through an analysis of the work of Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Quth and Muhammad Husayn Fadl Allah, a fresh look at the development of Arab thought and given fascinating insights into the history of the Ikhwan. A book of this importance, however, deserves more careful attention from its editor and press. Notwithstanding its merits, the last third of the book is marred by a number of typographical errors and misspellings, which does not befit a book of this scholarship.

Joseph L. Pace


The book is the combined work of Professor Dr Sukumar Ray (1905–1987) and M. H. A. Beg. Professor Ray who authored *Humayun in Persia* (1948) took up the work on Bairam Khan, but died before its completion. It was completed by M. H. A. Beg who is a surgeon by profession.

The book consists of a foreword by Dr M. H. Siddiqui, short biographical sketch of Dr Ray, prefatory note by Professor Riazul Islam and introductory note by Dr Beg. It is followed by ten chapters, additional notes, hukms (decrees) of Bairam Khan, a letter of Dr Riazul Islam, bibliography, index, a map of Central Asia, besides some photographs of typical Mughul paintings and various historical buildings.

The authors have devoted chapters to explain Bairam’s early life, his association with Emperor Humayun, Humayun’s exile in India and Persia and stay in Qandahar, restoration of Mughul role and Emperor Akbar’s era from the height of Bairam’s power to his rebellion. Each chapter is divided into a number of sub-chapters to discuss particular themes.

The authors have used primary source materials in Persian available in the British Museum, the India Office, other libraries in Europe and in the Subcontinent. Besides original works, some translations of the primary sources in English have also been used.
The entire work revolves round the desire of Professor Ray to reconstruct the historical role of Bairam Khan spread over the reigns of Emperors, Humayun and Akbar. He worked on 'Humayun in Persia' as part of his Ph.D. dissertation. The present work, therefore, appears to be the extension of his Ph.D. research. The book is not founded on a question or logic to inquire into the period of history under review, but simply to produce a biographical account which was probably lacking in the contemporary historical literature. However, the book has various shortcomings which impair its research and scholarly base.

The principal point of criticism is its isolationist approach which is rejected by the contemporary scholarship to reconstruct the past in particular. The authors have enumerated the following qualities of Bairam Khan:

"a valiant soldier"; "an able commander"; "an efficient organizer"; "a man of action"; (having) "a genius for leadership"; "the king's right-hand man": "a man of ready wit"; "a good judge of the realities of situation"; "wise"; "tactician"; (having) "diplomatic ability"; (having) "great powers of management"; "born leader": "great general"; "real author of Mughul restoration": "a man of culture": "well-versed in the humanities of his day": "poet of merit": "poetic talent" and "a successful military leader". (pp. 221-22)

The authors have not explained that despite being "a born leader", "a good judge of the realities of situation" and having "good powers of management" why did he opt for service and not opt to lay the foundation of his own rule?

A peep into his immediate past reveals that after the death of Sultan Feroze Shah Tughlaq (d. 1388), the pace of the fall of the Sultanate of Delhi (712-1526) accelerated very swiftly. The successors of Feroze Shah Tughlaq (1388-1414), as also the Sayyids (1414-51) and the Lodhis (1451-1526) could not restore the grandeur of the Sultanate that prevailed during the lifetime of Feroze Shah Tughlaq. The principal cause behind this long drawn decline as held by historians of all schools of thought was the absence of a king competent in administration and management skills and possessing the calibre of a great general. The qualities attributed to Bairam Khan, if rightly judged by the learned authors, would have made him the most suitable person to fill in this vacuum in India. An initiative to this effect would have linked Bairam Khan with his forefathers who, according to the book, ruled parts of Central Asia and Arabia — Qara Muhammad (d. 1390) ruled Armenia and Tabriz; his successor Qara Yusuf (d. 1420) also conquered Azerbaijan, Gurjistan (Georgia), Iraq, Sultaniya, Qazvin, Tarum and Sava; Yusuf's successor Amir Sikandar ruled during 1420-37 and later Mirza Jahan Shah ruled Iraq 'Ajami (al-Jibāl), Isfahan, Fars, Kirman, Hormuz (Oman) and Khurasan. Similarly when Emperor Humayun's blunders forced him to make room for Sher Shah. In the subsequent Mughul
era, Jehangir rebelled (1599–1604) against Akbar and Prince Khusrau against his father Jehangir, (1606), to establish their own rule. An identical situation emerged during the last years of Emperor Shah Jahan, when a war of succession started (1657–58) amongst his sons. An explanation correlating Bairam Khan with the past and the future could have universalised the work. Besides this, the bibliography is incomplete and poorly arranged, and so is the index which lacks comprehensive information. The publisher appears to be giving a touch of sanctity to the work, the usefulness of which is questionable. For instance the use of idiom "doyen of scholars of South Asian history" for Sir Jadunath Sarkar (p. III.), a letter of Professor Riazul Islam and Urdu translation (at two places) of an ode of Bairam by one Muhammad Akhtar Muslim negate the principles of free inquiry.

The book in the present form is a narrative, and helpful to the students of history at Masters level. It is equally interesting for the lay readers. However, the book deserves special credit for being co-produced by Dr Beg. It will not be fair to recognize his intellect in history of the Mughals. His interest to reconstruct the life and time of Bairam is really praiseworthy in the sense that he managed to undertake this project at a time when surgeons and physicians are engaged in such a professional race that they have seldom time for their families, what to say of such a literary and unproductive venture. The students of history should, therefore, be specifically thankful to Dr Beg for giving them this good book. The interest of persons like Dr Beg is a ray of hope for better future of historical scholarship. The Institute of Central and West Asian Studies of the Karachi University must keep this spirit on, and welcome other similar scholars who might select to add to the contemporary historical knowledge.

Sayyid A. S. Pirzada


This book was initially published in French language in 1964. This translation in English now published (1993) by Kegan Paul International deserves commendation for filling up certain gaps in English literature on Islamic culture.