

## Book Reviews

**Khadim Hussain, *Militant Discourse—Religious Militancy in Pakistan*, published by Narratives, Islamabad, 2013, pp.112, price, Rs.600/-.**

Showcased in its full strength since the 9/11 incident, the phenomenon of religious militancy has a long history, and demands a thorough analysis. The phenomenon of militancy and militarism has been posing serious threats to the integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan, and well-being and uplift of the society at large. Despite being highly complex in nature, the problem has been treated in a simplistic manner; this argument is held by the author of the book under review. He finds the so far available analyses of the issue far from being objective is rather coloured and partial, as these reflect particular perspectives of the states of the region and the global level. The people's perspective has been ignored largely in this discourse.

The book has been written with the help of author's own experience through interviews, workshop consultations and participant observation. As a resident of the affected region and an insider he has been very close to the reality which he has tried to explain in this book. He has emphasized the 'indigenous discourse composed of the voices of the common people'. His association with the issues of militancy and peacebuilding has made him write frequently. The articles published in this book are therefore an evolution of his analysis made and updated from time to time.<sup>1</sup>

The book has three sections dealing with: a) the growth of militant discourse through replacing the indigenous socio-cultural discourse; b) definition, support and influence of the Taliban in the government structure; and c) case study of district Swat with respect to

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<sup>1</sup> For instance see, 'Modes and Scale of Conflict in Pakistan's Swat Valley', *Conflict and Peace Studies*, 4:2, pp.63-78.

(i) the spread of militancy and religious extremism, and (ii) Swat's political, economic and social isolation.

The author begins with the claim that his book will nullify the widespread notion of militancy as being generated and invigorated by socio-religious and economic factors—poverty, or lack of education, good governance, or justice—and a particular ethnicity. He has rather linked the emergence of militancy with the state policies.

As to the implications of religious militancy for the society in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Hussain mentions: destruction of infrastructure; threatening the Pushtun community to survive as a distinct cultural and historical entity, and marginalizing the society and its secular sections in particular. The stereotyping of Pushtuns as aggressive, hardliner and religious fundamentalist needs empirical evaluation; to that end Hussain has designed his own theoretical framework. He calls for a revision of strategic priorities, and a fresh look at the role of US, ISI, Saudi funding and military's strategic plans in the region. He finds the Pushtun's stereotyping by the British Indian and later certain Pakistani authors, creating an 'other' than the rest of the Pakistani communities, as stigmatizing them. Pushtunwali, has been evolving, so projecting it as a static, stagnant and a diffident code of life, is wrong. He demands that challenges are emerging and there is a need to revisit the Pushtunwali, the movements, the institutional dynamics and the way state has been trying to deal with the monster of militancy so far.

The author suggests his own typology of terrorism, in the context of rise in suicide attacks and their casualties in FATA, KP and rest of the country and the resultant patterns of fear. He emphasizes the religious aspect of militancy found in FATA and tries to identify gaps in analyses, approaches and perception of stakeholders, to recommend a mediation strategy built upon people's aspirations.

In the context of present conditions, the author suggests that ideological, socio-cultural, and politico-strategic levels of the militant discourse is necessary for analysis and understanding the complex whole named militancy. The author presents a summary of the literature discussing these three levels of analysis. He outlines that at the ideological level the militants uphold only a homogenized worldview under Khilafat which discourage diversity, and nullify indigenous and modern cultures and civilization. The ideological brainwashing of the recruits, thus produce suicide bombers. According to the first model, he finds the explanation in the method of personality building and training of the so called '*jihadis*' such that they do not develop rational thinking, but have a higher level of anxiety and anger, and consider their

ideological opponents worth elimination. The second model is of 'group dynamics', or call it peer-pressure, which infuses a spirit of martyrdom. The vulnerable sections of population are identified by militants, all technological sources are employed to change the mindset, and local sources are generated through charity and donations. Then a strong social control is applied through banning liberal cultural material, destroying education, target killing the influentials, co-opting other militants, mass killing, paralyzing state security and establishing parallel justice system.

In section one, he discusses the fear factor and its relation with the ideology promoted by militants. Identifying 2008 as the year when local power was shifted from the local elite to the Taliban, and the civilians to the military administration, the writ of state was diminished. Here he refers to Chomsky who explains that, 'the fear by systems of power to discipline the domestic population has left a long and terrible trail of bloodshed and suffering'. This observation of Chomsky about the Nazis' atrocities holds very much true in the KP's situation under discussion in this book.

In section two, dealing with the politico-strategic level, is described how the political space for the militant discourse is provided through the contents of government education system, the legal and constitutional framework and the representation of a highly centralized state structure in Pakistan. Hussain finds this process embedded in the 'social, political, economic and cultural marginalization' of the local residents of FATA and Swat. Hussain adds that the security paradigm of the state has used the FATA region and its people as pawns in its engagements: first in Afghan war and then to support the 'war on terror'. In both regions, the anomalous legal system has been adding to the confusion of the people and administration. But despite the historical difference, the author argues, the pattern of emergence of militancy has been same in the two regions. He has mentioned the activities of Hafsa Brigade, and role of the Musharraf regime in collusion with the Bush administration in Talibanization of Pakistan. The paradigm of strategic depth is declared futile, as they distinguished between the 'good' and 'bad' Taliban. The security establishment is also held responsible of ignoring what had been growing in the ideological and non-state militaristic set-up in the settled and tribal areas of Pakistan through which the militant extremist ideologies were permeated into a large section of people during the 1990s till 2007 when the militants took over the control evidently. Strategic alliances among the Salafi *jihadis*, Deobandi organizations, Afghan Taliban, Punjabi Taliban along with ideological alliances have been ignored. Moreover, the strategic interests of Iran, India, Afghanistan, China, Russia and NATO were not

considered worth watching, hence Pakistan was isolated in the region. The province, government, the civil society, and the political parties together are not in a position to respond collectively to the threats caused by Talibanization. This observation of Khadim Hussain recorded in 2009 still holds true in 2014, when a full-fledged operation and dialogue with the militants are in progress simultaneously, with both sides trying to grapple each other successfully.

In the third section on 'Discourse, militancy and regimentation in Swat (1989 – 2009)' the author presents an anatomy of evolution of militancy in Swat and FATA in particular. Swat had been ruled by princess for over a century, only to be annexed to Pakistan in 1969 and be governed by PATA rules. FATA was under colonial administrations' Frontier Crimes Rules since 1901. The deputy commissioner has been entrusted with revenue, judicial and executive powers, really hyperbolic in proportion to other districts of the country. He finds that the TNSM (Tehreek-e Nifaz-e Shariat-e Muhammadi) was successful in controlling the Swat valley when it was given space by the administration of the time. He argues that the turmoil in Swat valley can be understood by knowing how the local elite and the state handled the affairs.

Analyzing the masses support for Maulvi Fazalullah, then known as Mullah Radio, the author asserts that the people at the lower ranks of society, engaged in vocational groups, and who mostly who did not have a share in land distribution of the area, were among his supporters. They were the ones who were called colleagues by the Maulvi so they felt empowered. It is despite the fact that the demand of *mullah* were not in no way empowering people. The author analyses the demands of recent Amir of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (a defunct organization), Fazallullah, which suggest only veiling women from head to toe, ban NGOs, close CD shops, and enforce Islamic punishments, as per his understanding. There is no demand aimed at empowerment and development of the local people and especially the marginalized groups. Despite a strong anti-women posture, the women, strangely, have been supporting him, the author explains why; mostly the older women who have no control on younger women are his supporter. At the tactical level he refers to how networking and incorporating other militants are done. He emphasizes the factors historically important in heightening of conflict in Swat. These include: the shift in religious authority, socio-cultural and gender dynamics, and legal battles in the evolutionary process whereas the geo-strategic factor and institutional factors were added to bring the situation at a detonating point. Many of his views are

corroborate by Wajahat Masood, who has tried to link the events in the province in historical context and theoretical explanations.<sup>2</sup>

Khadim Hussain has put up a question, which has been troubling many other individuals and organizations as well. It is about whether Swat will regain its integrity in social, political and economic terms. Tracing back the issue of militancy in clear terms from the 1990s, after Soviet Union's break-up, he mentions three factors beefing up militancy in Swat: a) the landless masses and religious groups assembled around the leader of Tehreek-i-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM); b) the local administration with the deputy commissioner being the highly powerful in it, lost its power after the Supreme Court ruling about abolishing the PATA regulations in Swat, thus leading to legal anomaly; and c) people wanted a judicial system to get quick relief which helped TNSM enforcing Shariat law. The role of national and international agencies is not ruled out by him, but he has emphasized the pro-militants' role of local bureaucracy in the spread of militancy in the valley.<sup>3</sup> The suggested solution by the author in the closing paragraph is:

If Pakistan is serious about blocking the way for the emergence of another Sufi Mohammad and Fazlulla in the valley, and in the whole Pakhtun belt for that matter, it has to revert to the people. The economic sustenance, political empowerment and socio-cultural rights of the people must be safeguarded if militancy is to be rooted out from the valley and the whole Pakhtun belt.<sup>4</sup>

As promised in the beginning of the book, Khadim Hussain has successfully tried to project people's perspectives, how their expression was proscribed, how they felt, why they responded to different situations, and why they can not be blamed for supporting militancy, as the onus lies largely on the state and its policies.

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<sup>2</sup> For instance see, pp.296-314, 374-97 in Wajahat Masood, *Taliban ya Jamhooriyat, Pakistan Dorahay Par* (Lahore: Nigarshat, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Wajahat Masood refers to it as well indicating the incapacity of bureaucracy to comply with orders of the Chief Justice to present the flogged girl in court of Islamabad, *op.cit.*, pp.366-73, especially p.370.

<sup>4</sup> Khadem Hussain, *Militant Discourse—Religious Militancy in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Narratives, 2013), p.105.

***Balochistan Tanazia aur Hul*, compiled by Ali Abbas published by Narratives, Islamabad, 2012, pp.219, price, Rs.450/-.**

Due to escalated crises of governance and insurgency in Balochistan, the amount of literature published about Balochistan is increasing, showing interest generated in the academia and intelligentsia about the urgency of need to deliberate on the issues of Balochistan. The province has miserably low Human Development Index. The recent decade has witnessed that kind of insurgency, which, though, is the latest addition to the series of insurgencies in the past, has a notable feature of threat to the very survival of the federation of Pakistan. The federal principle, on which Pakistan was formed as a state, is now being understood as not offering amicable solution to the present issue. Those Balochs, who are very mindful of the non-feasibility of the option of a separate homeland for themselves, are, however, in a state of utter confusion due to the inadequacy of the response received from the state of Pakistan about their grievances. The core issue of underdevelopment in the province is either dedicated to the non-willingness of sardars (local chiefs) and the power structure, or the geographical expanse causing high cost of building infrastructure. The Baloch claim due share of the natural resources drawn from their soil which are used lavishly in other parts of Pakistan, whereas the towns in Sui are deprived for the facility of using natural gas. This and similar other facts constitute a complicated picture of paradoxes, problems and apathy. The book under review deals with various dimensions of the same dilemma. Though it is a compilation but, very meaningfully, it starts with the sentence, '*ahl-e Balochistan guzashta nisf-sadee say budamni aur shorash ka samna kar rahay hain*' 'the residents of Balochistan have been facing conflict and anarchy since last half century'; and ends at, '*sooba mein halaat ma'mool par lanay kay leay baray paimanay par eslahaat karnay ki zaroorat hai*', 'to normalize the situation in the province large scale reforms are needed'. It also elaborates the point that in the conflict going on in Balochistan, the link among crimes, militant nationalism, religious extremism and politics is totally ignored, and this link is the one which comprises certain simplistic indicators of conflict and also its solution. This is the main argument of the book as well. The author/compiler also refers to the fact that no proper attention is paid to understanding the process of growing trouble and complexity in governance of the province (p. 219).

The book comprises six long and seven small articles. The first article provides a comprehensive overview of the issues in Balochistan. The next two chapters discuss the political parties and their leadership and the nationalist movement in Balochistan in the light of opinion of the

civil society analysts. Then there are essays about no-go areas, handing over Gwadar port on losing terms, and the ongoing insurgency. The short essays deal with law and order, claim over the new natural gas deposit, and problems of governance and crimes and corruption in the province. Three essays talk about the recent changes and impact of Akbar Bugti's death on Dera Bugti, and also the efforts to make it a model village of peace. The contents are indeed selected in a way that all major dimensions of the insurgency issue in Balochistan are elaborated.

The turmoil in Balochistan has been interpreted differently by different quarters. The government blames sardars, the Baloch people take it as a trial for demanding their due rights, the state sees a foreign hand behind this trouble, the politician want the nationalist movement to be turned into a political struggle, the experts call for compensating for the deprivation of masses, and the criminals find this whole situation as a troubled waters to fish in. While presenting conflict analysis, it is held that the issue is complex, the political culture of Balochistan is basically un-natural, a class-specific deprivation prevails, and the political parties have an internal rift. The secret agencies are intimately involved and the participation of masses in planning for their own province is limited, hence a kind of 'enforced federalism' is operative. People trace the roots of today's crisis in conditions of accession to the state of Pakistan. The provincial government is devoid of political will, and the local bodies/district system can best suit to the province having immense population scatter. The masses on the other hand do not trust public service system, instead they like local justice system, and turn out in elections remain very low. The local people suffer at the hands of discriminatory treatment regarding revenue allocation, economic development, and the government in power in Balochistan whereas almost all the MPAs are in the government, so no opposition in the parliament and no effective check on the working of the government. It is also pointed out that the remedial measures by the government, such as Aghaz-e Huquq-e Balochistan Package, 7<sup>th</sup> NFC Award, and the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment in the constitution still need to prove their efficacy to ameliorate the problematic ground realities in Balochistan.

The chapter on political leaders and parties, trace the origin of political parties from 1929, and relates details about Kalat National Party, NAP, Jamhoori Watan Party, Balochistan National Party, Balochistan Haq Tawar, National Party, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, BSO, Jamiat-ul Ulema-i Islam (F), Jamaat-e Islami, Pakistan Muslim League (Q) and (N), Pakistan Peoples' Party, and other small parties.

An article on the nationalist movement in Balochistan presents the views of politicians, experts and civil society leaders. The author argues that some serious efforts of the federal government to resolve the crisis in Balochistan have gone wasted due to bad governance. Theses interviews point out reasons as being: foreign policy of the government of Pakistan, proxy war of the US and China, role of international and national agencies, provincial autonomy, dialogues, and a nexus between religious extremists and separatists. Also are indicated factors like divisions among the separatist groups, sense of deprivation among the Baloch youth, lawlessness, settlers getting jobs, and the right to self-rule. Demand for southern province in Balochistan, no participation of people in the development planning, target killing, sectarianism in Quetta, need for education and employment to the locals, false policy of the government to crush the resistance by force and killing, role of land mafia to pull out the settlers to grab their land, masses no more under the control of the sardars, and complaints about foiling the basis of accession to the state of Pakistan—to live in an Islamic state and to have control over own resources. The need to handle the trust deficit between the masses and the state, all within the limits of constitution, has also been highlighted. (p.162). All these interviews, in short, indicate the complicated nature of the crisis.

The knowledgeable persons interviewed for this article have expressed their views which can be categorised into two major groups: those putting the major blame on the state and state agencies; and those taking non-state as well as state actors responsible for this chaos. This shows that lack of consensus among the analysts and experts about the major causal factors is also an impediment in getting at some practicable solution to the issue.

The book contains some excerpts showing deplorable conditions prevailing in the province, such as those related to security risks, no-go areas, humiliation of the civilians, corruption, smuggling, especially of oil to a large part of Pakistan, and easy availability of arms. The troubled areas of the province are also a victim of media black-out as only certain news are allowed to the media. Falsification of facts or strict checking of the journalists is one of such techniques that help the security agencies to muffle the intensity of the events.

An interesting and crucial underlying theme in this book is that of underdevelopment, which if genuinely removed, would lead to the succumbing of insurgents and also denying the impression that the local chiefs do not allow uplift of the poor and the powerless. The attackers kill a number of innocent citizens with mines when they tread on pathways which, if paved, would become secure. A paved road



accelerates the process of development. The death of Nawab Akbar Bugti in 2007 ended his half century long rule and left a void, whereas his grandsons are not in a position to bargain with the government effectively. The emerging scenario is that of lessened power of the local chiefs, whom various governments in Pakistan have been trying to appease by giving the royalty of the Sui gas fields. The way the Nawab had been extracting money from the government and the employees of Sui gas field, workers of education, health and security, apart from other transport and infrastructure operated for the Sui field is deplorable. The present heir of Nawab is not that powerful and cannot enjoy that much privileges and benefits. Nawab Akbar's legacy has weakened by the absence of an organized following, about which some detail is given in this book. Contradictions among the demands, strategy, and allegations by the Baloch leaders on other federal units especially Punjab, in the federation of Pakistan, is highlighted by the fact that, 'no stakeholder in the issue of Balochistan is wishful of transparency in the province, because due to no transparency many beneficiaries are bagging a huge amount of money (p. 213). The issues of governance revolve around the fact that the government wants to please the tribal chiefs (sardars) who are given a share in development funds. They seek connivance of the police chief of their own choice, and the levies, who have links with the criminal elements, the dynamics of which can be seen in this book.

A very specific focus on accepting the cultural and linguistic diversity is highlighted which would not require any funding but just change of attitudes. According to Wajahat Masood, an analyst, the politics of identity derived from distinct religion, language and culture benefits only the classes having influence. Redrawing the boundaries, therefore, would lead us nowhere. (p. 169)

The book provides an insight into the much camouflaged scenario of Baloch crisis, due to the ignorance and inaccessibility of the national media. The stakeholders reveal that kind of information which is of their interest; and it can be totally unreal. Such media blindness explains why people in other parts of the country do not know much about the crisis in Balochistan, whereas the crisis in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been minutely covered in the mainstream media, even the versions of militants before and during the dialogue stage are explained and avidly discussed. About Balochistan, this black-out can be undone only by exploring, writing and verifying the information made available to the outer world. The book in review provides many such hints in this direction.

A survey of literature on the similar topics about Balochistan reveals that the book by Ali Abbas provides a comprehensive overview

and in-depth knowledge of the subject. The Narratives in Islamabad has been producing good quality of books on contemporary issues and the book under review also adds to its credit in this respect.

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**Professor Dr Syed Jameel Hussain, *Mera Shehar Jamesabad, Aik Tarikhi aur Umran-yati Tajzia*, published by Fiction House, Lahore, 2013, pp.220, price, Rs.600/-.**

Jamesabad, the name of a town in lower Sindh from 1901 till 1981, now it is not on the map but preserved in the memory and psyche of the local residents, as the town was later renamed as Kot Ghulam Muhammad Bhurgari. The book reminds us of the history of colonial rule in Sindh which had been instrumental in exploring the land, settling new localities, naming them after the British officers of the time, and then repudiation of those historic colonial names by the new independent nation, which has been so keen to throw away the memories of colonial rule, despite having kept the mindset and the legal and bureaucratic structures of that phase intact. In fact, changing name of a city or place is very easy, but changing minds is difficult, so Jamesabad, is still popularly called Jamesabad, instead of Kot Ghulam Muhammad in the early phase, and now Kote Ghulam Muhammad Bhurgari; the suffix of a person's name was also considered critical to be attached to the name of the town, whereas people seek convenience in calling any name of frequent use. The change of name has been the fate of many other newly adopted names, though some of these have been popular, such as Faisalabd, the old Lyallpur—another colonial reminder. The old colonial time names of roads in big cities also show the habit of convenience, and general people do not mind the labels being British, Islamic, political, or else. Long names are abbreviated as well, such as the NWFP turned to its original historic name Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and then turned into KPK and KP.

The book under review has been written by a son of Jamesabad, who tells about its original name 'Hindal', a village claiming its origin since 1885. British Commissioner of Mirpur Khas in 1901, Sir Henry E.M. James, who supervised the settlement of Deh 290 in 1901, thus Hindal became Jamesabad. Sir James was born in England in 1846. He served the Indian Civil Service during 1865-1900. District Tharparkar got his services from 1891 till 1900, and he was a commissioner of the

area when this was surveyed for settlement. Earlier the area was thought to be settled for a cantonment but on change of plan, he just settled a town here bearing his name. He also got honour as an archeologist in China, wrote a famous book on it, and established the renowned D.J. Science College in Karachi. Now Jamesabad is a Taluka headquarter, a subdivision of District Mirpur Khas, which was created out of old district Tharparkar.

Jamil Hussain also explains how the town's name was changed, when a member of National Assembly, Raees Khair Muhammad Bhurgari, convinced the governor of Sindh that the land of Deh 290 was given to Sir Henry James by his ancestor named Ghulam Muhammad Bhurgari. Hussain explains that the Bhurgari family did not do anything to develop Jamesabad rather they lived at a distance and have now scattered in urban centres or abroad. He regrets the local political conditions due to which the public voice was not heard when the name was changed. He, in comparison, appreciates the people of Jacobabad, who resisted change of their city's name effectively. One would wonder how the authorities decide about changing name of public usage, of cities, roads, etc. If there has been a clear cut policy it would have been better. It can be proposed that the old names before the British control can be restored or if a new city was settled by the British that might retain its name. More suggestion can also be made. Jamesabad, therefore, could be either reverted to old name Hindal, which could have been a more local and reasonable name as compared to the present one, or Jamesabad, because the people liked it.

The town lies at 30 miles from Mirpur Khas city, with basic facilities of a small town. Basically its economy is agricultural, because the whole region was settled after construction of canals there. Jamesabad has been irrigated by Jamrao Canal, a branch of Rohri Canal coming from the Sukkur Barrage. Fertility of land was the reason why majority of people became agriculturists; whereas, a few factories have also been established by Parsis of Karachi. A railway station used to be there but the rail is no more operating these days.

The book is a description of history of a cluster of villages, turning into towns narrated with reference to the resident families. It is an effort to record social history of the area, learnt through observation, interviews and searching into the oral tradition. The multitude of individuals can be seen here doing their daily lives. As the author is a medical doctor, he has recorded many people's incident of death as well, which is another dimension of recording people's history. Life and death of particular trees are also recorded here.

Numerous ethnic groups are mentioned with care. Punjabis came here first as settlers in large number; Sindhis and Balochis were already there; Pathans settled there in small number, mostly as shopkeepers, and the seasonally visiting Pathans used to sell cloth on loans to be received at the harvesting time. A large number of tribes and castes, indicated by the family tags, are mentioned frequently in the book. Ten Urdu speaking families, permanently residing in the town are mentioned with reference to '*mushairas*' held by them.

General people are seen here in a diversity of roles: landowners, peasants, *jogis*, watermen, students, physicians, sportsmen, chairmen of local councils, journalists, artisans, social workers, politicians, etc. Women, the least-mentioned category in this book, are also seen in various roles, all traditional—wives, mothers, teachers, doctors, patients, councilors, etc. Despite devoting one chapter on girls' school, the author could not present authentic information about the evolution of girls' education and has left this aspect poorly addressed. Among the holy men mentioned in this book, the most prominent name is of Sain Abdul Aziz, who in his life and now after his death, too, has been a source of solace and spiritual enrichment for many, who also celebrate his *urs*.

The description of individuals, with their names, families, occupations, relationships, and history, is a very interesting and fascinating quality of the book. A lot for this has been collected through interviews and experience of living in the area, so the book has become an expanded autobiography of the author; in local terms not an *aapbeeti* but a *jagbeeti*. He narrates his personal life and at no place it is disconnected with the people around. So it is mostly a social autobiography, where the writer is speaking but being fully aware and alive to the people in his surrounding. The author has recorded memories of a large number of people in it. The narrative is full of faces, stories, memories, all connections of people embedded in space and time. Like the 'unknown soldiers' the unknown builders and workers of our villages and towns die unsung, unrecorded, and unheard. Only memories last for two or three generations. These people are more than a mere piece in the chain of evolution; they deserve more than just a name in the government's record of birth and death. At this stage oral history is the most suitable technique of preserving what has been fast vanishing into oblivion. In this sense the job is done very well by the author.

Jameel Hussain's own association with his schools makes him write about it in a full length chapter. He was taught by Hindu teachers as well whom he recalls with respect and affection. Teachers and school fellows are also mentioned with personal detail about their performance and careers scattered all over the book. The author written about his

desires such as making his city *Madinat-ul-hikmat* (the city of wisdom) by establishing libraries, promoting, publishing and making people book-lovers and readers. That deserves to be the dream of every Pakistani about his/her town to help Pakistan keep pace fast globalizing world.

Due to being a physician and born to a physician grandfather and a family of healers, the author has devoted a full length chapter on the clinics and medical stores. This aspect is interesting as generally a sociologist, a historian or an economist would not think this worthy of detailed description. He also mentions alternate healing practices, role of *mazars* and spiritual healing, with more emphasis upon applied side of cure as compared to preventive side.

Local painters and artists are focused in a separate chapter. Also are recorded details about cinema houses, norms of cinema-going, variety of famous films, romance of watching films, managers and operators of cinemas, restriction and permissiveness for women's visit to cinema and such other details about Jamesabad and the surrounding towns. All this detail shows that a very small town was once a very warm recipient of new Indian and Pakistani films.

The recorded evolutionary history of the town tells how urban facilities were added to it, such as telephone, water supply system, town committee, markets, celebration aspect associated with the ordinary hotels, significance of these hotels in social life of the area, quality of their food, health dimension, ancestral managements and shifting of their owners.

The author mentions non-Muslims, mostly Hindus in various roles, as students, shopkeepers, *hakims*, *sufis*, government functionaries, *jogis*, and as singers of *bhajans* (religious poetry) on *iktara* (one-string instrument of music) in the hotels. Hussain tells about people washing their utensils before eating and drinking at Hindu hotels, a clear indicative of attitudinal and social distance maintained by the Muslims. One religious minded Muslim hotel-owner never served tea to the non-Muslims. Other hotels used to keep separate cups for non-Muslims. Mosques are mentioned in a chapter which is in fact a detailed report of religious practices of the community, religious attitudes, sermons and Eid prayers. One word of caution at this stage for those who want to follow this style of history—the contents of the chapters drift away from the mentioned theme and thus contains material which should logically go to some other chapter.

The Hindus were, and are still, associated with a variety of occupations, such as tailoring, government job, shoe-making, selling animal-hides, traditional money-lending, factory, business, journalism, and various other social roles. The lower caste Hindus are generally

agricultural workers. They exhibit modernist attitudes as well and by adopting modern skills have acquired social mobility. Some have moved to other towns. Lower-caste Hindus (Meghwar, Kohli, Bhil) are mentioned separately. Ahmadis are mentioned in passing.

Hussain has very diligently tried to trace the history of whoever he could identify in social roles such as shopkeepers, clinic operators, and *imam* (prayer leaders). He shows the rise and fall, migration, shifting of occupations and marriages of various families. His emphasis upon individuals has resulted in devoting full chapters to known personalities of the town including Sain Huqqawala, a saint, a professor, a physician, a teacher-footballer, and a science teacher. The reason may be author's own personal association with these persons, but it should not be taken as any flaw in this biography of a town. At least the author could provide primary information about those whom he held in great respect like many other residents of his town. People make history and they deserve to be acknowledged in personal capacity as well.

A good aspect of this treatise is its comprehensive nature. Even the bicycle-shops are covered. With a lot written about the roads, routes, pathways, canals, rails, nearby villages. Wandering in the surrounding of his town, the author wrote a full chapter on the towns /villages nearby. In fact, his personal biography is nicely weaved into this social tales set in and around Jamesabad. However, if a woman had written this, it would have been totally different in presentation due to less access of women to the public areas and activities there. There is therefore a need to write the complementary women's history of the same town to complete the social picture and to erase the impression that women were largely mothers and house-makers, mostly nameless, not deserving any significant mentioning in the holistic picture of Jamesabad.

Hussain shows how people and the community perceived honours by the in a small town. Comparing it with a big city would be a mistake, but if seen in the context of a comparable community,<sup>5</sup> being the first physician, lady doctor, army captain, professors, footballer, film producer, playwright, wrestlers, is an honour. In fact these people make up the 'social power structure' of a town. Visit of great national leaders

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<sup>5</sup> The reviewer herself belongs to a small town in north Punjab. An article has been published about its growth as well. See, Anwar Shaheen, 'Phalia: Past is Another Country', *Pakistan Perspectives*, Vol.16, No.2, July-December, 2011, pp. 53-84. The point to be mentioned here is that majority of the social characteristics of the two towns, lying in two distant parts of the country, are similar. If we collect history of a large number of small towns, it would help paint a general picture of social evolution of the small towns in various parts of Pakistan.

is well remembered as an honour. Using police and army bands in marriage parties and inviting dancers is another source of pride.

Apart from individuals, groups, families, ethnic groups are perceived as entities important in a town. There are detailed chapters on *mohallahs* known with reference to ethnic labels—Momin, Makrani, Punjabi, Rao and Rangar Rajputs, etc. And among these is the one named Gharibabad, a humble name for a middle-class locality. With reference to Gharibabad the social habits of smoking cigarettes and *bidis* (indigenous cigarette), as well as making of *bidis*, horse-riding, processions of *azadari* (morning of Imam Hussain), taking loan on interest, carpentry, making cots, etc. have been described. The tribe Qaimkhanis and Syed families are described in separate chapters.

The author laments about a number of social features which he finds detrimental for development of humanity living in this area, such as petty fighting, destroying historical buildings/ trees, closure of loop line railway service, deplorable state of health in Tharparkar region, and people's reluctance to pay water bills, etc. The author has expressed many reasons of regrets and many wishes for his town, all very legitimate ones, relevant to develop it as a model town, prospering and thriving with cultural activities and pursuit of knowledge. Every true lover of a village or town surely has similar wishes and these can come true only if the individuals unite to become a community of 'change agents', a band of dreamers who have the willingness to strive for a positively brighter tomorrow.

With few typographical mistakes the book provides a model for writing social history.

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**Anwar Shaheen**

**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.), 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 *Tafsir al-Kabir* of Imam Razi], lexical [as in the case of the *Tafsir Kashaf* of Zamakhshari], legalistic [as in the case of the *Tafsir Ahkam al-Quran* 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-Mahjub* of Syed Ali Hujweri], the oral discourses [such as the *Fīhi mā fīhi* of Jalaluddin Rumi] and their Quran commentaries [such as the *Tafsir* 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 *mufasssir*, 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 Wali Allah.

The *Tafsir Charkhi* 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 *Masnavi-i-Ma'anavi* 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!

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**Syed Munir Wasti**

**Zia Mutaher, *Serving the unserved: the life of Dr Ruth Pfau*, published by City Press, Karachi, 2004, pp.99;**

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

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. I hope 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 84<sup>th</sup> year, Dr Ruth Pfau is a radiant example for all – and we can only pray: Licht! Mehrlicht! [Light! More light!]

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**Syed Munir Wasti**

**Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed (ed.), *Mahnat Kashon Kai Nam Shairi* (Urdu), Forward by Professor Sahar Ansari, published by Mass Printers, Karachi, 2012, pp.258, price, Rs.300/-**

The Pakistan Study Centre of the University of Karachi has brought out a collection of selected Urdu verses, *Mahnat Kashon Kai Nam*, compiled by the centre's director, Dr Syed Jaffar Ahmad. As the title indicates, the poetry in the collection is a tribute to the working class.

The collection reminds me of the Progressive Writers' Movement, which had idealised the working class and created awareness about its lot. At the same time, I sense a great change in the outlook of the progressives. It seems that with the passage of time their thinking and attitude has undergone a significant change. In the heyday of the movement, they demanded from writers a complete submission to the line dictated by the organisation. They had little tolerance for other points of view, even when those holding a different approach were sympathetic to their cause.

The present selection is a case in point. Had it been compiled during the 1940s, it would have remained reserved for the verses of the progressives alone, refusing to accommodate any other writer regardless of his or her sympathy to the cause of labour. But Dr Ahmad has made a wide departure from that line of thinking. The attitude is inclusive rather than exclusive. Dr Ahmad grants that poets other than progressives have also written about the working class and we cannot afford to ignore their writings. "When compiling this collection we have not confined ourselves to selections from the progressive poets alone," he writes. "We have also chosen to include verses from those poets who, in general, are not known as progressives or those who have not cared to be recognised as progressives. So, in addition to the progressives, poets such as Akhtar Shirani, Hafeez Jallundhri, Miraji, Noon Meem Rashid and Saleem Ahmad have also been accommodated in this collection. Not only this. We have gone beyond the period of the Progressive Writers' Movement and have taken into consideration poets of the classical period as well."

Paying attention to the classical period proved worthwhile. The collection has couplets from Vali Deccani, Mir and Ghalib. More than that, this period had surprises in store for the compiler. He stumbled upon Nazeer Akbarabadi, a sensational discovery. Dr Ahmad is all praise for Nazeer. "He compels us to wonder that a poet can really have such a deep insight into his society. Truly speaking, he deserves to be treated as the first of the progressives in Urdu poetry." This glowing tribute to the people's poet of the classical age by the compiler demanded a more

generous inclusion of Nazeer Akbarabadi's poetry but only two of his poems are part of this collection.

A selection from the following period shows Maulana Hali and Ismael Meeruti talking about the pains and pleasures of labourers with an awareness the newly emerged age brought for them. Significant is Hali's poem where a shoe maker is seen singing "Main Mauchi Kahlata Hoon". The non-progressives of our times included in this collection are Hamid Aziz Madani, Nasir Kazmi, Jamiluddin Aali, Zehra Nigah and Dr Fatima Hasan. In fact, the inclusion of verses from the non-progressives has added a new charm to Urdu poetry about the disenfranchised working class. It provides relief from the cliché-ridden expression which has come to stay with this kind of poetry. The banjara of Nazeer Akbarabadi, the kooza gar of Rashid, the mauchi of Maulana Hali are seen standing aloft amid the crowd of mill workers and factory labour. They bring with them new vision, depth and meaning.

Columnist  
Daily *Dawn*

**Intizar Husain**

**COVER STORY: Pakistan times**

Biyyothil Mohyuddin Kutty, widely known as B M Kutty, is a remarkable person in many ways. At the age of 19 he abandoned his home in Kerala and chose self-exile in Pakistan, for reasons that failed to convince many, including Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, as the hand of destiny sometimes hides restless souls' search for new worlds under the label of wanderlust.

Kutty's life over the next six decades resembles a ride on a roller-coaster. He has served his adopted country in a variety of roles — he has been a dependable manager in business firms, a trade unionist, a journalist, a publisher, a political worker, a leftist intellectual, a trusted negotiator, a firm campaigner for peace and, last but not the least, the author of an extremely readable autobiography. Aptly described as a political autobiography, (*Sixty Years in Self-Exile: No regrets; A Political Autobiography*), Kutty's narrative follows two parallel tracks — one presents the portrait of a proud Mapilla and his ceaseless desire to tilt at the windmills and the other offers a course in the political history of Pakistan.

Kutty writes about his eventful life honestly and with innocent candour. As he moves through a cavalcade of characters of various hues, he has a way of telling who are worthy of his friendship and respect and who of his anger or contempt. Most of the time he maintains his homespun modesty but there are quite a few flashes of well-earned pride. He does not conceal his attraction to the fairer sex and his admiration for women achievers is revealed, among other things, by his decision to dedicate his book to four women — Biriya Umma (mother), Nirmala Deshpande (peace), Benazir Bhutto (democracy) and wife Birjis (love). Nor does he hide his penchant for conspiring against his own career in business administration by taking up the causes of the victims of his benefactors' malfeasance.

The account of Kutty's movement from one business house to another and his struggle to raise a family without compromising his principles also offer a good peep into the social fabric of Pakistan during the period 1950-1974 — snapshots of life in Lahore in the early fifties, the rise of Karachi as a industrial and commercial capital in the sixties, and the ways in which society reacted to political upheavals throughout the first six decades of Pakistan's history. Much may have changed

since, except perhaps for the dehumanised factotums who punished Kutty for his innocence by condemning him to solitary confinement.

As for Kutty himself, nothing offers a better key to his character than the last two decades that he devoted to the promotion of peace and labour rights.

The other strand of the narrative is a valuable addition to the material on Pakistan's political history — it is a fairly detailed account, from a leftist's point of view, of the country's journey from one political blunder to another. It is doubtful if Kutty has had a notable predecessor in this area. His strength lies in the fact that he is neither gathering material from a library nor does he present a bystander's view of the turbulent politics; he is mostly in the thick of battle. Always a conscious believer in communism, he worked for the Awami League, the Communist Party, the National Awami Party, Pakistan National Party, and he has a great deal to tell us, not only about national politics but also about what went on within the progressive political parties and the movements for democracy.

The man Kutty was really devoted to from among the political leaders in his gallery — Mian Iftikharuddin, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto, Sardar Ataullah Mengal, Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri and a host of BSO leaders — is Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo. Kutty paid off his debt to Bizenjo by editing his biography, *In Search of Solutions*, some time ago. Here he presents a broader review of the nine-month tenure of the NAP government in Balochistan, and his own role as Bhutto's emissary to Bizenjo. He also offers several close-ups of Bhutto in a variety of moods and in the peculiar roles he liked to play. That Bhutto never treated his requests lightly and Benazir invited him to join her government reveals the level of respect Kutty came to enjoy among the political elite because of his professional efficiency, his understanding of politics and his capacity for calling a spade a spade. Students of politics will find in this book a large volume of reference material; some of it not readily available elsewhere.

What *Sixty Years in Self Exile* tells us about Kutty and his assessment of Pakistan's political travails are important and relevant and this material should enable serious students to comprehend the present crises. Here and there Kutty's memory fails him, literary critics may find his prose exceptionally simple, some may question his excessive use of the word "I" (unavoidable to some extent in an autobiography), and professional analysts may challenge his assessment of famous/notorious political figures, but that does not diminish the merit of the work.

It is not the autobiography of a run-of-the-mill politician who promises a revolution without knowing what it means, nor a sermon

from a usurper of the pulpit; it is the story of a generation whose capacity to throw up nameless builders of a nation the state did not have the good sense to use. Kutty will find a prominent place in the group of activists who tried to show the path to Pakistan's glory by fighting for peace, justice and the dignity of labour. States do not achieve greatness by the brilliance or the exertions of their leaders alone; far more important is the role of brief writers and prompters in the wings and Kutty has filled both roles with diligence and a gusto all his own.

The book is a good addition to the splendid works the Pakistan Study Centre of the University of Karachi has issued over the past many years.

The reviewer is secretary general of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

**Sixty years in self-exile: No Regrets; A Political Autobiography (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)** By *B. M. Kutty* Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi 562pp. Rs600

**I. A. Rahman**