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Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies

Volume 2, Number 2, June 2010

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Distinctive Cultural and Geographical Legacy of Bahawalpur

By Samia Khalid and Aftab Hussain Gilani

Geographical introduction:

The Bahawalpur State was situated in the province of Punjab in united India. It was established by Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan I in 1739, who was granted a title of Nawab by Nadir Shah. Technically the State, had come into existence in 1702 (Aziz, 244, 2006).¹ According to the first English book on the State of Bahawalpur, published in mid 19th century:

... this state was bounded on east by the British possession of Sirsa, and on the west by the river Indus; the river Garra forms its northern boundary, Bikaner and Jeyselmeer are on its southern frontier...its length from east to west was 216 koss or 324 English miles. Its breadth varies much: in some parts it is eighty, and in other from sixty to fifteen miles. (Ali, Shahamet, b, 1848)

In the beginning of the 20th century, this State lay in the extreme south-west of the Punjab province, between 27.42' and 30.25' North and 69.31' and 74.1' East with an area of 15,918 square miles. Its length from north-east to south-west was about 300 miles and its mean breadth is 40 miles. Of the total area, 9,881 square miles consists of desert regions with sand-dunes rising to a maximum height of 500 feet. The State consists of 10 towns and 1,008 villages, divided into three *Nizamats* (administrative Units): *Minchinabad*, Bahawalpur and *Khanpur*. Since each *Nizamat* was further subdivided into three *Tahsils*, there were nine *tahsils* in all. (Ahmad, 1998)

According to census of 1891 the total population of the Bahawalpur state was 650,042. The Muslims numbered 546,680; Hindus 90,013; Sikhs 13,321 and Christians 11. The big landlords were Muslims, while the money lending and banking sector was mostly comprised of Hindus. (Ali, 1994) In 1901 the population of this princely state was recorded by British government as 720,877 and 83 percent

of the total population was Muslim. (Ahmad, 341, 1998) Most of Hindus, by caste, were *Rajput, Jat* and *Arora*². Sikhs were *Grawal* and *Jats*. Muslims were mostly, *Rajput, Daudpotra, Jat, Baloch, Arain, Joiya Sheikh, Syed, Pathan, and Mogul*. (Ali, 1994)

During the rule of the last Nawab, Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V, Bahawalpur State was merged with West Pakistan in 1954. As a result, Bahawalpur emerged as an administrative division of Pakistan, with its headquarters at Bahawalpur City³. Accordingly, location of Bahawalpur division appeared as follows: in the north its boundaries were limited to River *Sutlej, Panjnad* and Indus River, which separates Multan and *Dera Ghazi Khan*, (where the adjacent districts of *Sahiwal, Vehari, Multan, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh* and *Dera Ghazi Khan* are located); while *Sukkur* Division of Sind province lies in south west. The East Punjab province of India and ex-princely states of *Bekaneer* and *Jessalmer* were adjacent to the south of Bahawalpur. This area is extremely important regarding national defense and from a strategic point of view. (Ali, 1994). Three districts of Division Bahawalpur are integral part of it: *Bahawalnagar, Raheemyar Khan* and Bahawalpur District (Gazali, 35, 1984). Bahawalpur division was an administrative unit of the Punjab Province of Pakistan, until the reforms of 2000 when the third tier of government was abolished.

Consequently, Bahawalpur got the charge of district, and it was bound on North by *Lodhran* District, on the East by *Bahawalnagar* District and India, on the South by India and on the West by *Rahimyar Khan* and *Muzafar Garh* Districts. Bahawalpur is one of the largest districts of the Punjab covering an area of 24,830 square miles. It has peculiar demographic, topographic and geographical characteristics. The district is situated almost in the center of the country at an elevation of 152 meters from the sea levels. It has Five Tehsils; Bahawalpur, *Ahmad Pur* East, *Yazman (i/c Cholistan)*, *Khair pur Tamewali, Hasilpur*. The population of Bahawalpur district has increased from 1.453 million in 1981 to 2.411 million in 1998 showing a growth rate of 3.88 % per year as compare with 3.3 % of total Punjab. Population density has increased from 59 in 1981 to 97 in 1998. (<http://www.bahawalpur.gov.pk/history.htm>)

The soil of central Bahawalpur mostly consists of the plains of Indus basin, which is at the height of not more than 150 meters above sea level. But the south-western desert, which is called *Rohi* or *Cholistan*, is mostly undulated due to the presence of sand dunes. The height of the sand dunes does not exceed 150 meters (according to Imperial Gazetteer of 1901 height of dunes was not more than 500 feet). Before the construction of *Sutlej valley Project's Canal* system, the irrigation was carried out with the flood water of *Sutlej*. This area is called "*Otarh*." The second major area in terms of topography, extending between the railway line and

the passage of Hakra, comprises of clay. The special ingredients are silt and sand dunes. Locally this is known as “*Hitarh*” and this is the prosperous and fertile area of the dwellings and markets of the colonies of Sutlej valley Project. Imperial Gazetteer concluded had divided this area lengthwise into three great strips: *Rohi* or *Cholistan* (desert); the central tract was *Bar* or *Pat* (upland); and the third was fertile alluvial tract in river valley called Sind. (Ahmed, 1998)

The climate of Bahawalpur is hot because, being adjacent to *Rajputana* desert, this area overall resembles the dry climate of an arid desert. The summer season lasts from the month of March to October for almost eight months, while the weather is pleasant and cold from November to February. The average temperature in the summer season remains between 40 and 50 degree centigrade, while during winter it is between 5 and 15 degree centigrade and sometimes it falls below the freezing point, which ruins the crops. Before the launching of canal system, when the Bahawalpur region mostly comprised of sand dunes, the temperature of Fort *Abbas* and *Khanpur* sometimes used to match that of Jacobabad and became the cause of sand storms. (Rehman, 1899)

These days Bahawalpur receives more rainfall all over the year even in summer, which shows that even Bahawalpur is also not immune to the effects of global warming. The months of July and August constitute the months of rainy season (commonly known as *Sawan*). The remaining monsoon winds of Northern Punjab occasionally cause heavy rainfall in this area which makes the weather pleasant. *Cholistan* consists of 10,399 square miles. There are some places, which do not receive rain years at a time. During winter sometimes the western winds coming from Persian Gulf would move towards this desert, creating conditions of thunderstorms, which last for over a week or so. Moreover, *Rabi* (spring harvest) of this region is dependent on rain; particularly the *Cholistan* desert’s crops are entirely dependent on these rains.

Rainfall is comparatively very low due to the fact that most of the area comprises of desolate and barren desert. *Cholistan*, the great desert, was once green and prosperous land, where cultivation was practiced. Around 4000 BC, *Cholistan* was a cradle of civilization commonly known as Hakra valley civilization. The major source of irrigation was the water of Hakra River but with the drying of the river the area was desiccated and left with only grazing lands. The river supplied water regularly to this region until 1200 BC but near 600 BC it became irregular in flow and subsequently vanished. In cultural advancement it can be compared with the Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Harappa civilization. Probably a variety of problems such as hostile invasions also contributed to the ultimate disappearance of this great civilization. (Ahmad, 2005)

Hakra River⁴ was called *Saraswati* in ancient times, which joins the Indus River after passing through *Pattan Minara* in *Rahimyar Khan, Sukkur, Bhakkar* and *Rohri*. According to several historical traditions, seven rivers used to flow in the Indus valley, which was also known as “Sapat Sindhu” which means the land of seven rivers. The two of the rivers Hakra and Ghaghra have since dried up and remains of ancient cities have been discovered on its banks. These ruins are now visible in the form of sand dunes. (Punjab States Gazetteer, 4, 1908)

In Bahawalpur, sand storms were excessive at the start of summer before 1920. In 1920 when canal irrigation system was introduced here to cultivate the area, agriculture flourished and as a result, sand storms reduced. Otherwise, these storms turned into the clouds of sands, which overcast the sky and the darkness would prevail even during day time. During summer the direction of the wind usually remained from North east to South west.

From ancient times wells were the only mean of irrigation or watering in this area, and earliest ones were un-bricked wells. Until the advent of twentieth century, the soil was also irrigated through flood channels along with wells. The state of Bahawalpur paid particular attention to irrigation system in 1900. Therefore Ahmad notes: Rs.7, 20,000 was advanced to cultivators for digging of 1,280 new wells and the repair of 159 old ones. Up to 1904 about 8 lakes had been thus advanced but still these activities were insufficient to deal the need for water. (Ahmad, 1998)

Later on a project called the *Sutlej* Valley Project was designed jointly by the Bahawalpur State and the Government of India to irrigate the fertile basin of *Sutlej* river, and was approved during 1920-21. According to this project four head works were built, out of which three were set up within the boundaries of Bahawalpur State: *Sulemanki, Islam* and *Punjad*, while the only exception is the *Ferozpur* head works.⁵ In this irrigation system there are two types of canals, perennial and non-perennial. (Ali, 1994) This boosted the cultivation in the vicinity.

In the early days of the state, the widely grown crops were wheat, cotton, oats, cereal, gram, barley, maize, rice, tobacco, sugar cane, turmeric, corn etc. ‘The crops which covered the largest area in 1903-4 were wheat (607 square miles), rice (183), spiked millet (90), great millet (85) and gram’ (82). (Ahmad, 1998) At present almost all kinds of crops are grown here. Different types of rice of extremely fine quality were produced abundantly in the area of *Khanpur*. The crops of wheat, barley and gram were produced mostly in the area of *Minchanabad*. Bahawalpur enjoys distinction for the production of wheat and the cotton in Pakistan. Among fruit dates, pomegranate, orange and mango have been noted for quality of production. In the ancient times, the pomegranate and date palm of this area were sent to other countries as gifts. The state was also exporting wheat, gram, indigo, dates mangos and *Gur* (unrefined sugar). (Ahmad, 1998)

In the last decade of 19th century, three rice-husking mills were functional in this area. Three cotton-ginning mills at *Bhawalnagar*, *Kot Sahab* and *Khanpur* were also working. Bahawalpur was also famous for its silk, metal cups, impure carbonate of soda and porcelain vessels. (Ahmad, 1998) Soap making and cotton ginning are still important enterprises. New factories, producing cottonseed oil and cottonseed cake were constructed in the 1970s. The principal industries are cotton ginning, rice and flour milling, and the hand weaving of textiles. Bahawalpur is an imperative marketing center for the contiguous undeveloped areas. It is located on the crossroad between Peshawar, Lahore, Quetta and Karachi. It is 889 km away from Karachi which is biggest market of goods in Pakistan.

The principal means of transportation was the railway system in Bahawalpur. This played a very vital role in the development of Bahawalpur State. To the north of the state the double track of the main railway line between Lahore and Karachi acceded through Empress *Adamwahan* Bridge across the Sutlej River, with a length of 148 miles within the State (Ahmad, 1998) and total length of about 240 kilometers.⁶ Big towns of *Bahawalpur*, *Ahmed Pur East (Dera Nawab Sahib)*, *Liaquat Pur*, *Kahanpur*, *Rahimyar Khan* and *Sadiqabad* are situated along this railway track. In 1897, another railway track was inaugurated between Delhi, *Bathinda* and *Samasatta*.⁷

A railway track of 257 kilometers long leads from Sama Satta to *Amroka* and another to *Bathinda* and *Hindu Mal Kot* station. Before partition this track had great significance as it was the shortest way to link Delhi with Karachi. The railway tracks built within the boundaries of princely states were named as “Royal Railway Line” and states bore its total expenses. (Ali, 1994) Another railway track of the state was completed in 1928, from *Bahawalnagar* to *Fort Abbas*.⁸ Before the Second World War a railway line was laid from *Fort Abbas* to *Sama satta*, with railway stations built at *Qatul Ammara*, *Yazman*, *Al-Quresh* and *Mansoor* situated along this track. During the Second World War the railway tracks were uprooted according the military needs and finally handed over to the British government.

At the start of the previous century, there were 624 miles of unmetalled roads and about 40 miles of metalled roads. (Ahmad, 1998) But before the partition of the subcontinent, only 32 miles of metalled road were left. One of the important roads was between *Fort Abbas* and significant market town, *Mandi Yazman*. Furthermore, *Yazman* town is connected with Bahawalpur City with a 32 km long road. Another main road connects *Yazman* with Head *Rajkan* and *Bengala Tailwala*. (Ali, 1994)

Now, more than that, Bahawalpur has a national airport facility and the best bus service of Pakistan “Sami Dewoo”, which can take you anywhere in Pakistan. As far as means of communication are concerned the cities of this area are

equipped with facilities like internet, telephone, mails and courier services. Even though these are not up to the mark, they are progressing day by day.

Cultural Heritage:

Horton and Hunt stated very simply, 'Culture is everything which is socially learned and shared by the members of a society.' (52, 1984) The people of Bahawalpur have strong religious sentiments. Hence, religion plays a vital role in their personal and in day to day life. The cultural heritage of this area is of no less importance than the culture of the other areas of the Punjab as far as the poetry, calligraphy, embroidery motifs, music, paintings, architecture, or various games, are concerned. The Culture of this place is a combination of Islamic religious norms and regional mores of Sind and Punjab.

The dress or attire is a significant part of the culture and heritage of any region. The traditional dress mostly worn by the people here includes plain shirt (*Kurta*), embroidered shirt (*Karahi dar Kurta*), cloth (*Lungi*), Turban (*Patka*), cap (*Kulah*), Shawl (*Chadar*), and crushed turban (*Turah*). The women wear shirt (*Kurta*), Lose Trousers (*Shalwar*), scarf (*Dupatta*), long skirts (*Ghaghra*) and Veil with Gown (*Burqa*) for concealing the body and *Khussa* are famous footwear of this region. The beautiful and elegant looking embroidery on footwear (*Khussa*) by making petals of flowers (*Gul Kari*) is a specialty of this place. "Bahawalpur is also renowned for gold embroidered *khoosas*. Here people use this footwear in day to day life", though this is not very soft footwear. (Quddus, 191, 1989)

The towns of Bahawalpur are internationally considered to specialize in extremely fine, light, and elegantly designed pottery which is sometimes called "paper pottery".

Its delicacy can be judged from the fact that a clay bowl large enough to hold a pint of water weighs hardly an ounce. This beautiful light pottery is incredibly cheap, and is a thing of great magnetism for the memento collectors. In the opinion of many a connoisseur, Bahawalpur pottery can compete with the delicacy and fineness of world pottery. (Quddus, 181-182, 1989)

Calligraphy (*Khattati*), inscription on gold and bronze's utensils and the art of pottery of the region are also worth mentioning.

The *Chunari* is the art of tying a small point on the cloth by threads and then dyeing it with the required colors. When opened after drying, there is a small circle in the white region splashed around the tied piece of fabric. In Pakistan Bahawalpur is famous for this *Chunri*. In addition, the art of embellished fabrics with embroi-

dery using thread-work, mirror work or gold brocade is prevalent. *Gota* and *lappa* (golden, silver, and other glittering ribbons) work is also popular here. Then Block Printing and Batik work on Cloths, Curtains and Bed Sheets are also in fashion. These techniques are transferred from generation to generation. These people who work in local industries are not formally educated. They just follow their forefathers in running their business, and most often, hand it over to the next generation.

Bahawalpur, along with Multan, is famous for work in the camel skin industry. Usually the skin of camel is stretched over clay moulds for drying. The drying time varies according to the thickness of skin. After it has dried, the clay moulds are broken and thrown away. The skin is then cleaned and dried again. It is then painted in colors repaired by craftsmen themselves. The mixing of these colors is a professional secret handed down from father to son (Quddus, 1989, 192).

Shahamet Ali called the local language the “language of *Daoodputra*” but he does not mention any name for it. He recorded that this language of the locals is a mixture of Sindhi and Punjabi and if a person understands either of these two languages he will not find it difficult to understand it (xxii, 1884). But now this language of natives is known as *Saraiki*. Punjabi, Urdu and English are also spoken and understood by most of the people. The natives of this area who speak *Sariaki* language are known as *Saraiki* people. Although they belong to different casts or *Beradri* yet due to language, they are identified as *Saraiki*. This language has many other Dialects as *Mūltānī*, *Thaalī*, *Jhangī*, *Sindhī*. There are also sub dialects like *Derāwālī* is a sub dialect of *Multani*, *Jāng(a)lī*, *Kacchrī*, *Niswānī* are sub-dialects of *Jhangī*. In the books of history the language of this area is commonly described as Multani.

Bahawalpur even now a day has customs and traditions of its own which are generally based on religious beliefs. “It is hard to find milk in the bazaars of Bahawalpur on the 10th of a lunar month as on every 11th of the lunar month, sweets are prepared to be distributed among poor in the name of the great saint of Baghdad, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Gilani, whose followers are found in large numbers in the area.” (Quddus, 176, 1989) This is not only the practice of Bahawalpur reign but it is a basic part of socio-religious aspect of Punjabi life style. But this area also has distinction in socio-religious mores of Sufis and shrines. Sind claimed to be the house of Sufism and Uch Shareef⁹ was its heart, which is now included in Bahawalpur District. Some other notable Sufis were ‘Shaikh Saifuddin Haqqani of Uch and Pir Jalaluddin Qutab-al-Aqtab who died at Uch in 1292 A. D. and converted the Mazaris and several other Baluch tribes to Islam.’ (Quddus, 150) The largest spiritual heritage, not only for locals but also for Muslims of subcontinent, is in *Uch*. This is a small town today and divided into three different quarters known as; *Uch Bukhari*,¹⁰ *Uch Jilani/ Gillani*,¹¹ *Uch Mughlan*.¹²

Uch Shareef is privileged to witness numerous sufis, saints and Islamic religious persons. As Quddus informs us: “Syed Bandagi Mohammad Ghouse one of the descendants of the great Sufi saint, Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani/ Gillani (1078-1115) took up residence in Sind at *Uch* (now in Bahawalpur) and died in 1517 A. D.” (Quddus, 149-150, 1989). In the 13th century the Sufi movement saw four friends commonly “known as ‘*Chahar Yar*’ they were: Hazrat Fariddudin Masud Ghanj Shakar of Pakpattan (1174-1266), Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Bukhari of Uch (1196-1294); Hazrat Bahauddin Zikria of Multan (1170-1267) and Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar of Sehwan (1177-1274), all of whom did great jobs in their areas and served Islam. ‘Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Bukhari converted *Sumras* and *Sammas*, ruling families of Sind’ (Quddus, 150, 1989).

Archaeologically, and spiritually, some immensely distinguished Sufis shrines existing at Uch include those of Hazrat Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari¹³, Hazrat Bahawal/ Baha’al Haleem¹⁴, Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Bukhari commonly known as Makhdoom Jahanian Jahangasht¹⁵, and Bibi Jawanadi¹⁶ and Shaikh Saifuddin Ghazrooni¹⁷. The surviving shrines, sanctuaries, cemeteries, and mausoleums are incorporate with glazed tiles and brick. Some also have revetments, lime plaster panels, terra-cotta embellishments with brick structural walls laid in earth mortars, along with ingenious cornered tower buttresses. The remarkable Mausoleum of Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari and his family were joined by a series of domed tombs. The first is said to have been built for Baha’ al-Halim/ Haleem by his pupil, while the second is Jahaniyan Jahangasht’s tomb is next to Bibi Jawindi Mausoleum. In the bouquet of Shrines of *Uch*, the shrine of *Bibi Jawandi* sustains its uniqueness because it has Central Asian design, titled in the blue and white faience.

On 22nd May 2009 the U. S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson visited *Uch Shareef*. She highlighted the importance of this place by saying that it is an ‘irreplaceable global Heritage’ furthermore she threw light on the significance of this place in the following words:

The exceptional architecture of this 15th century shrine needs to be conserved, not only for the thousands of devotees who visit every year at the time of the *Urs*, but for future generations.¹⁸ (<http://lahore.usconsulate.gov/1-09052201.html>)

Channan Pir Shrine is located an hour’s drive away from Bahawalpur City and 45 km from *Derawar Fort*.¹⁹ *Channan Pir* was a disciple of *Makhdoom Jahanian Jahangasht* of *Uch*. The annual *Urs* is held at the beginning of March. A colorful fair known as ‘*Mela Channan Pir*’ (function of enlightened persons) is held here. Devotees gather on the night of full moon to offer “*Fateha*”²⁰ at the tomb of

the saint. During these *Urs* days one can neither hire a bus nor trucks and tractor-trolleys from some surrounding city because all are booked by local people for the *Mala Channan Pir*.

Another worthy place to visit is the *Nawab* Family burial ground near the *Darawar Fort of Cholistan*, where most of the late *Nawabs* of Bahawalpur and their families are buried. The tomb is attractive, built with marble and decorated in blue glazed style. Locals have great affection for these graves of their rulers. The shrine of *Muluk Shah*, a popular saint of his time, is located in the city and visited by the devotees on every Thursday, *Ashura* and *Eid* days. A small fair is also held here annually.

Much folklore is also related with the shrines of this region. As there is a wall in the tomb of *Jahania Jhangash* on which local people believe that he travelled from Delhi to *Uch Shareef* on it. Then there is a gnarled tree outside the shrine which locals say it was planted by the saint himself, which is full of red, green and black wish ribbons/strips of cloths or bangles of glass as a *Chilla*. If these wishes are fulfilled then they give bangles of Silvers as a token of thanks to the guards of Shrine. There is a tiny room, to the right of the door as you enter which is said to house the footprints of “Imam Ali”. According to another legend, one out of 11 pillars in the hall of attached mosque with *Jalaludin Bukhari Tomb* was come there from Heaven. All visitors kiss those pillars one by one to be blessed. In Pakistan, locals associate folklores, legends and myths with tombs or shrines wherever they are found and Bahawalpur is not an exception. Most of the time, those stories do not have any historical basis. But these traditions tell us the oral history of different regions, which are transmitted inter-generationally.

The superstitions also have a special impact on the culture and tradition of Bahawalpur. In spite of an Islamic society ignorance prevailed because before partition the local Muslims were accompanied by local Hindus. Resultantly, Hindu norm imprinted great effect on them. Hindus firmly believed that iron, fire and water are gift of Gods for the safety of human beings from catastrophes. The Muslims of Bahawalpur co-opted these same beliefs from Hindus e.g. the practice of putting an iron knife or something made of iron by the side of a woman during childbirth. They believe this act will save both the child and the mother from bad omens. If the child of any woman died soon after birth, then the next baby was given names like *Faqir* (Beggar) and *Mureed* (Disciple) etc...so that he would survive due to the virtues of holy people. In addition, the very first time when a child was fed, that food was named as “*Ghutti*” which was derived from Hindus. Similarly, to keep the people safe from *Nazar-e-Bad* (outcome of an evil eye) various tactics were applied e.g. putting a black small mark on the forehead of a beautiful baby, a shoe hung in the neck of cattle and a black cooking pot (*Handi*) on a newly built house.

For the safety of new vehicles a black ribbon or strip of black cloth was tied on the rear view mirror or at the back of vehicles. Some time even a small shoe was hung behind the means of transportation.

Furthermore, some things are considered to be the signs of upcoming occurrences. Croaking frogs and ants coming out in large numbers was the indication of rain. The natives of Bahawalpur used to consider arrival of the guest as a symbol of auspiciousness and blessing. For that reason, guests are eagerly awaited. Some indication, which are thought to be the arrival of a guest are the cawing of a crow on the ridge of the wall, the dropping of the loaf of bread from hand, and sighting of a child sweeping.

In general conversation the people usually preface with some salutations. They call their male elders as “*Saeen*” female elders as “*Mai Saeen*” and age fellows male as “*Adda*” for the age fellow females the title “*Addi, Bhen* or *Bibi*” and boy and girl of young age as “*Kaka and Kaki*” are used respectively. Close friends call each other “*Dolha Saeen*” to show intimacy. In Bahawalpur culture, the custom of polygamy was common. For second marriage men mostly use the excuses the rules and regulations of the *Sharia*, which allow a Muslim man four wives at a time. Sometimes death of the first wife, ailment of wife or the desire for a son provides the bases to men for second marriage. Most common except then these causes is the rigid *Beradri* system in which there is a trend of marriage of a person within the *Beradri* (Cast or clan). Specially, marriage of a woman is fixed within the clan to avoid division of property. The bilateral marriages (*Vatta Satta*) are also the motivational factors.

In Bahawalpur State, the upbringing of the children was managed in a specific style. The first diet of a baby was the honey by the eldest person of the family, which was locally known as *Ghotti*. In initial days, baby was massaged with butter and the forehead was pressed to make the features of the face better. The bones of cheek and face were pressed and to keep the skull rounded, the baby was laid down straight after being wrapped by cloth when during his sleep (Tahir, 1979).

The people of Bahawalpur State have been extremely simple, sincere and friendly as well as hospitable. Sikhs and Hindus also lived along with Muslims so the customs and tradition of the Hindus and Sikhs were adopted. In Bahawalpur state majority of the population was illiterate, so they adopted such customs because they were ignorant. The people of Bahawalpur used to celebrate the birth of son very joyfully. They kept awake and festivities would go on for the whole night. On this occasion the people of the state would arrange a function, in which the relatives and friends used to be invited. This was called as function of circumcision. On the conclusion of the child’s “Quran reading” a ceremony used to be arranged (Kavish, 1995).

When the children grew up the responsibility of their marriage would be entrusted to their parents. In the state, the locals would marry their grown up children on attaining puberty which is an Islamic way of life. The custom of reciprocal marriages also prevailed, but in the case of failure of such marriages, not one but two families used to suffer. When the daughter grew up, the boy's family would submit the proposal of marriage. On this occasion the community would assemble and the sweetmeats were distributed and prayers for their welfare would be offered. Usually, first the engagement would be celebrated and afterwards the date for wedding was finalized. When the wedding date was determined, usually the knots on a thread were made to mark the date and handed over to the bridegroom's family. (Kavish, 1995)

The native of Bahawalpur State used to eat meat with great interest, specially cow, beef, mutton and chicken etc. The meat of partridge and quail were also liked very much. The food made with mutton, e.g. roasted meat (*Seekh Kabab*) pieces of flesh (*Tikka*) fried meat (*Karahi Goslat*) and a kind of curry taken in the early morning (*Nihari*) was eaten by the locals of Bahawalpur with great interest. But the special local dish is known as *Dal Patta*. Actually, this dish was famous in Hindu era when they serve a delicious *Dal* (a kind of grain) on *Patta* (leaf of tree). That is still famous here but now it is served in plates. No one really knows when and why this *Dal* or *Dawl* became popular among natives.

In spite of various other mystical folk poets, Ali Haider of Multan and Ghulam Farid's work in Saraiki is very well known among local people. Other famous poets like Sachal Sarmast and Shah Abdul Latif, famous mystical poets of Pakistan, also used this language to give their religious messages in poetry. Sachal Sarmast was more outspoken than Shah Abdul Latif, (d. 1826).

The lyrics of Sachal Sarmast, in Sindhi and Siraiki belong to most ecstatic verses ever written in any Islamic country. Sachal is one in a long line of poets many of them from Baluchi clan of Leghari who used Siraiki besides Sindhi, and whose poems even today repeat the traditional adoration of beauty as well as the acceptance of suffering typical of Sufism. (Qudus, 165, 1989)

The funeral ceremonies were also very unique and still prevail in the region. When someone died, no cooking was done in his home for three days and the close relatives and friends would take care of meals. On the third day *Quran Khawani* (reciting of the Holy Quran) or *Qul Khawani* would be held and prayers were offered for the soul of died person for eternal peace. Furthermore the clothes of the dead person were given away to charity. On the same day the legal heir was ap-

pointed the successor and the ceremony was held. The close relatives, friends and village or community fellows used to gift “one Rupee” or two as a token of love to the successor as “*Pug da Rupiya*” (rupee for the turban). After the death, some poor would be offered regular meal for some period continuously. The natives of *Ubbha* (North) observed 21 days’ ceremony i.e. the community was invited to meal twenty one days after the death (Punjab states Gazetteer, 197, 1908).

Locals *Urs* of different *Pirs* or Sufis are the most important functions and gatherings for public. In sports wrestling, Kabbadi, Malhan (Sindhi Wrestling), Chess, Playing Cards, Pigeon flying, hunting of wild boar and Hog Deers, Tube holding, Rod holding, Fist seizure, and horse racing etc. were very popular. While in children’s games Sheedan, foot ball, *Gilli Danda* (Club and wood rod) kite flying, marbles etc were included. In the miscellaneous games and days, on Sundays of the month of *Sawan* (local name of Rainy season), the people of the Bahawalpur State would assemble on the bank of river or canal and to enjoy by cooking and bathing. *Jhoomar* was the most popular dance, which was played especially on the occasion of marriages and *Dhamal* (mystic dance) was performed on happy occasions.

Large parts of this area consist of desert lands, and locomotive of desert life is the camel. During the *Nawab’s* time there was a great army of camel riders and there were Imperial Service Camel Corps.²¹ But yet Camel is important for the transportation in desert area. They are also involved in recreational activities. In every *Urs* or public gatherings, a camel race and *Dangal* of Camels (wrestling of Camels) are the integral parts of such local functions.

Here all classes also have their own style of recreation. The elite class is too fascinated by *Cholistan’s* Desert Jeep Rally. This is the most interesting event held annually in March in the *Cholistan* Desert. It is generally organized near Drawer Fort and vehicles cover the distance of about 250 km around this fort. It includes the vehicles ranging from 1300 cc to 3000 cc plus. Thrill-seeking tourists gather from all over Pakistan to enjoy the spring in sand and now it is getting international attention.

At the same time the lower class of workers also know how cheer themselves. They arrange donkey cart race on University road which is situated out of the main city. In Pakistan, donkey cart race has been recognized officially and some federations are also working for them especially for the Karachi Donkey cart race. Still the Bahawalpur donkey race is purely public activity financed, supported and enjoyed by local men. The camel race is also a chief pastime in the Desert areas.

Conclusion:

The geographical location of Bahawalpur gave it versatile Cultural inheritance, which is as colorful as it is old. This area is near India and has strong impact of *Rajputana* mores. Moreover, this is between two provinces of Pakistan which also imprinted their culture on this area. The Bahawalpur region and its masses still have some reflections of the Hindu culture. Nevertheless, the *Nawabs* tried to develop complete region in all aspects by establishing educational institutes, library, National Park, Zoo, Railway Station and Airport. This area is enlightened with education, and the hub of education of this area is the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. These all factors are contributing the cultural change of this area. In a nutshell we can say it is a unique of Pakistan with rich past, bright present and hopeful future.

Notes:

¹ The Abbasi Daudputras, Sindhi tribesmen, from whom the ruling family of Bahawalpur belong, claim descent from the Abbasid Caliphs. The tribe came from Sindh to Bahawalpur and assumed independence during the decline of the Durrani Empire. The mint at Bahawalpur was opened in 1802 by Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan II with the permission of Shah Mahmud of Kabul. In the Anglo Sikh wars (1st, from 1845-46, 2nd was in 1848-49) Bahawalpur supported the British and this granted its survival. The Abbasi family ruled over the State for more than 200 years (1748 to 1954). During the rule of the last Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V, Bahawalpur State was merged with Pakistan. During the 1960's (1954) the Nawab agreed (Agreement Dated 3rd October, 1947) for Bahawalpur to be absorbed into modern Pakistan.

² The only commercial class, the Aroras, numbered 66,000 in 1901. Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series. 342

³ This city was founded in 1748 by Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi I and was incorporated as a municipality in 1874. <http://www.world66.com/asia/southasia/pakistan/bahawalpur>

⁴ There are three school of thoughts having different concepts about the Hakra River. Some are of the view that it was the southern tributary of Sutlej River. But to some others, it was a separate river system in itself, which used to fall in the Gulf of the Rann of Kutch and some considered it the upper part of the Nara River of Sindh. However all are unanimous about its extinction. There is another opinion that its

neighboring river Jumna, which springs from its source near Himalayas, it is also called *Saraswati* with its Vedic name apart from Hakra, Ghaghra or Ghaghar. Even today it enters Indian Territory of Bekaneer as a rearing stream and sometimes its water also enters Bahawalpur. (Ali, 1994)

⁵ In 1922 the work in different phases started and ultimately the project was completed in 1930. *Sulemanki* Head works is situated in Bahawalnagar district near the Indo Pak border, and two canals, *Sadiqia* and Fort Wah were constructed to irrigate the eastern part of Bahawalpur. After the Indus Basin project with India, now the water of Jhelum River is supplied from *Balloki* via *Sulemanki* link canal. The second head works of Bahawalpur was built in Islam and two canals, *Qaim* canal and upper Bahawalpur canal were produced to irrigate the central part of Bahawalpur state while the third and the most important head works were built at about a distance of two kilometers on the downstream of Jhelum and Sutlej's meeting point at the place of *Punjnad* near the historical town of *Uch Sharif* and two canals were drawn from the head works to irrigate the central part of Bahawalpur and western part of *Rahim Yar Khan*. The two canals are *Abbasia* canal and *Punjnad* canal. The water is supplied to these canals through *Taunsa Punjnad* link canal under the Indus basin Treaty. In Muhammad Anwar Nabi Qureshi, *Mukhtasar Tareekh-e- Bahawalpur*, year not mentioned, 120.

⁶ Its construction as Indus Valley state railway continued from 1870 to 1880 from Multan to Kotri and it was opened for traffic in 1889. (Ali, 21-22, 1994)

⁷ Baghdad-ul-Jadid, Khairpur, Tamewali, Qaim Pur, Hasilpur, Chishtian, Bahawalnagar, Minchanabad, and McLeod Ganj are located along this track.

⁸ The local markets of Khichi wala, Faqir wali, Haroonabad and Donga Bonga are located on this track.

⁹ Uch Sharif, 75 km from Bahawalpur city is a very old town. It is believed that it came into existence way back in 500 BC. Some historians believe that Uch was there even before the advent of Bikramajit when Jains and Buddhist ruled over the sub-continent. At the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great, Uch was under Hindu domination.

¹⁰ Due to tomb of Hazrat Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari Surkhposh)

¹¹ Tomb of Hazrat Shaikh Mohammad Ghaus Qadri Jilani

¹² After the tombs Sufis of Mughal era

¹³ The tomb of Jalal Surkh Bukhari is unusual with a superb wooden roof painted in lacquer, predominantly red and blue. Hazrat Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari (1177-1272) The compound containing his flat-roofed Shrine and mosque is surrounded by brick wall decorated with blue tiles. The shrine was built in the 14th century and its interest for original woodcarving on the pillars and the 40 beams, some of which

still have traces of early paintwork. The saint's *urs* is held on 19th *Jamad-ull-Sani*. (Singh, 155, 2004)

¹⁴ Bahauddin Uchhi, who was commonly known as, Bahaul Haleem. He is supposed as teacher of Jahania Jahanghasht, another famous Sufi belonging to the same city. His exact date of birth is not known, however, an idea can be made from the dates of Jahaniya Jahanghasht who was born in 1303 and died in 1383. There is no documented evidence about Bahaul Haleem or his services. After the death of Bahaul Haleem, his tomb was constructed by the ruler of Khurasan named Mohammad Dilshad. Floods have destroyed it to a great extent. Especially the flood of 18th century that destroyed more than 70% of tombs remaining was the most devastating. The tomb of Baha'al Haleem has horizontal stripes of blue and white faience tiles, although little of it remains. At this time, the coffin of Hazrat Bahaul Haleem was moved inside the shrine of Hazrat Lal Bukhari. However, it's not known that which grave inside Lal Bukhari's shrine is that of Bahaul Haleem (http://uchsharif.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=45).

¹⁵ Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Bukhari (1303-1383), was the grandson of Hazrat Syed Jalauddin Surkh Bukhari He was a prominent member of *Suharwardiya* Sufi branch and was responsible for popularizing of this branch of Sufism in *Uch Sharif*. He was the great grant father of Bibi Jawindi and his famous pupil was Channan Pir of Cholistan. The portal of the square shrine is supported by wooden pillars in a poor state of repair, but the interior, with painted ceiling and two tombs topped with turbans, is relatively well preserved. The ancient carved door has simple geometric and floral motifs. The saint's *urs* is held on 10-12 *Zilhaj*. (Singh, 155, 2004)

¹⁶ Bibi Jawindi, (Living Queen) the great granddaughter of the saint Jahaniyan Jahanghasht, was known for her piety. Her tomb, built around 1498, is considered one of the most imperative, and the most ornate, sites in the town of *Uch*, which was the centre of Sufism under the Delhi sultanate. In plan it is octagonal on the exterior, with the interior walls angled to form a circle. The thick walls rise to two stories, transforming by way of squelches into a sixteen-sided drum upon which a dome sits, supported by bell-shaped brackets. Both the interior and exterior walls are decorated with a profusion of faience revetment. The tomb is in poor condition. (Nabi Khan. 65-67,1980)

¹⁷ Shrine of Shaikh Saifuddin Ghazrooni in Uch is said to be the oldest Islamic tomb on the subcontinent. This is in bad state of repair with no outer ornaments surviving. It's worth a visit for its spiritual and historical significance. He belonged to *Ghazrooni Silsal*, which is not active anymore. (Singh, 156, 2004)

¹⁸ She also said that a 50,000 \$ grant will be initiated in October, 2009 for the preservation and repair work of *Uch*. <http://lahore.usconsulate.gov/l-09052201.html>

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¹⁹ From Bahawalpur City this Ancient Fort is 75 km away in the Desert of *Cholistan*.

²⁰ *Fateha* means to say some holly verses for the dead one so he can be in peace in heaven.

²¹ 'There is a large number of camels in the State, many of which are employed in the Imperial Service Camel Corps. In 1900, two troops of cavalry and 450 infantry was disbanded, and an Imperial Services *Silladar* Camel Transport Corps rose instead. This consists of 355 men and 1,144 camels. There is also an Imperial Service (Camel), Mounted Rifle Company, with 169 officers, non commissioned officers and men. (Ahmad, 1998)

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Memory and Cultural Identity: Negotiating Modernity in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*

By David Waterman

In the face of cultural trauma and the sense of loss it entails, community cohesion and identity are preserved not so much by remembering as by re-membering, literally using first-generation memories to reconstitute the community, often elsewhere. In Nadeem Aslam's novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004), "elsewhere" is Britain. Although these Pakistani immigrants have already suffered their first cultural trauma during Partition, a traumatic event which they perhaps share with all Pakistanis, exile further compounds their sentiment of vulnerability on leaving the familiarity of the subcontinent, highlighted early in the novel by their loss of the fifth season, the monsoon (5). While Arjun Appadurai rightly suggests that such deterritorialization "is now at the core of a variety of global fundamentalisms" (38), Lukas Werth nevertheless warns against applying categories from one culture to another without taking the specific context into account, saying: "The dominant lines along which the perception of reality in Pakistan is organized, and which formulate directions for the dreams, the ideals, and the lines of development of the society, follow patterns which have to be inspected in their own right" (143).

While on one level *Maps for Lost Lovers* is a "clash of civilizations" novel, in Samuel Huntington's sense, there is nevertheless a cross-examination of concepts such as traditional and modern which comes to the surface in the wake of rapid social change and the ensuing feeling of cultural vulnerability, especially within a diaspora. Referring to Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt in 1928, Friedeman Büttner explains:

al-Banna wanted a modernization of society that combined scientific technical progress according to Western patterns with a basic ethical revival from within Islamic tradition [. . .] an Islamic state in which all social areas were regulated by the spirit if not the letter of the Qur'an. If, at the same time, the West was strongly rejected, this did not refer to all modernizing incentives coming from the West. Rather, the rejection referred – similar to the Protestant fundamentalists – to the structures and values that accompanied them. (66)

In other words, the implied antagonism between traditional Islamic values and contemporary Western culture, while indeed present in some cases, cannot always explain the multifaceted relations between British and Pakistani ways of life, especially when we recall that Pakistan does possess modern institutions and habits, such as a nation-state, market economy and industry, transportation, (irregular) democratic elections and modern means of communicating and disseminating information (Werth 149, 162). It is precisely this “contact zone” – Nadia Butt uses the term to denote “the space of cultural plurality in today’s transcultural world” (155) – among and between cultures which Aslam probes in all of its convolutions. The binary “clash” formula of traditional versus progressive is revealed as a complex aggregation of competing myths, packed with variables which are negotiated differently: notions of cultural contamination and integration, Islam and the community/nation, permissible margins to question orthodoxy, altercation on the domestic level, the mediation of absolutes through cultural representations, and the next generations’ strategies for navigating the present as they look to the future.

In *Les abus de la mémoire*, Tzvetan Todorov makes the distinction between literal and exemplary memory, the first subordinating the present to the past, while the second – potentially liberating – allows the past to be exploited in the present (31-32). While the children and grandchildren, born in Britain, are generally more open to exemplary memory, it is more often the parents’ and grandparents’ memories of the past which define – and seriously constrain¹ – this close-knit Pakistani community-in-exile, ultimately tearing families apart within this microcosm of contemporary Pakistan in its fitful attempt to define itself, to answer the essential question: “To what end will we use collective memory?” Possible answers include: retreat into community, integration, a negotiated, cross-cultural position with which to negotiate modernity, or perhaps something else entirely. Werth, for example, provides observations from his fieldwork, wherein Islamic traditionalism “pays heed to such matters as science or modernity in a different way: rather than treating them as antagonistic, it incorporates them into its own realm” (147). The articulation between past and present becomes a zone of continuous present, described in the novel as traumatic events that slow down time (79-80), especially as regards all of the irrational elements that create and maintain human reality. Such temporal articulation highlights the authentic dangers when memory – including the normative, prescriptive memory of a “certain past” – has not been put to good use, provoking a conflict of cultural identities based on what Deniz Kandiyoti calls “a presumed communal past” rather than an integration of diversity in the present (378; see also Tickell 160).

Neil J. Smelser advances the following definition of cultural trauma, which will serve us well when considering the lived experience of these Pakistani immigrants in Britain:

A memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is a) laden with negative affect, b) represented as indelible, and c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions. (44)

Although any discussion of cultural trauma regarding Pakistan must take Partition into account, more immediately relevant to *Maps for Lost Lovers* is the perceived threat to cultural referents experienced by Pakistani émigrés to Britain, especially if one accepts Marten deVries's idea (developed from Whiting and Whiting) that one of the purposes of culture is to maintain "an orderly progression through the life cycle" (*Traumatic Stress* 401). Such uprootings, Kai Erikson insists, qualify as traumatic events, "because it is *how people react to them* rather than *what they are* that give events whatever traumatic quality they can be said to have [. . .] 'trauma' has to be understood as resulting from a *constellation of life experiences* as well as from a discrete happening, from a *persisting condition* as well as from an acute event" (184-185; original italics).

Werth places this kind of psychological response within the context of modernity and globalization, highlighting the "deep unrest filling those who feel their own concepts and their identity are being twisted in the process of being attuned to a formulation of a reality which is not theirs" (145). Throughout the novel are indications that Britain is considered a hostile environment and residence in the UK is neither desired nor seen as anything but temporary, at least for the older generation.² A fundamental paradox is that cultural trauma can damage, as well as create, a sense of community, and Aslam's characters display this phenomenon, generating what Erikson (citing William Freudenburg and Timothy Jones in the context of disaster situations) calls "corrosive communities" (185-186; 189), wherein the community also seems held together by negative forces. While there is indeed a sense of community, it is a solidarity based on siege mentality, of protecting the group at all costs in the face of external threats. Perhaps this is the case, to varying degrees, in any examination of group dynamics, although it comes to the fore when the group feels vulnerable, creating what Appadurai calls an "ethnic implosion" (149), defined by Aristide Zolberg and colleagues as "primary solidarity groups vying with each other in a desperate search for security" (257). Such is the "double-edged sword" of cultural assimilation, offering protection and

a sense of belonging at the price of isolation and predatory competition (deVries 400); someone who feels safe within the ingroup asserts his / her individuality, while someone who feels threatened will do the opposite. These immigrants seek to reestablish the traditions and customs which they recognize and which contribute to their sense of identity by association through a politics of arbitrary closure, as Michael Keith and Steve Pile remind us: “These politics hermetically seal these boundaries, creating spaces of closure; on one side, ‘the goodies’ and on the other ‘the baddies’” (222), the sort of enclave mindset which hopes to guarantee a fixed notion of identity rather than consider identity as an ongoing process.

In the case of orthodox Muslims, much of this insularity could be attributed, according to Michael Cook, to the fact that Islam and the Koran have not been subjected to the same modern critique as Christianity and the Bible, or at least not to the same degree:

The Western evolution has been dominated by two phenomena, both products of the nineteenth century. The first was the emergence of the ‘higher criticism’ of the Bible: a rigorous philological approach which treats its object no differently from any other text which happens to have come down to us from the past, and reveals it as a pastiche of sources of varying dates and tendencies. The second was the phenomenon of soft belief – the willingness of large numbers of mainstream believers to give ground to this higher criticism, and the scientific outlook of which it is a part, and to be satisfied with salvaging a residual religiosity. Neither of these phenomena has been prominent in the Islamic world, and particularly not the first. (43-44)

Orthodoxy and conservatism are widespread, even normal, as a response to cultural trauma, and can indeed serve a practical purpose in terms of identification and grounding, despite obvious shortcomings, such as claims to absolute truth which, for example, place adherents above the law of the host country (see Nadia Butt, “Between Orthodoxy and Modernity” 164).

In the British city re-named Dasht-e-Tanhaii by the residents, variously translated as “wilderness of solitude” or “desert of loneliness,” these immigrants call attention to the sense of traumatic uprooting, despite the harsh conditions being left behind (*Maps for Lost Lovers* 29):

Pakistan is a poor country, a harsh and disastrously unjust land, its history a book full of sad stories, and life is a trial if not a punishment for most of the people born there: millions of its sons and daughters have managed to find

footholds all around the globe in their search for livelihood and a semblance of dignity. Roaming the planet looking for solace, they've settled in small towns that make them feel smaller still, and in cities that have tall buildings and even taller loneliness. (*Maps for Lost Lovers* 9)

Such a sense of loss, while perhaps universal among all immigrants, is not simply an internal, self-reflexive unease, but is exacerbated by external factors specific to each community-in-exile, the small towns where fitting in is often difficult, the tall buildings which lack all semblance of humanity. The question arises, however, what happens when the supporting culture fails, as it does in many respects, whether in Pakistan or in the diaspora; deVries cautions that strong identification to a culture “leads to a deeper sense of loss when the life of the culture is disrupted” (400). This leads us to ask further, as Salman Rushdie does, are these Pakistani immigrants navigating between two cultures, or have they fallen between two stools (15), what Cordula Lemke refers to as a diaspora “caught between longing and belonging,” recalling the tension between literal (or nostalgic) memory and exemplary memory cited above (172).

Following on the heels of an insular community is the conviction of purity and its attendant fear of contamination from outside, including the preoccupation with reputation on both the individual and collective levels. Nadia Butt makes the point that although separateness and purity were necessary to the mindset of a distinct state in 1947, it is “a hurdle today to the enrichment of [Pakistani] culture. It is so because the purity concern locks the culture into a watertight compartment” (*Daily Times* 1). Notions of ethnic and religious purity are insidious, so much so that “may your son marry a white woman” is a neighborhood curse within the context of diaspora described in the novel (118), and children are frightened into obedience with the threat that they will be “given away to a white person” (220). Michael O'Connor, interviewing Aslam, unwittingly throws the situation into relief along racial lines when he says “There is no integration in the novel, England, as it were, is absent,” whereas Aslam himself corrects O'Connor, saying “only the WHITE England is absent,” thus calling into question any assumed multi-ethnicity in this particular corner of Britain (1). Even the character of Shamas, who directs the Community Relations Council – “helping others to negotiate the white world” (15) – and who is the most open-minded of the older generation of Pakistanis, does not assist the immigrants to integrate white British society, but rather to confront it (see Butt 174). Shamas is at the same time considered impure, especially by his orthodox wife Kaukab, because of his affiliation with the Communist Party and “his Godless ideas” (34), as well as his habit of drinking an occasional glass of whiskey. A political program from which God is absent could not be further from

Islamic thought, and while he is respected in the community for his good heart, Shamas is nevertheless suspect for his high level of tolerance of other religions and western ideas of equality and justice (210).

For her part, Kaukab – like most of the other Pakistani women in the neighborhood – possesses a special set of clothing for going out, where she may come into contact with whites and be tainted. She removes this set of clothes immediately on returning to her house, whose interior has been painted the precise colors of their former home in Pakistan, what Appadurai refers to as “hypercompetent reproduction” in a context of nostalgia (30). Her interaction with whites is extremely limited, and while her rudimentary ability to speak English is at least partly to blame for her reticence, more pertinent is her fear of contamination; Kaukab washes after coming into contact with nonbelievers. She can literally count on one hand her annual transactions with whites: “The ‘thank you’ she murmurs to the flower-deliveryman is her third exchange with a white person this year; there were five last year; none the year before, if she remembers correctly; three the year before that” (69). Threats of contamination also exist between groups from different areas of the subcontinent, especially as regards Hindus and Sikhs in spite of their common bond as immigrants, leading one to the conclusion that such preoccupation with purity is based primarily on religion rather than race, wherein white skin in Britain is a marker of religious, rather than racial, difference.³

If even casual contact with non-Muslims provokes such a strong sense of impurity, intimate relations, such as marriage, incite even more careful scrutiny. Traditionally, marriages are arranged in this community, precisely with an eye to avoiding miscegenation. This practice is followed to the point of orchestrating a union between cousins whenever possible (see Werth 153), despite warnings on the risks of intrafamilial marriages from two local doctors – one British, one Indian – neither of whom is able to convince the orthodox Muslims:

[the father] reminded the Englishman that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were first cousins, and told the Hindu woman that before lecturing the Muslims on the dangers of genetic defects she might want to do something about her own gods who had eyes in the middle of their foreheads and what about those six-armed goddesses that were more Swiss Army knives than deities. (119)

Once again, the notion of purity seems unrelated to these Pakistanis’ situation as immigrants to Britain, as neither the British nor the Indian doctor are able to penetrate prevailing attitudes, in spite of the fallacious logic used by the father to defend his position. If suitable partners are not found within the closed ethnic community,

families will either send their offspring to Pakistan for marriage or have a potential mate sent from Pakistan, often with the assistance of a matchmaker; this is the case in the novel. Kaukab's only daughter, Mah-Jabin, is, following such orthodox tradition, also married to a man in Pakistan. This marriage has disastrous results, and she returns to Britain, although as she is no longer a virgin she is damaged goods as regards any possible future union. As is often the case, the standard for female purity is higher than the standard for men. The local prostitute, for example, is allowed to go about her business because she is white; "had she been Indian or Pakistani, she would have been assaulted and driven out of the area within days of moving in for bringing shame on her people" (16). Following this logic, when Chanda moves in with the man she loves, her brothers refer to her as a "little whore" and ultimately kill her (64). Such examples lend weight to Appadurai's argument that the "honor of women becomes [. . .] an armature of stable (if inhuman) systems of cultural reproduction" (45). Women, in other words, become the standard-bearers of men's reputations. Ironically, one of Chanda's brothers is having an affair with a Sikh woman, yet he sees no parallel between the two situations (344), the difference in religions complicating the aforementioned gender equation. In the novel, women are equated with infidels, called "minions of Satan both!" by some of the men (194), and even Suraya concludes of her gender, "*We women are wicked*" (200). A mosque cleric goes so far as to refer to women as "faeces-filled sacks," to be avoided whenever possible, with ritual bathing required after intercourse (126), and the abortion of a female fetus is considered quite normal, only becoming a tragedy for Barra (one of Chanda's brothers) when he discovers that, due to a mistaken diagnosis of its gender, his son has been aborted (349; see also 88).

While ethnic and religious purity are paramount, perhaps the greatest concern among these people is the purity of their reputations, or at least the perception of spotlessness according to custom and tradition. The importance of reputation among peoples of the subcontinent cannot be overstated by Shamas, worried as he is about the effects of a scandal on his wife: "He whom a taunt or jeer doesn't kill is probably immune to even swords" (193). The primary dramatic event of the novel is the murder of Chanda and Jugnu by the girl's brothers, an honor crime that is defended as justified and necessary by the majority of the community, even by some members of the victims' families. Butt suggests that the murder, "rather than taking up a central position in the story, acts as a mirror of the close-knit Pakistani community [. . . and] brings out transcultural anxiety among them as it eats into the vitals of their torn culture and torn society" (159-160). This murder also problematizes the notion that the younger generation is more receptive to the host country's way of life, more open to assimilation, while orthodoxy is generally attributed to the older generation. Although the brothers boast of their crime in

Pakistan, in Britain they must deny it, although everyone is reasonably sure they are guilty before they are arrested; Chanda's father is even said to be proud of what his sons have done (176). Such is the climate when honor and reputation are so highly valued that brothers will kill their sister, with their father's approval: "The neighbourhood is a place of Byzantine intrigue and emotional espionage, where when two people stop to talk on the street their tongues are like the two halves of a scissor coming together, cutting reputations and good names to shreds" (176).

Transcultural pressures also function in the opposite direction. Suraya, visiting Pakistan after having been influenced by English life, tries to intervene in a family feud involving, among other things, an uncle raping his niece; while generally her "wide-eyed innocence was found endearing and laughed off," on this occasion she is threatened with rape by the men of the family (157):

Eventually she was allowed to leave the house with her virtue intact; the men did, however, tell her that they were going to let everyone know that they *had* raped her [. . .] As it turned out it was as bad as if they had raped her. What mattered was not what you yourself knew to have actually happened, but what other people thought had happened. (158; original italics)

Kaukab too, after reproaching Chanda for living with Jugnu outside of marriage, makes it clear that she cares more about appearances than about the lovers' honest commitment (62), and she will go even further, defending the holy man against criticism, this holy man who beat a young girl to death in an effort to exorcise djinns (185-186). Even the mosque cleric guilty of pedophilia will be defended by his superiors and within the community, in the interest of preserving the reputation of the institution (245). Aslam takes pains to avoid a binary Pakistani / White or Muslim / Christian set of oppositions, however. The Christian minister of the local church is also guilty of inciting his congregation to exclude two people for conduct seen as unseemly vis à vis God's precepts (247), "thereby blaming religion in general for its intolerance and not just Islam" (Lemke 179). Of course, the hierarchy of the Catholic church has been guilty of dissimulating the conduct of pedophile priests, giving precedence to maintaining and protecting the image of the institution.⁴

Islam was the basis for the foundation of Pakistan as a country separate from India, Islam in a religious sense and as a political tool, and it remains the basis for this Pakistani community-in-exile. A fundamental problem arises, however, as Islam (much like Christianity) sees itself as applying to all humanity, whereas a nation or, on a smaller scale, a community, is never global. Nations and communities never include everyone; they are always bounded, their members

often identifying themselves not simply by those who represent “us” but also by those who are “not us,” as Anderson makes clear in defining a nation as:

an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign [. . .] The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet. (6-7; original italics)

In the case of these Pakistani immigrants in Britain, (re)-imagining or (re)-membering the community is accomplished through a sense that something has been lost along the way, a loss which, if we recall the earlier definition of cultural trauma, cannot be recovered in its original form. This leads to what Salman Rushdie, in the context of the expatriate Indian, calls the creation “of fictions [. . .] imaginary homelands” (10). Such imaginary homelands are not created equal; a homeland based on literal memory falls into nostalgia, whereas exemplary memory imagines multiple possibilities for self-fulfillment. If, as Rushdie suggests, “cultural displacement” better allows one to discern “the provisional nature of all truths,” it may also be that this same displacement is what incites the members of this Pakistani community to adhere very strictly to the tenets of Islam and its fundamental truths which are seen as anything but provisional, a safety net of sorts deployed in the interest of psychological and community cohesion (12), a strategy to limit risk by denying the possibility of multiple realities as well as overlooking the importance of imagination.

Islam, of course, is more than a religious doctrine, the Koran being very much concerned with social life, especially the law; in many ways, it is more a legal and political than a religious document (see Rushdie 380). The Koran itself states, “That is the Book, wherein is no doubt” (Q2;2, Arberry translation), whereas exegesis and interpretation, critical thinking and social intervention require an element of doubt, not to mention imagination. Rushdie argues that organizing a state around the basis of religious faith is impractical, that such a state has been “*insufficiently imagined*.” In other words, what Pakistan has been discovering, very painfully, is that no religion is any longer a sufficient basis for a society. The world has changed too much for that,” and he goes on to propose that “a State with a real reason for being” would be, for example, “a post-Islamic Pakistan” (387), less isolated, less profoundly associated with religion (see Butt 154). The contact zone of this

community-in-exile becomes a zone of friction due to the differing worldviews and ways of negotiating modernity, quite literally the different realities, expressed and experienced between believers and non-believers, which seem impossible to bring together, recalling Appadurai's disclaimer that: "One man's imagined community is another man's political prison" (32). They are often strangers to one another, incapable of mutual understanding, and while this phenomenon is certainly present at the level of nation and of community, on an even more intimate scale the effects are most felt at the level of the family, often between the first generation and their memories of traditional Pakistan and their children. Both generations, of course, see for themselves that other lifestyles can and do compete with those of the parents, but they deal with the situation differently, and not always along generational lines (117).

The family is, without doubt, the basic collectivity wherein the most vital socialization takes place, where culture is reproduced, and where reference points are fixed (Appadurai 43-44); in the context of fundamentalism and diaspora, increased mobility, liberal thinking and moral permissiveness are interpreted as "signs of moral decay" and ultimately lead to the dissolution of the family (see Büttner 59). Kaukab, the novel's matriarch and the most orthodox – not to say the most racist – among them, dutifully recites the Koran every day, without understanding a word of Arabic (322), while as we've said her husband Shamas leans toward godless communism and mutual tolerance: "He is not a believer, so he knows that the universe is without saviours: the surface of the earth is a great shroud whose dead will not be resurrected" (20). Vernacular versions of the Koran are never considered standard; Allah's truth, Anderson reminds us, is only transmitted in the "truth-language" of Arabic (14), an injunction which Kaukab observes to the letter, while Shamas, for his part, reads the newspapers every day. These newspapers, according to Hegel, are the modern man's substitute for morning prayers (see Anderson 35). Indeed, they form an odd couple – conversation between them is "frequently another way of being alone" (156) – especially in the eyes of their children, as the differing ways of negotiating modernity take their heaviest toll on the domestic level, tearing families apart in the best of times, and in the worst of times resulting in suicide and murder. Such separation of people and families is not necessarily a function of immigration, but is detailed historically within the broader context of family and cultural trauma in the novel. For example, the dissimulated Hindu ancestry of Shamas's father; he was the victim of a British bomb in 1919 in the Punjab, "which had emptied his mind of all its contents" (53) when he was ten years old, or the Sikh woman Kiran, who thirty years earlier wanted to marry Kaukab's Muslim brother, a union refused by the man's family (7).

Three families, linked to one another in this community-in-exile, seem especially important to mention. Firstly, Suraya, who is living in Britain after her drunken husband pronounced *talaaq* three times, thus divorcing her (159); she must now find another man to marry her briefly so that she can re-marry her husband and recuperate her son in Pakistan. Her efforts focus on Shamas who, as a Muslim, is allowed more than one wife. Suraya is both a devout Muslim and adapted to British life, and her position between the two allows her to interrogate the status of women within Islam:

Allah is not being equally compassionate towards the poor woman who is having to go through another marriage through no fault of her own is a thought that has occasionally crossed Suraya's mind, along with It's as though Allah forgot there were women in the world when he made some of his laws, thinking only of men – but she has banished these thoughts as all good Muslims must. (150; original italics)

Although Suraya seems more open-minded than many of the others, even some of the orthodox women have moments when they too question the status quo and the things that go without saying. Chanda's mother, for example, admits privately to her husband, "May Allah forgive me, but I've even caught myself thinking it was unimportant that [Chanda and Jugnu] were living in sin, so what if it goes against His law, that if I could do it all again I wouldn't break all ties with her over this matter" (173; see Butt 160 as well).

These are of course the afterthoughts and regrets of a mother whose daughter has been murdered and whose sons are in prison for the crime; the realization that she gave birth to both the victim and the killers weighs heavily on her mind (276). As has been mentioned, there are two competing realities regarding justice, best highlighted by the judge's comments at the end of the brothers' trial and by Shamas's thoughts to himself:

[Shamas] heard the judge say that the killers had found a cure to their problem through an immoral, indefensible act; a cure, a remedy – and their religion and background took care of the bitter aftertaste. Their religion and background assured them that, yes, they were murderers but that they had murdered only sinners. The judge said that Chanda and Jugnu had done nothing illegal in deciding to live together but, Shamas knows, that the two brothers feel that the fact that an act is legal does not mean it's right. (278; original italics)

The brothers feel justified, of course, because they have relied on literal memory in applying the kind of severe punishment which is practiced in Pakistan, that “wife-murdering” country (226) where hundreds of “honour killings” take place every year (273); Anderson argues that the ultimate sacrifice – a person willing to kill or be killed – “comes only with an idea of purity, through fatality,” an emotional response which places the social actor above the more rational idea of blind justice (144). Asked by someone in Pakistan who knows the truth, “You preferred being murderers to being the brothers of a sister who was living in sin?”, the brothers reply “Yes [. . .] because it was we who made the choice to be murderers. We are men but she reduced us to eunuch bystanders by not paying attention to our wishes” (342). This is the philosophy of justice which has been transposed to their current community, leading Shamas to comment on the social relativity of justice: “They have become a bloody Rorschach blot: different people see different things in what has happened” (137; see 43, 347 in the novel as well). Their crime of honor will of course land them in prison, but given the violent conditions – one of the brothers is seriously beaten – they risk death, too; ironically, the boys’ parents will appeal to Shamas for help with a transfer to a less-violent prison, a request to which he agrees, thus helping to ease the suffering of the men who killed his brother.

Shamas and Kaukab will also see their family destroyed as a result of these same competing philosophies regarding how best to navigate modernity. These views are summed up by their youngest son Ujala, who fled the family home eight years ago as a way of escaping both his mother’s nostalgia and his father’s idealism, in other words their mutual neglect of the here and now:

There couldn’t have been a more dangerous union than you two: *you* [Kaukab] were too busy longing for the world and the time your grandparents came from, they and their sayings and principles; and *he* [Shamas] was too busy daydreaming about the world and the time his grandchildren were to inherit. What about your responsibilities to the people who were around you here in the present? (324)

Indeed, Lemke suggests that although the three children will break free of the family, they will bear scars (180), perhaps as a result of “the politics of representing a family as normal (particularly for the young) to neighbors and peers in the new locale” (Appadurai 44). The oldest son Charag will marry Stella, a white woman (34), ultimately undergoing a vasectomy, which his mother qualifies as a “Christian conspiracy to stop the number of Muslims from increasing” (57; 59). Mah-Jabin, for her part, was married in Pakistan but returned to Britain to escape her husband’s brutality, a truth Kaukab will discover later (306), after she has already judged the

girl, trapped as the older woman is “within the cage of permitted thinking” (110), interpreting any sign of rebellion in her children as evidence of contamination by outsiders (Lemke 178). She beats, and very nearly kills, her daughter during an argument over the conduct of her life; Mah-Jabin then reproaches her mother for “your laws and codes, the so-called traditions that you have dragged into this country with you like shit on your shoes” (114), and who dreams of returning to the past in order to change her current situation: “I want to go back into the past and tell that young girl who was me – and whom I love – what not to do” (115).

The youngest son, Ujala, uses his homecoming to vent a long list of his complaints against his mother’s traditions, still angered by his mother “poisoning” him with bromide during his turbulent adolescence, a “blessed and consecrated salt” prescribed by the mosque cleric who understood perfectly the drug’s calming effects on libido (304). For her part, Kaukab blames her husband Shamas for planting Satan’s seed (329), and when she is forced to understand how her children feel about her, she prepares a suicide attempt from which Shamas saves her (328), although he will die – perhaps by his own hand, perhaps murdered – shortly afterward (368). For people like Kaukab, Appadurai argues, “social life was largely inertial [. . .] traditions provided a relatively finite set of possible lives, and [. . .] fantasy and imagination were residual practices” (53), whereas the younger generation has grown up not simply wishing to assimilate, but seeking to belong within the considerably more complex “interactive ethnoscapas” (48). In other words, the parents’ memories do not correspond at all to their children’s lived experience, meaning that the parents’ cultural map, created out of a traumatic past and clung to out of a sense of familiarity and security, has in fact done a great deal of harm to their children, which explains the parents’ abject, suicidal loss of hope at the end of the novel.

But hope there is, hope to challenge absolutes through artistic and cultural expression; rather than providing the answers of a religious or a political ideology, literature and other forms of artistic expression are “an inquiry; great literature, by asking extraordinary questions, opens new doors in our minds” (Rushdie 423). Early in the novel, it is jazz music that brings people together, whatever their gender, religion or age, reducing the distance between people(s) by insisting on their status as human beings:

The record would begin and soon the listeners would be engrossed by those musicians who seemed to know how to blend together all that life contains, the real truth, the undeniable last word, the innermost core of all that is unbearably painful within a heart and all that is joyful, all that is loved and all that is worthy of love but remains unloved, lied to and lied

about, the unimaginable depths of the soul where no other can withstand the longings and which few have the conviction to plumb, the sorrows and the indisputable rage – so engrossed would the listeners become that, by the end of the piece, the space between them would have contracted, heads leaning together as though they were sharing a mirror. All great artists know that part of their task is to light up the distance between two human beings. (13)

Lemke too, citing Ines Weinrich, underscores the role of jazz as a cultural bridge, saying, “On the one hand, jazz musicians point to a successful way of asserting one’s own culture within a foreign environment, and on the other hand, the use of elements of jazz in traditional Asian music has been practiced by Muslim musicians for a considerable time and stands for integration” (176)⁵. Even indigenous forms of music are allowed greater latitude in voicing unorthodox points of view, as the widely-attended concert by Nusrat illustrates; his lyrics tell the story of a young woman forced into marriage with a man she doesn’t love, and his lyrics also valorize a mystical communion with Allah, having no need of clerical intervention, and wherein women “—more than the men, attempt to make a new world” (192).

Charag also takes up the challenge. An artist like his father, he has purchased old photos of the neighborhood residents, old photographs destined for the trash bin, and hopes to incorporate them into his paintings, thus making the link between art and “real” people (319), while opening the photograph to various interpretations. Although a photograph is always past, “photography does *not* dam up what happens next, before, or after the photograph – everything that is conjectured and surmised in implicit accordance with the Heraclitean model of time-as-river and its modern adaptation as the *longue durée*. Instead, it exposes it to the viewer as only one of several possible ways of seeing the world” (Ulrich Baer 7). In addition to being open to various interpretations, the photographs also seem to offer, at least in part, an answer to Büttner’s question regarding how much of the past to rescue: “how much continuity is necessary in order to uphold the substance of the society? What is to be changed, what preserved, what is to be restored?” (71). The answer, implicit in the way the question is asked, is that the past is flexible and can be negotiated; it is not an all-or-nothing affair. Charag has also recently had a painting published in the Sunday paper, *The Uncut Self-Portrait*, of himself, naked and uncircumcised, as a statement against the first violence performed for cultural or religious reasons (320). While he apologizes to his mother for offending her sensibilities, he also says, “I can’t paint with handcuffs on [. . .] Jugnu taught me that we should try to break away from all the bonds and ties that manipulative groups have thought up for their own advantage. Surely, mother, you can see the merit of that” (320-321).

In fact, his mother can see no merit in that whatsoever, even though the

aforementioned “manipulative groups” include much more than orthodox Islam. His father, on the contrary, is bursting with pride, becoming aware that Charag “is maturing as an artist,” and more importantly, “becoming aware of his responsibilities as an artist” as he recalls verses which insist on just such social obligation: “*Which to hold dearer: my love for you, or the sorrows of others in the world? They say the intoxication is greater when two kinds of wine are mixed.* Good artists know that society is worth representing too” (319-320; original italics). Challenging absolutes through artistic inquiry is a way of opening what Butt calls “the singular space of Islam” to a multiplicity of “cultural encounters” (166).

In the novel, one scene stands out in particular regarding such open-mindedness, when Shamas and a friend cross paths with some late night revelers, and their differing reactions:

It was Sunday and a small group of Saturday-night revelers – young white men and women – had come down the road, smelling of alcohol, hair and clothing awry, on their way back to their homes from some late party. [. . .] The look of distaste – revulsion – on Poorab-ji’s face had surprised and disappointed Shamas. No doubt Poorab-ji had just seen sordid promiscuity on display, debauchery, lewdness, whereas for Shamas there was hardly anything more beautiful than those young people, fumbling their way through life, full of new doubts and certainties... (144)

Rushdie lines up squarely behind Shamas, saying that the way forward is through “arguing and challenging and questioning and saying the unsayable,” what he calls “the argument between the monk and the roaring boy,” which must continue if humanity is to make genuine progress, away from the clash of cultures and toward the bridging of cultures (394-395), away from the absolutes and certitudes of fixed cultural identity and toward an identity which does not retreat from flexibility and negotiation. The contact zone must remain flexible if our goal is to make cultural mobility and integration less traumatic, where belonging does not come at the price of isolation, and where negotiating modernity does not imply a loss of fundamental values.

Notes:

¹ “Set in a postmodernist world of determining structures, the novel explores how the laws of Islam shape the lives of lovers and murderers alike. [. . .] The only

characters who sincerely mourn their loss are those who are themselves on the margins and in the cross-fire” (Lemke 171-172).

² To give just a partial list of examples: “years of exile and banishment” (6); “We should never have come to this deplorable country, sister-ji, this nest of devilry from where God has been exiled. No, not exiled – denied and slain” (30); “*England* is abroad; Bangladesh is *home*” (46; original italics); “this isn’t our country” (79); “seen only as temporary accommodation in a country never thought of as home” (96).

³ Indeed, Lemke (176) suggests that the Sikhs and Hindus are perceived by the Muslims as a greater menace to the integrity of this community than the whites, as though whites are so far beyond the pale as to be considered irrelevant – recall Aslam’s earlier assertion that white England is absent.

⁴ See “Irish priest’s sex abuse covered up.” *International Herald Tribune*. Friday 27 November 2009, page 3, and “Un rapport accuse l’Eglise catholique d’avoir couvert des abus sexuels.” *Le Monde*. Samedi 28 novembre 2009, page 8, for recent examples.

⁵ Jackie Assayag, citing Eric Hobsbawm, calls jazz a music of protest and rebellion within a mistreated minority diaspora. See Assayag, “La mondialisation des sciences sociales,” Paris: Téraèdre, 2010, pages 137-138. See also Francis Newton (Eric Hobsbawm’s pseudonym), « Une sociologie du Jazz, » Paris: Flammarion, 1966.

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Political Manipulation in Human Rights Violations: A Case of Honor Killings in Balochistan, Pakistan

By Noor Akbar Khalil and Mashhood Ahmed Sheikh

Expectative Summary:

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State” (United Nations, 1948). But “The right to life of women in Pakistan is conditional on their obeying social norms and traditions” (Amnesty International, 1999).

Pakistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996, still women continue to be ‘commoditized’ (Amnesty International, 1999, p. 4), bartered for land or money, given as *swara* (compensation for murder/dispute settlement) or *watta satta* (men acquire a wife by offering a sister or daughter in exchange), women are abused, raped or murdered by close relatives. ‘Honor’ killing was once an unusual custom but has more recently evolved into a common practice in which men kill sisters, daughters, or other female family members to avenge a ‘shame’ or ‘dishonor’ she is accused of bringing upon her family or tribe¹. Behaviors considered to be ‘dishonorable’ are many and can include a woman wanting to marry a man of her choice; wishing to seek employment outside the home; publicly disobeying the family patriarch; being accused of having illicit relations or seeking a divorce.

This paper is aimed to briefly discuss the recently occurred case of honor killing- a “heinous criminal offence” (Shah, 2008) where allegedly close relatives buried 3 women alive and shot two others to death. Detailed discussion about honor killing and its intensity is beyond the scope of this paper, though we will try to give a general description with special reference to this particular case and show how politics intervenes in human rights violations and works to safeguard the interests of perpetrators rather than the victims. We will also briefly touch upon

the gap between theory (human rights idols) and practice (implementation) of the international conventions/covenants on human rights.

Description of the Case:

‘Honor’ killings are possible because these inhumane acts are not condemned by the society, and the law does not punish perpetrators as only 20 % of honor killings are ever brought to justice². Though the government has now passed a law according to which murders committed in the name of ‘honor’ would be considered intentional murder, the law is not sufficient to control this problem because in all cases the murderers are the close relatives of the victims (woman), i.e. father, brother or husband, who also have the privilege to resolve the issue on behalf of the deceased woman. It means when a person, father, brother or husband kills his wife, sister or daughter they sit together and resolve the case before it goes to the police for investigation or even if it goes to the police later on the men have the power to withdraw the case. Besides, “State institutions -- the law enforcement apparatus and the judiciary -- deal with these crimes against women with extraordinary leniency and the law provides many loopholes for murderers in the name of honour to kill without punishment”(Amnesty International, 1999, p. 3).

A recent case of honor killing occurred in Baba Kot, a remote village in district Jaffarabad of Balochistan province where the alleged perpetrators buried three women alive and shot dead two others. Their reason: to punish the three girls, aged 16 to 18, for trying to decide their marriages by themselves, and their two aunts for assisting the girls. The deceased girls had planned to get married in court as a result of their elders refused to let them marry the persons of their choice. When the news of their decision to get married in court leaked out, the alleged person, known to be the brother of a provincial minister, came along with his body guards, picked the girls and took them to a deserted place, where the girls were beaten before the men allegedly opened fire on them. The girls got seriously injured but were alive when the men hurled them in to a ditch and covered them with mud and stones. It is believed that due to the influence of the alleged family the case was kept secret. The alleged persons are considered to be very influential in the area and have strong affiliations with the government.

Description and Analysis of Key Actors

Cultural Setting of the Area:

Pakistan is a developing country, with 68% population living in rural areas in joint family system and following their ancestor's way of life³. Balochistan, mainly consisted of 'Baloch' tribe with many other smaller tribes, is considered to be the most traditional, as the people still live in a tribal set up, following their centuries old traditional way and a peculiar code of conduct for day-to-day life. The "...Baloch reckon descent patrilineally. Lineages, however, play a minimal role in the lives of most Baloch (Library of Congress – Federal Research Division, 1994, p. 1). Their "... society is stratified and has been characterized as "feudal militarism."(Library of Congress – Federal Research Division, 1994, p. 2)

Women are considered to be the pivotal point of their honor code. For women it is obligatory to follow a peculiar code of conduct in and outside home and refrain from certain behaviors, as its considered to bring 'Shame' and 'dishonor' to the family, which in most cases results in the death of the alleged woman.

Behaviors considered 'dishonorable' are many and can include: a woman wanting to marry a man of her choice, a woman wishing to seek employment outside the home, or publicly disobeying the family patriarch, or a woman being accused of having illicit relations or seeking a divorce⁴. Similarly, "Standards of honour and chastity are not applied equally to men and women, even though they are supposed to"(Amnesty International, 1999, p. 5). In the North West Frontier Province and in Balochistan "men often go unpunished for 'illicit' relationships whereas women are killed on the merest rumour of 'impropriety'"(Amnesty International, 1999, p. 5). The case of honor killing under discussion occurred in the Balochistan province of Pakistan.

The State:

Pakistan is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and is morally bound to implement its articles in true spirit. "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person". And "No one will be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment⁵". But in this particular case of honor killing the state seems unsuccessful not only in implementing the articles but also in punishing the perpetrators because "after one and a half months the police have still not registered the case and it is difficult to get more detailed information"(Asian Human Rights Commission, 2008, p. 3). "...human rights

groups have accused local authorities of trying to cover up the executions”(Telegraph (Our Foreign Staff), 2008, p. 2).

Besides, it is observed that the perpetrators after burying these women returned to their tribe like ‘conquerors’ without any fear of action against them. Father of these girls lodged a First Investigation Report (FIR) with the police against his own brother, who was said to be the architect of this crime. But latter on due to family pressure, he withdrew the case (Pak Tribune, 2008, p. 2).

Similarly Pakistan also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in March 1996. CEDAW stipulates that state parties agree, “To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women”⁶ (United Nations, 2007, p. 12). The constitution of Pakistan⁷ reconfirms the same article of CEDAW:

Laws inconsistent with or in derogation of fundamental rights to be void.
(1) Any law, or any custom or usage having the force of law, in so far as it is inconsistent with the rights conferred by this Chapter, shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be void”(Pakistani.org, 2007).

Due to public uproar and protests, the upper house of the country took the matter seriously and started discussion over these killings. During the discussion a cabinet member, who represents Balochistan province, defended and justified these killings saying “these are centuries-old traditions and I will continue to defend them”(McDowell, 2008, p. 1). He claimed that the tribal traditions helped stop obscenity. Besides he asked the fellow lawmakers not to make a big fuss about it (killings). (McDowell, 2008)

Many members stood up in protest, and called the executions ‘barbaric’ demanding more discussion (McDowell, 2008, p. 2). “I was shocked”, said one female lawmaker, who pushed for legislation calling for perpetrators of so-called honour killings to be punished (McDowell, 2008, p. 2). While, “a handful (of members) said it was an internal matter of the deeply conservative province”(McDowell, 2008, p. 2).

But so far the government has been slow to react, said a senator and co-chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), as, according to him, the matter was referred to the federal government on 16th August and the parliament took it into account very lately. Equally shocking was the conduct of the acting Chairman Senate, Jan Mohd. Jamali, from Balochistan province, who disliked even raising of this issue by a female Senator and advised her to “go to our society and see for yourself what the

situation is like there and then come back to raise such questions in the House⁸”.

Though, the senate has passed a unanimous resolution condemning the incident and punishing the perpetrators, an “attempt at a cover-up is on⁹” and the government presented an “extremely dubious report” before the senate. “The fact the act was ‘kept quiet’ means the government sympathizes with such doings”(Telegraph (Our Foreign Staff), 2008, p. 2). Thus, while the fact of the burial of the women is no longer disputed, but despite the public acknowledgment of this “heinous crime”¹⁰ ‘no action’ has been taken so far by the competent authorities.

Civil Society Organizations/NGOs:

CSOs and NGOs reacted to the case, and though in the beginning their reaction was mild but the Balochistan’s senator’s statement heightened it and they staged protests outside the parliament building over the killings and asked the government to take strenuous actions against the perpetrators. They condemned the senator’s remarks for rationalizing the killing of five women in the name of honor. The main rights group in the country, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, has also condemned the senator’s statement in the parliament and asked the government for taking due action against the perpetrators.

Media:

Media are one of the main sources for bringing the honor killing cases to surface. It is considered to be comparatively more authentic source for honor killing data in Pakistan, as rights groups compile their reports about honor killing on the daily reporting of newspapers and other media news. The present case is one of those which the media published and it got nationwide attention including the parliament.

Negating the government version of the incident, media, particularly English newspapers, tried to present the actual situation. The government presented its report in senate stating that three women had died instead of five and that the incident was a family property dispute, not honor killing case. This is a “distinct diversion from accounts of NGOs that have investigated the happening¹¹”. In its editorial, one of the English newspapers referred to the government silence as protecting the perpetrators. “Surely the government should be seeking the murderers, not protect (them) through some dark conspiracy of silence. The fact the act was ‘kept quiet’ means the government sympathizes with such doings.” the newspaper reported (Telegraph (Our Foreign Staff), 2008, p. 2).

Conclusion:

The above discussion, media reports, involvement of politicians (minister), senator's remarks, chairman senate reaction, government "distinct diversion and extremely dubious¹²" report in the senate and legal action indicate political manipulation in the incident. Three main reasons for why the perpetrators have not been punished so far are listed below:

1. The alleged main perpetrator is known to be the brother of a provincial minister, who belongs to the ruling coalition and taking action against his brother can create problems for the ruling party.
2. Balochistan is the most distant and traditionalist province of Pakistan. Living in tribal set ups and following their traditional code of conduct for life. Writ of the government is not applicable, enforced, or observed in most parts of the province where traditional laws and customs regulate day-to-day issues. Balochistan Liberation Army, an ethnic militant group allegedly involved in clandestine activities (GlobalSecurity.org, 2009) is actively seeking an independent political identity for Balochistan. As the incident took place in the tribal setting and the alleged perpetrator is an influential member of the tribe with strong political ties, government action against him could be taken as interference in their tradition and custom thus possibly fan the issue of autonomy (separation).
3. Third, but the most important reason, was the presidential elections. After widespread public uproar, the government moved to support a Senate resolution condemning the killings. Various critics said that the delay was caused due to political considerations in order to "secure Balochistan's support for the leader of the party, Asif Ali Zardari, in Saturday's (6th September, 2008) electoral College vote for president" (Masood, 2008, p. 3).

Notes:

¹ Focus Group Discussion with Community Elders in Balochistan Province (2005)

² Dr. Arif Mehmood, Ex. Campaign Manager 'We Can End Honor Killing' Oxfam GB, Pakistan (2006)

³ Census Report of Pakistan 1998, Pakistan, Census Organization Pakistan

⁴ Focus Group Discussion with Community Elders in Balochistan Province (2005)

⁵ Articles 3 & 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

⁶ Article 5 (a) of the Convention of the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women

⁷ Article 8 (1) Constitution of The Islamic Republic Of Pakistan

⁸ Press Statement of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in Daily THE NATION

⁹ Editorial of daily THE NEWS, on 3rd September 2008

¹⁰ Burning Point Column by Basil Fernando, Director of the Asian Human Rights Commission

¹¹ Editorial of daily THE NEWS on 3rd September 2008

¹² Ibid.

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Fawzia Afzal-Khan's *Lahore With Love*

Reviewed by Swaralipi Nandi

Lahore With Love: Growing Up with Girlfriends Pakistani-Style. Fawzia Afzal-Khan. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010. 176 pages. ISBN: 978-0815609247-8156-0924-7.

“A man’s memory is bound to be a distortion of his past in accordance with his present interests, and the most faithful autobiography is likely to mirror less what a man was than what he has become,” says Fawn M. Brodie and nothing describes Fawzia Afzal-Khan’s commendable memoir, *Lahore With Love*, more aptly. Afzal-Khan grew up in Pakistan, attended a Roman Catholic school and then Kinnaird College for Women before leaving for the US for her Ph.D. degree where she later accepted a job. A Professor at Montclair State University specializing in feminist and postcolonial studies, Fawzia Afzal-Khan is also a poet and an activist for Muslim women’s movements. Consequently, she brings in all these facets of her identity into her memoir, making *Lahore with Love* much more thought-provoking than a simple recounting of her past days in Pakistan and a ‘her-story’ of female friendships. She looks back at her life in Pakistan from her present position of a poet-writer-activist, critically scrutinizing each phase of her growing up in a newly independent country transitioning from the vestiges of colonialism to Islamic fundamentalism. Her girlfriends, each with a distinct personality and an equally diverse life story, portray the sundry plights of Pakistani women as they traverse the passages of girlhood to womanhood in the changing face of the country. *Lahore With Love* is a grand narrative on fifty years of Pakistan’s history through a lens which is overwhelmingly female—both feminine and feminist.

Born in the late 1950s, only a decade after the inception of the modern Pakistan, Afzal-Khan narrates the turmoil of a nation grappling with its religious identity, a colonial hangover, a civil war and numerous military coups. The society, especially the upper-middle class that Fawzia (as a character in the book) belonged to, was fraught with the paradoxes of colonial modernity and Islamic conservatism. So, while it was a fad to send the girls to Catholic convent schools to render them more marriageable with their ‘English’ education, these schools were nevertheless

segregated in sync with Muslim decorum. Afzal-Khan recounts numerous other instances of such paradoxes that characterized the Pakistani middle class whereby Westernized lifestyles coexisted with 'fanatical extremism,' and liberalism for women's education and homosexuality contradicted the racism people showed for the East Pakistanis. In terms of women's position, however, the society remained unanimously patriarchal in restricting them primarily to the domestic role.

The motif of segregation, which resonates throughout the book, appears less of a constriction and more of a catalyst for an alternative female space with its independent dynamics. As they grew up together with the same patriarchal restrictions and the same romantic fantasies about men, went through the same discoveries of their adolescence together, and shared their careers up to a point, the numerous experiences of Fawzia's passage from girlhood to adulthood are shaped and shared only by her girlfriends. As Fawzia recounts: "It is not surprising that same-sex relationships, especially for women, acquire deep, long-lasting emotional resonance. For me, growing up as the eldest daughter of a middle-class urban Pakistani family, girlfriends became a lifeline supplying dreams of possibilities..." (5). The names that recur in her memoir are those of her childhood friends Samina, Hajira, Saira and Madina, each holding a distinct appeal for Fawzia. Samina and Saira embodied the ideal femininity that Fawzia's adolescent self longed for but lacked, especially her enchantment with Samina's physicality often bordering on a homoerotic attraction. Samina, a teenage girl with a lover, is Fawzia's first exposure to such illicit love and its drastic consequences in the form of honor killing driven by class-based conservative Islamism. Saira, too, embodied the sexualized adolescent female body that both attracted and enthralled Fawzia. Saira was also the first one to get married, the first one to recount the experiences of the tabooed discourse of 'sex' and then to gradually lapse into the banality of domesticity with a shapeless body, three children, and a wandering husband. Fawzia shares the closest bond with Hajira who also hails from the same socio-economic background, though often Fawzia looks up to Hajira for the greater liberties she is allowed by her more 'progressive' parents. Emotionally too, the two girls feel closest to each other till Hajira is swept off by the communist discourse of her pseudo-intellectual husband, tragically ending in her suicide due to depression. Madina is the odd one out in the lot: not conforming to the norms of a traditional 'respectable' girl, she embodies an unrestrained female sexuality bordering on insanity and a fierce feminist aggression. A complete contrast to her otherwise, Fawzia relates to her through the activism of her street theatre.

While these characters who dominate her memoir matter to Afzal-Khan personally, they are also crucial to the ideological tenor of the book. The political overwhelms the personal in the memoir as Afzal-Khan critically exposes the

fundamentalist side of Pakistan and its gradual downslide to religious conservatism. An uneasy topic for most Pakistanis, she fearlessly invokes and condemns the atrocities done to the people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) during the civil war, asserting: “it would be decades before we, West Pakistanis would acknowledge the dastardly role of the Pakistani army in looting, killing, raping our brethren on the other side of India” (19). However, she is forthright and clear-sighted in her judgment: while she emphatically expresses her predilection for Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s socialist politics, she also candidly idicts him for of amassing personal wealth, for eliminating of his critics, and for encouraging religious fundamentalism (2). With this clear-sightedness she sees through the parochialism of those people who are closest to her, be it her mother’s racism toward the Shias or her girlfriends’ gradual conversion into religious fanatics. Her mother’s hatred of the Shias startles her to a realization of the “rot that had set in within the fabric of the Pakistani society, deliberately cultivated by the military dictator Zia-ul-Haq” (82). More disillusioning for her is, however, the transformation of her childhood friends who have now internalized the discourse of an Islamic revolution. She vainly tries to argue with these friends and relatives who have turned into faithful followers of a religious propaganda, ruefully realizing that her “best friends have become religious zealots in a way I could not have anticipated when we were giggly girls together” (65). The only friend she relates to ideologically is Madina, who, in spite of her eccentric ways, is an activist addressing women’s issues in Pakistan through her alternative theatre performances, which Afzal-Khan also promotes in her activism.

Afzal-Khan passionately engages in a discussion against the gradual prominence of religious fundamentalism in Pakistan, devoting a substantial space in her memoir to either dismantle the logic of such discourse or to render it risible through humor. Particularly ludicrous is the description of the women’s wing of militant Islamism led by Umm Hassan and the her group of fighter girls, humorously nicknamed as “Chicks with Sticks,” who have shot to international fame when their pictures were released on the Internet, wearing “black ninja outfits and wielding tall bamboo sticks” (129). Yet, with an unbiased assessment Afzal-Khan refrains from dismissing the group completely, admitting that “paradoxically, Umm Hassan seems a stauncher women’s libber. . . , than any “westernized” Pakistani woman I’d ever met—including myself” (141).

The memoir stands out in such impartiality of judgment and a critical awareness of the author’s own Westernized position. More often than not, Afzal-Khan turns the mirror to herself, commenting on her own problematic location as an American academic commenting on Pakistan. The author is constantly aware of the privileges of her Western location, in contrast to her locally bound girlfriends, and dedicates the memoir to them in a guilt of privilege: “It is through the writing

of our shared herstories that I am finally learning the humility that could have saved that mythical flyer (Icarus)” (8). The apologetic tone follows in her description of the honor killings in Pakistan and in her honest confessions of manipulating her “Muslim womanhood to make (her) way up the U.S. academic ladder”(10). While Afzal-Khan implicitly acknowledges her rational vision to her training in US academia, she also exemplifies Spivak’s notion of the metropolitan feminist who is aware of her responsibilities towards the emancipatory struggles of other women outside the domain of Western metropolitan concerns. However, the consciousness of her intellectual superiority occasionally leads to a slight egotistic strain in the memoir; nonetheless a memoir is, after all, a narcissistic project by its very definition!

Moving on to the narrative style of the book, as Carole Stone asserts in the Foreword, *Lahore with Love* is more complex than a memoir. A poet herself, Afzal-Khan muses on her own creative position with reference to other American memoir writers, focusing on the form as well as the content. The memoir also takes various shapes in terms of its literary forms, ranging from verses, parodies, stream of consciousness narratives, along with the confessional tone of an autobiography. At other times she records the history of Pakistan with academic formality, using the detailed footnotes to complement her argument with factual evidence. Particularly striking in narrative style is the chapter ‘Blood and Girls,’ which transcends the prose narrative, achieving a poetic exuberance of expression. Afzal-Khan blends her experiences of bull fighting in Spain and the procession of Muharrum through the metaphor of blood and violence, making it a beautifully crafted creative piece.

The memoir is also refreshing in its humor, which takes shape in the playful parodies as well as in the mild sarcasm of her political commentaries, giving the memoir a pleasant and enjoyable tenor. Though revelatory and critical in her tone, Afzal-Khan’s voice never becomes devastatingly spiteful. Instead, the memoir reads like a commentary by a woman who can see through and reproach the flaws of her country, but nevertheless feels connected to it. The memoir finally becomes characteristic of its genre as it ends with musings on Afzal-Khan’s self quest—“the ever-multiplying fissures of a selfhood fractured into so many roles, performances of identity...” (144) that haunt this multidimensional woman and her brilliant narrative.

Ali Eteraz's *Children of Dust*

Reviewed by David Waterman

Children of Dust: A Memoir of Pakistan. Ali Eteraz. New York: HarperOne, 2009. 339 pages. ISBN: 978-0-06-156708-7.

Titles can be misleading. Dust has nothing to do with the meteorological conditions in the hot, dry country where these children mature, but refers to Satan's lack of esteem for creatures which God had created of dust (Quran 17:61). Ali Eteraz's memoir of growing up in Pakistan and the USA takes the reader between the extremes of desire and fear as experienced by a boy wanting to fulfill his destiny as a servant of Islam, while tempted by the earthly world – the world of flesh, of dust – and his attempts to reconcile the ideal with the everyday hypocrisy and brutality surrounding him. Irony and humor are not forgotten in this contemporary version of “A Portrait of the Muslim as a Young Man,” as Eteraz enjoins us: “Read! [...] and remember, you can't get a death *fatwa* for laughing*” (xii; * probably).

Children of Dust is divided into five sections as we follow the young Ali from a time before his birth, when his father makes a *mannat* with Allah, promising that if a son were born to him, he would be raised as a servant of Islam; the hoped-for son arrives, and is named Abir ul Islam (Perfume of Islam). Indeed, it is this *mannat*, this covenant, which will alternately inspire and torment Ali throughout his youth. Book One is set in Pakistan; the family is poor in spite of Abir's father's training as a doctor. Here, Abir readily absorbs the stories he is told of contemporary Pakistani history by his father, fantastic tales from the Quran by his mother, and even more fantastic firsthand mystical accounts from his grandmother Beyji, all of which inspires him in his vocation as a *hafiz-e-Quran*. Two events, however, arrive in quick succession to remind the family of their covenant, and result in Abir's being enrolled in the *madrassa*: the baby brother's death in mysterious circumstances, and Abir's near-death from typhoid; the typhus *jinn* is defeated in due course by readings from the Quran.

The beatings in the *madrassa* ultimately lead Abir to rebel, for which he is incarcerated in the storage room for several days, thus keeping him on the path of obedience. Book Two describes the family's move to America, and their attempts

to remain part of the orthodox Islamic community while living in the Bible Belt, with all of the difficulties implied as Abir negotiates his way between the Quran Study Circle and the ABC sitcom *Boy Meets World*, between the sermonizing of the Jamaat missionaries and erotic chat on AOL. Abir once again has a plan for independence, going from a desire to change his name from Abir ul Islam to simply Amir, to enrolling in a Manhattan university; a genuine insight comes from sonnets sent by a beautiful girl, Una, and his interpretation of the poems as “liberating [... the poems] allow me to identify myself as a Muslim without having to take on the baggage that my parents and Saleem and the QSC added to it” (146). Book Three finds Amir abandoned by Una, and instead sharing a dorm room in Manhattan with Moosa Farid, the new roommates becoming each others’ touchstone of competitive orthodoxy. As they don’t drink or go to parties, the young Muslims spend their time watching movies; one in particular – *The Siege* – stands out in its ambiguity. On the one hand, the suicide bombers are portrayed as pious Muslims, while on the other the film denounces martial law as a response to terrorist attacks, leaving Amir without the clear-cut answer he’d hoped for: “At the end of the movie I learned that the same confusion extended to the rest of the group. We’d gone in expecting to become angry – no, *more* angry – and we’d left not knowing what to say” (158). Amir’s covenant gathers credibility and momentum as he traces his family lineage to Abu Bakr Siddiq, the first Caliph, who accompanied the Prophet in his flight from Mecca; an impressive story, exposed as a forgery by the end of Book Three, made even worse as the lie was invented to dissimulate Hindu ancestry. While many Muslims around him are praising Osama bin Laden, Amir – still believing himself the descendant of the Caliph – sees only a fighter posing as an Islamic scholar, while Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* is seen as a genuine threat because it provokes doubt regarding the divine status of the Quran. Rather than burn the book, Amir hides it in the Art History section of the library, knowing that pious Muslims will not encounter it there. The sexual desires Amir feels conflict with his piety, and the search for a wife becomes urgent: Kara is Lebanese but Christian and immodest; Bilquis, met on AOL, becomes his soul-mate by elimination, although her father hates Punjabis, so the families will not agree to the marriage. Losing hope of finding a bride in the US, Amir and his family travel to Karachi, but the big-city girls have all been Westernized, causing Amir to head for the desert in search of an uncorrupted, orthodox bride, only to discover how others see him, as a: “stand-in for the entirety of the infidel West. To be more blunt: I was *not* a part of the *ummah*, the universal brotherhood of Muslims” (220).

Book Four sees Amir return to a Christian university in Atlanta for his junior year, where he discovers postmodernism and seemingly unlimited sexual freedom. He becomes the President of the Muslim Student Association, thinking of himself

as “Muhammad to the MSA,” an egocentric power trip which even he realizes is “a charade” (247; 248); Amir finally abandons his confrontational approach after recalling Levinas’s advice that life should be interactive, not power-seeking (266). The final book is a string of epiphanies for Amir, who is now in Kuwait, having chosen the Arab world for his grand-scale project of Islamic reform. He has once again changed his name to Ali Eteraz (Noble Protest), although the name is about all he possesses; he has lost everything else, including his law career, his money and his family. He cannot reform alone, and plans to recruit a Shaykh, a Sculptor and a Princess, who represent freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, and financial patronage, respectively; even more surprising is his success in finding such people willing to join him. But Amir’s prolonged contact with his host, Ziad, will have a deep impact on his ideas of reform and allow him to embrace Islam on a more primary level, without all of the political and intellectual baggage; all of humanity, rather than Islam, becomes the object of service and of mutual belonging: “We were all children of dust” (324). Many simple, ordinary events lead Ali on his voyage of discovery: his day off-roading with Ziad, flying kites and photographing insects; a musical celebration with Pakistani workers; the story of Rumi and his teacher, Shams of Tabriz, who became one in their “I-ness,” or a simple conversation with his host, wherein Ali realizes that he has been obsessed with the wrong covenant, a secondary covenant which has pushed the primary Covenant of Alast into the background (328; 333).

Ali Eteraz’s memoir is of course the story of one young Muslim – Abir, Amir, Ali – yet it will undoubtedly find a wide readership due to its universal message of keeping our priorities straight in a world where people are often manipulated and constrained by political baggage, those religious and national affiliations which set up a conflictual, competitive framework of us versus them, rather than the “we-ness” of humanity as a whole. Ali’s story is long and heart-rending, sometimes funny, sometimes frustrating, and his willingness to share it makes us all better off in the telling and re-telling as we reflect on our own covenants and baggage.

Musharraf Ali Farooqi's Translation of *The Adventures of Amir Hamza*

Reviewed by Colleen Thorndike

The Adventures of Amir Hamza. Ghalib Lakhnavi and Abdullah Bilgrami. Trans. Musharraf Ali Farooqi. New York: Modern Library, 2008. 954 pages. ISBN: 978-0-8129-7743-1.

Musharraf Ali Farooqi's translation of *The Adventures of Amir Hamza* from the original Urdu gives readers a look into the fantastic battles and other myriad adventures of Hamza and his companions. Originally part of the oral tradition of pre-Islamic Persia, Hamza's various adventures and encounters with other civilizations and worlds were eventually collected by Ghalib Lakhnavi and Abdullah Bilgrami and published in Urdu. In the introduction to his translation, Farooqi recalls reading these tales covertly at night and reenacting the battles that Hamza fights against the various leaders he encounters throughout his travels. It is because of his memorable experience reading this epic as a child that he decided to translate the tale.

Readers of *The Adventures of Amir Hamza* are immediately immersed in a world of magic, which includes devils, jinns, peris, and giants. Hamza battles various leaders of the Orient, traveling all over Persia. His travels even include a trip to Qaf where he battles devils and dragons. Throughout his adventures Hamza succeeds with the help of his faith and his friends.

The Adventures of Amir Hamza is divided into four books. Book One begins before Hamza's birth. It starts with the story of Alqash, Emperor Qubad Kamran's vizier, betraying and killing Khvaja Bakht Jamal, a savant, over buried treasure that Bakht Jamal finds. Bakht Jamal's son, Buzerjmehr eventually uncovers the truth of his father's murder and has the Emperor sentence Alqash to death. Alqash's grandson, Bakhtak, seeks revenge for his grandfather's death, and is set up as a villain in the epic. Buzerjmehr becomes the vizier to Emperor Kamran and, later, his son Naushervan. By the middle of the first book the tensions of the epic have been established. Bakhtak has wormed his way into Naushervan's good graces and acts as one of his advisors along with Buzerjmehr; Hamza and his sidekick, Amar Ayyar, along with Muqbil, Hamza's loyal servant have established themselves as warriors willing to do Naushervan's bidding. Buzerjmehr advises and helps Hamza,

Amar, and Muqbil throughout the epic, while Bakhtak convinces Naushervan that Hamza will try to overthrow the emperor. Book One serves to establish these relationships and tensions and shows how great a warrior Hamza is. He fights and converts armies trying to overtake parts of Naushervan's empire. By the end of Book One, Hamza has amassed a large army and has gained the trust and loyalty of other warriors who he once opposed.

Book Two starts with Bakhtak having convinced Naushervan that Hamza's ultimate goal is to overthrow the emperor and convert everyone to his one true religion. Naushervan sends his army out to kill Hamza. Hamza is imprisoned in Yusef's well in Egypt at one point, but is saved by Amar and Muqbil. Hamza is also poisoned, but is saved Buzerjmehr and Amar. After surviving all of this, Hamza is called to Mount Qaf. Mount Qaf is a parallel land of Jinns, Peris, and Devs. Qaf is ruled by Emperor Shuhpal bin Shahrukh, but the Devs have risen against the Emperor and the rest of the Peris and only Hamza can defeat the Devs. While Hamza is in Qaf, he leaves Amar in charge of the army and of keeping Hamza's fiancé, Princess Mehr-Nigar, safe from harm and from being returned to Naushervan's palace. A lot of Book Two focuses on Amar's trickery and the pranks he plays on his unsuspecting friends and enemies. Amar especially relishes in making the high-ranking officers in Naushervan's army look foolish. His tricks usually succeed in shaming the officers into retreating. Much of this trickery entails low humor, which was included in the oral telling of the epic to keep the audience's interest and provide pacing as well as comic relief to the story.

In Book Three, Hamza journeys back to the land of humans after spending 18 years in Qaf. During his time in Qaf, Hamza married Aasman Peri (the daughter of Emperor Shuhpal bin Shahrukh of Qaf) who makes it impossible for anyone to help him, thus hindering his return to Princess Mehr-Nigar. Aasman Peri, who has a violent temper, doesn't want Hamza to return to his people because she will not see him again and because he loves Princess Mehr-Nigar more than he loves her. Book Four focuses on the re-establishment of Hamza's family. In this book, Hamza's children, from various women, come into the story. Some of his children, who do not know that he is their father, challenge him in battle. Hamza's travels end in Mecca with his meeting the prophet Muhammad and his attaining martyrdom.

Throughout the epic the overarching themes are love, friendship, and faith. Hamza's love for Princess Mehr-Nigar is his guiding force through many of his adventures. Hamza's friendship with Amar, Muqbil, and Landhoor not only enriches his life, but saves it many times. Whenever Hamza is on the losing end of a battle he quickly gains the upper hand by yelling, "God is Great" and keeping a strong faith in this god. While *The Adventures of Amir Hamza* is considered an Islamic epic, it is important to note that the epic is set in pre-Islamic Persia, roughly

during the 600s. And while Hamza is Mohammed's uncle, none of the characters follow any strict or consistent religious guidelines. Although Hamza professes faith in the one true religion and the one true god and is sometimes seen praying, he also engages in much drinking and debauchery, including having multiple wives and children by multiple women, throughout the epic.

This epic provides readers with an escape from reality. Almost immediately readers are immersed in this vibrant world and pulling oneself out of Hamza's heroic world to face the drudgery of the real world is a difficult and sad task. Farooqi's translation of this Urdu epic gives Western readers a valuable piece of literature. This is an epic that should be read by students and lovers of literature to broaden their horizons and give them hours of entertainment. I found this story more engaging, exciting, and accessible than any other epic I've read, because it has a good mix of high and low literary features, including some elevated epic language and great battle scenes, as well as scatological humor. This mix keeps the reader very much engaged in the epic for the duration of the book. Farooqi's translation seems true to the spirit of the epic and as true to the original language as possible. Farooqi includes at the end of the volume a brief history of the epic including possible origins for the tale. Readers will also find a list of characters, creatures, and historical figures to help further their understanding of the epic itself and its place in Persian literary history.

Mashhood Ahmed Sheikh's *Side Effects: Portrait of a Young Artist in Lahore*

Reviewed by Tatiana Zelenetskaya Young

The movie "*Side Effects: Portrait of a Young Artist in Lahore*" was directed by Mashhood Ahmed Sheikh, a visual anthropologist and documentary film maker. Mashhood has been educated as an applied social researcher. This film was made as the final project for the MPhil Visual Cultural studies degree at the University of Tromsø, Norway, after several months of field work in Lahore, Pakistan. Mashhood has also directed and co-directed "Running Man" (2005), "Murder" (2005), "Aik Kahani" (2005), "Keep Talking" (2006), and an ethnographic documentary film, "Harley ... the bad people?" (2007).

"Side Effects: Portrait of a Young Artist in Lahore" is a straightforward movie which gives a clear and uncensored view of the struggle and joy of the Young Artist in his daily life. The story unfolds in the city of Lahore which is located in Northeast Pakistan along the banks of the Ravi River. Lahore is a fabled city which has been in existence for hundreds of years, astonishing us with its magnificence. This city is often called the Garden of Mughals, taking its name from the days of the Mughal Empire. The ancient architecture guards the secrets and glory of days long gone. The beauty and vastness of nature is also present in the city, manifesting itself in parks and gardens. Today, this busy metropolis is the second largest city of Pakistan and is an education, media and art capital as well as the home of the Young Artist.

The Young Artist is enrolled in the College of Art and Design, studying for a bachelor's degree in graphic design. Apart from that, he is studying a certificate course in the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. On the college building that The Young Artist attends, the name of this institution is written in the English language. One would be surprised to see English letters instead of Punjabi (the regional language), or Urdu (the national language). Why in the city of Lahore, the second largest city of Pakistan, are there so many banners on buildings and such written in English? Is this how a first-time visitor would envision it, are these the images that appear in one's head before watching "Lahore"? And suddenly it comes to mind that the city of Lahore was under British rule. There are days when The Young Artist comes to the college only to find out that there are no

classes; he gets very frustrated or perhaps even discouraged. He wants to learn. When he gets together with his friends they complain that they want to learn the newest innovations, not to be taught outdated material. They all speak English, and write and study their homework in English. English has become increasingly more popular, especially among the youth. It is the language of young, educated, elite, and business oriented people; these changes are linked to the official status of government of Pakistan.

What comes to my mind is my birthplace which I left seventeen years ago: Kiev, the capital of Ukraine – how much I was surprised that names of banks, stores and other places are now written in English. Don't we have our own language?! Even such English words as "shopping" have sneaked into everyday conversation, even though we have plenty of Ukrainian words to describe this activity.

While attending the college, the Young Artist works every day. He already has been working for quite a while, and has a sufficient amount of experience and dreams of working for himself. His job takes much of his time; sometimes he works from 9 am to 4 am. He works for the magazine publishing company named "More". What does "More" symbolize? Is it the key word of this film? The Young Artist wants more: more from his life, more from his education, more from love - he wants more for himself.

This movie shows the real city of Lahore, real people and real life. What makes The Young Artist in Lahore so unique? It is neither Lahore nor The Young Artist but that You and I could be The Young Artist in our home city as well. All of us – humanity - basically want more from life and ourselves. I believe that many of us can recognize ourselves in a portrait that the director draws of The Young Artist. If it is not one aspect of life to which we can relate, then it could be another, similar to our own experience. There is something familiar in The Young Artist. How many of us want more from our jobs? We work hard, spending much of our fast, fleeting years doing that which we chose to do; we sleep less, eating while walking to the bus or a car, having virtually no time for our hobbies or friends. How many of us can recognize ourselves in the sense of lost love? I think we all felt it somewhere in our lives. Yes, we all can say the identical words "It was only me who was serious", and of course our hearts ache, feeling as if there is no word that will describe our pain, and we became as wordless as The Young Artist. I am also sure that we can speak to the fact that sometimes we did not learn as much as we had anticipated.

Did the director meet the goal to show what everyday life can be? Did we recognize ourselves in The Young Artist? Did he succeed in illustrating contemporary Lahore to us? Did we really picture in our mind that residents of Lahore buy jeans, do homework in English and read advertisements of store banners

adorned in English? How many times have we watched movies in which there is no reality, where reality is nothing but sugar coating and facade?

Because the perception of beauty soothes the human heart, the Young Artist is surrounded by his friends who want to capture the moments of life in “stills”. They go to nature to spontaneously photograph whatever they find interesting. They do macro-photography. Did you know that sand, dust and sticks carry so much beauty in them? You should see for yourself – watch the film! The team wants to immortalize these moments via capturing flashes of simple, everyday activities - such as playing with friends or being with loved ones. The Young Artist wants to avoid the human tendency to drift into life’s monotony by illuminating the experience of these moments.

During one of their trips to the lake, for example, the Young Artist and his friends meet Ahmed Raza. Ahmed’s simple words of wisdom speak for themselves, illustrating how one experiences and understands the world, from distinctive meanings and values as individual human-beings. Ahmed proclaims “How do you save the one who’s drowning willingly?” He then continues, “Stop listening to the sound of your own voice. Stop being obsessed by your own desires. Learn from books if you want to know something”. Ahmed weaves his message: “How may I conceive of our physical world if I don’t know where time begins and ends”.

The Young Artist experienced joy and enthusiasm for life when he dined on “chicken’s butts” with his friends or went “flying” and radiated happiness when he spent time with his girlfriend. Sometimes the Young Artist gets frustrated with his life, his job and his lost love; he declares that he “went quiet”. This is the side effect of love! Soft yellow lights surrounding the city of Lahore in the evening, the music eerily loops in the air around the Young Artist while he drives his motorcycle. He sings “I have a thousand stories. How can I tell you them all...?”

From Malakand with Love!

By Shaikh Muhammad Ali

My good fortunes in this life are due to being blessed with an amazing family. In countless ways, big and small; they have inspired and continue to enlighten me. My better half, the love of my life; Sabeen is a wonderful picnic manager. For reasons beyond expression; this article is dedicated to her! The last time that I travelled to the ‘Switzerland of the East’, yes SWAT was in 1986 when I could not meet my pen friend in Peshawar after travelling for 35 hours from Karachi in ‘Khyber Mail’ probably the slowest train in Pakistan then and would still be the slowest even after a lapse of 24 years now. Chuckles.

This pen friend and the Khyber mail trip indeed takes me down memory lane but I better return fast or else my wife will surely not give me breakfast today. Yes, in this part of the world (we being a male chauvinistic society) still enjoy the privilege of our wives making breakfast for us just like she does for my three little brats. I can see my friends from the West cursing my luck.

Not that she is forced to do this but she actually loves pampering me and I normally enjoy the honors. I can be such an ass sometimes. Right? Laughter! Coming back to the discussion; I had made friends with the Director (P&D) of University of Malakand sometime in 2009 and told him about my last trip to Swat and he vehemently asked me to revisit the place.

The pilgrimage:

This invitation stuck in my mind and heart and lo and behold come the first week of March 2010, I decide to take the pilgrimage of course along with my crazy family of five. Took a casual leave (which I am entitled to take 24 times in a year) on Friday the 5th March 2010 from work while the first Saturday of the month being off; we rolled towards the mountains (like we always do on long weekends).



(On the Motorway heading for Malakand Division)

Chakdara, Malakand. Does the name ring a bell? It better do since Malakand is about 26 kilometer from Mingora. One of the hottest places on mother earth till 3 months or so ago. Yes, the most happening place which was the center piece of terrorism with Metal fighting metal, Souls fighting Souls. Pakistani fighting Pakistanis. Muslims fighting Muslims. Right?

Well, if that is what you believe then you are absolutely wrong, Sir. It is a clash of civilization taking place right in the heart of Pakistan with foreign funding being paid in hard cash, yes greenbacks to corrupt our younger generation and to ruin the name of Islam by foreign agencies which we continue to call 'hidden hands' in this part of the planet. The government sleeps. The Moulvis frolic. The Army becomes trigger hungry again and the intermediaries which I call 'Consultants' in this case make hay while the sun shines.

It is rather easy to delve into this subject over and over again but I must behave and come back and write my piece. So off we went to visit the University of Malakand in Chakdara, Dir. Surprisingly, the university is in Chakdara city but is still called the University of Malakand which is actually another city. On my asking the local folks, I came to learn that this entire area lies in the Malakand Division and thus the name of the university.



(Getting slightly closer – So close yet so far away)

Well, talking about breakfast; my wife is up from her deep slumber and is indeed in the kitchen making breakfast for me. See. I told you I was good at this.

We stopped for lunch at Rashakai, a place where you leave the fabulous motorway and traverse on older and slightly rotten roads. But I must hurriedly confess that the NWFP province hosts the best roads in Pakistan. Rashakai has lately become popular with women in Islamabad apparently because cloth is being sold cheaper there and with a lot of variety. So ladies in Karachi and Lahore, pack your bags, book your flights and hotels & rush to Islamabad so that you can ruin your husband's happiness by dropping while shopping @ Rashakai! A shopper's paradise just 95 kms from Islamabad. Goodies being served on first come- first serve basis. Ladies, is your adrenaline running already?



(Family lunch @ Rashakai about 95 kms from Islamabad)

While we were stuffing our faces @ Rashakai, the first bomb exploded. No. No. Not an explosion, rather I saw a platoon of the Pakistan army arrive at Rashakai from Rawalpindi not to arrest us but to have lunch at the restaurant. My wife almost threw a tantrum since we were having a first bout with the army and I am sure she must be having fancy ideas already as to whether we should proceed ahead or return to our pit hole aka Islamabad.

Before she had taken this decision, just to make ourselves comfortable that we were heading towards a war zone (well almost); I took my children close to one truck and took a picture with one of the foot soldiers while making friends with him. Actually, he was almost scared to death since he himself was being posted in Swat for the first time but his embarrassment met newer heights when I told him that I was taking my children there as well. Well, it was not his fault since we are all human at the end of the day. Actually deep down inside I was shit scared myself although never showed it all along.



(Three idiots with ‘Brave heart’ – Muhammed Zaman Malik)

Historical perspective:

Chakdara has been an important trade-route junction for two or three thousand years. Alexander reached the Indus through Dir fording the Swat River here. At strategic Damkot hill, archeologists have found artifacts from the 2nd millennium BC and evidence of a Shahi fort.¹



(The beautiful Chakdara Fort with Plum trees around)

Emperor Akbar garrisoned Chakdara in 1587 in an unsuccessful attempt to take Swat. Nervous after the Chitral siege, the British in 1897 built the present bridge, fort and hilltop picket (among soldiers here then was young - who later

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became famous; Winston Churchill, for whom the picket is named). Unfortunately, the Pakistan Army now uses the fort so Damkot Hill is off limits to visitors.²



(A beautiful view of Damkot Hill with the Churchill Picket)

Thanks to our guide Fazal Ur Rahman (who was actually a cook at the guest house) managed to squeeze us past the Churchill Picket and we went up the Damkot hill but please do not spread the news around since I could be charged with trespassing. Laughter.



(A scenic view from Damkot Hill with Churchill Picket in the background)

Back to the main story:

After having lunch on the last leg of the Motorway, we took a detour towards Mardan city. I would not write about Mardan since I have already written in detail about this beautiful place with amazingly hospitable people in my other article on ‘Takht-e-Bahi’ which can indeed be appreciated on my writing space on SCRIBD.



(Passing through the Mardan city with the Railway station on the left)

We just breezed through Mardan, Takht-e-Bahi (although we did stop for 5 minutes for Qahwa) and headed for Dargai which is about a 40 minutes drive from Mardan City.



(The entrance to Dargai)

Another 25 minutes drive from Dargai we started ascending towards the Malakand Top.



At the foot of this all-weather pass is the Dargai Fort and at the Top is Malakand Fort, where Pashtuns led by the ‘Mad Mullah of Malakand’ rose against the British in 1897.³



(The only tunnel on the way to the Malakand Top)

On both sides of the pass and through a tunnel under it, runs the Swat Canal; robbing the Swat River to irrigate the plain. North at Chakdara is the turning and bridge to Dir and Chitral while straight on is Swat’s gateway, a police post at Landakai village.⁴



(Where do we want to go today – Chitral or Swat?)

Once you drop off Malakand Top, you reach an unassuming Batkhela village. The most interesting thing about Batkhela is (which most Pakistanis may not know) that it hosts the longest bazaar in the entire Pakistan. I heard that it is between 3–5 kilometer long. Indeed, with the traffic crush; it took us forever to get through this long, snaky bazaar.

After reaching Batkhela, it was already getting close to evening and I was trying to reach the destination as soon as possible before Maghreb prayers i.e. dusk. I must hurry to mention that since I always travel with my family on such trips, I make it a point that I always reach the destination before sun set. There is no point in taking risk with small children while driving in the night at new places and especially in the mountains. Death is indeed inevitable but why kill yourself early anyways?

It took us about 15 more minutes to reach the University of Malakand which is although situated in Malakand Division but housed in the city of Chakdara, Dir. While reaching close to the University, we passed by the famous Dir Museum but of course it was closed since it was after 5:00 p.m. and I marked it for attack on the next day.

We reached the University around sixish and were welcomed by the amazing hospitality of Fazal Ur Rahman who was the Cook cum House keeper of the guest house. After freshening up for a while, we had ‘Qahwa’ (Green tea) with him and after having an early home cooked sumptuous dinner, we all retired to bed early. Lest I forget to mention that the temperature was slightly above zero degree Celsius and may have fallen lower in the night since we used double blankets not to mention the electric heater which was practically on; the entire night.

The next morning (as always) I was up for Fajr prayers i.e. around 5:30 a.m. said my prayers and went out for a brisk walk in the woods. It was a chilly morning on 6th March 2010, much chillier than Islamabad. Although I am not sure, but we were at an altitude of approximately 5,000 feet above sea level or so.

The children got up around 8:00 a.m. and we had Omelets, Chai (Tea) and Paratha. Paratha (Pakistani style oily bread) I would hate to translate. It simply kills the taste. Fazal was indeed a marvelous cook and a wonderful host simultaneously.



(Fazal Ur Rahman feeding the brats)

After having breakfast, I was invited by my host i.e. Mr. Ilyas Iqbal; the Director (Planning & Development) of the University of Malakand to visit the university. Adil & Mohsin (my two princes) came along for the trip while Ayesha (my little angel) and Sabeen stayed for makeup (Laughter). Ilyas took us around the humongous university in a coaster (type of Toyota Van) and gave us a short tour round campus.



(Proof that I was at the University)

I was amazed to see the size of the university which was close to around 1,400 or so acres and surprisingly included an entire hill within its periphery. I have yet to visit a university in my entire life which owns a hill. Yes, an entire God damn hill!



(With our fabulous host i.e. Mr. Ilyas Iqbal, Director (P&D), Univ. of Malakand)

I was more surprised to learn through my host that the university came into being in the year 2002 whereby it was converted from the biggest wood processing factory in Asia. The factory was incurring huge losses year after year and thus it was finally converted into a university. Legend has it that the equipment worth Rs. 300 million was sold off to a businessman for Rs. 3 million in Faisalabad

and it practically took 6 months to transport the equipment. What an irony!

The university is a shambles while the huge deteriorating workshop has been converted into a garage for the university's fleet of buses; the shabby residential quarters of the workers have been turned into student hostels. The better houses built for officers are where the faculty resides now. Strange buildings have been turned into much stranger outlets.



(Work going on around the herbarium)

There is a herbarium in the making along with two green houses already in place. Instead of concentrating on the WATSAN yes water & sanitation issues of the student and faculty hostels, I wonder what is the point in squandering public money on brick & mortar first. They can always be developed once the Maslow's needs of hierarchy are in place.

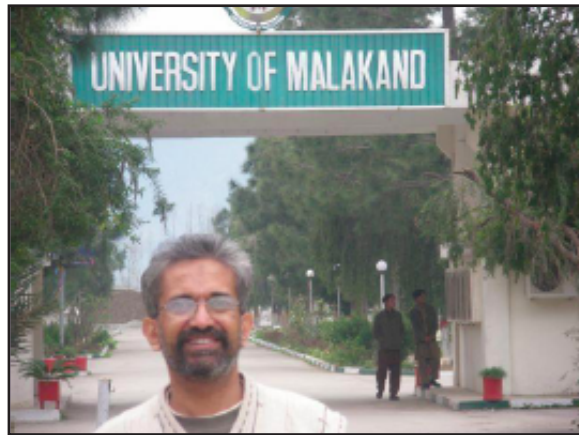


(The green houses among a rhapsody of grotesque planning)

Ali

With no offense to anyone involved in this Immaculate Conception, I personally feel that having a university here was the most foolish of ideas. Let me rush to explain my perspective as to why I feel this way before Ilyas takes an offense.

Although, the university serves a huge and burgeoning population around the area with a current student strength of 4,000 + students who even come all the way from Multan which may be at a distance of about 700 kms from here but that is beside the point. The city (wonder if I can call it a city in the first place) does not host a single hospital.



(Moulvi Sahib @ the gates of knowledge)

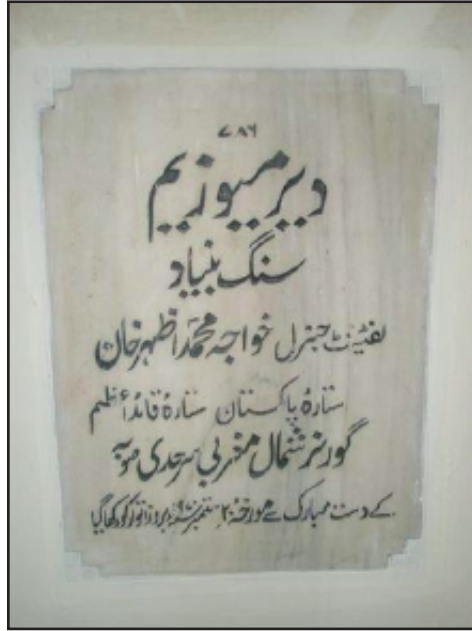
Yes, no hospital at all. How can education be more important than life; I fail to cherish. For any emergencies, the entire city / village of Chakdara have to march either to Dir northwards or to Batkhela southwards in order to reach a small district hospital. Yes, a distance of about 15 hilly kms has to be traversed before a decision of one's life or death could be taken. What a farce! I assume emergencies do not happen in this part of the world. Laughter!

Sorry, Ilyas; I blew this one up. No wonder, my Mom calls me a firey writer and yes I am proud of it too. You may please go ahead and call me 'Shameless moron' and I can bet I will continue to speak the truth and nothing but the truth!

After spending some value added time with Ilyas @ the university and cribbing about life in general, we came back & headed for the other goodies packed up by God for us on this trip. Fazal, being a strategic host had already called up his friend to fry fish for us that is caught from the Swat River and is served direct from the brew to make it ready by lunch time.

We first stopped at the Dir Museum. Incidentally, it was closed for renovation but with Fazal's skills he somehow managed to squeeze inside and convince the Director / Curator personally to throw open the gates for us. We, being from

Islamabad, the Capital City were hurriedly rushed in. Islamabad, the City which is about 5 kms from Pakistan. The throne of Power, Military, Establishment, Bureaucracy. All but farcical comedy. No more, no less!



(I wish this was in English. The laying stone of Dir Museum)

The museum was opened in 1979 and is tucked at the village's main entrance. Exhibits include amazingly well-preserved Buddhist statuary, beautiful carved columns and lintels from an old mosque of Swat and an ethnographic section with eye-popping embroidery and lots of jewelry.⁵

The Curator i.e. Dr. Zain himself came out to greet us while we almost thought that we may not be allowed to enter this small master piece of the history of this region. 'Hospitality of the Pathan' came out in full force when Zain Sahib hugged me and allowed us in with full honors.

Zuhr prayers was about to be offered and the three of us males in the Shaikh clan bowed & prostrated to the Lord, God almighty. Dr. Zain personally took us around the museum and while walking around with him I felt the power, humility, authority of this man who had a PhD in Greek archeology and had been heading the Dir museum for the last eight (8) years.



(Inside the Dir museum with the curator i.e. Dr. Zain)

Just to throw some light about his level on the seat of power, he narrated that he was usually summoned by the then Prime Minister i.e. Mr. Short Cut Aziz when he was invited to lay bricks @ a new museum opening up somewhere on the planet and Mr. Zain would pass him the knowledge about that region (as if Mr. PM did understand all that archeology).



(A rare relic at the Dir Museum, 'In the name of God' inscribed on the rock)

God does open up close doors on me. Yes, I thank you God for fulfilling your promise to a Momin. My enemies can rot in their self-generated hells. Eureka. Laughter!

After having a bout with history, archeology, this God fearing, fun loving, risk taking family headed for the Swat River. Instead of reaching the river through Mingora which was hardly about 26 kms from here (a hot spot till late due to the terrorism issue) we headed towards the hills of Shamozi to reach at the maximum height of the hill overseeing the other side of the scenic Swat river. Had it not been for Fazal, camera happy tourist s like us could never have reached here since this particular route is only known to locals.



(On top of the Shamozi Hill)



(A beautiful view of the Swat River in the background)



(His Royal Highness before he was thrown in the river)

After touching the skies we retreated back to civilization and before reaching the side of the river, we picked our Fried fish from the makeshift Hilton Continental at the mouth of the road skirting down to the Swat River.



(Our makeshift Hilton Continental where the chickens come home to roost along with the fish before they die and scavenged by animals called ‘Humans’)

It had been ages that we had fish like this. Trust me, if you were there, you will forget about eating fish at Cairo Hilton, Burj Ul Arab, at Champs Elyse’s or at the Trump Plaza in New York for that matter. Simple fish. Simple life. Simply splendid!



(The metaphorical 'Last supper' by the Swat River)

On the way back, we frolicked at the beautiful fall (Abshaar) close to the Damkot Hill. There seem to be no particular name for this Abshaar but we stopped and enjoyed anyways. Clean air. Clean water. Clean fun! We are loving it minus the McDonalds.



(Frolic @ the Water Fall)

Although we were initially planning to leave town after this escapade since Sabeen was slightly concerned about the security issues due to the proximity to the war zone but somehow Fazal (with his strategic emotional blackmails) convinced us to stay for one more night. And stay we did.

Again after having a slightly lighter dinner this time around, we slept after enjoying the traditional Qahwa while our bodies slightly acclimatizing with the chilly climate. After saying my Fajr prayers, I responded to a little over 35 e-mails (offline);

Ali

we had a late breakfast around 10 a.m. and left the guest house heading for home.

With a lot of sharp memoirs from yet another hospitable trip in the mountains of NWFP, I was driving with a heavy heart of losing wonderful new found friends. Yes, the Pathans who indeed could die for a friend. They have inspired me from day one since I have moved to Islamabad from Karachi in mid 2002 and have left a strong mark on my heart. I am miserably trying to learn Pashto and one fine morning I will probably write a book titled 'The way of the Pathan' or 'My escapades in N.W.F.P'.

On the way back, we stopped to buy 'Palai Maltay' (type of Oranges) from Malakand top. I tell you these are the best 'Maltay' you can get in the entire N.W.F.P province just like the 'Khanpur Maltay' in Punjab or the 'Sargodha Kinoo' from Sargodha.



(This picture was taken after feasting on the 'Palai Maltay')

After feasting on the 'Palai Maltay', we stopped for paying our homage at the mausoleum of the famous 'Mad Mullah of Malakand'. The story goes that once the British took control of the Sub Continent in the late nineteenth century, they headed towards the north of Pakistan (Sub Continent then) under the false hope that they would be able to control the honorable Pathan as well.



(At the mausoleum of Ghazi Sikandar Shah Shaheed)

By late 1895, the Pathans from Malakand Division formed their forces to go head on with the British and gave them a tough time. Ghazi Sikandar Shah (Shaheed) aka martyr remembered as the ‘Mad Mullah of Malakand’ by the British was the supreme commander of the Pakhtun forces. He fought with gallantry and thus was martyred on the Malakand top where he is buried today.

We got on the motorway around 4:30 p.m. and after having tea at Rashakai, we stopped for Asr prayers and then headed home.



(Asr Prayer break @ Rashakai, NWFP)

Indeed we were all tired but the little ones got lucky since they could sleep in the back seat of my Mercedes oops Santro!



(All's well that ends well)

PS. This article took me about 16 hours to complete and it would probably take at least a year to write something as fine as this one, lest I take another escapade on the same planet! Adios.

Notes:

¹ *The lonely planet, Pakistan*, John King – Bradley Mayhew – David St. Vincent, 5th Edition, July.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Labor Unionization in Pakistan – History & Trends

By Riffat Bawa and Waqar Hashmi

After the French Revolution, laborers in the mining industry formed a labor association as the revolution had inculcated a sense of collectivism in the masses. By that time, labor associations had no legal standing, but soon there was a mushroom growth of labor associations. These were the first labor bodies and soon the right of unionization was accepted through the Combination Act of 1828. Thus these associations became labor unions and they were accepted legally.

Malik Gokhale and his associates first started organizing labor in the Indo-Pak sub-continent. Malik also published a paper titled ‘Maratha’ which became instantly popular. In the beginning, the articles published in this paper were disseminated to study groups comprising labors from different industries for awareness. The Bill Hands Association came into being under the auspices of ‘Maratha.’ In a way, it was the first ever labor union in the Indo-Pak sub-continent. Slowly and gradually the wave of labor unionization reached British-India from England.

Generally, there used to be craft unions in England in those days, whereas, initially organizational-based labor unions were interestingly formed in British-India. For instance, the labor unions in Port Trust, Railway and Post Office etc., were the catalyst unions. Soon, labor unionization took momentum and consequently the Trade Unions Act was passed in 1926 under which labor unions were registered in order to give them legal status and official recognition.

In the context of Pakistan, the Railway Workers Union is considered the foremost labor union. Similarly, the Postal & Telegraph Department & Port Trust unions were established. Narain Das started organizing labor unions in the Sindh province and also paved the way for labor unionization in the private industrial sector. Popular labor unions at that time were in the Komal Flour Mill and the Ganesh Khopra (Coconut) Mill. The labor union of the Lahore Railway Workshop emerged as a powerful entity. Similarly, the Hydro-Electric Central Labor Union was formed pre-partition in 1935 in British-India at the electricity department. Its headquarters was in Shimla and Bashir Bakhtiar was its head. Another exemplary contemporary labor activist was Mirza Ibrahim, who energized the Railway Workers Union.

In British-India, labor unions were affiliated to the India Trade Union Congress which had a great inclination towards communism. In view of this, the Congress Party established the Indian Trade Union Congress (INTUC). Jay Parakash Narain's Socialist Party formed Hindustan Mazdour Sabha (HMS) – meaning labor council. Naturally, the INTUC & HMS activists were under the influence of the National Congress and Socialist Party respectively and were committed to further the cause of these forceful political outfits. The difference was that HMS supporters used to prefer the legal course whereas INTUC followers believed in industrial strikes. As per legal framework regarding industrial disputes, first notices of a strike were served, then negotiations were held and on unsuccessful deliberations a formal declaration was made and subsequently legal course was adopted by taking-up matters to the labor court or else observe a strike. The period of strike notice used to be 14 days which could be extended during negotiations and more often the notification period used to be extended.

As stated above, INTUC used to prefer going on strike whereas HMS often used to opt for taking matters to the labor court. Government had the discretion to halt the strike and refer the dispute to the labor court. The whole process used to take a lot of time as there used to be too many unsettled issues.

Strikes were not prohibited during the Second World War, but the Government used to interfere in the labor union related matters in major organizations. Congress and the communist block diverge upon two separate paths. During war there was a trend to focus on the war and avoid strikes so that there is no disruption in production. One of the stakeholders from the labor side was the Radical Democratic Party, which was in favor of war assuming it anti-fascist, while the rest used to consider it empirical war. Congress had the same view. As expected the communists also used to consider it a Zionist war, but in 1942 after the Nazi attack on Soviet Union began calling it civil war. This actually was the view of the British Communist Party, and their representatives propagated this belief by sending their missions in different countries including India.

The hype remained alive among labors even after the war. Pakistan came into being as an independent state. The labor in the newly established state formed the Pakistan Trade Union Federation while severing formal ties with All-India Trade Union Congress. Famous activist Mirza Ibrahim was the first President of the Pakistan Trade Union Federation. Bashir Ahmed Bakhtiar was another notable labor activist. Pasha Lodhi and Tuffail Abbas were also popular. Tuffail Abbas used to lead the labor initiative at the Orient Airways. Labor Union at the Orient Airways faced a lot of difficulties in the beginning as their initial strike did not go well and was unsuccessful. Meanwhile, Orient Airways emerged as a larger public enterprise in the shape of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). However,

Tuffail Abbas was a good strategist and a visionary. He formed a Committee for Mutual Cooperation (CMC) when labor union at PIA was dissolved, and later this Committee was transformed into a new labor union.

Under the banner of the CMC the interests of labor were aligned and this factor was instrumental in formation of the new union. The new union fund became a valuable resource for organizing the staggered labor elsewhere. Laborers in the other enterprises were organized gradually. In fact, labor movement outside Karachi was stirred. For instance, laborers were successfully organized in Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi (Punjab province) & Peshawar (erstwhile North-West-Frontier province & now newly named Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province).

Muhammad Suleiman played an instrumental role in forming and organizing labor unions in Lahore, Faisalabad & Rawalpindi. Similarly, lawyer Muhammad Akram activated the labor movement in Faisalabad & Rawalpindi. Subsequently, labor unions were formed in Rawalpindi at Watan Woolen Mill, Watan Cotton Mill, Rahat Woolen Mill and Glass Factory etc. Slowly the effect spread throughout. Some unions assembled at Tezab Ghar Aahata (Acid House Premises) of Watan Woolen Mills residential colony and initiated the process for labor unionization. Afterwards, Cantonment Staffs' Union also participated in this uprising. A large number of workers who participated in this assembly were supporters of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). As a result, the new union body was named Peoples Labor Front (PLF). Due to its policy of 'powerful struggle' the PLF carved a special place in the hearts of the laborers. Because of the concerted efforts of Rafiq Qureshi who was an ex-employee of PIA, a strong labor union came into being. Due to 'powerful struggle' mandate laborers started joining PLF in flocks.

Meanwhile, in the Industrial Area (Sector I-9) of Islamabad where there were about 100 factories, the labor movement gained momentum. Labor unions were formed due to the PPP-led PLF struggle in most of the factories. Among the people who led the PLF initiative, there notably were Nazir Masih (who belonged to the Cantonment Board, Rawalpindi – Islamabad & Rawalpindi are called the twin cities), Rafiq Qureshi from PIA, and Luqman Mirza from Tailoring House. After the general elections labor movement took pace. A large number of these laborers were pro-PPP.

As per law, labor unions could raise an industrial dispute after registration. As per the procedure, first the general secretary of the registered labor union had to serve a notice along with the list of demands to the management to hold negotiations with the union. After two weeks the general secretary could notify strike regardless of receiving response from the management. In view of strike notice, the Ministry of manpower used to intervene. Government used to nominate a re-conciliator who was supposed to supervise and facilitate the reconciliation process between the

management and the union. In case of a deadlock in reconciliation efforts the reconciliator used to issue a 'failure certificate.' Subsequently, there were three courses of action available to the labor unions; firstly to go on strike, secondly to take the matter to the labor court, and thirdly to involve an arbitrator. The inexperienced labor unions never realizing the usefulness of the arbitration process used to tap the first two options more often. The arbitrator was supposed to hear the standpoint of both the parties i.e., management and the labor union, and then render a verdict just like an expedient labor court. However, arbitration is a modern progressive way of resolving issues, and this mechanism is rarely deployed in Pakistan even now. One example of deployment of arbitration process was witnessed at the daily Tameer, where Rao Irshad, who was editor of a pro-labor weekly *Al-Fatah*, was nominated arbitrator to resolve a dispute between labor and management. As expected, Rao Irshad announced a verdict which was more inclined towards the interest of the labor union.

In countries where Industrial Relations are at a developed and mature stage, a panel of arbitrators is formed. This is not done in Pakistan as the state of industrial relations manifests a primitive outlook. Both management and the labor unions adopt a non-cooperative and confrontational stance towards each other. Two-party-approach is desirable but likely to take a lot of time and effort to evolve, hence not yet in place in Pakistan.

Salient Industrial Relations Trends in Pakistan

1. Employers avoid documentation.
2. Organizations contract-out jobs even of permanent nature.
3. There is a growing trend in government setups of making appointments on contract-basis particularly over the last ten years.
4. Present PPP led coalition Government repealed the Industrial Relations Ordinance (IRO) 2002 and by default the IRO 1969 is in effect. New law will be introduced soon. IRO 2002 was dubbed as an anti-union law. Formation of labor unions, work councils and management committees are envisaged in the IRO 1969.
5. Many manufacturing organizations award bonuses while linking them to annual profits.
6. Subsidized meals, company ration, and company goods are offered as a benefit in many corporations.
7. Paid holidays are awarded as an incentive in many factories.
8. Golden hand-shake schemes have been introduced in many organizations particularly public enterprises.

9. There is an increasing trend of out-sourcing even the core jobs in different industries.
10. Joint Management Consultation and Collective Bargaining do not take place at many companies, because formal labor representation does not exist there. In these organizations the management decides increase in salaries unilaterally. Wage offensive from labor unions does not take place at national level.
11. During collective bargaining the labor unions come up with as many demands as possible in order to derive better results.
12. Jobs are offered on recommendation or reference so that laborers find it difficult to go on strike and laborers show of power will be controlled.
13. Traditionally employers very smartly have avoided setting precedence of any kind. Before labor start agitation, the management announces some sort of financial relief to mitigate the effects in many organizations.
14. In many manufacturing concerns three months probationary salary after joining is withheld as a security.
15. As per rules, double of the daily wage is to be offered if the labor is called for work on public holidays, whereas either this is completely overlooked by employers or 1.5 times of the daily wage is offered at best.

Diary of a Wartime Chef

By Shadab Zeest Hashmi

Only winter berries
wild mushrooms and each of us
half the man he came.

No more of heroes
instead they want to hear
advice:
Always keep the mortar clean.

Recipes:
*Before frying in sweet oil,
slash and coat the eggplants
with a mixture of egg whites, pepper,
cilantro juice, murri and powdered lavender.
Serve hot
with segments of citrus.*

They fall asleep
between bread and entrée
and more advice:
Use medium sized eggplants.

They lay there
emaciated.

*Remember to fill the cuts with salt
to remove bitterness.*

Ghazal

By Shadab Zeest Hashmi

Was this not the garden of the crisp acorn and the dusty, bearded oak?
We left paradise because justice was promised on the other side.

There was much wood to collect, so we cut down the oak, the teak,
the olive. The new bridge was burned before we reached the other side.

Who hung the garlands, snatched the rose from the lark's side?
With the sun arrived the moon-filled aubade, night's other side.

Strange how they thought to compensate me with two minutes of silence,
or replace you with pension, I on this side of the war and them, the other side.

Remember the broken sky, the terrible storm, animals tumbling
in the ark? It was a man of faith who carried them to the other side.

If ever there was a wish, it was this: Zeest, may you belong
to the one who knows to cherish you, this side of life and the other side.

Kitchen Cabinet

By Rizwan Akhtar

Sunken in own her weight, mother leaves
for the market, and brushes with every vendor
that comes her way,
the fish not finned,
the meat not skinned
and the garlic too thin.

The sellers swear, take oaths of honesty
but she doubts them with an epicurean grin.

A breed of lusty stomachs she obeys
the fingers and lips make forays
the pots she cooks smell for days.
(The season changes and spices
scatter on a charpoy, lentils bask under sun,
orange peels curl into saffron shavings.)
A wave of steam,
comes from that gauze door,
ginger, tamarind and thyme
she grounds in a pestle
and murmurs her prayers
bending over a grime-crusting stove
while tomatoes struggle in coriander
keema * sizzles in the bottom
as her kitchen battles for a new taste.

The smells spread like a rumour
in the neighbourhood.
The aroma of mother's pot colonises
each nose, out of appetite

they make speculations
about brands and tags
some mimic the vendors
the others giggle and nag
the dripping rain chips in
the onions brown in globs
of ghee for tarka*
under her vigilant eyes
the ladle goes here and there
with her swinging braid.

To this day, the spices need some interlocutor
for elaboration. In an iron basket
the yogurt resists its shape
while flakes of garlic and cloves
are in the back-up plan.
With nimble surgeon's fingers
she examines and gets rid of each
and takes her recipes out of their reach

the sheets are unrolled
the recipes remain untold
though the rituals are bold
aunts and uncles trickle from that door
she serves and everyone belches for more.

*urdu word for seasoning

*urdu word for minced meat

Punjabi

By Mehnaz Turner

Punjabi, a rhapsody in my heart,
flounders on the tongue an out of tune
instrument. Yet a sip of a string
of words, and the weaker side of me
becomes a lute of iron. The Muslim
in me becomes Hindu, and the Hindu
in me becomes Sikh. The woman in me
becomes man, and the man in me becomes animal.
Partitions dissolve into the heat of mixed melodies.
The body a lit match, the effect of a cause.
Scrambled syllables of a language
I will never speak echoing in my chest,
and suddenly the miles between Los Angeles
and Lahore seem yellowed with snatches:
fragments of songs, memories of voices.
Here in America my thoughts open in English,
but the unfinished sentences make me think
of the biology of language, the Punjabi
in my blood, prior to English in all respects,
so that even as I write this poem, I am translating.

An Interview with Professor Pervez Hoodbhoy

By Mustafa Qadri

For three decades Pervez Hoodbhoy, a Professor of Particle Physics at Qaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad, has been promoting science and humanism in Pakistan. He was one of the earliest voices to sound the alarm not only against the Pakistan Taliban movement but also against the perils of developing nuclear weapons and the deepening religious intolerance that has been aided in large part by the Pakistan state. In this fascinating and insightful encounter, journalist Mustafa Qadri speaks with Professor Hoodbhoy about science, Islam, and the challenges faced by Pakistan.

MQ: There is a tendency in Muslim communities to look at past advancements in science by Muslim societies. In Pakistan, the development of the nuclear bomb was hailed as a marvel of modern Islamic science. What do you think is the relationship between Islam and science today?

PH: Well, of course theological inquiry has nothing to do with the physical sciences today and it can provide no guidance in my opinion. Theology relates to an entirely different set of issues. It has to do with how humans perceive their role in the universe, what is right, what is wrong, what is the purpose of life, and so forth. Whereas natural science has a very defined purpose; which is to understand the workings of the natural universe. And I'm afraid that religion, any religion, no longer has anything to say about how we should investigate nature, what we expect to find.

MQ: There have been a slew of books by authors like Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and a number of others talking about atheism and trying to distance society and the way it is governed by religion. Is that barking up the wrong tree? Does science have a role to play in social policies?

PH: No, I don't see that. I see that our ethical and moral principles are perhaps defined by the species instinct within us to propagate us and to become more

evolutionarily capable. However, the relation between morality, ethics and science is a distant one. I see that there are some things in society that we can ascribe to the need for us to survive... But other things, I think, are built on human experience and there does not seem to be a clear link between what is in existence in the field of morals and ethics and between science and rationalism.

MQ: But you don't think morality and ethics should temper society? We've just witnessed the 20th century where science has given us nuclear weapons and more efficient ways to kill people.

PH: I think anyone who says we should just let science do whatever it can has a very dangerous belief. Science must be tempered by human principles. I do think humanism does offer that way out. Because if one accepts the principles of humanism, that we are all equal, and that wisdom is to be obtained through experience and that science and logic are essential tools by which we can understand not just the physical world but the functioning of our societies, and that there is no place in this world anymore for superstitions and for things that have been worshipped in the past. I think in that sense scientific humanism does provide a means by which to temper the excesses of science and tell us that some things are absolutely wrong. Take nuclear weapons, it's obvious that if we condone their use, this world is going to be a very unhappy place... and it may not exist for very long.

MQ: In a deeply religious country like Pakistan how does one apply that humanism? Is it inevitable that someone promoting it will have to invoke Islam?

PH: Well, nuclear weapons have become a symbol of defiance for Pakistanis for two reasons. One the bomb has been associated with Islam as a means of increasing its glory. And the second reason is that it is associated with Pakistan in a nationalistic way which is... no different from India or perhaps what it was like in the United States when it first developed nuclear weapons or other nations. Nuclear weapons are a symbol of national pride in all countries. At the time of the nuclear tests religious parties took out cardboard replicas of the bomb, paraded them on the street with placards saying Islamic bomb and verses of the Koran.

MQ: So going back to humanism, that seems to be a departure from universal humanist principles. How does one recover the ground lost to this kind of mindset?

PH: Well, it's not just in Pakistan, you find it in every part of the world humanistic principles are a second priority. Even if they are admitted as theoretically good... nationalism and 'my country right or wrong' often dominates. It dominates to the extent that the US even today, when they talk about casualties in Afghanistan or Iraq, they say 4000 American lives have been lost. How often do you see American newspapers mentioning 500,000 Iraqis have been killed? So you see this attachment to one's own, this 'us and them' is very pervasive and it's very hard to fight. But it must be fought. And in places it has been successfully fought. After all the anti-war movement [against the Iraq war] in the US and Europe was really an expression. It's not that Europeans were worried about their own being killed. That was a factor but the biggest factor was that here was a large army going overseas to kill [people in] a country that had no capacity to hurt the US or Europe. Let's go even further back to the anti-Vietnam war movement. That was an expression of idealism and humanism and the feeling hasn't disappeared [but] it has to be cultivated and increased.

MQ: Is there a comparator to all of that in the Muslim world? You've mentioned, for example, the reluctance often to condemn the Taliban in Pakistan.

PH: There has been a reluctance to condemn the Taliban, Al Qaeda for all the atrocities that have been committed and justifications instead have been sought... that who else is opposing the Americans? The US is an imperial power and... somebody has to fight them. You see this confusion even among people in the Left in Muslim countries and in fact even among Hindus in India who belong to the Left who say someone has to oppose the US. So the fact that the US has been such a dreadful imperial power has confused people and made them look away from the fact that the Taliban are barbaric beyond any kind of calculation.

MQ: And all the people they are killing are ordinary Muslim Pakistanis.

PH: Absolutely, ordinary Muslim Pakistanis. And so now I think perhaps the tide is beginning to turn. You can see that there is something wrong in killing doctors merely for trying to inoculate young children from polio? [The Taliban oppose vaccinations which they see as a ploy by foreign powers to sterilise the population]

MQ: Is there a chance for some sort of humanist movement?

PH: In the long term, yes [but] I think that Muslim countries are in a confused psychological state. On the one hand they are dependent on the West for everything. Even the Taliban, they use cell phones, they travel in pickups, their lives are now

increasingly defined by the technology that they have available to them. They have no part in the making of that technology.

MQ: But they're happy to use it?

PH: Oh yeah, they're happy to use it. Incidentally, this is different from previous eras where you had opposition to technology. For example, the loud speaker. When it was first used in mosques sixty to seventy years ago, there was an uproar because here was something that had 'probably' been invented by Jews. How could it find its place in mosques? There was opposition to the printing press, so seventy years ago in Turkey it was banned and it had also been banned a century earlier in Baghdad [in what is now modern day Iraq]. All of these were seen as innovations that would cheapen the value of religion.

MQ: I'm wondering about the Taliban. When in control of Afghanistan, they didn't use any electronic media. Now they are using mobile phones, have spokespersons and produce videos.

PH: They have become increasingly more sophisticated in how they propagate their messages. So for example although in the strictest form of Islam it is forbidden to have a human face depicted in any way. Well now they show their victims' full face and then cut off their heads. The videos they produce now are fairly slick. They are filmed with excellent cameras and edited with electronic software and they have become very savvy at using the media so it's not just night letters as it used to be. Now with the night letter comes a dvd.

MQ: Now, let's move to the broader picture. What is at the root of the current violence occurring in the name of Islam?

PH: It's different in different places. If you look at [Muslim extremists in] the West it's an assertion of identity and they nurse each other's grievances. A lot of them are underperformers and so there is an attempt to lay the problems of their community on others. So you blame the other for what is actually your own lack of opportunity or ability...

MQ: So coupled with that do you think America's actions around the world have assisted that, given them a ready excuse?

PH: Well, I wouldn't even call it an excuse. I'd call it a reason. So many things come together. It's like a bomb. You've got to have the explosive, the oxidiser, all the right chemicals. They've all got to come together at the right time for the bomb to explode. None of this by itself is enough to cause an explosion. So if you look at poverty, there has been poverty in the northwest tribal areas of Pakistan, and guns, for as long as anyone can remember. Then you have the history of the Americans coming in and launching their global jihad. But there's one other thing and that's I think at the base of it all practically everywhere in the world and that's the fact that the world has moved much too fast for anyone's comfort and we just haven't been able to come to any equilibrium. Look, the lives of our parents are totally different to our lives today and that is true practically everywhere. And then you look at the tribal areas. Until 30-40 years ago they were living the lives of their fathers, their grandfathers and their great grandfathers. No difference. And then comes something very important in the 1970s – migration, to Saudi Arabia and the Middle East where they get the opportunity to dig ditches, clean toilets, very menial jobs. They come back with money and the technology it can buy, like pickup trucks, now cell phones, and so forth. That starts changing the face of the region. Over time it changes the structure of society. Traditional lives have been disrupted. This is a change that is more cataclysmic than what you saw at the time of the industrial revolution in Europe.

MQ: And why is that, is that because of the rate of change?

PH: Yes, the rate of change then was slower. Just look at the impact that population growth has had. Pakistan's population at partition in 1947 was 28 million, West Pakistan. Today it's 170 million so for every person that existed then there are six now. In cities there is a totally different way of living. They are mega slums. What can grow in that? Violence.

MQ: So really while we can look at a certain particular date when the current violence started what you're saying is it goes back to partition?

PH: Well, yes back to partition in terms of the religious intolerance that led to the creation of Pakistan... the notion that Hindus and Muslims could not live together, but that Muslims could live together. Well, the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 [after mass oppression by West Pakistan forces] proved that wrong. Religion is always divided [and Islam] has been divided for the last 1400 years.

MQ: From the very beginning?

PH: From the very beginning.

MQ: Do you think part of the problem is that there's a tendency to use the Islam stamp on everything? So for example when we talk about scientists from the 14th century, why do we categorise them as Muslim scientists?

PH: Religion is inserted where it absolutely has no place. For example, if you go to [the university medical] clinic here in Islamabad you'll find big posters that say 'cleanliness is half of religion'. Well hang on, if that's the case then why is this hospital so dirty? Or at the start of tree planting week they say it's your Islamic duty to plant a tree. But the rate of deforestation [in Pakistan] is greater than most countries in the world!

MQ: Doesn't that just mean we've been bad Muslims?

PH: So, then it is said that Islam is good, Muslims are bad. That's the defence that is taken. There's a mythologised version of the religion which has never been practised except in the early days of Islam. If we go back to that early Islam everything will be ok. The problem with this is that it bypasses 1400 years of human progress. After all, people don't travel by horses or camels, don't own slaves or have the kind of tribal feuds they had in those days. We've learnt to outgrow miracles. Instead we see science doing things we could never have imagined. And so this dogged determination to look for all answers in the past and to imagine that all answers exist in the Koran... is very destructive of progress and of science. Because the fact is a lot of Muslims are looking to the Koran as the place to find answers to scientific problems. If you go to the internet you'll see thousands of websites that say that the Koran predicted black holes and quantum mechanics and penicillin and antibiotics... in fact no discovery has not been predicted by the Koran. It's rubbish.

MQ: In a country like Pakistan then how do you tackle these issues?

PH: Look, you tell people live your life, do what you want. Just keep religion out of politics, let it be a personal matter... In my mind the only way for Pakistan to move forward is for it to become secular... which means that people have the right to worship whatever they like and by whatever means. But no one has the right to impose their version of Islam on all of us.

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