

# The Historian

Volume. 5 July-December 2007 Number. 2

A Bi-Annual Research Journal

## Articles

Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam: Urban Muslim Concerns and Punjab Politics in 1930s....Samina Awan

The Geo-Strategic Importance of the Khyber Pass in Historical Perspective: is it still the "Monarch of the Passes"?.....Javed Iqbal

"Human Rights" Through the Prism of History....Khalid Manzoor Butt

## Concept Paper

Constructing Bhadrakali Mandar Historically....Haroon Khalid

## Review Article

Imagination and Representation in Historical Discourses (Carr, Evans, and Jenkins). ...Hussain Ahmad Khan

## Book Reviews

Lia Litosseliti, *Gender and Language: Theory and Practice*  
Madhavi Desai, (Ed.), *Gender and the Built Environment in India*  
Jehangir Bader, *The Evolution of Democracy*



Department of History  
GC University, Lahore

## **The Historian**

**Volume. 5, Number. 2 (July-December 2008)**

© *The Historian* is published by the Department of History, GC University, Katchehry Road, 54000 Lahore, Pakistan.

No part of this journal may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic or electronic process, or in the form of a photographic recording nor may it be stored in a retrieval system transmitted or otherwise copied for public or private use without written permission from the Editor and the contributor.

ISSN No. 2074-5672

Designed by Shifa Ahmad  
Printed at Pixel Printers, Lahore

**PKR: 250**

# *The Historian*

*Volume. 5 July-December 2007 Number. 2*



*Department of History  
GC University, Lahore*

**EDITOR:** TAHIR KAMRAN

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS:** TAHIR JAMIL, HUSSAIN AHMAD KHAN, NOOR REHMAN

**EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD**

**FRANCIS ROBINSON** - Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK

**DAVID GILMARTIN** - Department of History, North Carolina State University, USA

**IAN TALBOT** - Department of History, University of Southampton, UK

**IFTIKHAR HAIDER MALIK** - Department of History, University College of Newton Park, UK

**MOHAMMAD WASEEM** - Department of Social Sciences, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan

**TARIQ RAHMAN** - National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan

**SHUAN GREGORY** - Peace Studies, Bradford University, UK

**VIRINDER KALRA** - Department of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, UK

**SHINDER S. THANDI** - Department of Economics, Coventry University, UK

**KATHRINE ADENEY** - Department of Political Science, University of Sheffield, UK

**FARHAT MAHMUD** - Department of History, GC University, Lahore, Pakistan

**GYANESH KUDAISSYA** - South Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore, Singapore

**MRIDULA MUKHERJEE** - Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, India

**SURINDER SINGH** - Department of History, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

**SHARIF-UL-MUJAHID** - Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan

**QALB-I-ABID** - Department of History, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

## DETAILED CONTENTS

THE HISTORIAN  
JULY-DECEMBER 2007 (VOL. 05, No. 07)

### ARTICLES

1. MAJLIS-I-AHRAR-I-ISLAM: URBAN MUSLIM CONCERNS AND PUNJAB POLITICS IN 1930S ... SAMINA AWAN 105
2. THE GEO-STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE KHYBER PASS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: IS IT STILL THE "MONARCH OF THE PASSES"?..... JAVED IQBAL 115
3. "HUMAN RIGHTS" THROUGH THE PRISM OF HISTORY....KHALID MANZOOR BUTT 129

### CONCEPT PAPER

- CONSTRUCTING *BHADRAKALI MANDAR* HISTORICALLY  
HAROON KHALID 155

### REVIEW ARTICLE

- IMAGINATION AND REPRESENTATION IN HISTORICAL DISCOURSES (CARR, EVANS, AND JENKINS)... HUSSAIN AHMAD KHAN 165

### BOOK REVIEWS

1. LIA LITOSSEITI, *GENDER AND LANGUAGE: THEORY AND PRACTICE* (GB: HODDER EDUCATION, 2006) 175
2. MADHAVI DESAI, (ED.), *GENDER AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN INDIA* (NEW DELHI, 2007) 177
3. JEHANGIR BADER, *THE EVOLUTION OF DEMOCRACY* (LAHORE: AIZAZ-UD-DIN TBM PUBLISHER, 2007) 179

- NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS AND REVIEWERS 182

# MAJLIS-I-AHRAR-I-ISLAM: URBAN MUSLIM CONCERNS AND PUNJAB POLITICS IN 1930S

SAMINA AWAN

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD  
PAKISTAN

## ABSTRACT

*Majlis-e-Ahrar-i-Islam (MAI) is regarded as a political cum religious denomination of the Muslims of the subcontinent drawing its legitimacy from the middle class and urban Muslim professionals. After the debacle of the 1857 Muslim's predicament revolved around the issue that how to save their identity. Muslim polity was in search of the means through which they would be able to save their culture and identity primarily enmeshed in their religious ethos and also to tread on the future honourably. The Khilafat movement gave vent to their aspirations and consequently they associated themselves with pan-Islamic ideology. MAI was the compromise between these aspirations that came forward to save the Muslim's identity using the modern political means and instruments.*

**KEY WORDS:** Ahrar, Red Shirts, South Asia, British India, Khilafat Movement, Muslim League, Nadwa, Unionist, Jamiat-ulama-e-Hind (JUH), Punjab, Indian National Congress(INC). Sufism.

The MAI was a brainchild of the middle class, urban Muslim professionals, who espoused complete independence for India, and sought the empowerment of underprivileged groups both in the princely states and British India. Its appeal was based on traditional modes such as oratory, mosque-based activism and voluntary support obtained in the name of Islam. It tried to make its mark on several fronts, and that too in the most crucial two decades preceding independence. Inspired by political Islam and a liberationist ideology, it was neither a totally religious organisation such as the *Tabligh*, nor was it a solely mundane set-up such as the All Indian Muslim League (AIML) or the INC. It

resembled the JUH, the Red Shirts and the RSSS, and had a shared emphasis on parades and uniforms, besides promising a utopian future. Its immediate constituents were essentially Muslims of north-western regions of India, and especially of Punjab. The MAI was unique in several areas, as it tried to blend together the opposite forces of territorial nationalism and Islam, and tried to expand its own remit and following in three princely states. It began as a party during the years when the former Khilafatists were seeking a new political role and national parties were still a long way off from offering their respective nationalist programmes. The MAI reached its optimum point during the 1930s, but given its programmatic, financial and other logistical constraints soon forced its slow decline at a time when Muslims in Punjab and elsewhere, began to yearn for a more enduring resolution to the Indian political impasse.<sup>1</sup> However, the ingredients and patterns, which catapulted the MAI, have often reverberated in the subsequent decades in the South Asian states.

The MAI embodied the quest for identity among the traditional and new elite groups of Indian Muslims. Given the apparent invincibility of the colonial state following the uprising of 1857, this quest for revitalised identities was to reshape the political and cultural definition across the communities. These two broad categories were further crisscrossed by sectarian, denominational, regional and class-based affinities, and were not monolithic at all. Traditionalists, in one breath, talked of going back to a pristine destiny and a glorious past, but differed among themselves on the strategies and modus operandi, which varied from literalism to syncretism. On the contrary, modernists saw no qualms in absorbing several Western mores and norms. The colonial state was not the sole architect of this ideological discourse. It had caused a political transformation of India by displacing the old guard and, in the process, had unleashed several newer and formidable cultural and economic forces, which impacted on society. Muslim articulation, at one level, varied from a total acceptance of colonial design without denigrating their own roots, as was the case with Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Syed Amir Ali and other reformers.<sup>2</sup> Contrasted with that, the ulama from seminaries such as the Deoband and subsequently from other institutions, including the Nadwa, used modernist means to regroup within a strong purist paradigm. The Barelwi ulama, basing their case on syncretic traditions, sought to reinvigorate spiritual bonds through the available intermediaries. At another level, the regionalist and land-based pressure group felt at ease with the Raj, such as the Unionists, and preferred to work under its tutelage. The reformers and regionalists, in their own distinct ways,

were closer to the colonial state, and often benefited from its largesse, without losing their own autonomy in intent and actions.

The canalisation and settlements in newer areas allowed fresh opportunities to the emerging middle classes that were still in their infancy. They felt energised by the opportunities that the colonial hierarchy offered, yet were equally unsure of themselves. Their aspirations and apprehensions led to early city-based cultural efforts, which, in the twentieth century, assumed full-fledged political postulations. In the case of Muslim, tanzims and anjumans were the forerunners of the future Unionist Party, the Muslim League, the Indian National Congress, the MAI and the Khaksars. All these parties used symbols such as nationalism and built their respective cases by promising sovereignty and economic empowerment; except for the Unionists and the Congress, they mostly used Islamic imagery.<sup>3</sup> The MAI and Khaksars were Muslim organisations, yet espoused India-wide nationalism, and combined it with their post-Khilafat Pan-Islamic sentiments. They remained wary of pro-Raj regionalists, such as the Unionists, as well as Muslim modernists, such as the Muslim League. The MAI's advocacy of Islam and a composite India-wide nationalism, like that of the JUH, was an untenable stance given the rural-urban schisms, and the powerful India-wide programmes on offer by the Congress and the League. In the end, even the otherwise formidable regional parties such as the Unionist Party, could not withstand transregional pulls, and both the MAI and the Khaksars were outshone by the demand for a bigger, consolidated and separate Muslim state. How far Pakistan resolved that historic quest of the Indian Muslims, is still an ongoing academic and general moot point. The way an India-wide nationalist espousal was found insufficient in assuaging the multiple fears held by minorities such as Muslims, Untouchables and Sikhs; while the very concept of Muslim separatism had its own limitations. It is curious to note that none of the Indian, and even British, leaders talked of any possible voluntary and forced population transfers, and it was assumed that the transfer of power will itself be enough to forestall any communal turmoil.<sup>4</sup> The issues of Indianness, as well as Muslimness, besides those of ethno-religious minorities left on both sides of the divide, are still far from having been resolved. The emergence of parties such as the Unionist, AIML and the MAI, added to fissures, which already existed due to the rural-urban divide and emergence of a new petite bourgeoisie asserting their cultural and political presence.

Punjabi identity, despite its Sufi, caste-based and predominantly rural ethos, was not cohesive, and being Punjabi meant



different things to different sections. The Unionist Party used it to cement its class-based, supra-communal solidarity. The MAI used India and Islam in the same breath, but its leadership, cadres and locale was mainly Punjab based. The party would never flag provincial and regionalist symbols, and felt quite comfortable being led by the INC.<sup>5</sup> The MAI would have ideally liked to see Punjab as an integral part of a united, free India, but that would not rule out the majority-minority tensions, which had now assumed communal proportions. Talking of Islam and India in a historical context was understandable, but India had been undergoing modernisation, where all these identities had adopted newer nuances, collation and collision both featured in this India.<sup>6</sup> Punjab might have had a slower pace of politicisation, yet the decade of the 1920s had already unleashed a wave of communalism, where by Ghadr and Khilafat appeared more like distant memories.

The MAI could be characterised as a movement, an organisation rooted in the fragmentary politics of the 1920s, but like many other contemporary trajectories, it was certainly not a party in the modern sense. It revolved around some articulate and like-minded personalities who were imbued with Pan-Islamic and liberationist enthusiasm. They hated colonialism as much as they abhorred the feudals and urban upper classes, and thus found listeners among the lower classes in mohallas, mofussil townships and villages. They used Urdu, which had already been adopted by Muslims all over India, as a binding force, and allowed them to win over thousands of volunteers for a number of causes. The MAI was basically a Muslim movement, which promised independence as well as Islamisation, and these two postulations went quite well as far as Muslims and other Punjabis were concerned. They were practising a type of politics, which was patterned on the style of the JUH and INC, and thus was not at all alien to British India. The MAI, like the Khaksars and the JUH, avoided involvement in communal activities, though it used sectarianism. Akin to the JUH, Khaksars, Shia Political Conference, Momin Conference and the Red Shirts, it was also aligned with the Congress and remained critical of the Muslim League.<sup>7</sup> Its anti-Ahmadi campaign was not successful initially, but twenty years later left decisive imprints on the history of Pakistan. However, it avoided clashing with the Sikhs over the Shahidganj issue, nor did it involve itself in the Sunni-Shia feuds. Thus, while looking at the career of the MAI, we find its devotion to transregional forces of Pan-Islamism and a composite Indian nationhood, over and above ethno-sectarian plurality. Yet, concurrently, its full-blown campaign against the Ahmadis also reflected its own denominational preferences and peculiarities. More

like the present-day movements amongst the Sunnis, Shias, Ismailis and Ahmadis, the MAI embodied an early version of the same binary politicking.

Political Islam is both an old and a new force in this Muslim redefinition. In its classical tradition, Islam created its own polity under the Prophet(PBUH), whereas the subsequent caliphates, sultanates and the nation-states have routinely used Islam, its symbolism and clerical groups seeking legitimacy for themselves. Historically, political Islam has been an important part of official hierarchies; has often justified dissent against authority; and has been absorbing immense energies of the intelligentsia in constructing discourse on an ideal polity. Political Islam, to the latter groups, was meant a combination of secular and sacred within the backdrop of an idealisation of the early Prophetic and Caliphal era.<sup>8</sup> It was both a political vehicle as well as a programmic ideology. In modern times, political Islam at the clerical, mystical and middle class levels would mean decolonisation and the establishment of a just socio-political order.<sup>9</sup> West-led modernity unleashed all kinds of responses among the colonised Muslim opinion groups. Suspicion as well as adulation characterised all these responses until we enter the post-colonial era where independence, in most cases, is being seen as chimerical with the socio-political morass still prevailing over the Muslim horizons. Here, in a contemporary sense, political Islam would promise empowerment and reassertion, though its proponents would use varying forms of strategies, including bullet and ballot.<sup>10</sup>

The MAI was not the architect of a decolonising form of political Islam, yet tried to harness it to reach a wider Muslim audience. The leaders such as Afzal Haq, Ataullah Shah Bokhari, Mazhar Ali Azhar, Habib-ur-Rahman, Shorish Kashmiri or Janbaaz Mirza all came from an emerging Muslim middle class, who sought sustenance from Islamic traditions, yet also benefited from modernity in the form of socialism and nationalism. They used print media, loudspeakers, trains and other means of mobility to create a wider following, and thus combined tradition and modernity within their symbolism and programmes. They certainly reached the subalterns in the Muslim community, who were mostly artisans, vendors, clerics, Urdu writers and some professionals such as lawyers. These Muslim subalterns were themselves divided in their affiliations, as some of them supported the Khaksars, while others gradually began to shift towards the Muslim League.<sup>11</sup> The landless peasants, disaffected Muslim Kashmiris, and the marooned residents of states such as Kapurthala and Alwar provided foot soldiers; while similar other oppressed groups across British

Punjab catapulted MAI into a harbinger of economic and political empowerment.

The study of Punjab in reference to the MAI does not debar a scholarly perspective in the realm of intellectual history, an area which still remains under-developed in South Asia. The philosophical and pedagogical issues touching on region, language, faith, class, literature, elite leadership, ideas, institutions and interaction with the wider forces across the multiple boundaries occur in this disciplinary category. Here urbanisation, educational systems, literary debates and an entire realm of oral and printed literature underwrite the complex and often contested issues of collective identity where history, politics and sociology join together to unearth the role of culture, creed and context. The MAI's literature, despite its emotional and often polemical nature, is certainly a useful terrain to seek out Muslim positions in a rapidly changing world. The MAI banked on the devoted, inspiring and charismatic leaders, who exhibited a closer affinity with their followers and volunteers, yet they also articulated ideas which found a receptive audience. Their travails on colonialism, exploitation and a dislocating modernity, provide a whole vista of untapped energy, where impatience with the status quo resonates in speeches and writings. Eagerness to stay connected with the past, the debunking of the present, while promising a utopian and pluralist future, remain the major cornerstones of this terrain. The MAI caravan premised itself on symbolism, which was rooted in the past, yet generously borrowed from modernity as well. The socialist colour of the red found no conflict with the Islamist crescent and star, while hatchet was synonymous with the Communist hammer and even with the fascist fist—all signifying a forceful defiance of exploitation. The khaki and the parades symbolised contemporary fascist paraphernalia and imprints prevailing both in Europe and Asia, and like the RSSS and Khaksars. This powerful instrument of European modernity did not threaten religion.<sup>12</sup> The MAI, in a sense, proved that the ends can justify panoply of various means, and thus a politics of inclusion was still better than pursuing singular campaigns. However, Punjab, Bengal and Assam underwent this caesarean partition amidst a bloodbath. It will not be out of place here to seek an overview of Partition itself and its postscript, that finally sealed the career of the MAI.

Muslim Punjabi leadership of the MAI came from the Punjab Khilafat Committee and the INC, and distrusted the Unionists. The Ahrar had broken with the INC on the issues of the Nehru Report. Mahatma Gandhi's decision of participation in the Round Table Conference and the representation of Punjabi leadership in the All-

India Congress Committee in 1931. Afzal Haq, Attaullah Shah Bukhari and Zafar Ali Khan were the early founding fathers of the MAI in December 1929, but they could not implement their decision of organising it at all-India level, because of their involvement in the civil disobedience movement launched by the INC in the 1930s.<sup>13</sup> They revived their party in July 1931, when they held its first public meeting in Lahore and debated its objectives and strategies. They simultaneously adopted the Kashmiri Muslim cause and the ongoing Maclagan College issue. The college fracas brought them local recognition, which encouraged the leadership to work on its Kashmir campaign more vigorously. This was followed by similar ventures on the human rights situation in other princely states such as Alwar and Kapurthala. Until 1934, the MAI enjoyed its unprecedented popular image as an eminent Muslim party in Punjab, which was soon engaged in a vigorous anti-Ahmadi campaign in Punjab. The Ahrar political conference in Qadian in 1934, opened a new chapter of sectarianism in the sub-continent, which helped the MAI to establish its credentials as the mainstream Muslim body. Their exclusionary approach on the issue of the finality of the Prophethood, attracted several members and sympathisers from among other Muslim political parties. This included the Unionist Party, a potential rival within the province.

After gaining appreciation from various Muslim quarters, the MAI tried to cash in on their popularity in the legislatures. They participated in the provincial and central legislative elections during 1933 (Bye-election), 1934, 1937 and 1945-6. Their smaller representation proved their inability to work more effectively within the legislative domains of British India, and they began to prefer agitational politics. Muslims regarded the issue of Shahidganj Mosque/Gurdwara, as the litmus test for the MAI. However, the party leadership avoided launching an instant campaign, which disappointed the Muslim community. Their opponents, in order to damage their popularity, amongst the Muslims as a result of their support of the Kashmiris and Meos, exploited their reluctance to participate in the Shahidganj campaign. Although they subsequently launched a campaign for the restoration of the Shahidganj Mosque, but were never able to regain their erstwhile popularity. They participated in the relief efforts for the victims of the Quetta earthquake and Bengal famine, which helped them sustain their humane image. Their leaders, in their personal capacity, tried to work for the social causes affecting the Muslim community, but owing to financial constraints and weaker organisational structure, they could not accomplish much. The party believed in, and actively participated in agitational politics and found

another opportunity to show their strength during the recruitment campaign launched by the Chief Minister of Punjab, Sir Sikandar Hayat, on the eve of the Second World War. The MAI decided to oppose it by launching an anti-recruitment movement within Punjab and, as a consequence, the party leadership courted arrest, while pursuing civil disobedience in protest against the Defence of Army Bill.<sup>14</sup> Almost 11,000 volunteers were arrested in the party's last-ditch effort to destabilise the British Government. That was the first time that the party had extended its campaign into the remotest areas of the Punjab. By early 1940, most of the Ahrar leaders were in jail, and the party was in disarray. The death of Afzal Haq also weakened it. When the Ahrars were released in 1943, the MAI launched Hukumat-i-Ilahiya scheme as an alternative to the demand for Pakistan, which did not attract many supporters. The Ahrar leader's espousal of unitary nationalism as the only solution of the Indian constitutional problem resulted in their progressive isolation.<sup>15</sup> Although they participated in the elections of 1945-6, but got only one seat, the AIML swept the polls to the central and provincial Assemblies. The party was divided on the eve of Partition, one for India and the other for Pakistan. It showed some activism in the anti-Ahmadi campaign of the 1950s, but could not gain its pre-Partition strength.<sup>16</sup>

The autobiographical and fictional works on Partition or Independence are mostly literary in nature, and well known to Urdu readers.<sup>17</sup> Studies like those of Urvashi Butalia, based on women's memories of Partition, or the research by Gyanandra Panday are important contributions and offer some interesting insights to South Asian historians.<sup>18</sup> As discussed in the present research, the studies by Ian Talbot, David Gilmartin, Sarah Ansari, Barrington Moore, Taj Hashmi and other historians, have established a strong tradition of regional histories that may be further expanded in terms of themes and focus. This study of the MAI is in the realm of regional studies, and points toward similar trajectories in other regions and communities across South Asia. The MAI might have been a short chapter in Muslim South Asian history, yet its replication remains a persistent reality.

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See David Page, *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control 1920-1932* (Karachi, OUP, 1987); also see David Page, *The Partition Omnibus* (New Delhi: OUP, 2002). See Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India: 1936-1947* (New Delhi: OUP, 1987).

<sup>2</sup>See Hafiz Malik, *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

<sup>3</sup>See Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh (eds.), *Region and Partition, Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent* (Oxford: OUP, 1999).

<sup>4</sup>See Sarah F. D. Ansari, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh, 1947-1962* (Karachi: OUP, 2005).

<sup>5</sup>For a contemporary critique of the Pakistan scheme by an eminent Ahrar leader, see Syed Attaullah Shah Bukhari, *Pakistan mein Kia ho ga* (Lahore: MMAP, n.d).

<sup>6</sup>See Yunus Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan 1937-1958* (New Delhi: Sage, 1995).

<sup>7</sup>Mazhar Ali Azhar's letter to Jinnah', 4 September 1946 Also see an interview of Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan in the daily *Ausaaf*, (Rawalpindi), 5 October 2003. See

[www.experts.about.com/e/n/na/Nawabzada\\_Nasrullah\\_Khan.htm](http://www.experts.about.com/e/n/na/Nawabzada_Nasrullah_Khan.htm)

<sup>8</sup>Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

<sup>9</sup>Other than the JUH and such groups in recent times, Syed Abul Ala Maudoodi and leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood like Sayyid Qutb have been the proponents of political Islam. For detail, see Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1991); and Abul Ala Maudoodi, *Islamic Way of Life* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1995).

<sup>10</sup>See Khalid Bin Sayeed, *Western Dominance and Political Islam; Challenge and Response* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

<sup>11</sup>W. C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946).

<sup>12</sup>For more on the RSSS, see John Zavos, *The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India* (New Delhi: OUP, 2000).

<sup>13</sup>See the Marquess of Linlithgow to Leopold Amery, 7 March 1942', in *TOP 1942-47*, vol. 1 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), p. 362.

<sup>14</sup>Shorish Kashmiri, *Pas-i-Dewar-i-Zindan* (Urdu) (Lahore: Chattan, 1971).

<sup>15</sup>Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

<sup>16</sup>For detail, see *Report of the Court of Inquiry constituted under Punjab Act of 1954 to inquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953* (Lahore: NAP, 1954).

<sup>17</sup>Urdu novels include works by Qurat-ul-Ain Hyder, Abdullah Husain, Khadija Mastoor and Intizar Husain. In addition, there are biographical works by authors like Saadat Hasan Manto, Josh Malihabadi, Qudratullah Shahab and Mumtaz Mufti.

---

<sup>18</sup>Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (London: Hurst, 2000).

# THE GEO-STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE KHYBER PASS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: IS IT STILL THE “MONARCH OF THE PASSES”?

JAVED IQBAL

UNIVERSITY OF PESHAWAR, PESHAWAR  
PAKISTAN

## ABSTRACT

*The world famous Khyber Pass has, throughout the history, served as a corridor connecting the Indo-Pak Subcontinent with Afghanistan and Central Asia. The strategic importance and location of this Pass has given the people of Khyber and their land worldwide fame and recognition. It has remained the focus of attention of historians, writers, strategic analysts and tourists interested in this part of the world. Through this Pass traveled trade caravans carrying trade between the Indian Sub-continent and Central Asia, as well as the invading armies of world famous conquerors from Darius to Ahmad Shah Abdali.*

**KEY WORDS:** Khyber Pass, Peshawar, Mughals, Afghanistan, British, Central Asia, Sub-continent, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The geo-strategic importance of the Pass never diminished throughout the Muslim Rule in the Sub-Continent from the early days of Muslim Conquest of Northern India to the majestic Mughal rule. Khyber also remained the focal point of the British policy regarding Central Asia during the days of the Great Game because of its important geo-strategic position. The emerging rivalry between Imperialist England and Czarist Russia in Central Asia and Afghanistan increased the importance of Khyber in the defense and foreign policy of the British Indian Empire.

After Pakistan's independence from British rule in 1947, the Pass seemingly lost some of its strategic importance for a while



but during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Khyber Pass regained its military importance. Khyber remained the center of attention and importance due to its geo-strategic position and millions of Afghan refugees also poured into the Pakistani territory through the Khyber Pass. At present, it has more importance as a trade outlet for the Central Asian States than a military gateway of conquest.

### THE WESTERN FRONTIER OF PAKISTAN

Before discussing the geo-strategic importance of the Khyber Pass, it would be desirable to highlight the geo-strategic importance of the whole Western Frontier of Pakistan, of which the Khyber Pass is an important part. According to Lord Curzon, "Frontiers are indeed the razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war and peace, of life and death to nations."<sup>1</sup> The Western Frontier of Pakistan, in view of its location, is indeed a 'razor's edge' on which hangs the future of South Asia. The overall significance of this region is exclusively vital to keep the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent free from invasion or infiltration from the north. The physical features, economic resources, ethnic considerations, historical background and the present political developments all add to the importance of the Western Frontier of Pakistan in the planning of an effective defense for the entire Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.<sup>2</sup>

The geo-political and geo-strategic imperatives of the area included in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan are of considerable value for the whole of South Asia. This area is still the passage or gateway to the South Asian subcontinent, with all its alluring resources. The Aryans, Achaemenians, Greeks, Kushans, Sassanids and Huns all came through the low North Western passes into India. The Muslims followed suit during medieval times and the Soviet thrust into Afghanistan 1979s was the latest in the series imperial intrusions. The Russians, some believe, had been planning to reach the 'warm waters' for quite a some time. It's a porous border having, according to American satellite mapping, about 340 border passes opening into Pakistan.<sup>3</sup>

Of the entire length of the Western Frontier, the middle section from the Kabul River to the Bolan Pass, some six hundred miles in length, has great importance due to its economic resources. North of this section, the Hindu Kush Range and its branches form a fairly formidable barrier to communications.

rendering all the passes in the section useless and inaccessible. The Southern Section from the Bolan Pass to the Arabian Sea traverses a region of lower relief but the scarcity of water, lack of good means of communication, bareness of the land, inhospitability of the climate, all render this section impracticable for mass communication.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the Middle Section of the Frontier is the keynote of the defense of the Western Frontier. In this section are located the important passes of the Khyber, the Kurram, the Tochi and the Bolan. Almost all the important invasions of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent were conducted through these passes in the Middle Section of the Western Frontier because the high mountains of the Northern section and the aridity of the Southern have always been hazardous for invaders from those directions. Thus the passes in the Middle Section are protected today with the same intensity as they were in the British period, through the establishment of cantonments and military posts and the strategic lines of communication leading to these from the interior.<sup>5</sup>

The poor communications in Afghanistan, the dilapidated condition of roads and non-existence of railway tracks combined with the rugged and mountainous terrain of the country posed a barrier and provides a certain amount of security to the Western Frontier of Pakistan against any adventurism from Central Asia but the military strength and resources of great powers lying in the region could surpass these obstacles. In case Afghanistan is not strong as well as cordial towards Pakistan, then the only option left for Pakistan is to maximize its efforts make the defense of the passes on the Durand Line impregnable, which are connected by rail and in some cases by roads to the rest of the country.<sup>6</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the most vulnerable section of the Western Frontier is the Middle Section. However, the terrain of the area has made its defense a little easier. The mountains are so located along the frontier that they can be effectively utilized by the armed forces to their advantage and that too with the great economy of force. The physical nature of the surface is likely to render the enemy's logistics into a problematic nightmare. "In such a region", says Dr. Azmat Hayat Khan, "the military success of fighting forces does not depend upon the size of the army but upon the adaptability of the troops and strategy to the terrain. The force of an enemy attack on the frontier is likely to be diminished through the employment of surprises, which, in view of the

difficult terrain, can be successfully achieved through the concealment of troops and material.”<sup>7</sup>

The Khyber Pass is not the only pass along the western frontier of Pakistan but of all the routes from Central Asia and Afghanistan to the Sub Continent, none rivals the Khyber Pass.<sup>8</sup> That is why it has been praised as ‘the most historic of all the passes of the world’ by James W. Spain<sup>9</sup> and ‘Monarch of the Passes’ by Major General A. C. Robertson.<sup>10</sup> According to Professor Ahmad Hassan Dani, “Khyber is the most wonderful Pass that has seen and made history for centuries. From Central Asia to Indo-Pak subcontinent the Pass has held the key to open the route for many an invader who ventured to reap the fortune of the extensive agricultural land across the Khyber and beyond the Indus. All these invaders have left behind their marks and symbols on the pass. It is as awesome and wonderful as has been the history itself.”<sup>11</sup>

Described as ‘the most historic of all the passes of the world’ by James W. Spain, the Khyber Pass is not, however, the most difficult to access. It has a quite unimpressive statistics as far as its height is concerned; 3,373<sup>12</sup> feet high at its summit, 1,670 feet at its eastern entrance, and 1,404 feet at its western entrance. Because of its eminent accessibility, the Khyber has always been the high road to India from Central Asia. It remains as important today in all commerce and communication between Pakistan and Afghanistan as it had been in the past.<sup>13</sup> It was one of the prime passes on the ancient Silk Route, connecting South and Central Asia (the old world) with Europe; and presently connecting the newly independent Central Asian Republics with Pakistan and onward with India via Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup>

#### **IMPORTANCE FROM MILITARY AND DEFENSE POINT OF VIEW**

The Khyber Pass historically was the route of various tribes and rulers from Kabul to Delhi and its significant strategic position.<sup>15</sup> But it also proved to be “a death trap in the past to countless thousands of traders and warriors who braved its perils” and it remained the scene of some of the fiercest clashes of arms in history.<sup>16</sup> Through the Khyber Pass have passed the invading forces of the Persians, the Greeks, the Mughals, the Afghans and the British, for whom it was the key strategic point to control Afghan border.<sup>17</sup> The Scythians, the White Huns, the Seljukids, the Tartars, the Mongols and the Turks have also been among those

who utilized this historic gateway during their Indian invasions. Conquerors like Cyrus, Alexander, Changez Khan, Mehmud Ghaznavi, Mohammad Ghori, Timur, Babur, Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Durrani all had to make use of this way. It was also through this Pass that the British feared a Russian invasion of the subcontinent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup>

The Pass is the swiftest and the shortest way to enter the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent from the western side and its history has turned it into the most fabled mountain gateway in the world. It remains, to this day, a prized gateway to India. Its strategic importance can be judged from a number of forts built along this narrow defile during the Sikh and the British period. Important among these forts are the Jamrud Fort at the beginning, the Shahgai Fort, the Ali Masjid Fort and the last one, the Landi Kotal Fort, which was the 'forward' position of the British Empire along the route to Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup>

After Zahiruddin Mohammad Babur established the Mughal Empire in India, his son Humayun nearly lost it to Sher Shah Suri only after ten years of the death of his father. After spending five years at Persia in exile, he came back to India through the same old Khyber Pass. He then built a fort at Peshawar in commemoration of his victory and named it Bala Hisar Fort (The High Walled Fort). Another fort of the same name stands at Kabul and both these forts were the two pillars of Mughal Imperial strength. But both were connected and secured by the Khyber Pass. The Mughals made the Khyber Pass a lifeline between Peshawar and Kabul. The northern routes, north of the Kabul River, lost their significance and they were practically given up by all the succeeding invaders.<sup>20</sup>

The routes north of River Kabul were actually closed to the Mughals and were hazardous to negotiate due to the presence of the Yousafzais who had been displaced by the *Timurids* (the Mughals) from Kandahar to Kabul and Kabul to Bajaur, Swat and Mardan districts. Therefore, the Khyber Pass became increasingly important as a connecting link between the Indian parts of their Empire and Kabul, which was the capital of their ancestor and founder of the Mughal dynasty, Zahiruddin Mohammad Babur.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the Mughals tried their best to keep it open and trouble free.

When the Mughals lost Afghanistan to Persia and later on Ahmad Shah Durrani founded the independent Kingdom of Afghanistan in 1747, the Khyber Pass remained under the

suzerainty of the Durrani Kings in theory, if not in practice. The rights and privileges of the tribes in the Khyber hills were duly recognized and respected. The Khyber Pass became the frequent passage of the Afghan army but it was used only after making toll payments to the Afridis and other Khyber tribes. At one time, Peshawar was the winter capital of the Durrani rulers of Afghanistan. Therefore, the Durrani had to maintain the Khyber Pass to secure communication between their possessions to both the eastern and western sides of the Pass.<sup>22</sup>

In the Sikh period, the strategic needs and requirements changed and the position was reversed. While the Mughals and the Durrani tried their best to keep the pass open for military and commercial traffic, the Sikhs thought it necessary to close the Khyber Pass, at least for military purposes. They had no possessions to the west of the Pass and wanted to secure their possessions on the eastern side of the Pass from the Afghans who claimed the ownership of a large part of the Sikh Kingdom. They therefore, constructed the most prominent fort at Jamrud and in order to back it up with a reserve force, they erected Burj Hari Singh at a little distance and strengthened the Bala Hisar Fort at Peshawar.<sup>23</sup>

The Khyber Pass always remained an important part of the British strategy. During the Anglo-Afghan wars, it was the only strategic pass that was constantly used both for the forward and backward movements of the invading and retreating British Indian armies. The British during the days of the 'Great Game' attached great importance to the Khyber Pass and other trans-Indus passes due to an imminent possibility of a Russian invasion of India through Afghanistan. In the words of Charles Miller, "For this reasons alone, the Khyber and other trans-Indus passes shared equal strategic importance with Gibraltar and Suez Canal."<sup>24</sup>

When the British succeeded the Sikhs, they continued to follow for some time the defensive policy laid down by the Sikhs but they had already interfered in the Afghan affairs earlier in the view of the Russian advance into Central Asia. The Great Game in Central Asia forced the British to adopt the 'Forward Policy' towards the frontier, which once again revived the role of Khyber Pass in the international war diplomacy. Due to the fear of losing Afghanistan to the Russians, the British fought three wars with Afghanistan and at the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War, the Treaty of Gandamak was signed between the Afghans and the British, which gave the British the possession of the Khyber Pass.

However, the tribes in the Pass area created regular disturbances and finally the British had to sign a treaty with the Afridi tribes in 1881, under which the Afridis promised to keep the road through the Pass open and secure in return for the payment of subsidies and tribal allowances by the British.<sup>25</sup>

Just as the control of the Khyber Pass was important for a firm hold on the areas surrounding the Pass, the control of Peshawar was equally important for the effective use and utility of the Khyber Pass. As Prof. Ahmad Hassan Dani says, "It was not possible for an invader to force his way through the Khyber Pass unless Peshawar offered friendly welcome. If one had military camp in Peshawar, as it was in the times of the Sikhs and the British, it was possible to contain the tribes (Khyber) in their hill resorts."<sup>26</sup>

The importance of Peshawar cannot be ignored in the British dealing with the Khyber tribes. The Location of the Khyber tribes was their strength and their weakness at the same time. The natural positions they held among the spurs and defiles of the Safed Koh and the bare, rugged and inhospitable mountains of the Khyber were extremely strong and strategically well placed. The passes, which the British had to force open, were difficult of approach and the clans were unanimous and united to defend their land at the signal of a common danger. But at the same time, the people of the Khyber Pass and of the hilly land around it were so much dependent on the plains that their own strong position became their weakest point. The British could easily shut them up in their own hills. Peshawar, which used to be the great field for their plundering operations, was also the market for their produce and a source of supply for their daily use household necessities. Exclusion from Peshawar was to many clans a severe form of punishment and an effectual blockade that would cut them off from the outer-world would probably bring them to terms sooner than an expedition.<sup>27</sup>

The most valid proof of the strategic importance of the Khyber Pass can be found in the words of Munshi Gopaldas, who was associated with the British administration of Peshawar and wrote the book about the history of Peshawar. He writes in his book, *Tareekh-e-Peshawar*:

The western boundary of the Punjab, which is also the western boundary of the British Empire in India, is located at a very advantageous

strategic position. In case of any aggression from the western side, the enemy will reach our border after a long and arduous journey through the difficult mountains and our forces will have no difficulty to deal with them. It will be difficult for the enemy to get regular supplies and reinforcements in time.<sup>28</sup>

Another example of how much importance the British attached to the Khyber Pass is the construction of a very expensive railway line through the Pass. It was the strategic importance of the Pass, which made the British undertake this overwhelmingly difficult task of constructing the railway through the rugged mountains at such a high cost.

In the post independence period, the Pass still retains its importance both militarily and commercially. The age of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons has considerably changed the concept of warfare and strategy but this new dimension of warfare is applicable only to major wars. But in low intensity conflicts and limited wars, the control of the passes along the Western Frontier will still be a great advantage to Pakistan.<sup>29</sup>

Air power can, no doubt, play an important part in the frontier combat, but the value of air action should not be overestimated in these areas because it is handicapped by the nature of the terrain. Flying has to be carried out at great altitudes because of hills and air pockets. Consequently, accuracy of aim is hard to obtain. Paratroops landing are possible on a small scale but in case of such landings, the adaptability of the force to the terrain, rather than its size, becomes more important. Apart from the defending forces, the tribes living in the hills are natural guerrilla fighters who have jealously guarded their hills over the centuries against any hostile incursions. The success of any defense plan of the future in this area will, therefore, rest to a large extent on the loyalty of the tribesmen towards Pakistan.<sup>30</sup>

For Pakistan, it is extremely important that there should be peace, stability and friendly ruling authority in Afghanistan. In case Afghanistan does not happen to be strong and friendly towards Pakistan, the only alternative left for Pakistan will be to direct her maximum effort towards the defense of the passes on the Durand Line<sup>31</sup>, including the Khyber Pass. However, the shift of forces to the Western Frontier will expose Pakistan to a threat from

the eastern side, which always seems to be more imminent than the danger from the western side.

A safe journey through the Pass was difficult in old days and it still depends on the goodwill of those who guard it. Unwelcomed entrants have suffered severe losses when trying to force their way through the Pass and one can still notice the reminders of battles once fought in this dangerous winding pass. The Europeans and other foreign writers and travelers who visited the Pass have painted a very dreadful picture of the passage in words that gives a hint of its strategic importance and history, full of wars and bloodshed. One Mike Edwards describes it as "the meanest stretch of country I have ever seen. The Pass bristles with reminders of violence: forts, picket posts atop every dominating crag, even concrete dragon's teeth, planted to stop German tanks when Britain feared a strike into India during World War II."<sup>32</sup> This legendary narrow defile is speckled with innumerable plaques commemorating the otherwise forgotten deeds of heroism of those who fought to take and hold the Pass.

#### IMPORTANCE FROM TRADE AND COMMERCE POINT OF VIEW

The Pass has been as important a highway of conquest as it has been as an ancient trade route between Afghanistan, Central Asia and Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Because of its eminent accessibility, the Pass has always been the high road to India and Southern Asia from Central Asia. It remains vitally important today in all commerce and communications between Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>33</sup> Although on the route from Kandahar to Kabul, Pakistan is accessible through a number of passes, such as the Bolan, the Tochi, and the Kurram, but the most convenient route to Pakistan runs from Kabul to the Khyber Pass via Jalalabad, with the shortest possible distance of only 190 miles.<sup>34</sup> It has always been the favorite route for the traders from where they could have an easy access to the seaports of Pakistan, moving onward from Khyber to Karachi via Peshawar. In the more recent past, transit trade agreements between Afghanistan and Pakistan allowed Russian goods to roll unimpeded down to the Indian Ocean.<sup>35</sup>

For centuries, trade caravans moved to and from Trans-Oxiana (*Mawara-an-nahr* in Arabic) in Central Asia to the plains of the Indus and the Ganges. Accompanying these caravans were merchants and missionaries, preachers and propagandists of different philosophies and also artists and architects, starting from



Bukhara, passing through Amir Timur's *Shahr-e-Sabz*, across the Iron Gate that divided the Sogdian Kingdom from the Kushan Bactria, over to Tirmiz, the divine place of Oxus crossing, and then the mountain cities of old Bagrama (near Charikar) and Kabul, the caravans finally knocked at the Khyber Pass that opened its gates and welcomed the tired travelers to rest in the caravan serais of Peshawat - 'the first coming city' (*Pesh-awardan*).<sup>36</sup>

This trade traffic between Central Asia and the valleys around the River Indus and Ganges dates back to the pre-Islamic era. Along these trade convoys, caravans of human civilizations also traveled from Central Asia to India through the Khyber Pass and settled there in the fertile valleys of Indus and Ganges.<sup>37</sup>

When the Kushans established their empire with its capital at Peshawat in the first century AD, the Khyber Pass had by then become a regular trade route.<sup>38</sup> The Pass gained more importance and vitality as a domestic and international trade route in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when a proper road was first built through it.<sup>39</sup>

In the British period, the sight of the passing by caravans through the Khyber Pass is so well portrayed by Rudyard Kipling in the poem *The Ballad of King's Jest*:

'When Spring-time flushes the desert grass,  
Our *kafilas* wind through the Khyber Pass.  
Lean are the camels but heavy the frails,  
Light are the purses but heavy the bales,  
When the snowbound trade of the north comes down,  
To the Market-square of Peshawar town.'<sup>40</sup>

The old slow and sluggish trade through the Khyber Pass by caravans of camels and other pack animals has now been replaced by convoys of speedy vehicles with huge capacity to load the trade items. The nature of the trade has also changed from local and regional to international imports and exports of commodities of Japan, China, Korea, Germany, England, and France and more recently cheap goods from Russia. Local tribesmen now fly to Hong Kong and Singapore to open their warehouses there and then manage to transport their goods across Pakistan to Afghanistan via Khyber Pass, in the name of Afghan Transit Trade but mostly smuggled back into Pakistan. With the changing nature of the trade through the Khyber Pass, it is no longer limited to the linkage between South Asia and Central Asia. It has now turned into a hub of free world market. This land locked and hill-girt passage that

once gave opening to world conquerors and indomitable migrations has now become a network of fast growing exchange of trading goods from all over the world.<sup>41</sup>

The legendary Khyber Pass has an important role to play in the years to come in view of the recent political changes in Central Asia, which have created a major stir in the political, industrial and commercial circles of Pakistan. These developments across the border in Afghanistan and Central Asia are likely to have far more important imprints on the future of Pakistan and the whole region. The breakup of the Soviet Empire has given birth to new states in Central Asia, whose economic independence and even survival will depend upon the finding of new outlets and routes for their trade and global links. Both Odessa in southern Ukraine and Vladivostok in south-east Russia are too far, so their shortest, nearest and most viable overland outlets as of necessity are towards the south, passing through Pakistan's Tribal Areas and Baluchistan southward to the deep-sea ports of Karachi and Gwadar.<sup>42</sup>

With these new prospects of international trade with Central Asian Republics, 'the old caravans may return in the new garb. The old camels may not be seen any more'<sup>43</sup> but the new trucks and vans may roll down the Khyber road and bring together men and their goods from distant corners and re-establish the old historical links that were broken during the 70 years of Communist regime in the former Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup>

The Geo-strategic importance of Khyber Pass fluctuated in different periods. It was not so frequented a route in the remote past but when the Kushanas established their empire on both sides of the Khyber Pass, it gained tremendous importance. For the Mughals, it was the most important, shortest and direct route to connect their possessions on both sides of the Pass. The Afghan rulers needed the Pass to ensure their hold over Peshawar and their possessions in the Punjab. The Sikhs kept the Pass open for trade purposes but they were fearful of Afghan invasions through the Pass and, therefore, constructed the Jamrud Fort to make sure that the Passage of Afghan invading armies through the Pass could be blocked at its eastern mouth. In the British period, the Pass was of vital importance during the Great Game for the movement of their troops to Afghanistan if and when Afghanistan's position as a buffer between British India and Russia was threatened.

In the post 1947 period, the Pass temporarily lost some of its strategic importance as there was no prominent threat of a

military invasion through the Pass. Despite of disputes regarding the Durand Line, the Afghans were never too strong to be considered a threat for Pakistan. However, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan renewed the importance of Khyber Pass as a military route.

The demise of the former Soviet Union once again reduced the military importance of the Pass. There was a worldwide geo-strategic shift in the post cold war era. Militarism and warfare were replaced by trade and struggle for economic supremacy. In this new global scenario, Khyber Pass as the shortest and most viable trade outlet for the landlocked Central Asian Republics, has again put the crown back on the head of the Khyber Pass, retaining its reputation as the "Monarch of the Passes."

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> An extract from Lord Nathaniel Curzon's Lecture, "Frontier: The Romance", delivered in the Sheldonian Theater, Oxford, on November 12, 1907 and published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford in the same year, quoted by Azmat Hayat in the Introduction of his book, *Durand Line*, p. xvi.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.
- <sup>3</sup> S. Iftikhar Hussain, *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes Along the Pak-Afghan Border*, ed. M. Y. Effendi (Peshawar: Area Study Center, University of Peshawar, 2000), p.164.
- <sup>4</sup> Azmat Hayat Khan, *The Durand Line: Its Geostrategic Importance*, ed. M. Y. Effendi (Peshawar: Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar & Hanns Seidal Foundation, 2000), p.12.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.14.
- <sup>8</sup> Lal Baha, *NWFP Administration under British Rule 1901-1919* (Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 1978), p. 51.
- <sup>9</sup> James W. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland* (Karachi: Indus Publications, 1985), p. 25.
- <sup>10</sup> Charles Gray Robertson, *Kurram, Kabul & Kandahar: A Brief Record of Expression in three Campaigns under General Roberts* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1979), p.171.
- <sup>11</sup> Ahmad Hassan Dani, *Romance of the Khyber Pass* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1997), p. 7.
- <sup>12</sup> The figure is different in different sources. Two other variants of this figure are 3,518 and 3,867.
- <sup>13</sup> Spain, *The Pathan Borderland*, p.25.
- <sup>14</sup> Teepu Mahabat Khan, *The Land of Khyber*, ed. Prof. Dr. Qabil Khan (Peshawar: Uzbek Publishers, 2001), p. 32.
- <sup>15</sup> A. Z. Hilali, "Geo-Political Importance of Afghanistan", in *Central Asia*, Journal of Area Study Center for Russia, China and Central Asia, University of Peshawar, No. 33, Winter 1993, p. 82.
- <sup>16</sup> Syed Abdul Quddus, *The Pathans* (Lahore: Ferozsons Pvt. Ltd., 1987), p.118.
- <sup>17</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, Vol. 6, S. V. "Khyber Pass, The", by William Benton Publishers.
- <sup>18</sup> Quddus, *The Pathans*, pp. 115-116.
- <sup>19</sup> Victoria Schofield, *North-West Frontier And Afghanistan* (New Delhi: DK Agencies Pvt. Ltd., 1984), p.49.
- <sup>20</sup> Dani, *Romance of the Khyber Pass*, p. 43.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 43.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 46.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 46

- <sup>24</sup> Teepeu, *The Land of Khyber*, p. 36.
- <sup>25</sup> Dani, *Romance of the Khyber*, pp. 48-49.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 41.
- <sup>27</sup> H. C. Wyllly, *The Borderland: The Country of the Pathans* (Karachi: Indus Publications, 1998), p.265.
- <sup>28</sup> Rai Bahadur Mumshi GopalDas, *Tareekh-e-Peshawar* (Lahore: Globe Publishers, n.d), p.142.
- <sup>29</sup> Hayat, *The Durand Line*, p.14.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 17.
- <sup>31</sup> Danni, *Romance of the Khyber*, p. 190.
- <sup>32</sup> Schofield. , *North-West Frontier And Afghanistan*, p. 49.
- <sup>33</sup> Hilali, "Geo-Political Importance of Afghanistan", P 82.
- <sup>34</sup> Hayat, *The Durand Line*, p. 16.
- <sup>35</sup> John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan: Key to a Continent* (Colorado: Westview Press Inc., 1981), p. 152.
- <sup>36</sup> Dani, *Romance of the Khyber*, pp. 9-11.
- <sup>37</sup> Mohammad Shafi Sabir, *Tareekh-e-Suba-e-Sarhad* (Peshawar: University Book Agency, 1986), p. 50.
- <sup>38</sup> Mumtaz Ali, *Political and Administrative Development of Tribal Areas: A Focus on Khyber and Kurram*, (Peshawar: Area Study Center for Russia, China and Central Asia, University of Peshawar, Ph. D. thesis) p. 44.
- <sup>39</sup> Hussain, *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes*, p. 31.
- <sup>40</sup> George Macmunn, *The Romance of the Indian Frontiers* (Quetta: Nisa Traders, 1978), p. 24. The complete text of the poem and other poems of Rudyard Kipling can be seen at "A Complete Collection of Poems by Rudyard Kipling", Poetry lovers' page (Online), July 20, 2006, [http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/kipling\\_ind.html](http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/kipling_ind.html)
- <sup>41</sup> Dani, *Romance of the Khyber*, pp. 63-64.
- <sup>42</sup> Hussain, *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes*, p. 164.
- <sup>43</sup> Although most of the foreign electronic goods and other valuable trade items are still smuggled through different hilly passages laden on camels and ponies.
- <sup>44</sup> Dani, *Romance of the Khyber*, p. 85.

# “HUMAN RIGHTS” THROUGH THE PRISM OF HISTORY

KHALID MANZOOR BUTT  
GC UNIVERSITY, LAHORE  
PAKISTAN

## ABSTRACT

*The current concept of Human Rights is a product of modern age. Stated precisely it is the outcome of the World War II and emergence of the United Nations in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century. As far as present perception of Human Rights is concerned, it has evolved over many centuries. Sometimes historical incidents and sometimes revolutions unfolded a new dimension in the concept of Human Rights. It goes without saying that the concept of Human Rights had an evolutionary process. On certain occasion people at the helm of affairs and conflicts between the nations, were the instrumentals in growth of the idea of Human Rights, but sometimes the idea was treated with contempt. However, contribution of different cultures and civilizations in the evolution of Human Rights cannot be ruled out. History testifies to the fact that people had been striving since times immemorial to secure liberties, deploying different strategies against usurpers and tyrants.*

**KEY WORDS:** Human Rights, Europe, Slavery, League of Nations, UN, American Revolution, French Revolution, Imperialism.

The conceptual underpinnings on which the discourse of Human Rights hinges on, are the right to life, right of belief, liberty, dignity, property, and justice. During the ancient and the middle-ages, people by and large wanted to have four basic rights, i.e., Right to life, Right of belief, Right of property and Right of justice. If the history of Human Rights is to be traced, one starts with King Hammurabi of Mesopotamia around 2000 BC. In this regard Micheline R. Ishay writes:

The rules contained in Hammurabi's code have a far-reaching influence in this respect. Aiming at ensuring the integrity of the judiciary, they called for removal of corrupt judges. There were also laws against calumny: if a person were wrongly accused, the accuser would suffer the punishment that would have been inflicted on the accused. Yet the most important contribution of Hammurabi's laws resides in the notion of progressive justice, illustrated by the talion principle "eye for eye, tooth for tooth."<sup>1</sup>

Generally speaking, right from the dawn of history the marginalized segments of the society like the women, the poor, the slaves and the religious minorities had been maltreated, abused, exploited and remained victims of injustice. During the rule of Babylonian King, Hammurabi (b.1795-d.1750 BC), these segments were granted certain rights and those rights were generally respected by the society and the government. In this regard, B.V. Rao sheds light on the conditions of the slaves and women during the period:

Slaves were better off in Babylonia because they enjoyed certain rights such as owning of property, marrying with freemen, and right to buy their freedom with their saving... . During the age of Hammurabi women enjoyed rights such as owning and disposing of property and freedom to pursue the profession of their choice. They were given right to divorce.<sup>2</sup>

Hammurabi's period is well-known in the early recorded history for its humane touch. Making of laws on different social and moral matters reflects that the ruler was interested to ensure peace and safety of life to his people. "Hammurabi's letters to the governors and princes confirm that the King took pains to preserve the interests of the weak and the helpless".<sup>3</sup>

The 'Cyrus Cylinder' is considered a valid document showing some important principles of Human Rights. According to the Cylinder, citizens of the empire were allowed to practice their religion or faith without any restriction. It put on hold the centuries old institution of slavery and introduced system of paid-workers to construct different palaces and forts for the king. So, the exploitation of

slaves was minimized quite substantially thus giving them a sense of relief. It is pertinent to mention here that the Cylinder also contained the protection of the rights to liberty, security, freedom of movement, the right of property and the protection of economic and social rights. In the Empire, citizens of all religions and ethnic groups had been granted equal rights without any discrimination. Hence, the way Cyrus ruled his people, it is quite evident that he treated people in a humane manner and gave them respect and dignity. Cyrus deservedly stands out as the protector of Human Rights in the history of humanity.

Indian king Ashoka (304–232 BC) is another epitome of tolerance and human rights. He gave rights to the people to practice any religion or faith of their choice. India came to be known as a kingdom of peace and prosperity because policies were framed to serve people and not to rule them. OP Chauhan writes about Ashoka: "After his brutal conquest of Kalinga in 265 BC ... he adopted Buddhism ... during his reign, he pursued an official policy of non-violence (AHIMSA) and protection of Human Rights, as his chief concern was happiness of his subjects.<sup>4</sup> In the 3rd century BC, he had set some unique principles of Human Rights in the Maurya Empire of ancient India. Ashoka treated his subjects as equals regardless of their caste, creed and religion, and and tried his best to ameliorate their lot.

Most religions had given certain rights to the people and none of them encouraged killing, cheating, stealing and mistreating others. The main objective of almost every religion is to protect life, honour and belongings of people and to provide them a peaceful life. An emphasis has been placed on mounting mutual trust in the society where people could help and care for each other. Inter-religions and intra-religion intolerance remained a bone of contention among people and nations which undermined Human Rights. The Crusades were the prime example in this regard. These wars broke out between the Christians and the Muslims in the name of religion from 1095 AD to the 13<sup>th</sup> century with short and long breaks. This religious intolerance could not wipe out any of the two religions and established that they had to live side by side. It is a fact that intolerance had swallowed millions of believers in the name of belief. Conflicts and wars between followers of religions were the hallmark of the medieval period.

Magna Carta had tremendous political significance in the medieval age as far as Human Rights were concerned. The document signed by King John Lackland of England in 1215 granted certain rights to barons relating to property, taxation and imprisonment. The Magna Carta provided some relief to the barons of England and



provided them protection from the limitless powers of the king. J. A. Rickard explains the Magna Carta:

It contains sixty-three sections that limit the powers of the king and protected the church, the barons, and all other classes of England people from his arbitrary acts.... Section thirty nine provided that no freeman should be detained or punished "unless by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land." Other provisions limited the amount of fines to be collected, regulated the seizure of private property for public use, and prohibited long imprisonments before trials.<sup>5</sup>

The Magna Carta was the first step towards curtailing the powers of the King of England and putting a check on some arbitrary laws. It provided some security and freedom to barons which subsequently were termed as Human Rights. The important among them were the right of the church to act independently from the state authority, the right of all free citizens to inherit and own property and be saved from excessive taxes. It also gave right to widows who owned property to choose not to remarry. Although Magna Carta provided some rights, not available earlier, yet condition of the commoners, the women and the slaves remained as miserable as ever. So, it had brought reforms only for well-off class of barons but the underprivileged people who were in majority did not benefit at all."The transition of Europe from the Medieval to the Modern Age was characterized mainly by three features: Firstly, a great intellectual movement known as the Renaissance, secondly, the Age of Discoveries which followed by and third, the Reformation."<sup>6</sup>

Machiavelli (1469-1527) is regarded as the first political thinker who espoused the ideas of secularism and nationalism. He stressed the need to separate religion from politics. According to Ernst Cassirer, "It has been said that Machiavelli developed a new political science, just as Galileo had founded a new science of nature."<sup>7</sup> M. Judd Harmon's opinion about Machiavelli is: "Machiavelli's approach is purely temporal. Religion and Church are considered, but only insofar as they relate to the matter of the secular unity. Machiavelli rejects all those theological foundations for government that had been part and parcel of medieval thought."<sup>8</sup>

His ideas were considered "modern" because Machiavelli took politics out of the realm of religion. It not only curtailed the political

clout of clergy but also promoted the idea of the nation state. It should be stated that secularism laid the foundation on which the whole structure of Human Rights discourse had been built. Many scholars have argued that religions had caused numerous national and international conflicts in history and increased human miseries.

Martin Luther, another exponent of secular ideas, struggled all his life to separate church or religion from the state. Instead of seeking pleasure in life hereafter, he advocated to find happiness in this life. Ishay states about Luther:

Martin Luther (1483-1546), the first to formulate Protestant principles, called for the centrality of the Bible as primary authority on issue of faith; the return to simple liturgies; separation between Church and state; and individual responsibility in matters of salvation and in finding happiness on each.<sup>9</sup>

Francisco de Vitoria, a Spanish theologian and teacher deserves a special place in history as he used his influence and managed the native people in Spanish Dominicans of America to practice religions of their choice. This step by a Christian Catholic King set a new example of tolerance which was a much awaited right of the people. The beginning of the modern period witnessed wars between different Christian sects in Europe. It disrupted the social, political and economic life of the people. Thus, it forced the people who were at the helm of affairs to reassess the ongoing conflicts.

The Dominican friar Francisco de Vitoria (1485 – 1546) joined the critical chorus, condemning in the sixteenth century the conquests and colonial policies of the Spanish empire and defending the rights of non-Christians and American native, thereby becoming the founder of the Spanish school of international law.<sup>10</sup>

Peace of Augsburg was a treaty between Charles V and the forces of the Schmalkaldic League, an alliance of Lutheran Princes to ensure tolerance between different sects of Christianity. On the basis of '*cuius regio, eius religio*', in the Prince's land, the Prince's religion', it gave freedom to German Princes to select either Lutheranism or Catholicism for their people. This peace treaty stopped confrontation to some extent between the two sects. Ferdinand Schevill explains: "the Peace of

Augsburg of 1555 must undoubtedly be construed as a victory of German Protestantism. But it was also, since it took the control of religion out of the hands of the central authority, the emperor, and gave it to the princes, a victory for the principle of decentralization."<sup>11</sup>

After the Magna Carta, the Peace of Augsburg was an important political milestone in shaping the concept of Human Rights. However, these political developments could not stop religious wars between and among the states having different faiths, and people continued to suffer in the name of religion. Consequently, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a prolonged war, which continued for thirty years, took place in Europe between states having different sects of Christianity. As the warring states drained their resources, they were forced to sign a treaty in Westphalia, Germany in 1648. It actually promoted a sense of religious tolerance among the confronting states for peaceful co-existence. At the same time it reinforced the ruler's right to choose religion for his people. However, an individual was debarred from choosing religion of his own choice. "It was only after the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), by the Peace of Westphalia, that some sort of a religious truce was established and Lutheranism and Calvinism were accepted on par with Catholicism."<sup>12</sup>

The Treaty of Westphalia has been regarded as a turning point for the modern concept of sovereignty of state. It reduced the role of religion in politics. Religion could no longer be used as a tool to interfere in the affairs of other states, which had caused numerous conflicts in history. It was noted that religious intolerance had generated vicious effects on the people.

In fact, religious freedom has three corresponding freedoms, i.e., freedom to assemble, freedom of expression and freedom of association. For that matter, the Treaty of Westphalia enjoys unique importance because it ushered in a new era of religious tolerance and co-existence, and somehow halted the religious wars between the states in Europe.

John Milton (1608 – 1674), a renowned English poet and journalist took one step forward from his predecessor reformists. He was a great supporter of freedom of press because this freedom generated freedom of expression as well as freedom to criticize the government. He tried to wean away the English Society from dogmas. "Milton proclaimed that importance of freedom of opinion: [G]ive me the liberty to know, to utter, to argue freely, above all liberties.... If truth is let free, it will overcome and win over all possible errors."<sup>13</sup> He was of the opinion that people should be allowed to form their own opinions on any matter and they should not be compelled to follow a

particular opinion or a way of thinking. They should be given complete independence to have access to information and knowledge. Selective information and knowledge do not equip people to make decisions on the basis of reason on any matter. He argued that it was the peoples' fundamental right to have access to information and knowledge. He was the leading critic who raised his voice against pre-publication censorship in England. Eventually Milton's version about the press freedom was accepted and the British government was forced to abandon the prepublication censorship in 1695. It was an important achievement as far as press freedom was concerned. Thus, Milton's ideas created awareness among the people as regard their rights. "The Habeas Corpus Act of 1679 was promulgated in England ... . In the spirit of the Magna Carta, granted in 1215 by King John to his barons, the Habeas Corpus established appropriate process for checking the illegal imprisonment of people by inferior courts."<sup>14</sup> The Act provided the people, at least, just trial and shielded them from unfair confinement of their peers who had been exploiting them by this old custom. This Act later became instrumental in declaring slavery illegal in England. So, it gave the people right of free movement.

Glorious Revolution of 1688 had a great significance in the political history of Britain. It shifted balance of power from king to the parliament, therefore, representative of people known as commoners ascended at the helm of affairs without shedding a drop of blood. That's why it is known as Glorious Revolution in which the Parliament not only ousted King James II and appointed William and Marry new rulers of Britain. Then Parliament offered them the Declaration of Rights as "true, ancient and indubitable rights of the people of this kingdom."<sup>15</sup>

The Bill of Rights (1689) ushered in a new era in which peoples' representative assumed power. The supremacy of parliament brought freedom of speech; taxes were levied and army was maintained.

Bill of Rights is a formal constitutional declaration or legislative assertion by which a government both (1) defines fundamental rights and liberties of its citizens and (2) establishes their protection against arbitrary or capricious interference or infringement by the government.<sup>16</sup>

It is interesting to note that the Glorious Revolution coincided with the publication of John Locke's (1632-1704) *Second Treatise of Government* which entails the first developed theory of 'Natural Rights'. He tried to change the premise of the Treaty of Westphalia which gave the right to the ruler to choose the religion for his state and people. Locke was of the opinion that the right should be given to the individuals to choose and practice any religion. Unlike Plato, Aristotle and Machiavelli, he thought that individual was the centre of the political system and the state was bound to protect and fulfil the aspirations of the individual. Actually, he changed the premise of the earlier political thought. Locke stressed upon the freedom to practice any religion because it belonged to the soul of a person. He was of the opinion that religion should be separated from politics and wanted that both should work within their respective spheres. According to Locke, "Government exists to protect life, liberty and property. Civil society has civil function; it does not exist to compel men to believe particular religious doctrine or to join religious group."<sup>17</sup> Jack Donnelly compliments Locke and states, "Locke is the seminal figure in the stand of liberalism that grounds the commitment to equal liberty on natural, or what we today call human Rights".<sup>18</sup> Despite the liberal theory of the time in which Locke advocated certain rights (which he called "Natural Rights") to people, he did not seem much interested in giving the same rights to women, slaves and even wage labourers. It meant that Locke was reluctant to give equal rights to majority of the population which raised eyebrows of critics.

Voltaire (1694-1778), one of the prominent French philosophers of the 'Age of Enlightenment' was also a supporter of the religious tolerance and followed the course of Locke and Bayle. He was also a staunch supporter of the freedom of expression and a famous phrase is generally attributed to Voltaire: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend till death your right to say it".<sup>19</sup>

Milton and Voltaire were prominent thinkers of the modern age who not only realized the importance of freedom of expression but also contributed towards it. They ushered in a new era and their writings paved the way to win the right of expression for the common people. Although they supported the right of the people in general, yet they did not say anything significant to improve the conditions of women which reflected that they were not in favour of giving equal rights to almost half population.

In fact these thinkers of the Age of Enlightenment held a common approach towards detaching the people of Europe from old

dogmas and religious prejudices and gave them a rational and pragmatic way of thinking. They inspired people to analyse matters on the basis of reason. Earlier it was common to analyse things in spiritual, romantic and traditional ways. Such analysis was designed by the clergy, feudal and the privileged classes. Most of the socio-religious traditions were made for strengthening these classes to keep a hold on the masses. It has been observed that these traditions were mostly against the interests and rights of the people. So, these thinkers opened new vistas to thought for people as they started thinking with reason. This enabled them to demand their rights from these privileged classes who were at the helm of affairs.

The concept of Human Rights took roots in Europe because it was far ahead of other regions in advancement of knowledge and science. Needless to say that knowledge was the driving force to shape the concept of Human Rights. Consequently in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Europe and America produced some popular movements for the liberty of people.

The birth of secular universalism took the form of assault on the intellectual and political edifice of Roman Catholicism. That structure, seemingly impregnable during the Middle Ages, now collapsed under the blows struck by the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation, opening up room for the emergence of humanist thought. Christian ethics thus shifted from a docile dependence on revealed knowledge toward an embrace of religious freedom and freedom of opinion in general. Simultaneously, feudal authoritarianism grounded on divine inspiration, yielded to the modern concept of the nation-state, justified by its protection of natural and individual rights. The monopolistic feudal economy gave away to mercantilism and later to free market based on the individual's rights to private property. Finally, a religious tradition that had often sanctioned merciless and arbitrary killings was now confronted with laws premised on the individual's rights to life, and with an insistence that even warfare must conform to universal standards of justice.<sup>20</sup>

The emergence of Secularism in Europe showed a new dimension of Human Rights, i.e., religion was a private matter of an

individual and the state had no authority to interfere in his belief. It was meant to show tolerance toward faith of others and popularized the idea of co-existence. The concept of Secularism is misunderstood in various societies even in the current age and taken anti religious. Actually, secularism is neither against religion nor in favour of religion. It emphasizes that government has to redress problems of the people with pragmatic and rational approach and refrain from meddling in the religious matters. It treats people on equal grounds and considers them alike human beings without any socio-religious prejudice. A secular government observes rule of law and provides equal opportunities to all its citizens. So, secularism led an era in which humanitarianism was pronounced and people were treated equally, as human beings irrespective of their religion, cast, race, colour, status and gender. However, most of the earlier thinkers did not give importance to the gender equality and considered women inferior to man which was not acceptable to the modern standards of Human Rights. Secularism was one of the important ingredients of American and French revolutions which have been considered a turning point for shaping the concept of Human Rights.

Although Europe was the centre of Renaissance, liberal movements and modern philosophies, yet revolution for independence from imperialism took place in America in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was the first revolution of its kind in the modern age which pushed away imperialism. It set the foundation for the rule of the people and their liberty. Thus the Americans became pioneers in winning liberty from imperialist powers.

Ishay quotes Jefferson, one of the Founding Fathers and President of the United States: "Religion", Jefferson asserted, "is a matter which lies solely between man and his God", and therefore it was necessary that "a wall of separation [be] erected between the Church and the State."<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Zafar Ullah Khan describes American independence in these words:

Thomas Jefferson proclaimed that his countrymen were 'free people claiming their rights as derived from the laws of nature and not as the gift of their Chief Magistrate'. The poetic Declaration of Independence proclaimed by the 13 American colonies on July 4, 1776 said: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain

inalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness'.<sup>22</sup>

It is pertinent to note that in the constitution of USA, emphasis was laid on words 'it proclaims that the sovereignty of the people. In this political system, people would be no more subjects and they would have equal opportunities to get happiness, safety, justice and welfare. In 1791, with an amendment, a list of fundamental rights of the people was included in the American Constitution. Indeed, it was a new beginning as far as rights of the people were concerned and thus became a role-model for other nations. The American Revolution and the Constitution affected the people of Europe as well as the subject-people of the colonies of different regions of the world.

The French Revolution was one of the most important political events of history. It not only changed the socio-political setting of France but also had immense impacts on Europe and other parts of the world. It stressed on the recognition and respect of Human Rights of the people. The American Revolution was against an imperialist power and its success culminated in the form of declaration of liberty for the people. But the French revolution had a different premise and. it was against the indigenous political system consisting of the monarchy, the feudal class and the clergy who had subjected and exploited the people of France for centuries. The French showed a way to the world in which, instead of the king or the elite classes, the people were made sovereign to rule themselves. They introduced a new social contract where people were equal and independent and, thus, free from the suppression of the traditional ruling classes. "With it, Jacobians and the defenders of the French *patrie* proclaimed a new world in which, 'liberty, equality, and fraternity' would become, they hoped, universal norms."<sup>23</sup> Schevill interprets the American Declaration of Rights in these words:

The Declaration affirmed that "men are born and remain free and equal in rights" and that among these rights are religious toleration, freedom of speech, and freedom of press. In the sharp reaction to the divine right theory of the old monarchy, the Declaration vested sovereignty in people, to whom officials of every level of authority were held to be responsible.<sup>24</sup>

Americana interpreted the French Revolution, "The rationale for the period is found in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen,



which affirms the liberty of individual, the separation of powers, the sovereignty of the people, and civil equality."<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the French Revolution was a significant event in real terms which weakened the class system in Europe. It proclaimed that all men were equal irrespective of their social, economic and religious background. Indeed, the teachings of Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau had an impact on the Revolution. David Thomson writes:

The "Declaration of Rights of Man" – a statement intended to have universal application and which certainly had very far-reaching implications. It was drawn up not for France alone, but for the benefit of men everywhere who wanted to be free and to rid themselves of comparable burdens of absolute monarchy and feudal privilege.<sup>26</sup>

The French Revolution became a great source of inspiration for the down-trodden people who were in majority but remained subjects under the thumb of the ruling class. It paved the way for democracy and rule of the people, and it proved to be a great stimulant for the people of the colonies to free themselves of the foreign rulers. No doubt, the French Revolution occurred at a place which was known as a political, cultural and educational centre of Europe. Perceptions and approaches of the age of Enlightenment were quite pronounced in the French Revolution one way or the other. It was the beginning of a change in the social and political setting of Europe. It was regarded as an important milestone towards Human Rights which had been significantly shaped during that period. Thus equality, liberty of individuals, peoples' participation in governments, freedom of expression and press, weakening of class system and diminishing monarchies were important factors in recognizing and securing Human Rights.

Although the French Revolution and its Declaration had brought some significant changes for the rights of the people yet it failed to uproot well entrenched conservative practices from the political system of France. Nevertheless, judging by 18<sup>th</sup> century standards of Human Rights, it was a quantum leap. However, if it is evaluated by current standards of Human Rights, certain elements were objectionable, i.e., ineligibility for women, slaves, non tax-payers and house servants in voting and holding of public offices. Such aspects reflect that equality among all human beings especially between men

and women, citizens and slaves was conspicuously missing. Certain and biases could not be uprooted from the French society.

Industrial Revolution was another important development which contributed a lot to evoke respect for Human Rights. "The period between 1770 and 1830 is usually designated as the pioneering stage of Industrial Revolution and was, in the main, limited to Great Britain".<sup>27</sup> The Industrial Revolution introduced a new system of remuneration and then the workers started getting money for their labour. In the traditional agricultural economy, the 'barter system' was in vogue which meant that a person would get commodities as reward for his labour. It did not grant purchasing power to the people. Thus, in the Industrial Revolution, work was rewarded in shape of money which attracted people to work in industries. Moreover, money could enable them to improve their lives which had been static for centuries. Industrialization also generated rural-urban migration and mitigated the influence of feudalism. Industrial towns and cities became centres of economic and commercial activities and consequently middle class occupied an important place in the social, economic and political order. At the same time, revolutions in France and America also inspired these bourgeoisie who were liberal, conscious and aware about their rights. "The Industrial Revolution brought infinite possibilities for the elevation of the standard of living and the promotion of the welfare of men."<sup>28</sup> Meena Anand aptly describes "Historically, the demand for individual rights was made by the rising commercial middle class which was the product of the Industrial Revolution. It was already the accepted ideology of the American and French Revolution".<sup>29</sup> The rise of middle class was a direct outcome of the Industrial Revolution. The middle class was a ardent supporter of Human Rights and liberal democracy in which they could also have their say. Changes in social and economic order gave voice and power to the middle class to envisage a new political system based on a constitution which would reflect their aspirations. Thus the centuries old political and economic system of Europe made a retreat.

A leading consequence of the modern politico-social development had been to give an increasing importance to the middle classes and that, up to the time of the French Revolution, it was the middle classes of Holland and England which had reaped the greatest benefits from an altered world ... it is therefore not surprising that it was in the main, under pressure from the English middle classes that the

stiff-necked monarchy of the Stuarts had been replaced by the parliamentary regime.<sup>30</sup>

Ishay is of the view that: "The nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution and the growth of the labour movement opened the gates of freedom to previously marginalized individuals who challenged the classical liberal economic conception of social justice."<sup>31</sup> The most important aspect of the Industrial Revolution was that it had not only urbanized the people but also shifted the economic and political centre from the rural feudal to the people of the urban areas. As the centre of politics shifted to cities and towns, political parties and pressure groups became active and important. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century popular democracy got firm roots in Europe and America which certainly enhanced importance of the political parties and pressure groups. In order to expand their political base, the political parties started consulting the middle class in policy and decision making. As a result, many individuals from the middle class got important offices in political parties and compelled their respective governments to give rights to the people.

The 'expansion of Industrialization' and the 'constriction of Slavery' were two important features of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in Europe and the USA. Slavery had a strong link with feudal culture and, when it got weakened due to industrialization, it put corresponding effects on institution of slavery. In the circumstances when industrialization was spreading, secular and liberal movements were in vogue, the institution of slavery no longer remained compatible. R. Coupland describes:

Slavery may be defined as the ownership and use of human property. The master inherits, buys, sells or bequeaths his slave as he does his pick or his spade. His treatment of him or her may be controlled, like the usage of the other possessions, by the custom or law of the society to which he belongs; but in general the slave's life and labour are as much at the master's disposal as those of his horse or his ass. ...he may be treated, underfed, overworked, done to death. ... The slave's soul is almost as much in bondage as his body. ...He cannot lead his own life. He can do little to make or mar his fate: it lies in another man's hands.<sup>32</sup>

The League of Nations defined the phenomenon in these words: "Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the rights of ownership are exercised".<sup>33</sup> No doubt, slavery was a stigma on the face of humanity and considered a degradation and humiliation of a human being. According to the Concise Columbia Encyclopaedia, "Slavery, institution whereby one person owns another and can extract from that person labour or other services, found among both primitive and advanced people."<sup>34</sup> There was no end to indignities and exploitations to which people had subjected their fellow beings. Slavery with its numerous dehumanizing ways and methods was prevalent in almost every civilization of the world. Slavery was a known practice which was used in the world to degrade human beings to the level of commodity and animals.

The institution of slavery was so strong and practice so widely by almost every society from the ancient time to the Middle Ages that none of the civilizations and religions could abolish it completely. Although, Hammurabi of Mesopotamia and the religion Islam, had compassionate considerations for the slaves yet they could not wipe out this heinous practice from their respective societies.

Organized religion and every type of society accepted slavery as a ... part of human activity until the late 18th century, when European philosophers such as Montesquieu began to speak and write against the institution. Therefore, opposition to slavery arose and gained momentum.<sup>35</sup>

It is pertinent to mention that, in the middle age and even afterward, the business of slave trade was at rampage. Traders of the European countries had brought numerous ships full of slaves from the African colonies. They used to sell those slaves in the European and American markets like animals and commodities. The social, cultural and legal systems were supportive of this degradation of human beings. This practice was being undertaken in Europe, the cultural, educational, economic and political hub of the globe. It is astonishing that in the land of Newton, Voltaire, Locke, Shakespeare, Kant, Bentham and Michelangelo the human trafficking was going on unchecked.

In the modern age, England took a lead in abolishing the centuries old institution of slavery. "In 1772, Lord Mansfield, the English Chief Justice, declared that slavery was illegal in England. Antislavery societies were founded in England in 1787 and in France in

1788.<sup>36</sup> In a case (R.V. Knowles, ex parte Somerset) of slave 'James Somerset', under habeas corpus, the Chief Justice observed and held slavery unlawful on the basis of restricting the free movement of a man against his will in Britain, whatever the law may be in any other country that he is from. This decision of the Court gave a new impetus to end slavery which was a big hurdle in the way of Human Rights. As in the presence of slavery, it was difficult to conceive the discourse of Human Rights. In 1811, it was declared illegal for British ships to indulge in the slave trade. Eventually, in 1834, slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire. It played a great role in changing the perception of the people and provided encouragement to anti-slavery movement elsewhere.

On the other side of the Atlantic, however, in the USA, the Supreme Court gave an ignominious decision in the case of Dred Scott VS. Sandford (slave). Chief Justice Taney with other associate judges gave verdict in favour of the master in 1857 and put the issue of elimination of slavery for the time being on back burner in America.

The opinion of the court decided against Scott's claim for freedom on three grounds: (1) as a Black he could not be a citizen of the United States, and therefore had no right to sue in a federal court; (2) as a resident of Missouri the laws of Illinois had no longer any effect on his status; (3) as a resident of the territory north of 36° 30' he had not been emancipated because congress had no right to deprive citizens of their property without due process of law.<sup>37</sup>

The decision of the Supreme Court showed that by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the racial and social bias was still there even at the top level. This court was not even ready to accept blacks entitled to have rights as the citizens of America. At the same time, the slaves were regarded as property of masters. Thus, this decision of the Supreme Court reflected the approach and thinking prevailing in America where all people were not treated equally and the racial and social discrimination was quite pronounced. It would go without saying that the champions of liberty and democracy could not stop slavery though the import of slaves had been banned in America in 1808. This practice continued and remained part and parcel of their social and economic order till President Abraham Lincoln's proclamation of 1863 to abolish slavery at the eve of the civil war of America. Then, two years after the

proclamation, the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment was incorporated in the Constitution to give a final solution to end slavery in America.

The American constitutional amendment to abolish slavery also strengthened the on going movements against slavery in other countries of the world. Indeed, it was the second important incident after England's ban on slavery. It had great effect on other countries which followed the same course and slavery started diminishing from the world. It is worth mentioning that at international level, the slave-trade could not be abolished, and in many regions slavery was very much part of the socio-economic system till the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the emergence of the League of Nations in 1920, the issue of slavery came under focus at international level. Then the League of Nations successfully managed to constitute a Slavery Convention in 1926 for complete suppression of slavery in all forms and to ban the slave trade by land and sea.

In the modern age, efforts to abolish slavery started with a decision of the English Court on the basis of the Habeas Corpus in 1772, however, it was alleviated at international level with the approval of 'Supplementary Convention' of the United Nations in 1956. Indeed this socio-economic stigma was a great hindrance in the realization of the ideals of Human Rights. No doubt, with the presence of slavery the dream to have equality and fraternity could not be realized.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) had deeply observed the fallout of industrialization and wrote *Das Capital* on the subject, which has been rated as one of the most influential books of all times. He was a staunch critic of the capitalist economy and depicted it as a tool to exploit the masses. He also regarded it as the main cause of poverty in the world. He was of the view that most political systems have been designed in the interest of the rich class.

Unemployment, low wages, and bad working conditions increase the misery of the workers, but at the same time their class consciousness is increased. A series of crises sweep the capitalist system, each crisis bringing it closer to the point of collapse.<sup>38</sup>

Marx brought a philosophical revolution which became popular among workers and commoners. Subsequently, many political parties and pressure groups occupied the centre-stage in politics in the name of the workers. The popularity of the philosophy of Marx had not been confined only to the industrialist nations but it had also spread to the colonies and even non-industrial and backward countries. These

developments had compelled the capitalists to undertake some measures to check this tide. Then many reforms were introduced to redress the problems and grievances of the workers.

The regulation of hours, wages, and working conditions, the prohibition of child labour, the establishment of unemployment insurance and workmen's compensation, and many more developments have resulted from legislative enactments and have created an entirely different situation for working people.<sup>39</sup>

The Philosophy of Marx gave a new hope to the poor and the working classes regarding their rights. Consequently they organized themselves and stood up for their rights in many countries. In this regard, an important incident took place in America in the decade in which Marx died. The decade of 1880's has been remembered for a series of strikes and lockouts of workers for their demands in the USA. The Haymarket Square Riots in Chicago on May 1, 1886 grew out of a strike against a factory. In the protest rally of the workers, a bomb exploded and caused death of many people. This incident has been marked for the labourers' rights and every year May 01, is observed as 'May Day' or 'Labour Day' in most of the countries. Since this incident, the labour movement got strengthened and became more active and it united the workers for their rights.

The labour movement had been growing since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, as a result, demands were made for social justice and better living standards for the labourers. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia also gave tremendous support to the working class. It was symbolically and politically significant for the downtrodden people to occupy the center stage. It was the beginning of Marx's perception of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariats'. Harold J. Laski describes:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels put emphasis on the alliance of workers to get their rights which had been usurped by the upper classes. In *Communist Manifesto* they wrote: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries unite!"<sup>40</sup>

The Bolshevik Revolution was psychologically a great boost for the labour movements because this class, for the first time entered the corridor of powers. Moreover, this Revolution eventually transformed Russia into a great political and military power. Subsequently the same ideology enabled them to lead a block of the socialist countries. Indeed, this revolution strengthened the movement of the labour class and compelled capitalist countries to redress their problems and respect their rights. Consequently the governments of many capitalist countries introduced reforms, and gave rights to the working classes which actually enhanced the working class politically. The formation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919 was another forum which redressed the problems of the labourers of the world.

Indeed, during the devastating war and its aftermath, two opposed efforts to institutionalize human rights emerged: the triumph of Bolshevism in Russia, initially premised on international socialism, and the nearly simultaneous establishment of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization, predicated upon progressive liberal notions of human rights.<sup>41</sup>

Most of the cultures, civilizations and religions did not give rights to women according to the current international standards. Islam was the first major religion which emphasized to improve social status of women. Although the Glorious Revolution, Bill of Rights, the American Revolution and French Revolution were important and big events of modern age as regard their contribution towards Human Rights, yet none of them could bring any tangible change for females which were almost half of the world's population. They remained subordinate human beings dependent upon males. By the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in most countries, they were not even allowed to possess property, sign a contract with somebody, have equal wages, right of vote and could not even hold a public office. The movement for the rights of women began in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

1848, The first women's rights convention in the United States is held in Seneca Falls, New York ... That outlines the main issues and goals for the emerging women's movement. Thereafter, women's rights meeting are held on a regular basis.<sup>42</sup>



1878, The first International Women's Rights Congress is held in Paris, France ... 1912 Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive (Bull Moose/Republican) Party becomes the first national political party to adopt a women suffrage plank ... 1920. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which granted women the right to vote, is ratified. The league of Women Voters is established.<sup>43</sup>

England, the front-runners of Human Rights and democratic values, gave right of vote to women over 21 year of age in 1928. Before that, women over 30 having property had this right since 1918. Turkey was another European country which granted this right to women in 1920's. By the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in most countries, the women still had been denied this political right.

The League of Nations remained silent on the issue of Human Rights. However, its successor the United Nations (UN) took up this issue with its emergence in 1945. Its preamble proclaimed that women have equal rights with men and thus tried to change the centuries-old status of women. It was a commendable effort on the part of the UN to recognise the rights of women. Three years after the formation of the UN, its General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It explicitly declared equal rights for women and men and set an international standard to be followed.

Where as the people of the United Nations have reaffirmed their faith in fundamental rights; in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.<sup>44</sup>

The UN held a convention in 1952 to give political rights to women without any discrimination because still in many countries women were without those rights.

Recognizing that everyone has right to take part in the government of his country directly or indirectly through freely chosen representatives, and has the right to equal access to public service in his country, and desiring to equalize the status of men and women in the enjoyment and exercise of political rights.<sup>45</sup>

In the same Convention, women's rights to have vote, contest election and hold public office had been accepted which gave a social, economic and political strength to women. Then gradually countries began to give political rights to women which empowered them and enhanced their position. The Convention paved the way for women to get their rights and be treated equally. Thus, they became entitled to have Human Rights without any discrimination. .

With the rise of mercantilism and spread of industrialisation across Europe, European imperialism reached its climax. During this period, many European powers had established political and economic control over countries and territories in Africa, Asia and in the New World.

Though the term colonialism and imperialism are sometimes used interchangeably, yet scholars usually distinguish between the two, reserving colonialism for instances where one country assumes political control over another and using imperialism more broadly to refer to political or economic control exercised either formally or informally.<sup>46</sup>

A competition ensued among strong European states to colonise different parts of the world and it embittered their relationships leading to wars and conflicts. Colonization refers to a powerful state, usually through military force establishing political control over a weak nation or people and assuming control. Obviously, this kind of political control involved the violation of the rights of the colonized. Dozens of African, Asian and American countries and territories had been colonized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by a few European nations who kept on exploiting them. With the rise of powers, like Italy and Germany, the competition to make colonies was further intensified. "Colonization was one of the major causes of the World War I, which has been one of the most devastating events in the history of mankind in which more than 10 million people were killed and more than 20 million wounded."<sup>47</sup> There is no second opinion that wars have always brought massive violations of Human Rights of the people. The WW II was not different from them because it caused unprecedented losses of human life and collateral damages.

The human cost is estimated at 55 million dead – 25 million in the military and 30 million civilians. The

amount of money spent has been estimated at more than \$ 1 trillion, which makes World War II more expensive than all other wars combined.<sup>48</sup>

The massive destruction caused by these conflicts had forced the world leadership to take measures to stop wars and develop a mechanism of collective security. It is interesting to note that the some European imperialist nations were fighting WW II against the 'Axis powers' in the name of democracy and condemned the governments of the confronting countries as dictatorial or totalitarian regimes. The victors of the WW II, who were also the forerunners of democracy, had a moral obligation to review their rule over colonies which was directly against the very spirit of democratic values and Human Rights. This wave was not only confined to Europe but also began to spread in other parts of the world. After the WW II the USA had emerged as hegemon of the World and started playing her new role for the promotion of democratic values. Then President Roosevelt of the USA criticized imperialist powers and urged them to free colonies under their control.

[I]f we are to achieve a stable peace it must involve the development of backward countries.... I can't believe that we can fight a war against fascist slavery, and at the same time not work to free people all over the world from a backward colonial policy.<sup>49</sup>

This statement of Roosevelt was quite significant for weakening the moral and political position of the Imperialist Powers of Europe over their colonies. So, after the WW II, a process of decolonization began which empowered indigenous people to rule their own countries. The leaders of the world, as a result, became serious to draw a mechanism to check conflicts between and among the states and solve their disputes through peaceful means and negotiations. In 1945, after a devastating WW II, the UN was formed with the support of great powers of the world. It was organized to stabilize international relations, secure peace and stop wars.

The UN Charter provided foundation for peace, security and equality, and discouraged discriminations on the basis of sex, language, race, colour and religion. It also encouraged right of self determination for the people. It was an international revolution which treated all people of all countries equally and respectfully.

To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.<sup>50</sup>

The UN has had multiple achievements in health, poverty alleviation, medicine, economic development, family planning, disaster relief, education and environment protection. Likewise, its Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been rated as one of its most commendable achievements. It had not only evolved consensus of different nations on the issue but also set international standard for Human Rights. The year 1948 will be remembered as a great achievement in the history of Human Rights. Meena Anand gives compliments to the UN Declaration:

It has been used by the United Nations, by other international organization and conferences, and by governments, as a yardstick to measure the compliance by governments with the obligations deriving from the Charter in matters of the human rights. It has penetrated into international conventions, national constitutions and legislation, and even in isolated cases, into court proceedings.<sup>51</sup>

Although the concept of Human Rights began with King Hammurabi of Mesopotamia thousands of years ago, yet it got a comprehensive definition and framework in 1948 with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN General Assembly. Earlier, the concept had different connotations for different people belonging to different religions and cultures. However, the UN Declaration has combined most of regions, cultures, religions and political ideologies in one broad definition of Human Rights. It is pertinent to mention that an overwhelming majority of the members of the UN supported and voted for the Declaration and, later on, ratified it. Thus it became an acceptable and sacred document. It provided a uniform standard of Human Rights to all nations and regions, irrespective of their backgrounds, cultures, religions and ideologies.

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Micheline R. Ishay, *The History of Human Rights From Ancient Times to The Globalization Era* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), p.28.
- <sup>2</sup> B. V. Rao, *World History* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt., Ltd., 1984), p. 38.
- <sup>3</sup> Ishay, *The History of Human Rights*, p.36.
- <sup>4</sup> O. P. Chauhan, *Human Rights: Promotion and Protection* (New Delhi: Anmol Publication Pvt., Ltd., 2004), pp.29-30.
- <sup>5</sup> J. A. Rickard, *An Outline of the History of England* (New York: Barnes & nobles, Inc., 1946), p.38.
- <sup>6</sup> Raghubir Dayal, *Modern European History* (New Delhi: CBS Publishers and Distributors, 2007), p.01.
- <sup>7</sup> Ernest Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), p.163.
- <sup>8</sup> M. Judd Harmon, *Political Thought From Plato To The Present* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964, Reprinted by Nizami Press, Lahore, 1988), p.159.
- <sup>9</sup> Ishay, *The History of Human Rights*, p.76.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 99.
- <sup>11</sup> Ferdinand Schevill, *A History of Europe From the Reformation to the Present Day* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1951), p.215.
- <sup>12</sup> Dayal, *Modern European History*, p.04.
- <sup>13</sup> Ishay, *The History of Human Rights*, p.79.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.85.
- <sup>15</sup> Lynda S. Bell, et. al., (eds.), *Negotiating Culture and Human Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p.25.
- <sup>16</sup> *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1988, Vol. 3, p.208.
- <sup>17</sup> Harmon, *Political Thought From Plato To The Present*, p.256.
- <sup>18</sup> Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (London: Cornell University Press, 2003), p.47.
- <sup>19</sup> <http://www.classroomtools.com/voltaire.htm> (Accessed February 2, 2008)
- <sup>20</sup> Ishay, *The History of Human Rights*, p.64.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.80.
- <sup>22</sup> Zafar Ullah Khan, *Human Rights* (Karachi: Pakistan Law House, 2001), p.4.
- <sup>23</sup> Ishay, *The History of Human Rights*, p.74.
- <sup>24</sup> Schevill, *History of Europe From the Reformation*, pp. 402-403.
- <sup>25</sup> *The Encyclopedia Americana*, 1987, Vol. 12, p.68.
- <sup>26</sup> David Thomson, *Europe Since Napoleon* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1962), p.11.
- <sup>27</sup> Schevill, *History of Europe From the Reformation*, p.508.
- <sup>28</sup> UNESCO (ed.), *Human Rights Comments and Interpretations* (London. Allan Wingate, 1948), p.25.
- <sup>29</sup> Meena Anand, *Struggle for Human Rights: Nelson Mandela* (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2004), p.32.
- <sup>30</sup> Schevill, *History of Europe From the Reformation*, p.504.

- <sup>31</sup> Ishay, *The History of Human Rights*, p.9.
- <sup>32</sup> R. Coupland, *The British Anti-Slavery Movement* (London: Thornton Butterworth, Limited, 1993), pp.7-8.
- <sup>33</sup> Zafar, *Human Rights*, p.167.
- <sup>34</sup> *The Concise Columbia Encyclopaedia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p.779.
- <sup>35</sup> *The Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 25, p.19.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.
- <sup>37</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People Prehistory to 1789*, (New York: Meridian, Penguin Books Inc., Oxford University Press), Vol. 2, 363.
- <sup>38</sup> Harmon, *Political Thought From Plato To The Present*, p.400.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.
- <sup>40</sup> Harold J. Laski, *Communist Manifesto Socialist Landmark* (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD., 1961), p.160.
- <sup>41</sup> Ishay, *The History of Human Rights*, p.177.
- <sup>42</sup> <http://www.ywca.org/site/pp/asp?c=djISI6PIKPG&b=295706> (Accessed May 5, 2008)
- <sup>43</sup> <http://www.ywca.org/site/pp/asp?c=djISI6PIKPG&b=295706> (Accessed May 5, 2008)
- <sup>44</sup> United Nation, General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble*, 1948.
- <sup>45</sup> *UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women*, 1952.
- <sup>46</sup> "Colonization", *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia Standard*, 2005.
- <sup>47</sup> "World War I", *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia Standard*, 2005.
- <sup>48</sup> Earl F. Ziemke, "World War II", *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia Standard*, 2005.
- <sup>49</sup> Ishay, *The History of Human Rights*, p. 180.
- <sup>50</sup> *The United Nations Charter; 1945*, Article 1.
- <sup>51</sup> Meena, *Struggle for Human Rights*, p.38.

CONCEPT PAPER

**CONSTRUCTING BHADRAKALI MANDAR  
HISTORICALLY**

**HAROON KHALID**

LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES  
PAKISTAN

**ABSTRACT**

*Two Bhadrakali temples (mandars) are located in Lahore, the provincial capital of Pakistani Punjab. One temple is at the precincts of Thoker Niaz Beg, while the other is situated at the mohalla phalla lakhpat rai, inside the walled city. Historians and archeologists know very little about the construction, the cults, and the deities of these sites. By taking cue from the artistic and the architectural remnants of the temple, this paper explores the historical possibilities of the construction of temple at Niaz Beg by locating it into a larger context of Hindu architectural and aesthetic values. The temple hosts a principal Hindu festival of the city every year. People from all parts of the city come to pay their reverence to the village goddess. A similar festival is also held at the temple in the walled city for those who cannot visit Niaz Beg which also explains the significance of this place for local Hindu community.*

**KEY WORDS:** Bhadrakali Mandar, Punjab, Lahore, Thoker Niaz Beg, Hindu festival, Hindu art, Hindu temple.

It was the twentieth century Lahore. Every year in the month of *Jeth* (between the middle of May and the middle of June),<sup>1</sup> when most of the people were reluctant to go outside especially in the evenings, the Hindu community gathered at a temple located at Thoker Niaz Beg<sup>2</sup> in the outskirts of the city. People from the neighboring cities also used to take the trip in large numbers taking carts, horses, and other means of

transportation to reach there. On the way, they placed earthen pots filled with cold water for the travelers as the thoroughfare was unshaded and dusty. Every year, they celebrated the festival for one day and one night. Not all of them stayed at night, those who did stay also brought tents with them to avoid heat. Drama, music, art, and rides were the source of entertainment while *Bhang*, *Sharab* along with sweetmeats were in profusion. The celebration was an amusing break from the hardships of life. Many Sikhs from Amritsar also took part in the festival.<sup>3</sup> This historical temple, *Bhadrakali Mandar* is still located at Niaz Beg. The *Bhadrakali Mandar* is the designation given to the dwellings of the *Bhadrakali*. *Bhadrakali* is the placid form of the *Kali Mata*, who appears as a ferocious deity, when she kills the demon by sucking out all the blood out of the body. *Kali Mata* emerged at the periphery of the Indian society but over time as her recognition grew, she found a place in the accepted Hindu pantheon. She is frequently described as, 'terrible and frightening, with black or dark skin usually no clothes, and long-disheveled hair. She is adorned with severed arms, which act as her girdle; wears freshly cut heads as necklaces; children's corpses as earrings, serpents as bracelets. She has long-sharp fangs, she is usually depicted to have long nails on claw-like hands, and blood is smeared on her lips.'<sup>4</sup> The adulation of the *Kali Mata* is not confined to any particular geographical region. In Bengal, however, she finds her most zealous supporters willing to give blood sacrifices for the patron-goddess. Kanhiya Lal is the late 19<sup>th</sup> century researcher who surveyed a variety of monuments in Lahore and penned their portrayal in his book, *Tarikh-i-Lahore*. He saw no icon of the deity but found a calf placed in a smaller dome inside the sanctuary. The detached body parts are compounded with the *Kali Mata* because they emblemize the repudiation of worldly pleasures. Besides the chief patron goddess, there may have also been other minor goddesses which were paid deference to by the pilgrims. These deities were worshipped on the first and the second floor. It is believed that the deity reveals an awesome, disruptive, and violent aspect during the annual festival as she confronts the demon disrupting the life at the village.<sup>5</sup>

The nature of festivals held at this temple highlights the very significance of this place among the Hindus of Lahore. This article attempts to explore the temple from three aspects: one part deals with the spiritual significance of the temple; second part discusses the genesis of the temple by inferring from primary sources; and the third portion highlights with the architectural and aesthetic aspects of the temple.



## (I)

Large Hindu temples are usually not just one building but have a number of adjacent monuments, symbolically attached to the worship of the deity. Some of these structures are pool, *Samadhis*, wells, and Banyan tree. The *Bhadrakali Mandar* had all of these. The construction of Hindu temples in medieval period was a complex process which involved charms, spells, and astronomy based predictions. After the selection of place for the priests, the *Sadhus*, necessary rites were performed before the construction.

Like almost every temple, large pool of water is also present at the temple. Water is deemed to be one of the basic elements out of which all has been made giving it a symbolic-metaphysical rendition. In Hinduism, water is considered to be a spiritual force that purges physical and numinous blemishes. The pool was also a blessing for the pilgrims during the severe summers of the subcontinent. The depth of the pool at the *Bhadrakali* is around 25 feet.<sup>6</sup> There were stairs flanking the pond on all the sides. There was a detached covered arrangement for women too.<sup>7</sup> Water came in from the wells found in large quantities at the nearby region. This water was then collected in the white buildings standing on each corner from where it entered the bath.<sup>8</sup>

There were 12 wells and 5 *Baolis* in the surrounding.<sup>9</sup> A *Baoli* is a large well with a staircase that led all the way to the base of the well. During summers families used to assemble near the foundation to get respite from the heat.<sup>10</sup> The only *Baoli* that was not integrated into the residential quarters has been enclosed with debris. Water was extracted from the wells by the Persian wheel.

Some of the ashes from the cremated corpse of an essential *Sadhu* is secured, and placed in a container. It is then buried and a *Samadhi* is constructed over it to identify the spot. *Samadhi* more often than not, becomes a mini-temple where generally, an idol of the deceased is placed and then worshipped. Five *Samadhis* exist at this vicinity.

*Sadhus* are male-ascetics who repudiate family and worldly associations for the life of religion. They usually shave their heads and let a tuft of hair on the crown of the head grow.<sup>11</sup> They are non-Brahmin twice born who take up the sacred thread for the rest of their existence as part of their initiation. Their activities vary from teaching, touring villages, preaching, and study.<sup>12</sup> They are also responsible for taking care of the image and performing the daily rituals.<sup>13</sup>

The *Sadhus* who's *Samadhis* we find at the *Bhadrakali Mandar* must have been the people who would have been responsible

for the day to day functioning of the temple. They must have been the supervisors of the large agricultural land that belonged to the deity. They also would have been responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the annual festival. People from Niaz Beg would have played an important role too in the daily functioning of the temple by giving donations to the *Sadhus*. The *Sadhus* would have each day woken, bathed, and fed the deity, besides which, they would have worshipped it daily. Over the years there must have been a number of *Sadhus* who would have stayed at the *Bhadrakali Mandar* however these five *Sadhus* who's *Samadhis* we find present here right now must have done something important to be bestowed with this honor of being granted a *Samadhi*.

A Banyan tree may also be found at the site. The shade of the Banyan tree is relished in the hot country life of the subcontinent and for that reason; one notices its significance in the Indian religious philosophy. *Bhagavad-Gita*, one of the holiest books in Hinduism says about this tree: "Of all trees I am the banyan tree, and of the sages among the demigods I am Narada."<sup>14</sup> The Banyan tree is one of the largest trees in the world which covers vast areas under its fall. Some of these trees are thousands of years old and have sizes that may be multiplied into acres. These trees also escort large temples. The one adjacent to this temple has been recently incised and only its shaft still exists. In the Hindu philosophy, it is considered improper to cut a Banyan tree and such a tradition is also present in many parts of the rural Punjab in Pakistan. Where the tree encroaches upon the houses of the people, they prefer to shift to a new place, instead of cutting the tree, therefore, such callous treatment meted out to this particular Banyan tree clearly depicts how aloof these inhabitants are from the Punjabi cultural sentiments.

## (II)

Nothing is written on the structure and we find no detail in historical document which could unearth the history of this temple. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kanahiya Lal refers to this temple as being "old", but that is not suffice for our research.<sup>15</sup> 'Old' in the context could connote the early British days and also ancient times which leaves a large period of time to probe. Kanahiya Lal mentions about the origin of an alternate-*Bhadrakali Mandar* which was summoned by Ranjit Singh. There is a rationale to accept this assertion that this temple is a latter assembly compared to the original building as it is referred to as the 'new temple' in *Tarikh-i-Lahore*.<sup>16</sup> If the original monument was previously being

used and this was a new construction intended to replace that *Mandar* then one can contest the assertion that the original temple was constructed during the occupancy of Ranjit Singh. Had Ranjit Singh ordered the erection of the 'original' edifice then he would not have summoned the assembly of a new architectural monument. Moreover, if it was this case then Kanahiya Lal could mention it. Due to this very reason, the origin of this 'archetypical' structure lies prior to the tenure of Ranjit Singh.

Before Ranjit Singh's rule, Lahore was politically unstable because different parts of the city were controlled by three Sikh *Sardars*. The triumvirate rulers were too busy in consolidating their control that they altogether ignored the patronage of culture and art; still one cannot overlook other prospects which could lead to the construction of this temple in the later half of the eighteenth century.

The construction of *mauza* Niaz Beg began in 1717.<sup>17</sup> A reasonable assertion may be that the place of worship was erected soon after the inauguration of the town. When Ranjit Singh captured Lahore in 1799, Subha Singh, one of the rulers of Lahore fled to Niaz Beg, then a small town and declared it as the capital of his lost kingdom.<sup>18</sup> It can be assumed that the locality received considerable patronization during this brief period of six months. The construction of temple may possibly be traced during this period as the structure is well outside the walled town. It is a likelihood that as the people began to move outside the walled city because of the increase in population, the building was raised during this period.

Often in the history of the subcontinent, whenever a new ruler emerged, he legitimized his rule by down-playing previous monuments and by raising new ones. Ranjit Singh's case is in point who constructed a new grander temple to replace the existing one. Moreover, if Subah Singh had constructed the monument Kanahiya Lal could have mentioned it. He rather chooses the word "old" which raises the possibility that the structure was constructed even before the Sikh rule. Another evidence which may subscribe to this assertion is the pattern of architecture of the building. Still this understanding is problematic. It is a possibility that the original building, which is termed as "old" by Kanahiya Lal, was razed and a new structure was constructed over it or a supplementary structure was erected. It would not be easy to glean various influences, either Mughal or Sikh elements. Nonetheless, such approach cannot be substantiated without further investigation.

(III)

Like many monuments in the city, *Bhadrakali Mandar* reflects Sikh derivation.<sup>19</sup> It is of 20-25 feet standing on the plinth of about six feet. The building was originally white in color which became black over a period of time, perhaps due to increasing pollution. Like Sikh philosophy, the fundamental feature of the Sikh architecture is also hybrid in nature which derives inspiration from Muslim and Hindu styles.<sup>20</sup>

The *Baradari* with the temple is made of small bricks which were used in the late Mughal architecture.<sup>21</sup> The floral motifs on the wall may not be termed as a particular Sikh style, however, the vases and florals on the splinters reflect the influence of Sikh architecture. Depictions of living beings are the typical examples of Sikh art.<sup>22</sup> One may not detect any such portrayal but a closer assessment reveals the red tail of *Hanuman* on one of the walls of the *baradari*. The rest of the depiction is obscured by the construction of a wall across the mural. Primarily green, orange, and red colours are used in the frescoes.

In front of the remnants of the *Baoli* is a niche in the wall, composed of little bricks. It is difficult to identify whether these bricks are small than the ones found at the *baradari* as they are bonded together more compactly.<sup>24</sup> It is more likely that it was a later construction.<sup>25</sup> The entrance towards the northern side has two simple arches parallel to one another. The fresco-floral patterns on the walls of *baradari* are similar to other monuments in the city. The color of the arches is yellowish whereas red bricks are used elsewhere. The arches appear much older than their surroundings and the size of bricks is much smaller as well. The bonding of the bricks on the arches is stronger than anywhere else.<sup>26</sup> Such observations lead us to a number of interpretations: First, either the frescoes were added subsequent to the alternate-*Bhadrakali Mandar*, or the motifs were re-created at the *baradari*. Second, the arches do not portray Sikh tendencies to embellish the margins with art and architectural works but are left unornamented portraying late Mughal architectural elements.<sup>27</sup> It may be inferred that the arches are older than the rest of the monument.

The discrepancy between the 'archetypical' and the 'supplementary' construction is obvious in the framework of the second entrance. It is different from the architecture of ground floor and the second floor.<sup>28</sup> Piers, which are sustaining the upper building, end where the wall of the entrance commences. Generally when a two-storey building is constructed, the architectural motifs are homogeneous for the ground and the first floor. Here we see a margin where the wall ends, and then the second building commences making

it highly plausible that the first floor was constructed during the Sikh rule and the ground floor before it.<sup>29</sup>

The Sikh motifs on *Samadhis* reflect the architectural development after late Mughal era.<sup>30</sup> The arches are decorated as shallow cusp shaped.<sup>31</sup> The floral and the vase patterns in the frescoes are typical Sikh architectural style.<sup>32</sup> The construction of the dome is similar to the one at the alternate-*Bhadrakali Mandar*. However, *Samadhis* were possibly constructed before Ranjit Singh.

The main building of *Bhadrakali Mandar* is white and had three floors. More than half of the building is damaged, and the other half is being used as a residential quarter. The front elevation is in a terrible state. Fresh walls have been built to partition the temple between families resulting in major alteration in the building. On the first floor, two shallow cusp arches are visible whereas the third larger arch with a façade is from the Mughal repertoire.<sup>33</sup> Once again there is a difference between the ground and the first floor. The former is made up of closely laid small bricks with no clear design patterns and the first floor is beautifully decorated with arches and piers. The motifs end at the first floor.<sup>34</sup>

Decorative arches are a fundamental feature of Sikh architecture.<sup>35</sup> Opposite to the pool, the arches on the ground floor are without any pattern or fresco paintings suggesting its pre-Sikh origin.<sup>36</sup> The western side is comparatively in a good condition, and the style is similar to the first floor. Inside the building are remnants of luster frescoes.<sup>37</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this concept paper is to trace the origin of the temple. It is too difficult to ascertain the exact date of its construction, however various elements in the building may lead us to conjecture. The deliberations that yet need to be settled is that whether it was constructed during the tenure of six months under the direct supervision of Subha Singh when he declared Thokar Niaz Beg as his capital. The maninimity and anormity of the project itseld refutes the possibility of the monument being constructed in such a short period of time. It is a question and a research problem needs to be resolved by the archeologists and historians.

Some of the architectural and artistic elements ensconced in the monument are inspired from Mughal style. There is nonetheless an option that it was constructed before the creation of Niaz Beg. There is enough proof of the fact that it would be the only settlement on the

bank of Ravi encircled by Jungle close to this proximity This might be a possibility, because first of all there is a rampart that protects the temple from the environs, and secondly in India, there has historically been the practice of constructing Hindu temples deep in the forest away from the civilization. Could *Bhadrakali Mandar* have been such sort of a temple? One limitation of studying the architectural relics is that of the original temple, which Kanahya Lal coins as 'old' was razed before a 'modern' building was constructed over it. Then it would be impossible to discuss the origins of the temple without any excavations. Given the at hand architectural and the historical evidence there are strong reasons to believe that the temple was established somewhere in between the beginning and the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the adjunct town of Niaz Beg was also under its way.

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, 1989), p. 538.
- <sup>2</sup> Niaz Beg used to be a small town, in the outer-skirts of Lahore. Its distance from the walled city is around 6 kos. In 1877, the number of houses, and the people at the town were counted to be 1076 and 2806 respectively. Now the state of affairs is different. Niaz Beg has been assimilated as a small industrial hub by the incessantly expanding metropolis of Lahore. The town, which was once 2 km from the Multan road now strands on it. The most current survey of Niaz Beg accounted for 28,682 houses, and 215,302 people. The town is named after Niaz Beg Mughal, a landlord of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, who laid its foundations.
- <sup>3</sup> *Gazetteer of the Lahore District* (Lahore: Sang-E-Meel Publications, 1989), p. 84.
- <sup>4</sup> David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddess: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Tradition* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), p. 116.
- <sup>5</sup> David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddess: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Tradition* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), pp. 204-5.
- <sup>6</sup> Iqbal Qaiser *Personal Interview with*, June-July 2008.
- <sup>7</sup> John C Oman, *Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India*. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908), 206.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>9</sup> Iqbal Qaiser *Personal Interview with*, June-July 2008.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Raymond B Williams, *A New Face of Hinduism: the Swaminarayan Religion*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 94.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92-3.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.98.
- <sup>14</sup> A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is*, (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, 1989), p. 538.
- <sup>15</sup> The word used is *Kadeemi*, which is translated as old. P201-2, Hindi
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> Mufti G Sarwar, *Tarikh-i-Maqhzan-e-Punjab* (Lahore: Dost Associates), p. 232.
- <sup>18</sup> Mohammad Tufail, ed. *Naqoosh Lahore issue* (Lahore: Adara Farogh-e-Urdu, 1962), p. 111.
- <sup>19</sup> Rizwan Azeem, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.
- <sup>20</sup> Iqbal Qaiser, *Personal Interview*, June-July 2008.
- <sup>21</sup> Rizwan Azeem, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.
- <sup>22</sup> Ustad Saif, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> Rizwan Azeem, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> Ustad Saif, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.

- 
- <sup>28</sup> Rizwan Azeem, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.  
<sup>29</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>30</sup> Ustad Saif, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.  
<sup>31</sup> Rizwan Azeem, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.  
<sup>32</sup> Ustad Saif, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.  
<sup>33</sup> Rizwan Azeem, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.  
<sup>34</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>35</sup> Ustad Saif, *Personal interview*, July-Aug. 2008.  
<sup>36</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>37</sup> Ibid.



REVIEW ARTICLE

IMAGINATION AND REPRESENTATION IN  
HISTORICAL DISCOURSES  
(CARR, EVANS, AND JENKINS)

HUSSAIN AHMAD KHAN  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE  
SINGAPORE

BOOKS REVIEWED:

EH CARR, *WHAT IS HISTORY*, LONDON: PENGUIN, 1987. ISBN-13  
9780141037738.

RICHARD J EVANS, *IN DEFENCE OF HISTORY*, LONDON: GRANTA  
BOOKS, 1997. ISBN-10: 0393319598.

KEITH JENKINS (ED.), *THE POSTMODERN HISTORY READER*, LONDON  
& NY: ROUTLEDGE, 1997. ISBN-10: 0415139031.

No composition, no decomposition, no analysis into identities and differences can now justify the connection of representations from one to another; order the table in which it is specialized, the adjacencies it defines, the succession it authorizes as so many possible routes between the points on its surface--- none of these is any longer in a position to link representation or the elements of particular representation together. The condition of these links resides henceforth outside representation, beyond its immediate visibility, in a sort of behind-the-scenes world even deeper and more dense than representation itself.<sup>1</sup>

Michel Foucault's above quote underlines the representational or memory crisis in the postmodern world which is largely shaped by conflicting ideologies/agendas, strategies of control and homogenization, and the processes of globalization and decolonization. These developments challenged the 'accepted truths' and prompted intelligentsia to re-think the very basis of historical understanding. Emerging discourses re-define the role of imagination in historical narratives and critically viewed the utility or (ab)use of, what is supposedly, an historical representation. This review essay intends to examine the questions of imagination and representation as addressed by post-empiricist, reconstructionist and referentialist approach deployed by Edward Hallet Carr and Richard Evans, and post-modernist, deconstructionist, and anti-representational approach adopted by Jenkins and Lyotard.

### (I)

Self designated radical historian, Edward Hallet Carr believes in the sanctity of facts, objective representation of past, and construction of narrative as a definitive mode of knowing past. At the same time, he relates this 'objectivity' with historian's imagination, giving it a twist of historical relativism. Facts do not mean "anything until the historian has got to work on it and deciphered it..... (the process may be termed as) processing process...because no document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought.....".<sup>2</sup> Therefore, historian needs "imaginative understanding for the minds of the people with whom he is dealing...".<sup>3</sup> In order to make his text intelligible, historian uses current connotations (like, war, revolution, war, freedom, empire).<sup>4</sup> Carr goes on to explain that "the function of the historian is ..... to master and understand it (past) as the key to the understanding of the present".<sup>5</sup> Thus, history is "a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past".<sup>6</sup> Here Carr relates objective representation with historian's imagination, use of contemporary language structure and circumstances. One wonders, what kind of past-exactness is this!

By extracting strength from Hegelian essentialization, Carr terms both society and individual as

inseparable entities.<sup>7</sup> To him, self-knowable truth is possible which can be used for understanding the society as well as individual: ".....the study of differences between American, Russian, and Indian society as a whole may well turn out to be the best way of studying differences between individual Americans, Russians, and Indians".<sup>8</sup> Historian should focus on important personalities and events because in a particular situation "...nameless millions were individuals acting more or less unconsciously, together, and constituting a social force. The historian will not in ordinary circumstances need to take cognizance of a single discontented peasant or discontented village".<sup>9</sup> Carr severely criticizes the distinction between society and individual.<sup>10</sup>

Carr equates historical representation with scientific observations because both share the same features like prediction,<sup>11</sup> objectivity, and generality.<sup>12</sup> Keeping in view the spirit of Enlightenment, he argues the use of historical representation in service of present and future. He strongly believes in progress, and to him, history is a tool to know about that sense of progress: "a society which has lost belief in its capacity to progress in the future will quickly cease to concern itself with its progress in the past".<sup>13</sup>

To conclude E H Carr's point of view, historian's imagination in interpreting facts (a processing process), is a kind of referentiality within a particular context, and he assigns and infers intrinsic meaning in the historical discourses, i.e., to know about present and to envision future. Carr's failure to appreciate the impossibilities of referentialism and representationalism primarily because of the inability of memory to recollect past *as it was*, make him a typical post-empiricist and rationalist historian who draws strength from redundant colonial discourses.

## (II)

Despite conceding the subjectivities in historical discourses and irresistible attacks of postmodernism, Richard J Evans claims the possibilities of reconstructionism.<sup>14</sup> Historian has a limited choice of words as he is imprisoned by the available text/evidence,<sup>15</sup> however, readers assign their own meanings to the text.<sup>16</sup> In other words, historian is compelled by his sources to interpret past within a limited space, but readers

have no such constraints. Evans ignores that historian is also a reader at one stage when he reads a text for constructing past.

In historical imagination and its representation, historian cannot take liberty of generalization and essentialization. One of the serious drawbacks of generalization is the negation of an individual "in favour of anonymous groups and trends".<sup>17</sup> Similarly, history cannot be reduced to a text, in doing so we would be able to capture "only a small part of its reality".<sup>18</sup> Evans rejects the Saussurian tradition and claims that the language and grammar can reflect the reality of the past because both (language and grammar) "have evolved through contact with the real world in an attempt to name real things".<sup>19</sup>

By giving the example of Abraham affair,<sup>20</sup> Evans contends that historical evidence cannot be moulded according to historian's wishes, and the legitimacy of an interpretation lies in its acceptability to a wider audience. By stating so, Evans concedes that contemporary power structures define our understanding of the past. And past is used to serve our present in ideological, moral and political domains.<sup>21</sup> Despite acknowledging limits of objectivity and crisis of representation in historical discourses, Evans insists that "...we really can, if we were very scrupulous and careful and self-critical, find out how it (distortion in history) happened and reach some tenable though always less than final conclusions about what it all meant".<sup>22</sup>

### (III)

"History is theoretical all the way down", claims Keith Jenkins, and we should "consider the question of the nature of history/historiography in its various ontological, epistemological, methodological and ideological/discursive manifestations, (and we).... should be especially aware of that theorizing which currently lives under the rubric of postmodernism".<sup>23</sup> Like Lyotard, he believes that the circumstances of postmodernity are given and a logical consequences of the failure of modernity.<sup>24</sup> Two variants of Eurocentric discourses; bourgeois and proletariat cults have been radically reassessed by the contemporary academia. Attempts for identifying the "real foundations" of social processes have lost vigour leading to the "postists

formulations (poststructuralism, postcolonialism, postfeminism, postmarxism....)".<sup>25</sup> Like upper case history, Jenkins finds similar problems in lower case histories which is read for its "own-sakism...(and is a) mystifying way in which a bourgeoisie articulates its own interests as if they belonged to the past itself".<sup>26</sup> Thus, lower case histories are "as ideological as those of the upper case".<sup>27</sup> Both are "metahistorical constructions, (and) are like all constructions, ultimately arbitrary ways of carving up what comes to constitute their fields...(such understanding is thus) a sort of end of history".<sup>28</sup> New sensibility of postmodernism has exposed the problems in empiricism as well: "for empiricism as a method, just cannot account for the significance it gives to the selection, distribution and weighting of 'the facts' in finished narratives".<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, Lyotard in *Postmodern Condition* argues that the ideological grand narratives are deployed to essentialize the "order" which is centred upon white-male, rationality, democracy and European. To legitimize "order", "disorder" is created which centred around women, irrationality, dictatorship and non-European. Construction of such binaries and ideological grand narratives form the very basis of historical imagination and representation. Thus, knowledge (including historical imagination and representation) as a whole is channelized by the postmodern states to achieve their own objectives, and to produce able-bodied, docile minds.

From the above discussion one may discern different views about the nature and utility of historical imagination and its representation in the form of narrative. To some extent, 'perspectivism' may align these theorists in one category (some may dispute over Jenkins inclusion). They recognize the role of imagination in historical discourses, and associate subsequent variations in thought to the time and space (which involve ideologies, cultural and social constructs, etc.). However, the basic point of contention is to what degree this construction is comparable to the reality? Jenkins claims that it is far beyond the reality, while the other two theorists maintain the possibilities of reconstruction of past *as it was*. However, both (Carr and Evans) make a case of utilizing the past to understand present and to draw lessons for the future. This is the point where history becomes a tool

or technology of control, as investigated and well-argued in postcolonial literature. As experienced by the postcolonial societies, local knowledge was displaced, communities and castes were re-configured and defined, binaries were constructed in the name of science, truth, democracy, freedom and progress. Such utility of past invokes postmodernists to visualize the existence of various and usually conflicting ideologies within historical text serving their specific agendas, objectives, or missions by taking refuge of truth and progress. Keeping in view the increasing influence of postmodernism in social sciences and humanities, Jenkins' assertion is somewhat plausible that the people are now smart enough to look ahead without taking guidance from the constructed and imagined past.<sup>30</sup>

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 238-9.
- <sup>2</sup> E.H Carr, *What is History* (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 16.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 24.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 26.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 30.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 32.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 33.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 50.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 52.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 62.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 63.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 132.
- <sup>14</sup> Richard J Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta Books, 1997), p. 253.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 106.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 107.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 188.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 110.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 112.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 116-28.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 195.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 253.
- <sup>23</sup> Keith Jenkins (ed.), *The Postmodern History Reader* (London & NY: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1-2.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.04.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.04.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.06.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.07.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.08.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.10.
- <sup>30</sup> "we now have enough intellectual power to begin to work for an individual and social emancipatory future without it (History)." Keith Jenkins, *Refiguring History: New Thoughts on an Old Discipline* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), pp.1-2.

# BOOK REVIEWS



The issue of gender and language is a diverse and rapidly developing field of study, which has both academic and popular appeal. Litosseliti's this book provides a broad overview of key issues and questions related to the gender and language, and it aims to do so in both theoretical and practical ways. It introduces key theoretical concepts and frameworks and illustrates and exemplifies the relationship between gender and language use, by looking at specific texts (spoken and written), situated in different contexts. Moreover, each chapter contains questions and suggestions for further reading, to allow those new to the field to locate the issues discussed in that particular chapter critically and in context.

The book has been craftily structured in three parts. Part I consists of three chapters and concentrates on the point that past theorizations of gender and language revolved mainly around how language has been used by women and men differently while more recent approaches are concerned with how women and men are constructed through language. As far as the chapters in this part are concerned, chapter 1 describes early feminist and non-feminist approaches to the study of gender and language. It focuses on key elements of early study in this area, such as sexist language, and the language change and intervention Chapter 2 concentrates on past approaches related to the differences between male and female speech, and with the varying interpretations of such differences.

Chapter 3 examines more recent theorization of gender and language. Instead of reliance on binary and generalized distinctions between male and female language use, the focus is on gendered discourses and identities (femininities and masculinities) and on gender as a contextualized and shifting practice rather than a relatively fixed social category. In addition, like a learned and skilled writer, Litosseliti has given different definitions of *discourses* in chapter 3. She says that our gendered identities are not simply about being male or female, but about doing or performing one's gender at any one time.

Part II is based on the assumption how gender is discursively constructed in education (chapter 4), in the media (chapter 5) and in the workplace (chapter 6). The issues and theories discussed in Part I are further exemplified in Part II. Sexist language, gendered discourses, power relations and ideologies pertaining to these texts are also analyzed in this part. Part III consists of only one chapter which

provides the broad introduction to some of the principles, approaches and decisions involved in conducting research on gender and language. This chapter is very helpful for new researchers in the area and a good resource for both the teachers and students. By introducing the key principles of feminist linguistic research and providing different samples of activities, study questions, and resources, the writer has made this chapter so much interesting and informative.

It is an interesting book for gender and language studies. Each chapter is provided with a summary. Further readings at the end of each chapter are also given to explore comprehensively different issues discussed in that particular chapter. It is useful in offering a new reader an informed account of past, current, diverse and controversial voices in the field and a thought provoking examination of some of the ways in which theory permeated practice. .

*FATIMA ZAFAR BAIG*

**MADHAVI DESAI (ED.), GENDER AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN INDIA (NEW DELHI, 2007)**

Women's movements across the world have been one of the characteristic features of the last century. These movements have significantly been successful in the sense that they have generated changes in social patterns, roles and the life styles, even transforming the identities of the people. Similarly the relationship between gender and the built environment has become part of the conceptual framework of the related professions in Europe and the USA. But this is not the case in countries like India, Pakistan, Srilanka, Nepal and Bangladesh. There must have been very few regions in the world where architects have such varied challenges as we have in South Asia.

Madhavi Desai, an adjunct faculty at the school of Architecture, CEPT, Ahmadabad and an architectural practitioner did her Masters in Architecture from the University of Texas, Austin, USA (1978). Besides two books, she has published several articles and has presented papers at seminars in India and abroad.

In "Gender and the Built Environment in India" Desai has dealt with two broad and crucial issues; one woman as designers and the other as users of the built environment. She has tried to bring the feminist consciousness to the built environment in South Asia with special focus on India. The book is a collection of articles dealing with gender and the built environment in terms of public places, institutions, homes, and the transport. It also highlights the works of women as designers and women as construction workers. The articles included in this book are mainly resulted from the papers presented at the symposium on '*Gender and the Built Environment*' organized by Women Architect Forum, Ahmadabad, India.

At all levels of life, the ideals and reality of the relationship between men and women is expressed in built form. Traditional and Cultural rules govern the use of space and codes regulate behaviour between genders. The space for women in the built environment is a matter of great concern. They are the neglected group of the society with almost no claim to the house, being dependent entirely on the patriarchal social structure. Following the general trend in society, a woman's place (so they say) is in the home, yet a design of a home rarely includes a space that the woman can call her own. Similar is the case with the public transport which is primarily used by women and children. The book also mentions the appropriation of spaces by men

through urinating in the public spaces, thus constraining women's freedom in many ways.

Historically, decision making, architecture planning and urban policy have been male dominated. This social construct has changed over the last decade or so and today women are better represented in urban planning as well as in housing policy. The kitchen is coming closer to the living room instead of being the farthest place in the house. Findings from a study in Nepal show that houses with less gender disparity had more comfortable spaces in their homes. Yet much more is required to be done in this regard. Perhaps men should leave the decision making in architecture entirely to the women.

Although the book lacks a concluding chapter to tie up the diverse strands of thoughts presented in different articles, the balance is created with a nice introduction by the editor. In one of the articles a similar paragraph is printed twice, which seems to be a composing error but it better should not have been there in a book of international standard. On the whole it is an excellent piece of work which attracts the attention of the planners, architects and designers who can benefit from this book to make the private and public places more comfortable for all members of the society.

*RANA FAQIR MUHAMMAD ASLAM*

**JEHANGIR BADER, *THE EVOLUTION OF DEMOCRACY***  
**(LAHORE: AIZAZ-UD-DIN TBM PUBLISHER, 2007)**

Democracy is the modern way of life. Today it is not merely a political system. All spheres of human life are influenced by it. In view of the overwhelming importance of democracy in everyday life it is difficult to imagine a world without it. But there was a time when we had a world without it. It was the society where tyranny and autocracy reigned supreme and provided hardly any space to individual liberty. Mankind was facing the brutalities and suppression of worst kind. It was from this stage of social life human beings struggled to make the future of their generations. Millions of people sacrificed their lives for the sake of democracy. History stands witness to this fact that the ideals of democracy were given life by revolutions, rebellions and movements. Modern historian A.J.P. Taylor is of the view that systems and organization don't come out of nowhere. They have a cause and a history. The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity didn't get materialized after the French Revolution. They had to wait for more than hundred years to get materialized. After the First World War democracy, socialism and liberalism came in the West. But soon democracy crumbled and gave way to dictatorship. The dream finally came true after the Second World War. This is how things evolve through different phases of history.

The under view book is a classic description of the evolutionary history of democracy. There is no denying the fact that the modern form of democracy had to evolve through many phases in history. It is a matter of great pleasure that this entire perspective has been detailed and analyzed by a seasoned politician like Jahangir Badar whose personal struggle for democracy is itself a great contribution to the cause of democracy. Mr. Badar needs no introduction. But the words of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto written in the foreword of the book are worth mentioning. 'Badar Sahib is not a weak person. Badar Sahib has courage, bravery and a deep sense of honor and every political worker and leader should have these characteristics: courage, bravery and sense of honor. His courage was tested in 1977 when he was given the sentence of lashes. Today people are not being lashed yet.' As the author has struggled for democracy in Pakistan, he gives a thorough analysis of the state of democracy in Pakistan. The book also provides the author's understanding of Islam and its compatibility with modern democracy. In this way the book comes out to be an analytical discourse on the history and the relevance of democracy in the modern world.

It is important for the adherents of democracy to see how the first seed of this noble cause was sown, how attempts were made to organize the society and what stages of evolution democracy had to undergo. The author starts with the code of Hammurabi as the first formal document meant for organizing the society. The text of the code is certainly an eye opener. Hammurabi was the fourth ruler of first Babylonian Dynasty. He was a great conqueror and a big monarch. But the cause of his eternal fame resides in the code he introduced to run his kingdom. There is no law in the code having anything to do with religion. 'An eye for an eye' is the basis of criminal law. The code provides protection to all classes of society. Next important document in line is the Ten Commandments. It is primarily a moral and social code. The provisions are very explicit and call for an ideal social order. These commandments went a long way in providing better living conditions to mankind. The author enlists the law of Manu-Smitri as the next most important document aiming for better social order. Basically the purpose of referring to this ancient law is to analyze that how thoroughly it contributed in Hindu civilization. The law of defines a social order peculiar to Hinduism.

After a drawing a thorough perspective and deeply analyzing the ancient laws the author comes to Islamic code. He opines 'if influence, extensiveness, comprehensiveness and longevity be made the touchstone and all codes of history are to be judged by it, no worldly law will be able to pass all the stages of this scrutiny. But Islamic is the only one capable of standing every test.' Mr. Badar gives an incisive analysis of Islamic code and its impact on society. After presenting a detailed perspective of some important laws in human history, the author comes to the history of democracy. The chapter 'Democracy in Ancient Times' provides a great deal of information. Contributions of philosophers and thinkers are well appreciated. Three important historical events stand supreme in their grand contribution towards the cause of democracy. Who can contest the significance of Magna Carta, Declaration of Independence by United States of America and the French Revolution. Three separate chapters are given for a detailed account of these events and their contribution for the cause of democracy. After this the author studies three examples of the rule of people. The history of the development of democracy in United Kingdom, United States of America and South Africa is discussed at length.

It is important to note that democracy didn't have a fruitful experience in most of the Muslim societies. The question arises as to whether Islamic law is essentially democratic? Mr. Badar contests this

misperception. He examines aspects of political system in Islam and evaluates their compatibility with modern democracy. The author is of view that since Islam is the religion of peace and better social order it provides best form of life to its adherent. It is primarily progressive in nature and encourages the process of change. Therefore the best and the most relevant side of the religion should be used in the larger interest of the ummah. The interesting and absorbing part of the book is the author's analysis of the experience of democracy in Pakistan. This account covers all the essential political details till the signing of the charter of democracy.

The under view book provides all the essential details regarding the evolution of democracy. There is no denying the fact that people have sacrificed a lot for this noble cause. Their interest may not be directly safeguarded by this political system but they know that the welfare of the society is deeply attached with it. Today the dream has not fully materialized for a great number of people living in different part of the world. Third world countries are a worst example of autocracy and oppression. Political parties and leaders are struggling for liberation from the clutches of authoritative elements. But it is not as simple to fight out these forces. This book serves as a handbook to revolutionaries. They can very well know that how ideals are achieved. Jahangir Badar has given very comprehensive details of all the relevant informations for a reader's purpose. It would contribute largely for the spread of awareness.

*TARIQ AZIZ SINDHU*

## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS & REVIEWERS

1. Research papers, notes, review articles, comments, rejoinders and book reviews-in English only should be sent in duplicate together with floppy in MS-Word to:  
  
Dr Tahir Kamran, Editor, *The Historian*, Department of History, GC University, Lahore (e-mail: [tahirkamran\\_gcu@yahoo.com](mailto:tahirkamran_gcu@yahoo.com), [history\\_department\\_gcu@yahoo.com](mailto:history_department_gcu@yahoo.com)).
2. Papers will be accepted for consideration on the understanding that they are original contributions to the existing knowledge in the fields of History, International Relations, International Political Economy, Current Affairs, Strategic Studies, Women Studies, Sociology, Journalism, Political Science, Statistics, Psychology, Philosophy, etc.
3. Each paper should be typed and should carry a margin of an inch and a half on the left-hand side of the typed page.
4. The first page of the research article should contain the title of the paper, the name(s), abstract and any acknowledgements.
5. Tables for the main text and each of its appendices should be numbered serially and separately. The title of each table should be given in a footnote immediately below the line at the bottom of the table.
6. Endnotes should be numbered consecutively.
7. All references used in the text should be listed in alphabetical order of the author's surnames at the end of the text. References in the text should include the name(s) of author(s) with the year of publication in parentheses. Attempt should be made to conform to the style of the Journal. Further information on questions of style may be obtained from the Editor of this Journal.
8. Each author will receive one copy of *The Historian*.
9. Book Reviews should give a description of the contents of the volume and a critical evaluation of the book. It should not exceed 05 or 06 typewritten pages. Each request for a book review in the journal must be accompanied by one copy of the book concerned.