

**OBITUARY****PROF. DR. ANSAR ZAHID KHAN**

(1 January 1934 to 19 February 2019)

Strange that a man who lived such a full life, should have it shown squeezed between two dates, as if they were bookends! But when a life is that full, that well-lived, and has influenced so many, then dates and death are mere statistics – only of theoretical interest. The true value and meaning of the man lives on, with his work. And our memories of him.

Ansar Zahid Khan was born on the very first day of the year 1934, in Agra one of the most well-known cities of the then-undivided Indian subcontinent. His early schooling Matriculation and Intermediate was done through the Allahabad Board, in 1948 and 1950 respectively. He obtained a 1st division in matric, and solid 2nd in subsequent examinations. Agra University was his *alma mater* for his Bachelor's (1953) and Master's (in History, 1955), as well as B.T. His last examination passed in India was Adib Kamil, from Jamia Urdu, Aligarh. He obtained his Ph.D. in History (1974) from the University of Karachi, Pakistan.

He started his professional career as a teacher of history. He taught in various colleges, as well as the Department of History of the University of Karachi. He retired on 31 December 1993, from the service of the Government of Sindh, as a Professor of History.

That was when Hakim Mohammed Said acquired his services for Hamdard (as Professor and Research Director of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan), for which he worked with dedication and loyalty till almost his last breath. Seriously ill, he went to spend the last months of his life with his sons, in Santa Clara, California, USA, where he died, at the age of 85.

Actually, his association with Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said began much before his retirement in 1993. Hakim Said was one of

the founding members of the Pakistan Historical Society. Dr. Ansar Zahid Khan became first the Society's Joint Secretary in 1970 upto 1989, and from 1989 onwards, its General Secretary. He meticulously edited the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society (Historicus)*, as well as another journal, the *Hamdard Islamicus*, for about 3 decades, and organized 11 International History Conferences. He also guided 25 Ph.D. scholars.

He remained Secretary of the Hamdard Education Society for 27 years, and, from 1970, was a Member of the Executive Committee and Editorial Committee of the Institute of Central West Asian Studies. He was also chosen as a Member of the Research Board of Advisors of the American Biographical Institute, in 1991, and was also honoured by a Turkish research journal the *Journal of Islamic Research* as a Member of its International Editorial Board.

He was a prolific writer, who authored, co-authored, or edited around 25 books, wrote numerous editorials, reviews, and articles, and has also left some unpublished work. Of his many books, *History and Culture of Sind* (1980), which goes beyond his 1974 thesis in its scope, is likely to be republished, and his *Al-Biruni: His Life and Work* needs to be introduced to a new generation. He co-authored *Bahr al-Asrar* and *Tadhkirat al-Umara*, co-authored and edited *Road to Pakistan*, and almost finished work on three other books: Editing and annotating English translation of *Tabaqat al-Kabir*, vol. III, English translation (from Persian) annotation and editing of volume III of *Tadhkirat al-Umara* by Kewalram, as well as of *Darbari Akhbar: Alamgir's Reign (1666-1707)*.

In his personal life, he was very caring of his family and relatives. In his professional life, he encouraged and mentored his juniors, and was a beacon light to researchers, historians, and academia alike.

Words are insufficient to describe the void he has left.

He worked tirelessly all his life. May his soul now rest in a well-earned peace. And may Allah give solace and strength to his family and us. Amen!