

Syed Moinul Haq: A Historiographical Analysis

Rafia Riaz

Assistant Professor

*Department of History & Pakistan Studies
International Islamic University, Islamabad*

Abstract

While looking at the brief period of the development of historical studies in Pakistan, one can visibly see the significant role of Syed Moinul Haq, a practicing historian. He was selected as General Secretary of Pakistan Historical Society in 1953 and remained associated with it throughout the rest of his life. Pakistan Historical Society provided an opportunity to Moinul Haq to expand his personal research. Along with that he initiated several projects and conferences related to historical studies. There are very few academic works exploring the historiography of the writings of Pakistani historians, although historiographical analysis is an essential part of historical methodology. The present study aims at doing a historiographical analysis of Moinul Haq's historical writings. It will identify the nature and kinds of historical writings produced by Moinul Haq along with analyzing his style of writing. The study also aims at investigating the influence of time and space and life experiences of Moinul Haq on his historical writings. The research has been conducted while mainly relying on the historical works produced by Moinul Haq along with consulting his autobiography and some of the other relevant historical sources.

Introduction

The task of historiography apart from exploring the methodological weaknesses of a historical work is actually to highlight the differences in the approach and outlook of one historian from another. Moreover it further aims at appreciating this variety of knowledge creation in the context of its own time and space. Historiography contextualizes the historian in the circumstances in which he lives and argues that these circumstances influence the thought, framework and writings of a historian. The present study is an attempt to analyze the historiography of Syed Moinul Haq, a famous Pakistani historian, in order to explore his unique style and his approach towards history.

Moinul Haq was born in 1903 in a *sufi* family of Moradabad. His father had not secluded himself from worldly life and was a teacher in a missionary school;ⁱ nonetheless Moinul Haq was heir to a strong tradition of Sufism from his family. After studying in the missionary school of Moradabad, Moinul Haq went to Meerut for taking admission in a college. He developed his keen interest in history in his college years.ⁱⁱ Afterwards Moinul Haq took admission in Aligarh University and did Masters in History. He initially taught at a college but later got job in Aligarh University.ⁱⁱⁱ Thus it may be concluded that many of his later interests and ideas were developed in his early years. After serving at Aligarh for many years, he migrated to Pakistan after its creation.^{iv} He was selected as General Secretary of Pakistan Historical Society in 1953 and remained associated with it throughout the rest of his life.^v Pakistan Historical Society provided a forum to Moinul Haq which

shifted his energies from teaching to extensive research. He not only worked personally but also initiated various projects and conferences on historical studies which promoted the cause of the discipline of history in Pakistan.^{vi}

The present study aims at doing a historiographical analysis of Moinul Haq's historical writings. It will identify the nature and kinds of historical writings produced by Moinul Haq along with exploring his style of writing. The research will thus mainly explore how Moinul Haq developed his argument and what kind of data was used to support it? Finally the study aims at investigating the influence of time and space and life experiences of Moinul Haq on his historical writings.

The research has been conducted while mainly relying on the historical works produced by Moinul Haq along with consulting his autobiography. Data has been analyzed by exploring the main components of historiography including content, style and framework of his writings. None of the studies have yet explored the historiography of Moinul Haq although an obituary has been written and published to honor his services. This obituary has highlighted the services of Moinul Haq^{vii} as Secretary of Pakistan Historical Society and his role and contribution in promoting historical research and studies. Although this obituary talks about his historical works but it has only mentioned the names of a few works and does not provide any detail about the content, style and framework of his writings.

History and Historiography

History has always remained a complicated discipline as far as its methodology is concerned. Historical evolution of the discipline of history is not unanimous in all times and societies. Different societies have seen the evolution of the discipline in a slightly different manner. For instance the ancient Greek culture was familiar with the discipline by the name of *Historia* which means “to inquire something.” Thus the Greek culture looked at history as something which needs to be inquired or investigated. The approach of the Greeks towards the historical knowledge thus was very critical. For instance, Herodotus tried to explore the nature of war between Greek and Persian by asking questions about several aspects of that war and finding the answers from different accounts of eyewitness.^{viii}

Similarly if one sees the origin and development of history in Chinese culture, it has taken a slightly different course. Most of the earliest works in Chinese history were based on official records. Around 1st century AD, Sima Qian wrote *Shiji* (Records of the Historian).^{ix} The famous Spring and Autumn Annals by Confucius also focused on maintaining records of events. In 771 BC, in Zhou Dynasty *Da Shi* was the title of an official historian which means the keeper of the Records of Great Events.^x Thus the works of history in China was initially largely associated with maintaining records of events. Likewise, the Muslims also developed their epistemology regarding history in a gradual process. From the amalgamation of *maghazi*, genealogy, *hadith* and poetry developed a consciousness about history. This history was initially called as *khabar/akhbar* and later on as *tarikh*. *Khabar*

literally means news and *tarikh* literally means date. Thus the Muslim's concept of history was associated with the concept of chronology and narrating the events.^{xi}

In the modern west, the debates regarding the methodology of history started particularly after Renaissance. From Rene Descartes who challenged the reliability of the methods of research of history to positivism and its impact on histories and then to idealism and relativism leading to post-modernism, the historians practically have not come upon a unanimous conclusion regarding the methodology of history. Similarly the debates about the role of historian in writing history, writing objective history, adopting problem-oriented or source-oriented approach are ongoing discussions with no final conclusions.^{xii}

It apparently seems that there is nothing common about the discipline of history except the units of time and space, however these units actually are very significant. From time and space derives the concept of the process of history dealt by almost all historians in one way or the other. Consciously or unconsciously, even the simple narrator of events is dealing with the process of history. Another commonality among the historians actually distinguishes them from the scholars of literature as all histories are based on available contemporary written or material sources of the concerned periods. It again is a debatable issue how data should be collected from these sources.

Rafia Riaz

Apart from these commonalities, the historians operate in a very broad epistemological framework. Thus the main objective of historiography is to highlight the differences in the approach and outlook of one historian from another. Historiography is a critical study of the historical works that can raise questions on the authenticity and reliability of the historical work along with critically looking at the style, content and framework of the historian. The work of historiography can criticize and can invalidate a work of history on the basis of weak sources, or on the basis of unsound interpretation due to certain biases. However its main objective is to highlight the differences of opinions and explore how and why various historians depict the same historical events differently. The historian working on historiography further highlights the impact of time and space on the writings of history and the human, cultural, linguistic limitations including certain ideological biases that frames the mind of a historian. Thus the work of historiography in the field of history acts as a tool to maintain and ensure authenticity and verification of knowledge. This process helps in deeply understanding some historical phenomenon and on the basis of this understanding, occasionally the older accepted interpretations are renounced and the historians are encouraged to find out new avenues and perspectives by reinterpretation.

Moinul Haq: Early Life and Framework

The present study is an attempt to analyze the writings of Moinul Haq in order to explore the content, style and framework of his writings. His thoughts were shaped by the experiences of his early life, by the creation of Pakistan which he witnessed himself and by the initial years of Pakistan in which he lived. Before analyzing his historiography, let's have a brief look at his career as a historian.

Moinul Haq enjoyed a long period of active academic life as his first book was published in 1947 and his last work was published in 1997, though Moinul Haq himself had died in 1989 just after completing the draft of this book. A prolific writer, Moinul Haq has to his credit a large number of publications. The quantity of work can initially amaze and later on motivate his readers. A maturity of thought and an understanding of historical process can be easily identified in the historical works of Moinul Haq. Although he developed his specializations in a specific era of history however he never restricted himself. He dared to expand his area of interest to a very wide range, starting from early Islam to Medieval India and then to British India and finally to the Pakistan movement. The actual sequence of his writings reveals an interesting pattern. He started his career from translating *Seerat-i-Sadiq*^{xiii} and ended his career on writing *Muhammad S.A.S.: Life and Times: A Historical Interpretation*, however he was academically a medievalist, the period on which he produced two scholarly translations (one published in 1969 and the other in 1975) and a few books. The last of his work *Muhammad S.A.S.: Life and Times: A Historical Interpretation*^{xiv} was more a work of

historiography and contains a critique of Orientalists in the light of available primary and Muslim sources. This work not only discloses Moinul Haq's skills in history, his maturity but also surprises us with the very vast number of readings in Urdu, English, Persian, and Arabic that Moinul Haq had gone through for this writing.

As was evident from his writings, Moinul Haq was an ideologue. The concept of the creation of Pakistan and two nation theory was deeply embedded in his thoughts and was reflected in his writings. Similarly, when writing about the Muslims and the British, his sympathies were with the Muslims, infact he wrote from their perspective. Likewise when he was writing about Aurangzīb, he never tried to hide his personal fondness for the prince. He has very openly and boldly taken positions in favor of his perspective and many of his writings have clearly narrated the hypothesis of the study in the beginning reflecting his ideological views. Instead of collecting facts and drawing conclusions from them, Moinul Haq picked up those facts which supported his views and position. In a few of his writings, he even didn't state facts, instead developed his argument on the basis of his understanding of history and his vast acquaintance with the historical sources. However it seems natural to make such choices for a historian who studied and taught at Aligarh and had supported Muslim League not only ideologically but also practically.^{xv}

His Writings

Moinul Haq had an interest in writing since his student life and as a student he helped one of his teachers in the editing of a Persian work of Amir Khusraw.^{xvi} This left a deep mark on his thought and he not only started his career with a work of translation but produced excellent quality translations in his career. His works can be roughly divided into many categories. His personal interests combined with the aims of Pakistan Historical society, he produced valuable translations as well as edited many works.

Translations and Edited Works

Moinul Haq translated many works, some of them from Urdu to English and later on some of them were translated from Persian to Urdu and English. The works translated from Persian demonstrates his academic expertise and interest which was more titled towards Medieval and Early Modern India. He knew Persian very well and translated *Tārīkh-i-Fīroz Shāhi* in Urdu and some portions of *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb* dealing with the reign of ‘Ālamgīr in *English*. In these translations, he made his own contributions by adding a very crisp and insightful introduction containing historiographical debates about the concerned translated works and their authors.^{xvii} In the translation of *Tārīkh-i-Fīroz Shāhi*, Moinul Haq has titled the introduction as *Muqaddima*. In the *Muqaddima*, Moin traced the personal life of Baranī from all available contemporary sources^{xviii}, then tried to conceptualize Baranī’s concept of History^{xix} before he could discuss his style of writing and the sources he used.^{xx}

Likewise, while translating portions of *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Moin has written an introduction and titled the work as *Khafī Khan's History of 'Alamgir*. He has started the discussion by giving some details about the life of the author and assessing the value and importance of Khāfī Khān's work along with commenting that Khāfī Khān in general disliked 'Ālamgīr and his policies, the feelings he was "unable to completely suppress" and "expressed them in the form of mild satires".^{xxi}In the second part of introduction, he has given his own comments about the life and policies of 'Ālamgīr in the light of other available sources on 'Ālamgīr and a few collection of 'Ālamgīr 's letter which were published then, "to help the reader in assessing the statements and remarks of Khāfī Khān".^{xxii}In 1962, he wrote *Prince Awrangzib* which means he already had done an extensive research on Aurangzīb 'Ālamgīr and in the light of his earlier study; he was able to make a scholarly comment in the introduction of the translation of *Khafī Khan's History of 'Alamgir*. He strongly argued that 'Ālamgīr was a capable leader who tried to balance his responsibilities "to reform the Muslim society" and administer the empire with non-Muslim majority.^{xxiii}However the whole discussion of Moinul Haq focused on the personal piety and good nature of Aurengzīb and he also talked about the time that 'Ālamgīr devoted to statecraft, however he did not use any facts and figures to prove that he was an able administrator. There was no mention of his achievements as an emperor or the effects of his reforms on the society. In both of these introductions, Moinul Haq has frequently used scattered facts to connect and link the missing ones. For instance the

date of birth of Khāfī Khān, the author of *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* was not known and Moinul Haq tried to make a learned conjecture about Khāfī Khān's date of birth by one of his statements containing two other dates.^{xxiv}

Another kind of publications by Moinul Haq is his edited works. For instance he edited *Muhammad Ali: Life and Works*, a book in which several articles about Muhammad Ali Johar had been compiled together. Moinul Haq wrote the introduction of this book himself just like the translated works.^{xxv} Likewise he edited Ibn-i-Khallikān's famous work *Wafayat-ul-Ayan*. This was a different kind of editing. The work was originally translated from Arabic into English by M. D. Slane, however Pakistan Historical Society decided to add some details in the form of Editor's footnotes after making a comparison of this English translation with the autograph MS. of Ibn Khallikān.^{xxvi} Apart from these books, he also compiled the proceedings of several conferences.^{xxvii}

Books and Articles

His written work can be further divided into two categories. One kind of books was purely scholarly writings in which the modern style of referencing was used and rare primary sources were cited to support the argument. The second kind of works were produced for the general reader and there were very few citation although the works were produced after a thorough study of the primary sources and reflected the grip and command of Moinul Haq on those sources.

Scholarly Writings

The word scholarly has been used here to distinguish one kind of Moinul Haq's work from another. It never means that the other works of Moinul Haq were of less value. The difference actually was in the style of writing. The scholarly works are written for a specific group of audience who are interested to read researches on specific topics. Three books have been included in this category. Two of them were very focused and targeted a specific topic while the scope of third book was a little broader, however all of these books were written with extensive referencing from primary sources. These works were published between 1945-1968 and they have been analyzed below according to the quality of their scholarly standard.

One of his highly credible and most amusing academic work, written in the mid of his career is *The Great Revolution of 1857*^{xxviii}. The forward of this book includes a literature review which highlights the weaknesses of already available literature. He significantly highlighted that the works of English authors cannot represent the viewpoint of locals and then presented his objective which is to provide the "other side of the picture" that is from the perspective of Indians. He also argued that the works of Indians and Pakistani authors are not very comprehensive on this issue. Moinul Haq aimed at providing a "detailed and objective account of the Revolution".^{xxix} In this book, Moinul Haq has discussed minute details of Revolution including its outbreak, the events of 10 and 11 May, the entry of Bahadur Shah and the

organization of revolutionary armies. Furthermore he has chronologically discussed the events of the fall of Delhi and consequently the rest of the areas of India. Moinul Haq has collected very rare and valuable information in this book. Chapter 3 particularly talks about a few Muslim leaders of the Revolution who are not very well-known. For instance Moinul Haq has introduced us with Sayyid Ahmed Allah Shah about whom he has specifically mentioned that “it is a great pity that we have very meagre information about the life and activities of this valiant fighter”.^{xxx} He has mentioned several others as well for instance Mawlawi Sarfaraz Ali, Mawlawi Liaqat Ali and Azim Allah Khan.^{xxxii}

In order to give the other side of the picture, Moinul Haq rejected the theory of Mutiny in a systematic and logical way. With references from letters and official documents, he argued that it was the company who paid homage and offered to pay Paishkash (an amount paid by different nobles and rulers to the Mughal Emperor as a tax and a symbol of his supreme authority) to the Mughal emperor and theoretically it was the Emperor who allowed the company to rule Indian territory. Thus Moin concluded that “judged from a strictly constitutional point of view the ‘Mutiny’ was a rebellion of the Company’s authorities against their de jure Sovereign.”^{xxxiii} Moreover Moinul Haq has highlighted the differences of administrative structure and spirit of the Muslim rule and the British. British had become exploitators, had kept extremely high tax rates, and had discouraged local industry on the cost of promoting British products. The Muslims

had kept low tax rates and that too was “spent in the sub-continent”.^{xxxiii}

Another of a highly credible and well-researched work *A Short History of the Delhi Sultanate*^{xxxiv} was written by consulting original Persian sources. The book was written in the beginning of academic career of Moinul Haq and was published in 1945 from Aligarh. It was the time when Moinul Haq was a lecturer of History at Muslim University, Aligarh. Moinul Haq offered an entirely new interpretation of the history of Sultanate based on original Persian sources. At that time when textbooks were claiming Balban as an irresponsible despot, Alauddin as a tyrant and Muhammad bin Tughlaq as mad,^{xxxv} it was a remarkable achievement of Moinul Haq and of Aligarh University to produce a treatise that challenged the established and extremely pessimist views on the history of sultanate. He argued that the law of Quran was supreme in the sultanate and tried to remove many misconceptions.^{xxxvi}

Moinul Haq has portrayed Balban as a wise monarch who effectively controlled his nobility and crushed all internal rebellions along with securing border from the danger of Mongols. While concluding his narration about the rule of Balban, Moinul Haq wrote, “Balban’s government was a fine example of benevolent despotism in which the king had the sole responsibility of safeguarding the interests of his subjects.”^{xxxvii} Moinul Haq justified the strictness of Balaban and Alauddin towards the rebels of the state and stated that “Balban and Alauddin inflicted harsh punishments on the offenders, but they had no other alternative, for they ill afford to permit the growth of

even minor troubles in the face of this external danger (means Mongols]”^{xxxviii} Moinul Haq has further thrown light on the economic and administrative reforms of Alauddin Khilji.^{xxxix} Negating the views of twentieth century historians about Muhammad bin Tughluq who call him a mad tyrant, Moinul Haq considered him as “one of the most gifted of Indian monarchs” whose “unpopularity was due to his original scheme and ideas” which were far advanced for his age.^{xl}

Moinul Haq argued that the conquest of Sind resulted in constant interaction of the local people with Arabs and gradually resulted in their conversion to Islam. Thus at the time of Turks invasion, Sind was a predominantly Muslim area.^{xli} Moinul Haq has described the role of Pre-Muslim dynasties of India, achievements of Mahmud of Ghazna and Shihabuddin of Ghor before exploring the history of Sultans. Apart from writing political history, Moinul Haq also wrote a chapter on “Government and society” and “Art and Literature”.

The conclusions drawn by Moinul Haq may not seem new to us today however in 1945 the history of sultanate was least explored. This book reflects the identity consciousness of the Muslims which was developed in political and social realms and can also be seen in historiography in which a unique style was introduced beginning from Maulana Shibli Naumani. The history of the Muslims of India under British rule was written under specific mindset.

Thus the style of Moinul Haq was to develop an argument before the data collection and to collect that data which could support his argument. These arguments were developed according to the framework of Moinul Haq. In above mentioned books, he has clearly shown his affiliation and likeness towards the Muslims of India whom he wanted to portray positively. His style also reflects a response of Muslim historians towards the British efforts of interpreting and distorting the Muslim history under an imperial design. The next academic work he produced again was supported with excessive primary sources, but followed the same style. This book however was not a reflection of Muslims image against the British. This was actually an expression of two schools of thought within the Muslims, one favoring excessive merger of Hindus and Muslims under the theme of unity of the universe and the other focused on the exclusive identity of the Muslims which they demanded to preserve. The work was titled as *Prince Awrangzīb: A Study* and the book was actually written to be treated as an introduction to the English translation of *Muntakhab*. The book was published in 1962. Although the work is solely written on the life and activities of Awrangzīb as a prince however the excessive fondness of Moinul Haq for Prince Awrangzīb and his extreme dislike of Dārā Shikoh was revealed throughout the study. Moinul Haq claimed about Awrangzīb and Dārā that “their approach to religion and their outlook on life” was different.^{xliii} According to Moinul Haq, Dārā was a believer of Wahdat-ul-Wujūd and Awrangzīb was an orthodox Muslim.^{xliiii} Looking at the practical experiences of Moin in life particularly his attachment

with Muslim League which favored Muslim exclusivist identity, it seems very obvious that he would favor the position of Awrangzīb against Dārā. His fondness for Awrangzīb was also visible in his early years. In his biography he has narrated an incident of his college years when one of his professors of History criticized the character of Awrangzīb ‘Ālamgīr and Moin interrupted him to tell that his comments are objectionable.^{xliv} Thus Moinul Haq in his introduction has very openly taken position in support of Prince Awrangzīb whom he called “exceptionally pious in his conduct, courteous in his behavior and sympathetic in his dealings” against Dārā Shikoh who was portrayed as “proud, haughty and vain, a typical wine-drinking, pleasure-seeking” prince who was also trying to “pose as a mystic” and was “engaged in conspiracies and plans to secure the Peacock throne”.^{xlv}

The book is a narration of the early life of Awrangzīb written in the light of Primary sources. It covers different military campaigns headed by Awrangzīb and his career as governor at different places. The book highlights the administrative skills of Awrangzīb and his intelligence by which he dealt with all his challenges. The book had an abrupt end and there was no chapter of conclusion

General Readings

The next kind of works which were written by Moinul Haq were either written for general public or students or they contained general description of a lengthy time phase. These works can be distinguished from his scholarly writings as although these works reflect

Moinul Haq's extensive knowledge of the primary sources however the sources were not quoted occasionally.

One of the general works produced by Moinul Haq is *Islamic Thoughts and Movements in the Sub-Continent(711-1947)*^{xlvi}, written in the style of world histories as Moin wanted to give a connected and consolidated picture of the evolution of Islamic thought in the subcontinent and an account of movements which contributed to its development.^{xlvii} He was also aware of the drawbacks of this writing style and particularly commented that "more information and comments could have been added in some places", however, it was not possible as the "plan was to cover the entire field in a single volume"^{xlviii} Moinul Haq related Islamic thought with the development of Islamic law or *sharī'ah*. His main argument was that the supremacy of *sharī'ah* was generally accepted in practice and was never questioned in theory.^{xlix} He further argues that some of despotic rulers violated *sharī'ah* "but they were always regarded as defaulters"¹ Another significant aspect of Islamic thought in the subcontinent, according to Moinul Haq, was requirement and exercising of *Ijtihād*.^{li} He discusses the influence of *sufi* movement as part II of the introduction,^{lii} however the whole introduction is conceptually not linked. He has not established any connection between law and Sufism which he believes to be significant aspect of Islamic Thought and Movements.

The whole book contains very general information about different phases of Muslim intellectual thought in the sub-continent. The unit through which Moinul

Haq studied intellectual thought was personalities but Moinul Haq clarifies that these may not be mistaken as biographies.^{liii} One can easily identify asymmetry in the pattern of the book. Moinul Haq provided very little information about *Fiqh*, *Kalām* and *Falsafa* and concluded it in one chapter while the consequent five chapters talk in detail about Sufism in the subcontinent. The chapter on *Taşawwuf* is not only lengthy but has also initiated scholarly debate on the topic^{liv} which reveals his personal interest and expertise in Sufism. The idea was supported by the details of his life which he has narrated in his autobiography. His grandfather was a practicing *sūfī*^{lv} and his father and maternal uncles had close association with *ulema* and *sūfīā*’ of their time. Later on, when he shifted to the house of a landlord at Meerut to continue his studies, He also had close interaction with *sūfīā*’ and there were constant discussions on Sufism which in the words of Moin not only enhanced his information about it but only increased the eagerness to study about the life and times of *sūfīā*’.^{lvi} The articles that I could found written by Moinul Haque substantiate the idea as many of them were written on Sufism.^{lvii}

Moinul Haq has discussed Akbar’s *Dīn-i-Ilahī* as well as the influence of *sūfī* movement in the subsequent period and how orthodoxy influenced the Mughal court. Later, he described the role of Shah Walīullah taking it up to the modern period by discussing Syed Ahmed Khān, Amīr Ali, Shiblī and Iqbāl. The book provides an excellent survey of the intellectual thought of the sub-continent.

The next book which can be placed in this category is *Ideological basis of Pakistan*^{lviii}. In the introduction of the book, Moinul Haq has clearly elucidated his hypothesis and made clear that he will only present those “historical facts and forces” that “have a direct bearing on the growth of the idea that the Muslims were a nation (qawm) by themselves”.^{lix} As the book is meant for students and general readers as Moinul Haq has mentioned in his preface,^{lx} thus the arguments he developed were not occasionally supported by wide-ranging available factual data. One can find many sweeping statements without any proof, specially in the first chapter, but on close examination of Moinul Haq’s academic career, it becomes evident that since the book was published in 1982 and by that time, Moinul Haq had already done extensive research on many fields and the conclusions he drew from those researches were used in this book. He also occasionally refers to his earlier works for more details.^{lxi} Likewise he also refers the readers to see different volumes of *A History of the Freedom Movement*.^{lxii} The style of writing slightly change from second chapter onwards in which Moinul Haq uses the style of moderate to extensive referencing mainly from secondary sources.

Although Moinul Haq claimed to trace the evolution of the idea of a separate nation in the history of sub-continent, however he never tried to connect his argument with the data. His data actually is just a description of political history of sub-continent whose direct link has not been established with the idea of Muslims as a nation. Similarly although Moinul Haq claims to trace the Ideological basis of Pakistan from

711-1940 but he has completed the discussion from 711-1857 in just one chapter while the remaining four chapters cover the period from 1857-1947. The first chapter is a narrative of Muslim history starting from the conquest of Sindh, the mention of Mahmood of Ghazna and Muizz al-Din of Ghur, the history of Sultans of Delhi and Mughals, taking it up to the Revolution of 1857.^{lxiii} At the end of this chapter Moinul Haq argued that Muslims developed political consciousness as a consequence of the Revolution of 1857 and in his words, “T(t]hey (the Muslims] starting consolidating themselves and emerged in not a very distant future as a separate *qawm* (nation)”^{lxiv}, which makes the whole exercise of locating the ideological basis of Pakistan in period extending from 711-1857 as futile. The ideology of Pakistan which is two nation theory has not been explicitly explained anywhere in the book,^{lxv} however the rest of the four chapters threw light on the ideology of Pakistan by exploring the course of political history of the Muslims.

This was Moinul Haq’s view of looking at the history of Muslims in the subcontinent, a view which was developed in his early life and matured in the light of ideological stance of Muslim League. He became a formal member of Muslim League in 1938^{lxvi} and as a teacher of Aligarh Muslim University remained associated with and worked as a volunteer for Muslim League in the elections of 1940.^{lxvii}

**Translation of Ibn Sa‘d’s *Kitab al-Ṭabaqat al-Kabir*
and *Muhammad S.A.S.: Life and Times: A
Historical Interpretation: Works on Sīrah***

It can be assumed that around 1965, Moinul Haq developed his interest in Early Muslim History, particularly in *sīrah* and under the auspicious support of Pakistan Historical Society initiated a project of the translation of Ibn Sa‘d’s *Kitab al-Ṭabaqat al-Kabir* which was published in 1967 and 1972 in two volumes. This study not only developed an acute eagerness in Moinul Haq to work on *sīrah* but also introduced him with some of the very primary and significant sources on the history of *sīrah* writing. The introduction mentions references from other contemporary historical writers including al-Dhahabī, Ibn Hajr, Sīyūtī, Ibn Khallikān, al-Wāqidī, Hishām al-Kalbī.^{lxviii} Moinul Haq claims that he has translated the chain of transmitters along with every narration which can be seen throughout the work.^{lxix} He however has adopted a hard stance on al-Wāqidī and did not consider the narrations transmitted to Ibn Sa‘d by al-Wāqidī as reliable. He refers to the remark of Shiblī and endorsed that the “narrations based on the authority of al-Wāqidī should not be accepted without further investigation”, which is a very hard and critical stance indeed. There has been some criticism on al-Wāqidī mainly by the *Hadīth* writers but the historians have considered al-Wāqidī as reliable. Yasin Mazhar Saddiqi, an Indian scholar on *sīrah* has concluded in his discussion on the sources of *sīrah* that except Shibli and Suleiman Nadvi, all Urdu *sīrah* writers and critical evaluators of *sīrah* sources have declared al-Wāqidī as reliable.^{lxx}

The translation of Ibn Sa‘d has developed a desire in Moinul Haq to work on the life of the Holy Prophet PBUH, which he has called as “a long long-cherished

desire of mine!” in his preface after the completion of the project.^{lxxi} For *Muhammad S.A.S.: Life and Times: A Historical Interpretation*, Moinul Haq has not only extensively quoted Ibn Sa‘d but has borrowed a few aspects of his style too. As Ibn Sa‘d has discussed early life of the Holy Prophet PBUH in much detail, in the same way Moinul Haq also gave a lot of importance to the early life of the Holy Prophet PBUH and devoted although short but full chapter on “Marriage with Khadijah” in which he explored the minute details of Prophet’s trade partnership with Khadijah with its terms and conditions, his journey to Syria, some claims of the Orientalists and their refutation, details of their marriage and family life.^{lxxii} Similarly Moinul Haq has explored the Makkan life of the Holy Prophet PBUH in much detail which usually is ignored by the historians. Besides he has provided 55 short biographies of the early Muslims in the Makkan period^{lxxiii} which makes his style very unique and different from other *sīrah* writers in English.

Moinul Haq grip and command on Arabic primary sources can be seen evidently in the first chapter in which he started a historiographical discussion on early *sīrah* writers. Moinul Haq has done extensive research on several aspects of his work. He kept on engaging himself with the accusations and objections of the orientalist on several aspects of Prophet’s PBUH life and refuted them either with logical arguments or with the help of counter evidence. For instance he did not only mention that the word Ahmed can be found in Christian text, instead he tried to dig out the whole controversy amongst the Muslim and the Western writers. He quoted Abdullah Yusuf Ali

who has explained the word Periclytos or paracletos used in the Gospel of John which apply to the Holy Prophet PBUH. Afterwards he quoted Sale who negated that this word was used for Muhammad as this was mentioned in The Gospel of St. Barnabas which was originally written in Arabic and alterations were made in it. On this he accessed a translation of Gospel of Barnabus himself and refuted the objections of Sale on the authority of the introduction written in that particular translation.^{lxxiv}

Moinul Haq has similarly dealt with the Medinan life of the Holy Prophet PBUH in a very different framework. He devoted two chapters to the theme “Groundwork and the Basic principles of the Islamic Society”. First chapter deals with the political arrangement consisting of the constitution of Medina and the second chapter discussed religious and moral ordinances.^{lxxv} The later years were discussed under the well-accepted Muslim historiographical references of Badr, Uhud and Ditch to conquest of Khyber and victory of Makkah with one exception, a chapter written with the title of “Tabligh through Correspondence” on the letters sent to some neighboring chiefs.^{lxxvi} The last two chapters also does not directly seem to be a part of biography and deviates from the usual style of writing biographies as it deals with “The Structure and Spirit of the Islamic Faith”.^{lxxvii} Another important feature of the book is extensive and detailed notes given at the end of every chapter. The notes further explained about the events or people and reveal a keen interest and a good command of Moinul Haq on the subject.

Conclusion

Moinul Haq thus utilized his passion for history in a vigorous and fruitful way. Initially he was interested to pursue his teaching job, with which probably he could not have been as prolific as he was while serving with Pakistan Historical Society. Pakistan Historical Society not only provided him with a forum for enhancing his skills in his own area but also developed his interest in diverse fields of historical studies. This diversity broadens the outlook and understanding of Moinul Haq and he was able to employ his vast knowledge to produce deep and vast analysis with proper pretext and context. The society contributed much in diverting his interest particularly in early Muslim history on which he produced a very fine translation and a well researched book.

Moinul Haq strictly followed the relativist school of thought in writing history and in all of his historical works, he has taken his position in favor of a particular interpretation of history. Rest of the data collection and analysis always remained subservient to that main argument. Moinul Haq has never made extra efforts to prove his objectivity, he instead used those energies to prove his argument with the help of historical data, thus it was easier to understand and grasp the influences of time and space on the thoughts and framework of Moinul Haq.

Moinul Haq was an ideologically exclusivist Muslim, particularly due to his attachment with the politics of Muslim League, but who interestingly came from a *sufi* family. These two different dimensions of his personality were clearly evident in his writings. Due

Rafia Riaz

to his love for the *sufia*, he developed an academic interest in Sufism. It definitely would have raised many research questions in his mind; the answer of which were given in his researches on Sufism. On the other hand, being conscious of his identity as a Muslim was understandable in a time period when Hindus and Muslims were distinguishing them not only on the basis of religion but also on the basis of political differences. Thus in his works on Medieval India, he highlighted the achievements of the Muslims Sultans of Delhi. He made a choice of Aurangzīb, an exclusivist Muslim Mughal Emperor, for further extending his research in Medieval India. Obviously he defended and praised him. He further highlighted Muslim exclusivist approach while writing on War of 1857 and finding the roots of ideology of Pakistan in the history of sub-continent.

Moinul Haq thus believed that history can be seen from different perspectives and it was part of his mission to introduce the reader, particularly the Pakistani reader with the “other side of the picture”. He wanted to explore the history of the sub-continent from the perspective of Muslims which was a genuine effort by a loyal member of a newly independent community. Moreover, he should be acknowledged for his services for the promotion of historical studies and research in Pakistan, an endeavor which still needs a long way to go.

References

-
- i Syed Moinul Haq, *Moinbeeti*, (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1993), 63-4, 112,
- ii *Ibid.*, 112.
- iii *Ibid.*, 199.
- iv *Ibid.*, 242-3.
- v *Ibid.*, 262-3.
- vi See Moinul Haq's role and contribution in Pakistan Historical Society in "Obituary" in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*.
- vii" Obituary" in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. xxxvii (October 1989).
- viii Jennifer T. Roberts, *Herodotus: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2; For looking at the detailed accounts of research methods adopted by Herodotus see, Donald Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 55-75.
- ix Sima used historical records and other accounts to create history of the Han dynasty. Mark Csikszentmihalyi, ed and trans., *Readings in Han Chinese Thought* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), 89.
- x Qizhi Zhang, *An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture* (Xi'an: Springer, 2015), 354.
- xi For details of Muslim Historiography see, Rosenthal, Franz. *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968); A. A. Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, ed., and tr., Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

- xii There is a huge literature available dealing with these methodological problems. A few works for instance are, Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946); E.H.Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin, 1964); Elton, G. R. *The Practice of History* (New York: Crowell, 1967); Fernand Braudel, *On History*, tr., Sarah Matthews (London, University of Chicago, 1980) (the work was originally published in French in 1969); John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, London: Longman, 1984; Richard J. Evans, *In Defense of History* (New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1999); John Tosh, *Historians on History: An Anthology* (London: Longman, 2000); Marek Tamm, Peter Burke, *Debating New Approaches to History* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018); Also see Rafia Riaz and Amanullah Khan, “Developing a Research Design based on the Distinction of History from the Social Sciences” in *Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, vol. 12, no.1(January 2024): 93-117.
- xiii Nawab Sadr Yar Jung Bahadur, *Hazrat Abu Bakr: The First Caliph of Islam*, tr., Moinul-Haq (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1947).
- xiv Syed Moinul Haq, *Muhammad S.A.S.: Life and Times: A Historical Interpretation* (Karachi: Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, 1997).
^{xv}Moinul Haq got the membership of Muslim League and actively participated in the election campaign of League in 1946, Syed Moinul Haq, *Moinbeeti*, 221.
- xvi *Ibid.*, 171-2.
- xvii Moinul Haq, “Muqaddima” in Zia-ud-Din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Feroz Shahi*, translated by Syed Moinul Haq, 4th edition (1st edition 1969)(Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 2004), 1-34.
- xviii *Ibid.*, 1-7.
- xix *Ibid.*, 13-22.
- xx *Ibid.*, 23-32.

- xxi Moinul Haq, "Introduction" in Khafī Khan, *Khafī Khan's History of 'Alamgir* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1975), xv.
- xxii *Ibid.*, xvi-xvii.
- xxiii *Ibid.*, xix
- xxiv *Ibid.*, xiii.
- xxv Syed Moinul Haq, ed., *Mohamed Ali: Life and Works* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1978).
- xxvi Syed Moinul Haq, "Editor's Preface" in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayat-ul-Ayan wa Anba-ul-Abna-ul-Zaman*, tr., M. de. Slane and ed., Syed Moinul Haq (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1961), vii.
- xxvii For instance Syed Moinul Haq, ed., *First all Pakistan History Conference 1951* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1952), Syed Moinul Haq, ed., *The Proceedings of the Pakistan (fifth session) held at Khairpur 1955* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, n.d). A total of 16 history conferences were held by Syed Moinul Haq under Pakistan Historical Society. See "Obituary" in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*.
- xxviii Syed Moinul Haq, *The Great Revolution of 1857* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1968).
- xxix *Ibid.*, xiv-v.
- xxx *Ibid.*, p55, foot note 1.
- xxxi *Ibid.*, 63-5.
- xxxii *Ibid.*, 16.
- xxxiii *Ibid.*, 19-22.
- xxxiv Syed Moinul Haq, *A Short History of the Delhi Sultanate* (Aligarh: Muslim Educational Press, 1945).
- xxxv *Ibid.*, iii.
- xxxvi *Ibid.* iii, iv.
- xxxvii *Ibid.*, 107.
- xxxviii *Ibid.*, 119.
- xxxix *Ibid.*, 126-134.
- xl *Ibid.*, 148, 162.
- xli *Ibid.*, 12
- xliv Syed Moinul Haq, *Prince Awrangzīb: A Study* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1962), v.

^{xliii} Moinul Haq believed that Dārā was not a true follower of the philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Wujūd and only posed as its believer. He further argued that Dārā played havoc with *sūfī* doctrines particularly with Wahdat-ul-Wujūd and interpreted it “in a most irresponsible manner”. *Ibid.*, v, vii.

^{xliv} *Moinbeeti*, 110

^{xlv} *Prince Awrangzīb: A Study*, v, vii.

^{xvi} Syed Moinul Haq, *Islamic Thoughts and Movements in the Sub-Continent (711-1947)* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1979).

^{xlvii} *Ibid.*, xi.

^{xlviii} *Ibid.*, xi.

^{xlix} *Ibid.*, xv-xvi.

^l *Ibid.*, xv.

^{li} *Ibid.*, xiv

^{lii} *Ibid.*, xix.

^{liii} *Ibid.*, xii.

^{liv} *Ibid.*, 78-107.

^{lv} *Moinbeeti*, 83

^{lvi} *Moinbeeti*, 95-96.

^{lvii} For instance see, Syed Moinul Haq, “Early Sufi Shaykhs of the Subcontinent”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* (Karachi) vol. xxii, part 1 (January 1974): pp 1-17; “The Origin and Growth of Sufism (A Brief Survey)”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* (Karachi) vol. xxi, part II (April 1973): pp 79-108; “Rise and Expansion of the Chishtis in the Subcontinent (1)”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* (Karachi) vol. xxii, part III (July 1974): pp 157-81; “Rise and Expansion of the Chishtis in the Subcontinent (II)”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* (Karachi) vol. xxii, part iv (October 1974): pp 207-48; “The Suhrawardīs”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* (Karachi) vol. xxiii, part ii (April 1975): pp 71-103.

^{lviii} Syed Moinul Haq, *Ideological Basis of Pakistan 711-1947* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1982).

^{lix} *Ibid.*, 1.

^{lx} *Ibid.*, v.

^{lxi} *Ibid.*, 49, footnote 1, 79, note 2.

^{lxii} *Ibid.*, 68, 81,82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 93, 114, 115, 122

^{lxiii} *Ibid.*, 5-48.

^{lxiv} *Ibid.*, 711-1947, 48.

^{lxv} However Two Nation Theory has been beautifully explained in a historical context in Moinbeeti. See *Moinbeeti*, 236-239.

^{lxvi} *Moinbeeti*, 233.

^{lxvii} *Moinbeeti*,221.

^{lxviii} Moin ul Haq, Introduction” in Ibn Sa‘d’s *Kitab al-Ṭabaqat al-Kabir* (New Delhi:

Kitab Bhavan, n.d), xix-xxiii.

^{lxix} *Ibid.*, xxii-xxiii.

^{lxx} Yasin Mazhar Saddiqi, *Khuṭbāt-i-Sīrat: Maṣādar-i-Sīrat ka Tajzīāti Muṭāla* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 2017), 12.

^{lxxi} *Muhammad S.A.S.: Life and Times: A Historical Interpretation*, vii.

^{lxxii} *Ibid.*, 93-103.

^{lxxiii} *Ibid.*, 112-138.

^{lxxiv} *Ibid.*, 78-81; Also see, 94-5.

^{lxxv} *Ibid.*, 250-290.

^{lxxvi} *Ibid.*, 421-433.

^{lxxvii} *Ibid.*, 571-616.