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UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

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Ramwari: A village without a road

Imran Malik | Ganderbal

Ramwari, a far flung village in Ganderbal district, craves for basic road facility.

Its connectivity with Srinagar-Leh National Highway which runs parallel to it would mean a better quality of life for its residents.

Though in 2014, PMGSY initiated the construction of a road and the bridge across the riverside but that is still incomplete.

Currently, people use wooden foot bridge to reach this other side of the river.

Shabir Ahmad Khan, a local resident said, "Due to heavy snowfall in winters there is tremendous increase in our difficulties."

"Recently a house completely got damaged in a fire incident. Fire and emergency services were unable to reach the spot due to lack of road facility. It resulted in loss of property worth lakhs," another youth, Aasif Ahmad Hajam revealed.

Demanding the completion of bridge and road as soon possible, Sarpanch of Gund-B, Ghulam. Nabi Kollu said, "If someone falls sick we have to carry the patient on our shoulders and cover the

distance of 3 to 4 kms to reach PHC Gund."

When this issue was brought into the notice of Imran Ali, AEE PMGSY subdivision Kangan, he said, "Srinagar-Leh transmission line was one of the barrier and secondly, there was land compensation issue which delayed its work. Both the issues have been sorted out and its work will resume as soon as the weather gets favourable."

"The completion of bridge is expected in September 2020 but its road may take further time as we have to remove some structures coming in the way," The official further added.

KU organises workshop on Qualitative Assurance in Open and Distance Learning

Humaira Nabi | Srinagar

The University of Kashmir's Directorate of Distance Education Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) cell organised a workshop on 'Qualitative Assurance in Open and Distance Learning.'

In the presidential address, Prof Mushtaq Ahmad, Dean School Of Open Learning highlighted the UGC-DEB ODL Regulations (2017) and its implications on Distance Education.

Prof Tariq Ahmad Chisti, Director Distance Education shared case studies related to Distance Education with respective Liaison officers and stressed upon them to think in creative and innovative lines. Liaison Officers from respective centres shared their experiences and expressed their commitments in providing excellent student support services.

Dr Aneeda Jan, Assistant Professor, School of Law, KU conducted the proceedings of the workshop. Dr Habbibullah Shah, Assistant Professor Department of Education, University of Kashmir highlighted the objectives of the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) cell and the tangible steps taken by the Directorate



in this direction.

In the conclusion, detailed feedback related to various quality parameters were received from participants in order to chalk out an innovative strategy for re-engineering the Distance Education.

Dr Showkat Rasheed Wani, Assistant Prof Department of Education, KU presented a comprehensive workshop report followed by vote of thanks by Dr Syed Ishfaq Ahmad Shah, Assistant Professor Department of Education, University of Kashmir.



Historical Mughal road to be an all-weather route

Shaheen Qayoom | Shopian

With the approval of the much awaited tunnel on the historic Mughal road by the Central Government, the Mughal road is all set to be an all weather route now

The ambitious project had not seen any progress for a decade despite repeated assurances by the government. But in the recent development steps have been taken up for a detailed project report of the proposed seven kilometres Mughal road tunnel between Zaznar and Chatapaani.

The tunnel would make it an all-weather road linking it with the rest of the country. This tunnel would reduce distance by at least 22 kilometres between Kashmir and Jammu.

Due to heavy snowfall the Mughal road remains closed from December to April every year. After the completion of the tunnel, the road would be an alternative to Srinagar Jammu National Highway which often remains closed during winters due to landslides. The business in Kashmir valley also suffers a huge loss due to the closure of the National Highway.

The people of Pir Panchal and southern districts of valley are eager to see this project accomplished

Shabir Ahmad, a local resident said, "We have been waiting for long to see this project in its full-fledged form. It will benefit us and our problems of traveling during winters will be reduced."

Another resident and a business man, Nazir Mir said, "There is a huge loss in our business when the road gets blocked in winters, but this project may lessen our miseries once it is completed."

We have been waiting for long to see this project in its full-fledged form. It will benefit us and our problems of traveling during winters will be reduced.



Book Review

Broken WINGS

The tender story of love that beats desperately against the taboos of Oriental tradition

Asif Khan

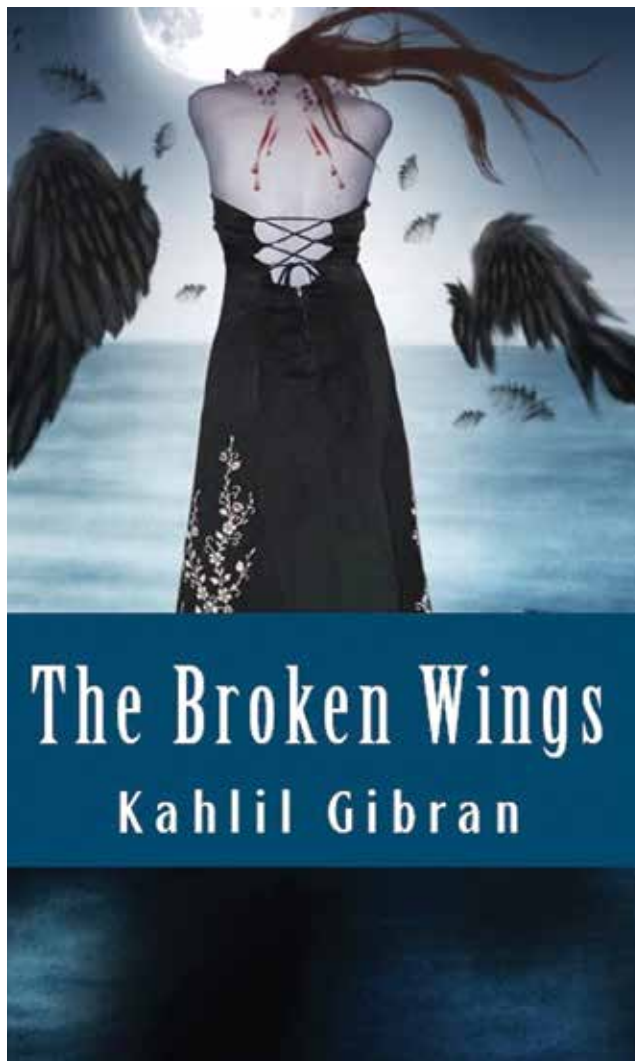
Broken wings is a tragic love story of 20th century set in Beirut written by Kahlil Gibran, a Lebanese-American writer, poet, visual artist and philosopher. His other notable works are The Prophet and Madman. The Prophet was written way back in 1923 and has been translated in more than 100 languages. Broken wings, was originally written in Arabic and was published in 1912 by the printing house of the periodical Meerat-ul-Gharib in New York. It was also adopted into a Lebanese film in 1962.

A young woman Selma Karamy is betrothed to a prominent religious man's nephew. The protagonist Kahlil Gibran falls in love with Selma Karamy. They began to meet in secret however, they are discovered and Selma is forbidden to leave her house breaking their hopes and hearts.

This piece of art is no doubt one of the finest works of the Gibran. He takes readers along with himself through different lanes of a typical catholic society dominated by church or clergy. And while doing so, the author reflects upon different problems or evils predominant in that era.

One of them for example, would be the reputation and power of the authoritarian clergy or church which dictated terms of living for the people. Selma Karamy was forced to marry the nephew of the priest Mansour Bey Galib despite of his ill character just because he belonged to the cleric family.

In the same manner the author has reflected upon the hardships and misery which a woman had to face at that time. Selma was forced to marry a person whom she had never loved. She was forced to love a person whom



the hidden secrets of her heart because they look upon her from behind the sexual veil and see nothing but externals: they look upon her through the magnifying glass of hatefulness and find nothing except weakness and submission."

The book can also be seen as a revolt against Catholicism and patriarchy which has dominated the society right from that time till now in one form or the other. The questions which the author has tried to raise still hold on to their validity even in today's world.

The choice of words by the authors is commendable, it feels that every word you read intoxicates and pushes you to read more. Every word in the book is loud enough to reverberate in your brain. It feels as if there is a story behind every word written in the book. You would always feel refreshing whenever you would take this book in hand. The spiritual wave accompanies as you move forward in the book. Some of

she had never wanted to be with. And after not being able to conceive a child she became target of justified domestic violence, only because it came from the clergy family in which she was married. And to my surprise the condition of women in our society from that era till now hasn't changed much. Women are still the target of domestic violence whose role has been restricted to help men continue their race. The dominance of males is strongly put to question by the author as is evident from this very line,

"The poets and writers are trying to understand the reality of woman, but up to this day they have not understood

my favorite lines from the book would be:

"Love is the only flower that grows and blossoms without the aid of seasons."

"The thirst of soul is sweeter than the wine of material things, and the fear of spirit is dearer than the security of the body."

This book has the power to make you write. You would definitely feel ecstatic after reading out this artistic piece and come to know about the hidden meanings of love. I would recommend this book to everyone especially because it now comes with total collection of author's works.



In Search of Prophet

The quest of an orphan boy to meet the Prophet of time

Umer Mukhtar

‘These are history’, Salik’s father would say to him looking at his poems. It is vital for every one of us who wants to preserve the truth, to pass it on accurately and in the right spirit’.

Unearthing the untold stories about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and presenting glimpses from the life of an orphan boy, Salek. *In Search of Prophet* presents the quest of this orphan boy to meet the Prophet of time beautifully in 112 pages. From the miracles depicting the speciality of Muhammad (SAW) to his sermon on the great hills, the author tries to present every detail which is required by the reader to further his knowledge. Written by Shahrukh Husain and Samira Shackle, this book is a creative factional account of Salek who was

guided by his father (famously known as Al-Shair among his close circles to know about a man who was known as “The Last Prophet.” The latest edition of the book is published by Penguin India in 2010 and had gone on to become the international bestseller in 2011 among Islamic readers.

The author has given a vivid description of the fictional characters of Salek and his father, who was obsessed to collect stories about Prophet Muhammad, despite being a rich man’s son Salek’s father left his desires to write about a man, he never met. The author has sensitively portrayed the agony of a son (Salek) who never acquired the love of his father except for few poems, stories collected by him, and a command, which was to meet the Prophet. The book takes a sudden turn when Salek has his first encounter with the Prophet who was delivering the

sermon on the great hills of Makkah.

The reader is involved throughout by the genius art of storytelling of the authors evident in the book, as the way, when Salek finds his way into the house of an old couple Sadea and Harith. The interest of a reader is further provoked when the old couple is visited by prominent personalities like Anas Ibn Malek, who provides an insider’s detail into the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The author further grabs the attention of the readers by giving the account of first revelation, the misadventure of Abu Jahl, two Holy Battles and lastly the expedition to Makkah. This book besides being a part of Islamic History also shows the struggles of two orphans trying to reach their destiny.

The book is a must read for everyone interested in knowing about Islam.

Prisoners of Paradise

An unusual love saga, this treatise explores the lives of two teenagers

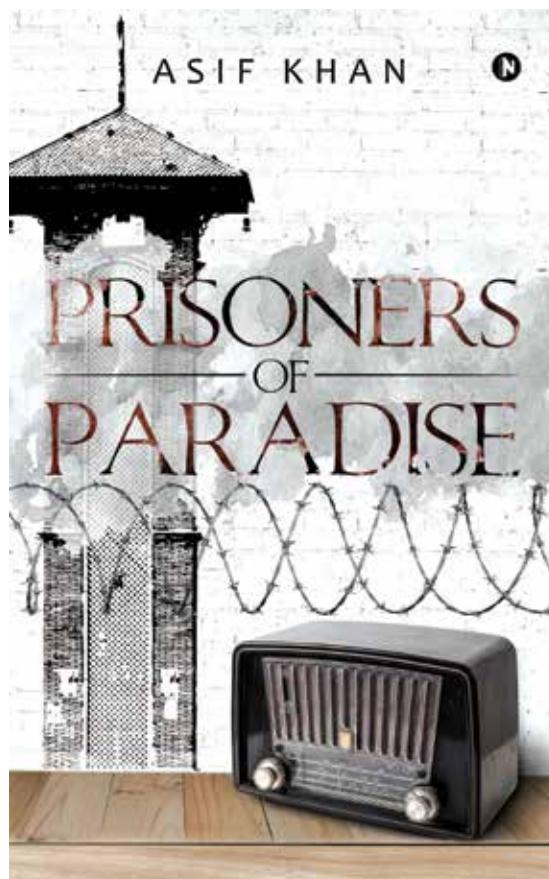
Qaiser Amin

Some books leave an imprint on your mind; this is surely one among them.

Published by Notion express in 2018, the book *Prisoners of Paradise* is an unusual emotional love saga of the two lovelorn teenagers, by a young author, Asif Khan. The book is a work of fiction set in the unrest of 2016.

The book is about two Kashmiri teenagers, Zain and Zara, who meet each other on social media and ultimately fall in love with one another. Though they haven’t seen each other but have every intention to see each other. They decide to meet on Eid-ul-Fitr but destiny has its own way of dealing with the things as unrest and tension grips the valley after the news of the killing of one of the top militants. People start panicking and throng to streets to protest against the killing. As a result they aren’t able to meet as they get separated amidst chaos.

Everything in the valley is put under siege including mobile networks. The story takes us close to Zara by highlighting her problems caused by this abrupt separation from her beloved. Zain and Zara become soft victims of conflict



and the author has beautifully taken us through the different phases Zara and Zain go through.

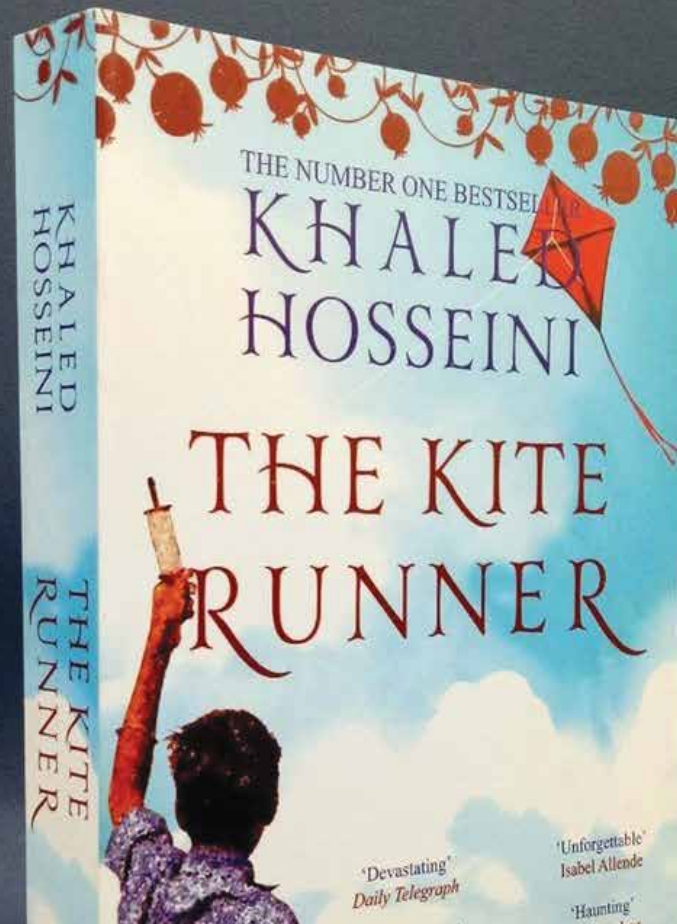
The book has been written in a lucid

language and the description of scenes is such that the local readers can easily relate to them. The Lal Chowk scene is one amongst many other beautifully crafted scenes, wherein Zain and Zara are under a single roof but yet unable to meet each other.

The raw poetic lines completely match with the situations and melt ones heart. The mentioning of loudspeakers used for protests and the effect which it has on Zara’s psyche is again one important scene in the book.

The book will keep your eyes wet throughout and would force you to finish reading it in a single sitting. It is the first regional book which has dared to touch the other side of the conflict and has highlighted the psychological issues of the conflict on the young generation. The book will surely be an asset to Kashmiri parents who need to talk to their children in times of any 2016 like situation.

The book is already very popular among the young generation especially the teenagers. It has also been on the list of the bestselling books in Kashmir. The book is surely a grab for the first time readers and definitely deserves a place in one’s reading list.



Book Review

KITE RUNNER

An unforgettable, heartbreaking story of unseemly friendship

Umer Mukhtar

The Kite Runner is an emotional novel by Khaled Hosseini which describes the lives of two kids Amir and his closest friend Hassan. Khalid Hussani explores the culture and life of people in Afghanistan and also visits some dark corners of the Afghan society, including the ill treatment given to its Hazara Community. Every character and development in this book opens a new chapter of happenings which interests the readers especially, the hunt for the missing child keeps the readers curious. The first part of this book covers the trauma faced by children amid the raging conflict in Afghanistan. The author has artistically presented the life of two happy children (Amir and Hassan) who used to play in the narrow markets of Afghanistan. Depicting the struggle of a father to protect his son, the author gives an emotional touch to this book while a son and his father is seen trying to make a run for their lives resulting in an exodus. Khaled Hosseini has covered wide notional ground in this book from a father's quest to protect his son and to a son's concern for his father's health, everything in this book is seen holding a good balance.

This novel not only witnesses the war in Afghanistan but the loss of a friend, honour of a child, love of a father and revenge for a friend which makes it a good mix for readers.

Khalid Hosseini uses a very simple language throughout. So it could be a good pick for the beginners. I recommended this book for everyone who want to start reading and know about the culture of Afghanistan.

Hakeem Farshita

Kite Runner tells the story of Amir and Hassan, the closest friends as good as brothers and also experts in the art of kite flying. The story is set up in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan and one year while participating in the local kite fighting tournament, a popular Afghan past time, both of them try harder to win the competition as for Amir this is his only hope of winning his father's love. But just like the kite battling in the sky, war comes to Afghanistan and the country becomes an extremely dangerous place.

In war people are often forced to make great sacrifices and the young Amir himself commits an act of betrayal towards his best friend Hassan which haunts him for the rest of his life. Amir and his father are forced to leave Afghanistan for America and The Kite Runner becomes the story of Amir's quest for redemption- righting the wrong's he committed years ago as a boy in Kabul.

The story is fast paced and introduced me to the world of Afghan life which is strange, fascinating and yet oddly familiar at the same time.

Hosseini's writing finds a great balance between being clear and yet powerful, not only is the story itself brilliantly constructed but the book also explores the very art of storytelling. Amir himself becomes a writer and he reflects on his experiences in the story as though his life itself were a piece of fiction.

I think the best thing about the kite runner is its sense of fate and justice, of good over coming evil despite all odds. The message behind the very ending could be interpreted differently by different readers but personally I felt that it offers a small sense of hope for both the future of its characters and perhaps for war torn Afghanistan as well. I would recommend this to all as a worth reading novel.



Web series
review

The Family Man

Dissecting subcontinental geo-politics, Raj and DK's *The Family Man* bravely holds mirror to Indian society

Farzana Nisar

Created by award winning duo Raj Nidhi and Krishna DK, the latest spy thriller, *The Family man* dwells in the life of Srikant Tiwari, played by Manoj Bajpayee, an intelligence officer who juggles between his family duties and serving the nation. He is a struggling family man but a star at his workplace.

The 10 episode series serves as a great entertainment with a mixture of spy thriller and little off-beat type of comedy. It has so much of real stuff into it, keeping us hooked throughout. Talking about the acting performances, needless to say Manoj Bajpayee is beyond words. He adjusts to the role of father, husband, employee and a friend. He carried the entire series on his shoulders and is indeed apt for the role. Priyamani, playing the role of Suchi, Srikant's wife, Gul Panag in the role of a NIA officer and Sharib Hashmi as Tiwari's friend connect well with the audience.

The raw and rustic storyline along with numerous plot twists keep us on the edge of our seats. The scenes of blood, bombs and blasts are quite powerful. The open ended closure might be a disappointment for some but it can keep you gripped for the next season.

The directors deserve applaud on how it blatantly acknowledges the wrongdoings of security forces in Kashmir which is very rarely seen in Indian media. Though the show may seem to portray a different narrative of Kashmir and its people, it falls on the same face while portraying Muslims on whole. It seems to boost the same stereotypical image of Muslims being terrorists. The fact being that web series are less censored, the repugnant language can be excused.

Despite the shows minor shortcomings, *The Family Man* is exciting, creative and well worth a few hours of your time.

Shahid Habib

Directors - Raj Nidimoru & Krushna DK Cast - Manoj Bajpayee, Priyamani, Sharib Hashmi, Gul Panag, Shreya Dhanwanthary **Network:** Amazon Prime Video Premiere **Date:** Sept.20, 2019

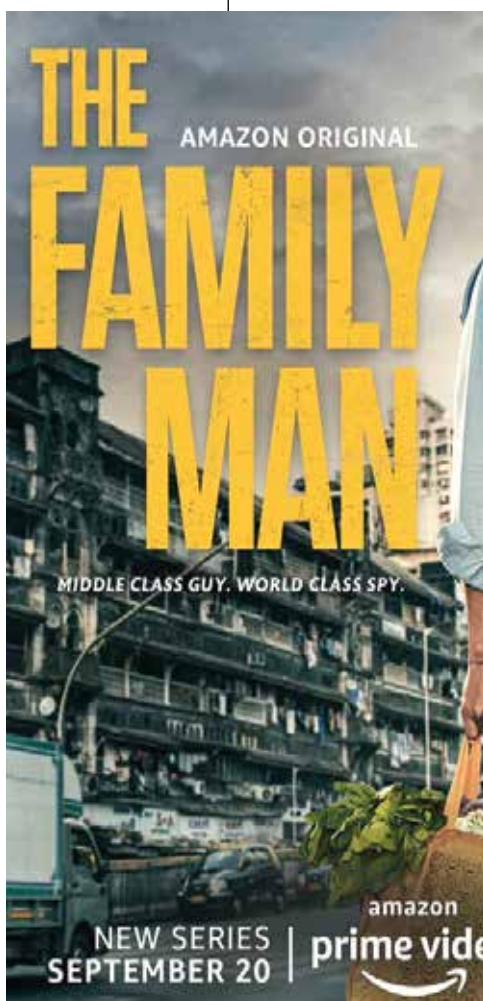
Dissecting subcontinental geo-politics Raj and DK's "the family man" holds mirror to Indian society,

Manoj Bajpayee-starrer socio-political action thriller series "the family man" is a reflection of everyday life of secret spy. The story revolves around spy agent Srikanth (Manoj Bajpayee) and reflects upon many sensitive issues that are currently predominant in India like Mob Lynching, youth joining ISIS, Islamophobia, Beef politics, Anti- Nationals, mass surveillance and Kashmir situation. Srikanth is a veteran field agent for Threat Analysis and Surveillance Cell (TASC) but is an irresponsible father and husband who is always caught up with his work. He has a beautiful wife Suchitra and two kids Atharv (son) and Dhriti (daughter) who are all disappointed with him. Srikanth tries to balance between personal and professional life but is seen failing miserably in doing so.

At the start of the season, two people are arrested with links to ISIS, and TASC finds out that something big is going to happen, a much bigger attack than 26/11 and that a sinister plan is afoot, by the name of "Operation Zulfikar," whose master minds are shown sitting in Pakistan. Then begins the hunt to decode operation Zulfikar. Each episode of series has been titled separately like, the family man, sleepers, Anti-Nationals, Patriots, Pariah, Dance of Death, Paradise, Act of War, Fighting Dirty and the final one is titled as "The Bomb."

Moreover, each episode is rounded off with indie rock tracks whose regionality reflect the cultural theme of that episode. For example, The episodes in Kashmir are rounded off with famous Kashmiri tracks "Harmukh Bartal," and "Hukus Bukus." The series is inspired by real events evident from the newspaper clippings which are shown at end of the episodes. Raj and DK have breached a subject that is rarely addressed in mainstream Indian entertainment. For example, in one episode Muslim college boy is beaten up for not standing during the pre-movie national anthem, another such scene begins with two Muslim meat transporters being lynched by violent Hindu mob. A sub plot involves the killings of innocent Muslim boys who were planning to distribute beef in Hindu MP's party, but surveillance agencies mistook them as planning some attack. It shows how heavy surveillance can take lives of innocent people. All three innocent Muslim boys killed are branded as terrorists to save the face of TASC. The family man offers a relevant socio-political context for radicalization. Another dark face of surveillance is shown when Srikanth uses high-tech surveillance software to

hack into his daughter's phone to check if she has a boyfriend, and his wife's location when he suspects her of having an affair with her colleague. One of the best part of the show is that it's not a one man show, all characters have their own stories and struggles. The location, cast and story keep you engaged all the time and Manoj Bajpayee superbly justified his character through his acting, he has lived in the character. The action, humour and politics makes "The Family Man" a hit just in its first season. While it has burdened its next season with huge expectations from the audiences. And, it will be very interesting to see how the makers cope with it.



The Han Kitab Tradition: *Seeking past to find future*

Malik Nauman

A common refrain vocalized by Islam's critics is that it is not compatible with pluralistic, liberal, open-minded societies. This particular view of Islam is not limited to a certain geography, ideology, or religion. From the USA to China, from the far left to the far right, from Christians to Buddhists, Islam's critics see it as an inherently disruptive, even predatory, ideology. Surprisingly, various highly politically charged movements within Islam also share in their views. These movements selectively retrieve texts from the sacred sources of the religion, often contravening well-established interpretations within Islam's scholarly tradition and imbue the religion with a culturally predatory color. Like Islam's critics, their interpretations of Islam allow no space for local culture. They seem to be ignorant of one of Islamic law's five universal maxims that declares: "Cultural usage shall have the weight of law," implying that customary usage, recognized as good, beneficial, or merely harmless in terms of the transcendent norms of Islamic law has authority similar to fundamental textual precepts of the law.

In this context, it is particularly useful to point to instances in Islamic history where Muslims harmonized indigenous forms of cultural expression with the universal norms of their sacred law. One such instance is the highly sophisticated but regrettably neglected Han Kitab tradition, an integrative approach to Confucian and Islamic learning developed by Chinese Muslims in the seventeenth century. Han Kitab (Han Qitabu), an expression that combines the Chinese word Han and a transliteration

of the Arabic kitāb, or "book," meaning "(Muslim) books written in Chinese." Those who took this approach were often called Huiru, that is, Muslim literati, or Muslim scholars of Confucian learning. This canon of texts materialized as translations and creative adaptations of important Islamic metaphysical texts and original composition of Islamic texts in the Chinese language and Neo-Confucian terms. According to Oludamini Ogunnaike and Mohammed Rustom, the emergence of the Han Kitab "points to a unique moment in Islamic civilizational and cultural history since it marks one of the few



written records we have of minority Muslim authors' articulations of an Islamic worldview in the language and philosophical terminology of a once-different civilization and intellectual tradition." Moreover, the authors of these texts didn't confine themselves to issues concerning only Muslims. A perusal of their works shows that they were also engaged with problems that concerned their Neo-Confucian contemporaries. The Han Kitab was at once both authentically Islamic and authentically Chinese. Indeed, some of the Huiru's Neo-Confucian contemporaries certainly thought so as well. The biography of the blessed Prophet Muhammad written by Liu Zhi, possibly the most systematic and

profound author of the whole school was honored with a preface by the Vice-Minister of the Board of Ritual who wrote: "The ancient Confucian doctrine has been undermined at different times by Buddhists and Daoists...now, however, in this book of Liu Zhi we see once more the way of the ancient sages, Yao and Shun, King Wen and King Wu and Confucius. Thus, although this book explains Islam, in truth it illuminates our Confucianism." Likewise, the Vice-Minister of the Board of War contributed a preface to Liu Zhi's Tianfang dianli (Rules and proprieties of Islam), stating that the minister, while discussing Islam with Liu Zhi, had come to the realization that it upheld traditional Neo-Confucian values, such as loyalty to the Sovereign, filial piety and brotherly love. But the ultimate seal of approval came when the Tianfang dianli was considered important enough to be included in the Siku quanshu

zongmu tiyao (Annotated Catalog of the Complete Imperial Library). These texts were in every sense native products of Chinese civilization.

The Han Kitab tradition, along with many other instances where Muslims harmonized the indigenous culture with an Islamic worldview, serves not only as a riposte to those who maintain that Islam prevents its followers' assimilation in foreign cultures but also as an example to be emulated by Muslims everywhere they exist as a minority. That way Muslims won't just be able to introduce the robust Islamic intellectual tradition to people who view Islam as being alien to the modern world but also contribute constructively to contemporary intellectual and practical spheres.

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