likewise, books in English and other European languages are useful for non-Muslim researchers who cannot consult the original sources and have to rely on the abundant anti-Islamic material that tends to misguide them with their intellectual dishonesty. Scholars like Dr. S.M. Wasti should be encouraged to continue such sincere and thoughtful pursuits with deeper dedication.

More attention should have been given to the printing quality of this book meant for an international audience with a contemporary focus. On a related issue, Pakistani manufacturers need to start producing recycled, eco-friendly paper and vegetable inks in order to make it easy for the publishers to adopt green printing technology easily and economically.

Karachi

Riaz Ahmad Barni

***The Tyranny of Rights* by Brewster Kneen, published by the Ram's Horn, Ottawa, 2009, pages 173, price, 20 Canadian dollar.**

The concept of human rights gained popularity in the 20th century. The social movement that started after the mid 20th century paved the way for human rights. The term 'natural rights' was more in use in 18th and 19th centuries. Eminent philosopher John Stuart Mill and political theorist Thomas Paine wrote about person's freedom and liberty in 'Essays on Liberty' and 'The Rights of Man' respectively. Later in 20th century the main source of human rights was 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' and various treaties and agreements drafted by states and different organizations. These are two main categories of human rights: entitlement right and personal rights. In post modernism the rise of individualism supported the language of human rights where every individual is gifted with certain rights for being a human being, thus,

'Man is born free with Natural Rights'. The concept of human rights has become universal. Individuals are given more importance than any other being. The personal liberty and freedom is more emphasized than the social justice and duty towards others. One can see in the developing and non-western countries that human rights have been used as a tool by capitalist/ imperialist powers to mobilize the masses against their rulers who emerged as threat to them. In this context, the book under review seems relevant and contributing to the debate on rights. It is an attempt to explain how human rights language is defined by the western culture and how it is serving the interest of the capitalism worldwide.

The author, Brewster Kneen, studied economics and theology. He went to Nova Scotia and started a commercial sheep farm. In 1986 he returned to Toronto and started his career in writings. Kneen is famous for his works: *Farmageddon: Food and the Culture of Biotechnology*, *From Land to Mouth: Understanding the Food System*, and *Rape of Canola*, exclusively deals with food system. In this book Kneen diverts his attention towards social movement, the human rights and its misuse by the western culture.

Brewster Kneen comes up with various arguments condemning the language of Human Rights and the way its supporters have manipulated it in their own interest. For Kneen, the universality of human rights is mere propaganda. He points out that in many non-western culture and languages not a single word exists like 'right', until it has been imposed by the western culture. For instance, Japan coined a new word for right – '*kenri*'.

While introducing the language of rights to the reader, the author explains the genesis of rights from history. Rights were associated with the ethics and morality in Greco-Roman civilization. The 18th century's enlightenment for being rich with individualism and rationalism, paved the way for the contemporary concept of human rights. He writes, 'Rights language is congenial to the liberal individualism pervasive in our society.' Today rights are seen as demand usually against the states. It's up to the states whether to grant or not to grant rights as some states closely served the interests of particular class or section of society. When Kneen writes about individualism of rights he becomes too critical. 'The rights liberates and freedom of the individuals are set against the claims and even existence of society or social order'. He explains one of the extreme cases where human foetus is granted individual's status against its mother. It's the misuse of rights and this type of particular approach leads towards the ignorance of welfare of the community. The conservative liberratarians consider state as an enemy of personal freedom and rights while other regards it as a means to justice. In the

western culture, extreme individualism and capitalist enterprises flourish together. Another right which activist has projected very often is the right to food. There has been an attempt to force the state to take the responsibility for feeding its population. The author's fear this may increase the dependency on the corporate industrial food system as there is an internal relationship between the corporate food sector and state. In India, this leads to organizing local food system for communities. Instead of depending on states, communities can work for the food sovereignty. Andhra Pradesh in India is one of such examples. The whole concept of right to food, propagated by the UN agencies and western culture has been condemned by the author. He asked few pertinent questions. How food is to be produced? Where food is to come from or who is to get it at what price? In 2005, the UNCHR resolution encouraged that all states take immediate actions to realize the human rights to food of all their people.

It's the corporate sector defining where the food comes from and who gets it at what price. If the state's goal is to grant rights to food to its citizens, it must have to limit the corporate control and profit from the food system. Kneen stresses that it is necessary to regulate the activities of companies and individuals who are responsible for the ruthless destruction of natural resources and captivating the food system. Food sovereignty, which is threatened by global capitalism, is required to feed the hungry population. For Kneen farmer's rights, which treat seeds as a commodity and make it property, is disrespect to all who have been planting and are engaged in agriculture since years. In 20th century, seeds became commercial property of the corporations and they are keenly interested to keep their ownership through various mechanisms, like certification, genetic engineering, hybridization etc. These companies assume for themselves Plants Breeders Rights, and in return, they grant farmer the right to save their own seeds for a season. This also makes plant breeding a professional activity of the formal sector of corporations and the farmers are tolerated within this system, they are not valued. In this scenario, plant breeders organized themselves and took several steps to counter the threat of corporations. Kneen gave examples of many organizations working worldwide. He further recommended that the states have to take actions and limit the role of corporations supporting Plant Breeders Rights and patents, for the well being of the society.

While discussing nature, Kneen prefers the term 'creation'. For him nature, in western thinking is something referred to as 'untapped resources waiting for corporate to exploit', while creation a more comprehensive and broader term to define the living and non-living beings in the universe. Kneen quotes the 'Genetic Bill of Rights'

developed by the Council for Responsible Genetics in the US. He completely disagrees with it and believes that this Bill is neither for the conservation of environment, nor for the love of nature, but simply an attempt to preserve and maintain biological and genetic diversity as a resource which can serve the interest of capitalist economy in the coming years.

Historically, corporations were established by the Crown to serve the interest of kingdom/empire in Europe. These companies do not have authority to act in their own interest or against the empire. With the passage of time, these corporations became sovereign and started to work for their own profit, and this, in return, gave wealth and power to a particular class — the capitalist. In the stock market, the economic growth rate has become an indicator of a healthy society and well-being of citizens has been neglected. The author traces out how corporations were given identity of a natural person with natural rights in 1886, through a US Supreme Court verdict. He is quite clear that in the age of corporation impersonation it is inappropriate and illegal for a corporation to claim ‘human rights’ for it. Talking about the rights of intellect, the author stresses that it is time to change the language of Intellectual Property (IPRs). IPRs, in the form of patents, trademarks, and copy rights are now applied to everything from seeds and genetic elements to mechanical gadgets, paintings, computer software, labels etc. Once recognized by the state IPRs become eerily similar to human rights. Institutions of intellectual property have become a global phenomenon. Thanks to WTO and TRIPS agreements, the supporters of IPRs claim it as natural and universal. When it comes to the right to intervene, Kneen is very vocal against the humanitarian militarisms. He believes that in the past few decades, human rights have become a way to intervene militarily in countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. Intervention in the sovereign states on account of human rights has been practiced by the aggressive West. A tyrannical example can be of George W. Bush’s announcement for Afghanistan. He said that US will strike military targets and will also drop food medicine and supplies to the starving Afghans. Kneen believed that humanitarian aid can be requested and sent to states in situation of natural disaster but it should not be used against the state sovereignty. In 1971, Medcins Sans Frontiers was founded and soon after its creation, the organization started to work in Nigeria’s civil war. This organization mobilized the public opinion in favor of Biafrans, the rebellious group of Nigeria. Biafrans held 80 percent of Nigeria’s oil reserves so international community and multinationals took great interest in Nigeria’s civil war. The whole idea was designed for military intervention and to mold public opinion rather than to help the victims of

civil war. The right to intervene remains a vague concept for those who might have recourse to it – states, international organizations and NGOs. Kneen seems quite pessimist when he talks about pharmaceutical companies. He holds that their aim is to keep the patient uncured so that their profit can be maximized. These companies are more interested to keep the patients alive rather to let them die. Vulnerable, helpless and uncured patients are more beneficial for pharmaceutical companies. Other rights discussed by the author are land rights, rights to water, right to die etc. Kneen conclude that the language of rights remains an impotent judicial abstraction. His preferred ‘language’ would emphasize diversity and complexity, respect responsibility not of what he claims of others, but of what he hopes and intends to be and do.

Kneen has discussed an important issue and has been tried to explore the hypocritical use of attractive labels, apparently reflecting the good will, but internally serving the interest working against humanity. In exposing this dichotomy, he has become rather bitter, and cynical at places, yet his efforts to point out the flaw in the discourse of human rights projected by the West, is very efficiently served.

This book is recommended for general readers and human rights activists, students etc.

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